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Blumenthal, Murphy conducting survey of manufacturers' needs

BY MARC SILVESTRINI REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY -- Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and his colleague, Rep. Christopher S. Murphy, D-5th District, want to add some steak to the sizzle.

The two lawmakers Thursday unveiled a manufacturing survey they developed to learn more about the needs of Connecticut manufacturers. They discussed the survey during at a manufacturing roundtable hosted by the Connecticut Manufacturing Coalition at the Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut Inc.'s headquarters on Interstate Lane.

Frank J. Johnson, president of the Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut, and Bonnie Del Conte, president and CEO of CONNSTEP Inc., a business consulting firm supported by the state Department of Economic and Community Development, also spoke during the roundtable. About 50 manufacturers from across the state attended.

The survey is an attempt to add harder, more empirical data to the anecdotal evidence Blumenthal and Murphy have collected during their tours of manufacturing facilities across the state, Murphy said.

"You hear a lot of stories if you spend any time on the floor of manufacturing plants in Connecticut," Murphy said. "We've both heard a lot of those stories. This survey will add a level of hard data to go along with those stories."

The survey results will make Connecticut's Congressional delegation more effective in its efforts to advocate for Connecticut manufacturers, because some of the delegation's colleagues in Congress are "moved by the stories, while others respond more to the data," Murphy said.

He also said he believes Connecticut's manufacturers will help lead the state out of its economic slump.

"I want to hear directly from those companies about how to craft policy that helps them grow," he said. "We've got to get creative to generate more jobs and business opportunities for our skilled workforce, and that process begins with this survey."

Blumenthal called manufacturing the lifeblood of the state and nation's economy.

"I am committed to making sure that Connecticut's manufacturing sector has the tools it needs to grow and compete in the global economy," he said. "This survey will provide us with the information we need to create policy solutions that lay the foundation for manufacturing businesses to thrive, create jobs and produce the

cutting edge technology."

The survey is available on Murphy's website at www.Christmurphy.house.gov, and will be available on Blumenthal's site, www.Blumenthal.senate.gov, soon.

The survey contains about 25 questions and takes roughly 20 minutes to complete. It will be available on the two websites until at least May 20, Murphy said.

After the survey closes, the data will be analyzed; recommendations, suggestions and comments from survey-takers will be considered, and a report summarizing the findings will be issued, he said. The final report will be available on both websites.

Survey takers interested in receiving a copy of the report can also provide their e-mail addresses at the end of the survey.

All who participate in the survey will remain anonymous.