

NEWSLINE GREENVILLE

> AdvanceSC Honored with Award

The GADC honored **AdvanceSC**, an organization that supports education and economic growth across much of South Carolina, with its fifth annual **William D. Workman III Buffalo Hunter Award** at its Investor Luncheon May 20. Established by Duke Energy to support communities through public assistance and economic development grants, **AdvanceSC** has provided grants to GADC projects totaling more than \$1.8 million, including critical funding to secure a dozen signature wins. In 2008, **AdvanceSC** supported W.W. Grainger's expansion, American Titanium's location, Precision Valve's growth and Innegrity's relocation to new quarters, funding site preparations, relocation of critical personnel and equipment, building up-fitting, and essential infrastructure additions. Board Chair Carol Burdette accepted the award for **AdvanceSC**.



> Berliner Seilfabrik Lands

Berliner Seilfabrik has announced the location in Greenville of the organization's new U.S. sales and distribution operations. The company manufactures "living playgrounds", intricately designed modular playscapes in a variety of unique designs and shapes, and all made from sturdy, galvanized steel wires covered with external rope strands of Polyamid yarns (carpet yarn). Located in 48 Brookfield Oaks Suite D, Berliner Seilfabrik will initially staff the sales office with a three-person sales team to cater to the needs of dealers across the United States, and also serve as a distribution point for product arriving through the Port of Charleston.

> At GE, Imagination at Work Extends to Training

Scott Zemitis is one busy guy. And he wouldn't have it any other way.

As Engineering Learning Leader for GE Energy's nearly 9,000 engineers globally – nearly one fifth of them in Greenville – he's tasked with making sure that the engineering team receives training that will keep them, and General Electric, on the leading edge of the rapidly changing energy industry.

And with 60% of GE's 1,500-plus engineers here holding advanced degrees, that training has to be leading-edge and innovative. "When people think of GE in Greenville County, they usually think of gas turbine manufacturing because our operations here help rank us as the largest gas turbine manufacturer in the world," says Zemitis. "Yet our operations are roughly half and half manufacturing and engineering, and those knowledge-based workers have to continue to learn just as our manufacturing team does – even if they already have masters or doctoral degrees."

Indeed, GE's Greenville operations house both their globally acclaimed manufacturing operations and a significant portion of GE Energy's brain trust – the engineering minds that have made GE Energy the world leader in gas turbine production and a global power in wind turbines. The rapid growth of the wind engineering team has been fed primarily with talent from other industries. The need for curricula and development programs specific to wind has become quite evident.

Local training support for GE workers in recent years had focused largely on technical skills used in the manufacturing processes at the world-renowned plant. Zemitis recognized the needs of the growing engineering team were not being adequately addressed. The challenge was how best to prepare them for the changing energy landscape while maximizing GE's precious training funds.

Triggered by conversations between GE and GADC officials about the evolving training needs GE professionals require, participants across the governmental, educational and private sectors have collaborated to craft an innovative developmental curricula that prepares GE employees for long-term growth and success.

"This was a breakthrough opportunity for us," noted Cynthia Eason, VP of Community and Economic Development for Greenville Technical College, and an active participant in the initiative formally known as Greenville Works. "We're creating and implementing non-traditional curricula to help extremely bright people improve core engineering skills, encompassing hands-on training and a focus on mechanical design fundamentals that many haven't been exposed to in years. It required fresh thinking and an open mind-set. And by helping GE develop its team, they're helping Greenville Tech improve."

Zemitis cited GE's collaboration with ReadySC, an initiative managed through South Carolina's Department of Commerce designed to assist new and expanding employers in developing their workforce, as another example of where innovative thinking paid off.

"Five years ago, our wind energy business was virtually nothing, but we've built it into an \$8 billion business today — and over 200 people in Greenville are dedicated to that business unit," Zemitis stated. "Through our partnership with ReadySC, we're developing a Wind Systems Academy curriculum which provides more than 30 lectures offered by wind experts around the world covering relevant topics like meteorology, gusting, system-level interactions and wind component design. We digitize lectures for offline review, so the program also becomes a knowledge-capture exercise."

Art Romano, consulting engineer with GE Energy who has been involved in the ReadySC program, concurred.

"The GE Wind System training materials and lectures cover a broad range of topics impacting our Wind Turbine business," said Romano. "By understanding the broader business, components design and exploring areas not specifically related to daily assignments, we develop more rounded understanding of system interactions. The support by ReadySC has been critical in our ability to provide essential, valuable training tools to our design engineers."

The initiative is continuing. Already, partners are exploring opportunities to expand the mechanical design fundamentals training to include composites and materials testing. This will provide engineers greater opportunity to practice fundamentals often lost in today's computerized society.

"We find that many of the brightest minds coming out of school today lack some of yesterday's fundamental engineering skills. We appreciate the help of our external partners in bridging this gap," said Zemitis.

There is also the need to keep modern software skills up to date in the experienced workforce. Via assistance from the Incumbent Worker Training program administered locally by Dean Jones for the State of South Carolina Dept. of Commerce, dozens of GE engineers have received the latest instruction in finite element analysis and CAD software.

After all is said and done, GE is fundamentally about putting the best minds together and letting their imaginations solve the world's biggest energy problems, Zemitis opines. "Innovative training is essential to our success as a company and pivotal to Greenville attracting and keeping top talent. Together, we want to see the knowledge economy flourish locally, with GE leading the way in renewable energy."