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High-Tech Equipment from Autocam Medical Installed in WMU AMP Lab

KENTWOOD, MI—(October 15, 2019)—Autocam Medical, a contract manufacturer of precision surgical and medical components and devices announced three new pieces of their manufacturing equipment were installed in Western Michigan University's (WMU) regional state-of-the-art Advanced Manufacturing Partnership Laboratory (AMP Lab).

The equipment is just one example of Autocam Medical's commitment to creating a skilled workforce. They are also a key partner in the AMP program, which is focused on encouraging and facilitating the development of students pursuing careers in engineering and manufacturing. In addition, they participate in a CNC Machinist Apprentice program in which they send workers to college to receive training in computer numerical control (CNC) machining. Students that complete 728 hours of classroom instruction while maintaining a full work schedule receive their journeyman's card in CNC Machining and 27 college credits towards an associate's degree.

Now students in the program will have access to some specialized equipment. The AMP lab equipment, a CNC 5 Axis Mill, a Swiss lathe, and a 3D metal printer, will provide engineering students and current engineers and designers with an opportunity to experience the high-tech devices needed to develop and test new products and prototypes. "We are primarily focused on the medical industry, so the machines are designed to make smaller parts," said John Kennedy IV, General Manager at Autocam Medical.

For example, the CNC 5 Axis Mill is used to make metal orthopedic devices such as ankle replacements, shoulder implants, hip sockets, and trauma plates for stabilizing broken bones. The Swiss lathe is designed to make long and slender round components for different uses. The 3D metal printer can print ready-to-finish objects.

In addition to the opportunity to use the specialized equipment, students will also be able to receive valuable input from industry experts at the lab. "Engineering students that have a concept that is little bit more technical than what they have the ability do on the Web, can come down here and say, 'I have this great idea can you guys help me figure out how to make this?,' while they learn more about advanced machining," said John Kennedy IV, General Manager at Autocam Medical.

The facility is located on the bottom two floors of WMU's building at 200 Ionia Avenue SW in Grand Rapids. Students begin their learning in the apprentice lab and classroom and then move down to the lower level, where the new equipment from Autocam Medical is located for hands-on experience. In addition to providing students with the tools they need to bring their concepts to fruition, the location of the Autocam Medical equipment in the lab's lower level allows passersby to have a birds-eye view of the machines from the sidewalk above.

"This type of visibility will allow people to see manufacturing in process," said John Kennedy IV. "It will also help raise the profile of advanced manufacturing in downtown Grand Rapids and draw more people into skilled trade careers. Manufacturers are struggling to fill these positions with well-trained workers who can become productive immediately. The AMP Lab helps close that gap."

Autocam Medical's President, John Kennedy, has played a primary role in this unique partnership between private industry and public institutions. He has helped connect Herman Miller and Paragon Die and Engineering to the program which includes several other area manufactures and donors such as, Amway, Cascade Engineering, Flexco, Haworth, and Rockwell Automation. Besides WMU, the companies will be involved with Grand Rapids Community College, Ferris State University, and Aquinas College. As a result, the Lab becomes a resource for all of West Michigan and beyond.

About Autocam Medical

Autocam Medical is a global contract manufacturer of precision-machined drill bits, drivers, screws, plates, cutting tools and other complex, highly engineered surgical implants, instruments and handpieces, as well as other device components. Clients are involved with instruments and devices used in procedures including the foot and ankle, hand and wrist, hip and knee, shoulder and elbow, spine, as well as ophthalmology and craniomaxillofacial procedures. The company offers a value-added approach to high-precision manufacturing with specialties in CNC milling, turning and cutter grinding. The company has achieved ISO 13485 and ISO 9001 certification and is FDA Registered and been awarded a VISA certificate in Brazil. Autocam Medical has facilities in the U.S., China and Brazil.

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