

— EXPERT —
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ALABAMA LEADERS SPOTLIGHT WORKFORCE INNOVATION AT ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SKILLS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Alabama took center stage at **HolonIQ’s 24th Annual Back-to-School Summit** as Kevin Taylor of **AIDT** and Don Griffith of **Y-tec Keylex Toyotetsu Alabama, Inc. (YKTA)** shared best practices in workforce development during the **Advanced Manufacturing Skills Leadership Council**, hosted by **inSpring**.

The session highlighted how Alabama’s strong mix of public-private collaboration—anchored by AIDT, major employers like YKTA, and workforce solutions partners such as inSpring—is shaping the future of advanced manufacturing statewide and nationally.

AIDT: CUSTOMIZATION, INNOVATION, AND SCALE

AIDT, Alabama’s flagship workforce development agency, currently supports **117 active projects** credited with creating more than **25,000 jobs statewide**. Taylor emphasized that AIDT’s strength lies in its **customized approach** to training. Companies receive programs tailored to their workforce needs, from immersive on-the-job experiences to specialized work skills analysis and video-based training modules.

For YKTA, this meant adapting the frequency and delivery of training as production scaled. “Our programs are designed to flex with company needs,” Taylor noted. “That flexibility ensures Alabama’s manufacturers remain competitive while workers gain the skills to succeed.”

YKTA: SAFETY, QUALITY, AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Griffith described YKTA’s Limestone County facility, part of the Mazda-Toyota joint venture, where the company produces the **“skeleton” of vehicles**. He underscored that safety and quality are woven into the culture from day one. “The safety of every vehicle relies on us,” Griffith said, noting how employees are trained to understand their role in ensuring structural integrity.

Through its partnership with AIDT, YKTA has strengthened **recruiting pipelines, pre-employment screening, and immersive training programs**, creating a workforce culture built on precision, accountability, and shared responsibility.

INSRING: REGIONAL HUB FOR PARTNERSHIPS

As host of the Council, **inSpring** spotlighted Alabama’s workforce innovations to an international audience. With expertise in **advanced manufacturing, energy and healthcare infrastructure practice areas**, inSpring plays a pivotal role in aligning employers, educators, and workforce developers to address critical hiring and training challenges.

Expanding this mission, **inSpring has established a regional hub operation in Alabama** to support **industry-wide organizations in attracting, retaining, and upskilling their workforce**. Active partnerships with **UAB Medicine and Diversified Energy Company** are already demonstrating how this hub delivers scalable solutions that blend employer needs with educational pathways, ensuring industries across Alabama have the talent pipelines required to grow and compete. **Charus Campbell, Program Manager at inSpring**, leads this collaborative effort locally in Opelika/Auburn and across the state.

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION

The discussion also highlighted Alabama’s investment in building a pipeline of future talent. AIDT’s **“Modern Manufacturing” high school course**—now enrolling more than **3,000 students**—equips graduates with job-ready skills, opening pathways into high-demand careers straight out of high school.

A MODEL FOR WORKFORCE GROWTH

From **revitalizing community assets** like the old Montgomery Mall into modern training hubs, to developing **industry-driven centers of excellence** in robotics and EV technology, Alabama is proving how workforce innovation translates into long-term economic competitiveness.

For Opelika and the Auburn region, these strategies are already creating direct impact. With YKTA anchoring local industry, AIDT driving training and development, and inSpring coordinating partnerships through its regional hub, the area is emerging as a **model for workforce resilience and growth**.

A NATIONAL STAGE, A LOCAL COMMITMENT

The New York event underscored Alabama’s leadership in advanced manufacturing, but its greatest impact resonates back home. As Campbell concluded, “Every conversation we have on the national stage is about how we can continue to invest locally—supporting employers, preparing workers, and strengthening Alabama’s economy.”

“What sets Alabama apart is not just the programs, but the partnerships.”
“By bringing together industry, education, and workforce development, we’re ensuring our communities remain competitive, resilient, and future-ready.”

-CHARUS CAMPBELL,
PROGRAM MANAGER AT INSFRING