

Women Leading the Charge at Toyota, Honored with STEP Ahead Awards

November 05, 2021

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WASHINGTON (November 5, 2021) – Two Toyota employees were honored last night by The Manufacturing Institute, at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., with STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Ahead Awards.

The STEP Ahead Awards honor female leaders in science, technology, engineering and production careers for their excellence and outstanding leadership. This year, the awards recognized 100 honorees and 30 emerging leaders, comprised of 106 different companies. The two Toyota winners were:

- Sandy Nott, vice president administration, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky
- Rebecca Chmelev, senior engineer, Advanced Technology, Toyota Motor North America

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“We congratulate Toyota’s STEP Ahead winners for this outstanding achievement and celebrate their exemplary leadership being recognized across the manufacturing field,” said Norm Bafunno, senior vice president of unit manufacturing and engineering at Toyota Motor North America. “At Toyota, we aim to elevate the perspectives and voices of all women within our company by empowering them to achieve their highest potential and inspire the next generation of leaders.”

Women represent one of manufacturing’s largest untapped talent pools. According to The Manufacturing Institute, females represent about half of the current U.S. workforce, but only 29% in the manufacturing

industry.

“Women in manufacturing proved themselves time and time again after the pandemic began, leading our industry in innovation and progress,” said Manufacturing Institute executive director Carolyn Lee. “The skills gap persisted throughout the pandemic, but our STEP Ahead honorees will help us fight it—they’ll play a crucial role in bringing more talented, motivated women into manufacturing.”

The STEP Ahead Awards are part of the larger STEP Ahead Initiative, launched to empower women in the manufacturing industry and drive them to mentor future leaders.

Twenty-one Toyota employees have previously received this prestigious award.