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Manufacturing Jobs Key to Balancing U.S. Budget

By Mike Botta

Drew Greenblatt is passionate about manufacturing and he's hell bent on waking up America to the fact that manufacturing is, in his words, intrinsic to saving America.

"You're not going to save America by turning out a bunch of tax accountants," Greenblatt said during an interview. "We need to develop the next Thomas Edison. You're not going to turn around the economy by hiring accountants and people in retail."

Greenblatt, president of [Marlin Steel Wire Products](#), Baltimore, has been helping spearhead a campaign in his home state of Maryland to convince America to get back to basics.

Burger Flippers Won't Do It

"You can't balance the budget with people who flip burgers," Greenblatt said. People must realize that manufacturing jobs are critical to America. You do not create wealth by pushing papers or flipping burgers. To create wealth you need to grow it, mine it or make it."

Greenblatt, who also serves on the executive board of the National Association of Manufacturers, was a key force behind the recent [Rally for Maryland Manufacturing](#) hosted by the Regional Manufacturing Institute of Maryland.

The initiative, held August 5 in Baltimore and designed to promote job creation through manufacturing, attracted some 800 supporters, including Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, Congressmen Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and John Sarbanes (D-Md), Maryland State Sen. Allan H. Kittleman (R-9th District), Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Howard County (MD) Executive Ken Ulman, and leaders from the business community.

Not Protectionism

The way Greenblatt sees it, the issue isn't one of U.S. protectionism. "Some products make sense to source (in China)," Greenblatt said. "It's a different answer for different markets." As an example, he explained that products like baskets intended for retail stocking purposes don't necessarily require tight welds. In such cases it may make sense for a company to buy from a less expensive overseas source.

"But, we (Marlin Steel Wire Products) are into quality and staying focused on what we're good at," he said, adding that for quality, no one beats the U.S. "We are the best place for a headquarters, for R&D and for making something," he said.

It Takes Only Two

“If we added two manufacturing jobs for every factory in America, the recession would be over,” Greenblatt said. “There’s a ripple effect. Every two manufacturing jobs created (in turn) create two more jobs” in workers needed support the manufacturing and fulfillment processes.

“The average U.S. factory has 15 to 20 employees, not thousands,” Greenblatt said, which differentiates us from, say, the Germans, who have monster factories employing many thousands of workers. “ We have tens of thousands of peanut-size factories. Add just two workers to each factory and the recession would be over.

According to U.S. Census Bureau information for 2008, the latest year for which statistics are available, of the 281,644 manufacturing operations in America, 208,675 have fewer than 20 employees and only 4,072 manufacturers have more than 500 employees.

A National Effort?

Greenblatt was careful to point out that the Maryland manufacturing initiative is “A-political” and that the rally included members of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

He also sees the Maryland effort as the start of something that should take hold nationwide. “The dialogue is starting,” he said. “Other states are starting to ask questions” about Maryland’s rally for manufacturing.

“I feel that this is a model example of a successful manufacturing rally,” said Greenblatt. “Hopefully it will become a theme in cities across the nation.”

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