

VERMONT *Guide*

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Students Participate in 'Made in Vermont' Days at Mack

Over 90 students and staff from three Vermont high schools attended Mack Molding's Made in Vermont days this week at its headquarters plant. All were upperclassmen at Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester, Arlington Memorial High School and the Career Development Center in Bennington.

Students toured the 'f'real' frozen beverage blender line, where virtually all of Mack's services come together to build the very complex product, including plastics, sheet metal, machining and product manufacture – with the procurement of over 400 unique parts from 63 suppliers – and final distribution. In addition to standing up to the rigors of the blend-it-yourself retail scene, this smart appliance automatically self-cleans and steam sanitizes, and alerts 'f'real' if there is ever a blender malfunction in the field. After seeing the way it's done in the world of modern manufacturing, the students were put to the test of building a simulated product themselves. Directed by the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center, the exercise pitted teams in a race against time to see who could manufacture the most high-quality product in a given period of time. A discussion regarding the skills needed in modern manufacturing and relative career paths at Mack wrapped up the day, followed by pizza and 'f'real' shakes.

Over a third of the students signed up for the opportunity to have more exposure in specific areas. "We'll follow up to put together meaningful programs for these students, such as job-shadowing, small group seminars or one-on-one mentoring programs," stated Jeff Somple, president, Mack Molding Northern Operations. "We value our youth...they represent the future, not only for Mack, but for all businesses in the state.

"Recent studies have confirmed what we've already been seeing – manufacturing is returning from China to the U.S.," adds Somple. "China is no longer the low-cost wage center it once was, which

means employment in U.S. manufacturing will be on the rise. We must have an educated and well-prepared employee base – our Made in Vermont Days represent just one of the ways we're trying to assist with that effort.”

Mack Molding is a leading custom plastics molder and supplier of contract manufacturing services, specializing in plastics design, prototyping, molding, sheet metal fabrication, machining and medical device manufacturing. Founded in 1920, Mack is a privately owned business that operates 11 facilities throughout the world. For more information, go to mack.com

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