



## EAMA RSP Hybrid Meeting Notes December 6, 2023

**Welcome** – Chair **Chris Jewell from Collins & Jewell** started the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed **Donna Knox** from the newest EAMA RSP member – **Ensinger Precision Components**.

He also introduced a NEW addition to future EAMA RSP meeting agendas – **Employer Accomplishment Sharing**. During the first few minutes of each meeting, manufacturing members will be encouraged to share recent newsworthy items of interest with the group.

**Hannah Coombs from Westminster Tool (WT)** shared that WT will partner with Sumitomo to grow sales and to increase educational opportunities related to injection-molded plastics for WT employees.

**Manufacturer Instant Poll** – The poll asked employer members to assess the quantity of EAMA RSP emails they receive between meetings.

**69% felt the number is about right.  
31% welcomed additional emails.**

When asked about specific topics on which they would like to receive more information, recurring responses included:

- Upcoming events of interest to manufacturers
- Information on state resources and incentive programs

### Updates from Working Groups

**Plastics** – **Reid Chamberlin from Sonoco** shared that CT State – Quinebaug Valley (QV) will start a second cohort of Plastics Manufacturing Courses designed primarily for incumbent workers in February 2024. Hannah is helping QV with outreach and reminded members that filling these classes is essential to ensuring they will continue to be offered by the college.

*Course I:* Introduction to Plastics will be held Tues/Thurs Feb. 5-26 from 5-8 pm. The fee is \$540. (Class size is limited to 20 students.)

*Course II:* Hands-On Plastics Manufacturing will be held as follows:

Group IIa – Tues, March 5-May 21, 5-8 pm

Group IIb – Thurs, March 18-June 4, 5-8 pm

The fee is \$950. Class size is limited to 10 students per group.

**Next Steps:** Members are encouraged to register their employees for these classes and to share the opportunity with non-EAMA RSP companies. The registration deadline is January 22, 2024. Register online at [qvcc.edu/workforce](http://qvcc.edu/workforce), scroll down to “How to Register” for online form. Any questions, call 860-932-4005.

**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](mailto:jmartel@qvcc.edu) or Joelle Garrett, [jgarrett@chamberect.com](mailto:jgarrett@chamberect.com). Paul Lavoie mentioned that there may be state money available as well.

Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance – A Connecticut Regional Sector Partnership

### **Business to Business (B2B) – Charles Daniels from Wepco**

**Plastics** shared results from a survey which asked members to share what prevents them from doing more business in CT. The top two factors identified by the responding companies were “identifying potential customers” and “matching your capabilities to the needs of customers.”

Seventy-five percent of those who responded felt they would benefit from a CONNEX Connecticut webinar to help them better utilize this resource designed to help them do more business in Connecticut. Charles is also looking for other ideas and more member input.

**Next Steps:** The B2B Working Group will host a CONNEX Connecticut webinar for EAMA RSP members. Watch for more details.

If you are interested in joining the Business to Business Working Group and/or have other ideas, please contact EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit at [eamarsp@gmail.com](mailto:eamarsp@gmail.com).

**Learn More:** CONNSTEP will host a ‘Building a Successful Profile with CONNEX Connecticut’ Webinar on Friday, January 19, 2024 at 12 pm. Register [here](#).

*Which of the following inhibit you from doing more business in Connecticut?*

**6 = Identifying potential customers**

**6 = Matching your capabilities to the needs of customers**

**4 = Business to business communications**

**3 = Certification(s), such as ISO 9001-2015**

**2 = Marketing Challenges**

**Workforce & Outreach** – In **Jeff Dickey from The Lee Company’s** absence, Tony shared that a tentative 2024 meeting schedule for this working group has been set, with the next meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, January 17**.

Tony reported that, in their hiring searches, The Lee Company is finding some “really good candidates,” which had not been the case the last couple of years. Tony asked if other members were finding this to be true. Chris Jewell noted that Collins & Jewell is seeing more applicants; Hannah Coombs from Westminster Tool commented that they have been getting some very good candidates as well; other members seemed to agree with this trend. There was concern, however, that retention and work ethic continue to be a problem. The working group therefore anticipates concentrating its efforts more on retention and career development strategies than worker attraction.

**Next steps:** Members of the Workforce & Outreach Working Group should watch their email for a formal meeting invitation to the virtual January 17, 2024 meeting.

### **Director’s Report**

**MPI Curriculum Documentation Process** – **Jess Key from Electric Boat (EB)** shared that EB and Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding (HII-NNS) have been tasked by NAVSEA to use the EAMA RSP Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) curriculum as the building block 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.

Jess invited and encouraged EAMA RSP members to review and provide feedback on any of the draft curriculum packages that are of interest to their company, noting that the curriculum packages are an extension of several years of work by the EAMA RSP. Members can choose to complete as brief or extensive a review as they wish. Jess shared that several MPI curricula will be available for feedback over the coming months, starting with Welding, which is currently available for EAMA RSP member review until January 5, 2024.

Chris noted that the MPI curricula are products that have been developed by the EAMA RSP. Chris thanked EB for their inclusiveness in inviting feedback from EAMA RSP members.

**Next Steps:** EAMA RSP members who are interested in reviewing the MPI Welding curriculum package should contact Tony Benoit at [eamarsp@gmail.com](mailto:eamarsp@gmail.com).

**Second Chance Hiring Initiative Launch** – **Michael Nogelo from EWIB** reminded the group that EAMA RSP entered into a Second Chance Hiring Partnership agreement with EWIB and the CT NAACP to provide workforce services to NAACP Million Jobs Campaign (MJC) justice-affected clients including career planning, case management, training (e.g., MPI), and job search support.

The NAACP is securing office space and hiring staff to launch the MJC in Eastern CT. Once that is accomplished, a press release will be issued and the NAACP will recruit and enroll participants.

**Next Steps:** Tony emailed EAMA RSP members in November to gauge their interest level in participating in the initiative. Members who have not responded to that email are asked to email Tony Benoit at [eamarsp@gmail.com](mailto:eamarsp@gmail.com) with their level of interest as follows:

- a) I'm ready to participate in the initiative and interview candidates as positions become available.
- b) I'm interested and might be ready. I'd like assistance on how to support success for my business and candidates.
- c) I'm not interested in participating at this time.

**R&D Tax Treatment** – **Colby Coombs from Westminster Tool** reiterated the importance of the passage of Senate Bill 866 which would restore being able to fully expense research & development (R&D) expenses in the year in which they are incurred under section 174 of the IRS code, as opposed to amortizing the expenses. R&D provides manufacturers with an incentive to innovate and grow.

**Next Steps:** EAMA RSP will send a letter to US Senators Blumenthal and Murphy urging their support for the legislation. At their request, the letters will also be shared with CT Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie and CT Chief Workforce Officer Kelli Vallieres.

EAMA RSP members are encouraged to directly contact Senator Blumenthal (<https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/contact/write-to-senator-blumenthal>) and Senator Murphy (<https://www.murphy.senate.gov/contact/>) to urge their support. Members may consider using the following language: "I am writing to urge your support for the American Innovation and Jobs Act (S. 866). This bill aims to increase investments in research and development (R&D) across a variety of sectors, including manufacturing, which is crucial for the continued growth and competitiveness of Connecticut. S. 866 would restore the ability of employers to treat research and experimental expenditures, which drive innovation, as same-year expenses under section 174 of the IRS code. Thank you for your consideration. I hope we can count on your support."

**Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI)** - **Carol LaBelle from EWIB** reported that for this fiscal year (7/1/23 to 6/30/24), the MPI expects to provide 94 training classes for roughly 1,200 individuals. The MPI will conduct a Welding class (Feb. 19 to April 26, 2024) designed to benefit smaller EAMA RSP members.

**Next Steps:** Members are encouraged to contact a Business Services Rep about potentially hiring MPI Welding students: Jeff Martel - [jmartel@qvcc.edu](mailto:jmartel@qvcc.edu) (860) 428-1854; Joelle Garrett – [jgarrett@chamberect.com](mailto:jgarrett@chamberect.com), (860) 941-6234

**Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI)** - **David Allard from EWIB** reported that CT State – QV hosted a full-day YMPI instructor professional development event in November, with a follow-up event scheduled for

January. New London High School hosted a career awareness panel in October that included local manufacturers and will arrange worksite tours for their manufacturing pathway students. Plainfield High School will host a similar event in December. The YMPI has garnered interest from high schools outside of the region including in Middletown and Old Saybrook. EWIB has connected with the South Central workforce board to facilitate and support plans for these schools. EWIB is starting to plan a YMPI hiring event for May 2024 with the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce. In response to a member question, David stated that the YMPI staff continually update the list of instructors, but changes happen fairly often. He can update any interested member about the instructors in their area.

**News of Interest** – Chris Jewell congratulated **Victoria Rook** from Westminster Tool for her inclusion in Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz’s op-ed piece in the *CTPost* and celebrated her success with the company.

Chris also commented on the 11/27/23 *Hartford Business Journal* article which featured EB Director of Talent Acquisition, Workforce Development, and Compensation **Courtney Murphy** as one of HBJ’s 2023 Innovators.

Also highlighted was that **CONNEX Connecticut** has registered over 500 manufacturers in their first 10 months of operation.

Lastly, Chris encouraged members to **visit the News & Events section** of the EAMA RSP webpage at <https://www.ewib.org/EAMA-RSP/News-Events>

**Next Meeting** – will be held in a hybrid format, **Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.**