

# MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A newsletter of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

SWVA Manufacturers' Expo - August 14th  
SWVA Manufacturers' Appreciation and Awards Banquet - October 4th

## SVAM Awarded Manufacturing Careers Scholarships

For several years now, SVAM has been awarding scholarships to students in support of its goal to promote manufacturing and its careers. This scholarship awards funds to students interested in pursuing post-secondary education in a manufacturing-related field, which includes all areas of manufacturing, both technical and administrative.

This Manufacturing Careers Scholarship is offered to graduating high school students in each county where SVAM has member companies. The purpose of the scholarship is to raise awareness about manufacturing careers and retain the talented worker pool we have in our graduating students. SVAM received applications and interviewed several students for this year's scholarship. Ultimately, the Board of Directors chose those students with drive and determination as well as a passion for manufacturing and the region.

17 students will be receiving this year's scholarship to help them in their pursuit of such careers as Engineering, Welding, Mechatronics, Machining, Human Resources, Electrical Technology, and Business.



*I applied for the SVAM scholarship because I felt that I perfectly met the criteria. I also knew that the scholarship would help me get a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and allow me to do that at a University of my choosing. From a young age, I've always been passionate about engineering, and I feel that the SVAM Scholarship has greatly helped me pursue that passion by attending North Dakota State University. Upon graduation, it's my goal to start a drone production company that will design and manufacture drones for a wide variety of tasks.*

- Jacob England, Scholarship Recipient

## SVAM Annual Meeting

On June 12th, SVAM hosted its Annual Meeting to recap accomplishments and help attendees better understand what the organization does for manufacturing in the region. Key accomplishments included increased membership and increasing and perfecting networking opportunities for manufacturers through things such as peer-to-peer groups, roundtable discussions, the SWVA Manufacturers' Expo, and the Manufacturers' Awards Banquet. This year, SVAM increased its focus on support for manufacturers to fill job openings through job fairs, the creation of a careers page on our website that maintains a listing for community members to view our members' active job openings ([www.swvam.org/mfgcareers](http://www.swvam.org/mfgcareers)), and social media job opening sharing. We continued to grow and develop our #MadeinSWVA campaign this year by providing manufacturing tours, presentations to students all across the region, videos highlighting what jobs in manufacturing look like today, events on college campuses, the launch of our Southwest Virginia Manufacturing Map, the SVAM CoE Career Academies, and much more. The SVAM Board also shared its 2017-2018 Financial Report and adopted its 2018-2019 Strategic Plan. To learn more about our accomplishments from the past year, please check out our Annual Report at [www.swvam.org/about-svam](http://www.swvam.org/about-svam).

## Career and Opportunity Fairs

This spring SVAM participated in the Southwest Virginia Community College Career and Opportunity Showcase, the Smyth County Opportunity Fair, and the Virginia Highlands Community College Job Fair. Through these fairs SVAM was able to talk to over one hundred students and adults about possible careers in manufacturing. SVAM handed out current job listings and discussed the benefits of a manufacturing career with participants. Several interested job candidates left with valuable information and hopes of pursuing a manufacturing career.

### Manufacture Your Career Events

This spring SVAM organized three Manufacture Your Career events. These events focused around a panel discussion highlighting the manufacturing sector and the career paths it offers. Panelists discussed multiple topics including pay and benefits, facility safety, common misconceptions, employer desired soft skills, and different job opportunities. Students took the opportunity to ask the panel members interesting and insightful questions about manufacturing. Students networked with the panelists at the end of the event, discussing job opportunities, internships and asking further questions. The events were a terrific opportunity for local manufacturers to interact with possible future employees. The 52 students in attendance of the events represented a variety of college majors.

The first event took place at Emory and Henry College on April 3rd. Participating companies included Somic America, Strongwell, Bristol Compressors, and Wolf Hills Fabricators, LLC.

The second event took place at Mountain Empire Community College on April 11th. Participating companies for this event included The PBE Group, Tadano Mantis Corporation, Tempur-Sealy, and Komatsu.

The third panel discussion was held at Virginia Highlands Community College on April 19th. The participating companies included Somic America, Bristol Compressors International, LLC, and Strongwell.

SVAM would like to thank the volunteer panelists, and Chris Thompson, Amanda Gardner, Emory and Henry College, Beth Boggs, Mountain Empire Community College, Mark Wildman, and Virginia Highlands Community College for hosting the events.



### SVAM Trainings

#### Cost Reduction in Worker's Compensation Lunch & Learn

On May 15th, hosted by Utility Trailer in Glade Spring, John Martin, Attorney at Law with Penn Stuart led a training to provide information regarding how to reduce expenses in Virginia Workers Compensation. He discussed the basic effects of workers' compensation claims on premium costs and methods by which an employer can actively attempt to limit costs when an employee incurs a compensable accident.

Thank you to Utility Trailer for hosting this Lunch & Learn, and John Martin and Penn Stuart for the valuable information.

#### Significant Developments in Employment Law in 2017 & a Look Ahead Lunch & Learn

On June 12th, Matthew Davison with Baker Donelson Law Firm led a Lunch & Learn training for manufacturers to examine and consider the most significant developments in employment law over the last year and offer a practical view of how employers can limit risk going forward.

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



### Member Spotlight

#### Utility Trailer Donates Items to Feeding America Southwest Virginia

"The employees of Utility Trailer in Glade Spring teamed up with Food City to donate more than 10,000 pounds of food, which was delivered in May to the Feeding America Southwest Virginia Distribution Center in Abingdon.

When Sam Cassell, Utility Plant Manager, heard employees talking about people having trouble affording both food and medicine, he said he approached Steve Smith, president and CEO of Food City, about a food drive. "I'm proud on behalf of the employees to be able to do this," said Cassell. "It's cool that we can make a difference in the community. How big of an impact could be made if everyone would do this?" Pamela Irvine, president and CEO of Feeding America Southwest Virginia, said such donations make all the difference. "If we didn't have this local support, we'd have to shut our doors. If we didn't have the support from Food City and Utility Trailer, we'd have to close down."

*Story by Linda Burchette with Smyth County News and Messenger*

### 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.

### Lean Six Sigma Black Belt

SVAM-CoE wrapped up its second cohort of Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Training on June 21. The cohort included employees from Tempur Productions (Duffield), Hollingsworth & Vose (Floyd), Hapco (Abingdon), Bird Dog Distributors (Clintwood), Lohmann Tapes (Orange) and University of VA Health Systems (Charlottesville).



### ATF Welding Testing and Inspection Services

Since its official designation as an AWS ATF on February 1, 2017, 149 welding tests have been supervised for 71 welders resulting in 78 certifications. This quarter alone, 43 tests were supervised for 27 welders resulting in 22 certifications.

### Customized Training

Customized GTAW welding training was developed and delivered for ProChem in Elliston, VA. David Cole, ProChem welder and CoE student, passed his GTAW test in May. Lacy Hatcher, ProChem HR Manager, said, "The certification he obtained allowed him to earn a promotion and gain an industry-accepted certification. That same skillset now provides our company with a certified welder who can replace expensive outsourcing of this same welding service."

### SVAM-CoE Recognized as an AWS SENSE School

SVAM-CoE has been designated as an AWS SENSE School. As a SENSE School, SVAM-CoE wants to support and assist regional Career and Technical Education Centers (CTCs) and community colleges (CCs) with the instructor training and certifications necessary for administering their programs, as well as be the next level for the CTCs and CCs students completing Sense Level 1.

### SVAM-CoE Partners with Wise Correctional Unit #18 in "Offender Transition Program" Pilot

Wise Correctional Unit #18, in partnership with Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence, is proud to announce Jay Stilwell and Timothy William (Inmates of institution) are AWS Certified Welders after passing their weld test at SVAM-CoE in Abingdon. One week after his release, Mr. Williams began working as a welder making \$17.00 per hour. Mr. Stilwell will be released in September, where he has numerous employment opportunities awaiting him where he will be able to utilize his newly obtained certifications." A special thanks to the New River/Mt Rogers and Southwest VA Workforce Development Boards, VA Cares, People, Inc and Goodwill Industries for ensuring wrap-around services.

### Southwest Virginia Work Ready Communities Initiative

Leaders for the SWVA Work Ready Communities Initiative completed the third of four planned Academies on May 2, 2018 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. These preparatory Academies are designed to help fully launch the initiative in the seventeen-county and four-city footprint of Southwest Virginia. A Catch-Up Academy was held on June 27, 2018 in Lebanon for newcomers to the project. The final Academy will be held on August 15, 2018 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. Official recognition for Southwest Virginia's participation in the initiative is set for September 2018. SVAM-CoE has been working diligently in partnership with the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board to coordinate, expedite, and conduct these activities. To learn more about ACT Certified Work-Ready Communities, visit <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/>.

### Upcoming Trainings:

Welding training is ongoing based on needs and requests • Siemens Level 2 projected to start August GD&T project to start this Fall

### Welcome Aboard New Staff – Kim Hamilton



The SVAM-CoE Board of Directors and staff would like to welcome Kim Hamilton to the team as the new Administrative/Project Assistant. Kim has extensive business experience in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts previously working in retail management, real estate development and marketing, and healthcare management and marketing. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Professional Communication from Old Dominion University where she was a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society. Kim returned to work after a career sabbatical during which she chose to be at home with her daughters during their formative years due to her husband's travel with his work for CSX Transportation. Her professional aspiration is to now use her knowledge, skills, and abilities to contribute to the mission of the SVAM Center of Excellence.

### 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](mailto:ssurret@svamcoe.org).

SVAM-CoE is Certified to Operate by SCHEV.

## HEART Project

The Heart Project continues to make progress. Since March 2017, 27 coal-impacted businesses have received direct services, 38 companies have received indirect services, 34 applications are on file, and 20 companies are in queue for evaluation. This quarter alone sees an increase of 6 businesses receiving direct services, an increase of 2 businesses receiving indirect services, and an increase of 6 businesses with applications on file.

For more information about the HEART of Appalachia Collaborative Economic Transition Project, visit <http://www.heartprojectswva.org/>.

## 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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