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Fresno State to host manufacturing conference

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Valley manufacturers won't have to travel to Southern California or the Bay Area to get the latest information about the resources that are available to them in their industry.

The University Center to Advance Manufacturing at Fresno State will host the 2nd annual Fall Manufacturing Conference Oct. 12 at the Radisson Conference Center in Downtown Fresno. Don Austin, an Industrial Technology professor at Fresno State, says this year's conference will cover considerably more ground than last year's event.

"Last year was a single presentation in one afternoon," said Austin, who is liaison for the event. "This year we'll have morning and lunch presentations, with different breakout seminars going on all day long."

The event is a local conference for Valley engineering and technology management that will focus primarily on workforce development and funding. Among the presenters will be federal, state and local leaders, educators and economists.

Pete Weber was an advisor to former Fresno Mayor Alan Autry and currently serves on the board of Fresno State's Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Mr. Weber, who serves on many other boards as well, will report on the 2012 San Joaquin Valley Regional Economic Summit during the morning session.

Also speaking during the morning session will be Dr. Carole Goldsmith, West Hills Community College District's vice chancellor of educational services and workforce development, who will cover workforce education efforts.

"This effort has been spearheaded through the Manufacturing Cluster, UCAM and others," said Bill Betts, vice president of Betts Spring Co. in Fresno. "The goal of the event is to make our community aware of the resources available in the community as well as learn about these organizations. Instead of monthly meetings, we'll get everyone together collectively."

Randy Dhindsa, senior vice president at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in Fresno will lecture on business funding during the luncheon session, and Glenda Humiston, state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Programs, will speak on the Ag value chain — a subject of considerable importance to many in the Valley, especially during the current economic



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situation.

“The thing about manufacturing in the Valley is that it’s all related to ag,” Austin said. “The line between engineering and management is a very fine one. Executives are also engineers, not just MBAs.”

Breakout sessions will focus on internships, quality, workforce, inventory, safety, funding, management and many others. California Manufacturing Technology Consulting, a creative solution company, will participate in breakout sessions in the morning as well as the afternoon.

The Fall Manufacturing Conference will be run on an outline similar to that of the Sept. 18 Central California Women’s Conference, which was held in the same venue at the Manufacturing Conference will be.

“We’re borrowing from the same model,” Austin said. “We’re not reinventing the wheel here.”

While the Women’s Conference had close to 3,500 attendees, those directing the Manufacturing Conference, in just its second year, have their sights set a bit lower.

“We had about 90 people last year,” Austin said. “We’re hoping for about 150 people this year.”

The breakout sessions will be led by four organizations: The Association of Operations Management, which has served the manufacturing, operations and logistics community of the Central Valley for more than three decades; The Project Management Institute, which identifies and promotes the fundamentals of project management; The American Society for Quality, whose mission includes promoting quality technology, concepts and tools; and the Central Valley Safety Society, which assists and advances the exchange of ideas among individuals responsible for safety and health at businesses throughout the Central San Joaquin Valley.

The Manufacturing Conference will begin at 8 a.m. and run until 4 p.m. The Radisson Conference Center is located at 2233 Ventura St. in Downtown Fresno. For more information, log onto www.fresnostate.edu/ucam.

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The advertisement features a red background with a pattern of small white circles. At the top left is a logo consisting of a white square with a red cross and a red bow. The text is in white and gold. The central image shows several Baccarat crystal items, including a Buddha figurine, a butterfly-shaped vase, and a perfume bottle, with several colorful butterflies (blue, pink, and gold) flying around them. The bottom of the ad has a dark red background with white text and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter.

Bill Betts is excited about this year's Manufacturing Conference and what it will showcase.

"There are things here that are turned out right here in the Valley," Betts said. "We want to remain competitive in a global world."

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