The RCBI Machinist Technology Program offered at its Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Bridgeport and Rocket Center has received re-accreditation from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), the organization announced in late February.

NIMS accreditation for the Machinist Technology Program at RCBI’s Huntington Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center remains in place.

This five-year re-certification for the training at Bridgeport and Rocket Center is valid until Feb. 25, 2015.

According to NIMS Executive Director Stephen G. Mandes, the re-accreditation “is the result of a rigorous examination.” That examination, Mandes said, determined that the RCBI program offered at Bridgeport and Rocket Center continues to meet the quality standards established by the organization “on behalf of the nation’s precision manufacturing industry.”

Begun in Huntington in 1998, the RCBI Machinist Technology Program now boasts 270 graduates, who have earned 1,100 individual credits from NIMS.

“We’re enormously proud of the men and women who have completed our program,” said RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber. “They’ve gone on to jobs in an industry known for providing the types of good wages and benefits that it takes to buy a home and raise a family.”

Weber said the RCBI training program was established in direct response to reports from industry, both in West Virginia and nationwide, of a critical shortage of skilled machinists.

The RCBI program is the only one of its kind in West Virginia and was the first in the nation to require its graduates to earn individual credentials – currently in three of seven categories – that meet NIMS standards.

Individuals enrolling in the program can choose between full- and part-time coursework at any of the RCBI Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Huntington, Bridgeport or Rocket Center. Training takes place in both the classroom and in a shop-floor setting.

D. Mark Carter, chairman of the Advisory Board that helped develop the industry-focused curriculum for the RCBI program, noted that the hands-on nature of the program “minimizes the amount of technical training and re-training required after a worker is employed by industry.”

The program’s courses are available to high school graduates, dislocated workers, welfare-to-work participants, individuals in state or privately funded education and training programs and employers who are expanding the technical capabilities of their current workforce.

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HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – In its ongoing efforts to enhance the pool of skilled workers available to industry, the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) is joining forces with Cabell County Career Technology Center (CCCTC) to offer evening welding classes to the Tri-State Area.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding agreement between RCBI and CCCTC, RCBI will supply the instructor and enroll students while CCCTC will provide equipment and facilities for the evening classes.

“RCBI is pleased to have the opportunity to partner with Cabell County Career Technology Center so we can offer this sorely needed training,” said RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber. “There is an identified shortage of welders – not just in West Virginia but nationwide -- and we are continuing to work to prepare individuals with proper skills so they are positioned to earn state welding certification and join the work force.”

Director Brenda Tanner at CCCTC says that by extending the welding training into the evenings, more adults will be able to sign up for the training they need to enhance their career potentials.

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"In tough economic times with high unemployment and the loss of jobs, it is difficult to focus on workforce skills development. In reality we have no better time. ... True economic reform means not only righting our economic ship but also pursuing the strategies that will ensure we maintain our competitiveness – our manufacturing competitiveness – into the future."

That’s how Emily DeRocco, president of the Manufacturing Institute, sums up the challenge – and the opportunity – that now confronts us.

Ms. DeRocco is absolutely right.

Yes, even as signs multiply that we’re emerging from what some have labeled the Great Recession, the nation’s unemployment rate remains stubbornly high. And many pundits are beginning to talk about a “jobless recovery.” But there’s something else important going on today – something that most so-called experts have either missed or simply refuse to acknowledge.

In a 2009 survey done for the Manufacturing Institute, a nationwide cross-section of companies reported they’re unable to find (and retain) the skilled workers they need. Almost one-third of the responding companies reported they had experienced some level of shortages.

No doubt a multitude of factors have come into play in creating this shortage of skilled workers, but it’s clear that a huge factor is the unwillingness of many young workers to consider jobs on the factory floor. And a big part of that unwillingness can be traced to the negative – and totally inaccurate – image of factories that exists in the minds of many people.

Today’s typical high-tech manufacturing plant is a clean, well-lighted place that easily could be mistaken for a hospital or maybe even a college campus. As a report from the U.S. Department of Labor notes: “Popular perceptions of manufacturing jobs as dark, dangerous and dirty are largely outdated as advanced robotics and other ‘intelligent’ systems become pervasive throughout the manufacturing process.”

It’s absolutely essential that we combat this inaccurate image and shine a spotlight on today’s appealing career opportunities in manufacturing.

Today’s U.S. workforce is the best educated and most skilled in our nation’s history. But as the members of the “baby boom” generation retire, it’s not going to be easy to find the skilled workers to replace them. Moreover, technological innovation in the manufacturing sector means that today’s manufacturing jobs require greater skills than ever before.

Suppling these type skills is a big part of what we’re all about at the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing. As West Virginia’s only statewide advanced manufacturing technology center, RCBI works hard – 24/7, every day of the year – to provide companies and individuals with the kind of innovative training and equipment they need to be competitive in today’s marketplace.

Given the right tools and training, West Virginia workers are the match of any workers anywhere.

As evidence of this, consider the innovative Super Lightweight Interchangeable Carrier, or SLIC, which was designed by NASA engineers for the Space Shuttle Atlantis mission to upgrade the Hubble Space Telescope. SLIC is the first composite-material equipment certified to fly in a human spaceflight program. It is slimmer, weighing only about half as much as conventional carriers, and stronger. With this new design, the Space Shuttle is able to carry three times the payload, making room for additional scientific instruments and other components.

SLIC is a revolutionary development and has vast implications for future flights, of course. And it was built right here in West Virginia, at Bridgeport, by FMW Composites, Inc. In crafting the innovative carrier, FMW and NASA worked closely with RCBI’s Composites Technology & Training Center, employing its test equipment, training facilities, laser measuring systems, lathes, mills and other sophisticated equipment, as well as tapping RCBI’s staff expertise.

Not every project we’re involved with is as exciting or glamorous as SLIC. But we approach each with the same level of dedication and commitment. And make no mistake about it: SLIC dramatically points the way to West Virginia’s future – a future where the sky’s no limit for workers who have the right kind of technical skill sets and access to the latest technologies.

To learn more about who we are and what we do, log on to www.rcbi.org.

Charlotte Weber is Director and CEO of the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI), which operates Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Huntington, South Charleston, Bridgeport and Rocket Center, W.Va.
Four are named RCBI Employees of the Month

C.T. Mitchell, Robert B. Hayes, Lawrence V. Cartmill and Tracy McDowell were selected as Employee of the Month recognition by RCBI for October, November, December and January, respectively.

C.T. Mitchell

Mitchell has served in a part-time capacity as senior public information specialist since February 2007.

A native of Williamson, W.Va., he is a 1949 honor graduate of Williamson High School and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from Marshall University. After a 19-year career in various editing positions at newspapers in Williamson and Huntington, he joined the Marshall University staff, serving as director of university relations and presidential assistant. After closing his 27-year Marshall career in 2000, he assisted Marshall President Emeritus Robert B. Hayes in writing the history of the Marshall medical school.

Mitchell was a founding board member of both Prestera Center for Mental Health and Green Acres Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled, serving on the latter board for more than 40 years. He was among the initial group to be inducted into the Williamson High School Hall of Fame in 2000 and received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism in 1989. He was a member of the U.S. Army of Occupation in West Germany from 1954 to 1956, serving at the army’s European headquarters. A widower, he is the father of three.

Robert B. Hayes

Hayes, who is curriculum consultant for RCBI’s training programs, is a former president of Marshall University (1974-83). In a Marshall career spanning more than 40 years, he also served in roles ranging from classroom teacher to interim president of Marshall Community & Technical College and from dean of the College of Education to dean of the College of Business.

His book, “$7,000 in the Bank,” a history of Marshall’s medical school, was published in 2006. He has been designated Marshall President Emeritus.

“We’re truly fortunate that Dr. Hayes doesn’t believe in retirement,” RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber said. “His work with RCBI has brought greater organization and academic rigor to our wide range of technical training programs. And the teaching manual he developed for us has been of enormous value to our instructors across the state. Finally, his commitment and insight are further enhancing the strong efforts of RCBI, as West Virginia’s advanced manufacturing technology center, to bring academic opportunities to those seeking lifelong skills training.”

A native of Clarksburg, W.Va., and the father of three, Hayes earned degrees from Asbury College and the University of Kansas following service in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. He and his wife, Katy, reside at The Woodlands retirement community in Huntington.

Larry Cartmill

Cartmill joined RCBI in November 2007 as technical program recruiter. A 1971 graduate of Marshall University, he earned an M.A. degree from the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies in 1979 and a Ph.D. from the University of Berkley in 2005. He has been a licensed professional counselor since 1990.

“Larry has done an outstanding job in bringing focus to RCBI’s efforts to acquaint individuals across West Virginia with the excellent career opportunities available to them in manufacturing and the training programs we provide,” Ms. Weber said.

Cartmill was a teacher and counselor in Cabell County schools from 1971 until 2006 and was named Teacher of the Year in 1979. From 1999 to 2006 he served as coordinator of student services at the Cabell County Career Center. He also has taught as an adjunct professor of herpetology at Ohio University Southern and adjunct professor of psychology at Mountain State University and at MCTC. He was a therapist at Prestera Center in 2006-07.

One of his major interests is herpetology and he serves as herpetologist for the Ohio University Southern Nature Center. He maintains a large collection of snakes and turtles and spends much of his free time in forests, deserts and jungles hunting for various species of reptiles and amphibians.

Cartmill and his wife, Sandra, are the parents of a son, Shane, and grandparents of Riley.

Tracy McDowell

Ms. McDowell serves as RCBI operations supervisor. She has worked with Marshall University Research Corporation and RCBI for 18 years and was Marshall University Employee of the Month in August 1996.

“Tracy McDowell is the ‘glue’ that holds us together,” Ms. Weber said. “She monitors our operations, makes certain that rules and regulations are followed and that details, large and small, are handled in an efficient manner. Her depth of experience and her willingness to accept responsibility are great assets to RCBI.”

A 1979 graduate of Huntington High School, Ms. McDowell earned associate degrees in the Administrative Assistant and Information Technology programs at Marshall Community & Technical College. She served as community relations assistant in the Huntington office of Congressman Nick Joe Rahall II before joining MURC/RCBI. Prior to that she held clerical positions with an accounting firm in Cincinnati, Ohio, and with Huntington National Bank in Huntington.

She is engaged to Huntington native Tyrone Williamson, currently of Akron, Ohio. She currently attends St. Peter Claver Catholic Church and until recently was director of HE-Motions Liturgical Dance and the Sunbeams for Christ at Young Chapel AME Church.
HUNTINGTON, W.Va. -- Despite a devastating fire last Oct. 30 that destroyed its building, equipment and inventory, a local company, Industrial Components, is still in business – and doing nicely, thank you.

Owner Daniel R. Bowe credits the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) with making the rapid comeback possible.

Industrial Components, which had been located on W.Va. Rt. 75 at Kenova, began rebuilding its parts inventory while receiving additional training on the state-of-the-art production equipment at the RCBI Huntington facility. The company has found another location and has resumed production of electrical and electronic equipment components, primarily for the mining industry.

"Being able to lease time on the equipment saves us a great expense," Bowe said. Particularly helpful in dealing with the emergency, he added, was the expertise of RCBI senior manufacturing engineer/site manager Brian Brown and production engineer Kevin Euton. "RCBI has been a great help," he said. "It gives us access to equipment a small business can’t afford to buy."

Bowe and his partner, Lonnie Black, started Industrial Components seven years ago "with almost nothing." On its web site the company describes itself as an electronic and electro-mechanical engineering firm that has designed innovative products for a variety of industries including transit, coal and healthcare. It has done well and now has five full-time and three part-time employees. Primarily, it makes large electrical switches for the mining industry and numbers among its clients giant mining equipment manufacturer Bucyrus International.

Industrial Components currently is housed in rental property at 11004A County Road 1, Chesapeake. Bowe said he hopes to find a permanent home for the company soon.

RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber said the Industrial Components situation "is an excellent example of RCBI’s ability to assist our region’s manufacturers in a variety of ways. We’re very pleased we were – and continue to be – in a position to help Industrial Components and its employees overcome adversity."

RCBI provides access to cutting edge technology and technical training to manufacturers across the region. Operating from Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Huntington, South Charleston, Bridgeport and Rocket Center (near Keyser in West Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle), its mission includes developing a quality, just-in-time supplier base for the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the commercial sector.

Weber calls the evening training “a great opportunity for young people, displaced workers and anyone who wishes to expand his or her career opportunities.”

Employers continue to report difficulty finding properly skilled welders to hire, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s “Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition.” Virtually all manufacturers and construction companies require welding, from the production of assemblies to maintenance and repair, so the field continues to thrive even in the current economic climate.

The first 16-week welding class will begin April 19 at CCCTC, located at 1035 Norway Ave., Huntington. The class, which will meet for four hours each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening, is a comprehensive one that includes both classroom instruction and hands-on training on the shop floor, with intensive student-instructor interaction.

“The best way to learn welding is to actually weld,” Weber said. “Our goal is to provide new welders with a firm foundation.”

The class can be taken independently to prepare the student to test for state certification in shielded metal arc welding or as part of RCBI’s comprehensive welding program that includes TIG (tungsten inert gas), MIG (metal inert gas) and Stick welding.

RCBI has a similar agreement to provide evening welding classes in Clarksburg at United Technical Center. The first class of 13 students in Clarksburg began its coursework the first week of January.

For more information or to register, contact RCBI's Larry Cartmill at 304.781.1678, 800.469.RCBI (7224) or send an e-mail to register@rcbi.org. Enrollment is limited. Financial assistance is available to individuals who qualify.
BOYD COUNTY STUDENTS TAKE A HIGH-TECH TOUR

Thirty-eight AutoCAD (computer-aided-drafting) students from Boyd County (Ky.) Career & Technology Education Center toured RCBI Nov. 10. They were able to view a wide range of high-tech, state-of-the-market equipment that RCBI makes available to manufacturers and entrepreneurs across the region. Here, Production Engineer Kevin Euton, right, explains how an Okuma Turning Center uses a CAD file to machine cylindrical parts, such as shafts. The students were accompanied by their instructor, Douglas Deborde, pictured at left. Larry Cartmill, technical program recruiter for RCBI's array of training programs, served as their host.

CALENDAR...

April 1 — Lean Manufacturing Seminar at Lockheed Martin plant, Clarksburg.
Veterans Employment Expo on Marshall campus. Technical Program Recruiter Larry Cartmill will represent RCBI, discussing training opportunities for veterans.


April 19 — RCBI begins evening welding class at Cabell County Career Technology Center, three evenings a week through August 10.


May 4 — Fundamentals of AutoCAD, Charleston, three days.

May 11 — Fundamentals of AutoCAD, Huntington, three days.

May 18 — Fundamentals of AutoCAD, Bridgeport, three days.
Introduction to CNC, Bridgeport, 13 weeks, one evening each week.
Introduction to CNC, Huntington, 13 weeks, one evening each week.

May 20 — Introduction to CNC, Charleston, 13 weeks, one evening each week.

May 25 — Fundamentals of Mastercam, Charleston, three days.

June 8 — Fundamentals of Mastercam, Bridgeport, three days.

June 22 — Fundamentals of Mastercam, Huntington, three days.

June 28 — Fundamentals of SolidWorks, Bridgeport, five days.

July 10 — Blueprint Reading, Clarksburg, 16 clock hours over two weeks.

RCBI PRESENTS CLASS ON VALUE STREAM MAPPING

On behalf of SkillsMAX and Community Outreach of Zane State College, Zanesville, Ohio, RCBI on Feb. 18 conducted an eight-hour Value Stream Mapping course for eight employees of Detroit Diesel Remanufacturing-East, a Daimler Company, of Byesville, Ohio.

Using the company’s own process data, RCBI taught the mechanics of Value Stream Mapping, a Lean Manufacturing tool that helps an organization see and understand the flow of material and information as a product makes its way through the value stream. The final outcome shows the amount of lead time -- the time it takes one piece to move all the way through a process, or value stream, from start to finish -- versus total cycle time, the amount of actual processing time it takes for a part to be completed. The goal is to then drastically reduce future lead time through Lean Manufacturing practices.

This is the second course RCBI has provided for Detroit Diesel. The first was an ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems Requirements Internal Auditing Course in September.
RCBI, Lockheed Martin to present Lean seminar April 1

RCBI and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. are joining to present a daylong seminar on Lean Manufacturing Thursday, April 1, at the Lockheed Martin plant on Bridgeport Hill Road, Clarksburg.

The seminar will be conducted by RCBI Quality Director Erica Cheetham with Lockheed Martin serving as host. Lockheed Martin is considered a national leader in Lean Manufacturing. A similar seminar was conducted by RCBI and Lockheed Martin last November. Plant Manager Chris Savage again will lead a tour to showcase the plant’s Lean Implementation.

The April 1 seminar will be limited to 20 people so interested firms or individuals should register as soon as possible. Cost is $99 per person for the seminar, including lunch. The event will run from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To register, call RCBI at 800.469.7224.

“Companies interested in reducing costs and improving production and quality will find this seminar extremely valuable,” RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber said. “We particularly recommend it for plant managers, quality managers, industrial engineers and human resource managers.”

She added, “Today’s companies must address a number of major business issues, from market globalization to the recent economic challenges, in order to succeed. They must find ways to cut costs without impacting quality, customer service or product availability. Lean initiatives focus on eliminating waste from plant floor operations — and administrative functions — by simplifying, standardizing and continually improving processes.”

The Lockheed Martin Clarksburg plant produces major assemblies for the C-130 tactical airlifter and the F-35 fighter jet. The Clarksburg plant is responsible for building approximately 17 percent of each C-130.

Ms. Cheetham has more than 15 years of experience in working with manufacturers, including the position of QS-9000 coordinator for a Tier II automotive supplier. She has completed several courses with the Lean Enterprise Institute as well as Harris Lean Systems, earning a certificate in Level Scheduling. She received both B.A. and M.S. degrees from Marshall University.

The RCBI Quality Certification group helps manufacturers develop and implement documented quality systems to help ensure that they remain effective, sought-after suppliers. To this end, RCBI offers a strong schedule of specialized, quality-focused courses in the latest applications and techniques and regularly helps companies develop work instructions and supervisory management skills.

Our Mission

The Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing provides statewide and regional access to advanced technology and technical training to small- and medium-sized manufacturers. The mission of RCBI is to develop a quality, just-in-time, supplier base for the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the commercial sector.

$6 million grant

West Virginia will receive $6 million in federal economic stimulus funds to train 1,853 people for “green” jobs. WorkForce West Virginia will use the funds to work with educational and training providers to provide training and professional development. The program is expected to help 1,672 West Virginians find employment in “green” enterprises, including wind energy, bio-power industries and water and sewer plants.

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