**State of Illinois, Manufacturers and Educators Join Forces to Help Veterans Get Skills for Careers in Advanced Manufacturing**

**Illinois First State to Join the "Get Skills to Work" Coalition; Coalition Helps 30,000 U.S. Veterans in First Year**





CHICAGO, Oct 16, 2013 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- GE /quotes/zigman/227468/delayed/quotes/nls/ge [GE](http://www.marketwatch.com/investing/stock/GE) +0.47% , the State of Illinois, The Manufacturing Institute, Illinois Manufacturers' Association and Harper College today announced Illinois as the first state to join the Get Skills to Work (GSTW) coalition. The coalition brings together employers, industry leaders, educators and the public sector to help veterans get the skills they need for careers in advanced manufacturing.

Founded one year ago, GSTW helps veterans translate military skills and experience to advanced manufacturing positions, provides skills training for U.S. veterans, and empowers employers with tools to recruit, onboard, and mentor veterans. The GSTW coalition was founded by GE, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Alcoa and The Manufacturing Institute. More than 190 new manufacturers recently joined the coalition, helping to connect veterans with even greater opportunities in advanced manufacturing. In its first year, close to 30,000 U.S. veterans were reached through GSTW.

Through this new Illinois partnership, GSTW will help veterans pursue and fill open advanced manufacturing jobs by providing targeted training and skills certifications. To ensure the training meets the immediate needs of local manufacturers, Illinois employers from across the state will work directly with the state's community colleges to provide quality education grounded in industry-based certifications.

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn said, "As the first state in the nation to join the Get Skills to Work training program, we are proud to be a part of this coalition that will support our local heroes. Illinois is home to tens of thousands of veterans and this partnership will help offer them the training they need for careers in advanced manufacturing. This statewide partnership demonstrates how the public and private sector can come together to drive economic growth and expand opportunities for our veterans."

The new partnership with the GSTW coalition was announced today at GE Garages, a month-long "fab lab" at Chicago Ideas Week (CIW) that invites participants to explore the future of advanced manufacturing through curated speaker programs, panels and hands-on experiences with high-grade equipment such as 3D printing and laser cutters. Expected to be in attendance were approximately 100 Chicago-area veterans, educators, policymakers, and manufacturers. Featured speakers included Governor Quinn; Gary Sinise, actor and founder of the Gary Sinise Foundation; Russell Stokes, president and CEO of GE Transportation; Greg Baise, president and CEO of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association; and Dr. Kenneth Ender, president of Harper College.

Stokes said, "An active and vibrant manufacturing industry is essential to the strength and continued growth of the U.S. economy. Veterans embody many of the leadership qualities that can help drive growth and initiative at GE. This statewide partnership with Illinois marks a major milestone on GSTW's one year anniversary and further highlights our nationwide effort to support veterans as they transition into jobs that will help drive U.S. capacity and competitiveness."

Jennifer McNelly, president of The Manufacturing Institute, said, "Advanced manufacturing is a promising pathway for those who served our nation as the industry continues to play an important role in our nation's economy. One of our core goals is to ensure that U.S. manufacturers have the workforce that the 21st century economy requires. The GSTW coalition and our servicemen and women will undoubtedly help us reach this goal."

Get Skills to Work has helped veterans translate military experience to corresponding advanced manufacturing opportunities and gain the technical skills needed to qualify for careers in this growing sector. Companies and veterans interested in joining this effort or learning more can visit GetSkillstoWork.org or join us on [Facebook](http://www.marketwatch.com/companies/Facebook?lc=int_mb_1001) at Facebook.com/GetSkillstoWork and Twitter @GetSkillstoWork.

About GE

GE is honored to have more than 10,000 U.S. military veterans continue their careers with the company and recently set a goal of hiring 1,000 veterans each year for the next five years. Through its partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes program, GE hired over 1,100 veterans in 2012 and has supported over 60 Hiring Our Heroes transition workshops, coaching over 4,000 veterans. GE is also an active member of and donor to several leading national military and veteran support organizations, such as Disabled American Veterans, Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund and the Medal of Honor Foundation, among others.

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About Harper College

Harper College is one of the nation's premier community colleges and one of the largest, serving more than 40,000 students annually in Chicago's northwest suburbs. The College's academic programs prepare students for rewarding careers and for transfer to four-year universities. Harper offers associate degree and certification programs, advanced career programs, workforce training, professional development, continuing education classes, accelerated degree options for adults and developmental education programs. For more information, visit www.harpercollege.edu or call 847.925.6000.

About Illinois Manufacturers' Association

The Illinois Manufacturers(1) Association is the oldest and among the largest state organizations focused on manufacturing in the U.S. Founded in 1893, the IMA advocates for more than 18,000 manufacturing firms in Illinois. Through the IMA Education Foundation, the IMA leads the Manufacturing and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics STEM Learning Exchanges for Illinois.

SOURCE: GE