

## News Release

### Rockford Area Aerospace Cluster Event Supplier Excellence Alliance "Briefing & Overview"

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**March 3, 2010**, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS - About 20 local aerospace companies listened to a presentation by the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) and the Supplier Excellence Alliance (SEA). The discussion centered on ways to grow your bottom-line by adhering to lean manufacturing and continuous improvement principles. SEA has a proven process, called the "Road Map", to improve performance, visibility and profitability. Eric Voyles, VP for National Business Development with the RAEDC said, "We are pleased to see such a great turnout. Our goal is to aid in sharing knowledge of efficiency improvement options with our local aerospace cluster firms. SEA is working to promote the acceleration of supply chain performance nation-wide while we are working to grow more productive and efficient companies here in the Rockford area, it is a great match." RAEDC hopes to get more companies from the Rockford area involved in SEA. There will be additional opportunities to learn about SEA in April and June of 2010.

Kimberly Hawkins, Outreach Director for SEA said, "SEA suppliers invest in building process management skills by using tested and proven methods. These methods prepare SEA suppliers to perform at a higher level for their customers which results in a greater value for the end user. The results SEA members tend to be an improved bottom-line and greatly expanded opportunities for new top-line business from existing and new customers.

Brian J Davis, Deputy Chief of Staff from U.S. Congressman Donald A. Manzullo's office welcomed attendees to the SEA briefing and overview. Mr. Davis talked about the importance of export sales and innovation in keeping Rockford's aerospace cluster healthy and growing. He spoke of how Congressman Manzullo had recently achieved results in both areas

Ronald J. Soave, Site Leader of Products and Programs with Aviation Systems, GE Aviation. Ron opened by sharing his personal experiences with supplier excellence and stressed the importance of understanding supply chains and selling value. He commented that in the future competition will be between supply-chains.

Spokes person for SEA, Kim Hawkins, introduced SEA, their history, main focus and benefits they offer to their members. From Energy Dynamics Inc. (EDI), Pat Bye, President of EDI, discussed the benefits he has seen from being involved with SEA and focused his discussion around the importance of business results such as increasing inventory turns, decreasing on-hand inventory and shortening the time from order to payment. Mr. Bye also extolled the value of increasing visibility to those around you, and the importance of collaborating with your peers and even your competitors. He offered up his knowledge of lean manufacturing and its use towards the implementation of the SEA Roadmap. Another focus of his discussion was tackling the "two big evils", inventory and scrap, while improving responsiveness and reliability.

Marzel Neckien , CEO, "W" Machine Works (WMW) then spoke discussing how WMW is taking his job shop to the next level by using state-of-the-art technology, lean manufacturing concepts and process improvement events. He shared with the group changes WMW has used to reevaluate their work and rework their systems to become more efficient. Marzel discussed the growing demands on the aerospace supplier industry and the ways that WMW is working towards remaining lean while still fulfilling their customer's needs. Mr. Neckien stated, "Because we began our lean journey before the "Great Recession" began, we never encountered it." Mr. Neckien claims that his company was able to continue to grow the number of customers it serves, its market share and profit-margin. Specific improvements high-lighted were improvements in cash flow and the net-working benefits he has seen from collaborating with SEA since joining. Mr Neickien encouraged the audience to join as well.

### **ABOUT THE RAEDC**

The primary role of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council is to enhance wealth creation in the Rockford Region by marketing the area and helping employers retain and create quality jobs. The RAEDC works closely with many partners to serve as a one-stop resource for clients, to improve the competitiveness of the region, and to engage the community in the work of economic development.

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