# DEARBORN, Mich., December 12, 2011 â€” The SME

Society of Manufacturing Engineers

*The SME Education Foundation has partnered with The Edge Factor, a new HD series to change public perception of manufacturing and inspire its careers.*

DEARBORN, Mich., December 12, 2011 — The SME Education Foundation announces a new partnership with The Edge Factor [1], a high energy, HD series that is rebranding the manufacturing industry with film and putting its advanced technologies center stage. The SME Education Foundation has also been named the community foundation for The Edge Factor.

The partnership builds on the SME Education Foundation [2]'s $5.2 million effort to push boundaries and change public perception of manufacturing, transform manufacturing education and address the shortage of manufacturing and technical talent in the United States.

"This is a great opportunity for manufacturing," says Bart A. Aslin, chief executive officer, SME Education Foundation. "Technology is moving at warp speed and we think The Edge Factor series does a great job of showcasing the energy and ingenuity of the manufacturing industry, and certainly its pride. Manufacturers up and down the chain need to join us on this one. We're directing a portion of the funding to our K-12 programming which includes manufacturing scholarships. The long-term benefits are unending."

The new reality show with a twist chronicles manufacturing innovation. In its latest episode, "Gnarly Metal," the team visits Straitline Components, a British Columbia-based manufacturer of mountain bike gear and components. Viewers are introduced to machining technologies supporting new designs for various elements of a mountain bike that could change the game of slopestyle riders forever.

Jeremy Bout, producer of The Edge Factor, brings a unique perspective to the series, a career in manufacturing which includes cutting tool design and engineering. Astounded by the role manufacturing plays in everyday life, and how little the general public understands it, he has assembled a unique team to bridge the gap between the visual media world and that of manufacturers. They all recognize that people working in manufacturing – designers, programmers, and engineers, sometimes with those capabilities all wrapped up in one person, with years spent honing their skills; often rival that of a doctor or surgeon.

The SME Education Foundation and The Edge Factor believe they are perfectly aligned with a common goal to increase public awareness of how manufacturing is shaping our world and affecting our global community.

Viewers are reminded that manufacturing is the backbone of our economy when they see real people doing extraordinary things not generally seen. The series make a serious contribution to workforce development by providing incredibly diverse and interesting segments which are appealing to young people. The intent is to also engage the manufacturing community and encourage them to provide access to their innovative thinkers for demonstrations of current technology and processes.

Today, as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education takes center stage, with the imperative being job creation, the SME Education Foundation has accelerated its funding and support for innovative education in advanced manufacturing.

Its long-standing partnership with Project Lead The Way (PLTW), a national education non-profit, offering students technology-based summer camps through its Gateway Academy, and a pre-engineering program for high school students through its Gateway to Technology program, prepares students for tech-based competitions.

Stemming from the production of The Edge Factor series will be a new student engagement competition called “Reality Redesigned,” as well as a series of classroom videos, “EDU Factor,” which will be used to highlight the specific technologies featured in The Edge Factor series.

These videos will be distributed and shown in classrooms with the support of SME Education Foundation through its relationships with the National Center for Manufacturing Education (NCME [3]) and CareerMe.org, Project Lead The Way (PLTW [4]), and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) [5].

According to the Manufacturing Council, approximately 2.7 million manufacturing employees will retire during the next ten years, yet only an estimated 750,000 young adults are enrolled in education programs in 2011, degreed and skilled, to fill the pipeline. That number further plunges to 350,000 by 2025.

Industry support for the launch of The Edge Factor series, the Reality Redesigned competition and EDU Factor classroom videos has been provided by **The Association of Manufacturing Technology (**AMT **[6]),** Mastercam **[7],** Morris South **[8], Society of Manufacturing Engineers (**SME **[5]), SME Education Foundation (**SME-EF **[2]),** Sandvik Coromont **[9], and** Solidworks **[10].**

**About Reality Redesigned:**
Producers of The Edge Factor are introducing “Reality Redesigned,” a design contest with a reality show twist offering students access to an international design competition. Up to $40,000 in prizes will be presented “live” at the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) Rapid Conference in April 2012.

For information on the Reality Redesigned competition, information kit and poster, students and bike enthusiasts contact Matt Ormel [11] at The Edge Factor. Matt is available to provide support to instructors and students and answer questions. Visit

The Edge Factor on Facebook [12] and follow them on Twitter [13].

Reality Redesigned will begin accepting applications on Monday, December 19, 2011. To register, click here [14]. The submission deadline is February 28, 2012.

**The Edge Factor Team:**
Jeremy Bout, owner, Underhouse Studios; Executive Producer, The Edge Factor: Independent film producer Jeremy Bout has overseen film projects ranging from shooting on the racetrack with the Joe Gibbs NASCAR team to creating videos with Grammy-winning musicians in Nashville. Significantly for The Edge Factor series, Jeremy also has a background in manufacturing-having worked for 12 years in cutting tool design and engineering, making him uniquely equipped to bring manufacturing to film, telling manufacturing-related stories from the perspective of someone who clearly understands what makes those stories significant.

**Francois Driessen, owner, FireTrigger; Director / Producer, The Edge Factor**
Born in South Africa, Francois Driessen completed an honors degree in Fine Arts & Visual Communication at one of the top design schools in the world. He worked as a creative director and commercials director in Johannesburg before relocating to London, Ontario. Founder of FireTrigger, Inc., a production and visual-effects firm, Francois seeks out opportunities to create “awe-inspiring material on-screen.” For The Edge Factor, he developed a special camera rig that makes 3D filming practical within a manufacturing environment.

**Industry Partners:**
The Edge Factor segment sponsors include: Cintas [15], Doosan [16], Koma [17] Precision, Mastercam, [7] Okuma [18], Renishaw, [19] Sandvik Coromont [20], SolidCAM [21], Solidworks [10] and Straitline Components [22].

**Media Partners:**
The Edge Factor media sponsors include Manufacturing Engineering [23] magazine and Modern Machine Shop [24].

**About SME Education Foundation:**
The SME Education Foundation is committed to inspiring, supporting and preparing the next generation of manufacturing engineers and technologists for the advancement of manufacturing education. Created by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) in 1979, the SME Education Foundation has provided more than $31 million since 1980 in grants, scholarships and awards through its partnerships with corporations, organizations, foundations, and individual donors. Visit the SME Education Foundation at www.smeef.org [2]. Also visit www.CareerMe.org [25] for information on advanced manufacturing careers and our award-winning website for young people, www.manufacturingiscool.com [26]

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**Links:**
[1] http://www.edgefactor.com/
[2] http://www.smeef.org/
[3] http://www.ncmeresource.org/
[4] http://www.pltw.org/
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