

Jay Timmons' Remarks to Graco (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

February 4, 2015

Hello, Graco! It's great to be in Minnesota and real pleasure to be with all of you here today.

Thank you for that warm welcome, and thank you Chuck [Rescorla] for that generous introduction. We appreciate Graco hosting us this afternoon.

There's nothing I love more about my job than getting to come to places like this – to stand with you on the shop floor and thank you for the important work you do. Not just for Graco. Not just for Minnesota. But for our great country.

You see, without manufacturing, the story of this great and indomitable country wouldn't have been possible.

When we were torn apart by a bloody Civil War, manufacturing helped sew us back together.

When we were trampled beneath a devastating Depression, manufacturing helped us get back on our feet.

When we were tested by a world war, bravely fighting tyranny on two fronts, manufacturing helped arm the Arsenal of Democracy here at home that powered America into a new era of leadership.

When we were tripped up by the Great Recession and many wondered whether manufacturing in the United States was past its prime, we not only proved the doubters wrong, but have roared back even stronger.

Manufacturers in the United States answer our nation's call time and again because the world needs America to be its beacon – and it's us in this room who power her light.

Today, because of the people on this shop floor and others throughout the country, the state of manufacturing is as resilient and robust as ever – and that's why, once again, America is rising.

I'm so proud to go to work every day leading the National Association of Manufacturers – the unified voice that advocates for the promise of manufacturing in America – because I'm proud to be associated with innovators and problem-solvers, like you. That's what we do.

When manufacturers see a problem, they fix it. If they can't find a solution, they create it. That's who we are. And, by the way, isn't that the American story, too?

Manufacturing in the United States has succeeded because our industry and our solutions are grounded on four fundamental values – values that also happen to be the foundational and unifying principles of the exceptional country we love.

The first of these is free enterprise: market forces that drive innovation and growth better than any other system ever conceived.

The second is competitiveness: our ability to invest and expand markets and succeed in the global economy.

The third is individual liberty: the creativity and entrepreneurship unleashed by protecting, defending and advancing the basic freedoms enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

And the fourth is equal opportunity: our shared belief that every one of us, if given the chance, has the potential to prove we can contribute to the success of our companies, our communities, and our country.

These values unite all of us – Republicans, Democrats and Independents –even at a time when our country seems more divided than ever. And they can help move manufacturing to new heights.

Manufacturers in the United States hold fast to these principles because we're Americans with a deep sense of responsibility. We lead by example.

Don't get me wrong – this sense of duty we feel isn't grounded in patriotism alone. It's also about pragmatism. This is very much about economics.

Look at manufacturing's direct impact on the economy. We are creating more jobs, making more products, and making them better than ever before. Every year, manufacturing contributes more than \$2 trillion to the American economy – one of every eight dollars in that economy.

The nearly half a million manufacturers in this state represent every one in seven jobs. Manufacturers have the largest total payroll of any sector – you are responsible for contributing \$37 billion to your state's economy.

Yet we can't underestimate manufacturing's *indirect* influence, too: Manufacturing has the biggest multiplier effect of any industry. Every manufacturing dollar in America adds one dollar and thirty-seven cents to the economy – nothing else comes close. And a single manufacturing job can lead to the creation of three to five more jobs in other industries. What a great return on investment that is.

Americans know manufacturing provides pathways to the middle class, to a stable and secure retirement and to a brighter future for every generation. Manufacturing improves people's lives not just through the products we make, but through the economy we strengthen. You simply can't have a strong service sector, financial sector or education system without thriving manufacturing.

So you can see why manufacturing has a disproportionate responsibility to keep our economy humming.

But there's another side to this coin – and that's what I want us all to think about and speak up about and advocate for. All of this good news also means that when our policymakers choose wrongly, don't act or sit idle, the missed-opportunity costs are higher for our sector.

We all suffer when our policies do not match our principles. That doesn't just matter to us – it matters to every single American consumer, family, and job-seeker.

We need policies that live up to your example, your work ethic, and your promise.

Our workers are the best and most productive in the world, and I believe they should have the best environment in which to innovate, invent and invest.

This is not just about reviving an economy, but perfecting our union. It's about creating a new, brighter future for everyone, by dreaming it, by building it, and by making it – right here at home – as we've always done when we're at our best.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a popular misconception about manufacturing – that we're just about machines. It's about people—you—and the potential we can unleash.

I know this firsthand. My grandfather left the family farm to stand in line for six months at the local paper plant in Chillicothe, Ohio. He went back every day until he got the job that would move my family into the middle class.

I think about his persistence every time I meet any of the great men and women who've chosen this career that's so important to our country – people with the same patriotism and perseverance of my grandfather and of a Minneapolis parking-lot attendant named Russell Gray and his brother Leil.

Manufacturing is about those people. It's about people who stay true to, and rise with, the principles of free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty, and equal opportunity.

When the world needs America to help make it out of a rough patch, it's manufacturers in the United States who make the things that make it happen. We are the ones who make anything possible.

And, today, we must do so again.

Like any manufacturing process, we need to put the right pieces in place. That starts with the right public policy – one that advances manufacturing and keeps America as exceptional as ever – the world's best example of opportunity and optimism.

We need to generate ideas and designs, calibrate the technologies and develop the logistics—that starts with our business leaders, and our workers, and with each other.

And like any machine that makes anything, nothing happens unless we push the “start” button – and that starts with you – the work you do, the voices you raise, the quintessentially American values by which you live, and your support of manufacturing in the United States of America.

Thank you very much.