



Specialty Manufacturing Cluster Minutes, February 22, 2005

Peter Straw welcomed the attendees and Curt Singleton was thanked for hosting the meeting at the Sarasota Association of Realtors office.

Diane Andrews spoke about the move to the new EDC offices at Live Oak Corporate Center on February 17, 2005 and that there were many projects for expansions and relocations that staff was working on.

Peter Straw spoke about the Capabilities Index Survey that was given out at the Sun Coast Industry Expo and was mailed to SAMA members to fax back to SAMA at 923-0577. The EDC staff will be compiling them for the next Capabilities Sub Group meeting.

John Clement, COO of Gemesis Corporation gave a presentation on LEAN Manufacturing which he said can apply to anything in life and to any industry. LEAN is not about cutting jobs, it is not a quick fix and solutions are not easy. It is a way of thinking and optimization. It can and should be a fun and powerful tool which will enhance a company's bottom line. There is a LEAN toolbox in which you can measure tangible results. John wants to form a LEAN consortium in Southwest Florida and will work with SAMA and EDC to get companies involved. John suggested anyone interested should call Brian Cartland at the EDC 309-1200 ext 202 for more information.

Brian Cartland reminded the attendees about the SATOP program (Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program) from NASA. He gave several examples of companies that have used the program successfully and one was Apollo Sunguard from Sarasota.

Nina Powers from Sustainable Sarasota spoke about E-Fest which will be held over Memorial Day Weekend at the Van Wezel and hoped manufacturers would want to exhibit products and have booths. For more information, call Nina at 861-5652.

Ron Ruess from Gulfcoast Business Finance, Inc. spoke to the group about SBA 504 Loan Program. He said it is the best choice for small business finance. He talked about the terms, typical financing structure, eligibility requirements and transaction costs. There were several questions from the audience and for more information, call Ron at 727-895-2504.

Next on the agenda were measurable objectives for the three new strategies for SMC. The discussion was opened to the group at large as opposed to breaking into smaller groups. The Strategies and Measurables suggested are as follows:

Developing Existing Local Business

1. Capabilities Index
2. Support Workforce Housing under Business Climate workgroup. Assist with employee questionnaire distribution to manufacturers.
3. Incentives need to be the same for existing business as those that are offered to relocations
4. Communicate with FMA on machinery taxes
5. Create a Speaker's Bureau from SMC and put together talking points about manufacturing.

Attracting a new Manufacturing Industry

1. Have a yearly measure of number of new manufacturers in an industry segment.
2. Assist with EDC and County officials for new manufacturers' site visits.

Promote Technical Education in Local Schools

1. Align with the Team Challenges from the Suncoast Workforce Board
2. Support FL ATE work in middle schools
3. Set up tours of manufacturing companies for middle schools.
4. Technical School, Make it Happen!
5. Continue awareness program of manufacturing in the County.
6. Secure grants to support middle school tours.

Next meeting will be April 6, 2005 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Aladdin Equipment Company.