

RI, CT Leaders: Manufacturing Key To Growth

The Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Biotechnology, nanotechnology and other high-tech industries could reverse decades of manufacturing job losses in New England but only if the region increases workforce development and attracts more startup businesses, members of Congress from Rhode Island and Connecticut said Tuesday.

U.S. Reps. David Cicilline and Jim Langevin from Rhode Island and Joe Courtney and John Larson from Connecticut attended a forum on manufacturing Tuesday at the Rhode Island School of Design.

"This has to be a key part of our economic development strategy for rebuilding our economies," said Cicilline, a Democrat.

Emerging fields such as nanotechnology and three-dimensional printing offer the region an opportunity to create thousands of well-paid, highly skilled manufacturing jobs, according to Michael Molnar, chief manufacturing officer at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. But Molnar said universities, governments and business leaders need to do a better job of working together to ensure ideas dreamed up here aren't turned into reality in a foreign factory.

"A paper is written and it goes on a shelf," he said. "Let's take it and make new industries."

Speakers said onerous regulations and uncompetitive tax policies hurt the region's attractiveness to manufacturers as much as labor costs. Langevin, a Democrat, said the region must also get better at educating and training future workers. "We need to make sure our schools and training centers understand where the jobs will be," he said.

Defense manufacturing must also play a role in the region's economic future, Larson said. He highlighted legislation that has passed the House that would fund the continued production of two Virginia-class submarines per year. Electric Boat makes the submarines in New Groton, Conn., and Quonset Point, R.I., and employs 10,000 people at the two facilities.

"Our second submarine is vitally important to Connecticut, Rhode Island and the security of our nation," said the Democrat.

The forum was sponsored by the New England Council and attracted several dozen small business owners and officials from economic development agencies and higher education.

RI, CT Leaders: Manufacturing Key To Growth

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Source URL (retrieved on 12/18/2014 - 8:40pm):

http://www.impomag.com/news/2012/08/ri-ct-leaders-manufacturing-key-growth?qt-recent_content=0