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For Immediate Release

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October Proclaimed Manufacturing Month in Fairfield County

Lancaster, Ohio – Fairfield County has proclaimed October as Manufacturing Month. Events will take place throughout the month to raise awareness of the vast opportunities in manufacturing careers. The county and the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance are partnering with school districts to show students how technology, math and engineering can help them become successful in the manufacturing industry.

The inaugural event will take place on October 3 in partnership with Lancaster Economic Development, Lancaster Public Schools, Ohio University-Lancaster (OUL), the Lancaster-Fairfield Chamber of Commerce, and Midwest Fabricating. Thirty students from Lancaster's Thomas Ewing and General Sherman Junior High Schools were selected from the STEM and Robotics program to receive tours of both Midwest Fabricating's headquarters in Amanda and the engineering technology lab at OUL's campus. At Midwest Fabricating the students will learn how fasteners are made and about opportunities that manufacturing careers present. At OUL the students will select a product to be printed on a 3D printer, learn how higher education contributes to manufacturing careers, and see how new manufacturing equipment works. This event is one of 2,600 that will be held across North America.

"It's estimated that almost 2 million of the 3.4 million new manufacturing jobs in the next decade will go unfilled due to a gap in skills," Rick Szabrak, Fairfield County Economic Development Director, said. "There is a perception that manufacturing is a dying industry and that the jobs are dirty and dangerous but that is not reality. Today's manufacturing environment is clean, high tech and full of exciting possibilities. Young workers can make a good living either just out of high school or after furthering their education at schools like OUL."

A 2016 Society of Manufacturing Engineers survey showed that more than 20% of parents view manufacturing as outdated; half of all respondents do not see manufacturing as an exciting profession; and nearly one-quarter of parents do not feel that manufacturing is a well-paying profession.

"The average manufacturing salary in the US is \$77,506," Szabrak said. "Our hope is that this event spurs conversation with parents so they understand that manufacturing is a viable career for their children. More than 4,200 people, or 18% of the workforce, are employed in the manufacturing sector in Fairfield County. Manufacturing Month and the event with Lancaster schools is a great way to highlight some of those jobs."

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