

10TH ANNUAL STEP AHEAD AWARDS RECOGNIZE WOMEN FOR EXCELLENCE IN MANUFACTURING

The Manufacturing Institute Will Honor Carrie Royal, Chemical Process Area Leader at Fiber Industries

DARLINGTON COUNTY – (March 1, 2022) – The Manufacturing Institute—the workforce development and education partner of the National Association of Manufacturers—announced it will award Carrie Royal with the Women in Manufacturing STEP Ahead Award.

The STEP Ahead Awards honor women who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in their careers and represent all levels of the manufacturing industry, from the factory floor to the C-suite.

“I am passionate about manufacturing because it provides an opportunity for a diverse group of people from various backgrounds to utilize their individual talents and skills to collaborate as a team in a fast – paced dynamic environment to create a product to compete in a defined market,” said Carrie Royal, chemical process area leader at Fiber Industries.

“At Fiber Industries, we are grateful to have women as leaders in our plant. Carrie is a shining example of how women are vital to manufacturing and we are proud that she is getting recognized nationally for her leadership in our plant,” said Don Bockoven, CEO of Fiber Industries.

“The 2022 STEP Ahead Honorees and Emerging Leader awardees are excellent representatives of the exciting opportunities available in manufacturing,” said Denise Rutherford, 2022 STEP Ahead chair. “These remarkable women and the leadership they show help inspire next generation of female leaders to consider careers in manufacturing.”

“The STEP Ahead Awards are central to the industry’s efforts to recognize and empower women,” said MI President Carolyn Lee. “Our Honorees and Emerging Leaders serve as role models and have their own multiplier effect on the number of women in the workforce, paying it forward to help others find their way into a successful, rewarding career in modern manufacturing.

After 10 years of STEP Ahead Awards, we’ve honored more than 1,100 women leaders in manufacturing, who in turn have impacted hundreds of thousands of individuals through mentoring and volunteer work. We’re so proud of all these women, and we can’t wait to see what STEP and its Honorees and Emerging Leaders will accomplish in the next 10 years.”

The STEP Women’s Initiative is the nation’s marquee program to close the gender gap in manufacturing. STEP works to foster a 21st-century manufacturing workforce by empowering and inspiring women in the manufacturing industry through recognition, research and leadership, as well as by motivating alumnae to pay it forward by mentoring the next generation.

The STEP Ahead Awards honor exceptional women in manufacturing and motivate them to mentor the next generation through an annual awards gala and associated leadership training program. The stories of these women and the leadership they show will help inspire next-generation female leaders in manufacturing and support current female talent within the

industry. In the program's first five years, STEP Ahead Award winners impacted more than 300,000 individuals—from peers in the industry to school-age children.

The biggest challenge facing manufacturers continues to be the growing workforce crisis—the shortage of skilled talent to fill open positions. Manufacturers can close the skills gap by 50% simply by bringing 10% more women into the industry.

Women account for about half of the U.S. labor force but represent less than one-third of the manufacturing workforce. STEP Ahead empowers and inspires women in the manufacturing industry. The goal is to build networks for women to have support in their industry and to elevate the role models who can motivate and mentor the next generation.

On April 28, the MI will recognize 130 recipients of the STEP Ahead Awards in Washington, D.C. The STEP Ahead Awards program will highlight each Honoree and Emerging Leader's story, including their leadership and accomplishments in manufacturing.

###

ABOUT FIBER INDUSTRIES

[Fiber Industries](#) collaborates closely with our partners to deliver sustainable fiber solutions made entirely in the U.S.A. at our state of the art manufacturing facility in Darlington, South Carolina.

Focusing on polyester staple fibers, our team's goal in every project is to collaborate with our customers to create innovative, quality fiber, while meeting the pricing, sustainability needs, and fulfillment requirements to produce market-leading fabrics and garments.

ABOUT THE MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE

The [Manufacturing Institute](#) grows and supports the manufacturing industry's skilled workers for the advancement of modern manufacturing. The MI's diverse initiatives support all American workers, including women, veterans and students, through skills training programs, community building and the advancement of their career in manufacturing. As the workforce development and education partner of the National Association of Manufacturers, the MI is a trusted adviser to manufacturers, equipping them with resources necessary to solve the industry's toughest challenges.