



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

nerej

Oct. 3 was National Manufacturing Day I hope you joined the celebration

October 21, 2014 - Construction Design & Engineering

A few years ago, the first Friday of October was designated as National Manufacturing Day, a day of recognition, awareness and appreciation for the invaluable contributions America's manufacturing firms and their employees make to the nation's economy and inventive spirit. This year National Manufacturing Day was on Friday, October 3, and I hope you joined the celebration.

While admittedly U.S. manufacturing does not have the world dominance it once did, the industry is still a bedrock of the nation. For example, according to recent proposed Congressional legislation, the U.S. manufacturing sector alone, when ranked against the GDP of other nations would be the 10th largest economy in the world. This would make it larger than the individual national economies of Spain, Australia or South Korea. The manufacturing industry employs 11 billion Americans in jobs with wages and benefits one-third higher on average than other sectors with one of the highest economic multipliers of any industry.

The industrial good news is not limited just to the nation. New York City also has cause to celebrate. According to the Center for an Urban Future and the Comptroller's Office, the city boasts almost 6,000 manufacturing firms and after many years of steady decline, industrial employment has leveled off for the past three full years, holding steady at about 76,000 jobs. In fact, New York City's manufacturing sector saw a 6.4% employment increase for the first Quarter of 2014. To paraphrase Mark Twain, "The reports of manufacturing's demise have been greatly exaggerated."

Although not visible to many, places like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the College Point Corporate Park and Hunts Point bustle with the activity of manufacturers and their related industrial cousins. Besides the numerous start-up small boutique manufacturers and fabricators supplying the New York metro market, the city boasts large and midsize firms with national and international distribution. For example, Crystal Window & Door Systems, started 25 years ago by my immigrant father, operates a 205,000 s/f factory in Queens. We employ over 300 workers and professionals and annually export from New York City about 400,000 aluminum and vinyl window products to more than 35 states across the nation.

Despite the economic challenges, such as property taxes, energy rates and city policies that seem to favor small, start-up fabricators, many large and mid-size manufacturers remain loyal to New York City. Similar manufacturing success stories exist across the New York metro area. Contrary to what is commonly believed, manufacturing in the region is strong, vibrant and important.

Of course, in the 21st Century global economy, the New York City metro area will never realize the glory days of its manufacturing past, but we can still appreciate and celebrate this important part of the national and regional economy. So roll up your sleeves and raise a mug of good strong "get to work" morning coffee to toast the employees, managers and owners of America's and the metro area's manufacturing companies on a job well done!

Steve Chen is the chief operating officer of Crystal Window & Door Systems, Ltd., Flushing, N.Y.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540