

## Area students get look at factory floor

Manufacturing Day gives students a look at new career opportunities

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Tim Catlett explains to students and teachers from Northwest Technical School how much strain a chain can sustain while they tour Laclede Chain Manufacturing on Friday, Oct. 5. The company gave more than 90 students the chance to learn more about working in the industry as part of nationwide Manufacturing Day.

GEOFFREY WOHLK/THE FORUM

MARYVILLE, Mo. — Nearly a hundred students got an up close and personal look at a career in manufacturing Friday.

More than 90 high school and college students from Iowa Western Community College and Northwest Technical School went out onto the factory floor for personal tours of Laclede Chain in Maryville as part of nationwide Manufacturing Day.

“There’s a lot of manufacturing, a lot of industry out there,” Tim Catlett, director of materials at the facility, told a tour group Friday morning. “The United States has lost some of that over the last few years, but I think it’s coming back. Don’t overlook a career in manufacturing if that’s what you’re interested in.”

According to the U.S. Labor Department, the industry has continued to steadily grow, adding hundreds of thousands of jobs over the past year.

“We hope that they see that there are valuable careers in manufacturing, and that they’ll come and look at local manufacturing and help us fill our needs,” Catlett said of the students. “Because I think that gets forgotten about a lot with the push for kids to go to college and that type of thing. But there are valuable, rewarding careers here in manufacturing.”

Wearing matching Manufacturing Day T-shirts, employees took the visitors through how the factory produces its different types of chains, stopping at each station along the floor to demonstrate how it works and answer questions.

Catlett said it’s the first year they’ve brought schools in as part of Manufacturing Day, and hopes that more students will show an interest in the industry.

“When you go out here on the floor, you’re going to see a lot of pieces of equipment,” Catlett told the students before they began their tour. “You’re going to see product, you’re going to see the process, but what makes this place work is our employees.

“And that’s what we’re most proud of. They’re our biggest asset that we can have.”