

Smoky Mountain news

(/index.php)

Maker space movement comes to Haywood

Written by Cory Vaillancourt (/news/itemlist/user/12695-coryvaillancourt) 14 March 2018



(/media/k2/items/cache/4addc39d860682428eda9e8d96723e1e_XL.jpg)

Opportunities for entrepreneurs in advanced manufacturing will soon arrive on Industrial Park Drive. Cory Vaillancourt photo

(https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/24373-maker-space-movement-comes-to-haywood#top)

The type of traditional manufacturing that put many small towns on the map and provided a decent living to generations of Americans is long gone; it's been in decline since the 1970s and will never fully disappear, but the massive economic benefits of large-scale industrial production for the most part have.

“Traditional manufacturing in North Carolina is somewhat of a pejorative anymore,” said Doug Long, dean of business and industry at Haywood Community College. “So many people have seen their families, their towns devastated by traditional manufacturing.”

Long's referring to the long-shuttered plants and superfluous smokestacks that still dot much of the Midwest, the Rust Belt and Appalachia but no longer provide employment in the symbiotic company towns that sprung up around them.

Haywood County is no exception, but is exceptional in that the enduring legacy of traditional manufacturing has made it the perfect place to embrace advanced manufacturing.



The banner features a purple and green logo for 'THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE' on the left, with icons of hands and feet. In the center, it says 'BOOK ONLINE!' in large purple letters, followed by the address 'Haywood Square | 288 N. Haywood St. | Waynesville'. On the right is the 'dōTERRA' logo with the tagline 'Wellness Advocate'.

(/component/banners/click/181)

“Advanced manufacturing could be anything from the type of equipment that you're using, all the way through the materials,” said Doug Burchfield, HCC's dean of workforce continuing education. “You've got somebody like GE Aviation using a lot of ceramics. There are some other companies in this area that are using proprietary materials like titanium aluminide. Those are some compounds you don't commonly see, but the ability now with 3-D printing to do metal printing is huge.”

It's exactly this type of manufacturing that can help small communities ameliorate some of the losses experienced when large local plants closed. But that type of manufacturing is not likely to take place in drafty Dickensian factories — the democratization of resources through technology incubators and so-called “maker spaces” means that entrepreneurs and small businesses will lead the charge, and soon, some of them will have come through HCC's “Project AMI.”

Manufacturing reimaged

Project AMI (Advanced Manufacturing Incubator) sprung to life when Haywood Community College recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to purchase equipment for an AMI.

“The idea was that we are going to start an incubator, or a ‘maker space’ is what they call it,” Long said. “With that in mind, we're trying to support our students who wish to be entrepreneurial but don't have the means to access that themselves.”

Industrial machinery — and a safe, practical space in which to operate it — is expensive, but Project AMI will provide both. Burchfield said available equipment will consist of a couple of lathes, a mill, welding gear, woodworking tools and 3-D printers, for starters.

Go to top

(<https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/24373-maker-space-movement-comes-to-haywood#top>)

A recent external feasibility study commissioned by HCC suggested that the combination of local economic development data and existing resources at HCC would make the Small Business Center on Industrial Park Drive the perfect location for such a maker space.

“It’s a good footprint as a starting point for AMI. It is warehouse space, with a loading dock,” said Katy Gould, director of the HCC Small Business Center.

Existing tenants in the building — Absolutely Yummy Catering, ALP Systems, Asheville Honey Company, Austin Medical, Telemetrics, Waynesville Soda Jerks and the Western Economic Development Organization — have known since shortly after HCC took possession of the building in 2016 that the clock was ticking, according to Karen Denny, vice president of business operations at HCC.

“We renewed their leases so they would all expire at the same time, on Sept. 30, 2018,” Denny said, noting that when HCC inherited the tenants, their individual leases were set to expire anywhere from January 2017 through September 2017 before being renewed by HCC.

All in all, there’s about 17,000 square feet of space; Project AMI is intended to be built in a modular, scalable manner, meaning it won’t take up the whole facility right away.

Its proximity to the SBC, however, is another bonus for entrepreneurs who already have the production figured out, but not the business model.

“We provide technical assistance and support to businesses,” Gould said. “Basically by getting them the resources they need to launch or grow a business.”

“By working with the Small Business Center, we have our folks who are on the front end of what businesses want to get started,” Long said. “So that’s going to help us generate what the need is for other equipment, and other training.”

The goal of the 18-month grant, which was awarded in late September 2017, is to spawn six small businesses and improve six existing businesses; the grant’s effective date was Jan. 1, 2018, and Long said he hopes Project AMI will be up and running by Jan. 1, 2019.

“This has the potential to be the change for Appalachia that Appalachia has been desperately wanting and needing. And the difference in this case is simple,” Long said. “We’re not trying to tell Appalachia what it needs to do. Instead, we’re asking Appalachia to come and show us its ingenuity and apply it. We’re not telling them what they should be doing.”

For a long time, Appalachians — and many Americans — were told that a bachelor’s degree was the only reliable ticket out of generational poverty. Today, investments by the ARC and HCC show a renewed focus on skills and trades as economic development assets.

“Several years ago, the statistic was that about 28 percent of the student body in North Carolina’s community college system already had a bachelor’s degree, which means that they’re coming back here for a skill set because they need to be able to live off of what they’re able to do,” Long said. “I know so many people with bachelor’s and master’s degrees and doctorates who are carrying trays for a living and not applying what they’ve learned. Industry is saying that the bachelor’s degree is not the end-all be-all.”

Go to top

Project AMI, it’s hoped, will also help attract students to HCC, which was opened in 1965, ironically, as the Haywood Industrial Education Center.

<https://smoky-mountains.com/news/item/2473-maker-space-movement-comes-to-haywood#top>

“It’s great from a marketing perspective,” said Jessy Duque, director of marketing and communications at HCC. “It really puts the college out there. It shows the community that we are here for the community and to serve the community and its needs. Aside from the students that we have here, we’re always thinking, ‘How are we serving the needs of the community, whether it’s this year, five years down the road, or 10 years down the road?’ I think with this project, we’re really looking at a long-term benefit.”

Tags: #haywood (/news/itemlist/tag/haywood), #entrepreneurship (/news/itemlist/tag/entrepreneurship), #haywood community college (/news/itemlist/tag/haywood%20community%20college), #business (/news/itemlist/tag/business), #small business (/news/itemlist/tag/small%20business),

Read **18610** times

0 Comments

Sort by



Add a comment...

[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)

Tweet

3 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.

MORE IN THIS CATEGORY:

- [Despite threats to funding, ARC soldiers on \(/archives/item/24374-despite-threats-to-funding-arc-soldiers-on\)](/archives/item/24374-despite-threats-to-funding-arc-soldiers-on)
- [TWSA struggles with open meetings laws \(/archives/item/24372-twsa-struggles-with-open-meetings-laws\)](/archives/item/24372-twsa-struggles-with-open-meetings-laws)

Related items

- [Haywood candidates slow to sign up \(/news/item/27281-haywood-candidates-slow-to-sign-up\)](/news/item/27281-haywood-candidates-slow-to-sign-up)
- [Undocumented students still eligible for free tuition at HCC \(/news/item/27274-undocumented-students-still-eligible-for-free-tuition-at-hcc\)](/news/item/27274-undocumented-students-still-eligible-for-free-tuition-at-hcc)
- [Haywood foundation focuses on health \(/news/item/27268-haywood-foundation-focuses-on-health\)](/news/item/27268-haywood-foundation-focuses-on-health)
- [Wolf Tales: Man and his wolf pack combat misunderstandings about America’s wild dog \(/archives/item/27245-wolf-tales-man-and-his-wolf-pack-combat-misunderstandings-about-america-s-wild-dog\)](/archives/item/27245-wolf-tales-man-and-his-wolf-pack-combat-misunderstandings-about-america-s-wild-dog)
- [Haywood candidates begin filing for office \(/archives/item/27242-haywood-candidates-begin-filing-for-office\)](/archives/item/27242-haywood-candidates-begin-filing-for-office)
- [Shining Rock remains shrouded in secrecy \(/archives/item/27203-shining-rock-remains-shrouded-in-secrecy\)](/archives/item/27203-shining-rock-remains-shrouded-in-secrecy)
- [Small-town sequel: Waynesville’s Smoky Mountain Cinema reopens \(/archives/item/27196-small-town-sequel-waynesville-s-smoky-mountain-cinema-reopens\)](/archives/item/27196-small-town-sequel-waynesville-s-smoky-mountain-cinema-reopens)
- [Lumberjack ‘family’ to get a home: Construction underway on new HCC timbersports building \(/archives/item/27181-lumberjack-family-to-get-a-home-construction-underway-on-new-hcc-timbersports-building\)](/archives/item/27181-lumberjack-family-to-get-a-home-construction-underway-on-new-hcc-timbersports-building)

[back to top \(/archives/item/24373-maker-space-movement-comes-to-haywood#startOfPageId24373\)](#)

[Go to top](#)

[https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/24373-maker-](https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/24373-maker-space-movement-comes-to-haywood#top)

[space-movement-comes-to-haywood#top](#)