RCBI is named a leading resource for state’s industry

Southern Business & Development magazine has awarded the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) a top berth in three categories in the “Best of West Virginia” section of its annual review. RCBI was cited by the Southern Economic Development Roundtable in “Best Economic Development Assets,” “Best of R&D” and “Best Tech Hub” categories in its winter 2016 issue. The Southern Economic Development Roundtable consists of CEOs, economists, educators and economic developers who offer guidance on new business sites or expansion.

“This important recognition reinforces a number of economic studies that show the impact that RCBI and its expertise have across our state,” said Charlotte Weber, RCBI Director & CEO.

Explore Manufacturing Day

Students gain insight into the world of manufacturing

(Above) Students surround Ron Cabacar, RCBI design engineer, for an introduction to the world of 3D printing during Explore Manufacturing Day in Huntington. Nearly 150 students from southern West Virginia learned about different types of manufacturing and related careers during the May 3 event. (Left) Representatives of Alcon Research show students a intraocular lens made by the high-tech company in Huntington.

3D printing industry posts another year of solid growth

Additive Manufacturing (commonly known as 3D Printing) continued its rapid expansion in 2015, growing by 25.9 percent to become a $5.17 billion industry worldwide. Wohlers Report, an annual analysis of the 3D printing industry, noted that the yearly growth of $1 billion was lower than the 33.8 percent increase of the previous three years but still represents tremendous expansion around the world. For 27 years, the industry has averaged a growth rate of more than 26 percent. Part of the growth was in lower-cost desktop 3D printers. More than 278,000 3D printers valued at under $5,000 were sold last year, according to Wohlers. In addition, the number of manufacturers selling more costly industrial-grade 3D printers doubled from the previous year.

Wohlers predicted the upward trend will continue as demand increases in the consumer market and more manufacturers integrate 3D printing technology into their processes.

NASA grants boost STEM activities across state

The NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium has awarded RCBI two grants that will advance STEM engagement among West Virginia students. RCBI will invest more than $20,000 to strengthen robotics programs and provide online training for educators on Additive Manufacturing (better known as 3D Printing) for their curriculum. RCBI has a strong history of hosting West Virginia educators who want to learn more about incorporating 3D Printing technology in classroom lessons.

“Providing hands-on activities for youngsters and supplementing 3D Printing technology with instructive video enhances learning,” said Charlotte Weber, RCBI Director & CEO.
3D Printing summer camps filling up, but spaces remain

More middle and high school students will become 3D printing experts during the annual 3D Printing camps at RCBI. Although the Huntington campus is filled, seats are available at the South Charleston camp, July 15-13, and the Bridgeport camp, July 20-29.

Throughout the week, campers use computer-aided design (CAD) software and precision machinery to customize a design and 3D-print it. The campers also tour local manufacturing facilities and explore entrepreneurship under the guidance of experienced mentors. Call 800.469.7224 for more information. Register here.

Camps offer students chance to learn about LEGO robotics

RCBI promises a summer of discovery for 9 to 14-year-old students interested in robotics. Activities kick off June 27-30 with a camp for those interested in FIRST LEGO League (FLL) robotics but who are not members of a team. During the four-day event, campers will learn to build, program and operate LEGO Mindstorm EV3 robots. The cost is $100 for each attendee and includes lunch each day. RCBI also will host a free two-day Robo Camp, July 20-21 focused on boosting robotics participation in the counties of Mason, McDowell, Mingo, Wayne and Wyoming. Groups from the five counties who are interested in forming teams can apply for the camp. Five teams will receive a free Mindstorm robot after completing training and agreeing to compete in FLL. For more information, contact Mike Friel at 304.781.1686 or mrfiel@rcbi.org.

Commitment to education in W.Va. earns RCBI honors

RCBI has been honored by Marshall University’s June Harless Wall of Fame for its contributions to education in West Virginia. RCBI was inducted into the June Harless Wall of Fame during a ceremony May 5 on the Marshall campus. The annual event recognizes individuals and organizations whose efforts have furthered the state’s educational system, particularly in underserved rural areas.

“Recognition of RCBI’s educational endeavors by the June Harless Wall is, indeed, a true honor,” said Charlotte Weber, RCBI Director & CEO. “However, the best reward is hearing that our efforts are stimulating the manufacturing sector, helping students secure jobs and contributing to the prosperity of our state.”

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This program will prepare the next generation of students for economic change in the state, according to Dr. Jonathan Butler, assistant professor of entrepreneurship in the college.

"The continued economic viability of the state really depends on creating an entrepreneurial mindset across the state. If West Virginia is going to experience any kind of growth, there is a high likelihood it will be within the state and driven by entrepreneurs," Butler said. "I don't think we can expect large major companies to relocate to West Virginia in order to save us - we need to be proactive."

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**Upcoming events**

**May 2016**

May 23 - Social Media for Small Business workshop, The Hive, Beckley, 4 pm - 6:30 pm

**June 2016**

June 9 - Credit Repair workshop, Workforce WV Office, Princeton, 1 pm - 4 pm

June 14 - Marshall State of the University, Washington, D.C., 6 pm - 9:30 pm

June 20-24 - 3D Printing Camp, RCB Huntington, 9 am - 2 pm daily

June 27-30 - LEGO Robotics Summer Camp, RCB Huntington, 9 am - 4 pm daily

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

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**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](http://www.rcbi.org).

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