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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 accomplishes this in a unique way—by being governed by a Board of Directors made of up southwest Virginia manufacturers. Programs and initiatives —many outlined in this newsletter—are held to carry out SVAM’s strategic plan. More information about SVAM can be found at [www.swvam.org/about-svam](http://www.swvam.org/about-svam).

**Our Mission Statement: To establish and promote the regional collaborations in support of manufacturing and manufacturing careers as part of an economic development initiative.**

## Manufacture Your Career-SVAM and EHC

On October 13, 2015, in cooperation with Emory and Henry College’s Office of Career Services, Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing co-hosted Manufacture Your Career, an evening of information and networking about career opportunities available in manufacturing.

require employees from a broad spectrum of backgrounds, including those with college degrees. Another topic of discussion, the misconceptions about manufacturing, revealed the differences between students’ prior perceptions of manufacturing versus the reality of working in manufacturing.

the students had the opportunity to network with manufacturing professionals with diverse educational backgrounds and careers. This event helped to support the work Career Services at Emory & Henry College does to broaden the career horizons of students.”



Amanda Gardner, Director of Career Services at Emory and Henry

College, approached SVAM with a request to offer a program as an opportunity for Emory and Henry students to gain greater insight as to how a bachelor’s degree can be used in manufacturing. With the goal of changing the image of manufacturing among college students, SVAM reached out to manufacturers in the region and began planning the event.

Students learned from panelists that the manufacturing environment is one that provides an opportunity to work with cutting-edge technology with an emphasis placed on safety, while also being a complex organization with careers ranging from advertising to engineering.

SVAM would like to thank participants including the panelists, giveaway sponsors, students and Emory and Henry’s Office of Career Services.

In 2016, SVAM plans to host similar events at UVA-Wise, Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, Wytheville Community College and Virginia Highlands Community College to continue collaborating with educational institutions in the region.

Nineteen students attended the event, along with a representative from Emory and Henry College’s newspaper, *The Whitopper*. After a successful discussion, panelists answered questions from students about the wide range of career pathways that manufacturing provides to job-seekers. The evening concluded with a door-prize giveaway featuring items provided by Somic America, West River Conveyors, Strongwell and General Engineering.

Ms. Gardner applauded the event by saying, “Thanks to the Manufacture Your Career event sponsored by The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, the student event attendees were exposed to the diverse world of careers inside manufacturing. I appreciate that

The evening started with a panel discussion featuring professionals in a range of positions within manufacturing. Panelists included Jeff Dunnack-Plant Manager at Somic America, Jamie Maas-Director of Production Operations at General Dynamics, Te-Kai Shu -Social Media and Business Development Manager at Strongwell and Carrie White-Manager of Quality Assurance at Strongwell.

The panelists discussed a variety of topics including potential career pathways in manufacturing for those with four-year degrees and beyond. Panelists pointed out that manufacturers

Pictured (Left to right): Jeff Dunnack-Somic America, Te-Kai Shu, Carrie White-Strongwell and Jamie Maas-General Dynamics



Jeff Dunnack and Carrie White speak with Emory and Henry students



Amanda Gardner, Director of Career Services at EHC; Marika Miller, Program Assistant at SVAM

## Military in Manufacturing Video



In celebration of Veteran's day, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, SVAM released a video through YouTube highlighting Veterans in manufacturing.

SVAM interviewed Jeff Dunnack, Plant Manager at Somic America, Jim Copenhaver, Technical Manager at Scholle Packaging and

Sophia Dutton of Tempur Pedic; veterans of the United States Army, Air Force and Navy respectively.

During the course of the interview, the veterans spoke about challenges facing veterans and the career opportunities that they have experienced in the field of manufacturing.

Each of the three interviewees emphasized the value of the soft skills they developed in the military and the impact that their training and discipline has had on their manufacturing careers.

SVAM sends out a special thanks to our video participants and to all veterans for their service to our country.

The video can be viewed on the SVAM YouTube Channel or on the SVAM Facebook page .

### SVAM GOALS:

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing operates under the following three goals which guide programming and initiatives to support the sustainment and advancement of manufacturing in the region:

1. To establish and promote the regional collaborations in support of manufacturing and manufacturing careers as part of an economic development initiative.
2. To redefine 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 careers.
3. To close the skills gap for regional manufacturers by aligning educational and workforce training resources with the most pressing demands of area industry.

## General Dynamics Best Practices Event

### General Dynamics-Best Practices Event-

SVAM encourages member companies to host Best Practices Events to share something about their company that they think other members may benefit from learning about. General Dynamics has found great benefit in having a Toastmasters Club and volunteered to host a Best Practice Event by inviting SVAM to its Open House and to sit in during a Toastmasters meeting.

Lennie Gail Mitcham, SVAM's Executive Director, attended the event and was enthusiastic about the wealth of insight she gained concerning Toastmasters. Toastmasters is a club with the goal of helping individuals improve their public speaking skills within the structure of a supportive and organized environment. However, the club is not only focused on assisting those with the goal of improving their public speaking skills, it is also a space to develop general communications and leadership skills through practice, peer feedback, and objective evaluation.

General Dynamics offers their Toastmasters club as an

employee benefit. The company pays an employee's membership dues and participation is on a volunteer basis. The atmosphere of this particular club was very inviting.

Participants interacted before the meeting as if they were lifelong friends. During the meeting, humor found its way through the very professionally structured hour. Tracy Peery, Senior Human Resources Specialist, spoke about how the club provides a way for people within the company, who may never have otherwise crossed paths, to meet and get to know one another.

A special thanks to General Dynamics for hosting the Open House event and for providing employees with the advantages that a Toastmasters club entails.

Companies who may be interested in chartering their own club can go here for some more information: <http://www.toastmasters.org/Membership/How-to-Start-a-New-Club>.

## SVAM Supports Regional Collaboration

### The Southwest 2020 Summit-

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing was a Silver-Level sponsor of The Southwest 2020 Summit, held at the Virginia Higher Education Center on October 22, 2015.

The event highlighted future plans for Southwest Virginia, with a focus on the region's unique characteristics and challenges. Presentations, panel discussions and workshops in a variety of categories left attendees inspired to be active members of their communities in Southwest Virginia.

Lennie Gail Mitcham, the SVAM Executive Director, headed up a workshop on the benefits of on-site medical clinics for industry. Participants in the workshop heard from Rick Nunley of Bristol Compressors and Timothy Lawson of Universal Fibers, who discussed the development and successes of their own on-site medical clinics. The speakers emphasized the decrease in requested sick leave and missed hours due to doctor's appointments due to the introduction of the on-site clinics, which are open to employees and their families.

### Generations Training-

On November 18th, 2015, SVAM sponsored lunch for The Noon Knowledge Series at the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator.

This session, led by Lil Dupree of People Incorporated, focused on Managing Generations in the Workplace. The interactive presentation informed attendees of the differences between the current five-generation workforce and how to make those differences an asset to the workplace. Ms. Dupree also discussed some of the communications challenges that are present in an age-diverse workforce and presented strategies to overcome difficulties. Participants were encouraged to consider the strengths of each generation and the value that their own unique perspective brings to a company.

There were twenty attendees in person and several more online. The video can be found on the Noon Knowledge YouTube Channel.

## SVAM Holiday Dinner

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, SVAM hosted its annual Holiday Dinner at The Virginian Golf Club in Bristol, Virginia. A networking opportunity for membership, the dinner brought together members for food, fun and great conversation.

In keeping with the spirit of the holiday season, SVAM invited attendees to bring a gift or to make a donation to provide Christmas gifts and dinner to a local family in need.

The generosity shown highlighted the giving spirit of our members, and SVAM sends out a special thank you to all those who contributed.



## Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence Update

December 2015 ended a very busy quarter for the SVAM Center of Excellence. During the fourth quarter, SVAM-CoE received an award, machining and fab lab equipment were ordered, SVAM-CoE participated in an NPR radio series, and the CoE staff welcomed a new teammate.



**SVAM-CoE Recognized at the Southwest 2020 Summit**- On October 22, leaders in the areas of education, health, and economic development were given the Trailblazer Award during the third annual Southwest 2020 Summit. Hosted by United Way of Southwest Virginia, the event brought together executives and community leaders from across the region who shared strategies, experiences, and best practices on becoming more collaborative in today's challenging economy. The Trailblazer Award recognizes those who have demonstrated the value of collaboration by working together to strengthen Southwest Virginia's economy. SVAM Center of Excellence Board Chairman, Kevin Mumpower, accepted the "2020 Summit Collaborative Trailblazer Award for Economic Development" on behalf of the SVAM and SVAM-CoE Boards of Directors. Though the award was presented to SVAM-CoE, the 60+ partners of the CoE are truly the award recipients. The CoE is becoming a reality because of the collaboration and efforts of the partners and manufacturers in the region. SVAM-CoE Board members and staff were truly honored to receive the award.

### Precision Machining and Fab Lab Equipment Ordered –

Advanced Precision Machining training, leading to National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) certifications, is projected to start in the first quarter of 2016 at the Abingdon Campus and Wytheville Satellite. A new Wire EDM machine and Trunion Table were delivered to Wytheville Community College (SVAM-CoE Satellite) during the third quarter in preparation for the advanced machining training. Mazak Vertical Center 500A-5-Axis, Mazak Horizontal Center 40003R and Mazak Quick Turn 200MY machining centers were ordered for the Abingdon campus. Manual machines will be ordered the first quarter of 2016. Experienced machinists will be able to enroll in non-credit, fast tracked training that will prepare them for NIMS Levels 2 and 3 certification testing. The NIMS certifications are globally recognized and valued by existing manufacturers in the region, as well as those manufacturers that are in the process of selecting locations for new facilities.

The SVAM-CoE Satellite in Duffield, located within the Pioneer Center, will house a Fabrication Laboratory (Fab Lab), and equipment for this facility has been ordered. A Fab Lab is a technical prototyping platform for innovation and invention, providing stimulus for local entrepreneurship. A Fab Lab is also a platform for learning and innovation: a place to play, to create, to learn, to mentor, and to invent. To be a Fab Lab means connecting to a global community of learners, educators, technologists, researchers, makers, and innovators; it is a knowledge sharing network that spans 30 countries and 24 time zones. Because all Fab Labs share common tools and processes, the program is building a global network, a distributed laboratory for research and invention.

**NPR Radio Series "Not Your Grandparents' Factory"**- SVAM-CoE Executive Director, Stephanie Surrent, along with Lennie Gail Mitcham, SVAM Executive Director, was invited by Lydeana Martin, Community and Economic Development Director for Floyd County, to participate in an interview about manufacturing.

The interview focused on the technological advances and workforce challenges of manufacturers, spotlighting Hollingsworth and Vose's (H&V) Floyd, Virginia facility. H&V, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, is a global manufacturer of advanced materials used in filtration, battery, and industrial applications. The interview, conducted by Robbie Harris with WVTF Public Radio, was aired in a 3 part radio series. It is hoped that as a result of the interview more attention is brought to what manufacturing truly is and its importance to the economy, improve the image of manufacturing (especially the perceptions by the younger generations) to ensure a workforce pipeline for manufacturing, promote manufacturing in Southwest Virginia and ensure Southwest Virginia gets the attention it needs and deserves. The 3 part series can be accessed and heard on their website at <http://wvtf.org/post/not-your-grandparents-factory/#stream/0>.

**Welcome Aboard New Staff** – SVAM-CoE is pleased to welcome intern Matt Arnold to the team. In his role as the Communications and Marketing Specialist, Matt will work with the Executive Director to develop and define public relations strategies, create CoE literature and other materials for communications (i.e. press releases, brochures, information packets, etc.), maintain the agency website, newsletter content and social media content, and other marketing related activities. There is no doubt that Matt's passion, customer service skills and enthusiasm will make a positive impression on those who meet him. The work he is tasked to complete during his 4 month internship, will have an important impact on the CoE, its goals, and success.

### 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
- Community outreach opportunities to change the image of manufacturing
- Training Sharing
- And much more!

If you would like to learn more about SVAM-CoE, contact Ms. Surrent to schedule a presentation at your business or organization. She can be reached at (276) 525-1400 or [ssurrett@svamcoe.org](mailto:ssurrett@svamcoe.org).

## Coming Up at SVAM

### Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award-

Beginning in January, SVAM will accept nominations for the 2015 Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award. SVAM asks its member companies to nominate one woman within their company who they feel rises about the rest. This is the third year that SVAM has given this award.

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 and also helps to showcase a different side of manufacturing, which can often be seen as a male-dominated field.

Please contact SVAM with nomination suggests and/or any questions about the award. Nominations are due by February 10th.

### Save the Date: Manufacturers Expo August 9th -

On August 9th, SVAM will hold its third annual Manufacturers Expo at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia.

SVAM will invite manufacturers from across Virginia and their vendors to attend. The purpose of the event is to provide a venue for manufacturers to network and share best practices in a peer-to-peer environment. It will provide a way for manufacturers to learn more about the local resources available to them through the capabilities of their fellow manufacturers.

More information about the expo will be shared in the coming months. Please contact the SVAM office with any questions.

## Employers Training Collaborative Grant

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. (SVAM), a non-profit educational organization, is again providing a workforce skills training cost reimbursement program to manufacturers in the 17-jurisdiction SVAM footprint. This program is funded through a grant from the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. It is an industry-led effort to provide better-trained workers for manufacturers and to promote manufacturing careers in the region. The \$200,000 grant will pay for workforce skills training to meet the needs of local industry in southwest Virginia. The Commission has limited reimbursement to 25-33% of training costs with documentation of a dollar-for-dollar match. It has also limited the types of training eligible for reimbursement to: Welding, Machining, National Career Readiness Credential Platinum Level, and Manufacturing Technician Level I. A complete listing of eligible subcategories can be achieved by contacting SVAM.

If you have questions or would like more information please contact the SVAM office

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[www.svwam.org](http://www.svwam.org)

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



#### Associate Members:

Manufacturing Technology Center, American Wood Fibers, Mazak Corporation, Southwest Virginia Workforce Investment Board, Virginia Highlands Community College, Hollingsworth and Vose

#### Affiliate Members:

Tri-County Skill Center, Occupational Enterprises, Inc., United Way Virginia Highlands, Russell County IDA, Russell County Government, Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority, Alliance Engineering, Virginia Economic Development Partnership-International Trade, Keith Thompson, Dickenson County Board of Supervisors, Genedge Alliance, Joint IDA of Wythe, New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board, Mountain Empire Community College, Allegheny Brokerage Company, Inc.