

# DoD, Government, Educators, and Manufacturers Gather to Address Critical Electronics Workforce Shortage

*Summit participants strategize how to build a strong and sustainable workforce*

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This week, leaders from industry, education, and government came together to develop strategies for building a strong and sustainable domestic electronics and microelectronics manufacturing workforce.

Future Electronics Workforce: A Leadership Summit, which took place on the campus of Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Mich., included leaders from the Department of Defense (DoD) Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program, Executive Agent for PCB and Electronic Interconnect Technology, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan Technological University, Sen. Gary Peters Office, Sen. Debbie Stabenow's Office, Northrop Grumman, Calumet Electronics, Plexus, IPC, SMTA, MichiganWorks!, and others.

The event featured an inspiring keynote from Adele Ratcliff, Director of IBAS, DoD, who focused on the national imperative for developing industrial skills. IBAS ensures that the Department of Defense is positioned to effectively address industrial base issues and support the National Security Innovation Base. Ratcliff emphasized the need for industry, government, and educational institutions to work together to develop innovative and replicable strategies to elevate the next generation of skilled electronics workers.



Adele Ratcliff, Director of IBAS, DoD, speaks to the crowd at the Future Electronics Workforce Summit on Wednesday, August 17th, at Michigan Tech University's Rosza Center in Houghton, Michigan

Much attention has been focused on the recent passage of the CHIPS Act and the effort to onshore manufacturing. However, industry experts acknowledged that talent development remains an equally critical issue. "The future of the American electronics industry depends on skilled workers," said Chris Mitchell, IPC VP of Global Government Relations, who discussed strategies for rebuilding the domestic electronics ecosystem. "Our industry supports more than 5 million U.S. jobs. These jobs are critical to keeping our nation safe and functioning. Talent development is nothing less than a matter of national security and global competitiveness."

The summit included a strategy session to develop collaborative strategies to solve what was framed as a critical shortage of American electronics industry workers. Participants pinpointed key strategies, including:

- \* integrate educational (K12, trade school, university) systems and industry promoting collaboration and identify and broadly sharing and scaling effective models;
- \* initiate lifelong connections with future workers, starting as young as elementary school and continuing throughout their careers, raise awareness about education, career, and future growth opportunities;
- \* address different ways to develop and offer a wide variety curriculum and educational formats to provide more immediate and adaptable training as it is needed; and
- \* engage and retain workers by connecting them to the greater mission, putting their roles into the broader context, and showing them why they are important.

The work session concluded with a commitment by industry leaders to continue to refine these strategies and to develop action items to be implemented by all sectors.

During the session, IBAS praised the novel approaches of Michigan Technological University's Dr. Chris Middlebrook, associate professor of electrical engineering, and his efforts to close education gaps and expand educational programming to include industry partners like Calumet Electronics and Plexus. In announcing plans to scale the MTU program nationally, Ratcliff said, "We celebrate your contributions to national security and national defense. Chris saw what an aging workforce could mean for this community, and he decided to do something about it. He assembled the experts and tapped the community ecosystem and you all responded. From what've heard here today, you all deserve awards."

Calumet Electronics CEO Steve Vairo praised the efforts of the many participants who traveled to Michigan's remote Upper Peninsula to take part in the summit. "It was an honor to have top leaders from our industry make the trip to our community," said Vairo. "This meeting reinforced our mutual commitment to American manufacturing and workforce development. Conversations like this are how change begins."

About Calumet Electronics

Calumet Electronics Corporation is an award-winning research, design, engineering, and manufacturing company specializing in high-quality printed circuit boards. The organization fuels collaboration with distinguished suppliers and customers to advance the production of leading-edge electronics in the United States.

Calumet Electronics is recognized for industry thought leadership and the rapid advancement and commercialization of ground-breaking engineering and manufacturing processes, including advanced HDI and HDBU, RF, and microwave IC substrates.

Calumet is 100% American-owned and operated with zero offshoring or outsourcing. It is America's only HUBZone-certified PCB manufacturer. Incorporated in 1968, Calumet is a high-volume manufacturer of PCBs, shipping over 4 million circuit boards annually from its 160,000 sq. ft. facility located in the remote Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Calumet Electronics is one of a select number of American Printed Circuit Board manufacturers with the integrated capability to design, engineer, prototype, and produce the advanced PCB technology.

Accreditations: HUBZone, IPC1791, NADCAP, AS9100d (NSF ISR), ISO9001 (NSF ISR), MIL-PRF-31032/55110, ITAR, UL, Cage Code

Learn more at [www.calumetelectronics.com](http://www.calumetelectronics.com).

#### About IBAS

The mission of IBAS is to provide the analysis needed to ensure a healthy Defense Industrial Base is able to meet the Warfighters' needs. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.businessdefense.gov/index.html>.

#### About Michigan Technological University

Michigan Technological University is a public research university founded in 1885 in Houghton, Michigan, and is home to more than 7,000 students from 55 countries around the world. Consistently ranked among the best universities in the country for return on investment, the University offers more than 125 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in science and technology, engineering, computing, forestry, business and economics, health professions, humanities, mathematics, social sciences, and the arts. The rural campus is situated just miles from Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, offering year-round opportunities for outdoor adventure.

#### About IPC

IPC is the global association that helps OEMs, EMS, PCB manufacturers, cable and wire harness manufacturers and electronics industry suppliers build electronics better. IPC members strengthen their bottom line and build more reliable, high-quality products through proven

standards, certification, education and training, thought leadership, advocacy, innovative solutions and industry intelligence. For more information visit: <https://www.ipc.org/>.

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