

Florida's Manufacturers & Educators Receive Special Recognition at 9th Annual Manufacturer Summit

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Manufacturers and educators committed to promote, educate, and train Florida's high-tech workforce will receive special recognition at the 9th Annual Manufacturers Association of Florida Manufacturers Summit in Orlando, FL.

Manufacturers Association of Florida, Manufacturers (MAF) Summit. The awards will be presented on Dec. 6, during the president's banquet at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Orlando, Fla., by FLATE (Florida Advanced Technological Education Center), the National Science Foundation (NSF) regional center of excellence for manufacturing located at Hillsborough Community College (HCC) in Brandon. Marilyn Barger, Ph.D., principal investigator and executive director of FLATE says "the awards stand as a testament to Florida's high-tech workforce." They also "serve as an effective vehicle in recognizing outstanding educators and industry professionals who have made significant strides in training the next generation of high-skilled workers in Florida" Barger said.

Steve Portz will receive the 2012 Secondary Educator-of-the-Year award. Portz who is an instructor for engineering technology at Space Coast High School has been teaching engineering technology for the last 25 years. Portz is also the co-founder and lead instructor of the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Aerospace and Manufacturing) Academy at Space Coast High School. Portz played a leading role in co-writing the 2007 Florida Succeed Grant that led to the establishment of an SLC academy. He has also hosted several industrial lecture series and offered summer camps with advanced topics in injection molding and composites, and instituted SolidWorks training program for the CSWA achieving a significant pass rate.

At the post-secondary level, Adrienne Gould-Choquette, faculty and program director of engineering technology at State College of Florida (SCF) in Bradenton, FL, will receive the Manufacturing Post-Secondary Educator of the Year award. Choquette has nurtured the engineering program since 2009, and has been instrumental in launching specialized courses in alternative energy, electronics and digital design. She also developed over 15 courses that include SolidWorks, Industrial Safety, Quality, Manufacturing processes and Solar Energy. At the state level she introduced several new courses including off-the-grid, nanotechnology, sustainability, building envelope science, and biofuels.

Indeed, Choquette has served as a great inspiration in persuading students like Andrew Sink to earn a degree in engineering technology. She helped Sink, a current ET student at SCF find a job at a local manufacturing company, and "contributed immensely" to his "personal, professional, and academic growth." Choquette is a member of the State of Florida Articulation Coordinating Committee for Engineering, and has been a faculty mentor for the FLATE-led Iberian partnership for technician excellence initiative for the last two years.

On the industry side of the continuum, Peter Buczynsky, president & co-founder of Pharmaworks, Inc. in Odessa, FL, will receive the Industry Distinguished Service award. Over the past few years, Buczynsky has coached a FIRST robotics team, and has hosted several industry tours for student to increase technical interest and awareness. Buczynsky currently serves as a Pasco County Economic Development Council (PEDC) board member, and is the Chair of the PEDC Economic Growth Task Force. He is also a member River Ridge High School's engineering academy advisory board, and is part of the Pasco-Hernando

Community College drafting and design advisory committee. Rob Aguis, director for community, career and technical education in Pasco County says “Bucznsky has been very influential in establishing and ensuring progress of career academies, STEM education and robotics throughout Pasco County.” Buczynsky is also a board member of the CTEF of the Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute Workforce and Education Board, and has served as an advisory council member for the Banner Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

2012 marks the sixth year of the FLATE awards. Since the implementation of the awards program in 2006, FLATE has recognized 12 educators in secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, and six industry partners. For more information on the FLATE awards, contact Dr. Marilyn Barger, executive director of FLATE at barger@fl-ate.org/813.259.6578.

FLATE is a National Science Foundation Regional Center of Excellence, committed to ensuring Florida has a well prepared workforce for advanced and emerging technologies. Created in 2004, FLATE is one of 46 Advanced Technological Education Centers in the United States funded by the National Science Foundation focused on improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and training to meet the needs of American advanced technology industries. For more information visit www.fl-ate.org.

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