Program Manager named for RCBI Composites Center

Aviation industry veteran Mike L. Gray has returned to West Virginia to serve as Program Manager for the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) Composites Technology & Training Center.

Announcement of the appointment, effective July 1, was made by RCBI Director and CEO Charlotte Weber.

The Composites Center is located at the Harrison-Marion Regional Airport, Bridgeport, W.Va., in association with the RCBI Bridgeport Manufacturing Technology Center operation. In partnership with the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, the Composites Center includes comprehensive composites training capabilities, design, analysis, development, evaluation and demonstration of affordable advanced composite materials. The manufacturing partnership supports the aerospace industry, including NASA, the Department of Defense and commercial industries.

“We are very pleased that a man with Mike Gray’s extensive experience in the aviation industry has agreed to serve as program manager for RCBI’s newest venture, the Composites Technology & Training Center,” Ms. Weber said. “It’s an important and challenging position and I’m confident Mike has the background and skills to take it to new levels of success.”

Gray, a graduate of Huntington (W.Va.) High School, has spent more than 30 years in the aviation industry following a seven-year stint, 1967-1974, as a jet aircraft technician and crew chief with the U.S. Air Force, working out of Charleston, South Carolina.

He attended Marshall University, 1975-76, and later attended Fairmont State College to complete an Aviation Maintenance Management degree. He also instructed Aviation Maintenance Management courses at Fairmont State. He has attended a wide range of specialty training programs sponsored by the U.S. Air Force and private industries.

Gray spent the major part of his career with Pratt & Whitney Engine Services at Bridgeport, Continued on back

Huntington reception, open house planned Sept. 11-12

The Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) will host a Machining & Technology Expo Wednesday, Sept. 12, during an Open House at the RCBI Huntington Manufacturing Technology Center.

Representatives from more than a dozen machine tool vendors and industrial suppliers will join RCBI’s staff to offer equipment and software demonstrations, entrepreneurial seminars and tours during the day-long event Sept. 12, slated to run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Lunch will be provided and door prizes will be awarded.

The expo will informally kick off the prior evening, Tuesday, Sept. 11, with a reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the RCBI facility, according to Charlotte Weber, RCBI Director and CEO.

“This expo,” Weber said, “offers manufacturers an exciting opportunity to see firsthand some of the latest technologies available to them at RCBI.”

The Huntington Open House is another in a continuing series of efforts by RCBI to provide access to state-of-the-art and state-of-the-market production equipment, technologies and software to manufacturers so they can compete and succeed in the global market.

Similar events were conducted at RCBI’s Charleston Manufacturing Technology Center in April, at the Bridgeport Manufacturing Technology Center in February and at the Rocket Center Manufacturing Technology Center in June.

Coming up…

Sept. 11 – Reception, RCBI Huntington, 5 – 7 p.m.

Sept. 12 – Machining & Technology Expo and Open House, RCBI Huntington, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Aug. 31 – Publication of Fall Issue of Capacity magazine

Oct. 8 – RCBI networking event at Stonewall Jackson Lake, beginning at 9 a.m.

Oct. 9 – Breakfast, followed by Machinist Technology Program board meeting at 10 a.m.
The official debut of the latest issue of *Capacity*, the magazine of the Robert C. Byrd Institute, highlighted RCBI’s participation in the 2007 Annual Meeting and West Virginia Business Summit of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

As in the past, RCBI again was a sponsor for the Business Summit, held August 29-31 at The Greenbrier. The Chamber’s three-day meeting is annually the largest gathering of business and government leaders in West Virginia. Final attendance figures for this year’s Summit are not available, but last year’s event drew nearly 800 people.

“The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce is very pleased again to have the Robert C. Byrd Institute as a key supporter and exhibitor of the West Virginia Business Summit,” Chamber President Steve Roberts said. “RCBI’s support for leadership development and economic development efforts across West Virginia is enabling us to build a stronger economy, grow more job opportunities and expand workforce skills.”

RCBI distributed copies of the Fall 2007 *Capacity* to each attendee’s guest room at the resort and made additional copies available at its exhibit booth in Colonial Hall. Visitors to the booth also were provided newly designed RCBI computer mouse pads.

“As the premier business event in West Virginia each year, the Business Summit offers RCBI an unequalled venue to network with potential client companies, government leaders and others who need to know who we are and what we do,” said RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber. “We’re indeed pleased to be part of such a significant event and have an opportunity to emphasize the importance of manufacturing.”

The Business Summit presented a lengthy list of speakers and panelists covering key topics such as economic development, taxation, Workers’ Compensation, health care and legal reforms.

With “Made In America” as its theme, the latest issue of *Capacity* features columns and articles by U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller; Gov. Joe Manchin; National Association of Manufacturers President John Engler; American Electric Power Chairman, President and CEO Michael G. Morris; Chesapeake Energy Chairman and CEO Aubrey K. McClendon and others.

The magazine reports on the rebirth of the Charleston stamping plant, takes a behind-the-scenes look at Huntington’s busy Alcon lens plant and features an excerpt from Lee Iacocca’s latest bestseller, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?*
China offers opportunities to West Virginia firms

By Charlotte Weber

Trade with China is one of this country’s most hotly-debated issues – and for good reason. It’s a classic good news-bad news scenario.

It’s good news that the United States and China have a thriving and growing trade relationship. Most importantly, that relationship dramatically diminishes the chances of military confrontation and war between two of the world’s major powers and eases political tensions which have endured for more than 50 years. Typically, trading partners prefer not to shoot at each other. Anybody remember the last time we fought Canada, which happens to be the largest foreign market for American goods?

Of course, the bad news is that China’s exports to the United States of $288 billion in 2006 were nearly six times greater than U.S. exports to China, which were only $52 billion. According to Robert E. Scott, director of international programs for the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, China’s trade surplus was responsible for 42.6 percent of the United States’ total non-oil trade deficit – by far our most imbalanced trading relationship.

Unless China revalues its artificially cheap currency and eliminates such trade distortions as its extensive suppression of labor rights, Scott contends, the U.S. trade deficit will continue to grow rapidly in the future. He says that deficit is causing the loss of many thousands of American jobs.

Scott claims that from 2001, when China was admitted to the World Trade Organization, to 2006, the U.S. lost 1,763,000 jobs – including 8,400 in West Virginia – as a result of growing trade deficits with China.

Columnist Robert J. Samuelson, writing in the Washington Post, offers a very different view. He says China’s trade offensive hasn’t seriously harmed most other economies – yet. Despite America’s huge current account deficit, to which Chinese imports have contributed, the U.S. unemployment rate is a low 4.5 percent and world economic growth has accelerated. “But what’s been true in the past may not be true in the future,” Samuelson cautions.

On a positive note, as the Chinese economy expands and more people move into the middle class, a huge consumer market is opening up. This should benefit American companies, as several firms in West Virginia are demonstrating. Diana Martin, manager of the international trade division of the West Virginia Development Office, noted recently, “As the middle class grows, there are more opportunities for the small consumer project manufacturers – and West Virginia has a lot of those small companies.”

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, West Virginia exports to China have increased significantly. In 1999, West Virginia exported $27.4 million worth of goods to China. By 2006, that number had risen to $187.1 million.

A Morgantown company, FCX Systems, has been selling solid state frequency converters for jet airplanes in China for 15 years, making up about 10 percent of FCX’s total sales.

Some West Virginia companies have elected to establish plants in China, taking advantage of the lower labor costs. Even those companies are selling to the China market – and bringing much-needed capital back to West Virginia.

It’s obvious that America’s great know-how and can-do-attitude can make great inroads into the China market while reducing or eliminating the trade deficit with China.

Through a variety of programs in our Huntington, Charleston, Bridgeport and Rocket Center facilities, we at the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI) provide access to the most advanced technology and technical training that assists our small and medium-sized manufacturers to compete in our global economy.

West Virginia exports to China exceeded $186 million in 2006

Companies that are involved in or providing service to coal, chemical, plastics and wood products industries are realizing success in the China market. One example is Poca-based Kanawha Scales & Service which sells scales and measuring equipment as well as feeders, crushers and moisture analyzers to the coal and iron ore industries. According to President Jim Bradbury, Kanawha Scales has received more than $75 million worth of contracts in China since 1992 – or 15 to 20 percent of the firm’s total sales.

Just give us a call or visit our web site, www.rcbi.org.

Charlotte Weber is Director & CEO of the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing.
A midshipman in the United States Merchant Marine Academy has turned to RCBI to complete a project for class work in New York.

Braxton County’s Joshua Suesli finalized a parallel clamp through the use of RCBI machinery. “At school, we had to do a lathe project,” he said.

Upon returning to Rhode Island for the resumption of several months of classroom work starting in November, Suesli will turn in the completed project for a review by a machinist. “A machinist will actually grade the project,” he noted.

The 20-year-old Suesli visited the RCBI Bridgeport Manufacturing Technology Center and worked with RCBI’s Paul Beatty, Senior Manufacturing Engineer and Site Manager, and Bernie Wilson, a Machinist Technology Program instructor, who assisted on the project.

Beatty said that Suesli had a “good basic knowledge of the RCBI machinery” used in the project.

“Things went well at RCBI,” Suesli added. “The employees were helpful. I really appreciated it.”

A 2006 graduate of Braxton County High School, the Gassaway resident plans to complete the four-year program and become a licensed engineer officer. He will then serve an eight-year commitment to the U.S. Navy Reserve.

RCBI assists student project

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RCBI and NASA look to the future

“It was a successful endeavor.”

That’s how Mike Gray, Program Manager at the RCBI Composites Technology & Training Center in Bridgeport, summed up a meeting this summer with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) officials. The session at Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland enabled RCBI staffers to gather information on potential future composites projects involving NASA and RCBI, Gray said.

“The trip was beneficial and the information we received proved valuable,” Gray remarked. He was accompanied by Len Tartamella, Senior Manufacturing Projects Engineer. Gray said one of the projects involves use of a new filament winder that RCBI is in the process of purchasing. “RCBI will fabricate some composite tubes that NASA will test for potential use in future space projects.” Also discussed was NASA’s use of RCBI to perform several levels of composites training for NASA personnel. Gray noted that the Composites Quality Control Engineering Manager at NASA attended an advanced composites course conducted earlier at RCBI Bridgeport.

“He provided positive feedback for the course,” Gray said.

Plans call for RCBI staff to visit the NASA facility in the future and tailor other composites courses specifically for NASA. The RCBI Composites Technology & Training Center focuses its specialized workforce training and assistance efforts toward development and demonstration of new and advanced composites technologies.

www.rcbi.org

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.

A Closer Look

Here is a closer look at a member of the RCBI family

NAME: Tracy D. McDowell
ADDRESS: Huntington, W.Va.
AGE: 45
FAMILY: Two brothers and two sisters
SCHOOLING: Huntington High School, Marshall University
LENGTH OF SERVICE AT RCBI: 15 years
JOB TITLE: Operations Supervisor
HOBBIES: Crocheting, reading, yard work, bowling, listening to music
FIRST CAR: ‘79 Toyota Corolla hatchback
SOMETHING THAT’S ALWAYS IN MY REFRIGERATOR: Cheese and pepperoni
PETS: Five-year-old yellow lab named Mia
FAVORITE MEAL: Hamburger and gravy, fried apples, peas, mashed potatoes and biscuits
I WILL NOT EAT: Asparagus
MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME OF DAY: Morning
FAVORITE CANDY: Heath bar
Dr. Keith J. Cotroneo, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Quincy College in Quincy, Mass., for the past two years, is the new president of the Marshall Community and Technical College (MCTC). He starts his new job Sept. 1.

“We’re excited to have Dr. Cotroneo join us,” said John Hess, chair of the Marshall University Board of Governors’ Community and Technical College Committee. “He brings a lot of experience in education administration to our Community and Technical College, and will be a great asset as we move forward and grow this institution.”

RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber and Associate Director for Public Information James E. Casto served on the MCTC Search Committee that evaluated candidates and recommended Cotroneo’s appointment.

Cotroneo replaces Dr. Robert B. Hayes, who has served as the college’s interim president since November 2006.

“I’m really excited,” Cotroneo said of his new job. “It’s an important time for the community college and the university. I’m looking forward to being at the community college and providing greater access to the citizens of West Virginia and to assisting the local community and the state in economic development.”

Before going to Quincy in 2005, Cotroneo served as:

- Vice President for Academic Affairs at Broome Community College in Binghamton, N.Y., from 1998 to 2005;
- Dean of Instruction and Chief Academic Officer at Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Ore., from 1995 to 1998;
- Associate Dean and Assistant to the President at Hagerstown Community College in Hagerstown, M.D., from 1992 to 1995;
- Associate Dean at Hagerstown Community College from 1988 to 1995.

Cotroneo received a Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University in 1976, a Master of Education from the University of Georgia in 1979, a Specialist in Education from the University of Georgia in 1985, and a Doctor of Education from the University of Georgia in 1987.

RCBI assists Alcon Manufacturing, Ltd. RCBI Director of Manufacturing Services Arley Carpenter instructs a group of five employees of Alcon Manufacturing, Ltd. in computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM). The Huntington manufacturing plant recently acquired a new type of CAD/CAM system and enlisted RCBI’s help in training 18 of its engineers and operators in its use. Also working with small Alcon groups were Lead Production Engineer Brian Brown and Manufacturing Engineer Aaron Blake. Alcon, with more than 800 employees in Huntington, is expanding its operations and expects to increase its payroll significantly. The plant produces thousands of intraocular lenses daily, providing better eyesight for millions around the world.
CAZ director named Research VP at Marshall

Dr. John M. Maher, Executive Director of the Chemical Alliance Zone Inc. (CAZ), has been named Vice President for Research with the Marshall University Research Corp. (MURC). He succeeds Dr. Howard Aulick, who retired.

“I am looking forward to working with everyone in the Marshall community and continuing the good work of the Research Corporation,” Dr. Maher said. “We want to make the Research Corporation a leading service organization for the university, make our environment conducive to growing the research enterprise substantially, and build on our excellent record of compliance and economic development. Many significant opportunities are on the horizon for Marshall, and we at the Research Corporation will be working to make those opportunities a reality.”

MURC is a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation that serves as the fiscal and administrative agent for sponsored research and other projects conducted by Marshall.

As director of the Chemical Alliance Zone, Dr. Maher served as the chief executive of a statewide collaborative organization devoted to economic development in the chemical and allied sectors. He is also President and Managing Partner of Rampant Technology Partners, LLC, a South Charleston-based chemistry and materials consulting and research firm. Before taking his post at CAZ in 2003, he worked for 21 years at Union Carbide, serving in a broad range of technical and managerial assignments.

Dr. Maher is a graduate of Cornell and Harvard universities. Born in Texas, he grew up in New York City and lives in Charleston with his wife, Regan. He may be reached at 304.696.4748, or by e-mail at maherj@marshall.edu.

Local government leaders briefed on RCBI’s efforts

A brief overview of RCBI’s mission and operations was the subject when Jim Casto, Associate Director for Public Information, spoke to a gathering of local governmental leaders in South Charleston on May 24.

Speaking at the South Charleston Public Library, Casto briefed members of the Regional Intergovernmental Council that serves Kanawha, Putnam, Boone and Clay counties. The council, one of 11 such groups in West Virginia, is primarily composed of mayors and county commissioners from the four counties.

If you are a member of a club or organization that you think would like to learn more about RCBI, you’re invited to contact Casto at 304.781.1670, or by e-mail at jcasto@rcbi.org.
Martin is appointed MTP interim manager

Director of Engineering Rick Martin has assumed additional responsibilities as interim Program Manager of the Machinist Technology Program, RCBI Director & CEO Charlotte Weber has announced. His appointment follows the resignation of Sam Argento, effective August 3.

Ms. Weber said she is excited about the team that has been put in place to oversee the important Machinist Technology Program. Martin and Director of Manufacturing Services Arley Carpenter are working with Senior Machinist Instructor Ed Black to develop a CNC curriculum component which will be offered to students beginning this fall.

Machinist Technology Program

Ms. Weber said Senior Machinist Instructor Ed Black and Machinist Instructors Bernie Wilson and Lloyd Arnold also will have expanded roles including additional student interaction, recruitment and retention. Black will be making visits to the other RCBI Manufacturing Technology Centers to assist with recruitment, curriculum development and expansion, Ms. Weber added.

Program Manager named for RCBI Composites Center

Continued from cover

1986 to 2004, in a variety of positions, including Service Center Operations Manager. He moved to Texas in 2004 as Director, Quality Control, at Dallas Airmotive, Inc.

Most recently he worked with Turbomeca-USA, in Grand Prairie, Texas, rising to New Engine Production Operations Manager. Turbomeca is considered the leading helicopter engine manufacturer on the international market. The company also develops and markets turbo-jet engines for aircraft as well as land and marine turbines.

Gray began his career in 1976 at Kanawha Airport in Charleston, W.Va., as an aircraft mechanic at the Executive Air Terminal. From 1978 to 1980 he was Service Manager/Chief Inspector of Capitol Aircraft there and from 1980 to 1981 was Service Manager/Director of Maintenance for Executive Air Terminal.

Appropriately, he holds a private pilot's license.

Gray said he’s happy to be back in West Virginia. “Although my career has taken me to a number of fine communities, it’s always great to come home – and my home is West Virginia,” he said. “Beyond that, I’m looking forward to working with the people of RCBI and taking advantage of opportunities to improve our state’s manufacturing climate. I’m convinced we can make a difference.”

In addition, Rebekah Duke, RCBI Financial Assistant, has assumed additional responsibilities to ensure customer focus is brought to the financial aid portion of the Machinist Technology Program. In addition to working with the Marshall University Financial Aid Programs, Ms. Duke will also assist students with on-line financial aid applications and application preparation for various statewide financial aid programs.

Ms. Weber said additional workforce development programs will be offered by RCBI, including Composites Manufacturing programs which are now in development.

RCBI

Robert C. Byrd Institute

Advancing Manufacturing Technologies

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Huntington, WV 25701

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