

# On the Road for You

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Mary Ellen Doran pictured with Heath Rohrbaugh (left) and Brian Richards (right) from WD Bearing Group at the 2026 Boston Robotics Show. (Image: MPMA)

Part of my job is getting into rooms that our members may not have time to visit themselves. Over the past two months, I attended three events covering the emerging technology spaces most relevant to the gear and bearing industry: RAPID in Boston, April 13–16; Xponential, the premier drone and unmanned systems show, May 11–14; and the Boston Robotics Summit, May 27–28. Here is what I took away from each one.

### **RAPID: A Show That Has Grown Up**

RAPID felt different this year in the best possible way. The booths were more realistic in size, the conversations more grounded, and the overall feel was of a larger, more serious show with more companies represented. The additive manufacturing (AM) industry has moved past the phase where everyone is trying to impress you with what might be possible. The focus now is on what is actually being produced, qualified, and sold.

I always enjoy seeing the Pantheon booth, and this year was no exception. But the highlight for me was walking the floor with Art Reardon of Reardon Metals, a member of our 3D Printing Committee. Art recently received patents on a line of steels that may be the first of their kind: the patents specifically identify the steels as being designed for AM. That is a significant development. The materials side of AM has long been a limiting factor for precision component manufacturers, and work like Art's points toward a future where the gap between what AM can produce and what our industry requires continues to close.



*Metallurgist Art Reardon (left) discusses printed gears in Filmatrix's booth with Ryan Besch (middle) and Logan Pensinger (right).*

### **Xponential: Drones Are Here, eVTOL Is Still Coming**

Xponential covers the full spectrum of unmanned and autonomous systems, and the drone side of the show was vibrant and active. The eVTOL space, however, was quieter than the headlines might suggest. There is significant development underway, but the commercial eVTOL market is not yet at the stage where it dominates a show floor. For members following the work of our Air Mobility Technology Committee, that is an honest assessment of where things stand. Technology is advancing, regulatory frameworks are developing, and supply chain conversations are beginning. But we are still in the early chapters of that story.

### **Boston Robotics Summit: Our Members Were Already There**

The Boston Robotics Summit was the most directly relevant of the three shows for MPMA members, and the presence of our community on that floor made that clear. I visited member companies on the show floor, including EMAG, CGI Inc., Cone Drive Gearing Solutions, Regal Rexnord, Schaeffler Group USA, SEW-Eurodrive, and Sumitomo Machinery Corporation of America. I also talked with Robotics Committee member Brian Dengel at KHK USA. I walked the floor with Zain Jamal from Bevel Gears India and colleagues from WD Bearing. The gear and bearing industries were well represented, and that is exactly where we should be.

The sessions reinforced a theme I have been hearing consistently: design for manufacturability from the start. Speaker after speaker returned to the same practical warning. Do not build your prototype from whatever components are convenient. If they are not scalable, not regularly available, and not designed with production in mind, you will pay for them when the time comes to manufacture at volume. This is a message our members are positioned to deliver and solve if they are engaged early enough in the development process.

Across all three shows, I came away energized. The emerging technology spaces our committees are tracking are maturing, the opportunities for motion and power transmission manufacturers are real, and our community is already showing up. I will continue to bring these conversations back to you through our committees and our programming. If you want to be part of that work, reach out.

To get involved with any of the MPMA Emerging Technology Committees, contact Mary Ellen Doran, VP of Emerging Technology, at [doran@motionpower.org](mailto:doran@motionpower.org).

