



MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A newsletter of The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing

In This Issue:

- 2023 Manufacturing Awards Banquet
- Manufacture Your Career
- Manufacturing Tours for Business Solutions Group
- Member-Exclusive Opportunities
- Member Listing



2023 Manufacturing Awards Banquet

The Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing (SVAM) held its prestigious Southwest Virginia Manufacturing Awards Banquet on Thursday, October 12th, to celebrate National Manufacturing Day. Distinguished business and community leaders from across Southwest Virginia gathered at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the manufacturing sector over the past year.



*Manufacturer of the Year
Real Performance Machinery*



*Community Impact Award
Universal Fibers*

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Alex Lupi, SVAM Board Member, who highlighted SVAM's accomplishments since the previous year's Banquet and acknowledged the vital contributions of its members. Mike Leigh, President of OpX Solutions, LLC, led a keynote address titled "How Manufacturing Can Succeed in Today's Economy." Mr. Leigh's keynote offered invaluable insights into strategies for success in the post-pandemic manufacturing landscape.

Continued on page 2



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.

2023 Manufacturing Awards Banquet (continued)



Innovations in Manufacturing
Strongwell

Excellence in Safety
VFP, Inc.

Environmental Excellence
Amcors Rigid Packaging

Manufacturing Employee of
the Year, McGuire Osborne

Eric Miller Memorial Award,
Sean Blackwell

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.

The highlight of the evening was the much-anticipated awards ceremony, where SVAM recognized excellence in the manufacturing sector across seven distinct categories. Each award category was carefully selected to spotlight the significant contributions of manufacturers to the Southwest Virginia community.

This initiative aligns with SVAM's overarching mission of reshaping the public's perception of manufacturing and fostering greater interest in manufacturing careers.

The award winners for 2023 are as follows:

- **Innovations in Manufacturing Award** - Presented to Strongwell of Bristol, Virginia.
- **Community Impact Award** - Presented to Universal Fibers of Bristol, Virginia.
- **Environmental Excellence Award** - Presented to Amcor Rigid Packaging of Wytheville, Virginia.
- **Excellence in Safety Award** - Presented to VFP, Inc. of Duffield, Virginia.
- **Manufacturer of the Year Award** - Presented to Real Performance Machinery, LLC of Independence, Virginia.
- **Manufacturing Employee of the Year Award** - Presented to McGuire Osborne of Real Performance Machinery of Independence, Virginia.
- **Eric Miller Memorial Award** - Presented to Sean Blackwell.

These distinguished companies and individuals have demonstrated exceptional dedication, innovation, and commitment to the manufacturing industry, showcasing its positive impact on the region.



“
Winning the award for Safety Excellence is a very special recognition. This achievement helps our organization show our safety culture is moving forward now and in the future. Safety is a critical facet at VFP. With all of the dynamic tasks in the various departments of production, safety must be implemented and followed for operational success and employee peace of mind.

SVAM is great organization that unites manufacturing organizations all working towards operational and safety refinement. Offering the opportunity to train, meet collectively, and recognize distinctions make SVAM something special.

- William Regert, EH&S Manager VFP, Inc.



Manufacture Your Career at King University



SVAM hosted a Manufacture Your Career panel discussion at King University on October 23rd. The event's purpose 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 King students and faculty about their companies, manufacturing benefits, and available job opportunities.

Those panelists were Sean Blackwell, Safety Coordinator at Hapco; Brandon Crook, Corporate Sales Account Manager at Strongwell; Ragan Proffitt, Production Engineer at Wolf Hills Fabricators; and Nick Dingus, Technical Manager at Cardinal Glass Systems. Many students took advantage of the opportunity to network with panelists after the event. Thank you to Finley Green with King University for hosting us and our panelists and for helping SVAM accomplish its goals.

Manufacturing Tours for Business Solutions Group



SVAM organized tours of Speyside Bourbon Stave Mill and Speyside Bourbon Cooperage for the New River/Mount Rogers Business Solutions Group on December 13th. Participants were able to see the entire process from the log to a finished bourbon barrel. Individuals from multiple organizations learned about the working environment, what Speyside looks for in an ideal candidate, pay and benefits, and more.

Member Exclusive Opportunities

HR Peer Group Meeting: The HR Peer Group convened for its quarterly meeting on November 1st, focusing on collaboration and the exchange of insights. This gathering, exclusive to full members of SVAM, offered a unique platform for HR professionals to engage in meaningful networking and discussion. The agenda centered on addressing current challenges in the HR landscape and sharing best practices, fostering a community of learning and professional growth among peers.

Educational Needs Discussion: SVAM recently hosted members for a discussion to address the needs of Southwest Virginia manufacturers in regard to the education system. The discussions centered on exploring practical ways to enhance collaboration between manufacturers and educational institutions. The emphasis was on aligning educational programs with the current and future needs of the manufacturing sector, thereby ensuring that students are effectively prepared for their roles in the manufacturing industry.

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

AM Training Management; Appalachian Council for Innovation; Appalachian Environmental Resources; Appalachian Promise Alliance; AtWork Recruiting and Staffing; Baker Donelson; Ballard Health; Bristol Rent All; Brown, Edwards & Company, L.L.P.; Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Emory & Henry College; EMATS, Inc.; Employee Benefit Consultants; GBC Wellness Center/The Medfit Center; Genedge Alliance; Hollingsworth & Vose Company; Hungate Business Services; King University; Merrick & Company (formerly Alliance Engineering); Micronic Technologies; Mountain Empire Community College; Mount Rogers Regional Partnership; New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board; Occupational Enterprises, Inc.; Old Dominion University; OpX Solutions, LLC; Radford University; SESCO Management Consultants; Smyth County Chamber of Commerce; Southwest Virginia Community College's Procurement Technical Assistance Center; Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board; The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County; The University of Virginia's College at Wise; Tri-County Skill Center; UVA-WISE Office of Economic Development; United Way of Southwest Virginia; Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority; Virginia Highlands Community College; Virginia Tech; Washington County Chamber; Washington County Industrial Development Authority; Wytheville Community College; Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce.

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)



851 French Moore Jr. Blvd., Suite 109
Abingdon, Virginia 24210
www.swvam.org
(276) 492-2100