

**SPECIALTY MANUFACTURING CLUSTER MINUTES**  
**APRIL 6, 2005**  
**at ALADDIN EQUIPMENT, INC.**

Clyde Nixon welcomed the attendees and Lindy Smith received a round of applause as our host.

Diane Andrews spoke about the funding for the new initiatives for all of the Clusters and that the deadline for funding proposals will be May 31, 2005. ED ROCKS 05 will be June 23, 2005 at Serendipity Country Club from 5:00-8:00 PM. There are three levels of sponsorships available and a flyer was passed out to the group.

Tony Dertouzos gave the update on the Capabilities Study initiative and said the task force will be putting together RFP's for marketing and implementation and data collection. The EDC funding will be used for the above to get the index moving. Tony explained once again that this is to inform manufacturers about all of the capabilities in Sarasota/ Manatee Counties.

John Clement spoke about LEAN Manufacturing and the LEAN Consortium that the EDC has implemented. The first meeting will be April 21, 2005 at the EDC office at 3:00. So far eight companies have signed up for the meeting to learn about LEAN practices. This initiative might have a funding request from EDC for the upcoming fiscal year.

The guest speaker for the afternoon was Allyson O'Connor from the Suncoast Workforce Board and her topic was 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Study Key Challenge Recommendations The Challenges are as follows:

*Challenge 1; Improve the Educational Performance of Suncoast K-12 Students*

*Challenge 2; Enhance the Quality of Career and Guidance Counseling*

*Challenge 3; Reduce Dropout Rates and raise Graduation Rates in Suncoast High Schools*

*Challenge 4; Align Education, Training and Career Preparation with Suncoast's Major Employers*

*Challenge 5; Increase and Improve Direct Interaction between Educators and the Business Community*

*Challenge 6; Promote and Support Suncoast Entrepreneurship*

*Challenge 7; Attract and retain Young Professionals as well as Pre-Retirement Baby Boomer Professionals to the Suncoast*

*Challenge 8; Brand the Suncoast as a Place where Creative Professionals of all ages are Valued and Supported*

Challenge 5 links business to education and a committee from SMC will be collaborating with SWB at a meeting later this month. SWB has a grant from Verizon and they will be purchasing LCD monitors for classrooms in Sarasota County. Allyson also said that the

first Technical High School will be built in the fall of 2007. It will be for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10 grades.

Lindy Smith urged more groups to collaborate on education so more can be achieved if everyone communicates with each other. The business community must join together to accomplish these tasks.

Next meeting date will be May 19, 2005 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at PPI Technologies.