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Robots Can Help Keep Manufacturing in Michigan, Says Trade Group

Manufacturing companies who want to remain globally competitive can use robotics to keep jobs in Michigan, according to the Ann Arbor-based Robotic Industries Association.

“Manufacturing companies in Michigan, as well as throughout North America, are at a crossroads in determining how to remain globally competitive,” said Jeff Burnstein, RIA president. “They can send jobs overseas or take advantage of robotics and other automated technologies to keep jobs here. Increasingly, we hope to see companies choose the latter option.”

Burnstein said the robots are sometimes viewed as a threat to jobs, but in reality, the true threat is the loss of global competitiveness.

“If you work for a manufacturing company that can’t compete anymore with companies in China, India, Mexico or somewhere else in the world, your job is definitely in danger,” Burnstein said. “But, if your company is using robotics to improve product quality, increase productivity, speed time to market, and reduce manufacturing costs, you know there’s a chance to remain competitive, keep jobs here, and grow in the future.”

Every robot on the plant floor requires people to build it, program it, maintain it, and apply it, which is why robots typically do not lead to an overall reduction in jobs. Plus, robots remove people from dangerous and repetitive jobs, freeing them up for higher skilled, higher paying jobs, Burnstein asserted.

Business strategies for using robots will be the focus of “How Robots Help American Companies Compete in the Global Marketplace” Webinar slated for 3 p.m. Eastern time on Tuesday, April 13. One speaker, [Drew Greenblatt, President and CEO of Marlin Steel Wire](#), has boosted business and payroll by turning the tables on low wage countries through judicious use of [robots and automation](#). Robots and lean manufacturing is the topic from Harley-Davidson, and Spirit AeroSystems looks at using robots in non-traditional applications.

This Webinar, and two others (one aimed at students considering careers in robotics, another focused on robots in the food industry) are sponsored by RIA as part of National

Robotics Week. Congress designated April 10-18 as National Robotics Week in order to focus attention on how robots can help our nation become more competitive, Burnstein said. Events are being planned across the country.

“National Robotics Week provides an excellent platform to get the word out about the opportunities created by robotics,” said RIA chairman Dean Elkins of Motoman Inc., a leading robotics manufacturer. “We have a great story to tell students, manufacturing companies, and the general public about the importance of robotics to the future of America.”

For more information about RIA and the robotics industry, visit Robotics Online or contact RIA Headquarters at (734) 994-6088.

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