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Seminar to tackle work-force challenges in manufacturing sector

Chris Murphy wants everyone to know he's friendly to business.

So on Monday, the Democratic congressman from the 5th District will lead a seminar on work-force challenges in the manufacturing sector at Central Connecticut State University's Institute for Technology and Business Development in New Britain.

Murphy has put together an impressive panel of employers, educators, work-force board services and organized labor to tackle manufacturing work-force development issues in Central Connecticut. He wants participants to come away with a better understanding of manufacturing's role in Central Connecticut, as well as whom to contact to get work-force needs met.

The roster of speakers reads like an area Who's Who in Business. New Britain native John Tirinzonie will kick off the event with a brief analysis of the status of manufacturing in the state. Tirinzonie, director of job development for the state Department of Labor, can talk in terms most of us understand. The first half of the discussion will focus on challenges manufacturers are likely to face. Bill Millerick, president of the New Britain Chamber of Commerce, will moderate the event.

In addition to Murphy, panelists include Tom Lorenzetti, ITBD's manager of business development; Zdzislaw Kremens, dean of CCSU's School of Engineering and Technology; Tom Phillips, president and CEO, Capital Workforce Partners; Robert Axon, principal, W.F. Kaynor Technical High School; John Harrity, GrowJobsCT; Gene McGreevy, vice president of operations, International Creative Data Industries, Inc.; Susanne Spargo, vice president, human resources, Mott Corp.; and Donna Lasher, vice president, Okay Industries.

(By the way, in my article Monday on Bill Millerick's 10th anniversary as president of the New Britain Chamber of Commerce I reported the number of Okay employees at 75. The figure

is probably two years old. Okay's owner, Greg Howey corrected me. The company now has 127 full-time employees.)

In fact, Okay could probably host its own panel on hiring. The little company that could manufactures precision metal stampings and assemblies for the medical, surgical, ordnance, electronic and commercial markets.

Several organizations are helping companies like Okay find qualified high-tech, high-skilled workers. The Connecticut Business & Industry Association in partnership with the state Department of Education and the Connecticut Community

Colleges' Regional Center for Next Generation Manufacturing has released a Career Pathways Engineering Guide and DVD to prepare students for engineering careers. The guide and DVD focus on building student interest in engineering, expanding their knowledge of educational requirements and career opportunities, and illustrate how engineering transforms and enriches how we live. The guide and DVD can be used in middle schools and high schools and provide information on engineering specialties, salary ranges and engineering programs in Connecticut education institutions, as well as work-based learning lessons for students.

They get an overview of engineering careers available in Connecticut and where they can learn skills they need for these jobs.

The DVD is available at www.cbia.com. It will also be available at a three-day symposium, Manufacture Your Future: Career Expo, June 3 to 5, at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford.

The seminar on work-force challenges in the manufacturing sector runs from 9 to 11 a.m. Monday at ITBD, 185 Main St. If you want to attend, call Rob Michalik at (860) 223-8412 or e-mail him at Robert.Michalik@mail.house.gov.



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