SME Recognizes Top Manufacturing Innovators At 54th Annual North American Manufacturing Research Conference

STATE COLLEGE, PA, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Breakthroughs in manufacturing took center stage today as SME honored leading researchers and professionals at the 54th annual North American Manufacturing Research Conference (NAMRC 54), hosted by Penn State University.

Organized annually by the North American Manufacturing Research Institution of SME (NAMRI | SME), NAMRC is North America's leading international forum for applied research and innovation in manufacturing and design, bringing together global researchers, industry leaders, engineers and students to share insights and present cutting-edge research to drive innovation, efficiency, and quality in modern manufacturing.

Each year, NAMRI | SME honors individuals whose research, leadership and technological advancements are shaping the future of manufacturing and elevating the field as a whole.

“These awards recognize exceptional leadership and research across the entire scope of manufacturing engineering, and it’s an honor for NAMRI | SME to celebrate the impactful contributions the recipients are making to such a critical field,” said Dr. Brett Conner, SME chief manufacturing officer.

Named in honor of the late Dr. Shien-Ming (S.M.) Wu of the University of Michigan, the S.M. Wu Research Implementation Award recognizes outstanding research presented at NAMRC that has achieved significant commercial and/or societal impact following implementation. The 2026 award was presented to John W. Sutherland, FSME, Distinguished Professor and Fehsenfeld Family Head School of Sustainability Engineering and Environmental Engineering at Purdue University.

Sutherland has reported fundamental contributions on sustainable manufacturing, maximizing effective use of material and energy resources and minimizing waste and environmental and human health impacts in the engineering of products and manufacturing systems.

Over nearly 35 years, Sutherland has developed core concepts, advanced rigorous engineering research and partnered with major manufacturers to implement sustainable manufacturing practices. These efforts have generated significant financial gains and meaningful socio-

environmental benefits.

More significantly, his work has transformed how the manufacturing research community views multi-dimensional sustainability issues related to products and manufacturing processes/systems. These outstanding contributions, as reflected in Sutherland's NAMRC papers leading to industrial implementation, underscore the kind of research impact the S.M. Wu Award was established to recognize.

NAMRI | SME Outstanding Lifetime Service Award
This award honors members for their long-standing service and contributions to NAMRI | SME. The 2026 recipient was:

Taylan Altan, PhD, FSME, FASME, FASM, Faculty Emeritus, Integrated Systems Engineering, The Ohio State University.

Outstanding Young Manufacturing Engineer Award
Three recipients of the 2026 John Agapiou Outstanding Young Manufacturing Engineer Award were recognized at NAMRC 54. This year's awards are named for John Agapiou, Retired Technical Fellow Engineer, Global Research & Development for General Motors.

This distinction is awarded to engineers under 35 who have made exceptional contributions early in their careers.

The honorees recognized at NAMRC 54 were:

Jennifer Bennett, PhD, assistant professor, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., SME Member since 2024

Newell Moser, PhD, mechanical engineer/research scientist, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Boulder, Colo., SME Member since 2025

Sneha Prabha Narra, PhD, assistant professor, Carnegie Mellon University, Gibsonia, Pa., SME Member since 2023

2026 Outstanding Paper Awards
Three research papers were recognized as Outstanding Papers from among nearly 270 submissions received during calendar year 2025:

"Cloud-Direct NC: A New Generation of Numerical Control Technology"
Authors: Shivam Garg, Liang Tung Chen, Aryan Shroff, Ricardo Toro, Shiv G. Kapoor, Jorge E. Correa, and Placid M. Ferreira

"PI-TSAD: A Physically Informed Time-Series Anomaly Detection Framework for Real-Time

Monitoring of Keyhole Collapse in Laser Powder Bed Fusion”
Authors: Carter Taylor, Conor Porter, Garrett Mathesen, Kyle Mumm, Fred Carter III and Jian Cao

“Exploiting the SPH Meshless Approach Potential for Tube Friction Stir Extrusion: Insights into Process Mechanics, Grain Size, and Micro-Mechanical Properties”
Authors: Salvatore Russo, Riccardo Puleo, Gianluca Buffa and Livan Fratini

NAMRC Student Research Presentation Award
This award supports the development of future leaders in manufacturing research. Finalists co-author and present their papers to a panel from the NAMRI | SME Honors Committee. The winner of the 2026 competition was:

“PI-TSAD: A Physically Informed Time-Series Anomaly Detection Framework for Real-Time Monitoring of Keyhole Collapse in Laser Powder Bed Fusion” by Carter Taylor, Conor Porter, Garrett Mathesen, Kyle Mumm, Fred Carter III and Jian Cao

SME Blue Sky Award / David Dornfeld Manufacturing Vision Award
This competition encourages bold, transformative ideas that address grand challenges in manufacturing and can attract government support. Finalists present to the Blue Sky Competition Selection Committee. The winner of the 2026 competition was:

Winner: “Protein-Based Manufacturing (ProMan): Programming Matter through Molecular Information” by Mostafa Bedewy, PhD, University of Pittsburgh; Won Min Park, PhD, Kansas State University; and Meng Wang, PhD, University of Houston

NAMRI Founders Lecture
Following the NAMRI | SME Awards Ceremony, the 2026 Founders Lecture was delivered by Steven Y. Liang, PhD, FSME, FASME, FAET, Regents’ Professor and Morris M. Bryan Jr. Professor for Advanced Manufacturing Systems, G. W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology. In his presentation, “Everlasting Feast of Manufacturing Science and Technology,” Liang presented an overview of how NAMRI/SME and NAMRC have pushed forward the state of manufacturing science, engineering and technology on a global scale.

NAMRC 55 will take place June 21–25, 2027, at Oregon State University. For more information, visit https://namrc.sme.org/.

About SME

Established in 1932 as a nonprofit organization, SME represents the manufacturing industry, including manufacturers, academia, professionals, students, and the communities in which they operate. We believe manufacturing holds the key to economic growth and prosperity, and champion the industry's potential as a diverse, thriving, and valued ecosystem. SME accelerates

new technology adoption and builds talent and capabilities to advance manufacturing and drive competitiveness, resiliency, and national security. SME designs new ways to understand and solve problems, and our solutions advance the next wave of growth in manufacturing. Learn more at SME.org.

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