

Press Release

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WiM & VMA Announce Formation of Virginia Chapter

Williamsburg, VA – The Women in Manufacturing® Association (WiM) and the VMA announced the formation of the WiM Virginia Chapter at the Virginia Competitiveness Forum in Williamsburg, Virginia. The WiM Virginia Chapter will provide professional development, mentoring, recruiting and community leadership to its membership. The organization will also provide opportunities for leadership recognition. The organization will be led by the WiM Virginia Leadership Council.

The organizing Virginia Leadership Council will include the following:

- Chair – Jordan Oligmueller, AdvanSix
- Vice Chair – Brenda Clarke, ITAC
- Recruiting & Outreach Team Leader – Tiffany New-Courtney, AdvanSix
- Professional Development Team Leader – Kerry McAvoy, One Environmental Group
- Senior Program Advisor – Tanya Cook, Virginia Industry Foundation (VIF)
- Management and Finance Team – Kimberly Noonan, Kelly Stevens (VMA)

Women make up approximately 47 percent of the U.S. labor force, but only 29 percent of the manufacturing workforce.¹ Women earn more than half of all associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees.² Women also hold more than half of all US managerial and professional positions.³ These data illustrate that women are a major untapped talent pool for industrial businesses.

"The WiM Virginia Chapter is focused on closing the gender gap in the industrial workforce through the development of women and inspiring the next generation of female leaders," said Jordan Oligmueller, WiM Virginia Chapter Chair.

"WiM has a developing network of state-based chapters so that members can better connect on a local level through networking, mentoring and events. We are incredibly excited to partner with the VMA to form our newest state chapter in the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Allison Grealis, President, Women in Manufacturing. "Women in Manufacturing® is a national association dedicated to supporting, promoting and inspiring women who have chosen a career in the manufacturing industry through networking and mentorship opportunities in-person and online."

Caitlin Sickles, a principal in the Policy Resolution Group at Bracewell LLP, represented the WiM Board of Directors in recognizing the Virginia Chapter. Sickles was joined by Tanya Cook, Virginia Chapter Senior Adviser and Virginia Industry Foundation Board member. Cook has been the driving force behind the program since her retirement from Philip Morris USA in 2018.

"The VMA is incredibly honored to be part of the WiM network and I am personally in awe of the Leadership Council and Management Team," said Brett Vassey, VMA President & CEO. "We are all unified in our commitment to closing the gender gap in manufacturing and the WiM Virginia Chapter is a major step toward achieving that goal."