

A Quarterly Check-In on the MPMA Emerging Technology Committees

Mary Ellen Doran, VP, Emerging Technology, MPMA



2025 MPMA SRN participants visit Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research. (Image: MPMA)

MPMA has five emerging technology committees, each focused on a sector reshaping the gear and bearing industry. Across robotics, air mobility, electric vehicles, industrial connectivity, and additive manufacturing, the committees are studying technologies before they fully arrive, building expert networks, and translating what is happening at the frontier into intelligence that members can use. Here is where each stands as we head into the second quarter of 2026.

Air Mobility/eVTOL Committee: New in 2026, this committee has already held two meetings and is growing with each one. We may be able to announce a chairperson soon. The committee is examining which drivetrain types are used across eVTOL platforms and how gears and bearings are incorporated. With these aircraft moving rapidly from concept to flight testing and early certification, the central questions are straightforward: where do gear and bearing manufacturers fit into this supply chain, and how can MPMA facilitate collaboration? We hope to bring speakers from this space to the webinar audience later this year.

Electric Vehicle Technology Committee: The EV committee started the year strong. The standards development arm of MPMA announced that its electric vehicle information sheet will be available later this year—a significant achievement after only two years of work. We look forward to discussing the implications when the document is released.

At our first meeting of the year, we discussed the current landscape. Events in the Middle East have again drawn attention to the fuels that power vehicles globally, prompting a thoughtful conversation about whether countries will pursue alternative fuels or energy sources for mobility. We are exploring bringing in a speaker from the petrochemical sector. Members are also interested in copper and mining as EV production grows and the U.S. pivots toward hybrids. More to come.

3D Printing Committee: The 3D printing committee continues to track where additive manufacturing is crossing from

prototype capability to production readiness and where real barriers remain. Specific programming for the coming months is being finalized. What stays constant is the committee's core premise: precision manufacturers who already operate under tight tolerances and demanding qualification processes are well positioned to engage with additive technology—not as a replacement for traditional manufacturing, but as an expansion of what is possible.

AI/IIoT Committee: This committee remains focused on cybersecurity. The May emerging technology webinar will feature Derrick Phillips, a CMMC expert, addressing the 2026 updates to the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification framework and the use of artificial intelligence within a CMMC-compliant environment. The committee also supported the March webinar featuring Pankaj Prasad, founder and CEO of Airwave, who presented “Demystifying AI and Real-World Applications for Field Technicians.” This webinar is available on demand on the MPMA website.

Robotics Committee: The Robotics Committee helped secure strong speakers for the MPMA Strategic Networking and Leadership Forum, June 2–4 in Indianapolis. OnRobot, a global leader in end-of-arm tooling and collaborative application solutions, will present. Steven Sikorski will deliver the second part of that session. Steven runs his own consulting firm, helping manufacturers take full advantage of automation and robotics. He previously served as a factory manager at Standard Bots and understands what it takes to move a robot from prototype to mass production. The committee is tailoring the presentation for a gear and bearing audience. Check out the full SNL program—I hear there may be a special guest.

A lot is happening across all five committees; you should get involved. Join a committee, attend a live event, or watch a webinar on demand. To participate, contact Mary Ellen Doran, VP of Emerging Technology, at doran@motionpower.org.

