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AM Forward initiative to create more resilient supply chains

Virigina-based 3D metal printing manufacturer, FasTech attended recent Additive Manufacturing Forward Initiative event, launched by President Biden.

Virigina-based 3D metal printing manufacturer, FasTech LLC attended the recent Additive Manufacturing (AM) Forward Initiative event, launched by President Biden. Additive manufacturing, sometimes known as 3D metal printing, is the process whereby 3D metal shapes are created by depositing layers of metal on top of each other – and the AM Forward programme is designed to speed up the adoption of additive manufacturing throughout the US by developing productive partnerships between large American manufacturers and the country's many small and mid-sized organisations.

Fragile supply chains can pose a significant break on a country's economy – and the AM Forward Initiative is designed to improve the US supply chain's resilience, to provide more stable order books amongst the small and medium sized manufacturers and to help support training programmes that upskill the next generation of employees so that they can find well-paid jobs in the future.

Five large original equipment manufacturers (OEM) are signed up to the AM Forward initiative: General Electric Aviation, Honeywell, Siemens Energy, Raytheon Technologies, and Lockheed Martin. Through the AM Forward voluntary partnership, these OEMs are helping grow the market for additive manufactured products by providing clear demand signals to small and mid-sized US firms, technical assistance and training programs. These OEMs should derive significant benefits themselves through improved supply chain security, reduced costs sometimes as much as 50%, shorter lead times and the ability to manufacture parts that just could not be produced using traditional manufacturing methods.

"We were delighted to be at the launch of the AM Forward Initiative in Hamilton, Ohio and to have the opportunity to discuss, directly with President Biden, the enormous potential that additive manufacturing presents in transforming the value chain," said Alan Pearce, CEO of FasTech. "Our business was one of the first in the US to use the GEFERTEC 3DMP®arc405 and GEFERTEC 3DMP®arc605 machines that deliver 3D printing without lasers or powders. Our Wire Arc Additive Manufacturing (WAAM) expertise coupled with our extensive CNC machining and reverse engineering capabilities means that we are in a great position to provide cutting edge solutions to our customers – whether this is to produce a prototype or manufacture extremely large parts within tight deadlines. As you can imagine, we work closely with some of the largest companies in the US to develop new processes and to explore ways of working more sustainably."

Importantly for the aerospace and defense industries, where long lead times can present a real problem, additive manufacturing can be up to 10 times faster than conventional

manufacturing methods. This coupled with significantly lower material costs, due to nearly 100% utilization, the wide range of off-the-shelf materials readily available and the ability to make parts that simply would not possible using conventional manufacturing methods, makes 3D metal printing an extremely attractive option.

FasTech will be exhibiting at the forthcoming Farnborough International Airshow, in the USA Partnership Pavilion. If you would like meet the team and to find out more about FasTech's 3D metal manufacturing capabilities, please drop by the FasTech stand.

The White House: Using Additive Manufacturing to Improve Supply Chain Resilience and Bolster Small and Mid-Sized Firms
FasTech: A quick guide to metal additive manufacturing
FasTech: How we work and apply WAAM to meet our customers

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