MEP • MANUFACTURING
EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP®

MEP Advisory Board
2017 ANNUAL REPORT

MEP Advisory Board Report for 2017

Last year was one of tremendous strengthening of the MEP National Network™, NIST MEP, and the MEP Advisory Board. Changes based on new legislation and the objectives of the MEP National Network Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 led to important innovations in programming.

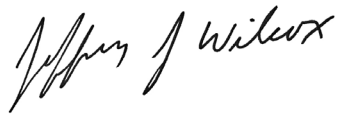
The year started with the signing into law of S.3084, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (P.L. 114-329). This key piece of legislation changed the MEP Program's non-federal to federal cost share ratio from 2:1 to 1:1. This allows MEP Centers to work with additional smaller and rural manufacturers instead of having to focus so heavily on finding match dollars. The updated legislation also allowed us to add members to the MEP Advisory Board. With a historic number of 15 members this year, we now represent the geographic breadth of manufacturing across America!

The MEP Advisory Board met in March, April and September of 2017 and our members spent time advising NIST MEP leadership and working within subcommittees to explore and develop recommendations on essential programmatic goals, ultimately hearing final report-outs to conclude those subcommittees. The Board convened a joint workshop with Center Board leadership to increase knowledge sharing and exchange governance best practices. In addition, we advised on the development and subsequently approved the current MEP National Network Strategic Plan.

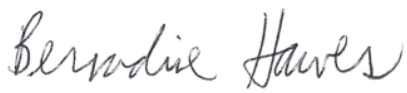
The Strategic Plan's principle goals of 'Empower Manufacturers,' 'Champion Manufacturing,' 'Leverage Partnerships,' and "Transform the Network' have already taken shape in the new MEP National Network Brand. Through this initiative, the capabilities of the MEP Center experts will expand into a National Network of trusted advisors just in time to support the needs of our country's defense industrial base and help U.S. manufacturers navigate the technology revolution underway in manufacturing. The Board is actively engaged in moving the principle goals forward in 2018 with the development of new working groups, specifically the Supply Chain Development Working Group (with focus on defense supplier gaps) and the Performance/ Research Development Working Group.

The Advisory Board remains committed to sharing our experience and expertise on the MEP Program's activities into the new year with the sustained focus on ensuring the competitiveness and success of U.S. manufacturers. We look forward to a productive and exciting year of continued growth.

Pursuant to 15 U.S. Code § 278(k)(m)(5) of the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, Public Law 114-329, we respectfully submit this 2017 Annual Report to the Secretary of Commerce and Congress.



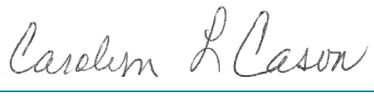
Jeffrey Wilcox, Chair
Vice President for Engineering
Lockheed Martin
Bethesda, Maryland



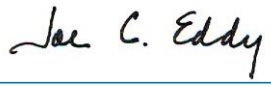
Bernadine Hawes, Vice Chair
Research Analyst
Community Marketing Concepts
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jose Anaya, Dean Community Advancement
El Camino Community College
Hawthorne, California

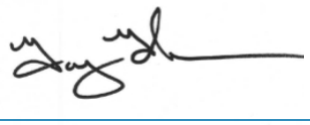
E. LaDon Byars, President & CEO
Colonial Diversified
Polymer Products, LLC
Dyersburg, Tennessee



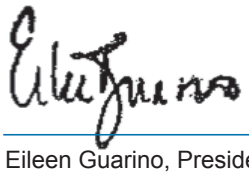
Dr. Carolyn L. Cason, Professor Emerita
University of Texas – Arlington
Arlington, Texas



Joe Eddy, President & CEO
Eagle Manufacturing
Wellsburg, West Virginia



Gary Groleau, Corporate Manager of Labor
Relations & Organizational Development
New Hampshire Ball Bearings, Inc.
Laconia, New Hampshire



Eileen Guarino, President & CEO
Greno Industries
Scotia, New York

Mary Isbister, President
GenMet Corporation
Mequon, Wisconsin

Thomas M. Lee, President & CEO
Vulcan, Inc.
Foley, Alabama

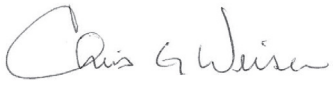
Mitch Magee, Director Engineering,
Architectural Coatings
PPG's Architectural Coatings
Dover, Delaware

Matthew Newman, Director Business Management
Covanta
Bixby, Oklahoma

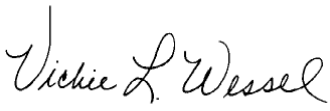
Kathay Rennels, Associate Vice President for Engagement
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO

George Spottswood, CEO
Quality Filters
Robertsdale, Alabama

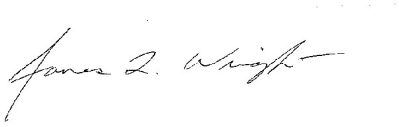
Leslie Taito, Senior Vice President for Corporate Operations
Hope Global
Cumberland, Rhode Island



Chris Weiser, Owner & President
J.V. Manufacturing, Inc.
Springdale, Arkansas



Vickie Wessel, President
Spirit Electronics, Inc.
Phoenix, Arizona



Jim Wright, Vice-President of Operations
Proof Research
Columbia Falls, Montana

Ed Wolbert, President
Transco Products, Inc.
Chicago, Illinois

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About the Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 created the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership program (MEP) to improve the competitiveness of U.S.-based manufacturing by making manufacturing technologies, processes, and services more accessible to small and medium-sized manufacturers. Over the last 30 years, NIST MEP and the MEP National Network have been focused on bridging the manufacturing productivity gap, identifying opportunities for growth, and encouraging technology deployment.

Growing from a pilot project of just three Centers to a network of organizations in every state and Puerto Rico, the MEP National Network (the Network) provides its manufacturing customers with a wide array of fundamental services in business and process improvements. Today, the Network consists of 51 MEP Centers in every state and Puerto Rico with over 1,300 experts, approximately 425 field locations, and more than 2,000 service providers. According to a third-party survey, in 2017 the Network interacted with over 26,000 manufacturers. MEP Center clients from across the country reported that the assistance they received helped to create and retain more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs in 2017, up from nearly 87,000 in 2016. Clients also retained more than $12 billion in sales, up from $9.3 billion the previous year and realized more than $1.7 billion in cost savings, an increase of $.3 billion from 2016. For every one dollar of federal investment, the Network generates $27.20 in new sales growth for manufacturers and $27.30 in new client investment. This translates into $3.5 billion in new sales annually. And, for every $1,291 of federal investment, MEP creates or retains one manufacturing job.

The MEP Centers and their partners, including state governments, universities, community colleges, non-profit entities, associations, and private consultants provide manufacturers with the services needed to reduce bottom-line expenses and grow top-line profits, both of which are necessary to thrive in the global marketplace.

American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (AICA) Brings Important Changes to the Program and the MEP Advisory Board in 2017

After years of work by the Advisory Board and many other supporters of the program, S.3084, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (AICA), was passed by Congress in December of 2016 and was signed into law (P.L. 114-329) on January 6, 2017. This achievement is central to the Board as it officially codifies the MEP Advisory Board.

This was a significant achievement for the MEP Program as the passage of this bill represented some of the most important legislative changes in the Program's history, third only to the Program's creation in 1988 and sunset clause removal in 1998. The AICA permanently adjusted the cost share structure to 1:1, formalized a recompetition for Centers after 10 consecutive years of funding, modified the evaluation process/ Panel Review, and strengthened Center Board governance. In addition, the statute changed the MEP Advisory Board structure, specifically requiring a minimum number of 10 Board members, allowing for a positive influx of geographically disbursed new members with valued expertise from across the country.

The Board was pleased to see this important legislation signed into law and is proud to have worked tirelessly over the last few years on this successful effort.

About the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Advisory Board

Per the ACIA, the purpose of the Board is to provide advice and recommendations to the NIST Director on:

- The activities, plans and policies of NIST MEP
- The soundness of NIST MEP's plans and strategies
- Current performance in relation to MEP Program plans
- Functions solely in an advisory capacity

The MEP Advisory Board has always consisted of members broadly representing the interests and needs of the manufacturing sector appointed by the Director of NIST. Now under the new AICA, at least two members shall be employed by or sit on an Advisory Board for an MEP Center, and at least five other members shall be from U.S. small businesses representing the manufacturing sector. An additional requirement includes that at least one Board member represent a community college. The Board terms consist of a limit of two consecutive full three-year terms; Board members are ineligible for re-appointment during the one-year period following the expiration of the second term.

In addition, the law requires the Board to meet at least biannually. In 2017, the Board met three times to perform its chartered functions.

Advisory Board Members in 2017

This was an unprecedented year of growth for the MEP Advisory Board. Based on the new statute requirements and four long-time Board members' terms ending, it was essential to add new members. In 2017, 10 new Board members were added to the roster, increasing the Board from 10 to 15 members. Designating a new Chair and Vice Chair were also a part of this transitional effort, as the Board's previous Chair, Vicki Wessel, ended her second term in May of 2017. The four Board members leaving service offered leadership and advice over their years of service and we thank them for their time and commitment to the MEP Program's Advisory Board.

Jeffrey Wilcox, former Board Vice Chair, stepped into the Chair role and Bernadine Hawes accepted the nomination for Vice Chair. Gary Groleau announced his retirement at the end of 2017. The current group represents the diversity of the U.S. manufacturing industry, from CEOs and executives at various sized manufacturing companies to education leaders at both state and community college institutions of higher education. The important perspectives of these volunteers will positively impact the MEP Program into the future.

JEFFREY WILCOX, Chair

Second Term expires: May 2019

Jeffrey J. Wilcox is the Vice President for Engineering at the Lockheed Martin Corporation, responsible for leading the development and execution of engineering strategy for the Lockheed Martin Engineering Enterprise and its 60,000 engineers, scientists, and technologists. Throughout his career, Mr. Wilcox has led several critical initiatives for the Lockheed Martin Corporation, including Engineering for Affordability, the Systems and Software Initiative, the Advanced Manufacturing Initiative, and the Energy Solutions Center launch. Prior to joining Lockheed Martin, Mr. Wilcox served as Senior Vice President at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) in McLean, Virginia. Mr. Wilcox graduated from Drexel University with a master's degree in Electrical Engineering and Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio with a degree in Biomedical Engineering. He serves on the Drexel University Leadership Council, the Stevens Institute of Technology School of Systems and Enterprises Advisory Board, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) Technical Operations Council, the MIT Open CourseWare Next Decade Alliance Advisory Council, and the US Manufacturing Competitiveness Initiative (USMCI) Steering Committee. Mr. Wilcox is an American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Associate Fellow and a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

BERNADINE HAWES, Vice-Chair

Second Term expires: May 2020

Bernadine Hawes is an executive level nonprofit professional and economic development specialist working in the areas of project management, strategy development, compliance, and evaluation. Her most recent achievement has been the authorship of a best practices manual for small business and economic development which was funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to American Cities Foundation. Ms. Hawes began her career at the University City Science Center (Philadelphia) starting as a senior-level project administrator and later Vice President. Currently she is a senior research analyst for Community Marketing Concepts. Ms. Hawes is Chairwoman of the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center. She also serves on the Board of the PEC Community Development Corporation which focuses on community development initiatives in Philadelphia, is Chair of the PEC Foundation, and serves on the Advisory Board of the Philadelphia Urban League Entrepreneurship Center. Born and raised in Washington, DC, Ms. Hawes has an MS Degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She is summa cum laude graduate of Lincoln University (PA). She has been the national Co-Chair of Penn's Black Alumni Society and former member of Penn's Brister Society for Diversity Inclusion.

JOSE ANAYA

First Term expires: July 2019

Jose Anaya, Dean, oversees the El Camino Community College District's Community Advancement Division and Business Training Center. Prior to joining the staff at El Camino College, he directed economic development programs at Cerritos College. Under Anaya's guidance, Cerritos College received numerous honors and recognition related to workforce development. These included a Best Practices award for its partnership with Lockheed Martin, and selection by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and its partners as one of five national exemplary models for expanding postsecondary education and training opportunities for Hispanic workers. Mr. Anaya's earlier experiences include work in the private sector with corporations such as Honeywell, ITT Industries and DataCard. He has broad experience and expertise in the areas of product design, manufacturing and management, as well as economic and workforce development. Mr. Anaya has a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from California Polytechnics University, Pomona, and an MBA with an emphasis in entrepreneurship from the University of Southern California.

E. LADON BYARS

First Term expires: February 2020

LaDon is the President and CEO of Colonial Diversified Polymer Products, LLC of Dyersburg, Tennessee. Colonial Diversified produces high-quality rubber products for a wide variety of industries including automotive, defense, commercial building, construction, farm equipment, aerospace, computers, medical, telecommunications, recreation, health, entertainment, plumbing, refrigeration and many more. She started out as a financial analyst and rose to become the president of the company. LaDon is very active in the manufacturing community, has received many awards, and is on the Advisory Board of the University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services, the MEP Center in Tennessee.

CAROLYN CASON

Second Term expires: May 2020

Carolyn L. Cason, Professor Emerita at The University of Texas at Arlington, has had a distinguished career as a scientist, teacher, academic leader and innovator. She began her professional career as a critical care nurse and has held university teaching appointments for over 35 years. She joined the University of Texas at Arlington in 1997 as Professor and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Nursing and served as the university's Vice President for Research from 2010 to June 2015. She envisioned and built the nation's first comprehensive healthcare simulation research and development center, the Smart Hospital, creating the prototype for the nation. She led the efforts that created Smart Care (a living laboratory dedicated to developing non-invasive, pervasive technology to monitor health changes and support independent living) and the Shimadzu Institute for Research Technologies (a $25m core facility supporting chemistry, biology, nanotechnology, and material science research). In 2014 she was named a Charter Fellow, National Academy of Inventors and in October 2015, she was inducted as Fellow, American Academy of Nursing. She serves on a number of boards including that for Tech Fort Worth, a seed incubator/ accelerator supporting entrepreneurs commercializing innovative technologies.

JOE EDDY

First Term expires: March 2020

Joe Eddy is the President and CEO of Eagle Manufacturing, which produces more than 750 industrial safety and materials-handling products, many of them from high-density polyethylene. He is an advocate for regional ethane crackers that would create polyethylene. Mr. Eddy is past Chairman of the West Virginia Manufacturers Association and is Chairman of the WVMA Educational Fund Board, Vice President of the Foundation Board at West Virginia Northern Community College, on the Advisory Board at the McDonough Center for Leadership and Business at Marietta College, Treasurer of the Regional Economic Development Partnership Board, on the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's Charleston Industry Roundtable, on the Board of the National Association of Manufacturers, on the West Virginia Economic Development Authority Board and founded the Joseph and Debra Eddy Foundation, as well as the Joseph Eddy Technology Fund at West Virginia Northern Community College.

GARY GROLEAU

First Term: Resigned from the Board December 2017

Gary Groleau is the Corporate Manager of Labor Relations & Organizational Development for New Hampshire Ball Bearings (NHBB), a subsidiary of global manufacturer MinebeaMitsumi Inc. headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. NHBB has 1500+ employees and three US manufacturing plants, each producing a diverse range of ultra-precision aerospace and instrumentation products. Mr. Groleau inspires progressive approaches to Collective Bargaining, Workforce Development, Employee Training, Performance Management, Leadership Development and is a tireless advocate in promoting career opportunities in Advanced Manufacturing and High Technology. Mr. Groleau is also a member of the New Hampshire MEP Advisory Council.

EILEEN GUARINO

Second Term expired: May 2017

Eileen Guarino is currently President and COO of Greno Industries located in Scotia, New York. Ms. Guarino attended the University of South Carolina. Early in her career, Ms. Guarino was a buyer for a clothing company which represented apparel in various resort locations throughout SC, Florida and Georgia. There she developed a women's clothing line that retailed in nine locations. Her responsibilities ranged from coordination of the annual buys to importing fabrics to be manufactured in the U.S. In 1988, Ms. Guarino relocated to upstate New York, where she lent her talents to her new career in the manufacturing parts business as what she calls "part of the Greno team." Greno Industries is a family-owned business, and is a recognized minority women owned business in New York State. Ms. Guarino has worked to expand the company's clients to now include successful relationships in new markets throughout Europe and Asia, as well as leading the company's strategic planning growth efforts of its 60,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility. As a result of her "Greno team" approach, she works to enhance the personal and professional growth of employees to be trained in Six Sigma and Lean Principles. One of her successes in her business career, of which she is most proud, was creating and implementing an in house high school manufacturing internship training program with local high school students. Ms. Guarino was the past President of the Tech Valley Global Business Network, and current Vice President of the Center of Executives Network of Manufacturing. She is also an active civic member in her chambers of commerce and the Women's Business Enterprise Network Council.

MARY ISBISTER

First Term expires: March 2020

Mary Isbister is President of GenMet Corporation, a custom metal fabricating company located in Mequon, Wisconsin. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, she worked at Pfizer, in Groton, CT for 11 years. During her tenure at Pfizer she held positions in medicinal chemistry, clinical research, and senior organizational development. In 1997 she moved to Wisconsin and founded Synergy Solutions an organizational development and strategic planning consulting business which she ran until 2001. In 1999 Ms. Isbister and her husband purchased GenMet Corp., a custom manufacturer specializing in high value-added metal fabrications and enclosures. From 2010 – 2014 Ms. Isbister also served on the U.S. Manufacturing Council reporting to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

THOMAS M. LEE

First Term expired: May 2017

Thomas M. (Tommy) Lee has been employed by Vulcan, Inc., an aluminum manufacturing company in Foley, Alabama, since 1985. He is currently President and CEO, and also Secretary/Treasurer of Vulcan Scholarships, Inc. Prior to joining Vulcan, Mr. Lee was employed by Alabama Power Company for eight years as a Commercial Sales Engineer. Mr. Lee moved with his family from Birmingham to Foley in 1968 and has called South Alabama home for 45 years. He graduated from Foley High School in 1974 and received his B.S. degree in Industrial Engineering from Auburn University in 1978. He and his wife, Sandra, live in Gulf Shores and together they have 3 children: David 30, Anna 27 and Marcus 22. Mr. Lee has been active in the community since graduating from college. He is a former Chairman of the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and a past winner of the Walton M. Vines Free Enterprise Person of the Year. He was a member of Class XVIII of Leadership Alabama and has been president of several civic, local school and professional organizations. Currently he serves as the 2nd Vice Chair of the Business Council of Alabama.

MITCH MAGEE

First Term expires: March 2020

Mitch Magee is Director of Engineering for PPG's Architectural Coatings business unit, the consumer paints business of PPG, with over 35 manufacturing plants and distribution centers in North America. He has over 30 years of manufacturing experience, having served in a number of capacities from front line plant operations to global quality and EHS roles in PPG's automotive, industrial and food and beverage package coatings business units. Mitch is also actively engaged in workforce development as the past Chair of the Delaware Manufacturing Association and the development of Delaware's first Pathways to Prosperity high school manufacturing technology program. This program was developed in conjunction with Gov. Markell's administration, Delaware Technical and Community College and local high schools. Mitch is also a member of the Delaware Workforce Development Board and has served on the boards of Western Pennsylvania Air and Waste Management Association, Delaware Technical Community College-Terry Campus, Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce and as a Pickaway County (Ohio) Trustee. He is a graduate of Allegheny College (BS Liberal Arts), University of Pittsburgh (MS Chemical Engineering) and a licensed Professional Engineer.

MATTHEW NEWMAN

First Term expires: March 2020

Matthew Newman is the Director of Business Management for Covanta. He joined Covanta in 2008 and has over 25 years of experience in the energy industry, which includes renewable energy, natural gas, exploration and production, electricity generation, asset optimization, risk management and public relations. In his current position, Mr. Newman is responsible for all business matters pertaining to the financial management and public affairs initiatives of the Covanta Tulsa Renewable energy facility located in Tulsa, OK. In addition, Mr. Newman plays an integral role in advancing Covanta's corporate programs for the company's extensive fleet of Energy from Waste facilities across the United States.

KATHAY RENNELS

First Term expires: March 2019

Kathay Rennels is the Associate Vice President for Engagement at Colorado State University and works to advance collaborative networks across the state and create economic development opportunities. She has significant experience fostering public and private partnerships in regional and rural workforce development, with particular attention to Larimer and Weld Counties. Ms. Rennels previously served three terms as a Larimer County Commissioner and is now leading the Food and Agriculture Key Industry Network for the State of Colorado. Ms. Rennels helped initiate the "Value Chain of Colorado Agriculture" study, released in February 2013, and co-authored the November 2014 follow-up study, "The Emergence of an Innovation Cluster in the Agricultural Value Chain along Colorado's Front Range." She also initiated the "Advancing the Agricultural Economy through Innovation" summit, held at CSU in March 2015. Ms. Rennels was the President of Colorado Counties Inc. and named Commissioner of the year. She currently serves on the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, El Pomar Foundation and Manufacturer's Edge (the Colorado MEP Center) as a board member.

GEORGE SPOTTSWOOD

First Term expires: May 2020

George Spottswood is owner and CEO of Quality Filters, Inc. (QFI) in Robertsdale, Alabama. Quality Filters, Inc. (QFI) was incorporated in 1981 in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Mr. Spottswood and his father, Horace Spottswood, purchased the business in 1983. At the time of purchase, QFI employed eight associates and operated out of a 10,00-square foot rented facility, manufacturing a single HVAC air filter product. Today QFI employs 150 associates and operates out of a 70,000-square foot corporately owned facility. He has served two terms as Associate Council President of the National Air Filtration Association (NAFA) as well as served on several NAFA Committees in varying roles. Mr. Spottswood has been involved with the Alabama Technology Network (ATN, Alabama's MEP Center) since 2005. He was named 2005 ATN Business Innovator of the Year for the State of Alabama. Other corporate Awards include the 2011 Innovator of the Year Award for Alabama by the Southern Growth Policy Board.

LESLIE TAITO

First Term Expires: July 2020

Ms. Leslie Taito is currently the Senior Vice President for Corporate Operations for Hope Global, a manufacturer of products and engineering of textile solutions. She is responsible for operations improvement, M&A, product and service development and marketing strategy deployment. Ms. Taito has 25 years of management and manufacturing experience having served as the first Director of Regulatory Reform for the State of Rhode Island in the Office of Management and Budget and held the Chief Executive Officer position for Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services, Inc. (formerly Rhode Island MEP.)

CHRIS WEISER

First Term expires: March 2020

Chris Weiser is the owner and President of J.V. Manufacturing, Inc. Since 1978 J.V. Manufacturing has provided the best equipment solutions for America's waste and recycling needs. J.V. Manufacturing provides safe, quality products made in the USA. Known for their excellent customer service which has made Cram-A-Lot one of the most respected brands in the industry, J.V. Manufacturing has over 200 employees, 2 manufacturing locations, and 3 remote service locations. Upon graduating from the University of Arkansas, Chris moved to Louisiana and worked for Freeport-McMoRan, a minerals and oil and gas producing company. In 1985 he moved back to Arkansas to help his family run J.V. Manufacturing, Inc. Since 1996 Chris has been President, CEO and owner of the company. Chris is passionate about the waste and recycling industry and about service to his community.

VICKIE WESSEL, Immediate Past Chair

Second Term expired: May 2017

Vickie Wessel is the founder and President of Spirit Electronics, LLC. She has more than 37 years of business leadership in sales, marketing, procurement, operations, contracts, finance, and quality systems management. Since its founding in 1979, Spirit has grown to support broad line electronic component distribution, supply chain solutions, and component value-added services. Vickie's innovative and business focused leadership and her continuous pursuit of quality and customer satisfaction has resulted in Spirit achieving many supplier excellence awards from Spirit's customers, Distributor of the Year by Arizona's Minority Business Development Agency, Distributor of the Year by the Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council, and Region IX Subcontractor of the Year by the United States Small Business Administration. She was a recipient of AIA's "Amelia Earhart Award," recognizing women who achieve excellence in the aerospace and defense industry. Vickie's passion for improving the contracting environment for the benefit of small businesses throughout the nation is evidenced by her active affiliation with the National Minority Supplier Development Council, the Pacific Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council, and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council. She currently serves as Vice President of the Foundation Board of the Electronic Components Industry Association, the Advisory Board of RevAz (the Arizona MEP Center), and the Advisory Board of Enterprise Bank.

ED WOLBERT

Second Term expired: May 2017

Ed Wolbert is the President of Transco Products Inc., a leading U.S. medium-sized manufacturer and contractor dedicated to nuclear power. Mr. Wolbert has been in the nuclear power industry for over 35 years, has been with Transco for the last 32 years, and has served as its president for the last 20 years. Mr. Wolbert oversees the daily strategic direction and tactical operations of the company, including direct guidance of its foreign activities. Mr. Wolbert is a member of the American Nuclear Society, and is also a member of ASTM (serving on the C16 committee). Mr. Wolbert continues to serve on the Department of Commerce's Civil Nuclear Trade Advisory Committee (CINTAC), after previously being both the committee's vice-chairman and chairman, and has been a vocal advocate and champion for small/medium size enterprises in the nuclear power market.

JIM WRIGHT

First Term expires: March 2020

Jim Wright is the Vice-President of Operations for Proof Research located in Columbia Falls, Montana. Proof Research is an industry leader that designs and manufactures state-of-the-art carbon fiber composite firearms for both military and commercial applications. Jim has 25+ years of experience in manufacturing engineering and production management across the aerospace, automotive, semi-conductor and firearms industries. Through his professional career, Jim has spent a significant amount of time abroad working with European and Asian companies and brings a passion to apply best-in-class concepts and Lean Manufacturing principles to help improve manufacturing within the United States. He holds a B.S. and M.B.A. from Southern Illinois University and was a member of the Montana MMEC advisory board for 6 years, serving in both the Vice-President and President roles. He is active in the local community and serves on the Board of Directors for the Kalispell City Chamber of Commerce.

Advisory Board Activities in 2017

The Advisory Board conducted three meetings in 2017:

- March 7, 2017
- April 30, 2017
- September 27, 2017

The first meeting in March was held in Washington, DC at the Department of Commerce's Herbert C. Hoover Building. At this meeting the Board had the opportunity to contribute direct feedback for the 'Presidential Memorandum Streamlining Permitting and Reducing Regulatory Burdens for Domestic Manufacturing.[1]' A second meeting was held in April as part of the kickoff of the MEP National Summit, in Denver Colorado. The Summit, hosted by NIST MEP for the Network, had 500 attendees from across the country for education and professional development. The Board portion of the meeting included an invitation for MEP Center Board chairs to an interactive session exploring governance best practices as well as discussion of overarching themes for strengthening the Network. The third meeting was held in September on the NIST campus in Gaithersburg, Maryland. This meeting allowed Board Members to tour several NIST Labs. The Board had the chance to meet program leads from the funding initiative that allows MEP Center staff to be embedded into the Manufacturing USA® Institutes and also those involved with the Competitive Awards Program which funds MEP Center projects above and beyond their normal delivery of services. Many MEP Center Directors attended each of these Board meetings to learn more about the priorities and strategies of the MEP Advisory Board.

1 'Streamlining Permitting and Reducing Regulatory Burdens for DomesticManufacturing', U.S. Department of Commerce, October 6, 2017.

MEP National Network™

The Go-To Experts for Advancing U.S. Manufacturing

The year proved to be one of substantial change as the Program made great strides to move from a loose federation of independent Centers to a formalized integrated organization known as the MEP National Network, a common entity comprised of all 51 Centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, NIST MEP, and strategic partners. The Board gave feedback as NIST MEP led the Network through the launch of a Branding Initiative, which resulted in the new MEP National Network identity and strategy to improve our collective ability to deliver on mission and serve more U.S. manufacturers. The brand launch was held at the successful National Summit, the first gathering of the full Network (Center Directors, MEP Center Board Members, and NIST MEP staff) in five years. Many MEP Advisory Board members attended this educational event which offered more than 70 sessions over two and a half days. Also in 2017 the Board presented final reports from two Board subcommittees: the MEP Learning Organization subcommittee and the Connecting User Facilities and Labs with SMMs (small and medium-sized manufacturers) subcommittee, which are now NIST MEP active projects.

In addition to the above activities, the Board heard reports and provided feedback on additional important projects throughout the year, including, as outlined below, the development and approval of the MEP National Network Strategic Plan for 2017-2022, NIST MEP Competitive, Embedding, and Natural Disaster-Manufacturer Assessment awards, and the results of an important, independent report on the MEP Program's economic impacts from the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

MEP National Network Strategic Plan 2017-2022

The Advisory Board reviewed, discussed, and approved the final draft of the detailed Strategic Plan proposed to guide the Network forward from 2017-2022. Developed in conjunction with the Board, Center representatives, and NIST MEP staff, the plan creates a sharp focus for the Network with four expansive goals supporting a new mission and vision for the Program. The Board voted unanimously to adopt and ratify the plan at its September meeting. The plan is available for download on the NIST MEP website.

The four main goals with their associated strategic objectives are as follows:

1. EMPOWER MANUFACTURERS

Assist U.S. manufacturers in embracing productivity-enhancing innovative manufacturing technologies, navigate advanced technology solutions and recruit and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.

- Identify, inform and deploy services relating to current and emerging manufacturing technologies relative to productivity growth.
- Act as a trusted advisor to small and medium-sized manufacturers to help them navigate emerging, and be aware of, future technology trends.
- Introduce and connect small and medium-sized manufacturers to successful strategies that helps attract and retain skilled employees, and creates an inclusive pipeline of future employees.

2. CHAMPION MANUFACTURING

Actively promote the importance of a strong manufacturing base as key to a robust U.S. economy and protection of national security interests; create awareness of innovations in manufacturing; create workforce development partnerships to build a stronger and diverse workforce pipeline; and maximize market awareness of the MEP National Network.

- Provide insight, at the local and national level, on the current “State of Manufacturing” by telling the stories about the people, companies and products made in the U.S. that support the economy and help protect our national security interests.
- Advance the MEP National Network as experts in manufacturing technology by utilizing key communication outlets to translate ground-breaking innovations in manufacturing.
- Enable state and regional workforce partnerships to connect, communicate and coordinate across local workforce development systems.
- Deploy the MEP National Network Brand and tie it to specific measures of success.

3. LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

Leverage national, regional, state and local partnerships to gain substantial increase in market penetration; identify mission-complementary advocates to help the MEP National Network become a recognized manufacturing resource brand; build an expanded service delivery model to support manufacturing technology advances.

- Leverage the major partnership with the Defense Department to attract other public (federal agencies) partnerships that bring vertical program synergies to increase market penetration, build on MEP National Network supply chain projects and entice state and other partner program investment funding.
- Create and provide on an annual basis, a value-added, state-by-state MEP National Network metric package on economic impacts, demographics served and “Public-Good” gained to encourage in-state advocacy of the MEP Center.
- Build on key technology and growth partnerships with the Manufacturing USA Institutes, NIST, other Federal Laboratories and Universities to develop a unique collaborative technology information transfer and service delivery model; grow relationships with state and city economic development principals, local Chambers, Tech Shops, Incubators, and Export Assistance Centers.

4. TRANSFORM THE NETWORK

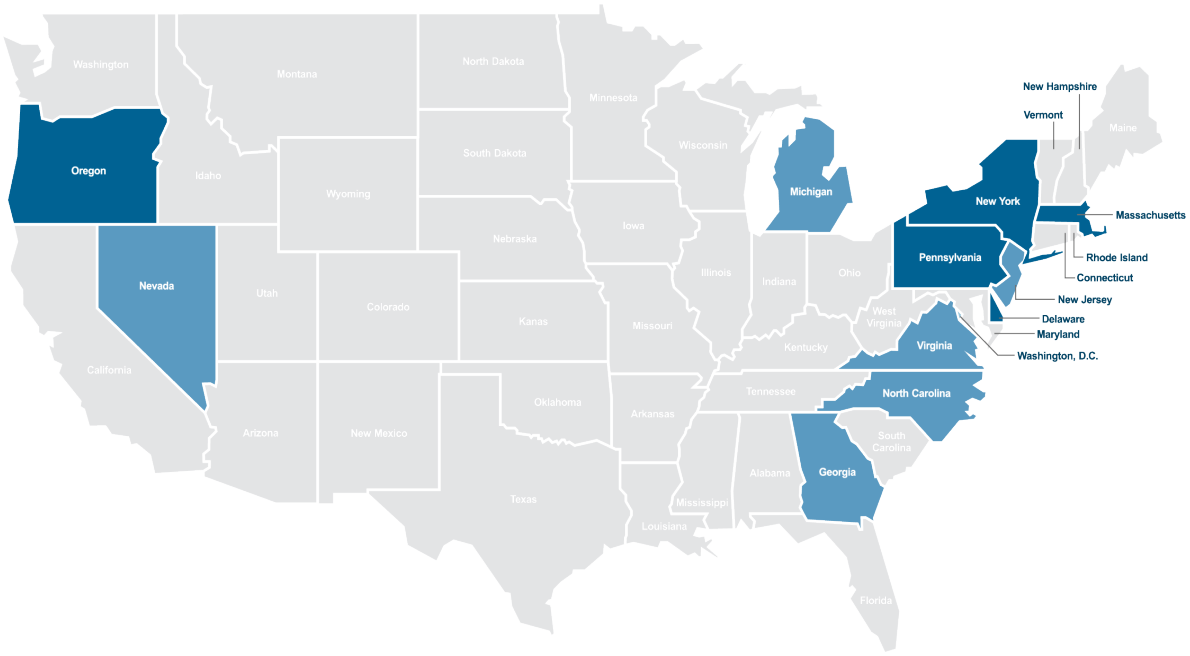
Maximize National Network knowledge and experience to operate as an integrated National Network; increase efficiency and effectiveness by employing a Learning Organization platform; and create a resilient and adaptive MEP National Network to support a resilient and adaptive U.S. manufacturing base.expanded service delivery model to support manufacturing technology advances.

- Deploy the Future is Now Framework, adopting the guiding principles into the MEP National Network which will help to migrate the MEP Program from a Program Office and System of Centers to a National Network with value-added Program Office support, allowing a broader range of complementary services and information tailored to evolving manufacturing business owner’s needs.
- Create and empower a Learning Organization function that will support increased NIST MEP and Center efficiency and effectiveness and help refine Center performance metrics based on information to inform performance-based diagnosis and feedback to Centers, enabling applications to Center self-assessment and Center-to-Center sharing.
- Strive for Center and NIST MEP Program Office operational excellence by establishing risk management protocols that put in place mitigating strategies for internal and external threats.

NIST MEP Competitive and Natural Disaster - Manufacturer Assessment Awards

NIST MEP Competitive Awards

Twelve awards were made in 2017 via NIST and NIST MEP's authority for a Competitive Awards Program. The innovative projects included five new awards which allow for embedding MEP Center staff at each of the remaining 14 Institutes within the Manufacturing USA network. Another seven MEP Centers received funds to add other capabilities to the MEP Program including the development of projects to solve new or emerging manufacturing problems that are not already addressed under a Center's base NIST MEP award.



The five new Embedding Project Awardees were awarded to MEP Centers in the following states:

- **Delaware**: Delaware Technical Community College, Newark
- **Massachusetts**: Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Worcester
- **New York**: New York State Department of Economic Development, Albany
- **Oregon**: Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc., Portland
- **Pennsylvania**: Pennsylvania IRC Network Foundation, Williamsport

The seven new Competitive Awards were made to MEP Centers in the following states:

- **Georgia**: Georgia Tech Research Corporation, Atlanta (2 projects)
- **New Jersey**: New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Cedar Knolls
- **Virginia**: L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Martinsville
- **Nevada**: Board of Regents, NSHE, University of Nevada Reno, Reno
- **North Carolina**: North Carolina State University, Raleigh
- **Michigan**: Industrial Technology Institute dba MMTC, Plymouth

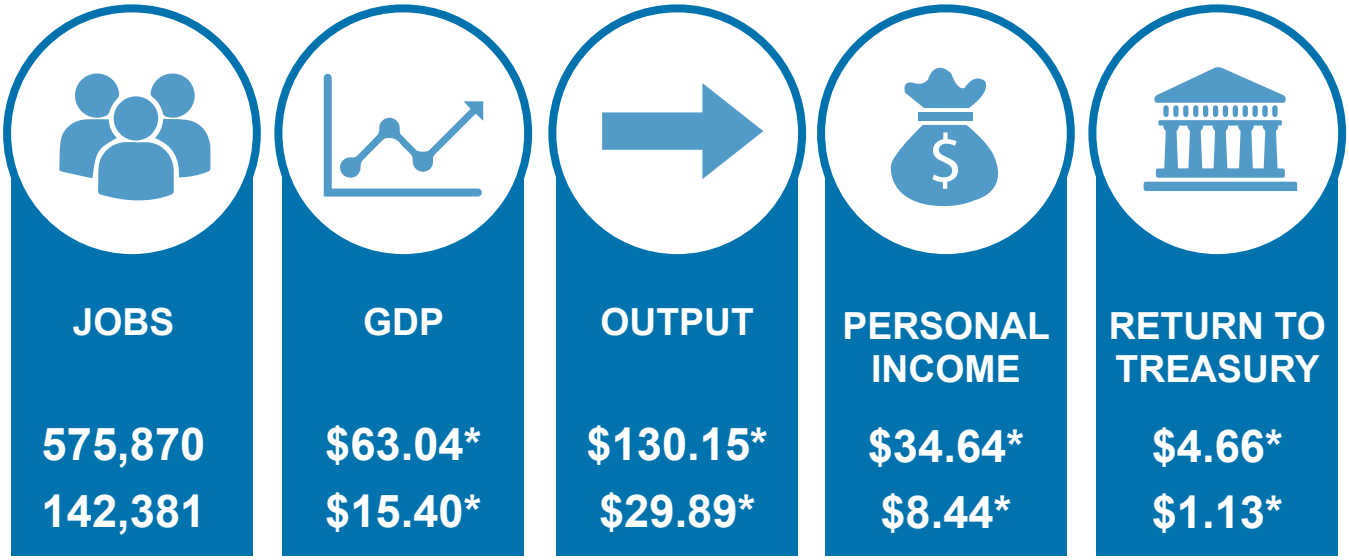
Natural Disaster-Manufacturer Assessment Awards:

NIST MEP moved quickly to award noncompetitive funds to MEP Centers in Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Georgia and Puerto Rico which were impacted by devastating hurricanes during the second half of 2017. Through collaboration with internal NIST grants staff, Network leadership and the staff at NIST MEP, a streamlined proposal with special award conditions allowed for use of NIST grant authority for funding to begin to be awarded less than three weeks after landfall of the first storms. Funding awarded is intended for assessment of the manufacturing base within each of the states and Puerto Rico as well as opportunities to assist in disaster mitigation.

Credit : J. Blotty/FEMA

The Upjohn Institute Report Shows MEP's Substantial Return on Investment

March 2017, the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research published a study using the national REMI® model, along with the results from the FY 2016 NIST MEP client impact survey conducted by Fors Marsh found the MEP Program generates a substantial economic return of nearly 9:1 for the $130.0 million annually invested by the federal government. The model, assuming competition or displacement between firms, adds 142,381 jobs to the U.S. economy, which would not have been created or retained without the services and activities of the MEP Centers. Under this conservative approach, the report quotes that MEP activities add $1.13 billion to the U.S. Treasury through an increase in personal income taxes. The increase in tax revenue to the U.S. Treasury would be higher if the model included corporate income taxes. With the model counting only income taxes, the tax revenues far exceed the $130 million cost of the Program.



* Dollars in Billions

NIST MEP Budget

The FY2017 appropriation received was $128M, $2M less than the program's FY2016 funding. The President's FY2018 budget request for MEP released on May 23, 2017 eliminated federal funding for the program but included $6M in funding to wind down operations. As of the writing of this report, a FY2018 budget has not been passed by Congress.

Approximately $110M of MEP's funding goes directly to the MEP Centers. Additional funds are provided in direct support of the MEP Network's work with manufacturing firms, such as federal funding opportunities for Centers or contracts to train MEP Center staff.

Looking Towards the Future with a New Mission and Vision

Moving forward, the MEP Advisory Board is confident the changes implemented in 2017 will result in increased effectiveness of the MEP National Network and bring even more impact to the Network's mission and future vision, as stated in the MEP National Network Strategic Plan.

MISSION:

Strengthen and empower U.S. manufacturers.

VISION:

We are the go-to resource for America's manufacturers ensuring U.S. manufacturing is resilient and leads the world in manufacturing innovation.

DRIVING FORCE:

We are driven to attain and uphold U.S. manufacturing preeminence which is essential to our nation's long-term economic strength and to protect our national security interests.

ROLE:

The MEP National Network focuses its expertise and knowledge as well as that of its partners (industry, educational institutions, state governments, NIST and other federal research laboratories and agencies) on providing U.S. manufacturers with information and tools they need to improve productivity, assure consistent quality, accelerate the transfer of manufacturing technology and infuse innovation into production processes and new products.

Making an Impact on U.S. Manufacturing

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