

NIST MEP State Stakeholder Newsletter

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NIST MEP New Strategic Plan Aimed at Enhancing Role in Innovation and Technology Transfer

NIST MEP's decision to expand beyond helping companies implement lean manufacturing practices, productivity improvements and marketing strategies is reflected in its Next Generation Strategic Plan

State economic development programs are concentrating on creating new industries and funding technology incubators, commercialization programs, and entrepreneurial activities. Through partnerships and connections with state technology development organizations, federal labs and university researchers, NIST MEP is uniquely positioned to serve as a resource in bringing together technological advances to meet the process improvement and product development needs of small manufacturers. The strategic plan can be found at <http://www.mep.nist.gov/NextGenerationMEPStrategy.pdf>.

ACCRA Conference and State Evaluators Roundtable Meeting – June 6-8, 2006

Ned Ellington, Joe Giannamore, Karen Lellock, and Aimee Dobrzeniecki represented NIST MEP at the ACCRA, <http://www.accra.org>, conference June 6-8th. NIST MEP provided an overview of the MEP program and identified opportunities to collaborate with state economic analysis staff as they measure the impact of manufacturing, innovation, and technology. At the State Roundtable, Kathleen Miller from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce presented ways in which state economic development research staff could collaborate and consider creative approaches to leverage funding in support of research. Kathleen presented a very successful project resulting in a multi-year review of the healthcare needs with her state and how resources should be deployed to meet the future needs. The *Health Care Industry Analysis Report* parts 1 through 3 is available in pdf format at <http://www.okcommerce.gov/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=141&Itemid=98>.

NIST MEP moderated a session where Amy Polonchek, Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Bob Isaacson, Analysis and Evaluation Director, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development provided two examples of how they are using information and analysis of supply chains in their states to plan for future support of small manufacturers – the supplier base. The presentations from this meeting are posted on the NIST MEP public site at <http://www.mep.nist.gov/state-affairs/state.html>.

NIST MEP Stakeholder Meetings in North Carolina

On June 20th, Roger Kilmer, Mike Simpson, Aimee Dobrzeniecki, Terri Helmlinger-Ratcliff, and Ken Poole (ACCRA) met with several representatives of the North Carolina State government and regional economic development organizations. Brief discussions about how the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in North Carolina (especially the business services group) could more effectively collaborate with MEP through NCSU's IES program were held with the following people:

- Roger Shackelford, Executive Director, Commission on Workforce Development, North Carolina Department of Commerce
- Chris Beachum, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Assistant Secretary for Policy Research and Strategic Planning (Piedmont Triad WIRED project – State project manager)
- John Hardin, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Deputy Director of the Board of Science and Technology
- Fred Williams, Executive Vice President and COO
- Willa Dickens, Associate Vice President, Economic & Workforce Development, North Carolina Community College System
- Don Kirkman, President and CEO Piedmont Triad Partnership (DOL WIRED project in North Carolina)
- Penny Whiteheart, Executive Vice President, Piedmont Triad Partnership

NIST MEP 2006 National Conference

In May, more than half of the MEP field staff from across the country met in Orlando, Florida for the 2006 MEP National Conference. This four-day professional development conference focused on MEP's market-driven mission of assisting small manufacturers to adopt current manufacturing and business best practices. The collective knowledge and experience of the MEP system was reflected in the over 100 sessions. Several sessions were of particular interest to state stakeholders and are highlighted below. The PowerPoint presentations are also attached.

Sessions 104 and 105: The Future of Manufacturing provided an updated perspective about where manufacturing technologies are heading. These sessions were of particular interest to MEP stakeholders because they provided information to understand the implications for economic development. The sessions were designed to help policy makers and program managers understand the significant changes that are redefining the economic structure of our manufacturing industries. The sessions also provided a pathway for understanding how expected structural economic changes influence how economic development policymakers should respond to the needs of U.S. manufacturing.

Session 108: The secrets to Growing Manufacturing Sectors reviewed the economic success and regional differences of certain sectors within manufacturing that have continued to add jobs, even during the most recent recession. The competitive advantages that make growing in the U.S. preferable to global outsourcing, likely challenges to future growth and how the U.S. and state policymakers help to make a difference were among the topics discussed by representatives from several of the most successful industries.

Session 201: Helping Traditional Businesses Become Sustainable and Sustainable Businesses More Profitable focused on the strategic and operational aspects of sustainable manufacturing and what it means to the health, resilience, and success of SME clients. Sustainability has become a major business goal for all enterprises, especially for small U.S. manufacturers. Customized approaches that engage company leadership in considering all aspects of their business and socio-economic environment – markets, customers, employees, operations, culture, and community were discussed.