

Midlands Tech Makes the Mold for Smithsonian Museum Event



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When faced with a shortfall of educational parts for an exhibit in the 2016 National Week of Making, the Smithsonian Museum turned to **Midlands Technical College (MTC)** for a solution.

“The Smithsonian needed several parts that were reverse engineered from famous inventions,” said Alan Grier, MTC program coordinator for machine tool and mechatronics. “One was a solenoid (electromagnet) that was used in many inventions, including the Morse telegraph.”

MTC machine tool students designed and made the mold for the solenoid spool to be used in the event. “We are lucky. Our shop has all the advanced equipment to make complex tooling like injection molds,” Grier said.

After the mold was complete, MTC students produced 2,000 of these parts on MTC’s 75-ton plastic injection molding machine. Grier drove the parts to Washington, D.C. just in time for the Smithsonian event, which was developed to celebrate makers across the U.S. and empower

participants of diverse ages and backgrounds to explore opportunities to innovate, create and build.

“The event was amazing,” said Grier. “There were hundreds of students learning, having fun and building inventions using what MTC provided.”

In addition to students and educational officials, about 2,000 members of the public attended the museum event and viewed the exhibits MTC helped create.

“Opportunities like this show young people how valuable industrial skills can be and the broad variety of career options that are available,” said Alan Clayton, MTC department chair for industrial technology. “They get interested in the hands-on nature of the technologies, and it’s really important for people to see how these skills can turn into a great career with the right kind of training.”

To learn more about the diverse programs within the MTC Industrial Technology department, visit www.midlandstech.edu.