

**News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 9, 2021

Media Contact: Dan Boss  
Communication Specialist  
231-929-5047  
dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org

---

## **\$275,000 Grant to Help Promote Industry 4.0 in Northern Michigan**

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – Awareness and use of the latest manufacturing technology is getting a boost in northwest Lower Michigan from a \$275,000 Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) grant. The Northwest Industry 4.0 Consortium received the grant to further the awareness and integration of Industry 4.0 practices in the region. The Consortium members are the Alliance for Economic Success, Cadillac Area Manufacturing Association, Grand Traverse Area Manufacturing Council (GTAMC), Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC), Networks Northwest, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, Northwest Industrial Association, Northwest Michigan Works!, Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), and Traverse Connect.

Industry 4.0 is the ongoing advancement of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern technology and automation. Key activities funded by the grant will include:

- Northwest Industry 4.0 Learning Lab/Hub & Micro-Credentialing
- Awareness building in the manufacturing sector through Manufacturing Association Industry 4.0 Alignment
- Regional Economic Development Industry 4.0 Strategy and Marketing

"NMC is looking forward to increasing awareness of Industry 4.0 in the region, providing local manufacturers with valuable assistance, and implementing an advanced manufacturing lab," said Jason Slade, Director of Technical Academic Area, NMC. "This "learning lab" will be designed to allow manufacturers to experiment with technology, educate their workforce, support apprenticeships, and apply Industry 4.0 concepts hopefully resulting in increased efficiency and process improvements."

"Industry 4.0 is the next step for small and mid-sized manufacturers to compete on the global level," said Ryan Schultz, Chief Operating Officer, M R Products, Inc. "We are excited to bring new opportunities to Northwest Michigan businesses to gain access to these technology upgrades through the MEDC and Networks Northwest. These upgrades will give our local employers and employees the tools they need to thrive."

"The Northwest Michigan Industrial Association is proud to partner with the Networks Northwest Consortium and Industry 4.0 to advance our member organizations and employees in terms of technology, strategy, and other vital tenets necessary to promote sustainable performance in our communities," said Dennis O'Leary, Chief Business Development Officer, Industrial Magnetics.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is committed to advancing manufacturing and manufacturers in the state and is supporting a variety of efforts as a result. More information at: [michiganbusiness.org/industry4-0/](http://michiganbusiness.org/industry4-0/)

# # #

NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org)

Networks Northwest's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.