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## Who/What is SVAM??

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. (SVAM) is a non-profit, 501c3 organization focused on supporting and strengthening all manufacturers currently in the region as well as welcoming new industry.

SVAM is governed by a policy making Board of Directors made up of area manufacturers who volunteer their time to steer the agency. There are three levels of membership in the organization: Full membership supported by a dues structure aligned with employee numbers; associate membership with minimal dues for

small manufacturers and trial memberships; and affiliate memberships designed to be inclusive of government, educational and non profit community organizations.

SVAM's three goals are as follows: 1. Establishing and promoting regional collaboration in support of manufacturing and its careers as part of an educational and economic development initiative. 2. Redefining the image of manufacturing with young people and their parents, their educators, the community and policy makers in a manner that increases the number of young

adults and other members of the workforce who pursue manufacturing-based careers. 3. Closing the skills gap for regional manufacturers by aligning educational and workforce training resources with the most pressing demands of area manufacturing.

These goals are achieved through various programming, trainings, training reimbursements to members, scholarships, and more. Many of these programming initiatives are displayed in this newsletter.

## SVAM Happenings

### Lunch-N-Learns and Seminars

Last year, in November, SVAM asked industry representatives, primarily in the human resources department, to list various topics they would like to have additional training and discussions on. Beginning in December and carried on throughout the year, SVAM developed a calendar of monthly Lunch-N-Learns

and quarterly Seminars. After two related Lunch-N-Learns, SVAM hosts a half-day seminar with additional information related to the topics. Topics have included Generations in the Workplace, Women in Manufacturing, Appalachian Culture, and FMLA & ACA. These events are open to all area manufacturers and free to

SVAM members. Each of the Lunch-n-Learns are hosted by member companies.

Thank you to General Dynamics, Scholle Packaging, Utility Trailer in Glade Spring, and Universal Fibers for hosting!



### Best Practices Workshop

This year, SVAM member companies began hosting "Best Practices" training events available to other SVAM members.

On February 20, SVAM members were invited to attend a Lean Manufacturing workshop hosted by General Dynamics in Marion, Va and sponsored by the SVVMA and the Manufacturing Technology Center. Nine SVAM members from three companies attended the workshop along with General Dynamics employees. The workshop, titled Sarge Systems Lean 101 and created by

General Dynamics in Marion, is designed to introduce attendees to the basic principles of Lean Manufacturing and demonstrate the impact implementing Lean can have in a manufacturing setting. The primary objective of the workshop is to provide:

- A basic understanding of Lean Manufacturing;
- An understanding of the 8 Wastes and how to recognize them;
- A knowledge of how Lean principles are applied;

- An experience of how a team environment can generate and implement positive change;
- A tangible impression of the impact Lean systems can have on our business performance and culture.

The 8-hour workshop accomplishes these objectives through lecture and hands-on simulation in a learning environment designed to be fun and provide an impressionable learning experience.

LEAN 101 WORKSHOP  
HOSTED BY GENERAL  
DYNAMICS

## Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award

In February The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing (SVAM) accepted nominations for the 2014 Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award. SVAM asked its member companies to nominate one woman within their company they felt rises about the rest.

The purpose of the award is to show the significant role that women play in manufacturing. This award highlights women, at all levels, who have demonstrated excellence in manufacturing. It encourages women who work in the manufacturing environment to continue to strive for excellence. It also helps to eliminate the idea that manufacturing careers are only for men.

The finalists for the award are Beth Bennett, Production Supervisor at Scholle Packaging, Inc; Susan Garrett, Production Assistant at Steel Fab; Ranae Anderson, Color Department Manager at Universal Fibers; and Lisa Mulling, Senior Configuration Management Specialist at General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems.

The winner of the Award is Nita McIntyre, Manufacturing Manager, Radomes at General Dynamics. Nita was chosen because of her work ethic, personal drive, resilience and commitment to excellence.

"After more than 37 years in manufacturing, Nita is valued for her technical knowledge and manufacturing expertise. She is respected for her work ethic and commitment to excellence. She is admired for her fairness and sense of compassion. Ultimately, Nita sets an example as a role model for all manager in manufacturing," said nominator, Jamie Maas of General Dynamics.

Winners and finalists will be recognized at the SVAM Manufacturers Appreciation Dinner.

Visit the SVAM website to read more about the nominees!



Pictured: Lennie Gail Dunlop, SVAM Executive Director; Nita McIntyre, award winner; Larry Souverielle, President/Chair of the SVAM Board of Directors

**"I have NEVER had someone go above and beyond for me. Hiring Our Heroes is such a great tool and asset for veterans."**  
**-Eric Snow, Hiring Our Heroes veteran participant**



On April 2, SVAM hosted Hiring Our Heroes—a very unique Hiring Event for veterans and service members in the region.

The goal of the Hiring Event was to connect veterans and service members with employers in the Southwest Virginia region. As part of the "pre-qualification" process, veterans and service members attended a free, half day class that covered Workplace Expectations, Interview Preparation, Resume Development and a Drug Screen. The classes acted as a refresher while communicating to employers that the veterans and service members are "ready-to-hire."

On the date of the event pre-qualified veterans were interviewed by area employers, primarily in the manufacturing industry, with open positions. These employers included General Dynamics, Steel Fab, PBE Group, RJ Custom Transportations, Universal Fibers, as well as Utility Trailers in Atkins and Glade Spring. Some veterans had the opportunity to be interviewed by six employers that day.

For SVAM, the link between manufacturers and veterans was obvious. Employers are looking for employees with soft skills - those who are reliable, self-motivated, driven, and can pass a drug screen - as well as hard skills. Through various trainings, veterans have acquired unique skill sets that make them valuable employees. This event allowed SVAM to support both manufacturers and those who serve our country at the same time.

Eighteen veterans participated in the Hiring Event. So far, thirteen have been placed in jobs.

## 2014 Manufacturing Related Scholarships

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. (SVAM) is excited to be continuing the tradition of offering scholarships to graduating high school seniors from Russell, Smyth, and Washington Counties, who plan to pursue a career in a field of study in manufacturing. This includes programs such as welding, machining, technical programs, robotics, manufacturing and industrial engineering, and business programs including management and accounting.

The scholarships are being offered to support SVAM's mission to showcase manufacturing to young people, their parents, and the community as a beneficial and exciting career field.

a dynamic and exciting field. The more we can do to get students interested in this career path, the better off our entire community will be."

Executive Director, Lennie Gail Dunlop, commented, "It is my hope that these scholarships will spark hope in young people who want to pursue a career in a field that will be highly beneficial and highly rewarding. Manufacturing is

Several students were interviewed as potential recipients of this scholarship.

Scholarship award recipients will be announced this month.

*"This experience has helped me focus in on a career field. Each shadowing experience individually showed me an approach on how I could use my degree in the production industry," said Malique.*

## Shadowing Opportunity for Emory and Henry Student

Throughout March and April SVAM provided Emory and Henry senior Physics major, Malique Johnson, an opportunity to shadow three manufacturers in the region.

He said it made an impact on him and he wanted to be involved in some way in this career field."

Amanda Gardner, Director of Career Services at Emory and Henry College, approached SVAM's Executive Director, Lennie Gail Dunlop about Malique's desire to learn more about manufacturing. "He participated in some leadership initiatives in high school and one included some interaction with local manufacturers in his hometown.

Malique shadowed at Universal Fibers, Ball Corporation, and Steel Fab. He learned about the Operation System Manager position and aerospace division at Ball Corporation, Universal Fibers taught him what certifications he would need to be competitive in the production industry, and Steel Fab taught him how he could use his degree in the field of quality control.

## Sponsored Programs

### CAREER CARNIVAL

In March SVAM had the opportunity to support Virginia Highlands Community College's 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Carnival.

The purpose of the Career Carnival was to showcase various career opportunities and encourage students of Virginia Middle School,

Glade Spring Middle School, E.B. Stanley Middle School, Northwood Middle School, Wallace Middle School, and Damascus Middle School to start thinking about their futures.

Several students stopped by to talk to the company representatives, learn about the manufacturing process, and discuss potential careers.

SVAM Member companies Universal Fibers, Utility Trailers - Glade Spring, and General Dynamics set up exhibits to show students what is accomplished at each company.

SVAM set up a display to show different career options as well as bust some of the myths associated with a career in manufacturing.

### MANUFACTURING SUMMIT

"SVAM, the SWVA Workforce Investment Board, Workforce & Economic Solutions at Southwest Virginia Community College, the Manufacturing Technology Center, the Southwest Virginia Community College Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and the Southwest Virginia Technology Council, recently formed a partnership to engage manufacturing companies in the counties of Tazewell, Russell, Buchanan, and Dickenson, to assess the skill needs for entry-level and incumbent workers, certifications, as well as credentials, and training and education requirements. The goal is to create an appropriately skilled workforce capable of supporting the existing demands for manufacturers while also positioning manufacturers for future expansion.

As a part of this effort, manufacturers in the four-county region were invited to participate in an online survey and attend a Manufacturers' Roundtable discussion held in March 2014. Of the fourteen manufacturers that participated, it was indicated that the biggest workforce and economic development challenge that they currently face is finding qualified workers. Of those surveyed, 57% indicated that they did not anticipate that the region would have a large enough labor pool to hire from in the next three to five years.

A Manufacturing Summit has been scheduled for Thursday, July 24, 2014 from 3:00-6:30 p.m. at the Southwest Virginia Community College. The goal of the summit is to provide manufacturers' with information and programs that will supply direction, knowledge, and solutions based on the information gained from both the survey and the Manufacturers Roundtable."

For more information, contact Rachel Patton, Business Services Coordinator, SWVA WIB at [r.patton@swvaworks.com](mailto:r.patton@swvaworks.com) or at (276)-608-1851. -Cara Owens, Southwest Virginia WIB Newsletter



Pictured: (Top) Daran Eastridge and Dawn Archer of General Dynamics. (Bottom Left) Stacy Street of Utility Trailer Manufacturing Co. (Bottom Right) Tim Lawson of Universal Fibers

**SVAM Submits Center of Excellence Proposal**

Last year, the Virginia Tobacco Commission and the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM) commissioned the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to study the training strengths and weaknesses of Southside and Southwest Virginia and make recommendations for creating a trained workforce to be available for economic development opportunities in advanced manufacturing.

Targeted industries include aerospace, automotive, and heavy machinery. The idea is to recruit anchor industries and their supply-chain companies/vendors as well as to provide advanced manufacturing training for existing industries. The Centers will focus on three curricula: Welding, Machining, and Industrial Mechanics – each to require – and success to be focused on – national certifications upon completion.

In response to the BCG report, the Tobacco Commission, in partnership with CCAM, has issued a request for proposal to fund three centers – two in Southside and one in Southwest. The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing (SVAM) has applied as the managing partner of a consortium to develop a proposal that is inclusive of the entire Region and provides a win-win for as many partners as possible.

All four community colleges, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, manufacturers across the region, the Virginia Highlands Incubator, WIBs, MTC, GenEdge, Southwest Virginia Technology Council, Tazewell County IDA, Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, Virginia Western Community College, and the Virginia Manufacturing Association are among the 50 partners who will be a part of this effort. SVAM has worked closely with the community colleges to identify their strengths, weaknesses, needs

and desired roles in the CoE. Each of their roles are being designed to fit their individual circumstances. In addition, seven distance learning sites will offer classroom instruction, testing, assessment, and virtual labs to increase accessibility to the training and decrease travel time and transportation issues.

Using a distributive delivery model, SVAM included Scott, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Tazewell/Bluefield, Russell, Wythe, Smyth, and Washington Counties and the City of Galax as specific sites for some portion of the Center of Excellence system - prerequisites, CoE curricula, testing and distance learning services.

Parallel to this effort, the United Way Virginia Highlands, with Occupational Enterprises, Inc (OEI) as a major partner, is developing a Collective Impact leadership approach to the supportive social services necessary to enhance the ultimate long-term success of the trainees. Supportive services such as child care and transportation, marketing of technical skills careers in addition to four-year degree programs to middle and high school students, and substance abuse education are among the issues to be handled by the community partners of the nonprofit sector.

In preparation for this effort, SVAM hosted IDAs from across the region to present the global economic perspective and other countries' investment in economic development and then make the connection to Virginia's initiatives, this CoE, and its potential to equip the southwest region to take its place at the table.

Special thanks go to the Washington County Board of Supervisors for some seed funding to prepare the application along



with Keith Thompson, former Director of the Manufacturing Technology Center; Julie Souverelle for budget preparation assistance; and Heather Musick/Betty Domjahn, the grant writing team from Virginia Highlands Community College for their invaluable assistance.

This RFP response is UNIQUE in the Commonwealth as it is driven by the manufacturers themselves rather than by academia.

The business model, innovation, and specific attention to the needs of the manufacturers make this an exciting approach to the training needs in southwest Virginia.

The proposal was submitted in April. SVAM is currently in the running as one of the three Centers of Excellence to be established. SVAM's proposal scored the highest by a scoring of eleven independent viewers.

**Upcoming SVAM Events**

SVAM has several projects coming up to include a Manufacturers Expo for on July 8 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

The Expo will provide manufacturers and their vendors an opportunity to set up company exhibits while networking with other manufacturers throughout Southwest Virginia. This is a unique event and will play a large role in showcasing the footprint of manufacturing in the region.

For more information and to register for SVAM events visit [www.swwam.org](http://www.swwam.org).

**SAVE THE DATES**

- State Employment Laws Seminar June 24
- Manufacturers Expo July 8
- Employers Climate Survey Lunch-N-Learn July 16
- Manufacturing Summit July 24
- (For Tazewell, Russell, Buchanan, and Dickenson Counties)
- Performance Evaluations Lunch-N-Learn August 19

## Why become a member of SVAM?

- Networking opportunities
- Access and free admission to trainings
- Priority access to SVAM worker pool
- Company exposure on website, at events, on newsletter, etc.
- Peer-to-Peer Best Practices Meetings
- Free admission to all SVAM events to include Manufacturers Appreciation Dinner
- Newsletter
- Community outreach opportunities to change the image of manufacturing
- And much more!



### New Member Spotlight!

SVAM is very happy to welcome **Ball Corporation** as a new full member of SVAM. Ball has already been active with SVAM as they provided a shadowing opportunity to a student from Emory & Henry College. Ball Corporation also plans to attend SVAM's Manufacturers Expo. Visit Ball's website at [www.ball.com](http://www.ball.com)

SVAM also welcomed new affiliate members from Russell County IDA and Russell County Government.

### Members of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc.

(as of April 30, 2014)



The First Name In Trailers



GENERAL DYNAMICS  
Ordnance and Tactical Systems

Look for the Spotlight of **Tadano Mantis Corporation** who joined SVAM in May in our next newsletter!

#### Associate Members:

Manufacturing Technology Center, Helton and Associates, American Wood Fibers

#### Affiliate Members:

Tri-County Driving Academy, Occupational Enterprises, Inc., United Way Virginia Highlands, Russell County IDA, Russell County Government



Contact the SVAM office for more information:

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