



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

TREASURER SHAWN T. WOODEN

TREASURER WOODEN PRAISES MANUFACTURING PIPELINE INITIATIVE, EASTERN CT WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD COLLABORATION BRIDGING THE REGION'S WORKFORCE GAP

As a New State Economic Report Points to Connecticut's Aging Workforce & Increased Hiring Needs in Manufacturing Sector; Treasurer Meets with Sound Manufacturing, Inc. & Workforce Partners to Discuss Manufacturing Pipeline Solutions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OLD SAYBROOK, CT—Today, State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden joined leaders from the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board and the Workforce Alliance at Sound Manufacturing, Inc. in Old Saybrook to advance Connecticut's manufacturing workforce needs and the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, a regional partnership resulting in more than 1,400 job placements. In response to July's Connecticut Economic Digest, which indicates a growing need for workers in manufacturing, Treasurer Wooden called on business leaders and workforce investment partners to discuss workforce investment opportunities and economic empowerment for Connecticut's under- and unemployed.

With more than 35% of the state's manufacturing workforce over the age of 54, manufacturing will be among the hardest hit sectors by Connecticut's aging workforce. Knowing these impending labor shortfalls, the state's economic report underscores the importance of having an adequate pipeline "to help train incoming workers to replace those who will eventually retire."

In 2015, in response to an increased need for skilled workers in the Groton-New London area, local manufacturing employers, area schools, and the workforce investment board launched the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI.) Over the past three years, MPI has become a nationally recognized leader for their demand-driven model and in that time, Sound Manufacturing has hired 14 program graduates, including two female welders—the first ever in the company.

"Workforce development is essential to growing Connecticut's economy," said State Treasurer Shawn Wooden. "By investing in the right priorities and fostering more private-

public partnerships like the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative in Eastern Connecticut, we can both grow our skilled workforce and the economic security of more Connecticut families, while also meeting the needs of more employers that are proud to call Connecticut home.”

“The MPI program has enabled Sound Manufacturing to grow our business,” said Kelli-Marie Vallieres, President and CEO of Sound Manufacturing, Inc. “The program’s demand-drive approach has successfully provided us with a reliable source of trained and motivated people looking for a long-term career. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“The MPI has proven its capability to raise the baseline of our labor force’s competencies in skills aligned to the hiring needs of employers,” said Mark Hill, Chief Operating Officer of the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB.) “As a result, the program has placed more than 1,400 individuals in jobs in the past three years, a considerably higher number than anticipated. EWIB is thankful to our team of thirty stakeholders for producing such results as well as the strong support and advocacy from Treasurer Wooden and other leaders in the State of Connecticut.”

Bill Villano, President and CEO of the Workforce Alliance added, “we see this as an opportunity to address a critical workforce need by bringing to scale an extremely successful training program developed by the Eastern Workforce Board.”

Treasurer Wooden serves as an ex officio Board Member of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA), which awarded a \$500,000 grant to the Workforce Development Council earlier this year in February, for workforce training and support across Connecticut’s five Workforce Development Boards, including the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board.

About Sound Manufacturing, Inc.

Located in Old Saybrook, CT, Sound Manufacturing, Inc, is a woman-owned business that employs more than 80 workers fabricating precision sheet metal for various applications, such as industrial machinery, security, lighting, and telecommunications including landscaping equipment under the brand name Monster power equipment. With more than 30 years’ of experience and growth in the high quality fabrication sector, Sound Manufacturing, Inc. is dedicated to investing in the latest machining technology and the continuous learning and development of their employees.

About the Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

Launched in 2016, the Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) is a nationally recognized, award-winning workforce development program created and managed by the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) in partnership with more than 30

other state and regional stakeholders. The program has consistently achieved a 92% job placement rate amongst its training program graduates since its inception in 2016.

About the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board

The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) is a non-profit agency mandated through the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The EWIB oversees a network of workforce-related programs funded from a variety of sources including the operations of the region's American Job Centers. EWIB is governed by a Board of Directors, which evaluates the regional workforce investment system. The private sector majority Board is comprised of representatives from regional businesses, state agencies, organized labor, and local educational institutions. EWIB works to identify the changing needs among employers and workers in its 41-town service delivery area and develops a strategic consensus among community leaders to align training programs to meet the needs of local employers in a manner that keeps Eastern Connecticut at the forefront of industry and technology.

About the Workforce Alliance

Workforce Alliance is the policy and oversight organization responsible for creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce in South Central CT. Board members include business owners, local elected officials and community leaders in order to meet changing local needs and shifting national economic and workforce trends. In the last year alone, Workforce Alliance and American Job Centers in New Haven, Meriden, Hamden and Middletown, served about 15,000 people and assisted in placing job seekers into full-time, part-time and per diem positions in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, logistics, information technology, hospitality, retail and more. For more information visit workforcealliance.biz

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