

Emerging Technology Comes to the FTM

Mary Ellen Doran, Vice President, MPMA Emerging Technology



Jacques Lemire presents on behalf of the MPMA Robotics Committee at CCAT. (Image: MPMA)

Something new is happening at the 2026 Fall Technical Meeting, and it's been years in the making. This October in Rosemont, IL, the FTM introduces a second track of presentation-only sessions on emerging technologies, innovative solutions, and real-world applications. For those of us working inside the MPMA Emerging Technology committees, this feels like a natural arrival.

The committees have always been more than discussion groups. They're a pipeline: topics get introduced, experts get connected, relationships take shape, and over time those conversations feed into broader MPMA programming. Track 2 at FTM is the most visible expression of that pipeline yet.

So much of what's on this year's FTM agenda traces back to committee work. Justin Michaud, the first chair of the 3D Printing Committee nine years ago, helped lay the groundwork for conversations that now include using direct energy deposition to repair gear teeth. Etaxtar came before the committee a couple of years ago; we visited their booth on our 2024 RAPID tour; now they're on the new FTM track. REWITEC introduced their lubricant technology through the committees and can now reach a broader MPMA audience. The Electric Vehicle Technology Committee has been exploring PEEK gears for high-power transmission and is glad to see the topic get its own session. Liebherr brought their skiving technology to an emerging technology webinar earlier this year and returns with another talk at FTM. Tom Hart of Seco gave an emerging technology webinar in 2024.

Our work on outside events has strengthened these ties further. In 2025, CCAT, the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, hosted the Joint Technology Summit, bringing together technology committee members from NTMA, AMT, and MPMA. CCAT has excellent research underway, and I'm glad to fold their work more directly into MPMA's programming. Thomas Christiansen invited MPMA to a heat treat event at WPI just months ago; his FTM presentation is another example of what these relationships generate. That kind of traction only comes from sustained committee engagement over time.

MPMA currently runs five active Emerging Technology committees, each tied to a sector reshaping the gear and bearing industry. 3D Printing watches for the point where additive manufacturing moves from prototype to production. Electric Vehicle Technology follows standards development, critical materials, and the shifting EV and hybrid markets. Robotics is digging into supply chain pressure and gearbox innovation as automation demand grows. AI and IIoT keep an eye on cybersecurity, the CMMC framework, and where artificial intelligence is landing on the shop floor. And new this year, Air Mobility and eVTOL is examining the driveline technologies behind next-generation aircraft, and where gear and bearing manufacturers fit in.

Each committee meets regularly and hosts webinars. That steady work is what eventually surfaces at events like FTM. If you want to see where an industry is headed before it arrives, the committee room is the place to be.

That work shows up most visibly this October. The 2026 Fall Technical Meeting runs October 5–7 at the Hilton Rosemont near Chicago O'Hare, co-hosted this year with the Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers (STLE). Track 2 opens Monday afternoon with a full session curated by STLE, building on their Emerging Issues and Trends in Tribology & Lubrication Engineering report. Tuesday covers AI and additive technologies, plus efficiency and lubrication. Wednesday continues with application, wear and failure, and manufacturing, materials, and heat treatment. Early bird registration ends August 14.

I hope to see you there. And if you haven't yet connected with one of the five Emerging Technology committees, there's never been a better moment. The conversations happening in those rooms keep shaping what the industry learns next.

To register for the FTM, visit motionpower.org. To get involved with any MPMA Emerging Technology Committee, contact Mary Ellen Doran, VP of Emerging Technology, at doran@motionpower.org.