NEWPORT NEWS, Va., June 15, 2017: Today, The Manufacturing Institute, Arconic Foundation, and Newport News Shipbuilding hosted STEP Forward: Hampton Roads, a networking event for women in manufacturing to discuss challenges and opportunities, connect with their peers, and share best practices in the workplace. This event gave the manufacturing industry an opportunity to shine a light on the untapped opportunities for women in a rewarding field.

While women make up about 47 percent of the labor force, they only represent 29 percent of the manufacturing workforce. The Manufacturing Institute, Arconic Foundation and Newport News Shipbuilding are committed to improve and tackle this glaring statistic through the STEP Forward series.

STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Production) Forward brings all levels of women in manufacturing together, from the factory floor to the c-suite, providing opportunities to connect with industry leaders. The attendees heard advice and key takeaways from Jasmine Brown, Alloy/Weld Process Owner, Arconic; Keira Lombardo, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Smithfield Foods; Chris Miner, Vice President, In-Service Aircraft Carrier Program, Newport News Shipbuilding; and AJ Jorgenson, AVP of Strategic Engagement at The Manufacturing Institute.

"Arconic and Arconic Foundation value diversity in the workforce and are committed to supporting women in pursuit of manufacturing careers," said Suzanne van de Raadt Vice President, Global Communications and Program Development. "Today’s manufacturing industry offers high-tech, higher paying careers in which women can and do succeed, and where their diversity of thought, experience, skills and background are needed to ensure continued advancements.”

The Manufacturing Institute launched the STEP Ahead initiative to honor and promote the role of women in the manufacturing industry through recognition, research, and leadership. STEP Forward brings the STEP Ahead initiative into the community to increase engagement and awareness, and allow attendees to connect to local partners.
“STEP Forward mobilizes women to act as a catalyst for change within their company and their community,” The Manufacturing Institute AVP of Strategic Engagement AJ Jorgenson said. “This is our third year partnering with Arconic Foundation hosting STEP Forward events, and we are excited to have the opportunity to continue spreading our message to women all across the U.S.”

The STEP Forward event took place at the Newport News Marriott at City Center from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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**About The Manufacturing Institute**

The Manufacturing Institute (the Institute) is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. As a non-partisan organization, the Institute is committed to delivering leading-edge information and services to the nation’s manufacturers. The Institute is the authority on the attraction, qualification and development of world-class manufacturing talent. For more information, please visit [www.themanufacturinginstitute.org](http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org).

**About Arconic Foundation**

As the philanthropic arm of Arconic – which works in close partnership with customers to solve complex engineering challenges to transform the way we fly, drive, build and power – Arconic Foundation supports programs that help prepare the 21st century engineering and advanced manufacturing workforce. Through collaboration with our nonprofit partners, our initiatives make quality STEM education opportunities available to students; support engineering and technical skills training through community colleges, vocational technical schools and universities around the world; and help to create access for underrepresented individuals to the STEM fields. The work of Arconic Foundation is further enhanced by the thousands of Arconic employee volunteers who share their talents and time to make a difference in their communities. Established in 2016, Arconic Foundation is active in 16 countries around the globe. For more information, visit [www.ArconicFoundation.com](http://www.ArconicFoundation.com) and follow our programming on social media.