

**N.E.W. Manufacturing Alliance**  
**General Membership Meeting Minutes**  
March 11, 2009  
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

**Present:** John Davis, Mike Nowak, Paul Rauscher, Mike Thomas, Ron Buchinger, Tom Verboncourer, John West, Karen Diedrich, Jeanne Geib, Dave Goblisch, Jim Golembeski, Joe Guell, Bob Lackie, Chris Linn, Kim Berg, Ted Penn, Jeff Pallini, Maribeth Zeller, Dave Scidmore, Dennis Russell, John Holzberger, Rick Recktenwald, Todd Swanson, Mike Troyer, Mike Daniels, Mike Langan, Joe Cerniglia, Tom Lowry, Jeff Gahnz, Jack Ignatowski, Chris Moss, Scott Meek, Bobbi Miller and Ann Franz

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

John Davis welcomed attendees to the meeting and guests introduced themselves.

**2. Featured Presenters: Mike Daniels, President and COO of Nicolet National Bank  
Mike Langan, Senior Vice-President of M & I Bank**

Mr. Daniels and Mr. Langan presented on the current economic challenges facing the country and how manufacturers can work with their lending institutions.

Mr. Langan recommended manufacturers meet with their banker a minimum of four times a year. He believes meeting in person is better than email. Both presenters stressed the importance of developing a relationship with a bank. Mr. Daniels shared that it is important for manufacturers to be transparent with their banker. Mr. Langan stressed that banking is still a people business. When a manufacturer needs a loan, the prior relationship with the bank will have an impact in securing the loan. The manufacturers' balance sheet is also very important in securing a loan. It is important to keep an eye on accounts receivables, so the manufacturer doesn't become a bank for its customers.

In obtaining a loan on equipment or real estate, it's important to have some of your own cash towards the purchase. Equity investors are now expecting more in return from the manufacturer.

There is still a lot to understand about the stimulus package. Banks are trying to understand what benefits are available to manufacturers (i.e. accelerated depreciation, extended amortization).

Jeff Pallini asked, "What can manufacturers do to help their customers get loans?" Mr. Daniels stressed that if the customer's bank will not give them a loan, asking the manufacturer's bank for the loan most likely will not work. Why would a bank that they do not have a relationship with give them a loan, if their own bank will not give them a loan? Manufacturers can consider giving a letter of credit or buy back guarantee, but there are risks involved.

Mr. Langan shared a manufacturer's survey that found orders are down as well as releases are way down. The food and paper industry seem to be doing well. He doesn't believe we have hit bottom. One positive is that the savings rate is increasing and there is less debt. Wisconsin is doing better than many states, but he doesn't see hitting the bottom until 6-15 months from now. There will probably be inflationary pressure in 2010. Interest rates should stay flat this year and gradually increase in 2010.

Mr. Daniels's Power Point presentation is included with the minutes.

**3. Updates on task forces**

**Steering committee:**

John Davis reported that he held a strategic planning session with the chairs of the three task forces on March 4, 2009. The chairs are: Chris Linn-Communications, Shannon Niccum-K-12 Outreach/Training, and Ernie Remondini-Recruitment. The goals of the organization were discussed, along with establishing metrics to support if they are effective or not. The Steering committee will discuss the proposed goals at its next meeting. Once it is approved, an email will go out to the general membership with the revised goals. The committee is also discussing the adoption of having an Associate membership.

### **Recruitment:**

The task force is working on adding 25 new Alliance members, along with having 100% retention. If a member does not renew, Ernie Remondini or John Davis will contact them about continuing their membership.

The Manufacturing & Technology Career Fair will be held on May 6, 2009 at Fox Valley Technical College. Before the job fair, there will be presentations on the future of manufacturing and careers that will be in demand. After the presentations, there will be three breakout sessions on a variety of topics including, career speakers, career planning, interviewing skills, and how to use networking in obtaining your next job. The Alliance was asked to present at the 11:30 a.m. session.

Members are encouraged to purchase a booth for the career fair portion of the day from 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., regardless if they have open positions. The career fair will be marketed, so job seekers are aware that many of the employers will be discussing careers within their organization, not specifically new job openings. This event will be an opportunity to spotlight manufacturing in a positive light, reinforcing there are future employment opportunities in manufacturing in the New North.

### **Communications Task Force:**

The task force is working on enhancing the Alliance's website. The task force has narrowed down to two contact management systems and will be making a final decision by March 13, 2009. The new website will be funded by the RISE 2 grant.

In addition, the task force is working on hosting focus group sessions with technical college students who are enrolled in a manufacturing-related program at NWTC, FVTC and MPTC. The information learned from these sessions will be used in developing a marketing campaign.

### **K-12 Task Force:**

The task force is producing a portable K-12 assembly program. The goal is presenting 4 high school and 2 middle school assembly programs in the fall.

The task force is working on developing two career pathways in CNC Machining and Industrial Maintenance. Companies were asked to fill out a spreadsheet listing the occupations in each pathway, wage, skill sets needed, and level of difficulty in filling position and skill gaps. There were then two facilitated meetings held to develop a career pathway using the survey information.

Employers participating in the Industrial Maintenance career pathway: Aarrowcast, Coating Excellence International, Georgia Pacific, Little Rapids, Fosber America, Johnsonville and PCMC.

Employers participating in the CNC Machinist career pathway: Centerline Machining, Lindquist Machine, Velocity Machine, Robinson Metals, EMT International, Fox Valley Metal-Tech, PCMC, Innovative Machine, and World Class Manufacturing.

## **4. Conclusion**

The next quarterly General Membership meeting will be held **on Wednesday, June 17 starting at 2 p.m. at Fox Valley Technical College's Bordini Center in room 103.** After the meeting will be a networking reception.