What You Need to Know

Connecticut students get a look at aerospace career opportunities at trade show

WTNH.com

More than 1,400 local middle and high school students attended the World's Aerospace Alley Tradeshow in Hartford on Oct. 29, 2026. The event, hosted by Aerospace Components Manufacturers, aimed to introduce students to career opportunities within the aerospace manufacturing industry.

Key points:

- The World's Aerospace Alley Tradeshow took place in Hartford, Connecticut, on Thursday, Oct. 29, 2026.
- Over 1,400 students from local middle and high schools attended the event.
- The tradeshow was organized by Aerospace Components Manufacturers to showcase career paths in aerospace manufacturing.
- Amy Thompson, the chief technology officer for the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, emphasized the need for manufacturers to upskill their workforce and adopt new technologies.
- The event aimed to attract new talent to help Connecticut's aerospace manufacturing industry remain competitive.

HARTFORD, Conn. (WTNH) — Local middle and high school students came together in Hartford for the Aerospace Components Manufacturers the World's Aerospace Alley Tradeshow on Thursday.

Students got the chance to learn from some of the top companies in the world about career opportunities in the aerospace manufacturing industry.

"Connecticut has a proud history of aerospace component manufacturing and our manufacturers in Connecticut produce some of the most complex advanced systems in the world for those aerospace systems. But to remain competitive, manufacturers need to adopt new technologies, they need to upskill their workforce with skills for those

technologies, they need to attract new people into our industry," Amy Thompson, the chief technology officer for the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, said.

More than 1,400 students attended the trade show.

ASK FOLLOW UP:

What does Amy Thompson emphasize about Connecticut's aerospace industry?

Amy Thompson, the chief technology officer for the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, emphasizes that while Connecticut has a storied history in manufacturing aerospace components, the industry must evolve to stay competitive. She states that manufacturers need to adopt new technologies, upskill their workforce to handle those advancements, and successfully attract new talent into the industry.

Thompson notes that Connecticut manufacturers currently produce some of the most complex and advanced systems in the world for aerospace applications. To maintain this position, she highlights the necessity of integrating new technological tools and ensuring workers possess the specific skills required to operate them.

What specific technologies are being introduced to the manufacturing sector?

While specific technological tools for the manufacturing sector are not listed in detail by Connecticut industry leaders, emerging technologies like quantum computing are expected to benefit advanced manufacturing. Experts note that quantum computing can approach complex problems more efficiently than classical computers, potentially benefiting various Connecticut industries

The integration of new technologies is considered essential for maintaining competitiveness in the aerospace and manufacturing sectors. Leaders emphasize that manufacturers must adopt new technological tools and upskill their workforce to handle these advancements. Additionally, in broader industrial contexts, there are pushes for the adoption of artificial intelligence to re-engineer business models by utilizing manufacturing data and expertise

How is Connecticut preparing its workforce for emerging digital tools?

Connecticut is preparing its workforce through a combination of educational partnerships, specialized training programs, and state-led initiatives focused on emerging technologies. The state has implemented a comprehensive strategy that emphasizes building skills and expanding access, including the Tech Talent Accelerator program which helps students develop proficiency in artificial intelligence. Additionally, a landmark partnership between Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and Connecticut State Community College provides technical high school students with dual enrollment opportunities and industry-recognized certifications.

To address specific sector needs, the state is utilizing advanced training methods such as virtual reality to accelerate nursing and EMS education. Educational and industry leaders are also focusing on upskilling workers to maintain competitiveness in advanced manufacturing and aerospace. Furthermore, the state is fostering interest in high-tech fields through initiatives like the Emerging Technologies Forum, which highlights the potential of quantum computing and AI.

What are the potential risks associated with rapid AI development?

The rapid development of artificial intelligence presents a wide array of risks ranging from individual psychological impacts to existential threats to humanity. Significant concerns include the potential for AI to evade human control, go rogue, or be misused by bad actors to create biological or chemical weapons. Additionally, there are growing fears regarding the technology's ability to engage in cyberattacks, such as hacking government websites or attempting to access sensitive data.

Beyond security and safety, the AI boom carries substantial economic and social risks. The technology may cause workforce instability through job displacement, though some companies are seeing an "AI boomerang" effect where workers are rehired when AI fails to meet expectations. There are also concerns regarding the mental health of children, specifically regarding unhealthy attachments to chatbots and the impact on brain development. Furthermore, the massive energy and water demands of AI data centers are raising environmental concerns and contributing to higher inflation and electricity costs.

LINK TO VIDEO: https://www.wtnh.com/video/connecticut-students-get-a-look-at-aerospace-career-opportunities-at-trade-show/12320180