BRIDGEPORT—Manufacturers and entrepreneurs from throughout North Central West Virginia discussed a variety of manufacturing needs and investments during a recent roundtable luncheon hosted by the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) in Bridgeport.

More than two dozen business representatives participated in the 90-minute luncheon, staged at the Bridgeport Conference Center at Charles Pointe on November 10.

RCBI staff members joined industry representatives for the mid-day event, designed to give industry the opportunity to address specific needs across the region.

RCBI Director Charlotte Weber welcomed the business leaders and gave a brief overview of RCBI’s continuing role as West Virginia’s Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center.

“After 20 years dedicated to working with manufacturers and entrepreneurs,” Weber said, “these focused discussions help gather direct input from businesses about their technology and workforce needs which allows RCBI to ensure continued local access to the latest innovative, technologies and technical training they need to succeed.”

Several business leaders voiced strong support for the RCBI-sponsored event.

Mark Carter, vice-president of business development at Swanson Industries in Morgantown, said, “I thought it was very useful to gather the information from companies in the area about what their outlook is, what their needs are for equipment, quality and training.”

“I thought it was absolutely informative,” said Mark S. Dellana, executive director of development at Genesis Partners in Bridgeport. “It brought the right people into the room to make good, informed decisions. It’s all about growing the region.”

“The group that gathered today helped show that we can come together to accomplish goals, instead of simply not working together and being left behind nationally or globally,” Dellana added.

David Lieving, a business retention and expansion representative at the West Virginia Development Office in Charleston, said that “RCBI is right on target in terms of organizing this type of event.”

“I was pleasantly surprised to hear the employers in the room talk openly about their training and equipment needs. From an economic development standpoint, this is very valuable to help our existing businesses grow and expand, hiring more people,” Lieving said.
Smart Business: The Case for Sustainability

By Charlotte Weber

Sustainability – it’s a word all of us are going to hear with increasing frequency in 2011 and the years ahead.

Businesses big and small are recognizing that the status quo – doing things “the way we’ve always done them” – is no longer acceptable. Instead, they’re using environmentally sound strategies to innovate, create value and build competitive advantage. They’re finding ways to adapt to today’s new eco-realities, open new market opportunities and transform their operations so that they’re more sustainable – and more profitable!

I was privileged to serve as a moderator at the recent (Nov. 12) West Virginia Sustainability Summit & Expo in Morgantown, a day-long event sponsored by U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., and his Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation Inc.

At RCBI, we’re currently celebrating our 20th anniversary. That’s two decades of supporting, assisting and championing manufacturing. And I’m proud to say that from our earliest days, we have emphasized sustainable manufacturing, working with our client companies to use cutting-edge processes that maximize technology and productivity gains, while minimizing negative environmental impacts and conserving energy and natural resources.

The high-tech equipment that we lease to manufacturers provides unequalled precision and efficiency. So they drastically reduce time, energy and waste as they produce, resulting in the use of fewer natural resources and the creation of less pollution. This benefits the manufacturers, their customers and, ultimately, the environment.

Senator Rockefeller characterized the Sustainability Summit as a “conversation about how to use sustainable practices to preserve our existing industries, protect our environment and, most importantly, grow our state’s economy and create new jobs.”

Mark Dempsey, vice president of the Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation and vice president of external affairs for Appalachian Power Co., noted that while sustainability may be a “new direction in business,” many companies in the state already have remarkable success stories to tell.

Among this growing list of companies are two, Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia and Dow Chemical, that were represented on the program at the Summit.

Mark Berardi, manager of manufacturing support at the Toyota plant in Buffalo, told the Summit that the sprawling auto plant has a “zero waste” policy and as a result has sent nothing to landfills for disposal since 2003. The plant recycles 34 million pounds of materials each year, Berardi said.

Dow Chemical, which operates plants in South Charleston and Institute as part of its worldwide network, has saved billions of dollars as a result of a company-wide initiative aimed at saving energy.

“Since 2005, we have saved more than $9 billion by investing less than $2 billion on our energy saving initiative,” said Neil Hawkins, Dow’s vice president of sustainability and environmental health and safety.

As the speakers at the Summit made clear, the sustainability agenda for business – and especially for the manufacturing sector – has moved decisively from a checklist of defensive measures to a menu of growth opportunities. New and anticipated laws and regulations aimed at reducing carbon emissions, preserving water and other natural resources are no longer just compliance costs and reputational risks.

Rather, today’s sustainability agenda includes producing new products and winning market share. This is an exciting change – and one that RCBI is committed to.

Charlotte Weber is Director and CEO of the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI).

RCBI Assists Valtronics with ISO Registration

With the assistance of RCBI, Valtronics, Inc., of Ravenswood, W.Va., has achieved a recommendation for ISO 9001: 2008 Registration status.

The recommendation followed a three-day Phase II Registration Audit of the organization’s documented and implemented Quality Management System by Gus Trygstad, Lead Auditor of Intertek.

RCBI Technical Trainer Eddie Fisher reports the assessment “was performed against the Standard and the organization’s documentation with no findings. A foundation has now been set for the organization to maintain and improve its system.”

Located in a 24,000 square-foot facility in Ravenswood, Valtronics offers a number of value-added services, including automation, rebuilding and testing valves in the field or in its shop, building control panels and customizing buildings for housings, including installation.

The company has a staff of more than 50 employees, with a total of more than 250 years of skilled experience.
Four RCBI Employees Honored

Michael L. Bryant of Huntington, Rick C. Smoot of Chesapeake, Mary Lucinda Curry of Duck in Clay County and Ted Cains of Grayson, Ky., have been recognized as RCBI Employee of the Month for June, July, August and September, respectively.

Michael L. Bryant

Bryant is an Information Systems Specialist with RCBI.

“Michael Bryant is gifted with computer-networking skills, and his years of experience certainly enhance his outlook as RCBI focuses on providing industry access to the information technology it needs to thrive,” RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber said in announcing his selection.

A graduate of Barboursville (W.Va.) High School, Bryant earned a B.S. degree in computer science and software development from Marshall University in 1998 and an M.S. in technology management, also from Marshall, in 2005.

His previous experience includes a stint at Huntington-based Strictly Business Computer Systems as a senior software engineer from 2001 to 2007, when he became a contractor for Fenwick Technologies and then worked with Global AlertLink as a senior software engineer. Bryant and his wife Ann have two sons, Kevin and Kyle, and live in Huntington’s Pea Ridge neighborhood.

Rick C. Smoot

Smoot is an Instructor in the RCBI Machinist Technology Program at its Huntington Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center.

“Rick is a wonderful asset to us as RCBI continues its leadership role in helping West Virginia meet its growing need for a highly skilled trained, motivated workforce,” Weber said.

A 1977 graduate of Chesapeake (Ohio) High School, Smoot attended Hocking Community College. He is a graduate of RCBI’s Machinist Technology Program, where he earned eight individual metalworking certifications from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, and Marshall (now Mountwest) Community & Technical College, where he earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science.

He joined RCBI in 2008, coming from McCorkle Machine and Engineering, Huntington, where he had worked as a CNC (computer-numerical-controlled) machinist and leadman since 1999. He began his career as a machinist and leadman at Southern Ohio Machine and Repair, Chesapeake, from 1978 to 1987, when he joined D&E Industries, Huntington, where he was a programmer/leadman, CNC operator and first-class machinist. He then served as a CNC technician at Richwood Industries, Huntington, in 1998 and 1999.

Smoot lives in Chesapeake with his wife Linda, three daughters and a stepson.

Mary Lucinda Curry

Curry is Coordinator of Workforce Development/Technical Trainer with RCBI.

Born in South Charleston, Curry is a 1979 graduate of South Charleston High School. She attended the University of Maryland, European Division, from 1979 to 1981, while living in Germany. In 2000, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership Management and Development from Mountain State University.

Prior to joining RCBI in 2008, she was Director of Enrollment at Mountain State. Previously, she served as Associate Director at West Virginia Junior College and Office Manager at University of Southern California, European Division, in Germany.

“Lucinda’s two decades of experience in education programs have proven to be a considerable asset for us as RCBI assumes a leadership position in helping West Virginia meet its growing need for a skilled, motivated workforce,” Weber said.

She and her husband, Barry K. Curry, have two married daughters, Alia Miller and Bethany Morris, and a son, Ethan Curry.

Ted Cains

Cains is a Manufacturing Specialist/Technical Trainer at the RCBI Huntington Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center.

“As RCBI assumes a leadership position in helping West Virginia industry meet its need for a skilled workforce, we’re glad that we have talented individuals like Ted Cains on our team,” Weber said. A native of Denton, Ky., he earned an associate degree in technology management from the University of Findlay in 2006 and is a leadership graduate of Rapport International.

Cains joined RCBI two years ago. Previously, he worked at Dana Coupled Products as a Team Leader/CNC Setup and Operator (1985-97) and at Cooper Tire and Rubber Company as an Engineer II (1997-2008).

He and his wife, Wanda Cains, live in Grayson, Ky. They have three children — Miranda Binion, Tabitha Bauers and Jessica Cains.
Providing a conduit that links Mountain State manufacturers and entrepreneurs with contracting opportunities is a hallmark of the RCBI 21st Century Manufacturing Network. Nearly 550 companies — primarily in West Virginia and the bordering states of Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia — actively participate in the RCBI network.

The computerized clearinghouse at RCBI is designed to help manufacturers network with each other and reach new markets. It allows participants to market, team, convert documents, electronically communicate and conduct other collaborations online. The effort enhances the strength of manufacturers and suppliers across West Virginia and the region.

“Because of the continuing importance of electronic commerce — and its ever-expanding role in commercial success — we are excited about placing these contracting opportunities at the fingertips of the participants in our electronic supplier chain,” says Charlotte Weber, Director & CEO at RCBI.

Since 2001, more than $350 million in federal contracts has been awarded to the RCBI network’s quality-based participants, who because of their participation are positioned to take advantage of production opportunities they otherwise couldn’t access. These contracts involve the manufacture of textiles, metals and electrical components, weapons components, and spare or repair parts for military vehicles. From the manufacture of odd-shaped handles and brackets for military vehicles and weapons systems to flotation devices or other life-saving apparel, the manufacturers in the RCBI network offer valuable products and services that meet stringent requirements.

For more information about the network or to become a participant, call 800.469.RCBI (7224), log on to www.21stmanufacturing.org or e-mail 21stcentury@rcbi.org.
HUNTINGTON — When all the members of the statewide RCBI team gathered for their customary year-end Staff Meeting and Holiday Dinner on Dec. 20, they had a distinguished guest — Stephen J. Kopp, Ph.D., the president of Marshall University.

In a ceremony at the RCBI Huntington Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center, RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber presented Kopp with a plaque in “Appreciation and Admiration” of his strong support of RCBI.

In brief remarks, Kopp lauded RCBI and its 20-year history of creating jobs and fostering economic development in West Virginia and the region.

Kopp also spoke about the recent progress recorded by the university and some of the challenges it faces. He pointed to an 8.3 percent increase in freshman enrollment and a 5.7 percent jump in overall enrollment. He said plans are progressing for establishment of a new pharmacy school as a logical complement to the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and he voiced optimism about a future engineering complex.

Sound fiscal management at MU has erased a $5 million annual budget deficit, Kopp said, but as always, future funding for higher education in the state remains a concern.

CAPACITY Celebrates 20 Years of RCBI History

A newly published 20th Anniversary Issue of CAPACITY, the RCBI magazine, celebrates two decades of RCBI history.

The cover of the special issue features a one-of-kind metal sculpture commissioned by RCBI to mark its anniversary. Artist Tammy Roy works in a medium that is emblematic of the manufacturing industry.

All of Roy’s artwork is created with a blowtorch. When she starts a project, she doesn't visit the nearest art supply store. Instead she starts at a salvage yard, then she takes the junk objects she finds there and transforms them into unique pieces of art. That’s why she named her company One Eighty; it explains the transformation the scraps and junk undergo in becoming art.

A 12-page special section in the magazine documents “RCBI Milestones: 1990-2010,” chronicling in words and pictures some of the significant events in the history of West Virginia’s Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center.

“RCBI is a model of how industry and academia can work together to help manufacturers, entrepreneurs and individual workers succeed,” the article notes. Since it was established at Marshall University in 1990, RCBI has served more than 5,000 manufacturers that employ 80,000 workers.

To request a copy of the special issue, call 800.469.RCBI (7224) or click on www.capacity-magazine.com.
Individuals who completed a 13-week course in Gas Metal Arc Welding have passed state certification after the advanced welding training offered by the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) in Bridgeport. The comprehensive courses feature both hands-on training and classroom instruction through a partnership with the United Technical Center (UTC).

Charlotte Weber, RCBI’s Director & CEO, noted that the welding program is “a great opportunity” for individuals at a time when there is a lack of welders not only in West Virginia but nationally. Weber said that RCBI and UTC began the partnership last fall to help alleviate a major shortage of welders in the region.

“We are responding to an identified shortage of welders — not just here in West Virginia but nationwide — and are continuing to prepare individuals to earn state welding certification and join the work force,” Weber said.

Gaining certification were Bobby Taylor and Luke Carpenter of Grafton, Robert Hemeon of Bridgeport, Ben Smith of Clarksburg, Tim Blake of Greenwood, Randy Fleming of Fairview and Kendall Moore of Fairview.

For information on future welding courses, contact Kathryn Stanley, workforce development recruiter, at 304.848.2283 or 304.848.2270 or send an e-mail to register@rcbi.org. Financial assistance is available to individuals who qualify.

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What are the people in our Page One photo watching?

They’re part of a crowd of nearly 60 individuals representing manufacturers and organizations that attended a day-long kickoff of Mastercam X-5 and SolidWorks 2011 technology at the RCBI Charleston Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center. Presented in conjunction with Mastercam and SolidWorks, the Oct. 26 seminars showcased the latest CNC programming and 3-D Modeling software that offers manufacturers high performance machining capabilities.