

FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIR VISITS TRI-C *for roundtable on workforce development*

There is perhaps no other person whose words influence the economy more than Janet Yellen.

That's why a visit by the chair of the Federal Reserve to your college's campus is more than a local story — it's a national media event.

That was the case Sept. 26, when Yellen visited the Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) on Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus. Following a lunchtime speech at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown, Yellen traveled to Tri-C for an afternoon tour and roundtable discussion.

During the tour, Yellen — accompanied by Tri-C President Alex Johnson and other College officials — observed the operation of manufacturing equipment on the MTC's manufacturing floor, including a 3D printing machine, precision measuring tools and a student demonstration of how a milling machine works. Yellen also toured the MTC's Ideation Station.

Following the tour of the manufacturing floor, Yellen participated in a roundtable discussion on the state of manufacturing workforce development in Northeast Ohio. The discussion included representatives from labor skill-development nonprofits, manufacturing companies and the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

During the approximately 45-minute discussion, members of the roundtable outlined the challenges facing area companies in finding and developing new workers and the ways in which both nonprofits and educational institutions such as Tri-C are working to address those challenges.



Lonnie Coleman, president of Cleveland-based mechanical contractor Coleman Spohn Corp., participated in the roundtable.

"Manpower is the number one problem facing our industry," Coleman said. "Baby Boomers are retiring, and we need young workers to fill the gaps. But we're finding it difficult to recruit out of high school, and a lot of it is simply that young people aren't exposed to the manufacturing industry like they once were."

Coleman Spohn is among the companies implementing more proactive recruiting and training strategies in an effort to interest young people in the manufacturing sector. Coleman views Tri-C's Right Skills Now program as an integral part of that strategy — and an important cog in recruiting and developing new manufacturing talent throughout the region.

"Tri-C is tied into so many people and organizations around the area," Coleman said. "The College is very important to the companies in our space. We know Tri-C graduates will be educated and prepared to enter the workforce. And they'll have the advanced technological knowledge that is becoming more and more important to the manufacturing space."

During the roundtable, Yellen listened intently to the perspectives shared by each local leader, offering follow-up questions and feedback. At the discussion's conclusion, she thanked each member for participating.

"You are all hard at work making sure the systems are in place to train people and fill jobs," Yellen said. "It is a very necessary role that must be filled in our country, and I appreciate the work you do. Thanks to all of you for an eye-opening conversation."