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Forum addresses IT needs of West Virginia industries

"There is only one economy," U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller declared at the second West Virginia Forum on Technology and Innovation at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

The Senator's statement set the right mood at the April 23 forum, which was designed to explore ways of drawing the State's core industries into the New Economy. The forum series promotes awareness, long-term visions and strategies that will allow West Virginia to meet the challenges of a technology-driven, global society.

The WVU forum provided participants with the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Information Technology arena. These professionals shared their expertise in how technological support services and products can be adapted for industry.

In his welcoming address, WVU President David C. Hardesty, Jr. said that West Virginia cannot wait to become more comfortable with technology.

"Almost overnight, but with a lot of hard work, the technology revolution has touched the economy of Morgantown and the I-79 corridor, but it will have to reach other regions in the State. And, each region will have different needs and different strengths upon which to build.

Toyota's latest investment brings 200 more jobs to West Virginia

On January 26, Toyota Motor North America President Tag Taguchi announced plans to add a new production line and 200 employees at the plant. U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller, who has played a vital and ongoing role in encouraging Toyota's investment in West Virginia, noted how far the Buffalo facility has come in a relatively short time.

"Driving there for the announcement, I was reminded of walking around in the rain and mud, not so very many years ago, trying to imagine if



Senator Rockefeller addresses audience at West Virginia University.

"We must expand the capacity for broadband communications," Hardesty added. "If it is expanded, education, jobs and the New Economy technologies can be transported to former coal towns as easily as coal was transported from them on the railroad in the old economy."

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this site might have the potential to become an important link in Toyota's global supply chain," the Senator said. "Little did I know then what incredible seeds we were planting."

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Buffalo plant took place in 1996. Original plans called for 300 employees to produce engines only, but by January 1998, Toyota decided to double the engine-production work force. In September 1998, the company upped the ante with an automatic transmission facility and another 200 employees.

The latest expansion not only will provide the Buffalo facility with more jobs, but it also will (continued on page 3)

Taking his turn at the podium, Senator Rockefeller told those assembled that the last year has demonstrated that neither high-technology businesses nor heavy industries can guarantee economic security by themselves.

"Manufacturing and production must and will continue to provide a vital economic foundation for this State, and good-paying jobs for thousands of West Virginians. But those industries, while maintaining their traditional role as important employers and economic leaders, have to explore and master the nontraditional strategies and technologies that will keep them competitive.

"We're not so much interested in creating a brand-new economy as we are in upgrading the existing economy," the Senator continued. "It's like upgrading your computer software. Only instead of moving from Windows 95 to Windows 2000, we want to upgrade from Steel 95 to Steel 2000—and start planning for Steel 2005."



Forum panel members (from left) included Patrick B. Stewart, Linda Wellings, Phillip Biedler, and Marshall Moore.

President Hardesty then introduced Dr. Bonnie Morris, Associate Professor of the College of Business and Economics at WVU. She presented the results of a survey on Information Technology use and needs in West Virginia.

Among other things, the survey indicated that 60 percent of the respondents already use IT for production scheduling, order tracking and marketing. Another 15 to 20 percent plan to implement these programs. On the other hand, survey

respondents indicated that they are not convinced that IT will improve their competitive advantage. They also are worried about work force availability, training and retraining.

However, panelists in the forum's morning discussion may have helped to put some of those concerns to rest.

Marshall Moore, Technology Leader of GE Specialty Chemicals, discussed the company's successful use of digital technologies in the three key elements of the supply chain: buy, make and sell. "It is all about making your collaboration with the customer more convenient and more productive," he said.

Patrick B. Stewart, President and Chief Executive Officer of MetalSite.Net, detailed how his company markets steel and hardwoods over the Internet. Doctoral candidate Philip Biedler, who is pursuing a degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering at WVU, talked about his research into new technologies and traditional industries.

Addressing the subject of IT support for manufacturing processes was Linda Wellings, President of MPL Corporation. She told the audience that it is vital for industries to partner with IT companies.

"Even though costs may seem high, the benefits of future savings and capability win out in the long run," she said.

Also making the case for industry-IT partnership was Roger K. Mowen of Eastman Chemical Company. He filled in for Eastman Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Earnest Deavenport, who could not attend the forum.

Eastman has developed a two-pronged business strategy around e-business to transform its portfolio and to reduce costs. Its initiatives include digitized processes, automated transactions and Web investments.

Mowen urged the audience to be proactive when it comes to Information Technology.

"There's no room for hesitancy," Mowen said. "E-business isn't the millennial version of the mood ring. It isn't an electronic pet rock. It isn't some fad you can sit back and watch pass. You have to jump in—and the sooner, the better."

Of course, industries should not rush in blindly. "As too many extinct IT companies can tell you, when you go for broke, sometimes that's exactly what you get," he said.

"E-business is less about technology and more about serving customers. Eastman's core competency isn't technology. Our core competency is providing customers with new products and services.

"The point is that e-business is still business," Mowen said. "And business is still about customers."

After a break for lunch, the forum continued with exhibits and networking opportunities. An afternoon panel discussion on "Tools for Positioning Core Industries in the New Economy" featured Bart Christner of Cambridge Technology Partners and Dr. Robert L. Moore of Gensym Corporation.

Information on incentives, opportunities and action plans was offered by David Warner of the West Virginia Economic Development Authority, Lou Sousa of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Industrial Technologies and Dr. John Hewes of the Advanced Technology Program.

In summing up his thoughts on the forum, Senator Rockefeller acknowledged to participants that change is hard.

"But it's liberating as well, and I think any force that unleashes the potential I felt today is good for you and good for West Virginia.

"We're not going to reinvent our economy overnight, or achieve the kind of growth we're after in a quarter or a year. But we can do it, and with our traditional industries in many senses leading the way, we will do it."

Toyota's latest investment (continued from page 1)

enhance the plant's status both within and outside the company. Workers will manufacture engines and transmissions for the RX 300 sport utility vehicle, a member of Toyota's prestigious Lexus line. They also will produce similar components for the Matrix, a new subcompact sedan-SUV hybrid.

"In Toyota's culture, the Lexus has almost a sacred quality," Senator Rockefeller said. "This is an extraordinary decision."

President Taguchi reinforced the latter sentiment. "Bringing Lexus power train production to West Virginia shows the confidence Toyota has in the outstanding team members at this plant," he said. "It also says West Virginia is a great place to do business."

To date, Toyota has put \$950 million into its West Virginia operation, resulting in 1,000 well-paying and highly-skilled jobs. "That makes it the largest industrial investment in the last 50 years in our State," the Senator said.

And the credit for that, he added, goes to the employees of the Buffalo plant themselves.

"Toyota managers and Toyota workers are proving the truth of something I have been telling people for a long time: We have a world-class work force here in West Virginia. Our only problem was finding enough opportunities to demonstrate that. Toyota provided an opportunity, and the workers here in Buffalo seized it.

"This is the fastest-expanding plant in all of Toyota's history. It is the first plant outside Japan to make engines for the Lexus luxury line. This is a world-class success story, and it proves that we have world-class economic resources here in West Virginia," Senator Rockefeller concluded.



Senator Rockefeller and Governor Bob Wise tour Toyota's plant in Buffalo.

IT helps GE to meet challenges of the new millennium

In 1892, a merger between Thomas Edison's General Electric Company and the Thomson-Houston Electric Company created what we know today simply as "GE."

With net earnings of \$12.7 billion in the year 2000, this diversified technology and manufacturing giant operates in more than 100 countries. A short list of its divisions includes aircraft engines, appliances, lighting, medical systems, real estate, transportation systems and the NBC broadcast network. In West Virginia, the company runs the Morgantown-based GE Specialty Chemicals, Inc., and the GE Plastics Washington Site, near Parkersburg.

GE has continued its longstanding tradition of cutting-edge innovation in recent years by embracing Internet technology. In October 2000, for example, GE Specialty Chemicals formed a joint venture with Albemarle Corporation and Cytec Industries Inc., to launch PolymerAdditives.com. This venture gives customers a faster, more efficient way of purchasing complementary, brand-name products and services directly from trusted suppliers of specialty chemicals and polymers.

PolymerAdditives.com and other GE initiatives in the Information Technology arena address the three key elements of the supply chain: buy, make and sell.

"On the buy side, utilization of Web-based resources such as e-auctions creates new, real-time competition among suppliers," explained Marshall Moore, technology leader for GE Specialty Chemicals. "The global reach of the Internet then allows for participation of suppliers from across the globe. The increased competition drives down costs of raw materials and services."

"Make" encompasses more than



Marshall Moore,
Technology Leader,
GE Specialty Chemicals

just the manufacturing of products, he added. "Application of digital technology has been taken beyond monitoring processes from control rooms and logging information into databases. Now, the digitization strategy means taking all of that data and making it available through the Web in a way that it drives real-time decisions.

"Monitoring material usage on a daily basis rather than monthly identifies opportunities for improved efficiency. Digitization also means taking out manual processes wherever possible."

The "sell" aspect involves reaching new customers and providing order entry, services and customer support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

"The success of GE's Web-based businesses is based on making them collaborative, not just static sources of information," Moore said. "In addition, the application of digital technology to diagnose and service problems in the field from remote locations has provided a major boost in our ability to support our customers."

He pointed out that for established industries, it is important to build upon the foundation that already has been laid when moving into e-business.

"Being a traditional company with a known brand name is a head start to success in an e-business initiative. In any industry, failure to pursue an effective e-business strategy will mean lost opportunities for growth," Moore concluded.



Gale Given, President, Verizon West Virginia and Kentucky, Inc.

Gale Given tapped for DRWV board

The Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation has elected Gale Y. Given of Teays Valley to its Board of Directors.

Given is State President of Verizon West Virginia, Inc. and Verizon Kentucky, Inc. She oversees Verizon's operations, external affairs, regulatory issues and financial matters in both states.

"I'm a native of West Virginia who thinks our state has a lot to offer, and I've always appreciated the Discover the Real West Virginia

Foundation's positive approach to telling that story," she said. "I'm excited to be a part of DRWV now and to lend whatever help I can to the cause."

Originally from Point Pleasant, Given holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in business administration from Marshall University. Her career started in 1979 at C&P Telephone of West Virginia, where she worked in the Charleston

central office engineering organization.

Given went to Bell Communications Research, a branch of the regional Bell operating companies, in 1987. She assisted the telecommunications industry in resolving national issues related to carrier interconnection.

In 1990, she returned to C&P Telephone of West Virginia (later Bell Atlantic) as part of the regulatory organization. Prior to joining Verizon, she served as executive director/regulatory for Bell Atlantic-West Virginia, Inc.

In addition to the DRWV Foundation, Given's professional affiliations include the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Branch Banking and Trust Advisory Board, the Marshall University Advisory Board, the Children's Home Society and the Business and Industrial Development Corp.

She believes West Virginia's best asset in terms of economic development is attitude.

"For a long time, it seemed like we saw our glass as being half empty," she said. "I think we're turning the corner on that. There seems to be a growing realization that we have a good foundation that we can—and will—build on."

Project Harvest helps State businesses plant a firm foothold in Asia

Under the leadership of U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller, the fourth "Project Harvest" trade mission to Japan will promote economic development opportunities for West Virginia and its citizens.

The mission, sponsored by the Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation, will run from June 30 through July 8. Several corporate executives

will participate in the mission to market their products. Members of the Foundation's Board of Directors will also accompany Senator Rockefeller on the trip, acting as Ambassadors for the Mountain State's businesses, work force and products.

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Senator Rockefeller has worked for more than two decades to develop contacts and build relationships with the Asian business community. During the trip, he will help West Virginia manufacturers as they promote their products and services. In addition, Senator Rockefeller will meet with numerous companies that have an

interest in North American expansion. He will also hold meetings with Toyota Suppliers and representatives from Japanese aerospace companies to discuss visits to the State this fall.

"West Virginia is a very good deal for companies that want to locate in North America," he said. "Manufacturing has been a mainstay of our State's economy, and it will continue to play a big role.

By relentlessly pursuing economic opportunities for our State's businesses, we can shore up and support our manufacturing community."

Currently, State exporters ship goods valued at \$2.2 billion to 118 foreign countries. Of those exports, 34 percent go to Asia.

"Now that we have our foot firmly in the door, we must continue to explore the potential of global markets," he said. "It's not the people next door we need to compete with, it's the people in Singapore and Indonesia."



Project Harvest 2011

For more information on these articles and other projects please contact:

DRWV Foundation

Sara Dearing
Executive Director
405 Capitol Street, Suite 512
Charleston, West Virginia 25301
Phone: (304) 345-0700
Fax: (304) 345-1779
Email: sdearing@drwvfoundation.org
<http://www.drwvfoundation.org>

Office of Senator Rockefeller

Terri J. Giles
Director, Economic Development
531 Senate Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6472
Fax: (202) 228-4656
Email: Terri_Giles@rockefeller.senate.gov
<http://rockefeller.senate.gov>

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