

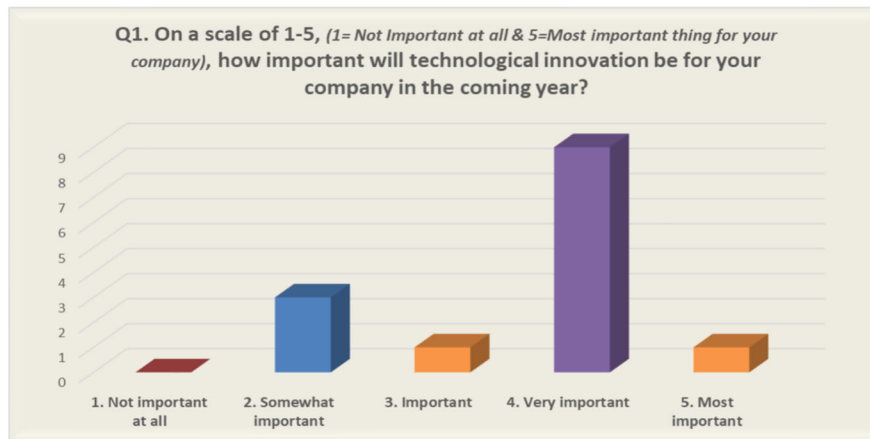


EAMA RSP Hybrid Meeting Meeting Notes

October 18, 2023

Welcome – Chair Chris Jewell from Collins & Jewell started the meeting at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed the newest EAMA RSP member - International Paper.

Employer Instant Poll - To determine the importance of technical innovation for our manufacturing members during 2024, an instant poll asked members to rank its importance.



71% of those responding ranked technical innovation as being very important or most important.

A second poll question asked respondents about a variety of technologies and which they would be starting to use or expanding in 2024. From the 12 choices provided, the top three results were:

1. Cybersecurity 19%
2. Robotics 14%
3. Energy efficiency 11%

Employers and support partners discussed resources to help employers strengthen their cybersecurity practices, including free cybersecurity assessments through CONNSTEP, Manufacturing Innovation Fund smart industry ready assessments and cyber assessments, and the CT State – Quinebaug Valley cybersecurity program.

Business 2 Business Working Group Update – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit informed the group that the B2B survey, designed to determine what barriers EAMA RSP members face to do more business in Connecticut, would be sent out again.

Next Steps: EAMA RSP members were encouraged to complete the survey when it was received.

Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance – A Connecticut Regional Sector Partnership

Connex – Tony asked members to share their experiences with CONNEX, to determine if it has resulted in additional business for them. **CONNEX CT Program Manager Bernice Zampano** reported that CT to CT matches have had great success. She said they will do additional marketing in the future. She also encouraged members to review their profiles to ensure that their contact information is included to be properly matched.

Learn More: To sign up for a free CONNEX account, visit: https://manufacturing.ct.gov/connex?language=en_US

Plastics Working Group Update – **Working Group Chair Reid Chamberlin from Sonoco** reported that the first Intro to Plastics course was completed at CT State – Quinebaug Valley with 22 students from several EAMA RSP members. He shared the feedback from the students, which was quite positive; instructor Matthew McKenney received very high ratings from the students.

Reid reminded EAMA RSP members that it is important that they send incumbent workers to the next cohort which is tentatively scheduled for February 2024 to ensure that the Intro to Plastics class will continue to be offered.

Next Steps: EAMA RSP plastics members can start thinking about which of their employees they may want to send to the next Intro to Plastics class. EAMA RSP members will receive notification when the class dates have been set.

Learn More: Incumbent Worker Training funding may be available to offset the cost of the training. For more information contact the Business Services Team: Jeff Martel, jmartel@qvcc.edu or Joelle Garrett, jgarrett@chamberect.com.

MPI Curriculum Improvements - Safety Additions - **Chris Jewell** reported that a variety of safety components have been added to the MPI curriculum. **Bret Jacobson, Director of CT State – Three Rivers’ Manufacturing Apprenticeship Center (MAC)**, shared that an employee from Electric Boat (EB) has been coming to the MAC and providing the safety training in 6 modules. The training is “universally valid” for all manufacturers; the training has heightened safety awareness among students. Constant reminders about safety are inherent in all the MPI trainings.

EB Curriculum Documentation Process - **Jess Key from Electric Boat** shared that EB and HII-NNS have been tasked by NAVSEA to create common maritime trades curricula that can be leveraged by any submarine industrial base (SIB) regional training system to skill new hires to standard processes across Enterprise employers. The initiative drives commonality in training to common standards across the US with central maintenance of updates and flow down for any changes in processes and/or governing documents. The curriculum team is performing broad benchmarking for best practices and mockup designs, with minimal recommended changes and no anticipated constraints for local partners. Jess said EB would like to solicit EAMA RSP members to review each draft curriculum package and provide feedback to be integrated into the final curriculum and clarified that final curricula can be customized to respond to regional industry needs.

Next Steps: EAMA RSP members will be invited to volunteer to review any of the draft curriculum packages prior to each planned package release date, and to participate in an abbreviated pilot for each program (1/4th the standard duration).

Planned package release dates:

- Welding: 11/29/23
- Outside Machining: 2/28/24
- Pipefitting: 4/10/24
- Paint: 3/29/24
- Inside Machining, Sheetmetal, and Electrical: TBD

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CT NAACP - Michael Nogelo from EWIB reported that Chris Jewell signed a Second Chance Hiring Partnership MOU with the CT NAACP on behalf of the EAMA RSP. The partnership will provide workforce services to NAACP Million Jobs Campaign (MJC) clients including career planning, case management, training (e.g., Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative – MPI), and job search support.

The combination of the MPI's excellent training and MJC recruiting, and support is expected to help connect EAMA RSP members who need trained workers with a population that is underrepresented in the workforce.

Next Steps: Tony Benoit will email EAMA RSP employer members to give members the opportunity to volunteer to participate in the second chance hiring initiative and/or to learn more about second chance hiring.

R&D Tax Treatment – Ray Coombs from Westminster Tool reported that 40 US senators have co-sponsored the *American Innovation and Jobs Act* to allow the continued expensing of R&D costs that is hurting manufacturers. US Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy are not among the co-sponsors. Ray thanked US Congressman Joe Courtney's Chief of Staff, Ayanti Grant, for Congressman Courtney's steadfast support.

Next Steps: EAMA RSP will send a letter to US Senators Blumenthal & Murphy urging their support for the legislation. [Click here](#) to read an overview of the issue from the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) & click [here for a sample letter](#) to legislators. EAMA RSP will send a copy of this letter to CT Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie to engage Governor Lamont.

Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) - Carol LaBelle from EWIB reported that the MPI continues to run smoothly. 53 training classes were/will be provided from July through December 2023 with another 20 planned for the first quarter of 2024. As of September 2023, over 3,000 people have received training; job placements exceed 4,000. Carol explained that the variance in the number of people trained versus those that got jobs is attributable to people (most of whom were in the MPI in its early years) who had manufacturing skills and did not require training. She also highlighted the 33 local manufacturers who have hired MPI grads; 24 of whom are EAMA RSP members.

Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI) - David Allard from EWIB gave an update about the very successful Explore Manufacturing Expo held at Dodd Stadium on September 28. All but one of the 24 participating manufacturers was an EAMA RSP member. 560 students attended the event from 24 area schools, including 4 middle schools. It is rumored that this, the final stop on the 2023 Manufacturing Road Show, was the best event.

David also shared that 17 area schools (11 of whom are teaching the YMPI curriculum) will attend this year's YMPI Kickoff meeting on October 19. YMPI work funded by the Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) Grant is underway. ReadyCT is supporting efforts to strengthen the YMPI career readiness and work-based learning components and will be looking for employers willing to offer tours, job shadowing opportunities, speaking engagements, and internships for students.

Next Steps: EAMA RSP members who are interested should contact Malia Sieve from ReadyCT at malia.sieve@readyct.com.

Communication – Chris Jewell offered congratulations to SPIROL on their 75th Anniversary.

CT Comptroller Sean Scanlon visited Eastern CT to see a “day in the life” of an MPI student. The day-long event on Oct. 16 included visits to CT State - Quinebaug Valley and the Grasso Tech Manufacturing Apprenticeship Center to visit MPI classes & tour the manufacturing centers, as well as a roundtable discussion with several smaller EAMA RSP manufacturers held at EWIB and facilitated by Comptroller Scanlon and EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit.

Lastly, **Chris** reminded members to register for the Foster Corp tour and EAMA RSP Networking Event on October 25 at Foster Corp and the Black Dog Bar & Grille in Putnam.

Next Meeting – will be held in a hybrid format, **Wednesday, December 6 at 9:00 a.m.**