



EAMA RSP Hybrid Meeting Notes October 16, 2024

Welcome – EAMA RSP Director **Tony Benoit** started the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

EAMA RSP Chair Chris Jewell was away and unable to attend. EAMA RSP Vice Chair **Hannah Belmont** was unable to chair the meeting because she was presenting at the National Plastics Conference in Texas. Hannah was able to join the meeting via Zoom and noted that she has the chance to share the great work that EAMA RSP is doing with her peers and other industry leaders at the conference.

Tony congratulated Electric Boat on winning “The Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut,” bracket-style contest sponsored by CBIA.

Tony introduced new EAMA RSP member **Vicki Fry** – **Jeffco Fibres**.

Employer Instant Poll – The manufacturers in attendance were asked about employee celebrations held by their company and why they sponsor these events. See the results at right.

YMPI Advisory Meeting Report – **David Allard**

David shared the outcomes of the August 18th meeting at which EAMA RSP employer members served as an advisory board for the Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI). This meeting included a review of the existing YMPI model, program outcomes over the last several years, and a facilitated discussion to collect feedback on how employer expectations of the YMPI are being met and ideas for improvement.

Outcomes from the meeting were summarized into several themes. Employers would like the following: Increase employer engagement with the partner schools, build more robust training into CTE Pathways, strengthen the value of the YMPI credential that demonstrates student proficiency, and stress the importance of the employability skills embedded within YMPI.

Updates from Working Groups

Youth Pipeline – **Willie Barber, Electric Boat** – Willie reported that the working group is looking at ways for EAMA RSP employers to provide more support to the YMPI program by embedding themselves in YMPI schools and strengthening the program, and also how to help and support schools that want to grow and establish career pathways.

Instant Poll Results

Do you celebrate any of the following with your employees?
(Choose all that apply.) **15** manufacturers replied as follows:

- 14** Christmas / Other year-end holidays and observances
- 9** Employee work milestones: promotions, certifications or completion of training, employee of the month, work anniversaries, etc.
- 9** Other employee events (i.e., picnic, food-related events, cookoffs, etc.)
- 8** Other holidays (e.g., Halloween, Cinco de Mayo)
- 8** Employee birthdays / personal milestones (i.e., marriage, birth of child)

When asked WHY they have celebrations,
12 manufacturers responded:

- 12** Celebrations are an important element of our company culture
- 12** To improve employee morale
- 12** To sustain positive employee morale
- 10** To encourage employee interaction with management
- 6** We like to party

Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance – A Connecticut Regional Sector Partnership

Business 2 Business – **Dan Chaplin, Forge 41** – Dan encouraged manufacturing members to attend the EAMA RSP Networking Event on October 29. The event starts with an optional tour of SPIROL from 5:00-6:00 p.m. followed by networking and a tour of the Advanced Manufacturing & Technology Center at CT State – Quinebaug Valley from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Next Steps: If you are interested in hosting a small networking event/tour at your company please contact Dan Chaplin at forge41@outlook.com or Linda Riquier at lindariquier@hotmail.com.

Workforce & Outreach – In Jeff Dickey’s absence, **Tony Benoit** reported that at the September 11 meeting, three topics topped the discussion:

- The role that training and cross training plays in employee development.
- The importance of proper onboarding to enhance productivity and how it also helps with retention. It was noted that many staffing agencies have strong onboarding.
- The importance of good onboarding to create a culture of safety.

Tony asked the manufacturers in attendance if there would be any interest in a webinar on a topic related to safety, and there was strong interest from the EAMA RSP members present. It was suggested that a webinar with CT OSHA would be interesting and useful.

Next Steps: Based on the positive response from the members, EAMA RSP will investigate offering a safety webinar in 2025.

Plastics – **Hannah Belmont, Westminster Tool** – Hannah shared she will be reconvening a meeting with the plastics manufacturers in November to discuss ways to build off the existing plastics training curriculum offered by CT State – Quinebaug Valley as well as some digital training resources available.

Next Steps: Hannah will set up a meeting with interested companies. For more information, contact Hannah at hbelmont@westminstertool.com.

Director’s Report

Explore Manufacturing Expo at Dodd Stadium – **Tony Benoit** introduced **Francheska Cordero** from **Nordson EFD** who was among the 18 manufacturers that participated in the event on September 26. Francheska reported that over 900 middle and high school students attended the event, and that there was a great deal of engagement and interest from the students. She also commended the other manufacturers for the many hands-on activities they provided for the students and encouraged all EAMA RSP members to attend the event next year.

Employer Engagement in the MPI – Tony introduced **Michael Nogelo** from **EWIB** who reminded the members that the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) is demand driven and that classes are only scheduled when there is demand from employers to hire the graduates. He encouraged the employers to complete the form they received indicating their hiring projections for the next 3 to 6 months to determine if there is sufficient demand for additional MPI classes. There is a wait list of individuals who are looking to get into MPI training but there must be sufficient demand from employers looking to hire.

Based on the initial hiring demand survey results, a 7-week Introduction to Machine Operator class will begin at CT State – Quinebaug Valley on October 28. EWIB can add another cohort in early 2025 if demand warrants it. Training classes in Welding and Plastics can also be offered if there is sufficient demand.

Michael also spoke about funding needed to continue the MPI and thanked the 13 members who provided a letter of support for the \$3.6 million grant application to the federal Dept. of Commerce. He also thanked the 16 EAMA RSP support partners who submitted letters of support.

2025 Meeting Calendar – Tony shared the 2025 EAMA RSP meeting calendar which follows a slightly different cadence than 2024. Quarterly meetings of the full EAMA RSP will be held in hybrid fashion in March, June, September, and December. Placeholder dates have been included on the schedule to accommodate a single topic

meeting in August and an in-person Networking Event/Meeting in October. Members were encouraged to add the meeting dates to their calendars.

Updates on EAMA RSP Responsibilities & Initiatives

Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) – Carol LaBelle from EWIB reported that 28 MPI classes have occurred or been scheduled from July 1 through December 31 of this year, a slower pace than last year. She reminded the members that On-the-Job Training (OJT) funding is available when hiring an MPI graduate. She introduced **Jeff Martel and Joelle Garrett from their Business Services Team** to give an overview of the MPI OJT Program.

MPI OJT Program - Jeff Martel, Joelle Garrett – Business Services Team (BST)

MPI graduates provide a pool of trained talent who are ready to grow with your company. The MPI OJT Program allows EAMA RSP members to train graduates into the roles the company needs. Skills include: OSHA certification, blueprint reading, basic measurement and machine shop knowledge.

OJT provides a reimbursement of wages (50%-75% depending on company size) during the OJT. The length of the OJT is negotiable OJT (8-26 weeks; the average is 12-16 weeks) and is based on the position, skills gap, and funding availability.

The Business Services Team can refer candidate employees to EAMA RSP members. If you are interviewing candidates who may have recently completed an MPI training, contact BST to determine if a candidate may be eligible for OJT. An MPI OJT contract must be in place before the new employee begins working.

Next Steps: To learn more about the MPI OJT Program, contact the Jeff Martel - 860-428-1854, jeffrey.martel@ctstate.edu or Joelle Garrett - 860-961-6234, jgarrett@chamberECT.com

Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI) – David Allard from EWIB shared that a **YMPI Activity Catalog** has been added to the EWIB website that responds to EAMA RSP members' request for a menu of programs and activities and a single clearinghouse to promote opportunities related to developing the future workforce. He encouraged EAMA RSP members and support partners to review the website, add their programs and activities, and discover ways to get engaged with the YMPI. These can include member willingness to host a teacher for an externship or a student for an internship, interest in promoting recruitment events, opportunities for job shadowing, availability of company tours, and more.

Next Steps: Visit the YMPI Catalog [here](#). To add a program, complete a submission form [here](#).

Other

Partner Corner – Karen Bellnier – Mitchell College – Mitchell Hub provides online learning on professional skills and industry certifications. A wide variety of classes are available in Manufacturing, Technology, Operations, and Business categories. They also offer specialized courses in neurodiversity and professional skills. Their classes provide access, flexibility, and connection. Virtual and on-campus learner support is available. Courses can be taken by individuals self-paced or in scheduled cohorts of 10-20 people with support provided by industry mentors and meetings for discussion/networking. Incumbent Worker Training funds may be used to help offset training costs.

Next Steps: For more information contact Karen Bellnier at bellnier_k@mitchell.edu, 860-701-5415. View the full course catalog [here](#).

Cybersecurity Workshop – Linda Riquier – EAMA RSP has partnered with APEX CT to offer an in-person workshop on October 22 for companies exploring the cybersecurity requirements needed to become a DOD supplier. One of the highlights of the workshop will be a free resource that allows employers to do their own cybersecurity self-assessment regardless of their current level of cybersecurity (i.e., NIST SP 800-171 and -172 or CMMC 2.0).

Next EAMA RSP Hybrid meeting: Wednesday, December 18, 9:00-10:15 a.m.