Rockefeller Focuses On Creating High-Tech Jobs

BRIDGEPORT, W. Va. – U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller joined manufacturing sector leaders and business owners from across North Central West Virginia here for a roundtable to discuss how to grow and support high-technology jobs.

Rockefeller, chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology, has vowed to take a hard look at ways to create more manufacturing.

"Congress is more focused than ever on reenergizing our manufacturing sector and putting Americans back to work," Rockefeller told the group assembled Feb. 5 at the RCBI Bridgeport Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center. "There are a lot of proposals floating around in Washington – like increasing research and development, targeting tax credits, and promoting exports of our products – and I want to hear from West Virginia companies who are on the front lines of high-tech jobs already."

Rockefeller said there "is no question that America's future lies in our ability to maintain our edge and compete globally. Issues such as innovation, research and development, and training the workforce are the keys to our future."

"But," he cautioned, "there is no cookie-cutter approach. What works for manufacturing in Wisconsin may not work for manufacturing in West Virginia – and that's why I'm here … and why I'll continue to talk with manufacturing sector professionals across the state. By working together, West Virginia can be a manufacturing leader well into the future."

Much of the discussion centered on the need for increased science, technology, engineering and math instruction for young students as a necessary preparation for tomorrow's high-tech jobs. "If you wait until they're already out of high schools, it's probably too late," Rockefeller said.
Those attending the roundtable include representatives from Aurora Flight Sciences, Bombardier, the Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Center, Touchstone Research Laboratory, Quality Machine, FMW Composite Systems Inc. and others.

RCBI Hosts Veterans

BRIDGEPORT, W.Va. – Six Clarksburg-based military veterans toured the RCBI Bridgeport Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center in late January through a program aimed at assisting veterans re-enter the workforce. The tour gave the veterans an opportunity to learn more about training options to further their education.

"They are interested in the one-year, hands-on Machinist Technology Program," said Kathryn Stanley, Workforce Development Recruiter. "Some of these veterans have a machinist background so they are actually looking at the computer-numerical-control (CNC) skills set program."

At RCBI, both manual and CNC machining classes are available featuring national certification, day and evening classes, certificates and Associate Degree options with financial aid and VA benefits for those who qualify.

The veterans were accompanied by counselor Kara Tustin, vocational rehabilitation specialist for the Veterans Administration, who explained that the Veterans Industries Transitional Work Experience program is designed to assist veterans in re-entering the workforce, while providing employers with qualified and motivated workers.

Tustin said veterans in the program gain work experience, references, the skill sets and work habits they need if they’re to be successful in today’s competitive labor market.

For more information on the Veterans Industries Transitional Work Experience program, call Tustin at 304.623.3461. For additional information on RCBI’s machining classes, call Stanley at 304.848.2283 or Bryson Karp at 304.781.1678.

New Evening Courses Offered In
Basic Machining, CNC Operator Skills

RCBI is offering two new evening courses that focus on both basic and more advanced, computer-controlled, machining skill sets for workers. With certifications earned in the courses, individuals will have the recognized skill sets they need to begin or further their careers -- as well as enhance the capabilities of their employers.

The courses, both offered in the evenings at RCBI Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Huntington and Bridgeport, are forming now. Modeled on its nationally certified Machinist Technology Program, the new courses allow individuals currently employed in the day-time workforce to freshen their skills at night with the same proven, hands-on focus applied in RCBI's full-time, degree-option offerings.

Charlotte Weber, RCBI’s Director & CEO, says the courses offer "a great opportunity" for individuals at a time when there is a lack of skilled workers in West Virginia and across the nation. "We know companies need individuals who have the right sets of technical skills, and skilled machinists are in demand right now here in West Virginia as well as nationally."

The basic machining course opens a career track for focused, entry-level machinists by offering rigorous, specialized instruction that prepares individuals for immediate employment in the manufacturing industry.

The CNC (computer-numerical-control) course provides more advanced instruction in set up, operation, programming and maintenance of CNC equipment used in industry.

For additional information or to register, call 800.469. RCBI (7224) or send an e-mail to register@rcbi.org. Financial assistance is available to individuals who qualify.

Allevard-Sogefi Earns ISO EMS Registration

PRICHARD. W.Va. – With the assistance of RCBI, the Allevard-Sogefi filter system plant here has earned its ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) Registration.

Plant Manager Troy Thomas termed the registration "a key milestone for us" and praised Ken Shapaka, the plant’s operations manager, and Eddie Fisher, a certified ISO auditor with RCBI, for their efforts in enabling the plant to earn the designation.

"Eddie was great," Thomas said. "We really appreciate his efforts on our behalf. Thanks to Eddie and Ken we accomplished in eight months something that easily could have taken us a year or more to complete."

Opened in mid-2010, the $7 million high-tech plant is Italian-owned Sogefi’s first filter system plant in North America. Every week it makes and ships thousands of original equipment oil and fuel filters to car and truck manufacturers, including Ford, Chrysler, Hyundai, Kia, BMW, Toyota and Nissan. In addition, it also makes aftermarket filters sold under a number of brand names, including FRAM, CoopersFiamm and Purflux.
OPEN HOUSE -- Frank Adkins, center, of Meadow River Enterprises in Lewisburg, brought these two prospective students to a recent Open House at the RCBI Huntington Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center. Adkins is a long-time member of the RCBI Industry Advisory Board. Shown with him and the prospective students are RCBI’s Bryson Karp, far left, and Ed Black, far right. Open Houses were conducted Feb. 26 at the RCBI Huntington and Bridgeport Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers.

RCBI Offers Reverse Engineering, Prototyping and 3D Printing

RCBI can help meet your reverse engineering and prototyping needs so you can manufacture solid, functional models, molds, patterns, customized tools or fixtures, as well as component-parts.

Using precision measurement technology in conjunction with direct digital manufacturing processes, including 3D printing, which is readily available at RCBI, manufacturers and entrepreneurs alike can produce more complex products, resulting in new market opportunities and the possibility of expanding their businesses.

RCBI will help develop and produce prototype parts both quickly and cost effectively. Working from a sketch, mock-up or original part, RCBI’s experienced staff uses the tools available to produce digital files for tool path creation to reproduce your parts. RCBI can then provide a working prototype for inspection and assessment before you commit to further production.

With RCBI’s broad array of metrology and production equipment, you can produce almost any type of extruded, formed, molded, machined or stamped part. The equipment includes:

- Coordinate Measurement Machines
- FARO Arms
- FARO Laser Tracker
- Handyscan 3D Digital Laser Scanners
- Dimension 1200e series 3D Printer
- Fortus 900 mc 3D Printer

For more information about RCBI’s reverse engineering and prototyping services, contact Chris Figgatt at 304.720.7735 or 800.469.RCBI (7224).

RCBI Helps Turn ‘Chicken Switch’
From Bright Idea Into Reality

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – The aptly named "Chicken Switch" is a true West Virginia success story, springing from the inventive mind of a Charleston chemical plant electrician and nurtured to reality by RCBI.

The switch is a portable, easy-to-use device that is designed to remotely operate a variety of circuit breakers where arc flash is a hazard. Designed and built by MarTek Ltd., at 4806 Chimney Drive, the switch is the creation of Charles (Mark) McClung, who came up with the idea for it in 2004 while he was working at Dow Chemical Co.

"At first Mark worked quietly on the side while perfecting the switch, then he went at it full-time," says Russ Safreed, a long-time friend and fellow plant worker who joined as a partner in the fledgling business about a year ago.

As the switch idea moved from the drawing board to the production stage, McClung enlisted the help of RCBI, which provided engineering design assistance, prototyping and machining.

RCBI introduced MarTek to the West Virginia Small Business Development Center, which lead to a small start-up grant taking the Chicken Switch innovation to full-rate production. All of the metal components of the Chicken Switch are manufactured at the RCBI Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Charleston and Huntington. MarTek, through a Workforce West Virginia grant, has received training to program and operate the computer-numerical-control (CNC) equipment available at RCBI and now can program, inspect and produce parts with minimal assistance.

"There's no way we could have done what we've done without RCBI," says Safreed. "Having RCBI, its equipment and its technical expertise has been critical to our business. I don't know where we would go if RCBI wasn't available to assist us."

The battery-powered "Chicken Switch" (the name is trademarked) enables manufacturing plants, mines, hospitals, and other users to comply with OSHA protection requirements for operating circuit breakers. A 30-foot control cable allows the operators to be safety positioned away from the breaker.

Customers who have bought the switch include the Department of Defense, NASA and a virtual Fortune 500 list of companies, including American Electric Power, Chevron Phillips, Dow Chemical, DuPont, Exxon Mobile, Northrop Grumman, Pratt & Whitney, Weyerhaeuser and others.

For more information about how RCBI can assist with your innovative ideas or products, call 800.469.RCBI (7224).

Weber Joins TechConnectWV Board

Anne Barth, the executive director of TechConnectWV, has announced that RCBI Director & CEO
Charlotte Weber has been named to the group’s board of directors.

TechConnect is a statewide coalition of professionals dedicated to growing and diversifying West Virginia’s economy by advancing technology-based economic development. The group’s aim is to serve mainly as a facilitator, enhancing awareness, increasing collaboration and raising the discussion of important issues to spur technology development and commercialization in the state.

"I am delighted to welcome Charlotte Weber to the board of TechConnect," Barth said. "Her leadership at RCBI, and her knowledge of what it takes to improve the competitiveness of West Virginia’s manufacturing sector, is unsurpassed. Under her direction, RCBI has proven that innovation in manufacturing is the key to re-tooling our economy. I look forward to working with Charlotte as TechConnect seeks to diversify the state’s economy, promote economic prosperity and add high-wage jobs."

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**Calendar...**

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<td>Composites Fabrication and Damage Repair at RCBI Bridgeport, 5 days (40 hours)</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
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<td>May 16</td>
<td>FARO Arm Training at RCBI Huntington, 3 days (24 hours)</td>
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TECHNOLOGY UPDATE is published by the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI). Celebrating 20 years as West Virginia’s Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center, RCBI provides access to cutting edge technology and technical training to manufacturers across the region. Operating Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers in Huntington, 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, NASA and the commercial sector. For additional information about RCBI, visit www.rcbi.org.