

# News Release

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## **Fostering smart manufacturing in southwestern PA Phoenix Contact and Digital Foundry at New Kensington partnership drives economic growth**

**Middletown, PA** – Phoenix Contact is partnering with Penn State's Digital Foundry at New Kensington to help workers in Westmoreland County, Pa., develop skills for today's smart manufacturing environment. The Digital Foundry is a regional hub that fosters the growth and economic vitality of Southwestern Pennsylvania through education, training, and the accelerated adoption of digital and smart manufacturing technologies.

Students can use real-world automation equipment in a learning space that mimics an actual manufacturing floor. As a Technology Partner at the "Game-Changer" level, Phoenix Contact is providing in-kind donations, such as PLCnext control, Ethernet switches, cables, and other products. In addition, Phoenix Contact employees are providing technical support and education.

CESMII, the Smart Manufacturing Institute, has designated the Digital Foundry as one of its Smart Manufacturing Innovation Centers (SMICs). These centers of excellence throughout the U.S. focus on building industry-specific smart manufacturing ecosystems.

"At Phoenix Contact, we believe in the promise of smart manufacturing empowered by open technology," said Louis Grice, vice president of digitalization and government relations at Phoenix Contact USA. "To live up to this promise, we're proud to support partners like those at the Digital Foundry. They make learning accessible to their community. By doing so, they help grow the knowledge and know-how needed to put leading technologies to work. Together, we're stronger as we contribute to a bright and sustainable future for U.S. manufacturing and its stakeholders."

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"We are thrilled to welcome Phoenix Contact as one of our newest Technology Partners at the Digital Foundry," said Sherri McCleary, executive director. "Phoenix Contact has just celebrated 100 years of connecting people with technologies, and our vision of improving lives and strengthening businesses through access to digital technology couldn't be more aligned for this partnership. We look forward to working together on our common goals around education, skills building, and supporting the growth and health of manufacturing through digital and smart manufacturing solutions."

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

Photo credit: Rebecca Dietrich, Penn State New Kensington

#### **About Phoenix Contact**

Phoenix Contact is a global market leader based in Germany. Since 1923, Phoenix Contact has created products to connect, distribute, and control power and data flows. Our products are found in nearly all industrial settings, but we have a strong focus on the energy, infrastructure, process, factory automation, and e-mobility markets. Sustainability and responsibility guide every action we take, and we're proud to work with our customers to empower a smart and sustainable world for future generations. Our global network includes 22,000 employees in 100+ countries. Phoenix Contact USA has headquarters near Harrisburg, Pa., and employs more than 1,100 people across the U.S.

For more information about Phoenix Contact or its products, visit [www.phoenixcontact.com](http://www.phoenixcontact.com), call technical service at 800-322-3225, or email [info@phoenixcontact.com](mailto:info@phoenixcontact.com).

#### **About the Digital Foundry at New Kensington**

Penn State University's Digital Foundry, located in the heart of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, serves as a dynamic innovation and manufacturing hub. Its primary objective is to foster economic development by offering technical support to the manufacturing industry and skills enhancement in digital and smart manufacturing technologies through hands-on learning. As one of CESMII's seven Smart Manufacturing Innovation Centers, the Digital Foundry boasts state-of-the-art digital manufacturing hardware, software, and industry certifications. Bolstered by a team with extensive industry experience, the Digital Foundry has been operational since 2022 and is a collaborative effort between Penn State New Kensington and the Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland. It has established and implemented a robust operational framework providing tailored technical assistance to manufacturers while also offering comprehensive education and workforce training programs spanning from K-16 education sector through current workforce. Through this mission, the Digital Foundry is working towards the vision of improved lives and strengthened businesses through access to digital technologies in the heart of a rustbelt community it calls home. For more information, visit [digitalfoundrynk.com](http://digitalfoundrynk.com).

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