

The History of DRMA

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For over nine decades, manufacturers in the Dayton Region have worked together within the Dayton Region Manufacturers Association—an organization that traces its roots to a small 1934 alliance of 24 local tool and die companies, originally named the Tool Manufacturers Association.

The original 24 founding members:

1. American Tool & Manufacturing Co.
2. Brinkman Engineering Co.,
3. Burdell Engineering Co.,
4. City Engineering Co.,
5. City Machine & Tool Works
6. Dayton Tool & Engineering Co., Inc.
7. East Dayton Tool & Die Co.
8. Eureka Tool & Die Co.
9. Federal Tool & Machine Co.
10. Highland Mfg. Co.
11. International Tool Co.
12. Johnson Tool & Engineering Co.
13. Knowles Tool Manufacturing Co.
14. Modern Tool, Die, & Machine Co.
15. Modern Tool Co.
16. Moore-Eastwood Mfg. Co.
17. Muncie Tool & Engineering Co.
18. North Side Tool Co.
19. Norwood Engineering Co.
20. Precision Gage & Tool Co.
21. Progressive Tool & Engineering Co., The
22. Steel Products Engineering Co.
23. Vulcan Tool Co., The
24. W.B.W. Tool Co., The

From the Great Depression through World War II

The TMA spent its first two decades creating a manufacturing community, bringing tool and die shops together to network and collaborate. They established regular member meetings at iconic Dayton establishments such as the Biltmore Hotel and Suttmillers Restaurant, plus hosted golf outings at the Walnut Grove Country Club. Committees were formed to manage programs, membership and attendance.

These were turbulent years, and the Association addressed the business and political challenges of the time. Members were kept informed on issues like labor shortages, rapid

increase of wages, unionization, the need for draft deferments for critical employees, and the re-introduction of war veterans back into the workforce.

The TMA also supported service organizations like the Soldier's Service Club and the Dayton Community Chest. Technical manufacturing challenges were also addressed, one example being a presentation entitled "Important Factors in the Grinding of Tool and Die Steels." Membership grew from the original 24 manufacturers to 36 by 1947.

The Association also maintained a close connection to the newly formed National Tooling and Machining Association by designating an NTMA trustee on the Board of Trustees who spoke at Board and member meetings. Over the years, seven owners from the Association membership served as the chairman of the NTMA board, even though the Association never sought to become a chapter of the NTMA.

TMA in the Post-War Years

As membership increased, the TMA headed into the post-war period, solidifying into a more structured organization, contracting a part-time secretary, and continuing to address concerns. Labor issues, wage increases and draft deferments continued to be issues. This was also a time of new challenges, like the merging of the AFL-CIO, the complications of federal procurement, and the increasing demands General Motors had placed on their suppliers. The TMA kept members educated on all these developments, forming committees entitled Labor Relations, Public Relations and Business Practices.

Education was also a focus, as the need for highly skilled workers grew rapidly. To address this challenge, the TMA pursued an apprenticeship program with Patterson Co-Op High School and the University of Dayton. The Association investigated the establishment of a UD curriculum covering all phases of operation in a tool and die shop, plus launched a course in tool design at Patterson Co-op. The TMA planted seeds to interest youth in manufacturing careers such as partnering with the Boy Scouts on a career day event.

To further serve their members, the TMA played a role in promoting the Dayton Region as a tool and die powerhouse, initiating an advertising campaign to highlight the region as a producer of high-quality tools. They also assisted the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce in promoting the region by supplying a written history of the Dayton tool and die industry.

To better serve members, member committees were expanded, adding Public Relations and Advertising, Apprenticeship and Employee Relations, Business Practices and Bylaws.

The TMA in the 1970s

The TMA started this decade with a name change, becoming the Dayton Tool & Die Manufacturers Association.

The Seventies were a time when unionization efforts were very aggressive, thus the newly named Association used a multi-pronged attack to address these issues. Delco/GM speakers were brought in to address and advise membership on contract negotiation and the problems

of working with a labor union. Seminars were conducted on tactics used to resist unions. Association members traveled to Washington DC to discuss the Labor Reform Act of 1977 with Senators John Glenn and Howard Metzenbaum. The Labor Committee worked tirelessly to assist members affected by unionization.

Unionization exasperated the old problem of wage instability, which led to a wage-price freeze by President Richard Nixon, which was part of the "Nixon Shock." The Association reacted by conducting wage stabilization seminars plus wage surveys to educate members on this constant and evolving issue.

The Seventies also saw the establishment of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The resulting new safety and health regulations, inspections, remedial orders and fines created a sense of anxiety and uncertainty to Association members. The DTDMA responded by educating their members, inviting the area OSHA director to address membership concerns and answer questions.

The ever-increasing government regulations, unionization and wage instability led the Association to form a Government Relations committee to be a liaison between members and their elected officials. Elected officials were invited to speak with membership, one example being a meeting with Ohio Governor James Rhodes at the King Cole Restaurant.

Workforce development continued to be a focus in the Seventies, as many manufacturers experienced a shortage of skilled workers, coupled with losing employees to GM/Delco plants. The training of apprentices was encouraged, despite many businesses losing interest in these programs. A speaker from the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training was invited to speak to members, warning of the dire consequences resulting from fewer apprenticeships being established.

In addition to encouraging apprenticeships, the DTDMA began working with Sinclair Community College and the Montgomery County Joint Vocational School, while continuing to collaborate with Patterson Co-Op, to provide the much-needed classroom training.

DTDMA becomes DTMA in the 1980s

In February of 1982, the Association's corporate name was changed from the Dayton Tool and Die Manufacturers Association to the Dayton Tooling and Machining Association (DTMA).

The Eighties were a time of technological advances in machining, with many shops turning to NC and CNC machines, plus computer assisted design. The DTMA addressed these changes by holding seminars in NC machining. Advances in CAD/CAM design were also addressed via a panel discussion on the emerging technology. A speaker from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base was invited to discuss "Computer Aided Engineering Systems for Die Design and Manufacturing."

Despite such technological advances, there was still a need for highly trained machinists, so the DTMA worked with the Montgomery County Joint Vocational School to establish a two-year training program called Project Step (later called Step I). A more extensive program was

needed that included both classroom and shop floor training, so Project Step II was established with Sinclair Community College. The DTMA provided \$5,385 to help start up Step I and \$5,000 to help launch Step II which was a large investment for the Association at that time.

The DTMA continued to maintain a close connection to the National Tooling and Machining Association, partnering with them in government relations efforts, attending meetings and conferences and participating in the National Apprenticeship Contest. The DTMA and NTMA also met with WPAFB to discuss procurement opportunities.

In 1986 the first local Industrial Exhibition trade show was held, owned and produced by Southex, sponsored by the DTMA. This trade show allowed the region's manufacturing community to display their strengths and capabilities as manufacturers and suppliers.

The DTMA in the 1990s

The Nineties introduced new problems to manufacturing, such as the growth of drug use on the shop floor, the ever-increasing severity of OSHA penalties and the constant need for recruiting and training more workers. Addressing these problems, the DTMA held a seminar entitled "Drugs in the Workplace," solicited members to write letters opposing the Comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Reform Act (HR1280) and launched many initiatives to address workforce development.

To address the need of growing the workforce, the DTMA continued to work with Sinclair Community College in their Step II program, supporting a proposed two-year tooling and machining associate degree program. The DTMA also worked with Sinclair to launch the Advanced Integrated Manufacturing Center (AIM Center), a state-of-the-art facility designed to mimic a real, modern factory floor, complete with machining centers, robotics and automation, plus CAD/CAM design. State of Ohio TechPrep grants and scholarships for those interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing were also supported by the Association.

Formal training was not the only need in developing a workforce; recruitment was also a challenge. Initiatives were explored like connecting more with Dayton's African American community and working with military officials to attract retired personnel to manufacturing. A Machining Technology Day was held in October of 1996, held at three shops and attracting 125 attendees.

In addition, outreach to high school teachers was undertaken by offering complimentary DTMA memberships. The Association also partnered with the State to recruit high school graduates who were not planning to attend college. Classroom presentations highlighting careers in the industry were developed and speaking engagements were held at local high schools. A 32-hour boot camp titled "A Career That Works" was launched to introduce young people to careers in tooling and machining. Recruitment was a critical need in the 1990s and has remained a persistent challenge in the decades since.

The Nineties were also the time when the DTMA partnered with the Dayton Development Coalition on the Tool Town (later called Tool Valley Network) economic development initiative.

The Association's leadership recommended a strategic shift, abandoning an initial plan for an 85-acre tooling and machining district in downtown Dayton. The new approach prioritized increasing the volume of regional work and expanding the workforce pipeline. Even though the specific goals were not met, the initiative was successful in getting the manufacturing industry on the minds of decision makers and stakeholders throughout the Region.

Changes in the structure of DTMA leadership also took place in the Nineties. For years the Association was managed by a contracted secretary, which eventually became a secretary/treasurer position, starting with H.L. Neilson until 1951, Maurice Leen from 1951-1962, Elwood Zimmer from 1962-1985 and Ron Hutchins from 1985-1991. The Association contracted with Strategies Plus/Antonnette Flohre as the association executive from 1991-1997. In September of 1997, Angelia Erbaugh was hired as the association executive (eventually called president) making her the DTMA's first employee, a position she held from 1997-2025.

The New Century... 2000-2010

With new professional leadership, the DTMA sailed into the new century, addressing old and new challenges, one being the departure of Delphi Automotive from the Dayton Region.

Delphi, formerly GM Automotive Components Group (once called GM Delco), began closing their local manufacturing plants, affecting not only their workers but also local suppliers. The Association began collaborating with the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce to develop a strategy to mitigate the impact of the plant closings. The DTMA also organized a meeting for member Delphi suppliers to share information on their struggle to be paid by Delphi. DTMA president Angelia Erbaugh served on the GM Regional Response Task Force and formed two manufacturing focus groups to assess employers' concerns about hiring displaced workers from large, unionized companies.

Despite the layoffs at Delphi Automotive plants, the industry still needed to recruit more workers. This prompted the DTMA to launch several initiatives, including one that promoted a more diverse workforce, reaching out to historically underrepresented groups. To achieve this, the Association collaborated with the Dayton Urban League to boost African American enrollment in Sinclair's Step II program, allocating \$10,000 for program scholarships. Additionally, they launched a recruitment campaign featuring billboards, bus ads and church posters.

To further attract young people to the industry, the Association also launched the BattleBotsIQ program (affiliated with the NTMA), supported by a generous \$100,000 donation from Dave and Doris Dysinger. BattleBotsIQ, later renamed BotsIQ and today known as Extreme Bots, was created to introduce students to careers in manufacturing and engineering by having them design, build and battle their own robots in a controlled arena. Through the program, students gained hands-on experience with machining, welding, electrical engineering, and programming, with the goal of encouraging them to pursue a manufacturing career.

Recruitment was not the only challenge in workforce development. Ensuring such workers received the needed skills was also an issue, which led the DTMA to promote NIMS. NIMS, the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, is a system of national standards and credentials for skills in advanced manufacturing. To gain certification, applicants take a written exam, plus undergo a performance evaluation, by producing a part or demonstrate proficiency in machining, inspection etc. Apprenticeships, or programs like Sinclair Community College's Step II would provide training, with the goal of passing a NIMS certification exam. The Association spent the early 2000s promoting NIMS, forming a committee to help communicate the value of NIMS certified workers, and even offering reimbursement to members for certification costs.

Another initiative in the early 2000s was the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Show (AMTS). In 2005, Southex shut down their Industrial Exhibition Show, prompting the Association to establish their own show to highlight the region's manufacturing capabilities. The DTMA was able to pull off the show in only three months, netting a profit the first year. AMTS was not only successful financially, but became a venue for BotsIQ battles, which exposed young people to the manufacturing community.

To further recruit more young people, the DTMA transformed what was once the DTMA Scholarship Fund into the DTMA Education Foundation (eventually becoming DTMA Foundation), a separate charitable entity. This newly formed Foundation's mission is to maximize effectiveness in recruiting and retaining students and employees in the regional tooling and machining industry. A formal investment policy was adopted, designating the Foundation as a funding organization, with tasks to be facilitated by committees in the DTMA.

The DTMA becomes the DRMA, 2011-2025

In 2011, the Dayton Tooling and Machining Association became the Dayton Region Manufacturers Association, to broaden its focus, supporting all manufacturing in the region, and not being limited to the tooling and machining sector. This broader approach led the DRMA to establish partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, government and community groups, plus non-profits.

Also in 2011, the DRMA actively promoted MFG Day, a nationwide event occurring annually on the first Friday of October. Manufacturers open their doors to the public, encouraging young students, educators and parents to experience how manufacturing has evolved from a once dirty factory environment to an innovative career that involves robotics, CNC machine tools, advanced design software and innovative high-tech processes. The DRMA asked local manufacturers to participate, to encourage a new generation to consider a career in manufacturing. The Association's 2019 local MFG Day was #1 in the nation, engaging 4,014 students from 68 schools, facilitated through plant tours hosted by 44 member companies.

The DRMA understood how vital young people are to the continued growth in manufacturing, not just as workers, but also as future leaders. This led the Association to establish a Young Professionals Group in 2015 which eventually became a DRMA committee with goals of engaging younger employees at member companies in DRMA initiatives and establishing a leadership development program through the University of Dayton's Center for Leadership. In

2020 this focus on future leaders led the Association to transition the Young Professionals committee to the Associate Board, with the goal of fostering leadership skills and deepening involvement in the Association.

Also, during this time, the Association sought to strengthen their relationship with government officials, advocating for members' concerns. Government officials were invited to all member events, letters were written to oppose certain policy and legislation deemed damaging to the sector, such as the opposition to "Fast Track" or Trade Promotion Authority and joining the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce in opposing the legalization of marijuana. The Government Relations committee continues to develop strong relationships with government officials and remains a strong and vital function of the DRMA.

With the DRMA's scope and focus being broadened, the Association worked to upgrade their structure and leadership. Membership was broken down into three categories, Manufacturer, Affiliate (companies providing services exclusively to manufacturers, such as industrial suppliers) and Associate (companies providing services to multiple industries, such as banks and insurance companies). Also established was a strong process in strategic planning which included the Board as well as committee chairs, ensuring the Association stays relevant.

To further relevancy, the DRMA continued to provide education and information to assist members in navigating an ever-changing business landscape. A annual economic update event was launched, featuring Brian and Alan Beaulieu of ITR Economics, which informed members of economic trends in the Ohio and other US regions, plus foreign countries, and other industries. This event has remained extremely popular through the years. In addition, forums were held on such topics as family business issues, OSHA, Worker's Compensation, additive manufacturing, etc. Member events called Meet Ups were launched to provide a format for members to share challenges and best practices on various topics.

The DRMA moved into this final decade continuing to focus on workforce development. The Association continued to partner with non-profit consultants like FASTLANE (developing classroom presentations), local city governments like the City of Dayton (assisting them in their Manufacturing Week Summer Camp), plus reaching out to various schools with Power Lunch career events. Association president Angelia Erbaugh served on 20 school/college advisory boards throughout the region to convey manufacturers' skill needs.

This success in workforce development led to the DRMA being selected as the Ohio Manufacturers' Association's (OMA) Industry Sector Partnership for the Dayton Region. For many years, the OMA has served as a statewide advocate for effective manufacturing policy. Recognizing a critical need for workforce development across Ohio, the OMA launched an initiative to bring manufacturers together to collaboratively address workforce challenges. To support this effort, it established a network of Industry Sector Partnerships to coordinate collaboration and fund regional initiatives. Given the DRMA's decades-long leadership in workforce development, their selection as the Dayton Industry Sector Partnership was a natural fit.

In 2019, after several years of declining attendance, the Board of Trustees decided to discontinue the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Show (AMTS) after consulting exhibitors and attendees. The Association strengthened their focus on workforce issues and strived to promote more opportunities for members to network and connect, such as Meet Ups and Shop Talks (gatherings hosted by members).

In 2020, the DRMA's mission of connecting people and businesses across the manufacturing sector was hindered due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Association staff began to work remotely with committee and Board meetings taking place virtually. The Member Services committee shifted their focus to what the Association can do to help members during the pandemic. A weekly virtual Covid Meet Up was established for members to share information. Though some events were cancelled, the DRMA adapted to make sure vital events happened, such as video tours of manufacturing plants in place of in-person tours on MFG Day, plus Meet Ups being held virtually. The DRMA programs and services may have appeared hindered during the COVID-19 period, but the crisis ultimately strengthened DRMA's impact. Manufacturer members came to recognize the importance of connecting with other manufacturers to solve shared challenges. Member retention began increasing during this period and continues to rise today.

In 2025 Angelia Erbaugh retired after leading the DRMA for 28 years. During her tenure as president of the Association, Angelia exemplified steady, visionary leadership through some of the most challenging periods in modern manufacturing history. She not only expanded and strengthened the Association but successfully guided it through two rebrands that kept it relevant and forward looking. Her leadership spanned eras of profound disruption, including plant closures and offshoring of manufacturing, the aftermath of 9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, and the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, she consistently positioned the Association as a trusted advocate and unifying force for manufacturers. Through resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to the industry, she leaves behind a stronger organization and a legacy of service.

New Leadership 2026 and Beyond

In July 2025, Amy Schrimpf joined the DRMA as the Association's new vice president and transitioned to the president role in early December 2025.

Amy brings an extensive Dayton-area résumé and a wealth of experience to the role. A trusted business leader with deep roots in the region, who has demonstrated a strong commitment to regional growth and collaboration. She previously served as economic development director for the City of Kettering, project manager for the Dayton Development Coalition, project director for the Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District, and public policy director for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, among other key roles. Her broad experience in economic development, public policy, and strategic project leadership reflects a deep understanding of the Dayton Region and a commitment to advancing its continued success.

Through 2025 the DRMA continues to carry on the mission to be the voice of manufacturing in the Greater Dayton Region. The Association promotes success through peer-to-peer

connectivity, career awareness, advocacy, education, economic development and sharing best practices. Throughout its history, DRMA has helped preserve the vitality of the region's manufacturing base by fostering cooperation and by adapting to a continually evolving world and will continue to do so for many years to come.