



## APRIL 2006

### Calendar of Events

#### April 6, 2006

CMFI Board of Directors Meeting.  
Rosewood Restaurant, Rosemont.  
6:00 PM

#### April 27, 2006

CMFI Member Meeting.  
The Clubhouse, Oakbrook  
6:00 PM

#### May 4, 2006

CMFI Board of Directors Meeting.  
Rosewood Restaurant, Rosemont.  
6:00 PM

#### May 23-25, 2006

SFIC Washington Forum  
Washington DC  
[www.sficwashingtonforum.com](http://www.sficwashingtonforum.com)

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**FOR RESERVATIONS FOR THE CLUBHOUSE:** mail in your pink card, fax (773-784-1304) or e-mail (cmfi@netzero.net) to the Institute Office **BY APRIL 21, 2006.**  
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## A Very Special APRIL MEMBER MEETING

APRIL 27, 2006

The Clubhouse -298 Oakbrook Center  
Oakbrook, Illinois  
6:00PM-7:30PM

You're invited to this unique Member Meeting which was such a success two years ago. Instead of our usual dinner/speaker format, we're offering a more casual atmosphere with a 1½ hour reception, with open bar and hors d'oeuvres, at "The Clubhouse" in Oakbrook. This meeting is intended to help our members reconnect with each other and this evening will be ideal for networking, exchanging plating and business ideas with your peer, and just having a good time with new and old friends.

The Clubhouse offers a unique country club environment that invites you to sample a taste of the good life while enjoying an extensive collection of antique and contemporary artwork. The Clubhouse is located in the north east corner of the intersection of Route 83 and Cermak Road (22<sup>nd</sup> Street) in Oakbrook, on the south side of the Oakbrook Center Shopping Mall between Lord & Taylor and Neiman Marcus, facing Cermak Road.

Space is limited and will be offered on a first come, first served basis so make your reservations now.

**SORRY, NO WALK-INS WILL BE ALLOWED FOR THIS MEETING. RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 21, 2006.**

## **WORKERS' COMP REFORM EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2006**

From: IMA Executive Memo 2/8/06

Illinois Landmark Workers' Compensation reform legislation which passed last May, took effect February 1. The changes are intended to improve the delivery and level of benefits to those injured on the job, while reducing the total amount paid by employers for the system.

The legislation implements cost containment in workers' comp by establishing a medical fee schedule indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The bill provides for Utilization Review of proposed or provided medical treatment to ensure the treatment is reasonable and necessary for injured workers using nationally recognized medical standards.

The new law also creates a Workers' Comp fraud statute and investigation unit within the Division of Insurance of the Department of Financial & Professional Regulation to investigate charges of workers' comp fraud, including uninsured employers, and allows for reporting of fraudulent claims by employees. It also stiffens penalties and fines and creates a work-stop order for failure by employers to obtain workers' comp insurance. In addition, it provides civil liabilities for persons who knowingly or fraudulently attempt to obtain workers' comp benefits.

Benefit delivery mandates are expanded to allow more speedy resolution of disputed claims, including expediting emergency hearings to resolve cases within 180 days, allowing injured workers to

receive quicker treatment and facilitate and earlier return to work.

The benefit structure was amended to increase the minimum benefit for a worker killed on the job, and to set minimum rates for amputations at 50% of the Statewide Average Weekly Wage. The law also sets the maximum wage differential rate at 100% of the Statewide Average Weekly Wage for workers who qualify and extends the reopening of the claim to 60 months, as well as increases burial benefits to better cover actual costs.

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## **MANUFACTURING INNOVATION LEADERSHIP AT RISK**

Excerpt From: IMA Executive Memo 2/06

Downward trends in US manufacturing innovation pose a serious threat to America's long-term economic growth and living standards, according to a new report released by the Council of Manufacturing Associations (CMA) and the Manufacturing Institute of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

According to the new report, five clear warning signs show that America's innovation process is at risk:

- Manufacturing output since the last recession lags that of earlier economic recoveries – its 15% growth is only half the pace averaged in recoveries of the past half-century.
- Manufacturing capacity remains underutilized, slowing investment in new plants and equipment. Manufacturing capacity has grown at less than

- 1% annually (compared with 5% in the 1990s).
- The US share of global trade in manufactured products has shrunk, falling from 13% in the 1990s to 10% in 2004. The US now runs a trade deficit in Advanced Technology Products, and the US share of global trade in value-added export industries such as machinery and equipment is falling.
- US manufacturing offers rewarding and desirable careers for highly skilled workers. Yet the perception that manufacturing employment is unstable and lacks job opportunities discourages new worker entry. While manufacturing continues to pay better than other industries, the sector is experiencing a broadening shortage of skilled workers.
- America's long standing leadership in R&D is being challenged. While the US continues to spend more than any other country on R&D investment, US growth in R&D has averaged only about 1% per year in real terms since 2000.

The full report, "U.S. Manufacturing Innovation at Risk," by Dr. Joel Popkin is available at [www.nam.org/Popkinreport](http://www.nam.org/Popkinreport).

On a more up note, Illinois exports reached a record high in 2005, surging almost twice as fast as exports nationwide, giving the state's dwindling manufacturing sector a boost, according to a recent report in Crain's Chicago Business.

In the first 11 months of 2005, the value of goods exported from Illinois jumped 19% to \$32.68 billion.

Projections are that Illinois will top \$35 billion for the full year, making Illinois the sixth largest exporter in the nation and on par with Pennsylvania as the fastest-growing exporter.

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### **TRAINING SEMINAR ON COMPLIANCE WITH EMPLOYMENT LAWS**

CMFI's law firm (Stone, Poggrund & Korey) is offering a new series of affordable management training seminars for our members.

Various US Courts of Appeal have created a new burden on employers to train managers to comply with laws prohibiting employment discrimination and harassment. These courts clearly establish the principle that an employer must do more than rely on "boiler plate" posters, notices, and handbooks which describe illegal discrimination, harassment and procedures for filing grievances.

Failure to train managers about employment laws may result in the assessment of punitive damages for violations of anti-discrimination laws because there was "no effort to train hiring managers about the Age Discrimination Laws."

In addition to understanding anti-discrimination laws, employers can prevent and reduce employment liability if they investigate and promptly correct illegal harassment. Courts have begun to provide guidance as to

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**what constitutes reasonable conduct by employers in harassment investigations.**

**To insure compliance with the recent court decisions, our legal counsel highly recommends that every company provide its managers with at least one training seminar on compliance with employment laws.**

**If you are interested in such a seminar for your company (two hours in duration), then please contact David Pogrund, Stone, Pogrund & Korey, 32<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 221 N. LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 782-3636 to arrange a convenient time for training at your company. The seminar fee of \$600.00 is quite reasonable and holding the seminar at your facility makes it convenient for your personnel to attend. As an added bonus, Jodi Eisenstadt, employee relations attorney for Workplace Resolutions, Ltd. has offered to lead a section of the seminar on how to investigate harassment claims. Ms. Eisenstadt has had extensive experience investigating harassment complaints.**

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### **A COUPLE OF NICE MEMBER BENEFITS**

**Watch for CMFI's new Wage Survey with your May newsletter. This is a wonderful member benefit but only those CMFI members completing and returning the survey will be sent the tabulated results.**

**Also check out CMFI's new website: (chicagometalfinishers.org). Although we're still working on it, you can already find an updated member directory and processes.**