



MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A newsletter of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing

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Women in Manufacturing Symposium



Frances Pung, Chasity Hearn, Kristin Goff, Ragan Proffitt, Melanie Protti-Lawrence

On Wednesday, March 8th, The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing (SVAM) hosted its annual Women in Manufacturing Symposium in celebration of International Women's Day. The Symposium is held to celebrate and recognize women's contributions, value, and future in manufacturing. Furthermore, the purpose is to promote the career opportunities women can pursue in the manufacturing industry.

Participating employees were encouraged to make connections, get to know one another better, and expand their network through open networking time.

Kristin Goff, Senior Project Manager for Volvo Group in Dublin, Virginia, provided the keynote speech. Kristin's keynote address focused on encouraging attendees to "pack your GRIT and help us even the playing field." Kristin explained that GRIT was an acronym which stood for Growth Mindset, Reflection, Intelligence (Emotional), and Toughness. She talked about her own journey through success and failure to do this for herself.

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Mission Statement: Supporting the sustainment and advancement of manufacturing in Southwest Virginia through regional collaborations, improving the image of manufacturing, and closing the skills gap.

SVAM Goals

Goal 1: Supporting manufacturing and its careers as part of an educational and economic development initiative.

Goal 2: Increasing the number of individuals who pursue manufacturing-based careers.

Goal 3: Aligning educational and workforce training resources with the most pressing demands of area industry.



Women in Manufacturing Symposium (continued)

A panel, comprised of women at various levels of their careers in manufacturing, spoke about their career paths, overcoming challenges, celebrating their successes, and encouraged women to pursue and develop their careers in manufacturing. Panelists were Chasity Hearn, Production Supervisor at Speyside Bourbon Cooperage, Ragan Proffitt, Manufacturing Engineer at Wolf Hills Fabricators, Frances Pung, Quality Manager at Strongwell, and Melanie Protti-Lawrence, President of Lawrence Brothers, Inc..



"The event inspired me by knowing that other women are interested in or do the same jobs that I enjoy, which are Welding and Manufacturing. I particularly enjoyed the real-life stories of what they have achieved, how they got there, and the stresses they endured... My takeaway would be the numerous opportunities in manufacturing that I have within the bigger region..."

- Journie Woods, 12th Grade, Union High School Student



Manufacture Your Career

SVAM hosted a Manufacture Your Career panel discussion at Virginia Highlands Community College on March 30th. The purpose of the event is to encourage students to pursue careers in manufacturing by changing perceptions and educating them about available opportunities. For the

event four panelists spoke to VHCC students and faculty about their companies, the benefits of working in manufacturing, and available job opportunities. Those panelists were Juliana Hybner, Senior Manufacturing Engineer for General Dynamics Mission Systems, Nick Bordwine, Inside Sales Coordinator for Wolf Hills Fabricators, Giles Hughes Jr, Value Stream Manager for Hapco Pole Products, and Brooke Eskridge, Welder at Utility Trailer Manufacturing in Glade Spring. Many students took advantage of the opportunity to network with panelists after the event. Thank you to Traci Mitchell with VHCC, for hosting us, and our panelists for helping SVAM accomplish its goals.

2023 Outstanding Women in Manufacturing Award

Each year SVAM accepts nominations for its Outstanding Woman in Manufacturing Award. The nominees are scored by a panel of judges based on company and community impact. 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 with great pleasure we announce the winners of this year's Outstanding Women in Manufacturing Award, in three categories:

Management: Shelly Wiseman, Materials Manager, Strongwell

Hourly/Production: Nancy Hicks, Production Coordinator, Shearer's Foods

Administrative Support: Bobbi Marin, Document and Data Control, Somic America, Inc.



Shelly Wiseman, Strongwell



Nancy Hicks, Shearer's Foods



Bobbi Marin, Somic America, Inc.

SVAM also recognized 14 women as honorees of this year's award. Profiles for each winner and honoree can be found at [swvam.org/outstandingwomen2023](https://www.svam.org/outstandingwomen2023).

Training Opportunities for Membership

SVAM continued to meet member training needs with multiple training offerings this quarter. Trainings were provided at no cost to SVAM Member companies. In partnership with the Center for Manufacturing Excellence, SVAM provided a series on Generations in the workplace. SVAM continued its Supervisor Training series, in partnership with Virginia Tech, by offering a virtual training on "Transitioning from Peer to Leader." A recording of this training is available on SVAM's website. In partnership with OpX Solutions, SVAM offered a training on "Achieving Kaizen Success."

Careers Promotion for Membership

Many of SVAM's member companies are actively hiring. SVAM is providing advertisements of these openings, daily, on our website and across our social media platforms. We also work with members to organize onsite job fairs. SVAM has a page on our website that compiles all openings for member companies, with links for job seekers to apply: [swvam.org/mfgcareers](https://www.svam.org/mfgcareers). This page gets updated every Thursday.

Membership Benefits

Connections:

Members are provided opportunities to connect with other manufacturers as well as vendors - providing opportunities for business improvement and business growth.

Resources:

SVAM has saved its member companies thousands of dollars by providing them with access to resources that offset training and development costs.

Support:

Member companies have access to a menu of benefits offered that support business growth including training, marketing, and efforts to help member companies fill job openings.

SVAM Manufacturing Membership



SVAM Affiliate Members

Southwest Virginia WDB; Virginia Highlands Community College; Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; Hollingsworth & Vose Company; At Work; Appalachian Environmental Resources; Employee Benefit Consultants; GBC Wellness Center/The Medfit Center; Baker Donnelson; SESCO Management Consultants; Tri-County Skill Center; Occupational Enterprises, Inc.; United Way of Southwest Virginia; Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority; GKT Properties, LLC; Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board; Joint IDA of Wythe; Mountain Empire Community College; Micronic Technologies; Mount Rogers Regional Partnership; OpX Solutions, LLC; SWCC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center; Wytheville Community College; Appalachian Council for Innovation; King University; Smyth County Chamber of Commerce; Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce; UVA-WISE Office of Economic Development; The University of Virginia's College at Wise; Radford University; Old Dominion University; Virginia Tech; Allegheny Brokerage Company; Ballad Health; Washington County IDA, Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Local Government Partners

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