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America needs thousands of blue-collar workers to manufacture our AI future

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COMMENTARY ECONOMICS

America Needs Thousands of Blue-Collar Workers to Manufacture Our AI Future

by Rob Portman

August 13, 2026 Fox News



Rob Portman, Distinguished Visiting Fellow in the Practice of Public Policy

The future of artificial intelligence may depend less on coders than on construction workers, electricians and factory technicians.

Tech companies are pouring money into new artificial intelligence (AI) data centers at an astounding clip, with Alphabet, [Microsoft](#), Meta and Amazon expected to spend roughly \$700 billion this year alone. And that doesn't include the costs of grid modernization and semiconductor capacity. But those ambitions keep running into the same problem—there aren't enough skilled workers to build the infrastructure that will power the AI economy.

By one estimate, the United States will need 140,000 additional skilled trades workers like electricians, HVAC technicians, welders and construction workers by 2030 to support [AI infrastructure](#). How will we meet that demand?

The answer may lie across the Atlantic—in Switzerland. That nation's apprenticeship system has helped build one of the world's most innovative economies. And it's achieved this by creating clear pathways into skilled technical careers for generations of young people.

Read more at [Fox News](#).



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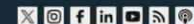
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