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### **What's On Your Workbench?**

Inventors, builders, tinkerers and thinkers – otherwise known as “makers” – are the backbone of America’s creative ingenuity. Today’s makers also have more tools at their disposal than ever before, from 3D printers to laser cutters and sophisticated software.

The week of June 12-18 is being celebrated as the “Week of Making” across the United

States to honor makers and the role they play in our country's economic and technological future. You'll find some great tips and tools below to help you get started or move to the next level.

Learn more about the [Week of Making](#) and how you can get involved, and read more about some of the exhibitors at this year's Maker Faire held in DC. You can even watch the White House's "[Go Make!](#)" [video](#) for inspiration!

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### **Our Nation's Oldest "Makers"**

One of the most popular exhibitors at the National Maker Faire was the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). NIST, one of the nation's oldest physical science laboratories and now part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, previewed their LEGO Watt Balance this past weekend.

Here are two of the programs NIST has to support U.S. "makers":

[NIST Laboratories](#), which conducts world-class research, often in close collaboration with industry, to advance the nation's technology infrastructure and help U.S. companies improve their products and services.

The [Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership \(MEP\)](#), a nationwide network of local centers that offers technical and business assistance to smaller manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits and be more efficient.

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### **TechShop: Your Own Space for Creating and Building**

What do YOU want to make? If you're a current or aspiring maker, find a nearby TechShop for tools, workspaces and classes to help you design and build new products.

TechShops are a nationwide network of facilities that provide advanced machines and tools, sophisticated 2D and 3D design software and other professional-grade equipment.

[Learn more about TechShops](#), including facility locations and upcoming classes on how to use the different kinds of equipment.

### **TechShop also has a great [Makerspace Academy](#)!**

This comprehensive step-by-step academy is designed to walk educators and librarians through the critical steps of designing, equipping and operating successful, safe and inspirational public makerspaces based on the TechShop model. [Visit the Academy webpage](#) to see upcoming sessions in the DC area, Pittsburgh, Chicago and San Francisco.

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### **Cutting-Edge Programs to Help Manufacturers**

Are you a manufacturer – an advanced maker – looking for lighter, more durable materials with which to manufacture products? If so, you'll want to consider joining [Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow \(LIFT\)](#), a public-private consortium of manufacturers, academic institutions and government agencies created to find lighter, stronger manufacturing materials.

If you're interested in knowing more about 3D manufacturing, you'll want to check out [America Makes](#). The organization is another public-private consortium whose members focus on manufacturing issues, including design, materials, technology and more, with a specific focus on 3D printing.

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