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Silver Crescent Foundation Appoints New President Preparing State's Future Workforce a Primary Goal of New President

Karen Owens

The Board of the Silver Crescent Foundation, a statewide organization committed to promoting manufacturing vitality and career opportunities in South Carolina, has named Karen Owens as its new President. Owens will begin her tenure on October 1 and will work with a number of partners to build the state's future workforce pipeline.

"I am grateful to the board for this outstanding opportunity to promote manufacturing's important economic impact in South Carolina," Owens said. "We have so many world-class companies like Bridgestone-Firestone, BMW and Roche Carolina making products used by millions of global consumers. I am committed to promoting South Carolina's manufacturing community and supporting efforts that encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing."

One of the cornerstones of the Foundation's mission is to encourage young people to pursue their studies so they can be the creative and innovative workforce of the future. According to Owens, foundation programs like Camp Success and Technology Champions are vital for engaging students and their parents about the possibilities that exist here in South Carolina's manufacturing sector. Advanced manufacturing requires knowledgeable employees who can solve problems and handle the ever-changing demands of the global economy.

"When you say manufacturing I think a lot of people envision these dirty old factories and textile mills of the past," she added. "That's not what manufacturing looks like today. Plants are automated, run by computers, use robots and in most cases require highly trained technical employees that can operate this sophisticated equipment. They are clean, well organized and highly productive. I look forward to working with a number of partners throughout the state to make sure people understand the beneficial relationships that exist between manufacturing and a high quality of life for our citizens."

Silver Crescent Founder Tony Smith will remain with the Foundation, serving as the organization's chief operating officer.

"For many years the Foundation focused its energy and resources toward helping manufacturing improve productivity," Smith said. "The Foundation is now poised to become an important advocate of South Carolina's manufacturing industry that showcases innovation and quality and nurture career interest among young people.

"At this juncture it is time for new leadership and I am so pleased that Karen Owens has accepted this challenge. Karen understands the opportunity associated with a strong manufacturing economy and she has the instinct, understanding and insight to lead the foundation in this important endeavor. She is energized by the opportunity to lead, create and is motivated to make a difference," Smith added.

A Columbia native, Owens most recently served as Vice President of Business Development for the Clare Morris Agency, a woman-owned marketing and communications firm that specializes in economic development and the knowledge economy. Prior to joining CMA, she was employed by the SC Department of Commerce as a Communications Manager and a Recycling Development Project Manager.

"In her short time with our firm, Karen has been a valued member of our team, bringing in several new clients that generated more than \$100,000 in new revenue," said Clare Morris, President of the agency that bears her name. "At the same time, we are excited for this wonderful opportunity for one of our own to lead an organization with the reputation of the Silver Crescent Foundation and look forward to a very strong working relationship as we continue to serve as its agency of record."

With more than 30 years of experience in supporting education, engineering and technology development in South Carolina, the Silver Crescent Foundation is dedicated to addressing the needs of our future workforce pipeline by supporting programs that capture the imaginations of young people and foster a desire to become the designers, engineers and manufacturing leaders of tomorrow.