



TREASURE COAST  
MANUFACTURERS  
ASSOCIATION

# TCMA VOICE

A Newsletter presented by the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association

SPRING 2021

## FORT PIERCE PRECAST FIRM WINS CONTRACT FOR FSU PROJECT

Fort Pierce-based **Florida Architectural Precast** has been awarded a more than \$1 million contract to supply precast architectural components for the new Florida State University Student Union building in Tallahassee.

The project will be one of the largest masonry projects in Florida this year, according to company president Shawn Walters. Design and manufacturing for the FSU job began in March, Walters said, and the project is slated for completion during the third or fourth quarter of 2021.

Florida Architectural Precast has designed, engineered and manufactured custom precast concrete, cast stone, glass fiber-reinforced concrete and foam-filled lightweight architectural trim, panels and decorative additions on a variety of institutional buildings and private homes since 2009. Finished components are

shipped for final installation by masonry contractors in Florida and throughout the Eastern Seaboard.

The company employs 22 people at its state-of-the-art 35,000-square-foot production company at 2640 South Kings Highway in Fort Pierce.

Florida Architectural Precast has worked extensively with FSU in the past. The company supplied the south end towers at Doak Campbell Stadium and also has completed work at the Wildwood Dormitory, the Warren Library and the Student Success Center in Tallahassee.

The company also has completed a number of projects for Trump golf clubs in Jupiter and Doral; the Disney Four Seasons Resort in Orlando; and St. James Cathedral in Orlando.



This curved staircase is part of a project completed by Florida Architectural Precast at the Trump National Doral golf resort in Miami.

Locally, Florida Architectural Precast has worked on Indian River State College's STEM building at the Pruitt Campus in St. Lucie West and the Center for Innovation on the Massey Campus in Fort Pierce.

Contact Florida Architectural Precast at [www.faprecast.com](http://www.faprecast.com) or 772.489.0920.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT: Aluma Tower Company Inc., Vero Beach

**Aluma Tower**, which began operations in Vero Beach in 1973, designs, manufactures and services customizable telescoping towers and associated products. It serves the military, telecommunications service providers, law enforcement, emergency management, surveillance, weather monitoring organizations, the oil and gas industry, utility companies and the amateur radio field.



Trailer Tower Systems, which are the heart of Aluma's business, come in all shapes and sizes.

Approximately 95% of its products are distributed outside Florida, and 20% is shipped overseas. Aluma Tower is ISO-certified.

In 2015, Aluma Tower was recognized as Manufacturer of the Year by South Florida Manufacturers Association and by the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce. In 2018, Aluma Tower was a finalist in the Florida Companies to Watch program and was featured in the February edition of *Florida Trend's* Clean Manufacturing section.

In 2020, Aluma Tower was included on *Inc.* magazine's annual Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing privately held companies in the U.S. The list is the most coveted ranking of the nation's entrepreneurial elite. It was the first time that the company applied for inclusion on the list. Aluma's core values are: dedication, continuous improvement and integrity.

Shane Mullan, general manager and

executive vice president, is very involved with the Indian River County Chamber's Manufacturing Boot Camp program, coordinated by the Chamber's economic development office.

Mullan is featured in a promotional video for the program, explaining how he worked his way up from earning a technical certification and starting as a welder at Aluma to his current position.

He welcomed boot camp students to tour both Aluma Tower's facilities during the 2019 program year. Mullan is also involved with the EDO's Manufacturers' Roundtable discussions — biweekly conference calls between manufacturers and training providers, to strengthen relationships and be sure the training offered is in sync with the training needed for new hires.

Aluma Tower is a great community partner!

Visit [AlumaTower.com](http://AlumaTower.com)

# EVEN DURING COVID, MANUFACTURING EXPANDS

**TCMA VOICE** recently caught up with Kevin Carr, CEO of FloridaMakes, a statewide, industry-led partnership that strengthens and advances Florida's manufacturing economy. Its mission is to improve the productivity and technological performance of the state's manufacturing sector, focusing on small- and medium-sized companies.

**TCMA VOICE: How is Florida manufacturing doing, considering the impact of the COVID?**

**CARR:** It is expanding. Many companies had half a bad March, a bad April, a bad May and then started to come back. But a lot of companies grew. They found some markets that expanded, or they found supply shortages that they could fulfill.

We have recovered pretty well. In December [2020], we had 384,000 manufacturing workers, and that's about the same as we had the year before. When a lot of people lost work, manufacturing kept chugging along. Manufacturing was a stabilizing influence. [The December manufacturing jobs figure is an 8% improvement over the low point of 2020 in April, state figures show.]

**TCMA VOICE: So, manufacturing did well to be steady as the pandemic hit Florida. Do you expect it to grow now?**

**CARR:** Yes. Florida in 2019 was 12th [in number of manufacturing workers], but its growth in jobs was higher than everybody else. So, you don't get too freaked out about being in 12th place. You look at growth. Since 2014, among the top 12 states, Florida's growth was by far the most. Now, among those top 12 states in manufacturing employment, Florida's GDP is pretty low [actually, the lowest], but when you look at GDP growth, Florida is No. 1. [Florida's growth in manufacturing GDP was nearly

40%, far ahead of its nearest competitor in job growth since 2014 among the top 12 states, California, at about 23%].

When I look at the state of manufacturing, I focus on productivity which is the gross output per worker. In 2015, Florida was ranked 38th in the country and that productivity has grown to 30th. It has grown at a rate about two times everybody else's. That has to do with the growth of what I call higher-value industries. Medical devices, aviation, defense, and others.

**TCMA VOICE: How is Florida going to keep up that growth?**

**CARR:** Manufacturers are moving to Florida and the ones that are here are improving their workforce.

Those companies that employ people and in turn create demand from suppliers look mainly at two things. The talent, and the talent pipeline. Talent is the biggest differentiator, when a company decides where to locate, and secondly, do you have the suppliers? Before I bring my company to Florida, I have to know who is going to build all those component parts. Most of those bigger companies are assemblers.

Florida has 2,700 or so manufacturing companies, and 80% of those are under 20 employees. That bodes very well for us because a lot of those [bigger] companies are looking for a local system of supply.

A factor that increases productivity is technology. The more skilled your worker is, the more advanced the technology that they are applying, the more output per person. You are seeing that happening in Florida at a level that is not happening anywhere else [in the United States].

**TCMA VOICE: You've said that Florida wants to be among**

**the top five states in manufacturing production and workers by 2030. Can it get there?**

**CARR:** In productivity in 2019, Florida was 30th, one of only four states to increase in average productivity. Florida's average productivity level, which again is the GDP per [manufacturing] employee, was about \$153,000 in 2019, and the U.S. average was about \$183,000, so if Florida simply reached the national average, that's a gain of \$11.6 billion added to the economy, without adding another job. Just by improving your technology.

And if you look at the growth in productivity, we top every-



Kevin Carr, CEO of FloridaMakes

body, again. [Florida up 20% since 2014, several percentages points ahead of California, second in that growth.]

So, if we keep that pace of growth up, we can get to where we want to be by 2030. We can be in the top five.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

For planning purposes, people who manage manufacturing companies are often asked to predict the future. Answering this question requires determining needs within the company, what outsourced resources will be needed, what technical training will be required or something as simple as what the workload will be in three months.



Jerry Jacques, general manager at Advanced Machine & Tool, is president of the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association.

As technology advances, the manufacturing industry sees the benefits right away. Today's plant floor looks much different than it did even 20 years ago. Machine automation is the normal and our equipment is now communicating with our databases resulting in increased proficiency. The industry has seen substantial growth in productivity and efficiency as technology redefines what can be accomplished.

A recent example of new technology that has captured everyone's attention is 3D printing. Because of its ability to quickly take design concepts and rapidly produce goods that can be used immediately, 3D printing has become a viable option for manufacturers instead of a novelty. So what's next?

Technology advances continue to change the manufacturing industry for the better. These advances have created new types of manufacturing jobs that require more technical ability and critical thinking from employees who operate technology driven equipment, processes and environments. There are interesting, well-paid positions that need to be filled across the industry. Our innovative workplace welcomes new employees and the existing skilled workforce as manufacturers fill jobs the industry has created. What a wonderful time to work in technology.

The ball is in your court now. How are you helping change the perception of the manufacturing industry? Let's make a difference.

# ST. LUCIE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW/TCMA GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The **St. Lucie County Development Review Taskforce** was formed 10 years ago by the EDC and the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce which responded to a request by the county's administrator and planning director to review its permitting and development processes for business. It was reinvigorated in 2016 when the City of Port St. Lucie was reworking its permitting processes. Two key members of the taskforce are Terissa Aronson, president of the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, and W. Lee Dobbins, a land use attorney with Dean, Mead, Minton & Moore and the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association. They responded to some questions about the taskforce.



Terissa Aronson  
St. Lucie County  
Chamber of Commerce



W. Lee Dobbins  
Dean, Mead,  
Minton & Moore

**Q: What is the St. Lucie County Development Review Taskforce?**

**Dobbins:** It is a group of people who work with our local governments [St. Lucie County, Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce] to make the development review process go a little more smoothly. We try to find ways to streamline the processes of getting approvals from planning, building, utilities and other departments.

**Q: What is the composition of the taskforce?**

**Dobbins:** The St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County are probably the two most

active members. It also has representatives from the Treasure Coast Builders Association, the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association, and the Realtors Association (Broward, Palm Beaches & St. Lucie Realtors Association®). Suggestions come from the professionals on our taskforce as well as the cities' and the county's staff.

**Q: How can you make sure we maintain sensible regulations?**

**Aronson:** This is not one-sided. This is not just applicants trying to get ease of restrictions. It is really a process that can benefit both the staff and the applicant.

**Dobbins:** A lot of what we do

is finding ways to make the process go smoothly without diluting the review. Everybody wants to see the standards maintained because that benefits all of us.

**Q: Are the elected officials involved?**

**Aronson:** Yes, but the most important people are the department heads who direct staff. The department heads really dig deep to figure out ways to work with us to make everybody's lives a little easier.

**Q: What are some recent accomplishments of the taskforce's efforts to work with the local governments?**

**Dobbins:** We worked with St. Lucie County to increase

the number and types of site plans that can be approved at the staff level without having to go to the Board of County Commissioners. That can save a lot. And we worked together for a 15% cut in all permit fees including all planning, building and environmental permits, for a year starting last October 1. That was approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

**Q: So you've got it all figured out now? Time to fold the taskforce?**

**Aronson:** Not quite. It is ever-evolving. No application is the same. There are always new issues, new concerns, and new opportunities arise all the time.

## TREASURE COAST MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION 2021 MEMBERS

- A-1 Roof Trusses LLC
- Advanced Machine & Tool, Inc.
- Aerex Industries, Inc.
- Aluma Tower
- Apple Machine & Supply Co.
- D & D Welding & Fabrication LLC
- Derecktor Shipyards
- EB Airfoils, LLC
- Expert Shutter Services
- Fasco Epoxie's Inc.
- Fastsigns Vero Beach
- Florida Architectural Precast, Inc.
- Helena Agri Enterprises
- Hi-Tide Boat Lifts
- HOG Technologies
- Hot Pie, Inc.
- Indian River Select / Freshco
- Investment Casting Specialists of Florida
- Islamorada Beer Company
- Lenco Marine Solutions, LLC

- Maverick Boat Group, Inc.
- MP Manufacturing & Design, Inc.
- Nylacarb Corporation
- OCULUS Surgical
- Orchid Island Juice Company
- PAC Seating Systems
- Paradigm Precision, Inc.
- Phoenix Metal Products, Inc.
- Piper Aircraft
- Pursuit Boats
- Real Stone & Granite
- Ross Mixing, Inc.
- Southern Sewer Equipment Sales
- Southeast Elevator Inc.
- St. Lucie Battery & Tire
- The Porch Factory
- TNT Custom Boat Works, LLC
- Triumph Aerospace Structures
- Unique Tool & Dye, LLC

**AFFILIATE MEMBERS**

- Business Development Board of Martin County
- CareerSource Research Coast Carr, Riggs & Ingram
- CBIZ
- CenterState Bank
- Dean, Mead, Minton & Moore
- Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County
- Express Employment Professionals
- Greater Treasure Coast Partnership
- HBK CPA's & Consultants
- Indian River State College
- Manpower
- Spherion
- UBU Brands

# TREASURE COAST BOOT CAMPS GIVE ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES A KICKSTART IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

When he was a senior at Treasure Coast High School in Port St. Lucie in 2018, Slater Price wasn't sure what he would do after graduation. Other than the improbable dream of being a professional skateboarder, all he was sure of was that he did not want to go to college.

A guidance counselor pulled Price into an office and told him that what he needed was boot camp. Not the military one with demanding drill sergeants, but the Ready to Work Manufacturing Boot Camp.

Price figured he had nothing to lose but was not enthusiastic about the five-day program where he would learn how to write a resume, perform in a job interview and tour local manufacturing and warehousing plants.

The eye-opening plant visits changed his life, Slater, 21, said. He was particularly moved when he saw boats being made at Maverick Boat Group.

"I was blind. I had no clue what I wanted to do and this kind of showed me a direction," Price said. "I got a job that I kind of like doing, so, that's cool."

Price is part of a growing manufacturing workforce that accounts for more nearly 5% of the Treasure Coast labor force, Florida and federal figures from 2019 show. Manufacturing jobs accounted for 5% of the labor force in Martin County, 4.9% in St. Lucie, and 4.3% in Indian River, against 4.3% statewide. St. Lucie has the most manufacturing jobs. St. Lucie, with 310,000 people in the latest count from 2019, has as many people as Martin and Indian River combined, and 77.5% of its population was part of the labor force, compared with 55.5% in Martin and 51.2% in Indian River.



Slater Price, center, and fellow members of the 2018 St. Lucie County Boot Camp class watch a demonstration at Hi-Tide Boat Lifts in Fort Pierce.



TONYA WOODWORTH, CAREERSOURCE PHOTOS

Jarl Stromer, class regulatory manager for Triton Submarines in Sebastian, shows a deepwater submersible to Josh Green, Hunter Crawford and Ben Deering, students from the 2019 Indian River manufacturing boot camp.

## STUDY REVEALS GAP IN TRAINING

A 2017 study by the St. Lucie County Economic Development Council showed a gap in the training level for the area's prospective entry-level manufacturing employees. The EDC along with company leaders on the Treasure Coast Manufacturing Association created the Ready to Work Manufacturing Boot Camp in St. Lucie County in 2018. The first class, which included Price, had about 20 students from St. Lucie schools. That will be about 15 this year, limited due to virus-protection spacing, said Jill Marasa, EDC vice president for business retention and expansion.

In 2019, Indian River County began a similar boot camp, which like St. Lucie's, was enthusiastically received by company and school officials as well as the students themselves. Since 2018, four out of five attendees of the boot camps were working in the area's manufacturing sector a year after completing the program, said Jerry Jacques, president of the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association.

Helene Caseltine, economic development director at the Indian River Chamber of Commerce, which coordinates with Indian River schools for the boot camp, said its program is much like St. Lucie's: five days of training in soft skills from personal finance to ways to work on a manufacturing team, and tours of manufacturing plants along with question-and-answer sessions with company leaders.

In 2020, St. Lucie was able to offer a modified boot camp that met virtually and was privy to virtual plant tours and discussions

with company leaders, Marasa said.

Maverick, along with Piper Aircraft in Indian River and CVS in both counties, are among the most active employers involved in the boot camp.



Manufacturing on the Treasure Coast varies from airplanes, aluminum shutters and these precision drill bits produced by M.A. Ford Manufacturing in Vero Beach.

"Everybody has the same issues," said Angie Brandt, human resource manager at Maverick. "We have a hard time finding people skilled in the field. The boot camp has really sparked an interest and we are a very strong supporter."

Maverick has hired about a dozen workers straight out of the boot camp, Brandt said.

Price, in his fourth year at Maverick, operates a CNC — computer number control — a prominent machine in many plants worldwide that cuts a variety of material into manufacturing parts. In Price's case, it's not a stretch to say a Maverick boat starts with him and the plastic forms he cuts into parts and sets up on a cart called a kit that travels from station to station in the building process.

**TCMA welcomes new directors**



Jack Chadam  
Director at CBIZ

Jack Chadam, director at CBIZ, and Timothy Fischer, CEO at Southeast Elevator, have joined the board and we look forward to their leadership and experience to propel the organization forward.

“ TCMA has proven to be an invaluable resource for me at Southeast Elevator. Being new to the company and the local community I have leaned on TCMA to help make connections, locate local vendors and introduce me to local educational resources to help develop our workforce. In my first 60 days as CEO, this nominal investment has paid for itself 10x over and introduced me to countless great business people in the region. Thank you TCMA!”

— Tim Fischer, CEO Southeast Elevator



Timothy Fischer  
CEO Southeast Elevator

**TCMA ANNUAL MEETING**

**SUMMER 2021**  
**DETAILS COMING SOON!**

**TCMA Board of Directors**

- Jerry Jacques**, Advanced Machine & Tool, TCMA President
- Bill Wilcox**, Phoenix Metal Products, TCMA Vice President
- Pete Tesch**, EDC of St. Lucie County, TCMA Secretary
- Brian Bauer**, CareerSource Research Coast
- Helene Caseltine**, Indian River County Chamber of Commerce
- Jack Chadam**, CBIZ
- Lee Dobbins**, Dean, Mead, Minton & Moore
- Mike England**, Express Employment Professionals
- Stephen Farinacci**, Maverick Boat Group
- Tim Fischer**, Southeast Elevator
- Mike Gordon**, Piper Aircraft
- Tom Kindred**, Florida SBDC @ IRSC
- Brooks Price**, Phoenix Metal Products
- Chad Rockefeller**, Expert Shutter Services
- Jarrod Trefelner**, CenterState Bank

**EXPANDING YOUR BUSINESS?**

**Contact the economic development organization serving your county**

**Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Division**

[www.indianrivered.com](http://www.indianrivered.com)

**Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County**

[www.youredc.com](http://www.youredc.com)

**Business Development Board of Martin County**

[www.bdbmc.org](http://www.bdbmc.org)



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