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Pegasus Manufacturing in Galesburg Named 2025 SBA Illinois Manufacturer of the Year

GALESBURG, Illinois – The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#)’s [Illinois District Office](#) has recognized Galesburg, Illinois-based [Pegasus Manufacturing, Inc.](#), as the 2025 Illinois SBA Manufacturer of the Year.

Last week, Illinois District Director Willette LeGrant visited Pegasus to present the award to Pegasus owner/CEO Ruth Whitehead and her husband Ray Whitehead, who co-owns the company. The award recognizes a company that not only drives manufacturing excellence, but also inspires broader economic revitalization and workforce empowerment.

“The SBA is pleased to honor Pegasus Manufacturing, Inc., as this year’s SBA Illinois Manufacturer of the Year,” said **Willette LeGrant, SBA Illinois District Director**. “Pegasus doesn’t just build parts. They are also building people, pathways and progress. They are a model of resilience, innovation, and leadership within American small business manufacturing. Pegasus’ investments in advanced technologies, people, and community development have created lasting value—both for the industries they serve and the region they call home.”

More than 200 people attended the award ceremony at Pegasus, including Illinois state Rep. Daniel Swanson (71st District) and representatives from the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and the Knox County Area Partnership.

Founded in 2013, Pegasus has grown into a reliable manufacturing partner for aerospace, defense, medical, and automotive industries—delivering ultra-precise, agile, and high-performance components.

Headquartered in an SBA-designated HubZone, Pegasus plays a key role in revitalizing the region’s manufacturing workforce. Through strategic partnerships with local high schools, colleges, and workforce initiatives, the company is helping to build a sustainable talent pipeline while bringing high-value jobs to a rural community.

Pegasus' key achieves include:

Advanced Manufacturing & Innovation

Pegasus leads in integrating cutting-edge technologies, including Directed Energy Deposition (DED) and 3D Wire Laser Metal Deposition (WLMD), into traditional CNC workflows. These hybrid solutions help reduce lead times, support sustainability, and combat part obsolescence.

Community & Economic Impact

As a certified HubZone manufacturer, Pegasus prioritizes hiring from underserved communities, with a special focus on veterans and women in manufacturing. The company is actively pursuing and Woman-Owned certifications to further this mission.

Strategic Partnerships & Workforce Development

Pegasus collaborates with Galesburg Area Vocational Center (GAVC), Western Illinois University and technical institutes to offer paid internships and career development opportunities in CNC machining, engineering, and additive manufacturing—building a real-world training bridge between high school, college, and career.

Operational Excellence

Pegasus maintains industry-leading quality and compliance standards, including AS9100D and ISO 9001:2015. The company continues to deliver mission-critical components under tight deadlines, even amid global supply chain disruptions—earning trust from customers and Tier 1 suppliers alike.

The award is part of SBA activities celebrating [National Small Business Week](#), which was held May 4-10 this year. During National Small Business Week, the SBA shines a spotlight on our nation's 34 million small businesses. Since 1964, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week, which recognizes the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners.

PHOTOS COURTESY of Pegasus Manufacturing, Inc.



PHOTO CAPTION: Ruth Whitehead (center), CEO of Pegasus Manufacturing, Inc., holds her award for the 2025 SBA Illinois Manufacturer of the Year with employees during an awards ceremony at Pegasus on June 5, 2025. Her husband and co-owner Ray Whitehead (left of Ruth) and SBA Illinois District Director Willette LeGrant (right of Ruth).

About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of entrepreneurship. As the leading voice for small businesses within the federal government, the SBA empowers job creators with the resources and support they need to start, grow, and expand their businesses or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.

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