

# New Haven Register

<https://www.nhregister.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

## Forum: Young people need to think differently about aerospace manufacturing

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By Paul Murphy

The future of aerospace manufacturing in Connecticut is at a crossroads. We've come so far and have the potential to go much further, and yet our wheels are in danger of grinding to a halt.

We can build our buildings, buy our advanced equipment, but where are we going to get the skilled workers and talent needed to support the growth of manufacturing in our state?

In aerospace, our state is at the forefront of manufacturing. Aerospace Alley® is a jewel in the nation: a marketplace comprised of dozens of independent component makers right here in Connecticut, known and admired worldwide.

We have the technology, the infrastructure, and the reputation. We even have the contracts — fulfillment of which will keep our companies busy for years.

What we don't have is the skilled manpower to keep the industry thriving as older skilled workers retire en masse.

But why? Why aren't today's high school students eager to find jobs in a field that is waiting to welcome them with open arms? Why aren't kids ready for well-paid positions that offer clear paths for advancement?

For many young people, the concept of manufacturing tends to conjure up images of factory work decades ago. Progressive aerospace factories in Connecticut today are clean, bright, safe, and loaded with state-of-the-art production equipment.

According to Aerospace Components Manufacturers President Pedro Soto, there are "incredible" career pathways available in Connecticut aerospace manufacturing. "The youth of Connecticut have an opportunity to secure lifelong job security and accomplishment in a thriving field. We need to make sure that they are armed with the skills and education to be able to take advantage of this," he said.

And, besides good salaries, there is significant job security as the industry is driven more by the commercial sector whose aerospace programs are not typically affected by government or political uncertainty.

The current eight-plus year backlog of orders for the most popular commercial jets is evidence of the sustainable long-term demand. This factor should provide a sense of confidence to young workers looking forward to a lengthy career.

I believe that part of the problem is the increased emphasis our society places on what I call "book learning:" that is, being lectured to in a classroom and learning to spit back information by rote. It's a system that rarely takes into account the value of world experience.

On Wednesday, November 7, ACM will host "The Aerospace Alley® Tradeshow! & Future Work Force Opportunities Fair" in Hartford.

This is an opportunity for students, and their parents, to be inspired. To learn about burgeoning opportunities in the aerospace field in Connecticut. To ask questions, and to see for themselves that the aerospace manufacturing industry means a bright and prosperous future.

It's a chance for kids to think a little differently.

*Paul Murphy is executive director of Aerospace Components Manufacturers, a consortium of independent Connecticut aerospace manufacturers.*

NOTE: This article also appeared in the Internet versions of Connecticut Post (Bridgeport):  
<https://www.ctpost.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>;

The Hour (Norwalk): <https://www.thehour.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

The Advocate (Stamford): <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

Register Citizen (Torrington): <https://www.registercitizen.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

Middletown Press (Middletown): <https://www.middletownpress.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

News Times (Danbury): <https://www.newstimes.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>

Greenwich Time (Greenwich): <https://www.greenwichtime.com/opinion/article/Forum-Young-people-need-to-think-differently-13333577.php>