

Legislative Involvement Tops LMC's 2004 Priority List

Message from Jack B. Hoey, Jr., Coastal Glass Distributors
LMC Board of Directors Legislative Liaison

One of the LMC's important roles is to monitor legislative activity to assure that our members' voices are heard on public policy issues that affect the manufacturing community. I am currently serving as the Board's liaison on public policy issues. I will be working with Jennifer Robson to provide opportunities for LMC members to meet and talk with political leaders, and will also be working with task forces coordinated by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce on issues of interest to the LMC.

In my opinion, tax policy is likely to be the area of biggest potential concern as we move into 2004. There continues to be pressure to increase revenue while providing tax relief in some areas strongly desired by the public. When these two pressures are working together, they tend to find an outlet by increasing taxes selectively on industry groups. The attempt to eliminate the sales tax exemption on manufacturing equipment last year is a good example of what can happen in this kind of environment.

Our goal in working with legislators is not to gain more for ourselves at the expense of others, but to help assure a public policy environment that enables the Lowcountry region to enjoy the benefits of a healthy manufacturing sector. We have developed a statement of principles that expresses the values we seek to further in the public policy arena. (See statement on Page 2.)

If you have any questions or concerns, or want to alert the LMC Board to issues that you perceive, please contact me. My email address is jhoey@coastalglasdist.com.

Mr. Hoey is president of Coastal Glass Distributors, a leading glass fabricator based in North Charleston. He has a regular feature in the Charleston Regional Business Journal, "Lessons in Leadership."



Commerce Department Finishes Long-Awaited Manufacturing Study

The Bush administration on January 16 released its long-anticipated study on what the government should do to address the steep downturn in the U.S. manufacturing sector. Originally scheduled to be released in September, the 88-page report became exceedingly complex, according to those involved in writing various iterations of the document entitled "Manufacturing In America: A Comprehensive Strategy to Address the Challenges to U.S. Manufacturers."

Manufacturers are generally pleased with the result, though they admit that the report repackages many long-standing Bush administration policy initiatives into one place, including making the tax cuts permanent, tort and regulatory reform, and energy and health care initiatives.

Nevertheless, Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans pledged that the study is the first step in reorienting the federal government toward addressing policies that improve the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers.

The report lists 63 recommendations, but the most important aspect of the endeavor is focusing the administration's attention on manufacturing, Evans emphasized. A new manufacturing position will be created within the Commerce Department and a variety of interagency working groups and task forces will be chartered throughout government to pursue policies regarding fair trade, R&D funding and regulatory reform.

The document leaves the status of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program somewhat in limbo. No funding level was mentioned for the program. The Bush administration's 2005 budget submission will reveal its intentions. Last year, it requested almost a 90 percent reduction in spending for the popular program, though the report gave it a muted endorsement (see page 70 of the report).

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The report can be downloaded from the Commerce Department’s Web site at <http://www.doc.gov>. Among its recommendations are:

- Create an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing and Services.
- Lead benchmark analysis studies to identify and prioritize those areas of public policy that have the most impact on manufacturing competitiveness;
- Create a new Office of Industry Analysis that will assess the cost competitiveness of American industry
- Establish a President’s Manufacturing Council to provide oversight and advice on implementing the President’s Manufacturing Initiative;
- Create an Interagency Working Group on Manufacturing chaired by the Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing and Services.
- Make the tax cuts permanent.
- Reduce cost of tax complexity and compliance.
- Make the R&D tax credit permanent.
- Reduce the cost of healthcare.
- Modernize the legal system to eliminate frivolous lawsuits.
- Reduce the costs of regulation.
- Establish an inventory of potential regulatory reforms that would lower the cost of manufacturing.
- Enact a comprehensive energy policy.
- Review federal R&D funding for generic technologies, engineering and the physical sciences;
- Strengthen partnerships to promote manufacturing technology transfer;
- Support a “newly coordinated” Manufacturing Extension Partnership and create a national virtual network of centers of manufacturing excellence;
- Strengthen education and enhance workforce skills.
- Establish a high-school and technical education partnership initiative;
- Promote open markets and level playing fields.
- Encourage economic growth and open trade in capital markets abroad;
- Negotiate trade agreements that benefit U.S. manufacturers;
- Pursue elimination of foreign tariff and non-tariff barriers to exports of U.S. manufactured goods;
- Enhance the effectiveness of trade enforcement tools such as the WTO;
- Enforce U.S. trade agreements and combat unfair trade practices affecting U.S. manufacturers.
- Establish a task force within the Commerce Department’s Import Administration to pursue the elimination of foreign unfair trade practices;
- Reinforce efforts to promote the sale of American manufacturers in global markets.
- Update and reauthorize U.S. export control laws.

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Local small business owners talk with South Carolina’s Secretary of Commerce

On January 8, 2004, small business owners were invited to a discussion with Commerce Secretary Bob Faith as part of a statewide “Small Business Listening Tour.”

As the head of South Carolina’s official economic development agency, Commerce Secretary Faith knows that small business owners’ needs evolve over time, and therefore, so should the services that Commerce offers this vital constituency. With that in mind, Secretary Faith planned the statewide tour during which he has been meeting with small business owners and listening to their thoughts on how Commerce can better support their efforts.

LMC members in attendance included Sean McLernon of STEALTH Concealment Solutions, and Rebecca Ufkes of UEC Electronics who had the opportunity to join a small group of business owners for lunch with Secretary Faith.

The open forum session held at Charleston Southern University allowed small business owners to ask questions and voice their concerns to the Secretary. True to his word, he listened intently and made comments and suggestions where appropriate. During a small luncheon event, Secretary Faith listened to local business owners in a roundtable forum. Issues that were a common concern included the high costs of insurance and the need for higher education programs in Charleston.

Small business facts:

- Nationally, small businesses with fewer than 50 employees account for 94.5% of all employers
- South Carolina has more than 91,000 Employer Firms with less than 50 employees - that’s 95% of total Employer Firms (97,000)
- There are nearly 275 industrial firms in the Charleston-Berkeley-Dorchester area with fewer than 50 employees - 69% of total industrial facilities.

Additional comments, questions, or concerns can be directed to the Secretary and the Department of Commerce staff by emailing questions to comments@sccommerce.com, or contact Chuck Bundy, Small Business Ombudsmen, at 803-737-0440. You may find out more online at www.sccommerce.com.

Lowcountry Manufacturers Council
2003-2004 Board of Directors

Larry Debevec, Corning Inc.
Herb Ellis, Charleston Marine Containers Inc.
Marv Ervin, Coburg Dairy
Kerry Farmer, Alcoa Mt. Holly
Bill Finn, AstenJohnson
Ladd Hall, Nucor Steel
Jack B. Hoey, Coastal Glass Distributors
John Irion, SCMEP
Don Kassing, JW Aluminum
Mike Leatherwood, Leatherwood Electronics
Sean McLernon, STEALTH Concealment Solutions
Ron Paquette, Hubner Manufacturing
Mark Richards, The Richards Group
Joe Schady, Alpha Sheet Metal
David Smith, Bayer
Pete Taylor, Cummins Marine
Gene Walls, The Post and Courier
Rebecca Ufkes, UEC Electronics

The LMC Welcomes the Following New Members:

* Denotes Associate Member

Coronet North America

- * **Garfield Corporation**
- * **Gateway Supply**

LMC Guiding Beliefs for Public Policy Involvement

The Lowcountry Manufacturers Council promotes and pursues legislative goals that will enhance the present and future well-being of the coastal South Carolina region.

- Healthy communities exhibit economic vitality while wisely balancing the value of growth with quality of life and environmental considerations.
- A strong, profitable manufacturing sector sustains healthy communities by creating high-skill, highly-paid jobs, and by enabling the community to sell the value its people create across the region, the nation, and the world.
- Manufacturing diversifies a community’s economic base like no other sector can, by extending its reach into a broad range of industries and communities.



S.C. Secretary of Commerce
Robert Faith

Member Spotlight: STEALTH Concealment Solutions



STEALTH Concealment Solutions, Inc. was organized in 1992 to provide the telecommunications industry with a means to expand their infrastructure by offering antenna concealment. **STEALTH** designs, engineers and fabricates antenna concealment screening systems for the entire wireless industry. Their architecturally sound and aesthetically pleasing concealment systems are specifically designed to assist in receiving zoning and building owner approvals without reducing the system's RF performance.

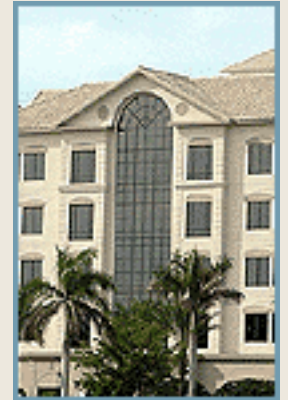
STEALTH's solutions to antenna concealments include, but are not limited to: rooftops, flagpoles, light poles, bell and clock towers, signs, water towers, silos, crosses, chimneys, louvers, trees, and side mounted boxes. **STEALTH** has proven to be the industry leader in antenna concealment by offering a full range of services from photo conceptals to inspection/maintenance programs for antenna concealment products. Their photo conceptals can assist in faster planning and zoning board and architectural review board approvals, allowing carriers to earn revenue faster from a site.

Whether you are working on a new antenna concealment site or have the need for retrofit services, **STEALTH Concealment Solutions, Inc.** has the solution. With offices across the United States and overseas, they can help get your site online quickly. As more people demand mobile communications, wireless companies are finding the need for camouflaging, concealing or "**STEALTH-ing**" antennas at their sites.

As a manufacturer in the telecommunications industry, **STEALTH** has designed many standard products and even custom applications. They use their innovative StealthSkin™ V materials and design methods to balance several criteria: cost-effectiveness, structural integrity, RF transparency, and cosmetic appeal. The majority of **STEALTH's** designs employ three major material components: Steel, FRP (fiberglass), and our exclusive StealthSkin™ V panels.

STEALTH's growing business and innovative methods continue to attract customers as well as media attention. Locally, STEALTH Concealment Solutions has been featured in the Post and Courier, the Charleston Regional Business Journal and on the local news. Time Magazine has also mentioned STEALTH in their Business online reviews. STEALTH'S products are getting noticed.

To learn more about STEALTH Concealment Solutions, contact Sean McLernon, President and COO, at (843) 207-8000.



LMC Board of Directors Welcomes New Members and Announces Change

Two new members were named to the LMC Board of Directors at the January meeting. Rebecca Ufkes of UEC Electronics in Hanahan has accepted a seat, as well as Sean McLernon of STEALTH Concealment Solutions of North Charleston. Both Ms. Ufkes and Mr. McLernon have been active members of the LMC prior to joining the Board, and they bring great energy and new insights to the organization. Welcome!

Also at the January meeting, a change in leadership was announced. Mr. Don Kassing of JW Aluminium resigned as Chair-Elect of the Board due to time constraints brought on by recent successes and the growth of his business. Mr. Kassing will continue to serve on the Board. Mr. Mark Richards of The Richards Group has been named the new Chair-Elect for the 2003-04 term, and will therefore serve as Chairman of the LMC Board of Directors for the 2004-05 term. Mr. Richards is an entrepreneur who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. Mr. Richards has served on the Board for several years.

TALKIN' TRASH

The LMC is planning a "Waste Management Awareness" campaign scheduled for the month of June 2004. Learn how to save money, manage your waste effectively & efficiently, maintain high environmental standards and receive a discount from participating service providers. Stay tuned for more details.

Help us name the program! Do you have an idea for a catchy slogan or phrase? Email it to jrobson@charlestonchamber.org for a chance to receive additional recognition for your company.

Gibson & Associates Announces New LMC Insurance Benefit Options

Effective February 1, 2004, there will be six new exciting benefit options for LMC members. We have a wide variety of new benefits to choose from including a low-cost, low-benefit plan that could save employers up to 50% on their health insurance costs! All plans continue to offer dual options for all employees.

At renewal, all existing LMC member companies will be required to switch to one of the new plans. We will contact you as you approach renewal to present all available options.

If you would like additional information on these new plans, please contact David Gibson at 800-733-3391.





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www.lmcsc.org

Serving Manufacturers in the Lowcountry and throughout South Carolina

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, January 27
Manufacturers Roundtable
6:00 p.m., North Towne Grille & Seafood

Thursday, February 12
Annual Winter Golf Classic
8:00 a.m., Kiawah Island Resort - Turtle Point

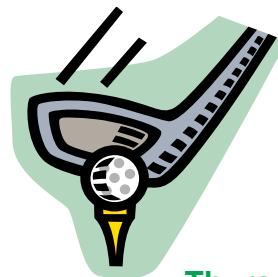
Thursday, February 19
Education & Training Committee Meeting
8:30 a.m., Trident One-Stop Career Center

Thursday, February 26
UEC Electronics Plant Tour
8:30 a.m., UEC Electronics

Thursday, March 11
Board of Directors Meeting
7:30 a.m., AstenJohnson

Tuesday, March 30
Manufacturers Roundtable
6:00 p.m., North Towne Grille & Seafood

Thursday, April 22
Member Appreciation Social Event
5:00 p.m., Woodlands Resort & Inn



2004 Annual Winter Golf Classic

Thursday, February 12, 2004
Noon Shotgun Start
Kiawah Island Golf Resort - Turtle Point
Teams of Four - \$800

Food, fun, drinks and prizes for all!
Contact Jennifer Robson at 843-805-3010 to
register or for more information.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

The Lowcountry Manufacturers Council is a local nonprofit organization, comprised of and representing the needs of the greater Charleston manufacturing community, as well as members throughout South Carolina. In each issue of *Network News*, we will print announcements about LMC member companies. Advertising opportunities are also available. To include your news, learn more about the LMC, or inquire about advertising, contact Jennifer Robson at (843) 805-3010, email contactus@lmcsc.org, or visit the LMC online at www.lmcsc.org.

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