



# MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A newsletter of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing

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Noah Hoffman, SVAM Scholarship Recipient

## Manufacturing Careers Scholarship

Each year, SVAM awards scholarships in pursuit of its goal to promote manufacturing and its careers. The purpose of the scholarship is to raise awareness about manufacturing careers and retain the talented worker pool we have in Southwest Virginia.

The scholarships are awarded to deserving high school seniors who wish to pursue a post-secondary education in a manufacturing-related field. For 2023, the qualifying fields of study were engineering, welding, machining, robotics, industrial maintenance, instrumentation, controls systems/PLC programming, drafting/design, and environmental health and safety.

After the application and interview process, SVAM was happy to award 10 deserving students across Southwest Virginia with funding up to \$2000 each. These students all showed a strong desire to pursue a career in manufacturing in the region.

SVAM would like to thank the Scholarship Committee, made up of manufacturing members, for taking the time to interview the students and help choose the most qualified candidates.

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*“I took machining classes in high school, and I became interested in a career in machining. Real Performance Machinery in Independence provided the opportunity to participate in an internship in machining. Once I worked there, I decided to pursue more classes at WCC. The scholarship is going to be very helpful in reaching my education goals. It gives me an opportunity to further my education in the field of machining by alleviating some financial burden. I am thankful for SVAM and their assistance in helping me reach my goal of a career in machining...”*

*- Noah Huffman, Grayson County High School*

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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.



## Manufacture Your Career at WCC

On April 27th, SVAM held its Manufacture Career Program at Wytheville Community College. The purpose of this program is to encourage students to pursue careers in manufacturing by changing perceptions and educating them about available opportunities.

For this event, four panelists spoke to students and faculty about their companies, the benefits of working in manufacturing, and available job opportunities. They answered questions about pay and benefits, why so many have stayed in manufacturing for so long, working environments, ways that Southwest Virginia manufacturing impacts the globe, and much more.

Panelists for this event were Becky Crouse, Administrative Director for Smyth County Machine and Fabrication; Susan Nelson, CNC Set Up Technician for Real Performance Machinery; Michael Heiney, MPACT Coordinator for Mohawk; and Josh McPeak, Quality Manager for Somic America.

After the panel discussion, many students took advantage of the opportunity to network with panelists. Thank you to Perry Hughes with Wytheville Community College for hosting us for this event and to our panelists for helping SVAM accomplish its goals.

## Careers Promotion for Membership

SVAM has had a continued focus on promoting job openings for our member companies. SVAM is providing advertisements of job openings, daily, on our website and across our social media platforms. SVAM has a page on our website that compiles all openings for member companies, with links for job seekers to apply. This page gets updated every Thursday and can be found at [swvam.org/mfgcareers](http://swvam.org/mfgcareers).

As an exclusive benefit to membership, SVAM also supported two in-person job fairs for SIG (formerly Scholle IPN), where SVAM managed registration and advertised the event. SVAM offers the opportunities to manage an in-person job fair to all member companies.



SVAM also participated in several in-person opportunities to promote jobs in manufacturing. SVAM Executive Director, Lennie Gail Mitcham, spoke with 60 students at the Galax Career Fair on April 21st.

On April 25th, Lennie Gail gave a presentation to approximately 200 students at the Grayson County High School where she addressed myths associated with manufacturing careers and spoke about the many career opportunities available in manufacturing in the region.

SVAM supported Virginia Highlands Community College's "Get Hired" Career Fair on April 26th, where many employers gathered to meet with job seekers.

## 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. As part of its Supervisor Training series, in partnership with Virginia Tech's Southwest Center, SVAM offered the following trainings: "Communicating with Employees", "Time Management", and "Design Thinking and Problem Solving". Per a member request, SVAM also partnered with Baker Donelson to offer a virtual "Reasonable Suspicion" training.

## Member-to-Member Connections

SVAM continually provides opportunities to connect its member companies together to learn from and strengthen one another. This quarter, SVAM provided a virtual Human Resources Peer Group for its members as well as an in-person Environmental Health and Safety Peer Group meeting. At these meetings, professionals discussed challenges their companies are facing and shared advice for overcoming those challenges. The EHS Peer Group meeting was hosted by Coperion in Wytheville. In addition to valuable EHS discussions, participants learned about Coperion's EHS program and took a tour of the facility.



## 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 Workforce Development Board; Virginia Highlands Community College; Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; Hollingsworth & Vose Company; AtWork Recruiting and Staffing; Appalachian Environmental Resources; Employee Benefit Consultants; GBC Wellness Center/The Medfit Center; Bristol Rent All; SESCO Management Consultants; Baker Donelson; 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 Board; The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County; Mountain Empire Community College; Micronic Technologies; Mount Rogers Regional Partnership; OpX Solutions, LLC; Southwest Virginia Community College'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; Ballad Health; Washington County Industrial Development Authority; Allegheny Brokerage Company; Washington County Chamber; Emory & Henry College; Genedge Alliance; Merrick & Company (formerly Alliance Engineering); Appalachian Promise Alliance

## Local Government Partners

Smyth County Board of Supervisors, Washington County Board of Supervisors, Wythe County Board of Supervisors (Affiliate), Scott County Board of Supervisors (Affiliate)



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