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**City of Duluth - Communications Office**

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**SUBJECT: Duluth Mayor Larson, Economic Development Partners and Educators Recognize Manufacturing Month with Visit to LSC campus and GPM Inc.**

**BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office**

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**Duluth Mayor Larson, Economic Development Partners and Educators Recognize Manufacturing Month with Visit to LSC campus and GPM Inc.**

[Duluth, MN] – Mayor Emily Larson joined education, economic development and workforce partners to recognize *Manufacturing Month* with a visit to a new program targeted for women in machine operations and a tour of GPM Inc., a local company that manufactures submersible slurry and dewatering pumps.

Mayor Larson was joined by representatives from APEX, ISD 709, City of Duluth Business Development staff, State of Minnesota DEED, Duluth Workforce Development staff, SOAR Career Solutions, Community Action Duluth and elected officials to highlight “Manufacturing Month” as part of a statewide month long effort. Mayor Larson will visit the Integrated Manufacturing program at the Lake Superior College campus in downtown Duluth where the Duluth Workforce Development staff launched a new 200 hour Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA) funded course to train women for careers in machine operation. Following the tour, the group and class participants had a chance to tour the GPM Inc. facilities.

“Creating a pathway for women to pursue good paying jobs, develop highly critical skills and improve the lives of their families is a win-win for our community. I’m proud to have great education and community partners, area businesses and our workforce team that have aligned efforts to address our workforce shortage and train the next cohort of excellent employees. Doing so is absolutely critical to ensure that we have a diverse and skilled workforce to meet the present and future needs of our employers,” said Mayor Emily Larson. “I also want to thank our partners who are once again giving over 200 students access to learn about future job opportunities available to them. Many thanks to Arrowhead Manufacturers and Fabricators Association, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, ISD 709, APEX, NORTHFORCE and Lake Superior College.” Students will tour several manufacturing facilities, including GPM Inc. later this month.

According to the latest data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, manufacturing jobs have grown by 0.7% over the past year. Through 2017, the statewide manufacturing industry provided a total of 8,500 jobs at 344 firms with a total payroll of nearly \$500 million, and average annual wages of \$58,708. Those employment numbers include a variety of positions that contribute to the success of manufacturing such as assemblers and fabricators, welders, mechanics, first-line supervisors, machinists, engineers and technicians, inspectors, clerical, and managerial staff. Both skilled and entry-level workers are in high demand – manufacturing employers in the region posted a near record high number of job vacancies in the second quarter of 2018 – the highest number posted since 2005. A higher percentage of these manufacturing openings require postsecondary training and 1 or more years of experience than the total number of vacancies across all industries, at 32% and 58% respectively.

“GPM is very encouraged about programs like Women Economic Security. Properly trained and educated machinists possess critical core competencies and skill sets that allow companies like GPM to be competitive, and win, in a global marketplace,” said GPM CEO Peter Haines. “As the original equipment manufacturer of the Made Tough™ GPM-Eliminator™ series of pumps, our professional team of machinists consistently delivers value to our organization. GPM is very proud of its history of utilizing manufacturing talent from the Northland. A number of our current management team rose up through the GPM ranks working first in manufacturing or our service and repair group. We’ve placed interns in permanent engineering positions, and to this day fund local universities on special projects. GPM engages students and enhances their educational experience with real-world projects that add to an already impressive 40-year track-record of GPM success.” Haines went on to say, “GPM is very serious about its commitment to growth. In October alone GPM is hosting the WESA tour in support of Manufacturing Month, followed by the Arrowhead Manufacturers and Fabricators Association (AMFA) board meeting and facilities tour, then the University of Wisconsin Superior (UWS) student tour at the end of the month. Beyond this we’re funding a senior mechanical engineering design project for the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), and remain committed to supporting APEX, the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion - an economic development engine that has been very effective in catalyzing business throughout northern Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin.”

*About*

October is Manufacturing Month with statewide tour opportunities organized through area manufacturers to educate the public about modern manufacturing jobs and industry innovation. Learn more at <http://www.tourofmanufacturingmn.com/>

Lake Superior College provides high quality, affordable higher education that benefits diverse learners, employers, and the community. LSC's academic, technical, continuing education, and workforce development offerings prepare learners for a rapidly changing global community. Our services support learning, and our partnerships connect the college and its learners to a broader spectrum of community life.

The Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) program, funded through MN DEED, is a collaboration between Duluth Workforce Development Center, Community Action Duluth, ISD 709 Adult Basic Education, SOAR Career Solutions, Lake Superior College. The program's goal is to increase awareness, exposure, and access to occupations in the skilled construction and healthcare sectors and conduct culturally suitable outreach to underemployed female populations.

GPM Inc, manufactures and distributes the toughest, most reliable submersible and horizontal slurry pumps found anywhere in the world. They also represent world-class manufacturers providing solutions in air handling, mechanical seals, gearboxes, material handling systems, cooling towers, valves and many other fine products.

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**Mayor's tour of Women in Machining Class at Lake Superior College downtown campus**



**Tour of GPM Inc. with Mayor Larson & LSC class**