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Unique Nuclear Supply Chain Development Conference Generating Results

St. Louis, MO – September 22, 2016 – The results are in and, by all measures, the unique “Advanced Manufacturing and Nuclear Supply Chain Development Conference” met or exceeded expectations of conference organizers. The conference, held in St. Louis, Missouri on September 12th, was the culmination of the three-year, federally-funded Make It In America (MIIA) program.

Sixty-six people from 30 companies, including 20 session presenters attended the conference, where they learned about nuclear supply chain opportunities during 18 presentations and shared experiences. Missouri was the only state to win a federal MIIA challenge grant to assist more manufacturers in entering the global nuclear power plant supply chain market

The primary conference objective was to make it easier for manufacturers to understand the requirements to enter the nuclear supply chain. For those companies not currently supplying components or subcomponents to new or existing nuclear power plants, this market can seem mysterious and the requirements to become a supplier can be overwhelming.

All presenters reinforced the message that this is, indeed, a challenging market, but it is one that can be lucrative and profitable to those with the right capabilities and have the required patience, perseverance and foresight. Those who attended were also reassured that there are resources that can help them investigate opportunities and improve their capabilities to perform in this market.

Key people from the nuclear supply chain came to talk to manufacturers about what it takes or what they did to become qualified. Many companies commented that hearing about what is required from companies who have gone through the process was both enlightening and encouraging.

“I was most impressed by the constant buzz of conversation at breaks, lunch, and the reception which was a direct result of interest and excitement generated by the conference,” said conference manager Rick Prugh, Missouri Enterprise MIIA Program Director. “In fact, a nuclear component

supplier who presented has contacted one of the companies that attended about working together on machining nuclear subcomponents.”

Presenters from NuScale Power and Westinghouse set the tone for the conference by explaining the design and advanced manufacturing capabilities they were seeking from their supply chains. Other presenters represented companies who had either successfully broken into the nuclear supply chain or were buyers of components and services.

Requirements and guidance for selling into the supply chain were provided from various perspectives. Representatives from Burns & McDonnell, NuScale, Ameren, Watlow, and AZZ Nuclear discussed their interest and needs in purchasing for their respective supply chains as an EPC (engineering, procurement, construction) contractor, nuclear reactor manufacturer, utility provider, and major component suppliers to the nuclear industry.

The conference also featured resource providers. American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) representatives discussed the “N” stamp and NQA-1 certifications required for safety-related, nuclear plant parts. Other resources explained the assistance they could provide in developing required quality control programs.

State, government, education, and business organizations explained the assistance they could provide. Export opportunities and available assistance to pursue these were explained by the Senior Nuclear Trade Specialist from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration and a trade manager for the Missouri International Trade and Investment Office. Workforce training resources who presented were the University of Missouri, State Technical College of Missouri, and the Division of Workforce Development from the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

This conference could become a template for future events designed to help expand the number of U.S. companies participating in the nuclear power supply chain. The conference was organized and supported through the joint efforts of Missouri Enterprise, U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council and the University of Missouri.

Missouri Enterprise managed and hosted the conference. The not-for-profit organization operates the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership program to help manufacturers in Missouri become more profitable.

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