The Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) is hosting its first Explore Manufacturing Day on Tuesday, May 3, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in Huntington. The free event provides an opportunity for manufacturers to showcase what they do and highlight the rewards of manufacturing careers. Manufacturers will have the opportunity to speak to students in RCBI's Machinist Technology/CNC and Welding programs as well as students from area high schools and career & technical centers. If you or your company is interested in attending the event, contact Becky Calwell, Interim Director of Student Recruitment, at 304.781.1690 or bcalwell@rcbi.org.

RCBI programs boost economic output, analysis finds

Early stage funding initiatives at RCBI generated $66 million in sales for state manufacturers and created 318 jobs between 2012 and 2015, according to an economic impact analysis by the Marshall University College of Business. The report by the college's Center for Community Growth and Development estimates that for each dollar RCBI allocates in early stage funding, the state experiences $435 in increased output and $74 in increased earnings. Researchers predict that one new job is created for every $665 RCBI spends on these initiatives. "This analysis clearly demonstrates that when we provide West Virginians access to technology and technical expertise to develop their ideas, they can have a significant impact on our state's economy," said RCBI Director & CEO
Dr. Jerome Gilbert Charlotte Weber. "Innovators simply need the tools to help them succeed. Our early stage funding is helping bring creative ideas to life."

Webinar to explain funding assistance for entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs and manufacturers will learn about early stage funding opportunities to help empower their new ideas during a free RCBI webinar on Tuesday, April 21, from 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. The presentation will provide an overview of available funding and the application process as well as highlight examples of previous successful projects to encourage others to apply. RCBI offers assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs to empower new ideas by bridging the gap between concept and prototype. This assistance includes seed funding opportunities for design engineering, prototype development and process/production assistance.

Register here.

Marshall to host state bioscience conference April 26-27

Dr. Jerome Gilbert, president of Marshall University, will present the opening keynote address to kick off the Sixth Annual West Virginia Bioscience Summit scheduled Apr. 26 - 27 at the Marshall University Foundation Hall. The event brings together biotech companies, academic researchers, service providers, policymakers, economic developers, funders and others to engage in two days of education and inspiration focused on showcasing the "value" our industries bring to the state and nation. The event also will feature Michelle Dixon, General Manager of Alcon's Huntington, W.Va., manufacturing facility, who will address the importance of innovation. Learn more.

Huntington's J.H. Fletcher achieves quality certification

Mining equipment manufacturer J.H. Fletcher & Co. of Huntington has earned ISO 9001: 2008 registration, a commitment by the company to enhance customer satisfaction and continually improve its performance. RCBI began providing quality implementation assistance for the company in May 2013, and will continue to assist the manufacturer with its ISO audits. J.H. Fletcher also has taken advantage of RCBI services including 3D Printing technology to produce unique scale model versions of its large industrial equipment. Charlotte Weber, Director & CEO at RCBI, congratulated Fletcher for its continued focus on Quality. "We're thrilled to help another manufacturer achieve ISO certification -- and equally pleased that this long-time technology innovator continues to diversify its market on a global scale," Weber said. Founded in 1937 by James H. Fletcher, the Cabell County manufacturer develops underground mine technology to improve productivity and reduce risk for miners. Learn more.
Curry to spearhead nationwide apprenticeship program

Lucinda Curry of Duck in Clay County has been named director of Apprenticeship Works, the National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program. RCBI received $4.9 million from the U.S. Department of Labor to replicate its apprenticeship model across the country. The RCBI model involves collaborating with industry recognized partners to help bridge the skills gap in American manufacturing. "Lucinda Curry's pivotal role in creating our model apprenticeship program and her creative approach to workforce development make her the ideal candidate to lead Apprenticeship Works," said RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber. "She's demonstrated the ability to forge partnerships, engage businesses and identify workforce needs on a national level." Curry will lead a team of recruiters and trainers who will work with businesses, educational institutions and workforce development agencies to establish apprentices and pre-apprentices. The goal is to create a higher skilled, more productive workforce while encouraging women, disadvantaged youth and returning military personnel to consider advanced manufacturing careers. Learn more.

RCBI 3D Printing camps receive state STEM support

RCBI has received a grant from the Governor's STEM Initiative to support its 3D Printing Camps. The STEM initiative, which is administered by the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, awarded $150,000 to 54 schools and organizations across the state to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities. The 3D Printing Camps at RCBI, presented in partnership with Marshall University, introduce young people to opportunities in advanced manufacturing through hands-on experience. The 2016 camps are scheduled in Huntington from June 20-24, in South Charleston from July 11-13 and in Bridgeport from July 25-29. Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs, a national education foundation established by the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association International, supports RCBI's camps. Call 800.469.7224 or register online.

Startup Weekend to promote entrepreneurship in W.Va.

You've heard the buzz, but what, really, is an entrepreneur and how do you become one? Find out by joining Startup Weekend Charleston, April 15-17, in South Charleston. Startup Weekend is an
intense, action-packed event where anyone can pitch ideas and work with a team to build a new business venture in just 54 hours. It's a coordinated effort to boost the number of startups in West Virginia. Successful entrepreneurs and coaches will offer guidance and inspiration as participants collaborate to create successful ventures. Charlie Dennie, director of special projects at Alpha Technologies, will serve as keynote speaker. The weekend culminates Sunday, April 17, when teams pitch their ideas to a panel of judges. Startup Weekend Charleston is sponsored by BB&T, Marshall University, West Virginia State University, the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing, Advantage Valley and the West Virginia Small Business Development Center. Tickets are $100 for adults and $75 for students. Scholarships are available. For more information or to register, click here.

Upcoming events

April 2016
April 15-16 - SkillsUSA state competitions at RCBI Bridgeport
April 15-17 - Startup Weekend Charleston at Charleston Conference Ctr., So. Charleston
April 20 - Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Agriculture workshop, RCBI Bridgeport, 9 am - 3pm
April 21 - RCBI's Early Stage Funding Webinar, online from 2 pm - 2:45 pm
April 28 - Transitioning to ISO 9001: 2015, Brentwood Industries, Martinsburg, 8 am - 4 pm

May 2016
May 3 - Explore Manufacturing Day, RCBI Huntington, 10 am - 2 pm
May 12 - CNC machinist student graduation, RCBI Bridgeport, 11 am - 1 pm
May 13 - CNC machinist student graduation, RCBI Huntington, 11 am - 1 pm
May 13 - Makerspace Open House, RCBI Huntington, 4 pm - 6 pm
May 17 - Cybersecurity Lunch & Learn, RCBI Huntington, noon - 1 pm

Call 800.469.7224 or email frontdesk@rcbi.org for more information.

ABOUT US

The Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) provides leading-edge equipment, specialized training and staff expertise so entrepreneurs and manufacturers of all sizes can innovate, create jobs and thrive. Learn more at www.rcbi.org.