



Staff photos by MICHAEL BESWICK

Susan Kasa, president of Boulevard Machine and Gear, talks to Buck Upson of Pioneer Tool and Supply at the annual gathering of the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association.



Larry A. Maier, president of Peerless Precision Inc. in Westfield, hosted the annual gathering of precision manufacturing professionals. Tents and tables were set up at the event, below.

## UMass, precision manufacturers share ideas at trade gathering

By JIM KINNEY  
Business writer

WESTFIELD — Michael F. Malone, the University of Massachusetts vice chancellor of research and engagement, left the suit and tie back in Amherst.

After all, no one in a machine shop wears a tie and that's why Malone was in Westfield last week: to tour Peerless Precision Inc. on Mainline Drive, and meet with people from the region's precision manufacturing industry

about how UMass can help them and how their capabilities to manufacture sophisticated parts down to tolerances smaller than a human hair can help the University.

More than 250 attended the annual picnic and pig roast sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association, a national trade group. Members of the trade group are usually small machine shops making parts for the aircraft, space, medical device, clean energy, automo-

tive and firearms industries.

"This is just a great informal way to get to know people," Malone said.

James D. Capistran, executive director of the UMass Innovation Institute, said UMass' engineers might help small machine shops with problems. Or the university might use local manufacturers to build prototypes that test out technology developed at the university.

The event also drew Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray, Gregory P. Bialecki, state secre-



tary of Housing and Economic Development; and Eric T. Nakajima, the state's senior innovation adviser.

Local shops are growing their capabilities, said Larry A. Maier, president of Peerless Precision and host for the an-

nual event. Maier said he invested in \$350,000 worth of new machinery last year.

"Not bad for a 20-man shop," he said.

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