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ENGINEERING SHOWCASE BRINGS STUDENTS, MANUFACTURERS TOGETHER

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL – The Southworks Engineering and Robotics Showcase held last month at Prairie State College was an extraordinary success. It featured teams of students from area high schools demonstrating their mechanical creations. While manufacturing is alive and well in the south suburbs, more needs to be done to convince high school students to take a fresh look at job opportunities in the field.

Along with the college, the event, called "Mayors for Manufacturing," was also sponsored by organizations including the Technology and Manufacturing Association, South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association and Chicago Southland Economic Development Corp. The mayors association is also a partner in the Calumet Green Manufacturing Partnership, which works to match people, particularly the unemployed, with available manufacturing jobs. Training partners in the effort include Prairie State, South Suburban College and Moraine Valley Community College, and the partnership also works with several local high schools.

Manufacturers see robotics as a possible entry point in getting high school students to think of manufacturing as a career option. Manufacturing, particularly in the Chicago region, is enjoying a "second renaissance." While the U.S. has lost significant manufacturing jobs to lower-cost countries such as Mexico and China, U.S. firms are focused on producing higher-value products, which in turn are enabling them to offer better wages than they were 20-plus years ago.

For more information, please contact Anna Helwig at (708) 596-2000, ext. 5706, ahelwig@ssc.edu. For more information about all of SSC's programs, admissions and registration, please visit www.ssc.edu or contact the Admissions Office at (708) 210-5718.

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