Making Headway in Revitalizing Hawaii’s Manufacturing Industry

In 2014, the Chamber launched its Manufacturing in Hawaii initiative with two goals in mind: 1) to support products made in Hawaii for Hawaii and 2) the export of these products from Hawaii to the mainland and international markets.

Manufacturers who are part of these efforts include Pacific Allied Products, who bottles and distributes water here for national brands reducing shipping costs and carbon footprint. La Tour Bakehouse was recently highlighted in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser for its efforts to expand to mainland Costcos. Hawaiian Chip Company is also expanding its distribution, including to Japan, and Big Island Candies sends its products all over the world. In addition to locally manufactured food and other goods, exports also include technology and services.

And, with tourism our number industry, more than 8.5 million consumer visitors are exposed to Hawaii-made products every year.

This May, in partnership with the Hawaii Food Manufacturing Association, the Chamber will be spotlighting some of our Hawaii manufacturers at the Aloha Market in Japan, organized by sister Chamber, Chigasaki Chamber.

With the important role manufacturers play in promoting the Hawaii brand, the Chamber will continue advocating for this industry. Representatives with INNOVATE Hawaii (the Manufacturing Extension Partnership - MEP) and our Manufacturing in Hawaii initiative joined the Chamber, as well as manufacturers reps from states across the nation, in “2017 Hill Day” organized by the American Small Manufacturers Coalition to inform key decision makers about the important work being accomplished by the MEP program and avoid any de-funding of this program.

Additionally, the Chamber signed on to a letter with the National Association of Manufacturers urging President Trump to support continued funding of MEP.

With the new Administration, it is critical that we continue to advocate with a strong, unified voice to secure support of the manufacturing industry here in Hawaii and across the nation, particularly with the need to establish relationships and connections with new agency leaders.

On the state level, with the support of our legislature and administration, manufacturers received funding to invest in new equipment and workforce development training which, in turn, creates and sustains jobs and increases export opportunities for local companies. The Chamber continues to seek grant funding this session to build on this initiative’s momentum.

To showcase the progress of the revitalization of the industry, in April, the Chamber will be hosting President and CEO Jay Timmons of the National Association of Manufacturers, who will tour various local manufacturers and meet with policy makers. Members of the business community are invited to a reception with Mr. Timmons on April 11.

Keeping Hawaii on the radar and ensuring that our leaders understand the important and strategic role our state plays for our nation is critical. In that light, the Chamber will continue to seek opportunities and initiatives to take advantage of our location at the crossroads of the Pacific and to keep Hawaii and our businesses and industries front and center.

Visit cochawaii.org to learn more about our Manufacturing in Hawaii initiative and support the Chamber’s advocacy efforts.