

Bartow County businesses recognized this week

by Mark Andrews

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Manufacturing Appreciation Week was held this week, with the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce helping to organize tours of local manufacturers and industries.

Tamara Brock and Rachel Rowell, co-chairpersons for Manufacturing Appreciation Week, said the week is an opportunity to see how businesses can make an impact on their community.

"Manufacturing Appreciation Week is a statewide recognized program," Brock said, "and it's a chance for the state and the local chambers [of commerce] to recognize industry and manufacturers in their community and their huge economic impact on their area."

The week concludes today with an appreciation breakfast for the manufacturers at the Clarence Brown Conference Center during which five businesses are given appreciation awards.

Brock and Rowell said Bartow has over 130 manufacturers or industries that contribute 9,000 jobs and have a payroll of \$308 million.

"That's nearly 20 percent of our work force," Rowell said.

Members of the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce this week had the opportunity to tour four local manufacturers -- Ti Group Automotive Systems, Gerdau Ameristeel, Anheuser-Busch's Cartersville Brewery and Americo Manufacturing Co.

The Daily Tribune News visited Anheuser-Busch's Cartersville Brewery and Americo Manufacturing Co., which collectively employ about 480 full-time employees.

Anheuser-Busch broke ground in 1988 and made its first shipment in 1993. Currently, the 900,000 square-foot facility is home to 563 total active employees.

Rob Haas, general manager for the Cartersville brewery, said he and his employees take pride in their product as well as their environmental efforts and safety record.

For example, Haas said when Cartersville suffered from a water shortage about three years ago, a team at the brewery worked to conserve the resource without impacting their product.

"Now, Cartersville is ranked No. 1 in the entire global company in water usage," Haas said.

He gave credit to the team who worked to reduce the amount of water used per barrel of beer produced to water used.

"We're an 8 million barrel facility and we're using three barrels [of water] per barrel [of beer]," Haas said.

He said the facility functions with about 99 percent recyclable capabilities.

"We're very cognizant of every waste material and we do everything we can to make sure it's recycled," Haas said. "... We're proud of the facility, we're proud of the company, but most importantly we're really proud to be a part of Cartersville and we want to be here for the long haul."

Allan Howell, general manager at the Americo Manufacturing Co.'s Cartersville location, said the business opened its doors in January and currently houses about 40 full-time employees.

The main Americo facility is in Acworth, but the Cartersville location produces flat mats made of polypropylene or nylon with logos and fonts used by companies like Reebok. The mats can also be custom made in terms of color and art for home use.

"We also sell and manufacture a variety of [other] mats and graphic mats," Howell said. "... Pretty much any picture or art you want, we can put on a mat."

Operations manager Nick Nunez showed chamber members the amount of effort and steps it takes when producing one of these particular types of mats.

"When you see a mat, you don't think of the time it takes [to produce]," Nunez said, "but a lot of work goes into it."

Brock said she appreciates all the business which contribute to Bartow County.

"We're a large manufacturing community and we're very privileged that we do have a diverse group of manufacturers here," Brock said.