

Summer 2004

www.lmcsc.org

LMC Offers Manufacturing Certification Program in partnership with Trident Technical College and Trident One-Stop Career System



On September 1, 2004, 20 individuals from the Charleston region will be the first to complete a "Manufacturing Certification Program" established by the Lowcountry Manufacturers Council through a public-private partnership. These 20 students will complete the training at no cost and graduate with a certification in skills relevant to a career in manufacturing.

The establishment of this pilot program is a result of two years of work, collaboration, and the commitment of the LMC's Education & Training Committee. The program was envisioned as a way to address the needs of area manufacturers for better-qualified, skilled, entry-level employees. By partnering with Trident Technical College and the Trident One-Stop Career System, the LMC worked to create the first manufacturing certification program of its kind in the Charleston region.

One of the biggest challenges and greatest accomplishments of the initiative was financing the program. At a cost of approximately \$10,000 for a course of 20 students, the program was at an impasse last spring without an identified source of funding. When this occurred, several manufacturers and public organizations came forward to sponsor the pilot training course. The sponsoring companies recognized the value

and the long-term benefits the initiative would bring to manufacturers and the community. The support of the sponsors, Trident Technical College and the Trident One-Stop Career System make this program an excellent example of how collaboration can lead to the success of a program that benefits Charleston's citizens and employers.

With funding in place, the process for the August 2004 pilot course began in June when the LMC ran two ads announcing the program and inviting interested individuals to attend an orientation session. Nearly 80 individuals attended the sessions, and from those candidates, 20 students were selected through an application and interview process conducted by members of the Education & Training Committee. To be eligible, candidates were required to have some work experience, not necessarily in manufacturing, and an interest in manufacturing as a career field. Applicants were also required to take the WorkKeys test, which is a test administered by the Trident One-Stop Career Center.

The training curriculum for the program includes basic coursework in applied mathematics, team skills, measuring techniques, computer basics, safety and environmental, applied mechanical reasoning and manufacturing technologies. It is a 30-hour program taught by Trident Technical College instructors, and all students who complete the course will receive a certificate. The program begins August 10, 2004, and will conclude on September 1, 2004, with a graduation ceremony at 6:30 p.m.

Upon completing the training course, the 20 students are not guaranteed a job, nor are they obligated to go to work for a specific company. However, many of the manufacturing companies who have sponsored the program have voiced their excitement and enthusiasm about the students. To address this interest, representatives from all LMC member companies are invited to attend the graduation. This will be an opportunity for member companies to meet and speak with the students about potential career opportunities.

The LMC is focused on making the "Manufacturing Certification Program" a permanent course offered through Trident Technical College. Once the pilot course is completed, the committee will begin an evaluation process and use that information to determine the program's direction. The LMC eagerly anticipates the day when manufacturers in the Charleston region not only look for "certified" employees, but also begin to demand that level of training in their new hires.

For more information about the LMC or the workforce development program, contact Jennifer Robson at 843-805-3010 or contactus@lmcsc.org.



**Thank you to our
program sponsors
for their support
and contributions**

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Letter from the 2004-2005 LMC Chairman

Competitive Wisdom

As manufacturers we are increasingly experiencing the need to do more with less. Less margin as we face increasing domestic and foreign competition, fewer qualified employees in the labor pool, and less time to make the important decisions that determine our profitability now as well as in the future.



Mark W. Richards, The Richards Group
2004-2005 LMC Chair

With this in mind, the Lowcountry Manufacturers Council (LMC) is embarking on an important mission this year to bring you the wisdom that will make your operation more successful and more profitable.

Using our monthly roundtables as a base to work from, we will be inviting experts in to tell us about the latest trends and opportunities in everything from lean manufacturing, to how to reduce utility costs, to how to market your company more effectively. With recent legislation affecting the right to work we will have experts share with us specific language that should be in our employee handbooks to keep us from running afoul of the laws and protect us from expensive litigation. Our theme this year is competitive wisdom and our goal is to bring you the knowledge you need to be the best you can be.

With a focus on relevance, we are going to invite more people from your organization to join us in gaining competitive wisdom...folks from your sales and marketing group, your operations, and your human resources department. We want you to bring those employees that can benefit by the specific topic we will be delivering each month.

We will learn something from them as we discuss the issues affecting manufacturing organizations and hopefully they will learn something to take back into your company. Together we will be expanding our knowledge base of competitive wisdom.

In this issue of *Network News* (page 3), there is a schedule of events for this year's Roundtable Dinners. We have identified experts for these topics and invited them to speak to us. We invite you to make recommendations for future speakers, as well as topics, that might have greater urgency or relevance to your organization. By all means, please share your needs with us, and we will do our level best to address them in the 2005-2006 agenda, or we may schedule a special seminar or training program.

To wrap this up, I would be remiss if I did not offer a heartfelt thank you to Herb Ellis of Charleston Marine Containers, Inc. our outgoing chairman, for his dedication and hard work over the last year. He has left me in the enviable position of taking over the reigns of a well-managed and fiscally healthy organization. I would also like to thank Mike Leatherwood of Leatherwood Electronics and Manufacturing for his continued zeal and passion for making this a great, relevant, and important organization for all of our members. Thank you both! Finally, I would like to thank Jennifer Robson from the Chamber for all of her help with our ongoing needs as well as the other board members that serve with such selflessness.

It's going to be a great year, and I look forward to making this journey together. In June of 2005 when we evaluate our progress, I want each and every one of our members to turn around and look at the progress we have made over the year. I want each of you to reflect and know that you have learned at least one thing through your affiliation with our organization that has made a positive impact on your organization, your personal life, or both.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark W. Richards'.

Mark W. Richards
The Richards Group, LLC

Lowcountry Manufacturers Council
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The LMC Welcomes the Following New Members:

* Denotes Associate Member

**Charleston Steel & Metal
Quintrex Boats**

* **Palmetto Loom & Reed**

* **Athena Corporation**

* **American Machining & Mfg.
Co. Inc.**

Interested in serving on the LMC Board of Directors
or on an LMC Committee? Find out how you can get involved by contacting Jennifer Robson at 843-805-3010 or contactus@lmcsc.org.

Manufacturers Roundtable Reinvigorated for 2004-2005 Year

ROUNDTABLE - r'awndt'eybul

[n] a meeting of peers for discussion and exchange of views

As part of the 2004-2005 program of work, the LMC is striving to educate and inform its membership, while providing opportunities for networking and the sharing of ideas. In order to do this, the Manufacturers Roundtable is being reintroduced. This monthly dinner meeting will feature a different topic and speaker each month. Plant tours will be offered every few months in place of the dinner meeting to give members the opportunity to visit other facilities.

These meetings are an not only an opportunity for your company's CEO, President or Plant Manger to attend, but also for the other key players in the company's management team. The topics cover issues relevant to humans resource professionals, finance directors, sales and marketing personnel and managers in the plant. Let your team know about these meetings and encourage them to take advantage of the sharing of ideas and information.

The meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noted, at the North Towne Grill and Seafood in North Charleston. Dinner and the program will begin at 6 p.m. Plant tour times and locations will be announced in advance. Again, please be sure to let others know about the tours and encourage them to attend. This is an opportunity for your company to take advantage of your membership in the LMC.

*Be sure to mark you calendar for the upcoming roundtable scheduled for **Tuesday, August 31, at 6:00 p.m.** Ms. Wendy J. Keefer of the law firm Barnwell, Whalley, Paterson & Helms, LLC, will help explain what employers need to know about the recent legislation regarding **Employment-At-Will** rules and regulations. Are you sure you understand what the legislation means to you and how it impacts your company manuals, procedures and policies? This is your chance to find out and ask questions.*

What:

LMC Manufacturers Roundtable Dinner

When:

The last Tuesday of the month, *unless otherwise noted* 6:00 p.m., *unless otherwise noted*

Where:

North Towne Grill & Seafood
2093 Eagle Landing Blvd.
N. Charleston, SC 29406
843-863-1001

Who:

Executives and management team representatives from LMC companies (President, CEO, Human Resources, Finance, Sales & Mktg., Plant Managers, etc.)

Cost:

Approximately \$12 plus taxes, paid after the meeting

RSVP:

Advance notice is appreciated if you plan on attend a meeting, but feel free to just "show up" if it fits your schedule.

Roundtable Schedule

Tuesday, August 31, 2004 - 6:00 p.m.

Employment-at-Will: What you need to know
Wendy J. Keefer, Barnwell, Whaley, Patterson & Helms LLC

Tuesday, September 28, 2004 - 6:00 p.m.

Effective Hiring Strategies
Jim Gray, Jim Gray Consultants

Tuesday, October 26, 2004 - 6:00 p.m.

Health, Environmental and Safety Issues -
Current OSHA Hot Buttons
Vivian Harper, S.C. Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP)

November 2004

The Post and Courier Plant Tour
Date and time to be announced

December 2004

No meetings scheduled for holiday season

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Cut Your Utility Costs and Conserve Energy
SCANA Representative

Tuesday, February 16, 2005 - 8:00 a.m.

Plant Tour at Charleston Marine Containers Inc.

Tuesday, March 29, 2005 - 6:00 p.m.

Lean Manufacturing Presentation
& BBQ Dinner at AstenJohnson

Tuesday, April 26, 2005 - 6:00 p.m.

Tax Incentives & Economic
Development Opportunities
Tri-County Representatives

May 2005

Plant Tour
Date and location to be announced

Tuesday, June 28, 2005 - 6:00 p.m.

Increase Sales and Learn How
to Market Your Business
John Carroll, Unlimited Performance

Tuesday, July 26, 2005 - 6:00 p.m.

Developing Your Export Markets
& International Sales
Phil Minard, Chs. Export Assistance Center



P.O. Box 975
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www.lmcsc.org

Serving Manufacturers in the Lowcountry and throughout South Carolina

Mark your calendar for the LMC Annual Meeting & Dinner
In celebration of South Carolina Industry Appreciation Week

Thursday, September 23, 2004
6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Charleston Place Hotel
Invited Keynote Speaker:
Governor Mark Sanford

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

For additional information, please contact Jennifer Robson
at 843-805-3010 or contactus@lmcsc.org.

Register online at www.lmcsc.org.