GREENVILLE — Clemson University and Greenville Technical College officials broke ground Monday for a $25 million center that will advance the manufacturing workforce and serve the automotive, transportation and other high-tech sectors.

The Center for Manufacturing Innovation is a collaboration between a research university, a technical college and manufacturers to create a center that enhances the development and implementation of advanced manufacturing technologies.

The primary goal for CMI is to increase the number of skilled workers for manufacturing to close the skills gap that has hampered the progress of many Upstate employers.

CMI, to be located adjacent to the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research Technology Neighborhood 1, will offer education designed to meet industry needs. It will include dual-credit programs in partnership with Greenville County Schools, articulations that promote students’ progress from associate’s to bachelor’s degrees and workforce training and certificate programs that increase the qualifications of manufacturing employees.

Research for innovation in advanced manufacturing and future technologies related to advanced manufacturing will be incorporated into instruction. CMI will also include a Manufacturing Honors College, expected to be the first of its kind.

The center will engage K-12 students and show them the possibilities that exist in advanced manufacturing careers through dualenrollment programs, tours, camps and open houses. Students will also benefit from internships and apprenticeships that allow them to gain practical experience working alongside experienced engineers, faculty and staff.

The idea for the campus began with the needs of employers. As the concept has been developed, leaders with area manufacturers including BMW, Michelin, GE, Bosch Rexroth, ADEX Machining Technologies, League Manufacturing, JTEKT Koyo, Fabri-Kal, SpecFab Services, Master PT, Standard Motor Products and more have voiced strong
support for the project and have provided input that has allowed plans for CMI to take shape.