



More than 70 junior high girls recently learned about careers in the manufacturing industry at the Women in Manufacturing Summit at the Quad-Cities Campus.

The day included breakout sessions where students participated in virtual welding, supply chain management, making keychains on a CNC machine, and production line flow. The students enjoyed lunch from [The Little Brown Box Delicatessen](#) (a woman-owned business) and a panel discussion with women who are making an impact in the manufacturing industry.

Thank you to event sponsors [John Deere](#), the [City of Galva](#), [Springfield Armory](#) and [McLaughlin Body Company](#) and panelists Jill Castree, Renee Jewell, Sara Ryan, Beth Takemoto and Jodi Zimmerman.

Presenter biographies

Jill Castree

Jill is a senior manager of supply chain management for Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas. She earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a double major in supply chain management and marketing. During college, she was selected for an internship with John Deere doing supply chain management for the Ottumwa, IA, location. Upon graduation, Jill was offered a role in the supply chain department at John Deere Waterloo Works. In 2014, Jill moved to Texas and started working for Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas, the third largest forklift manufacturer in the world by revenue. Headquartered in Kyoto, Japan, Mitsubishi offered Jill an opportunity for growth. She started as a commodity manager followed by promotions to senior commodity manager, purchasing manager and now, senior manager of supply chain management. Over the past nine years, Jill has enjoyed the opportunities and challenges of working at a large, global company. Her team manages \$700 million-plus in spend, sources for five production lines with global suppliers, and negotiates contracts and cost savings with those suppliers. Jill also is leading a transformational software implementation to increase efficiency, mitigate supply chain and informational security risk, and take supplier collaboration to a new level. Jill lives in the Quad Cities and continues to travel frequently between Mitsubishi's plant locations in Marengo (near Chicago), Houston and Japan.

Renee Jewell

Renee began her career at John Deere in 2006 in material flow at Davenport Works. She held various roles in supply management before leading the backhoe loader assembly operations as a module leader at Dubuque Works. Renee then joined the seeding and tillage organization where she held roles of increasing responsibility - the global product line manager for air seeding, supply management manager for planters, material flow, production planning and control manager, and the business unit leader for planter assembly, FPV and shipping. She then progressed to Harvester Works as the business unit leader for sheet metal fabrication and service parts. In 2019, Renee rejoined construction and forestry as the global order fulfillment process leader. From there, Renee led strategic sourcing globally for the steel commodity. She then transitioned to the Region 4 logistics manager where she and her team were responsible for all inbound and outbound shipments for the U.S., Mexico and Canada, global packaging and warehouse competency. Currently she is the materials manager at Harvester. In this role she is responsible for managing the procurement, material flow execution, inbound/outbound logistics, warehousing operations, inventory control and order fulfillment functions for the Harvester factory. Renee earned a bachelor's degree in business management from Purdue University and an MBA from St. Ambrose University.

Sara Ryan

Sara has been with McLaughlin Body Company for about 20 years and has held many positions including industrial engineer, manufacturing engineer, account manager, human resource manager and industrial relations/environmental health and safety manager. Last year she shed the HR portion and is just focusing on the EHS portion. Currently she is the EHS manager and handles all safety and environmental matters at McLaughlin, safety training, safety enforcement, EPA reporting, wastewater, disposal of waste, stormwater and air emissions. She has a Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering from the University of Iowa, a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Rockhurst College, and got halfway through an MBA at the University of Missouri.

Beth Takemoto

Beth has 17 years of manufacturing, quality and operations experience at John Deere. She started her career in Ottumwa in 2005 working as material flow engineer, then manufacturing engineer, and finally a team leader. In 2012, she moved on to a role at John Deere corporate where she served as the competency project manager implementing the production supervisor leadership training in the U.S., Brazil and China. In 2014, she moved into a new product engineering supervisor role at the design center for Harvester Works bringing in new combine programs. Following that, she moved to Hagie Manufacturing, a joint venture with Deere, and became the quality and manufacturing manager implementing key quality processes and significantly decreasing their failure per machine metric. She moved into business unit leader in combine body then front-end equipment at Harvester before taking on her current role as quality and manufacturing process manager at Davenport Works. She is very proud of her leadership in the diversity, equity and inclusion arena during her career and is currently the co-chair of ABLEd, an employee resource group centered around those who are differently abled as well as being an engaged member of the Women In Manufacturing group at Deere. Beth graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering and earned an E-MBA from the Tippie Program at the University of Iowa.

Jodi Zimmerman

Jodi is a team leader at John Deere Davenport Works supervising a machining department. Her first job in manufacturing was an internship with John Deere while she was completing a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois. She was a manufacturing engineering intern working on large tractors and loved her job. The factory was fast paced, energetic, and gave her the opportunity to interact with people on a daily basis while still using her engineering skillset. She has worked at four different factories since then and has continued to feel valued and respected as a woman in the workplace.

Jodi believes that quick thinking, strong communication skills and good decision-making ability allow anyone to succeed in a manufacturing role no matter the gender!

Thanks to Cambridge Junior/Senior High School, John Deere Middle School (Moline), Neponset Grade School and Wilson Middle School (Moline) for bringing their students to the summit.

[View photos from the event on Facebook.](#)

Media coverage:

- WBHF/KLJB - [Students learn about careers at Women in Manufacturing Summit](#)
- KWQC - [Empowering girls: Black Hawk College's 'Women in Manufacturing' summit inspires next generation](#)
- WQAD - [Black Hawk College helping girls find their place in the manufacturing industry](#)
- Dispatch/Argus/Quad-City Times - ["Formulate a vision for themselves": Quad-Cities girls learn about manufacturing trades](#)

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