



**Tri-County Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
2025 Employer of the Year Awards**

At its December 12, 2025 Board meeting, the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board, Inc. presented Employer of the Year Awards in Armstrong, Butler, and Indiana Counties for employers who have significantly contributed to the workforce development system within the region. This award highlights the collaboration of business and workforce development in the three counties. All three companies have significantly contributed to building a skilled workforce.

Armstrong County Employer of the Year – Herkules USA Corp.



In Ford City, Pennsylvania, 125 employees at Herkules USA work daily with expertise and passion on the design and production of Herkules grinding and turning machines in the spacious production halls of the 81,000 square foot area that offers the best conditions for the high-precision production of all machine components. Whether mechanical production or electrics - all work is carried out in-house at Herkules USA. An extensive range of turning, milling and grinding machines as well as measuring systems, many of them from their own group of companies, guarantees the highest machining quality.

Herkules USA has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to workforce development through collaboration, worker training, employee recruitment and retainment, youth pipeline development, apprenticeship opportunities, and being registered with the PA CareerLink®.

The company has forged strong partnerships with local industries, trade organizations, the Tri-County Manufacturing Consortium, and educational institutions such as several local career and technical centers. These collaborations allow for shared resources, coordinated training efforts, and alignment of workforce skills with regional business needs. However, continuous learning is a cornerstone of the Herkules USA workforce strategy. The company regularly

provides professional development opportunities, including customized training programs, certifications, and technical upskills to ensure employees remain competitive in a rapidly changing marketplace.

Recognizing the importance of a strong workforce, the Herkules USA has implemented innovative recruitment practices while maintaining a culture of respect, growth and advancement. As a PA CareerLink® registered employer, they participated in the annual career fair for both students and jobseekers. Another avenue of training and retention they utilize is through apprenticeship. Through registered apprenticeship programs such as the mechatronics program through the German American Chamber of Commerce, the company combines hands-on learning with classroom instruction, creating a clear pathway for individuals to gain industry-recognized credentials while earning a wage.

Herkules USA is deeply invested in preparing the next generation of workers, which is demonstrated through their commitment to welcome cooperative education students to further train and develop their skill set at their company. Through partnerships with local schools and technical education programs such as Lenape Tech, the company offers mentorship, job shadowing, and career exploration activities that expose students to real-world opportunities in the field. The company also actively participates in occupational advisory committee meetings for local technical schools.

This collaboration between Herkules USA and the workforce system has benefited both employees and the business. By promoting lifelong learning and community engagement, Herkules demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing workforce development within its organization and the broader community.

Butler County Employer of the Year – Adams Manufacturing Corp.



Founded in 1976 and proudly part of the Keter Group, Adams Manufacturing Corp. got its start selling suction cups into prominent hardware, craft, variety, and office supply stores. Since then, the company has gone on to become an innovative maker of injection-molded consumer products.

Headquartered in the small, picturesque town of Portersville, Pennsylvania and with other support facilities throughout the region, their state-of-the-art manufacturing plant transforms resins into a wide variety of products sold to leading mass merchant, online, and hardware retailers around the world. Today, they employ over 200 full- and part-time employees.

Over the years, Adams Manufacturing product lines have expanded from suction cups. They now manufacture folding & stacking outdoor furniture, garden & holiday hardware products, and Adirondack chairs in a dozen colors. The latest addition to their growing line includes furniture designed to accommodate individuals with larger proportions. They're continuing to enhance their product lines with modern features like multi-purpose cup, smart-

phone, and accessory holders.

Adams Manufacturing leverages structured worker training programs to strengthen operational capability, consistency, and employee engagement across its manufacturing sites. These programs are designed to ensure that new hires and existing employees receive hands-on, peer-based training from experienced production associates who understand both the technical processes and the culture of the organization. An emphasized area of this training is the utilization of their on-the-job training program that combines hands-on learning with structured mentorship to ensure employees gain the technical knowledge, safety awareness, and problem-solving skills necessary for success in a high-performance environment.

Adams Manufacturing recognizes that maintaining a stable and capable workforce is critical to operational excellence, safety, and product quality. Their recruitment and retention strategy combines data-driven workforce planning, strong community partnerships, and a culture of engagement that encourages long-term employment. As a registered employer of the PA CareerLink®, Adams Manufacturing posts jobs and attended the 2025 job fair. They are also committed to supporting veterans through active recruitment, partnerships, and workplace inclusion initiatives. Adams recognizes and values the leadership, discipline, and technical expertise that veterans bring to the manufacturing environment.

Adams Manufacturing Corp. is an active member in the Tri-County Manufacturing Consortium. Through working collaboratively with local workforce development resource partners, mutual opportunities are presented for their employees and the continued success of the company.

Indiana County Employer of the Year – Valence Surface Technologies/H&W Global Industries



Valence Pittsburgh was founded in 2002 as H&W Global Industries. Today they operate out of a state of the art 55,000 square foot facility servicing clients in the aerospace, defense, automotive, marine, mining, nuclear, and medical industries with high quality military specification metal finishing, electroplating and industrial coating services. Their services include anodizing aluminum and its alloys, black oxide coating, wide range of military grade painting, passivation of stainless steel, zinc plating, zinc phosphate coating, conversion coating, powder coating, industrial painting, for leading defense applications and much more. They currently employ 78 highly trained staff.

Valence Surface Technologies, doing business as H&W Global, has established itself as a cornerstone of collaboration within the regional manufacturing network. The company actively partners with workforce development organizations such as the PA CareerLink®, Indiana County Manufacturing Consortium, local schools, and training providers to strengthen the talent pipeline and align educational programs with industry needs. Through these partnerships, H&W Global has supported initiatives that connect jobseekers and students with hands-on career pathways in advanced manufacturing. These collaborations have helped bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, creating a more sustainable and responsive local workforce.

H&W Global has implemented proactive recruitment and retention strategies designed to attract top talent and maintain long-term engagement. By collaborating with workforce partners, career centers, and vocational schools, the company identifies candidates who align with its culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Recruitment events, referral incentives, and internship opportunities have successfully introduced many individuals to rewarding manufacturing careers. Once onboard, H&W Global emphasizes retention with skill advancement opportunities, flexible scheduling options, and a strong culture of teamwork. H&W Global utilizes WEDNet services to increase employee skills and aid in advancement to retain talent. These efforts have led to improved employee satisfaction and lower turnover, strengthening both the workforce and the company's operational stability.

H&W Global has made strategic use of the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program with the PA CareerLink® to accelerate employee readiness while offsetting the costs of onboarding new talent. By partnering with local workforce agencies, the company has provided new hires with paid, structured training tailored to specific roles within surface finishing and production operations. This approach allows employees to gain valuable hands-on experience while earning a competitive wage. The OJT program has proven particularly effective in transitioning candidates from non-manufacturing backgrounds into skilled trades, expanding the company's labor pool and providing career opportunities for individuals seeking stable employment.

Through ongoing partnerships with PA CareerLink®, workforce boards, educators, and local government, H&W Global contributes to regional economic growth and the development of a skilled labor force. This culture of collaboration and continuous learning exemplifies the company's dedication to both its employees and its community.