

MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A newsletter of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing

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Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award



*Melissa Harrison,
Strongwell Corporation*

In February, SVAM accepted nominations for its 2018 Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award. This is the fifth year that SVAM has presented this award and through this program, many amazing women have been recognized for their contributions to the world of manufacturing in Southwest Virginia.

The purpose of this program is to change the image of manufacturing and highlight the significant role that women play at all levels in manufacturing. It is SVAM's hope that through the positive example that the winner and finalists of this award display, other women will be encouraged and see the opportunities they have to succeed in a career in manufacturing.

A panel of judges scored nominations based on company impact, community impact, personal drive, and leadership. After careful consideration, the panel chose Melissa Harrison, Chief Estimator at Strongwell Corporation in Bristol, Virginia as the winner of this year's award. Judges said, "I wanted to meet her after I was finished reviewing her application." "By touching several important functions of the company's operations and being given responsibility for 10s of millions in company sales by spearheading the team interacting with clients through the quote and estimate process is admirable.

Nothing impacts a company more than the relationship with customers and the generation of revenue. The fact that she has been highly involved in the community through a multitude of different organizations signifies a willingness to stay engaged with the community and perhaps unknowingly provides a symbol of inspiration that other women can ascend and succeed in the world of modern industry."

SVAM would also like to congratulate the finalists for this year's award. Each of these women have made very notable contributions to their company and the community, setting the example of what it means to be an outstanding woman in manufacturing.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- SVAM Annual Meeting - June 12th
- SWVA Manufacturers' Expo - August 14th
- SWVA Manufacturers' Appreciation and Awards Banquet - October 4th

The Finalists:



*Cindy Flemming,
Core Health and Fitness*



*Lisa Greenway, General
Dynamics Mission Systems*



*Lisa Delby,
Somic America*



*Melissa Whited,
Tempur Production USA*



*Renae Anderson,
Universal Fibers*



*Tina Clevinger,
West River Conveyors*

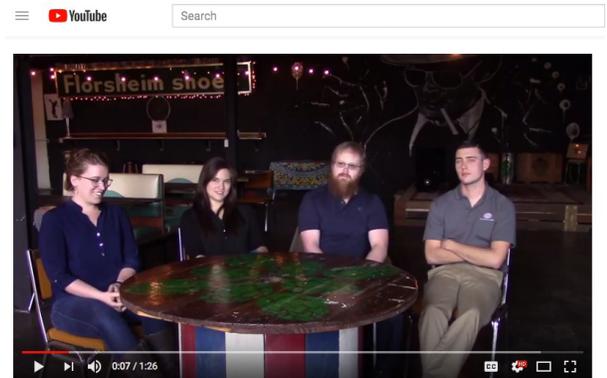
The winner and finalists each received recognition as honorees. Melissa will receive her award at a presentation at Strongwell. The finalists each received a certificate of recognition during a presentation at each of their companies. Melissa Harrison will also be invited to speak at SVAM's Manufacturers' Appreciation and Awards Banquet on October 4th. Be thinking about who you might want to recognize next year as an Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing at your company!

Wages and Benefits Survey Announcement

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, in partnership with the Joint IDA of Wythe County, and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, will be administering a regional Survey of Wages and Benefits for manufacturing in Southwest Virginia. It is understood that our area manufacturers require this information to make important operation and HR decisions. SVAM has sought guidance and input from manufacturers to help ensure that the survey is in a format that will be beneficial, usable, and covers the information that manufacturers need. The survey will be distributed for manufacturers to fill out in May, and a report will be sent to those who completed the survey in June. While the goal of the resulting data is to better understand how other manufacturers in the region operate, any company-specific information received will be strictly confidential, and information will be shared without revealing individual companies' information.

SVAM Launches *Generations in Manufacturing* Video Series

In February SVAM launched a new video series *Generations in Manufacturing: Millennials*. In this series millennials discuss how manufacturing has positively impacted their lives, giving them the time, means, and job security to pursue their hobbies and enjoy life. SVAM has released the first four videos in the series and would like to thank the participants, Austin Greer, a Welder from Utility Trailer in Glade Spring; Sarah Russell, a Chemist from Tempur-Sealy in Duffield; Alexandra Prince, a Team Leader from ZF Group in Atkins; and Ethan Hess, a Production Operator from Quadrant EPP in Wytheville. Special thanks to Headspace Brewing Company in Marion, VA for allowing SVAM to film at their Brewery.



SVAM will release the final *Millennials* video in April and then continue the *Generations in Manufacturing* series with *Generation X*.

SVAM is currently seeking participants who have spent 20+ years in manufacturing for the final part of the series, *Generations in Manufacturing: Veterans of Manufacturing*.

Please visit www.swvam.org/svam-videos to view this video series.

Promoting Careers in Manufacturing

During the months of February and March, SVAM visited fifteen high schools in southwest Virginia, speaking to over 1100 students about opportunities in manufacturing. Topics discussed included career pathways, opportunities for varying levels of education, common myths about manufacturing, and the role of manufacturing in the economy. Students also watched *Generations in Manufacturing: Millennials*, to see how a manufacturing career contributes to a well-rounded life outside of the workplace.

The purpose of the presentations was to help students understand manufacturing career opportunities available to them in southwest Virginia. Faculty and staff at multiple schools also expressed interest in working more closely with SVAM to further impact both students and teachers in regard to opportunities in manufacturing.

SVAM Trainings

Active Shooter Preparedness Lunch & Learn

On February 20th, Major Ashbrook of the Washington County Sheriff's Dept. led an engaging training providing tips and discussions about how to handle an active shooter event, and how to prepare for the possibility of one. Discussion topics included: Definition of Workplace Violence, Emergency Management, Profile of an Active Shooter, Indicators of Potential Violence, Examples in Society, Situational Awareness, Course of Action, LEO Response, EMS Response, Prevention, and Legal Issues.

This training was held in partnership with the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. Special thanks to Major Ashbrook and the Washington County Sheriff's Dept. for leading this training.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

On March 27th, Trey Range with Baker Donelson led a Lunch & Learn training for manufacturers to help them understand how to handle sexual harassment complaints, what their policies should say, and how to handle allegations. Mr. Range provided some very valuable information that can be used by companies and organizations large and small. Sexual harassment is a serious issue that requires intentional and careful attention and consideration both in prevention and in the handling of issues.

Thank you to Matthew Davison, Trey Range, and Baker Donelson for providing this information for our organization and local manufacturers.

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.

SVAM-CoE Trainings/Academies

Utility Trailer Employees Complete Customized PLC Training

SVAM Center of Excellence developed and facilitated a customized training course for Utility Trailer-Glade Spring. The company requested PLC training to assist a couple of its employees with PLC programming and troubleshooting. The training, delivered at SVAM-CoE in Abingdon and at Utility Trailer's facility in Glade Spring, was completed in February. Congratulations to Adam Hodgson and Scott St. John!!

SVAM-CoE Hosts its 4th Advanced Manufacturing Career Academy in Abingdon

The SVAM Center of Excellence (SVAM-CoE) hosted 16 area residents, along with their counselors and aids, through the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) initiative for its 4th Advanced Manufacturing Career Academy in February. The participants experienced hands-on learning about Welding, 3D Printing and Advanced Manufacturing by creating a finished product. In this case the product was, Star Wars fans rejoice, a light saber. The participants had an opportunity to tour Samuel Pressure Vessel and Universal Fibers to see manufacturing up close and in person. The goal of the Career Academy is to expose young adults to advanced technologies, machines and equipment, and to offer a glimpse of the exciting, challenging and often high-tech world of manufacturing.



Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Training Kicked Off on March 14

A new Lean Six Sigma Black Belt cohort started on March 14th at the SVAM Center of Excellence in Abingdon. The course will run every other Wednesday and Thursday until June 21st. Upon completion of the classroom training and a black belt project, the participants will receive their Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification and CEUs from VT.

SW Virginia Regional Work Ready Communities Initiative -Leaders Complete Second Academy

SVAM Center of Excellence (SVAM-CoE), in partnership with the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board (SWVAWDB) and New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMRWDB), coordinated and hosted the second of four sessions of the Southwest Virginia Work Ready Communities (WRC) Academy February 7 in Abingdon at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. This long-term collaboration will help the region improve workforce readiness, employee retention, and our competitiveness as a region. Seventeen counties and four cities are participating in the first effort of this size in this part of the US. The next step, in the pursuit of the certification, is the third of 4 academies, which is set for May 2 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. To learn more about ACT Certified Work-Ready Communities (WRC), visit <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/>

ATF Welding Testing

SVAM-CoE is an AWS Accredited Test Facility (ATF). The American Welding Society renewed the certification as of February 1, 2018. During the 1st quarter of 2018, SVAM-CoE supervised its 100th welding test and tested its 50th welder. As of 3/31/2018, 106 welding tests have been supervised, of which 59 total passed tests/certifications.

Welcome Aboard New Staff – Gerald Austin



It is with great pleasure to announce that Gerald Austin joined the SVAM-CoE team as the Facilities/ATF Technical Manager in March. Gerald first certified as an AWS Certified Welding Inspector (CWI) in 1990 and has made the transition back and forth from welding to inspecting over the years with ease. His knowledge about the trade and ability to apply that knowledge, coupled with welding abilities, makes him a rare commodity in the welding industry. Gerald has already proven to be an asset in SVAM-CoE's efforts to become an AWS Accredited Testing Facility (ATF). He was instrumental in the development of the Quality Assurance Procedures Manual. Gerald has served as the Test Supervisor since February 2017. In addition, he has been the Welding Instructor for all four of SVAM-CoE's Advanced Manufacturing Career Academies. Gerald will be the ATF Technical Manager, supervise weld tests, and facilitate welding training. There is no doubt you will find him knowledgeable, professional and passionate about the welding trade.

Why become a member of SVAM?

Networking opportunities

Training opportunities

Priority access to SVAM worker pool

Company exposure on website, at events, on newsletter, etc.

Peer-to-Peer Best Practices Meetings

Free admission to Manufacturers' Appreciation Dinner

Community outreach opportunities to change the image of manufacturing

Upcoming SVAM-CoE Trainings:

- Siemens Mechatronics Level 2 – Spring 2018 (Abingdon Campus/ Bluefield Satellite)
- Welding – ongoing based on needs and requests
- Welding Inspection – Spring/Summer 2018

If you would like to learn more about SVAM-CoE, contact Ms. Surret to schedule a presentation at your business or organization by calling (276) 525-1400 or ssurret@svamcoe.org.

SVAM-CoE is Certified to Operate by SCHEV.

HEART Project

The Heart Project has experienced much progress over the 1st quarter of 2018. Since implementing the Heart Project in March 2017, twenty-one (21) coal-impacted businesses have received direct services, 36 companies have received indirect services, 28 applications on file and 20 companies in queue.

Coming up, the Heart Project and its partners, Southwest Virginia and New River/Mt Rogers Workforce Development Boards and Genedge, are hosting a series of Business Roundtable events throughout the region.

For additional dates and locations for upcoming events, visit <http://svamcoe.eventbrite.com>. Registration is required to ensure adequate materials and enough food for lunch.

Members of the Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing



The First Name In Trailers



Associate Members

Manufacturing Technology Center; Machine Tech Inc. (Mazak Corp.); Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board; Virginia Highlands Community College; Hollingsworth and Vose; First Community Bank; Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; HR Alliance, LLC.

Affiliate Members

Tri-County Skill Center; Occupational Enterprises, Inc.; United Way of Southwest Virginia; Russell County IDA; Russell County Government; Virginia Coalfield EDA; Alliance Engineering; Virginia Economic Development Partnership, International Trade; GKT Properties; Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Genedge Alliance; New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board; Joint IDA of Wythe; Mountain Empire Community College; Micronic Technologies; Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance; OpX Solutions, LLC; SWCC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center; The Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development; Wytheville Community College; The Southwestern Virginia Technology Council; People Incorporated of Virginia-Workforce Development Services; US Small Business Administration; King University; Smyth County Chamber of Commerce; Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce

County Partners: Smyth County Board of Supervisors and Washington County Board of Supervisors

Affiliate County Partner: Scott County Board of Supervisors



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