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News from the week of Aug. 16, 2004

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Women are at least twice as susceptible to some Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) than men, according to a recent study from Ohio State University that re-analyzed data from 56 previous studies on MSDs.

"Any way you slice the data, women have a significantly higher prevalence -- anywhere from two to 10, even 11 times higher than men -- for many of these disorders," said Delia Treaster, a former Ohio State doctoral student, who conducted the study with assistant professor of epidemiology and biometrics Deborah Burr. "The question now is, why? Is it biomechanical, physiological, psychological, or what? Most likely, it is due to a combination of factors."

MSDs result from repetitive motions performed over extended periods of time that affect muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints. The study looked at age, occupation, and the difference between whether people reported the problem themselves or whether it was clinically diagnosed.

Though the study provides no specific rates of incidence, it does call into question some generalizations made on the basis of gender. Commonly held beliefs include men are more likely to experience back pain due to heavy lifting, while women, who do intricate repetitive work, may suffer more from MSDs.

The study definitely shows the need for more research in this area to determine the cause of the discrepancy between men and women who suffer from certain MSDs. The complete report was published in the journal [Ergonomics](#).

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### **Georgia Tech to receive \$208 million contribution from GM**

Partners for the Advancement of Collaborative Engineering Education (PACE), a corporate alliance between General Motors Corp., EDS, Sun Microsystems Inc. and UGS recognized the Georgia Institute of Technology and its students as a solid investment in the future of engineering.

PACE selected Georgia Tech to join its academic partnership and receive an in-kind contribution of software and other technology with a commercial value of more than \$208 million. The in-kind contribution includes computer-aided design, manufacturing and engineering software, as well as hardware and training.

PACE, which was formed in 1999 to support key academic institutions worldwide with computer-based engineering tools, announced the contribution and new partnership on Aug. 18 at the Cleary Theater at Georgia Tech. The featured speaker of the event was Bob Lutz, GM vice chairman of product development and chairman of GM North America.

The PACE contribution represents a significant investment in Georgia Tech and also fits nicely with the school's multi-disciplinary approach to innovation, according to Georgia Tech president Wayne Clough.

"Our partnership with PACE strengthens Georgia Tech's relationships with each of these top companies," said Clough. "And in the hands of more of our students and faculty across many disciplines, the contributed technology will strengthen Tech's push to innovate through collaboration."

For General Motors, the new partnership with Georgia Tech is an investment in the company's future.

"Today, working in the automotive product development arena demands a firm grasp of computer-based design and analysis tools," said Lutz. "General Motors is pleased to be a part of investing in the intellectual capital of tomorrow's engineers."

One of the largest corporate in-kind contributions ever given to Georgia Tech, the PACE contribution will give students access to the same programs used by leading industry professionals, including those at General Motors.

"This contribution will allow us to train our students on the latest and greatest technology. Our students will be in very high demand because they'll be using all the same programs that many of the top companies are using," said Tord Dennis, PACE program integrator at Georgia Tech.

The software includes modeling and simulation programs such as Fluent, Unigraphics and MSC Nastran. With these programs, students will have new, powerful tools to design everything from hybrid vehicles or airplanes to biomedical devices. And with

Fluent, for instance, a user can design and run a simulation of how blood flows through arteries and veins or how fluids move through an engine. Other contributed software includes Teamcenter, E-factory and Solid Edge.

The software and other contributed technology will be used primarily by engineering students and faculty, in areas such as aerospace, mechanical engineering and biomedical engineering, but will also be useful to students in many of Tech's six colleges.

While the contributed software and other equipment will be concentrated in a few select labs, including the new PACE Lab in the A. French Building, it will also be installed in appropriate computer labs all over Georgia Tech.

In addition to the contributed technology, Georgia Tech's new partnership with PACE will give a boost to Tech's Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, the No. 7 mechanical engineering graduate program, according to *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. General Motors will now recruit employees more actively from Tech and collaborate with the institute on automotive-related research.

Georgia Tech is the 27th institution to join the PACE program. Since its inception in 1999, the corporate partnership contributed software, hardware, training and technical support to schools like Purdue, Michigan State, Northwestern and Virginia Tech, and institutions in Canada, China, Germany, Mexico and Sweden.

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#### **Jobless claims fall in recent week**

New claims for unemployment insurance fell 3,000 to 331,000 for the week ended Aug. 14, according to the Labor Department. The four-week moving average of jobless claims declined 2,500 to 337,000.

The four-week moving average is generally considered by economists to be the more reliable of the two because it smoothes out week-to-week volatility. Both rates remained below 400,000, which is the level economists use to define a weak labor market and a stable one.

Continuing claims for unemployment insurance increased 16,000 to 2.9 million for the week ended Aug. 7. Continuing claims are those older than two weeks.

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#### **Motion Industries, SKF host value-added services Web cast**

Maintenance, repair and operations distributor Motion Industries and bearings and seal supplier SKF recently co-sponsored a Web cast entitled "Brush up on your Bottom Line."

Featured speaker, Tim Underhill, president of Underhill & Associates, covered the topic "Measuring and documenting savings from value-added services."

Viewers learned how to reduce total costs while minimizing risks associated with product/service performance, develop a successful strategy for managing buying costs, establish a model for evaluating suppliers and compute anticipated savings before making a commitment.

In addition, they looked at other industrial facilities that saved thousands of dollars by implementing a documented solutions program. To view the Web cast, [click here](#).

"By taking a closer look at value-added services available from suppliers and quantifying and documenting the savings, MRO buyers can realize reductions in the total cost of operations, rather than buying solely on unit price," said Underhill.

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### **U.S., global economies to continue expansion**

The U.S. and global economies will expand strongly during the rest of 2004 and into next year, according to the latest analysis by The Conference Board.

The passing of the early acceleration phase of the business cycle has led to the misperception that the U.S. and global economies are at risk, but this is not the case.

"This phase is quite normal," says Gail D. Fosler, The Conference Board's executive vice president and chief economist. "We will see strong growth rates return shortly and continue in 2005."

Industrial growth has been rising at a 5.6 percent rate in the U.S. and a 5.2 percent rate globally. Growing from a near standstill in mid-2003, the sudden acceleration in economic growth rates in the past nine months has put tremendous pressure on the global supply chain, particularly in key industrial commodities like steel, copper, aluminum and energy.

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### **UAW workers reject Caterpillar final offer**

United Auto Workers (UAW) members at heavy-equipment manufacturer Caterpillar voted to reject the company's last, best and final proposal in voting conducted Aug. 15.

The UAW instructed workers to report for work as scheduled on Aug. 16.

"Our members have once again spoken," said UAW vice president Cal Rapson, who directs the union's agricultural implement department. "The UAW central bargaining committee at Caterpillar will meet later this week."

UAW-represented workers at Caterpillar rejected a similar company proposal in April. The UAW represents more than 9,000 active workers at Caterpillar facilities in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Colorado and Tennessee, and more than 20,000 retirees.

The active workers are represented by seven UAW locals: Local 974 – East Peoria, Ill.; Local 751 – Decatur, Ill.; Local 2096 – Pontiac, Ill.; Local 145 – Montgomery, Ill.; Local 786 – York, Pa.; Local 1415 – Denver; and Local 1989 – Memphis, Tenn.

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### **SKF to partner with Turbo Genset on next-gen bearings**

Bearings supplier SKF selected Turbo Genset Inc. to design and manufacture a high-speed motor and associated drive electronics for SKF's high speed spindles operating on magnetic bearings.

The motor and spindles will be used in applications that require high reliability, high-power density and very low contamination of the user's process. The spindle solution is expected in the beginning of 2005 with serial production starting later in the year.

The agreement consists of a development and evaluation phase, which is to be followed by an initial production contract. This agreement is a significant step in fulfilling SKF's objective to expand the spindle range with higher power density solutions for various industries and applications.

Both SKF and Turbo Genset Inc. see further collaborative opportunities for integrated magnetic bearing and motor drive systems across a wide range of industrial sectors.

"SKF is very pleased to come to this agreement with Turbo Genset," said Shawn Gibson, business development manager of SKF Magnetic Bearings. "We are confident that we will reach our common objectives and succeed with the goal of building new equipment that reaches higher speed and power. We are looking forward to offer this solution to the market, where we believe there is a strong growth for this type of solution."

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### **DaimlerChrysler sells stake in Hyundai Motor Co.**

DaimlerChrysler AG sold its 10.5-percent stake in Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) for \$912.2 million.

The transfer of the shares is part of the realignment of the strategic alliance between DaimlerChrysler and Hyundai Motor, which was announced in May.

Since commencement of the strategic alliance in September 2000, there have been significant changes in the global commercial vehicle and automotive markets, which resulted in a reassessment of both companies' respective strategic objectives.

To better address these conditions, the companies determined it was mutually beneficial to realign the alliance in order to reflect realistic current market conditions. The companies expect these measures will better position the strategic alliance to deliver value and to pursue additional projects going forward.

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### **Industrial production climbs in July**

Industrial production increased 0.4 percent in July, according to the Federal Reserve. Output in June was revised down and is now estimated to have decreased 0.5 percent. Capacity utilization for total industry rose 0.2 percentage point in July, to 77.1 percent, a rate 4 percentage points below its 1972-2003 average.

In manufacturing, a production gain of 0.6 percent in July more than reversed the previous month's decline, as both durables and nondurables posted sizable gains in output.

Capacity utilization in manufacturing stepped up to 76.3 percent, its highest level since May 2001. Output in durable manufacturing rose 0.7 percent in July after having been unchanged in June.

The production of motor vehicles and parts fell for a third straight month, primarily because of another drop in the parts component.

Elsewhere in durable manufacturing, declines in the indexes for wood products, primary metals, and furniture and related products were more than offset by increases elsewhere, especially in computer and electronic products, machinery, aerospace and miscellaneous transportation equipment, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

"The industrial production report was a sign of relief from the worrying reports in June," said Daniel J. Meckstroth, chief economist for the Manufacturers Alliance/MAPI. "Although electric utility production was down significantly in both June and July, manufacturing activity bounced back strongly in July. The high-tech industries continue to lead production growth and reflect a strong increase in business investment, which is showing up in machinery and transportation equipment production. Improved business volume, increased business profitability, low financing costs, and easier bank credit terms are driving capital spending."

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### **Boeing prepares to hire 250 workers in St. Louis**

Standing in front of a U.S. Air Force F-15E and a Republic of Korea Air Force F-15K, Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., and Boeing Integrated Defense Systems CEO Jim Albaugh announced the company would move quickly to fill 250 open positions in St. Louis by the end of the year.

"Eighteen months ago, I committed to Sen. Bond that we would grow employment in St. Louis by 1,000 people within five years," Albaugh said. "To date we have added over 1,500 to our payroll. The growth we've seen is a direct result of the strong political support of the Missouri delegation led by Sen. Bond, a strong partnership with the local union leaders like Rick Smith and Steve McDerman, and the hard work of our team here, who has made being on time and on budget a hallmark of Boeing military aircraft and weapons programs.

"The strength of these partnerships is allowing us to grow our business, and is the reason we located the headquarters of Integrated Defense Systems and the Army's Future Combat Systems program here," Albaugh said. "For 65 years, the men and women of this community have built the world's best fighter and attack aircraft. While we stand in front of the dominant strike aircraft of today, other members of our team are hard at work on the future by transforming aerial warfare as they build the unmanned X-45."

The comments were made while Bond and Albaugh were congratulating employees on sustainment of the F-15 line. In July, the senator secured an additional \$110 million for advanced procurement of two additional F-15 aircraft.

"It is the dedication and skill of the Boeing employees in St. Louis that made the most recent F-15 procurement possible," Bond said. "Your individual efforts, taken as a whole, directly support our war fighters and enhance their chances of returning safely to their loved ones. All of you can take tremendous pride in knowing that."

Albaugh also talked about the immediate need to fill hundreds of positions in the community.

"Today we are moving quickly to fill 250 positions here in St. Louis," he said. "Over the next 18 months we will add a total of 800 jobs, that's in addition to 1,500 jobs we've added to date."

The company will host an accelerated-hiring event Aug. 20 at the St. Louis Airport Marriott. The company expects to conduct an estimated 300 interviews to fill a wide range of openings, primarily in technical and engineering fields, such as avionics, electrical, mechanical, software, structures and systems. Many of the jobs

require a security clearance or the ability to obtain a clearance.

The interviews will be held on a pre-scheduled and walk-in basis. Hiring managers and recruiters from St. Louis and other parts of Boeing will be on hand at the event, and ready to make contingent employment offers on the spot.

Walk-in candidates are welcome to attend from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the St. Louis Airport Marriott at I-70 at Lambert Airport. Applicants can visit the Boeing [event site](#). Job seekers are also encouraged to go to [www.boeing.com/careers](http://www.boeing.com/careers) to complete a job profile and submit a resume online.

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### **NAM praises Bush proposal of flexible scheduling**

Encouraged by remarks made by President Bush indicating he'll propose to Congress a modernization of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to allow workers greater scheduling flexibility, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) said 21st century workers and families need and deserve this flexibility.

"Current law is an impediment to flexibility," said NAM human resources policy vice president Sandy Boyd. "Just as today's jobs are different from the jobs of 30 and 40 years ago, today's workforce is different, too.

"Our workers face vastly different family scheduling challenges than in the past," Boyd said. "So, updating our laws to allow employees increased flexibility is a must."

Boyd said the NAM has long supported allowing private sector workers the same flexible scheduling options available to their public sector counterparts.

"Many workers have asked for more flexibility choices and are surprised to learn that the law, not their employer, is the main roadblock. It's long past time for the FLSA to reflect the realities of today's workplace," he said.

"The key to any workable system is that it remains completely voluntary on both sides – neither employers nor employees should be forced into comp- or flex-time agreements," said Boyd. "Uncomplicated legislation that avoids mandates will most benefit workers."

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### **Skilled worker shortage threatens Chinese manufacturers**

A massive shortage of skilled labor is threatening to turn Chinese manufacturing from a boom into a bust, according to the Chinese newspaper *China Daily*.



In the eastern Shanghai municipality, the job/candidate ratio is as high as 36:1 for mechanical cold-forming workers and 27:1 for electronic component manufacturing workers.

Haining, a city known in China as a center for more than 2,000 leather-manufacturing businesses, has reached capacity. Skilled manufacturing workers are becoming more difficult to find, which will not allow the manufacturers to increase production.

A local Guangdong Province government report showed that some 1.8 million mid-level technicians and 1.2 million senior-level technicians were needed between 2001 and 2005.

The equipment-manufacturing industry in Shenyang currently requires tens of thousands of skilled workers, according to its local labor department.

Local governments are working to increase enrollment in vocational schools and hiring foreign workers to shore up resources. Some students have already been evaluated by companies even though they won't finish school until 2005 or 2006.

"The dearth of skilled workers has had a negative effect on the development of some products, enterprises and industries," said Mo Rong, vice director of the Institute of Labour Sciences under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

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