

Composites Manufacturing link: <http://compositesmanufacturingmagazine.com/2018/01/iacmi-winter-meeting-highlights-the-state-of-composites-in-automotive/>

IACMI Winter Meeting Highlights the State of Composites in Automotive

Evan Milberg January 22, 2018

From Jan. 16-18, The Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI), a 150+ member consortium committed to increasing domestic production capacity and manufacturing jobs across the U.S. composites industry, held its winter members meeting in Detroit. The meeting, which coincided with the 2018 North American International Auto Show, featured automotive research and development innovations, workforce development trends, and technical updates from Ford Motor Company, Volkswagen and others.

The meeting program featured a keynote presentation from Greg Satell, the author of *Mapping Innovation, A Playbook for Navigating a Disruptive Age*. Satell provided a macro-level perspective of the interplay of technology and societal trends.

“When just a few people have cars, it’s just a mode of transportation,” Satell said. “When everybody has a car, it becomes a force that reshapes society.”

Other program highlights included a workforce development presentation from Lucintel, a premier global market research consulting firm, to discuss the trends in hiring, job creation, and training for composites careers. Attendees also got an inside look at IACMI technical projects, many of which have opened the doors to new opportunities for composites manufacturers and suppliers.

For example, Ashland is the lead on an IACMI project to identify and develop optimized vinyl ester resin/fiber sizing/carbon fiber combinations that demonstrate quantifiable improvements in the quality and strength of the resin-fiber interface with resins, sizings, and carbon fibers from the project participants. The project aims to build an integrated supply chain with a scale necessary for widespread adoption of the technology in the automotive industry. Involvement in the project, according to Joe Fox, Director, Emerging & External Technologies at Ashland, has opened the doors to new opportunities to grow the market for automotive composites.

“Further into the project, [IACMI has] connected us to the recycling companies,” said Fox. “And outside the scope of this project, R. Byron Pipes [Director, Design, Modeling & Simulation Technology Area, Purdue University] has connected us with modeling

companies that we should be talking to. Also, in terms of new opportunities, we've also been pulled as a resin supplier into three other IACMI projects.”

Attendees also had the chance to hear from the Composites Prototyping Center (CPC), which shared the results of its project using an innovative x-ray process to create a carbon fiber Aston Martin hood.

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The meeting also provided an opportunity for attendees to tour the IACMI Scale-Up Research Facility (SURF) in the Corktown district of Detroit. The facility represents IACMI's Vehicles Technology Area. The SURF is managed by Michigan State University. LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow and IACMI co-invested in the manufacturing facility in 2015, and research and workforce development projects began in the facility in 2016. In October 2017, both of the Manufacturing USA institutes celebrated the facility with a ribbon cutting and open house on Manufacturing Day 2017.