

Mack Defense Wins Contract for Marine Corps Prototype Vehicles

By Paul Muschick / (Photo courtesy of Mack Defense)

LEHIGH VALLEY - Mack Defense has won another contract to help the Marine Corps prepare to replace its fleet of medium tactical trucks.

Mack will produce two prototypes, in the second phase of a program it started last year.

The new family of vehicles will replace Marine cargo, dump, wrecker, tractor, and re-supply trucks that support air-ground task force combat support missions.

"These prototypes represent the next generation of purpose-built, specialty vehicles for the Marine Corps," said David Hartzell, President of Mack Defense, a subsidiary of Mack Trucks, in Allentown.

"By leveraging our commercial vehicle technology expertise and adapting it for military applications, we're delivering a highly capable platform that can perform in the most challenging terrains, while incorporating advanced safety features and hybrid propulsion systems that meet the Marine Corps' rigorous mission requirements," Hartzell said in a May 19 news release.

Construction of the prototypes will begin in the second half of 2025, with completion targeted for early fall. After testing, delivery to the Marine Corps is expected in the first half of 2026.

The contract follows an initial development contract last year where Mack Defense provided a detailed engineering technical data package for three medium tactical truck cargo variants.

Manufacturing is a leading driver of Lehigh Valley's \$56 billion economy, with more than 700 manufacturers collectively producing an output of \$9 billion. Mack Defense is among several Lehigh Valley manufacturers that contribute to America's national defense. Others include Bio Med Sciences, Curtiss-Wright, D Gillette Industrial Services, Lehigh Heavy Forge, and Mussel Polymers.

The Marine Corps medium tactical truck program emphasizes enhanced off-road mobility with vehicles designed for cross-country operation while maintaining optimal weight for improved fuel efficiency and payload capacity.

The prototype phase includes the □

In addition to advanced driver assistance features such as collision avoidance, blind-spot detection, enhanced traction control, and anti-lock brakes, the vehicles also feature hybrid-electric technology delivering improved fuel efficiency while enabling critical tactical advantages such as silent watch capabilities using extensive onboard power storage and generation and exportable power for other military systems.



Lehigh Valley Students are State Champs in What's So Cool About Manufacturing, for 4th Consecutive Year

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - For the fourth consecutive year, a middle school in the Lehigh Valley has won the top prize in the statewide What's So Cool About Manufacturing® video competition.

The student team at Lower Macungie Middle School won first place for their video about Crayola, which produces crayons, markers, innovative art tools, crafting activities, and creative toys.

The awards were presented May 14 in Harrisburg, with 23 schools competing, including four from the Lehigh Valley who advanced from the Lehigh Valley regional competition.

What's So Cool About Manufacturing®, created 12 years ago by the Manufacturers Resource Center, pairs teams of students with manufacturers to produce a video showcasing the innovative technologies that are used and the products that are made in today's manufacturing. The goal is to introduce students to careers in manufacturing.

Manufacturing is a leading driver of the Lehigh Valley's economy. About 700 manufacturers collectively produce an annual output of \$9 billion, which makes up 16% of the region's \$55.7 billion Gross Domestic Product. Nationally, manufacturing makes up 12% of GDP.

The Lehigh Valley is among the Top 15% of manufacturing markets in the U.S.

The region's location, within a day's drive of one-third of U.S. consumers, and its skilled labor force, make it attractive for companies that produce things. Lehigh Valley manufacturers produce food and beverages, medical devices and vaccines, semiconductors and other technology, and consumer goods such as Crayola crayons and Martin Guitars, among other items.

What's So Cool About Manufacturing® debuted in the Lehigh Valley in 2013 and has spread statewide and been adopted in 11 other states. More than 60% of Pennsylvania's school districts have participated in the program since its inception.

"The continued success of the What's So Cool program validates its effort to generate excitement toward careers in the manufacturing sector and to promote STEM education and technical training among students and parents," said Karen Buck, Director of Workforce Initiatives at Manufacturers Resource Center. "We are so excited and proud to celebrate the Best of PA 2025 student teams and highlight their videos!"

In 2024, students at Broughal Middle School in Bethlehem won first place, for their video about Weaver Popcorn Manufacturing.

In 2023, students at Northeast Middle School in Bethlehem won first place, for their video about Stanley Black & Decker.

In 2022, students at Eyer Middle School in Macungie won first place, for their video about BlueTriton Brands.

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) is a sponsor of What's So Cool About Manufacturing®. Manufacturers Resource Center is a regional partner of LVEDC, and the video program aligns with LVEDC's talent strategies by engaging students in career pathways exploration and influencing perceptions that students, teachers, and parents have about jobs in manufacturing.

