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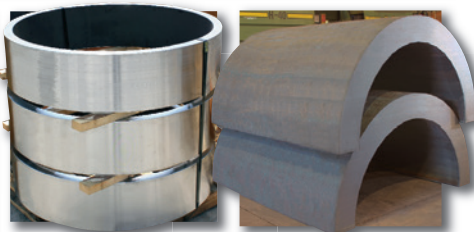


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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



When we at the NIA first began planning this edition of *Engaged*, the issue's theme was "labour solutions". Most of our members can attest to the challenges of finding and retaining skilled employees, particularly as the most experienced members of their workforces approach retirement. It's a topic of utmost relevance to anyone running a business, particularly in Niagara's industrial sector.

And then a pandemic struck.

*Engaged* moved from a spring publication to the fall, when our audience would be more receptive and hopefully not as consumed by problems like navigating disrupted supply chains, sourcing PPE and re-engineering shop floor workflow to keep workers safe.

COVID has been so transformational that we would be remiss not to address its impact in our editorial lineup. So our issue now has a dual theme: labour solutions and COVID resilience. What comes across in many of our stories is just how intertwined the two topics actually are. For many businesses we've talked to, a strong and dedicated workforce has never been more important. It can be a key source of business stability in an unstable market environment.

On an organizational front, I'm happy to report that the NIA has been hard at work promoting and advocating for Niagara industry. Regrettably we haven't been able to proceed with many of the networking opportunities that members have come to enjoy over the years: breakfasts, social events, plant tours, tradeshow, etc. But like organizations everywhere, we've actively pursued virtual opportunities in an effort to connect.

Through Zoom meetings, webinars and email notifications, we've been able to keep members abreast of NIA and member initiatives alike, as well as critical (and rapidly evolving) government programs to support business through the uncertainties of COVID.

In June we launched a new website at [www.niagaraindustry.com](http://www.niagaraindustry.com), which you can read about on page 46. I hope you'll take the opportunity to visit the site and make use of some of the valuable features that are exclusive only to members.

I want to close by highlighting the most inspiring NIA development over the past half-year, one which was member-

driven. During the depths of the outbreak, and in very short order, Niagara's industrialists stepped up to the plate, raising over \$115,000 to purchase a ventilator and desperately needed PPE for the local health system. A collective, heartfelt thank you goes out to Joe DeMan, who spearheaded this incredible fundraising drive, and to all the businesses who so generously contributed.

The NIA's slogan – "competitors in the field, partners in industry" – has never resounded so strongly, with Niagara's industrial sector uniting to give back to the community and support our health care heroes. It's truly an honour to be involved with business leaders of such character and compassion.

Sincerely,

Dr. Don Cyr  
Professor of Finance, Brock University  
Chair, NIA Board of Directors

## LOOK FOR THESE ICONS IN OUR FEATURED STORIES, SHOWCASING HOW NIAGARA MANUFACTURERS ARE MOVING FORWARD.



### COVID RESILIENCE

Niagara's industrial sector adapts and learns to overcome the challenge of a global pandemic.



### LABOUR MARKET

A spotlight on Niagara's workforce and labour market.



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### MILESTONES

NIA members celebrating milestone anniversaries.





# Niagara's industrial sector showing resilience through a pandemic

Written by Blake Landry,  
Manager, Economic Research & Analysis,  
Niagara Economic Development



**T**here's no question COVID-19 has brought unprecedented disruption to business worldwide in 2020.

Niagara's economy has also been hit relatively hard, given the region's strength in tourism and dependence on binational tourism, trade and commerce.

Due to the pandemic, up to 30,000 people became unemployed and businesses lost an estimated \$7.8 billion in revenue. To put this into perspective, Niagara's labour force is approximately 220,000, producing a GDP of \$18 billion. The resulting impact of COVID-19 on this economic engine is far worse than the recession of 2008-2009.

Fortunately, Niagara's goods-producing sectors were affected less drastically than the services-producing sectors.

When observing data from employment, the goods-producing sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, natural resources, and construction) shed 9,800 jobs from January to May 2020, but rebounded to pre-COVID-19 levels by August. Manufacturing, alone took out 7,000 jobs from January to May, but mostly rebounded by August. The services-producing sector lost 25,400 jobs during this time, and was still down 17,400 jobs by August.

As for investment, industrial building construction stayed mostly consistent through the pandemic. Although 2020 has not been as strong as previous years, this is due to other reasons.

Aside from April — when new building permits were halted and some companies suspended operations temporarily — investment levels rebounded to pre-COVID levels by May and continued to uptick through to July (as of magazine publication).

Total investment in industrial building construction from January to July was \$42 million, compared to \$81 million in 2019, \$92 million in 2018, and \$56 million in 2017. Analysis again shows these lower levels of investment are not due to COVID, but rather 2017-2019 was unprecedented in total industrial investment in Niagara, and 2020 remains historically strong that way.

Although the pandemic hasn't drastically affected industrial jobs and investment in Niagara, there remain major challenges for businesses, with more on the horizon.

COVID-19 caused a significant disruption to global-supply chains, relied on by Niagara manufacturers. In a typical year, Niagara manufacturers import about \$1.3 billion in goods and export about \$4.2 billion. COVID obviously disrupted that trade activity. Businesses must now secure their supply chains by increasing domestic sourcing, where it is feasible.

Markets have also been negatively affected by COVID. When new equipment orders are disrupted, and customers question their capital spending capacity, businesses must seek out other revenue opportunities, such as scaling aftermarket services – including the sale and delivery of maintenance, spare parts, and other value-added services.

Many businesses remain vulnerable, given their industrial workforce is employed in on-site jobs. Businesses might be advised to proactively invest in personal protection equipment, and make use of technology allowing the distancing of workers, through use of tools like collaborative robotics, autonomous materials movement, and the industrial internet of things.

These challenging times have also presented market opportunities. Alongside aftermarket industrial services, there will be a boosted demand for products in pharmaceuticals, medical supply, PPE, sanitation, and other areas.

As such, continuing entrepreneurial innovations will help industrial business continue to rebound in a pandemic era where all businesses have to be alert and operationally flexible to stay strong. ■



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# Handling Covid's workplace turbulence

Written by Don Fraser

It has been the most trying of times for industrial managers, juggling a kaleidoscope of staffing issues through COVID-19. Take heart, you will get through it.

Deanna Villella of Job Gym/John Howard Society of Niagara offers strategic advice and pointers to help navigate these complexities in a new employment era.

It's not easy — complex red-tape is already wrapped around many legislative changes affecting employment and company needs, said the senior manager. Those include accommodation, physical and mental health issues and a decrease in production and demand. Or, you might have to respond to a sudden surge in orders, while complying with the new rules.

"Employers also have had to lay off, and then create new positions like health screeners all at the same time," Villella said. "The constant communication from different levels of government, in navigating complexities of workplace requirements, has become this new reality."

It can be very frustrating. While a manufacturer may have ramped-up orders, social-distancing rules may not allow for as many workers as before, plus there are new PPE (personal protective equipment) requirements. At issue, may be the affordability of those added measures.

In this area, you're not totally on your own, she said. Various grants and incentives for some COVID-related workplace changes are available, but navigating the process to get there, while maintaining your business, can stretch administrative capacity.

Meanwhile, industrial employers must also convey a message they're doing what they can, to make their workplace safe, especially during COVID.

"Many new candidates and potential candidates for jobs ask about workplace safety more regularly now," Villella said. "They want job sites to take those responsibilities seriously, with measures in place, to protect staff." Other employees, previously furloughed, are returning to workplaces. They can be anxious about potential future outbreaks.

Villella suggests employers lean on — and fully support — a Joint Health and Safety Committee — or the person(s)



Many are seeking support with virtual interviewing, we see that continuing."

Deanna Villella  
Job Gym





responsible in this area. When crafting, or updating a Return to Work site plan, communicate and document those actions, by explaining to staff the reasons, and legislation that make the changes necessary.

If your staff is comfortable mandated regulations and common-sense in a COVID-era are being applied, it builds renewed confidence in the health and safety of that workplace. That diligence creates goodwill, while ensuring your team stays as healthy as you have the power to make it.

Remote staff training has also taken hold since COVID, she notes.

“Many employers are either uploading training online, or contracting with third-party companies to offer specific online training,” said Villella. Firms and organizations have also increasingly made use of this remote option for staff working from home, or who need updated training and retraining for certifications.

The virtual world of recruiting in this pandemic era has also reinforced new approaches to getting the right person for the job. “Employers who continue to hire had to use virtual job fair approaches. Many are seeking support with virtual interviewing,” she said. “We see that continuing.”



*Strong plant COVID protocols boost employee confidence and help keep team members safe and healthy*

Taking steady, smart action when facing this blizzard of legislative change — and using targeted grants if you are eligible — can help ease the stress manufacturers are facing in this tough COVID-19 workplace transition. ■



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# INTEGRATED GAS RECOVERY SERVICES

## WALKER INDUSTRIES' LANDFILL TO FUEL GM ST. CATHARINES

An innovative renewable energy project is being completed at the General Motors (GM) St. Catharines Propulsion Plant that will significantly reduce greenhouse gases, lower future energy and carbon costs, and enhance the competitiveness of an iconic plant that manufactures and supplies engines and transmissions for GM assembly lines across North America.

Integrated Gas Recovery Services, a partnership between **Walker Industries** and **Comcor Environmental**, teamed with **GM Canada** to prove that smart solutions can be found to reduce costs, cut emissions and enhance competitiveness all at the same time.

In 2017, GM examined its largest sources of onsite greenhouse gas emissions at the St. Catharines plant. It was determined that by designing a cogeneration facility fueled by renewable landfill gas, two significant things could be accomplished at the same time: lower future energy costs, including electricity, and strongly reduce net local greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 70 per cent.

With support from key partners such as the Ontario Centres of Excellence and Alectra Utilities, the project began with GM Canada's purchase and installation of four 1.6MW engines.



*Renewable landfill gas will power 35% of GM's electrical demand at its St. Catharines Propulsion Plant, while cogenerating significant heat for the facility.*



# The use of landfill gas is a double win for the environment.



These engines will provide 6.4MW of electrical power to the plant, which represents approximately 35 per cent of the electrical demand at the site. In addition, waste heat produced by these engines will be captured and used by the existing plant equipment to provide heat throughout the plant. The combination of electricity and heat generation is what makes this a cogeneration project.

A typical cogeneration plant uses natural gas to run engines. However, because of the proximity of the GM plant to the industrial landfill site owned and operated by Walker Industries, a unique alternative approach was decided upon. Rather than using natural gas for the new engines, they could instead be adapted to run on the renewable landfill gas generated by the landfill and delivered to the plant through a dedicated pipeline. The use of landfill gas is a double win for the environment; instead of being flared to the environment, the landfill gas is collected and repurposed as a fuel to the new engines. As a result, GM can reduce the consumption of natural gas to heat the facility, thereby reducing its total greenhouse gas emissions. To make this concept a reality, a landfill gas pipeline stretching 3.5 kilometres long was constructed to connect the two sites, including a section that was bored under an old alignment of the Welland Canal.

Renewable landfill gas is now being received at the GM St. Catharines Propulsion Plant from Walker Industries as the engines are being commissioned. Commissioning is expected to be complete by October 31, 2020 and the cogeneration system will be fully operational on November 1, consuming approximately 475,000 GJ per year – enough to power approximately 8,000 homes – and helping to bring GM's vision of a future with zero emissions that much closer to reality.

## Integrated Gas Recovery Services is an innovative partnership between Walker Industries and Comcor Environmental.







# RESILIENCE

**noun • the ability to recover readily from adversity**

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From the building of the Welland Canal that ushered St. Catharines into the industrial age, we've been innovators, industry leaders and a beacon of light during challenging times such as these. Through adversity, we enrich. Through changing times, we are resilient.

When the world stopped, we did what we've always done: we came together (while staying apart) and adapted to find our way forward. It's during times like these where we lead change.

As we look to the future, the resilience and innovations from our past inspire us. St. Catharines has had an essential resilience dating back to its incorporation in 1876. Together, we will continue this tradition of adaptation, innovation and perseverance for the next 144 years.

Sincerely,

Brian York  
Director of Economic Development  
and Government Relations  
City of St. Catharines



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# Niagara industrialists dig deep for COVID-19 hospital equipment

Written by Don Fraser



*A ventilator costs around \$66,000. NIA members united and far exceeded their goal, generously donating \$115,000 to support local health care professionals and patients.*

Last spring, a major fundraising effort led by Joe DeMan, co-founder of the Niagara Industrial Association, delivered an outpouring of generosity for Niagara Health, with \$115,000 raised by NIA members.

Money for the Niagara Health Foundation (NHF) of Niagara Health went to a ventilator and other needed hospital equipment to help impact patients' lives and caregivers' ability to deliver top care and improved outcomes through COVID-19.

DeMan said the NIA fundraiser quickly gathered steam, following its April launch.

"By just 3 p.m. that first Friday, we already had nearly \$30,000 of contributions," said DeMan, founding member and past vice chair of the NIA and president of DeMan Global Corp.

"I believe this speaks volumes to the integrity of the manufacturing community we've created here in Niagara," said DeMan, also a member of the NHF board. "These leaders demonstrated how kindness, generosity and leadership come through in hard times. I couldn't be more proud."

DeMan praised the Grape Growers of Ontario for the spark they generated earlier this year: "Their donation of a ventilator inspired us to do the same, and I hope others can make their own contributions.

Wendy Smith, the NIA's operations manager, was also a tireless support for us through this fundraiser, he said: "We cannot thank her enough." Don Cyr, president of the NIA, said the Association clearly bonded with DeMan's initiative.

"The majority of NIA's members — small-and-medium sized manufacturers and associated service providers — are essential to the maintenance of the critical supply chains in our economy," Cyr said.

"They are particularly sensitive to the needs of people in the Niagara health care system."

Andrea Scott, Interim President and CEO of Niagara Health Foundation, adds: "We are so grateful for the support we have received from the members of Niagara Industrial Association. "During these unusual times, the Foundation continues to carry out its work supporting our medical teams and our hospitals. This vital life-saving ventilator and equipment will be used on our frontlines to respond to COVID-19."

## NIA companies that donated include:

*\*Absolute Change Management, \*Barbican Architectural Products Ltd., \*Book Depot, \*CEM Engineering, \*Corporate Facility, \*Garden City Machining, \*Genaire Limited, \*Handling Specialty Manufacturing Limited, \*International Sew Right, \*Airwood Vents, \*Barber Hymac Hydro Inc., \*DeMan Global Corp., \*Dilts Piston Hydraulics, \*Employment Professionals Canada, \*Fastek Inc., \*FBT Inc., \*Jungbunzlauer, \*Kaupp Electric, \*Mancuso Chemicals Limited, \*Niagara Industrial Association, \*Niagara Precision Limited, \*Niagara Water Jet, \*Seaway Fluid Power, \*The Burke Group, \*Tradewood Windows & Doors, \*Valbruna ASW Steel Inc. and \*Washington Mills. ■*



# Entering a new Horizon in plant, employee investment

Written by Don Fraser

Sometimes opportunity knocks at the toughest times. For Spencer Sheldon at Horizon Precision Inc., a welcome rebound in orders, despite COVID-19's impact, has pushed investment into new plant space, technology and workers.

"We're actually hiring more and doubling our plant space, due to demand — even now," said Sheldon. "It's a time for building up."

Horizon is a full-service machine shop in Fort Erie that completes projects from prototype to production. Areas of specialty include CNC milling, turning, and production and contract machining.

It's been a steady track for Sheldon, who started his career at an aerospace machine shop. He continued his career at a machine shop focusing on heavy industries, such as steel production, and oil and gas.

He bought the Horizon Precision company in 2017, pumped by its potential. "I always wanted to own a machine shop of my own, because I knew it would be interesting to work for myself," he said. "It's inspiring to see what we can build together as a team."

In that inaugural year, it was a one-person shop working in a 3,000 square foot building. Sheldon worked tirelessly to establish a solid customer base. It worked. Soon, it became clear he had to add to employees: "I hired three more

into the team since 2018, and expect to hire further in coming months, as we grow."

Using technology to drive efficiencies is also making this expanding team more productive and versatile.

The firm has invested in work-holding technology to drastically reduce set-up time, reducing costs to customers. "This equipment will allow us to add automation to our CNC machines in the future so we can run it unattended, with lights out," Sheldon explained.

The owner has begun replacing his shop's manual multi-spindle screw machines with CNC Swiss-Type machines, to boost job capabilities. Swiss lathes can nimbly perform different

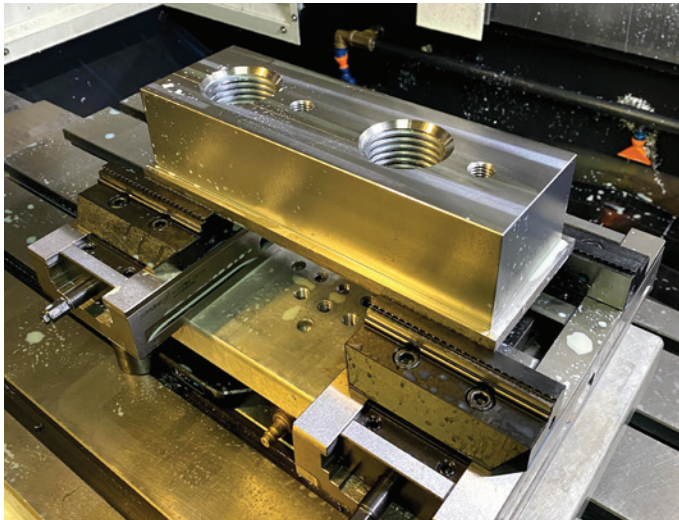


**We're actually hiring more and doubling our plant space, due to demand — even now."**

**Spencer Sheldon**  
Horizon Precision Inc.







CNC Machined Mounting Block

machining operations, allowing for a complicated part to be machined in a single set-up.

The result is even though COVID, the company has gained several new customers by upgrading outdated equipment.

"In the early months of COVID, we had to temporarily lay off, but we've since returned them to work," said Sheldon. "Through all this, we successfully served our diverse customer base,

which meant demand did not suffer as it could have. Our COVID strategy is to double down on strategic planning."

Sheldon also bolstered marketing and advertising, to increase awareness and gain market share, with that success leading to a decision to get bigger. Now a larger space is needed to accommodate the company's capacity and add machining centres.

All the while, keeping a focus on a thriving workforce is essential, Sheldon said: "We want to give them the proper tooling to do these jobs. And we have a benefit package for them that helps a lot."

Worker satisfaction comes in other ways: "There is freedom for everyone to contribute to the manufacturing process. Rather than just push out jobs, we want our people involved, even from the beginning quoting stage.

"It's a team effort in this job shop," he said. "And this new larger place will be a better working environment for our team, with the benefit of a larger manufacturing space where we can add machines we need.

"We're kind of crammed in here, right now. We need to ramp it up." ■



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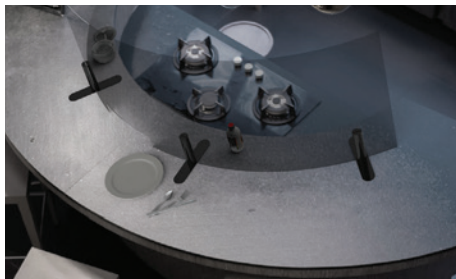
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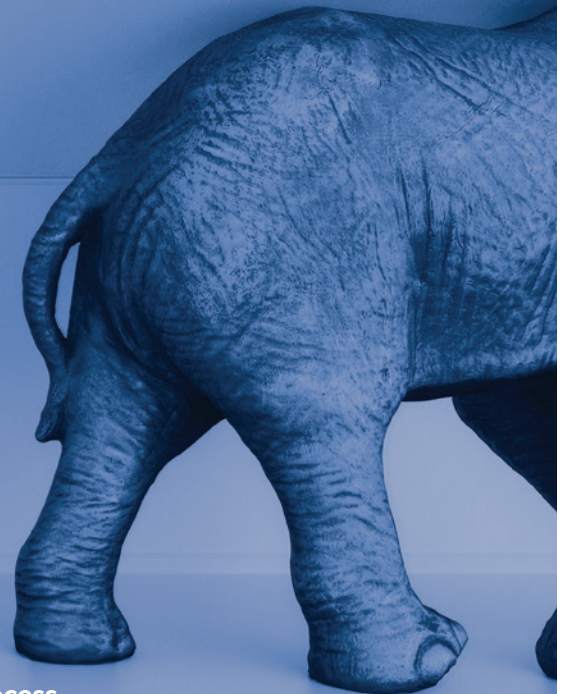
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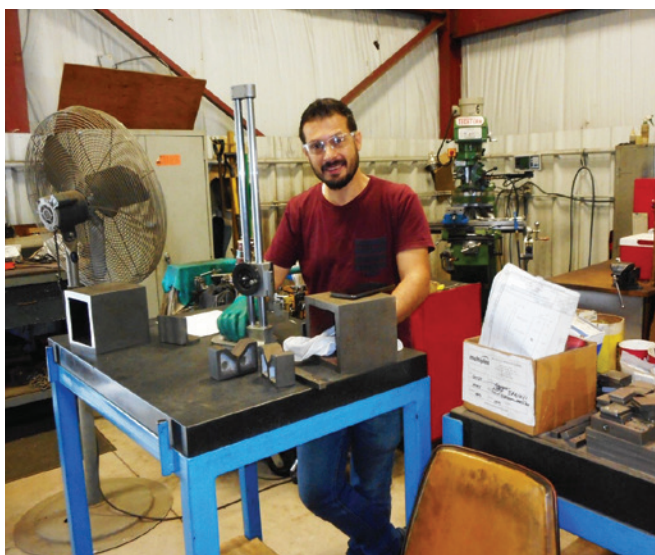
# Bringing international industrial talent to Niagara

Written by Don Fraser

When Davert Tools was tackling the skilled trades shortage, it considered qualified, overlooked workers overseas. A resulting match welded valuable new talent onto their shop floor team. It also changed a refugee family's life.

Davert Tools of Niagara Falls designs, prototypes and builds specialized tools, fixtures and jigs for the automotive industry in North America. Three employees were retiring there, and owner Bob Collier needed an extra hand, with experience.

"I was in the same position as many employers here, with many retirees on deck. We are well aware of the shortage of experienced people in skilled trades," said Collier. "So I needed to find a solution."



Lebanon native Anas Nabulsy brings his industrial expertise to Niagara Falls-based Davert Tools.

**We are well aware of the shortage of experienced people in skilled trades, so I needed to find a solution."**

Bob Collier  
Davert Tools

As he considered his options, Collier was aware of an organization called Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), a non-profit organization that connects skilled refugees abroad with Canadian employers.

"The process with TBB was relatively straightforward," he said. "They assembled a great number of candidate resumes, relevant to what I needed in the plant."

Last year, Collier flew to Beirut, Lebanon to meet and interview several refugees pre-selected by TBB for that tool-and-die position with Davert. Remote interviewing through Skype or other platforms was available, but Collier wanted to interview candidates face to face.

After a few meetings, Anas Nabulsy impressed Collier, and he became the choice. Nabulsy and his family had already



decided to leave a deteriorating situation in Lebanon and looked to Canada as a place to make a new world. It was a transformative and thrilling time for the couple, as the opportunity arose. Once the job offer was accepted, Davert and TBB supported Nabulsy's application to apply as a skilled worker to Canada.

After seven months administration in this case — required by program details and government rules— Anas, his wife and newborn son came to Canada in August 2019, and they settled in Niagara. Both company and Anas have since thrived in this newfound arrangement.

Nabulsy, a mechanical engineer with machine-shop skills, is the right fit for their 20-person team, said Collier: "We started him in the tool room, and he literally stepped in with little training within an hour. At Davert, we have since moved him to engineering, to learn more about our products, and he immediately became part of the team."

The company owner notes international recruitment for new employees like Nabulsy can mean rolling up your sleeves, but it's worthwhile — beyond just the humanitarian side. These hires can do the job, are ready to work and want to be there, Collier said. "They really are great people."

"That skilled worker arrives with their family, while putting down roots in a new community, so motivation and retention is also high," he said. "Professionals like Anas, for whom a job opportunity in Canada is a lifeline out of refugee circumstances, are grateful to be able to work and rebuild. It's a longer-term strategy, but a smart investment."

For Anas Nabulsy, the transition has been a welcome life-changer, in a new COVID-working world we're all adapting to. Like many industrial buildings, Davert has a plant floor where doors must be left open, and social-distancing rules are in order for employees. The door has also metaphorically opened in meaningful ways now, for this new Canadian.

"This field of work was not entirely new for me," Nabulsy said. "I worked in many industrial areas before, but working with auto makers is different, and it's really exciting."

His career at Davert is a learning experience that gives him a feeling of accomplishment amid the security of a new home.

"I get to solve many challenges, and that's what makes me feel proud. I like what I am doing right now." ■

# Finding Talent Beyond Boundaries

Niagara industrial employers facing skills shortages, can consider hiring new employees through organizations like Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB).

TBB works closely with supportive federal and provincial governments to help meet those needs, with assistance from a new program: In June 2020, Canada rolled out the world's largest skilled refugee pilot of its kind, aiming to support 500 refugee principal applicants and their families, to immigrate into in-demand jobs over the next two years. Those hired by Niagara employers are supported under this pilot.

For TBB, engineers are the top occupation group, but there are industrial candidates in other skilled trades.

To start, TBB Canada Director Dana Wagner advises contacting the TBB, to arrange a call (see below for contact).

"We need to first understand the job requirements and to explain the recruitment and relocation process," said Wagner. Once an employer decides to recruit with TBB, the organization uses a job description to do a talent search in their database of over 20,000 candidates — all talented refugees living in Jordan or Lebanon.

The TBB refers resumes/CV's of qualified candidates and facilitates remote interviewing and visa applications to Canada for successful candidates. It also helps coordinate their relocation, and monitors Canadian settlement details.

"The process is very similar to typical international recruitment. The difference is that our candidates have been refugees," Wagner explained.

"They have a drive to put their qualified skills to use in a good place like Niagara, where they can contribute to their new community, put down roots and start a secure future for themselves and their families." ■

For a direct contact, and for more information:

**Dana Wagner,**  
*Canada Director, Talent Beyond Boundaries,*  
*Toronto, Canada*

**e. [dwagner@talentbeyondboundaries.org](mailto:dwagner@talentbeyondboundaries.org)**  
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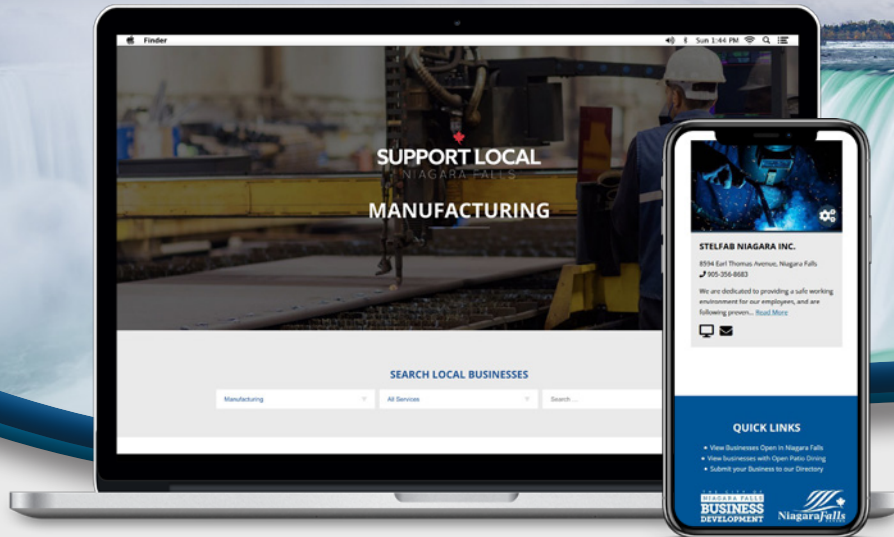
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# Looking to the future in skilled trades recruitment

Written by Don Fraser

**C**reatively attracting new skilled workers has been an ongoing priority for Niagara's industry, says Vivian Kinnaird, CEO of the Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB).

This urgency is not going away, and the time is now to look for an infusion of talent, in anticipation of retiring workforces faced by many local industries.

Responses from a 2020 NWPB Skilled Trades research project give a useful snapshot on exactly what employers in our sector are facing now, and how technology is changing the way people work.

Niagara employers in manufacturing and motive power commented positively on successful technological change, Kinnaird said. Of note, are opportunities resulting in new efficiencies and making jobs more productive, with advanced capabilities.

"There's also a positive view about how technology will change the work of the labour force, rather than simply the demand for labour," she added.

Always looming is the expectation of upcoming retirements and potential difficulties in filling vacancies as they arise, Kinnaird said: "Here, a specific need is to be able to share knowledge and experience from the retiring workforce, to a younger and new generation of workers.

We are in a flexible labour market here, with COVID not changing much in previous fundamentals. Wherever people live, the skilled trades workforce pool moves as needed to find work in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area, she

adds. People in skilled trades, who also live in Niagara, may opt to travel to employment in Hamilton/Burlington that better suits them. It can also work in the other direction, although to a far less extent.

"We're seeing that the number of working-people living in Niagara is generally larger than those who are actually working here, which is the same for all communities of our size" Kinnaird said. "COVID-19 is just kind of accelerating the issues that are already there."



Vivian Kinnaird

With that in mind, Niagara-based companies looking to hire skilled employees could be in competition for skilled labour, both locally and within the GTHA, so a focus on employee attraction and retention is paramount.

They may need to consider competitive compensation packages, and beyond, in considering how they recruit and retain new workers.

And hiring may be in the forecast. Manufacturers in the region have also weathered rough seas pretty well in 2020.

"In the workforce, we're generally seeing a bounce-back from March/April 2020," Kinnaird said.

"It's been actually fairly good in the manufacturing sector. There's been a lot of employment gains, and employment that stayed the course through this." ■

## Other Highlights from the Niagara Workforce Planning Board

Job counts and job projections in key sectors involved in the Skilled Trades research project:  
[bit.ly/34Ywops](https://bit.ly/34Ywops)

More about NWPB's Immigrant Mentorship Program and a profile of success story Muhammad Anees — now employed as a Project Manager at Hamill Machine. [bit.ly/33ZucUI](https://bit.ly/33ZucUI)



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# WHY THE NIAGARA INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION?

## BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

The Niagara Industrial Association (NIA) offers many unique benefits and opportunities to both manufacturing and service-oriented member companies. The following highlights some of the benefits the NIA has offered to-date.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

NIA has participated with Niagara economic development offices in an effort to investigate supply chain opportunities for NIA members:

- Partnered with Magnet Export Business Portal to provide export resources to NIA members
- Developed a Celebration of Industry Showcase to profile NIA members and demonstrate the strong capabilities and capacities available
- Produced an annual magazine, *Engaged in Industry*, to profile NIA members and the industrial sector in Niagara Region to broader audiences
- Represented and advocated for the interests of Niagara's industrial sector to the federal government, including for its Interim Report on Establishing a Canadian Transportation and Logistics Strategy





## ADVOCACY

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- Led efforts to reverse the decision to end industrial waste pickup in Niagara Region
- Led efforts to reduce industrial development charges in Niagara Region to zero
- Niagara Foreign Trade Zone designation support to bring funding and other resources to market Niagara as an international trade hub
- Supported Niagara Gateway Economic Zone and Centre industrial development incentive program creation
- Supported various efforts to reduce industrial electricity rates for industrial users in Niagara
- Supported efforts to securing multi-millions in public funding to support various manufacturing initiatives and capacity building in Niagara such as the provincial investment to build the Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre at Niagara College, the federal investment to designate Niagara College a manufacturing Technology Access Centre, and federal funding to bring a productivity improvement program, Go Productivity, to Niagara manufacturers
- Participated in many targeted trade missions and business development opportunities in targeted industries and geographies
- Led efforts to work with local school boards and post-secondary institutions to ensure that students are informed in manufacturing career information and cooperative education opportunities

## RESOURCES

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- Access to information and contacts related to manufacturing-specific business funding programs
- Access to NIA membership contacts and other manufacturing information
- Information and seminars on manufacturing best practices from fellow NIA members as well as subject matter experts
- Information on emerging legislation to prepare members for regulatory changes
- Access to supply chain opportunities presented to the NIA from members and opportunities outside of Niagara

## NETWORKING/ MARKETING

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- Regular opportunities to network with fellow manufacturing companies, government and political representatives, and service providers at bi-monthly Membership Meetings, NIA Annual Golf Tournament, NIA Summer Social, Manufacturers' Breakfast, etc.
- Business profile on NIA online membership directory that heightens online presence as well as other business advertising opportunities
- Bi-monthly NIA member manufacturing plant tours to share information on company capabilities and best practices



*Custom turning application by skilled CNC machinist with over 28 years of experience.*

# Iafrate Machine pivoting with confidence in a new world

*Written by Don Fraser*

**I**n a successful machine shop, a skilled workforce digs deep to ensure tough orders are finished on time and with top-shelf quality.

Over four decades, Iafrate Machine Works Ltd. has been moulded this way by long-time tradespeople who've made it happen.

Iafrate (IMW) has always been a Canadian company, family owned and operated, that provides a full range of custom CNC machining, engineering and fabrication to the North American market.

As industrialists like IMW emerge from a pandemic, its team is preparing for a new generation to learn from this experience, while the sector rebounds.

The firm understands these constant imperatives: from exceeding expectations in jobs, to welcoming workers in a new manufacturing reality.

Here, IMW has developed into a business with diverse and impressive specialties, including CNC turning and milling, grinding, induction bending, plus other methods for high-end, and sometimes complex, machine parts and forgings.

It has finished-off key pieces for the oil-and-gas industry, while completing intensive orders for the automotive, aerospace, chemical and defence/military sectors.

Company owner Al Iafrate recalled those early years as a Thorold upstart, and a family business launched by Al's father Costantino. Al, with a business education background, joined the firm in 1981, when the original facility was about 8,000 square feet.

Costantino Iafrate passed away on July 15, 2020. As a founder of IMW, he provided the roots to build the company into what it is today. A hard-working man, he passed on his dedicated work ethic and perseverance to his children and grandchildren.

In the company's early years, Costantino's son Al gradually reoriented the firm to production machining, in addition to die-and-tool work. Al recounted: "You can train unskilled good people to run a CNC machine over time and run production, which reduces the need for hard to get tradespeople."



By the early 1990s, automotive became IMW's bread-and-butter, with the shop producing millions of ball-joints for the former TRW Automotive company. At one time, the company was machining and assembling front upper-control arms for every GM truck and SUV made in North America.

As we've all learned with COVID-19, dramatic business changes happen out of the blue.

By 2008-09, IMW's automotive work was roughly 90% of the bottom line. Suddenly, "the world collapsed with the Great Recession," recalls Al. That disruption was immense, with their crew tumbling to 15 from 100. After that hit, the company pulled up its bootstraps and found new work.

In years since, alternative-energy orders and larger customers in the oil-and-gas sector has filled in business gaps, along with other jobs.

When the cyclical oil and gas sector was booming, the firm shipped weekly truckloads of components to Alberta, for their customer base to assemble, test and distribute throughout North America.

Along the way, IMW has worked with other Niagara machine shops to finish side projects. "We can do all this, because we have capacity here," said general manager Chris Iafrate, of a firm that now has more than 50 CNC machines in a complex spread out over 70,000 square-feet, and two buildings.

Included in IMW's production systems are two robotic installations, which load and unload tooled-CNC lathes, said Chris. IMW also has a safety-stock program for many customers, where if a part is needed immediately, it has already pre-made and stored it for them.



*Certified quality management systems and checks are top priority at Iafrate Machine Works.*

Given these sometimes large manufactured pieces, it's no surprise this is a metal-consuming enterprise. At any time, the company might store between 500,000 - 750,000 pounds of steel. This raw materials backup also allows flexibility to turn around fast, custom jobs.

Through it all, IMW has depended on stalwart team who've put in their years.

Among those is plant manager Walt Altoft, hired by Costantino as a 19-year-old general labourer. Walt smiles when asked about his longevity with the company: "There have been lots of changes over the years. I've been here for 41 years, so that should tell you something."



**A skilled  
manufacturing  
career is  
a great  
opportunity  
that provides  
a comfortable,  
stable living."**

**Al Iafrate**  
**Iafrate Machine Works**

Al views this collective knowledge as a real asset. IMW now has about 40-50 employees with between 25-to-40 years service, each: "You talk about employee retention, well we've got it," said company office manager Daniella Stukel.

IMW business development manager Alyshia Iafrate also notes a changing labour market in this regenerating economic landscape, with most manufacturing plants preparing for a demographic shift-change.

"We have very low employee turnover which is great, but an issue is a mature workforce," she said, voicing concerns of manufacturers in Niagara now facing a surge of potential retirements, and are worried about getting qualified shop people they need.

With that, Al also expressed dismay over persistent attitudes about industrial employment. In recent decades, manufacturing trade has been given short shrift, over other job and career paths. It's to their loss, he says.

In Al's early working years, a skilled person in a plant could count on a comfortable, stable living, and that hasn't changed. "These are great opportunities, including maybe extra overtime income. You can buy a house, own a car. The manufacturers are emphasizing this fact now," he said. "We must get the young people back to us."

Through these sector-wide, people-power challenges, IMW remains humming. Al says the firm has grown almost every year, aside from the Great Recession. In the meantime, it's gearing up to get solidly back on the ground and running, in a challenging COVID environment.

The Iafrate's say a company focus has become larger clients that are serviced impeccably, as part of its continual

work ethic. The plant workflow to accomplish this is also streamlined:

"A competitive edge for us is having one person running a number of machines," Chris said. "We schedule jobs to do it as efficiently as possible, and as best as we can for our people doing it."

Alyshia reflects fondly of a family-oriented business that has become a star in Niagara's manufacturing scene. "We're able to do a lot," she said. "Everyone here is proud of what we've accomplished and what we can do."

Indeed, much has happened through 2020.

In a later conversation, Alyshia touches on that new reality: "These are tough times for everyone. And no one is giving up."

"Things change for companies and people, and sometimes it happens quickly. Still, we all have to carry on, and continue prosperity for IMW and Niagara's industry as a whole," she said. "Everyone is rolling up their sleeves, and they are getting back on that horse."

"There's no doubt we have to all work together to make this happen."■

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## DIVISIONS OF THE NIAGARA SHOP FLOOR

# Niagara's Shop Floor

Written by Don Fraser

Niagara, Canada has a long storied history manufacturing. Nikola Tesla helped electrify Niagara Falls in 1895, which brought electricity needed to power to one of the earliest industrialized regions in North America. Niagara evolved into a powerhouse in manufacturing, especially metal, machinery and plastics.

Today, if the metal, machinery and plastic manufacturing industries in Niagara were the floor of a single massive factory it would be more than 13.8 million square feet of shop space. On this massive shop floor, more than 9,000 workers cover a broad range of services, from metal fabrication to machinery manufacturing to plastics and rubber product manufacturing.

You can find the services and products you need all in one place, on Niagara's industrial shop floor.

### FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS

Niagara's fabricated metal products sector features nearly four million square feet of factory space, on which 2,118 people work at 106 businesses. Every year, Niagara exports \$725 million worth of nickel and nickel products, \$47 million of iron and steel products and \$43 million of copper products, among a wide range of other goods.



Niagara offers the collective expertise of many of the region's 1,400 millwrights, more than 375 metalworking and forging machine operators and more than 200 sheet metal workers. The region's industrial workforce includes more than 750 workers producing architectural and structural metals, nearly 600 working in machine shops that make products such as turned products and screws, and nearly 300 producing boilers, tanks and shipping containers, as well as more than 300 metal fabrication labourers.

Shops in this sector also have expertise manufacturing many other products, including cutlery, forging and stamping, spring and wire, coating, engraving, cold and heat-treating and other fabricated metals.

### TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT

Niagara is a historic centre for the transportation equipment industry. The region's transportation equipment



## SHOP FLOOR BY THE NUMBERS

As of 2019, Niagara's metal and plastic-based industries were composed of:



**13.9**

MILLION  
square feet of  
shop space



**273**

BUSINESSES



**9,100**

TOTAL JOBS



**\$3.4**

BILLION  
IN EXPORTS



**73%**

of Niagara's total  
MANUFACTURING  
EXPORTS



industry covers nearly four million square feet of floor space, with 2,381 employees – the largest of any part of the manufacturing sector. About 28 companies operate in this sector.

Niagara exports roughly \$256 million worth of vehicles in the railway and rolling stock categories, as well as \$30 million in aircraft, spacecraft and associated parts. Niagara also exports components such as engines and boilers that may be associated with vehicle production. Companies in this sector produce motor vehicles, vehicle bodies and trailers, aerospace products, rolling stock, ships, boats, parts and other equipment. In fact, every year, Niagara produces 10 million Tier 1 auto parts.

The Niagara workforce features the expertise of more than 1,000 motor vehicle assemblers, inspectors and testers. The Niagara area also employs 69 aerospace engineers and 74 aircraft assemblers and inspectors, as well as more than 1,000 other workers throughout the supply chain.

### PRIMARY METAL

Niagara has a long history in the primary metals sector. With hundreds of millwrights working in Niagara, the region features 1.4 million square feet of factory floor space in this industry, dedicated to iron and steel mills, ferro-alloys, steel product manufacturing, non-ferrous metals and foundries.



Niagara exports roughly \$102 million of iron and steel products along with millions of dollars worth of copper, aluminum, nickel and zinc.

Across a dozen businesses in the primary metal sector, Niagara's workforce is more than 1,000 strong. This workforce includes 131 ironworkers, more than 300 labourers and 46 foundry workers.

### MACHINERY MANUFACTURING

Niagara machinery manufacturers provide a broad range of services to an array of industries. The 58 business and 1,644 workers in this sector serve the agricultural, construction, mining, industrial machining, commercial, service, ventilation, heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, metalworking, engine, turbine, power transmission and general-purpose sectors. In fact, the metalworking machinery sector alone features 13 companies.



About 2.8 million square feet of shop space in Niagara is dedicated to machinery manufacturing. Working on that shop floor, you can find many of Niagara's 1,100 welders, 810 manufacturing managers, 310 mechanical engineers and 269 machine tool operators.

Machinery is Niagara's leading industrial export at about \$1.8 billion in machinery, boilers, mechanical appliances, engines and parts – more than half of total manufacturing exports.

### NON-METALLIC MINERAL PRODUCTS

Niagara's non-metallic minerals sector is driven by the expertise of approximately 640 skilled workers. With over a million square feet of factory floor space and a selection of non-metallic products to serve many industries, Niagara is a strong player in this field.



Niagara's 23 businesses in the non-metallic mineral sector produce numerous products. Nearly 400 workers in Niagara produce cement and concrete products. Hundreds more produce clay products, refractory products, glass and glass products, lime, gypsum and other non-metallic minerals.

The Niagara work force includes 102 concrete, clay and stone forming operators, 60 glass-forming and finishing machine operators and many others working in fields such as mineral processing and control and process operations.

### PLASTIC AND RUBBER PRODUCTS

Plastic products are a major export industry in Niagara. The region exports about \$300 million worth of these products every year, along with \$18 million in rubber products.



With 717 workers and 20 businesses in this field, Niagara's shop floor features nearly 423,000 square feet of floor space dedicated to the plastic and rubber sector. Businesses looking for expertise in Niagara can count on the services of 121 plastic products assemblers, finishers and inspectors, 113 plastic and rubber product manufacturing supervisors and a number of other professionals in this sector.

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At the Niagara Industrial Association, our members have worked together to create a collaborative, comprehensive shop floor of products and services that can compete with any region. ■

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## ABOUT HORIZON PRECISION

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## HORIZON PRECISION'S CAPABILITIES

Horizon Precision Machining's core competency is a team of highly skilled and certified precision machinists. We will help you take your project from prototype to production and we'd be pleased to have our CNC Machining Centre serve you in any or all stages of that process. Our in-house machining capabilities include:

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## HORIZON PRECISION'S APPROACH TO SERVICE

Horizon Precision ensures we understand your project needs holistically. We emphasize consistent and clear communication – our customers have visibility into the project status every step of the way. We embrace technology to drive efficiencies. This allows us to offer competitive pricing to our customers without sacrificing our own stability.

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The Niagara-Hamilton region is an essential trade gateway that is well positioned to take advantage of Ontario's maritime opportunity. The Niagara-Hamilton trade corridor is strategically located within a day's drive of major Canadian and U.S. cities, with access to 10,000 km of Great Lakes shoreline that connects the region to any market around the world. Connect with us to grow your business in the Niagara-Hamilton trade corridor.



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# Charting a shop future for teen recruits

Written by Don Fraser

Guiding a prospective worker from teen, to apprentice then employee, is a careful project. It takes meticulous training by senior hands and an appreciation of when the fit is right, says the head of Girotti Machine Ltd.

Girotti is a machine shop in St. Catharines, specializing in finishing and processing orders. Its expertise ranges from repair to the manufacturing of precision parts to large products, engineering and rebuilds. It employs 30, about two-thirds on the shop floor.

Girotti's president Aaron Tisdelle describes a mutual evaluation period when his company first accepts trainees, when they are often eager and wet behind the ears.

"High school CO-OP placements are a wonderful thing," said Tisdelle. "If you can get that young person in our building for decent cross-training, before you hire them, you get a sense of what they can bring to the company."

The process, from then on, resembles many other shops. Incomers are paired with a senior machinist who builds up key skills on essential machines.

At Girotti, though, it's not that clear-cut. Materials used for production are pricey, the parts it makes are often physically large. Starting costs for those orders can range from \$10,000 - \$40,000.

"When a job is in those last stages, the investment can add up to \$50,000 - \$80,000," said Tisdelle. Given that, stakes are high, with mistakes costly during those last cuts. A new trainee has to be on their game before tackling that complexity.

"It's not like handling small machines, where you give a direction such as: 'OK find something in the scrap bin, square up the block, now drill these holes,'" Tisdelle explained. "So, for some larger machine shops the hiring process is a longer road."

After a time, employer and employee decide if the work arrangement is humming. It's a serious commitment. Both sides have to be clear-eyed and honest in assessments, before a job offer is given a handshake. To this, Tisdelle advises their older trainers to be blunt, but longterm in their suitability assessment.

Trainers and owners should appreciate that these are teenaged, not completely-matured people, and likely from another generation. Supervisors should ask: does the student have what it takes, to make it work here?

"If you don't see that development of the young person during those first months — as much as you might not want to do it — you make those hard decisions," said Tisdelle. He also reflects that some young workers he's hired had difficulties out of high school, but underwent a life-change through successful apprenticeships.

"It's amazing, and so great to see. When they succeed, they become something they didn't think they could ever be."

These apprenticeships at Girotti have cooled for the time being, however.



*Nurturing a co-op student towards apprenticeship, and then to full-time employment, requires effort and commitment – but it's a great strategy for building a skilled workforce.*



//

**When they  
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Aaron Tisdelle  
Girotti Machine Ltd.



Tisdelle said a recent factor (as of this magazine interview), is the Ontario provincial government's ending of training funding that he was using, which made it affordable. "I had to wheel it back here; because of the end of that, realities with COVID-19, and extra expenses. I don't have the capacity or funds to have a senior machinist spending time with a junior one."

As a result, as of fall 2020, Tisdelle is temporarily not able to take on new apprentices. "It's really disappointing, it was a big piece of what I was doing."

He is confident this will change, adding: "Anything governments can do, to help us to be competitive using our workforce is critical for the industry. In this international market, we have to produce at the lowest price."

In the meantime, workplaces have transformed over a single year.

Adapting shop floors to COVID regulations has been an ongoing preoccupation, say Tisdelle and other area manufacturers.

They appreciate measures are necessary, but many aren't easy to implement. Protocol details for people coming into a plant, deep cleaning, and employee distancing are expensive, they can hinder plant operations and chew at the bottom line. It's a new workplace world also faced by other manufacturers, offices, food/retail and enclosed public sites.

"It's an obviously extraordinary time for everyone, no one escapes this," said Tisdelle, past president of the Niagara Industrial Association. "As manufacturers and industrialists, we're making it work out as best as we can."

"And as always, we learn to be creative and nimble through uncertain times." ■



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# UNDERSTANDING FILTRATION IN HVAC

In these uncertain times where there is concerns of virus and bacteria being spread through HVAC systems, having a properly designed, installed and maintained filtration or air treatment system is very important. Many believe that a clean and proper air filtration system can help in mitigating the spread and/or transmission of airborne droplets. If droplets are small enough in size and under the right conditions, these droplets can become airborne and remain this way for several hours.

Ventilation and filtration provided by heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems can reduce the airborne concentration of SARS-CoV-2 and thus the risk of transmission through the air. Over the past several years, Bioteknik Environmental has been developing our innovative BioScrub™ Restorative Cleaning Process for HVAC systems.

## The Deepest Clean: A Two Stage Approach

The first stage is a proprietary process that utilizes an all-natural BioScrub™ Probiotic solution that is used to break down the microscopic biofilm (microbiome) that is on the surfaces of the fins in the heating and cooling coils within the HVAC equipment. Breaking down the biofilm helps to significantly improve (restore) the heat transfer capability but also helps to loosen all the contamination that is trapped by the biofilm.

The second stage of the process utilizes a high pressure high temperature supersaturated steam to flush the loosened debris from the coils without causing any damage to the coils.

## BioScrub's Significant Value – Restoring & Deep Cleaning

Numerous detailed measurement and verification (M&V) studies and associated case studies have been undertaken during the development process and these have always clearly demonstrated the significant value that using BioScrub™ brings but, cleanliness of the equipment was rarely of interest or a focus. This is not the case today.

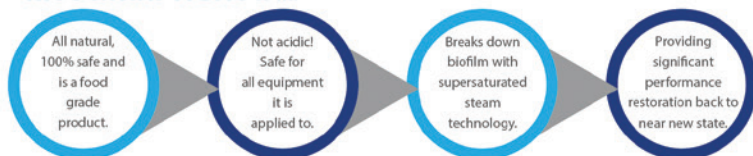
With growing concerns that bacteria and viruses can be transmitted and spread through HVAC systems there is renewed interest in how to prevent this through filtration and air treatment. In this process, an important aspect is the cleanliness of the coils in the equipment. This is a two-fold problem. Firstly, the coils themselves can be a breeding ground for moulds, bacteria and viruses in the naturally occurring biofilm. Secondly, a contaminated coil typically has significantly reduced airflow through the coil and by default there is reduced airflow through the filtration or air treatment system.

## How Clean Are Your Coils & Why It Matters

HVAC filtration or air treatment systems are designed to filter airflow through the equipment. This can be fresh air, recirculated air or a combination of recirculated and fresh air (sometimes called mixed air). If the HVAC coils are fouled with years of contaminants, the airflow is degraded. This means that comfort can be affected, higher energy consumption may be occurring but more likely, the circulation and filtration of the air will fall below what was specified in the design and this can lead to an unhealthy indoor environment.

In conclusion, regular filter changes are important, however what is equally important to note is that not all air passing through is filtered. Maintaining clean and proper air filtration, by deep cleaning the coils will not only help in the overall performance of your HVAC equipment, it will also assist in mitigating possible airborne transmission of viruses and bacteria, ultimately providing a cleaner and healthier indoor environment.

## The Benefits of BioScrub™



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65 YEARS



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50 YEARS



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**MSCI** is an approved provider for the **WSIB Health and Safety Excellence Program** and will help you develop a clear roadmap to improve safety in your workplace, whether you are just starting up or want to improve systems and processes already in place. Benefits include rebates on premiums, expert guidance and, public recognition from the WSIB.

**Jamie Wright, CRSP**, as **Director of Mentor Safety**, has built a well-respected company based on his 30+ years of health and safety experience at **General Motors**.

You will still be dealing with **Carola Mittag, President of Workplace Safety Group**, a well-respected safety company in Niagara since 2004, and you can continue to depend on the same quality of work.

**Jamie Smith, NCSO** is one of our seasoned trainers and senior consultants. He has worked 20 years at **General Motors** and is also currently a **Health and Safety Professor at Niagara College**.

**Dave Jarrett**, a professional firefighter and presently **Captain and Acting Platoon Chief for the City of Niagara Falls Fire Department**, brings years of health and safety, boots-on-the-ground experience to his position of instructor.

**MSCI** feels fortunate to acquire **WSG**. Our shared core values include:

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Our companies have worked together frequently in the past, and we are confident in each other's talents and capabilities. We hold similar values and philosophies on doing business: producing an excellent job for the client, an emphasis on honesty and integrity, and the importance of bringing a positive attitude to our work. Though we will now operate as one company – **Mentor Safety Consultants Inc.** - you can rely on the same personal working relationships that you have had in the past.

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# Bringing new hands onto a shop-floor team

Written by Don Fraser

**W**orkforce regeneration is critical to a manufacturer's long-term success.

At Niagara Precision Limited, an enduring custom-machining shop in St. Catharines, that lifeblood is from nurturing young apprentices.

Niagara Precision is a machine shop focuses on high-end custom machining, CNC work, tooling, prototypes and specific production runs, and has been in business since the 1970s.

For the company, which has nine skilled machinists, a typical hiring protocol is to welcome a promising high-school CO-OP candidate, who has the aptitude, and is mechanically inclined, and then stays with them during further college training.

"They do their apprentices here, they start from scratch," said company president and owner Jane Buunk. "They learn from

everyone in the building, move up the ladder, and just go."

If a CO-OP matched with Niagara Precision is successful during the high school year, that person is hired on. They may be asked to take on shifts when they can after school, and during the summer. The candidate — usually from either the Niagara Catholic District School Board or District School Board of Niagara — will often work for the shop until August, and then be offered an apprenticeship that coincides with studying at Niagara College.

Niagara Precision also has a dedicated trainer for these newbies, said Buunk. Trainees paired with them will cover different shop floor sections in the building. They learn the basics from the ground up, like square-ups and properly using a vice: "As their skills improve, they are moved into the CNC section, then they learn how to program, and work on newer machines and lathes."

"I think we treat our employees well through this training, and after they are hired. They do stay," said Buunk. "I've been here 42 years. My next person has been here for 35 years, and others are at 33, 28. We have a great team and they become a real family."

For employees new and mature in shops like Niagara Precision, times have changed and COVID-19 has been tough haul. Still, regional manufacturers interviewed for this edition of *Engaged* are reporting resiliency and versatility through this pandemic — many were able to continue their shifts throughout, and orders remained at a decent level.

Buunk is among those success stories, as the company implements required measures for its replenishing team, while in a pandemic era: "We have done very well, so far we never had to close a day." ■



The Niagara Precision Team



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## CO-OP

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## OYAP

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## Dual Credits

These programs allow students to earn a high school and college credit at the same time. The courses offered vary each semester and sometimes include Level 1 apprenticeship.

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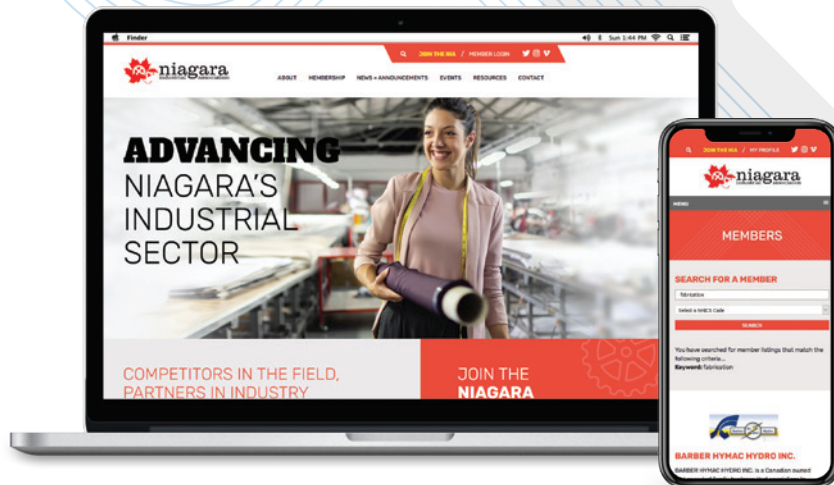
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**NEW!**

# NIA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Members-only content can help companies network and access business support



In May, the Niagara Industrial Association launched a new website at [www.niagaraindustry.com](http://www.niagaraindustry.com).

The site was built from the ground up, with two primary objectives in mind: promoting the NIA and its advocacy efforts on behalf of Niagara's industrial sector; and helping NIA members expand their network of suppliers and reach new customers.

"We're very excited by the new website," says Dr. Don Cyr, Professor of Finance at Brock University's Goodman School of Business, and Chair of the NIA. "We strongly encourage our members to check out the site, and to use the features specifically developed to help Niagara's industrial businesses succeed."

## MEMBERSHIP LISTINGS

Only members have access to detailed contact information within the NIA's full membership list. Looking for a local supplier that might be able to help with a pressing order? Simply use our search feature under "Membership" to identify firms of interest, either through the NAICS Code drop-down (to search by industry), or by looking up a keyword.

Member listings showcase each company's capabilities and list contact information so you can either check out their website or reach out to senior company leadership directly.

## KEEPING YOUR PROFILE CURRENT

As an NIA member, you'll want to make sure your own company listing is up-to-date and relevant to potential visitors. Access the "Member Login" link at the top right of the screen using the login password provided by the NIA. Then click "My Profile" to access your company's profile.

All fields related to your business can be easily updated, thanks to an easy-to-use WYSIWYG. A helpful tutorial video can also be found under "Website Features" in the Membership section.

## MEMBER POSTINGS AND OTHER FEATURES

When you are logged in to the website, you can also access our handy Member Posting feature. Here, members can submit opportunities, information, advice and requests. Member posts are compiled daily and emailed out to the full membership. Please note that the NIA will review and approve posts to ensure relevancy to our membership.


Another way to reach out to businesses is by advertising on our home page. Here you can communicate your message and take advantage of over 50,000 page views per year. Clicking on your ad brings users directly to your website. Please contact [info@niagaraindustry.com](mailto:info@niagaraindustry.com) for ad pricing and availability.

Site content that is fully accessible by the public includes information about the Association, news and announcements, NIA events and other resources such as digital versions of past and current issues of this *Engaged in Industry* publication.

The Association worked with NIA member 180 Marketing, a St. Catharines-based graphic design and web development firm, to launch the new site. ■

Visit [www.niagaraindustry.com](http://www.niagaraindustry.com) today!





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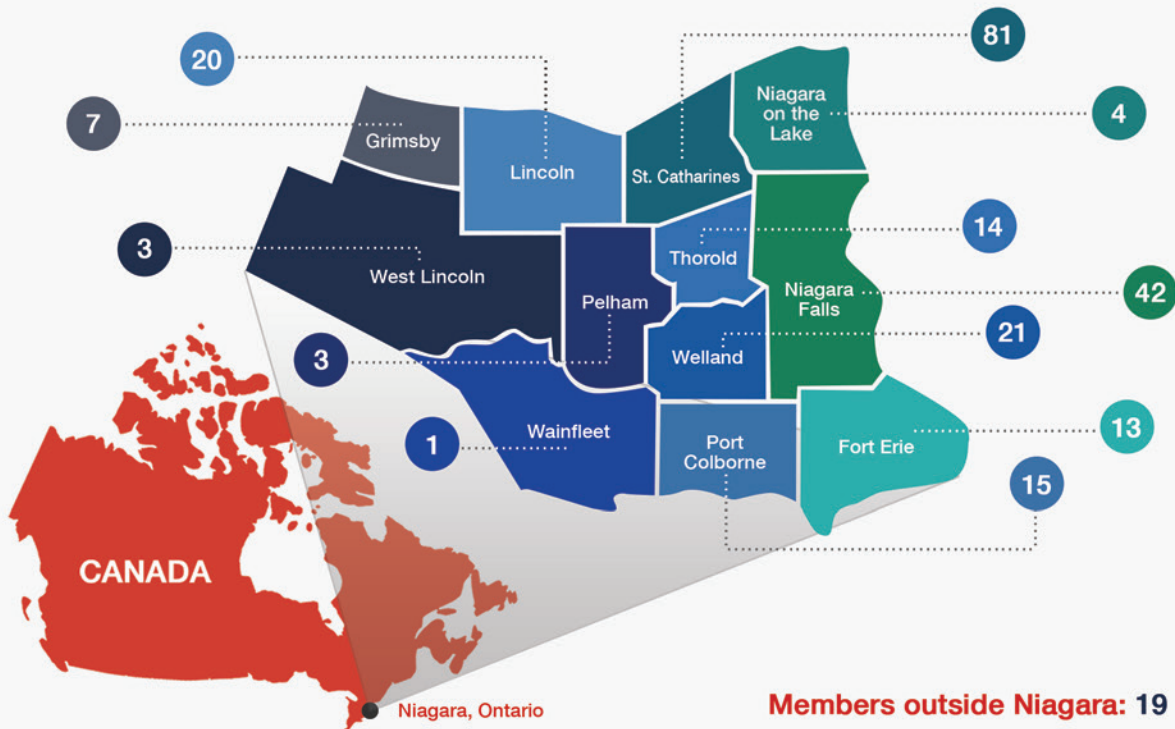
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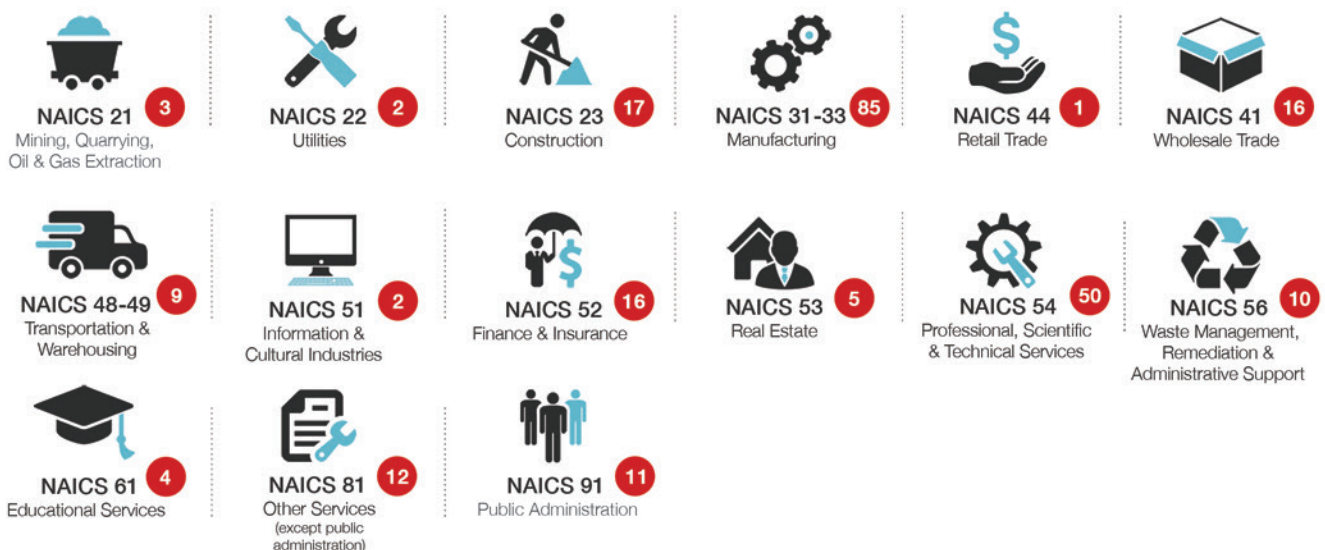
TOTAL **243**  
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## MEMBER LOCATION



## INDUSTRIAL COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP





## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MEMBERS



Private Sector Members  
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Industrial member  
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### ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Supported Niagara's bid to become a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Point
- Supported the creation of the Niagara Gateway Economic Zone and Centre industrial incentive program
- Submitted a positioning paper to the Province of Ontario advocating for more competitive industrial electrical rate structure
- Participated in many skills shortage reviews with a variety of industrial and educational stakeholders
- Submitted the NIA's position to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities supporting Niagara's position as a nationally significant trade corridor
- Sponsorship of a gathering of all municipal and regional elected politicians for review of intermodal transportation opportunities in Niagara Region
- Consistent promotion and awareness building of the relevance and benefits of Niagara's industrial and manufacturing cluster to the regional economy
- Vigilance on potential changes to municipal and regional industrial development charges and other policy changes that affect Niagara's industrial cluster

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# WHY I SIT ON THE BOARD



"As an economic development professional in Niagara, I recognize the importance of the manufacturing and industrial sector for the economic success of Niagara. The NIA provides an ideal forum and network to work with the sector to ensure it is receiving the resources and support necessary for continued success."

**Blake Landry, Niagara Region Economic Development**

"NIA has a very important role to fulfill. It endeavours to be the "Voice of Industry" as well as a catalyst for sector sustainability, growth and development. By virtue of their participation, our members acknowledge that we live in an interdependent business world and that entities, such as ours, do enable greater business awareness and foster mutual support."

**Verne Milot, P. Eng, MBA, Growth Associates**

"Being a member of the Niagara Industrial Association in an ex-officio capacity has been an extended education and provided me with a better understanding for the importance of the industrial sector to the Niagara and world economy. We have so many touch points on different facets of this planet that need to be celebrated, as our capabilities are second to none. As a member I look to continue to tell the Niagara Industrial story, which is one of resilience and innovation. As we continue to grow and take on the world, one thing remains the same - "We Are Stronger Together!"

**Marco Marino**

"If you expect Change, you have to be prepared to be a positive part of the process. The Niagara Region has a rich history of talented trades people and manufacturers that has grown our community to what it is today. The NIA is that vital voice to make sure that our community understands the role that manufacturing has in our community and to advocate for its growth and stability."

**Kevin Jacobi, Executive Director, CanadaBW Logistics Inc.**

"The manufacturing industry has had a long and significant history in Niagara and continues to be one of the Region's most important economic drivers. It is a great honour to serve on the Niagara Industrial Association Board and to play a role in fostering industry's continued success through the initiatives of the NIA."

**Don Cyr, PhD, MBA, MA, Professor of Finance  
Brock University, Goodman School of Business**

"Sitting on the NIA Board allows me to engage our membership and to grow our future workforce. I am passionate about connecting our members with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions so they can train the best and brightest future manufacturers for our skilled trades in Niagara. Training the youth of Niagara. The Future of manufacturing."

**Jane C. Buunk, Niagara Precision Limited**



"Niagara is where I was born, raised a family and grew a business. I want to see Niagara become everything it can be. Being part of the NIA as a board member means that I can be a part of this growth and help to secure a solid future for the Region."

**Larry Anderson, CEO, Larry Anderson Consultants**

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"With over 35 years of experience, working within the manufacturing sector and having contributed direct operational input throughout my manufacturing career, I feel compelled to offer my experience, time and efforts, to sit on the NIA Board, as well as share lessons learned from my other Board of Directors work. By doing so, my efforts are focused on improving member benefit and to add value in promoting membership profiles within the manufacturing community in Niagara and beyond. Sitting on this board allows me to share knowledge and experience, increase networking opportunities and a chance for me to assist local entrepreneurs and make a difference in their operational and manufacturing operations in Niagara. Giving back to the local community should not have to be requested, but should be a life-long commitment for each and every one of us."

**Bruno Iafrate, CEO/VP Operations, Imbibitive Technologies Corporations**

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"In sort of an about-face from my first 'why I sit on the board', where I said I wanted to ensure a strong region and offer my support upon an association that would be heard within local government and industry, I now sit on the board because I KNOW the NIA is that Voice! Without the strong volunteer board that is now in place, businesses like my Dilts Piston Hydraulics and Power Tech Hydraulics would be missing opportunity and a place to find solutions. Growth takes investment, I now find the greatest investment to secure growth is participation. Being able to offer my expertise, suggestions and comments, while listening and discussing those of my fellow board members, makes me proud to sit on board; makes me proud to participate in the Industrial future of Niagara."

**Ian Hill, President, Dilts Piston Hydraulics Inc.**

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"I believe industry is the backbone of our community. It's these businesses that create good paying jobs, contribute to the tax base that support our health system, our education system, our infrastructure. Joining the NIA Board has allowed me to actively support Niagara industry while working alongside some of its brightest leaders. I was born, raised and lived most of my life in Niagara. I want to see it flourish and provide opportunities for the next generation. I see the NIA as one of the best advocates to ensure that happens."

**Len Stolk, President, Stolk Construction LTD**

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"Sitting on the Board of the NIA has been instrumental in my growth and understanding of the community. It has introduced me to members of our community at all levels holding positions that I would otherwise not have known. Through my engagement with educators and their institutions I have learned that our young people will be instrumental in the growth of the Region and bring new elements to our workforce that will help us as companies and as a community take on the challenges of the future. I have sat and discussed important issues that are critical to the Region's future with government representatives at all levels. I have learned that they are passionate about the direction we are headed, and that their support they can bring to that direction and their engagement in our community is imperative to our growth. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of our business leaders and learn that the success they achieve in their businesses ripples out into our community and becomes a success for us all. I have learned that Niagara is a powerful force in Ontario, in Canada and the Global village we live in today."

**Aaron Tisdelle, President, Girotti Machine**

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"The economic prosperity of Niagara depends on having a high-quality post-secondary education system that develops the knowledge and skills of its workforce. It is also vital that we encourage and get students excited about local manufacturing careers to ensure Niagara's manufacturing sector is sustainable in meeting future workforce demands. I am honoured to serve on the Niagara Industrial Association Board of Directors and thrilled to be given the opportunity to develop a future workforce pipeline and advance the interests of Niagara's manufacturing sector."

**Vincent Shaikh, M.Eng., Dean of Media, Trades and Technology, Niagara College**

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"As a manufacturer in Niagara, I have a long list of challenges that keep me up at night. Being a member of the NIA has always provided direct benefit to our company, and now my participation at the Board level gives me an opportunity to have more of a voice and an impact on my business, and the Niagara region."

**Jordan Sherlock, President, North America Traffic Inc.**

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"Manufacturing is a cornerstone of our economy. I am passionate about helping Canadian entrepreneurs become stronger and more competitive. Being part of the NIA board allows me to contribute to the growth and development of Niagara's industrial sector, and make a difference in my local community."

**Bailey Charles, CPA, CMA, BDC**

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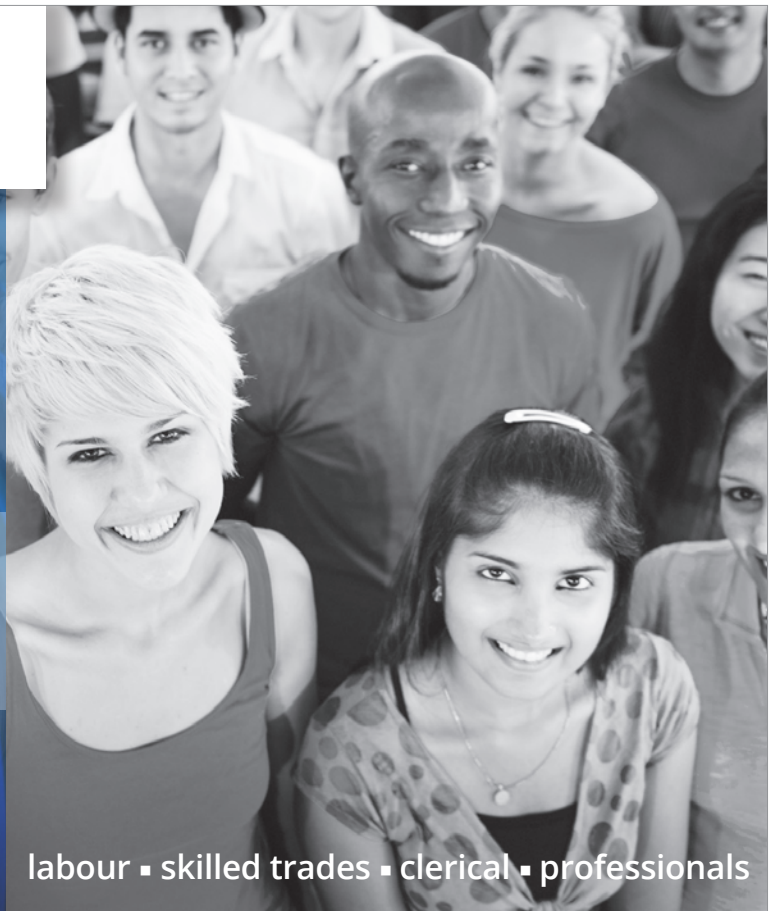
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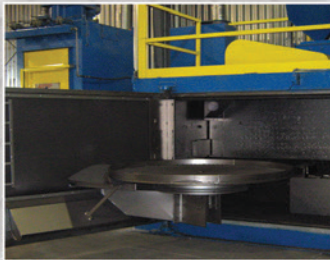
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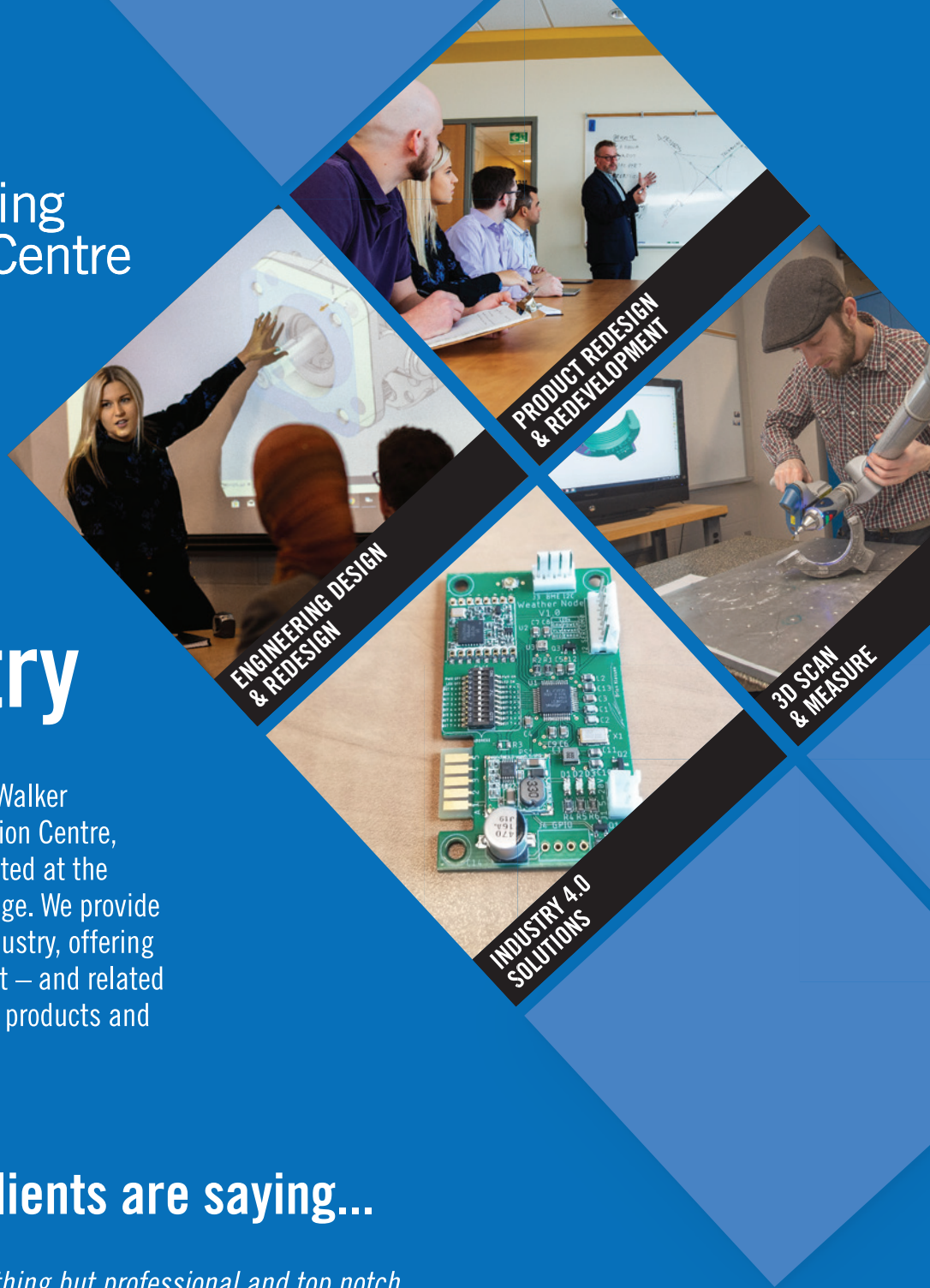
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