

**National Institute of Standards and Technology
Manufacturing Extension Partnership
Advisory Board
Minutes of the June 24, 2013 Meeting**

Background

The Department of Commerce (DOC), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), Advisory Board met in an open session from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on June 24, 2013 at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center in Denver, Colorado. Approximately 31 attendees, composed of Advisory Board members, DOC, NIST, and MEP participants, guest speakers, and observers, attended the meeting. Phillip Singerman, Acting Director of MEP, is the Designated Federal Officer for the MEP Advisory Board.

Attendees

Board Members

Roy Church, President, Lorain County Community College
Denny Dotson, Chairman, NIST MEP Advisory Board, and Chairman, Dotson Iron Castings
Eileen Guarino, President & COO, Greno Industries
Edward “Ned” Hill, Dean, Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University
Mark Rice, President, Maritime Applied Physics Corporation
Rich Scott, President, Quality Filters, Inc.
Vickie Wessel, Vice Chairman, NIST MEP Advisory Board, and Founder and President, Spirit Electronics, Inc.
Jeff Wilcox, Vice President for Engineering, Lockheed Martin

MEP Participants

Alex Folk, Director of Program Development, NIST MEP
Karen Lellock, Senior Policy Advisor, NIST MEP

Phillip Singerman, Acting Director, NIST MEP
Mark Troppe, Manager of Strategic Partnerships, NIST MEP
Gary Yakimov, Manager of Policy and Research, NIST MEP

Other Participants

Alan Taub, Chair, NIST Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology
Henry Wixon, Chief Counsel, NIST

Observers

Scott Broughton, Center Director, Advantage Kentucky Alliance
Lauren Bryson, Executive Director, Innovative Manufacturing Center – Pennsylvania

Mike Coast, Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center
Diane Henderson, Federal Program Officer, NIST MEP
Shawnda Henderson, Arizona Commerce Authority
Carrie Hines, President/CEO, American Small Manufacturers Coalition
Wes Kelly, South Dakota MEP
Jeff Lucas, NIST MEP
Amanda Mallott, Industrial Specialist, NIST MEP
Petra Mitchell, Center Director, Catalyst Connection
Kellie Pearl, Director of Marketing & Communications, American Small Manufacturers Coalition
Brian Sherman, Arizona Commerce Authority
Gary Thompson, NIST MEP
Tab Wilkins, Regional Manager, NIST MEP

Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Speaker: Denny Dotson, Chairman, NIST MEP Advisory Board

Mr. Dotson called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.; Mr. Dotson made introductory remarks and had the Advisory Board members and meeting participants introduce themselves. He went on to explain the need and desire to build products in the U.S., how Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) need to shorten supply chains, and how manufacturers seeking competitive pricing from suppliers impacts small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

NIST MEP is a representative of SMEs and has recognized the significant need for capital investments in new technology. MEP offers a unique opportunity to encourage this. SMEs need to significantly change how they have operated in the past and adopt technologies and processes to grow in the future. Mr. Dotson stated that the Advisory Board will hear about these changes in the upcoming presentations.

Presentations

Role of Federal Advisory Board

Speaker: Henry Wixon, Chief Counsel, National Institute of Standards and Technology

Mr. Wixon provided background information on how the federal government seeks advice from the public, specifically through public/private advisory committees. In 1972 the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) was passed, and today there are over 1000 federal advisory committees in the country. FACA consists of four main objectives:

- Advisory committees should provide advice to a federal government agency or President that is relevant, objective, and open to the public. Mr. Wixon stressed that openness is key to FACA.
- Committees should act promptly to complete their work. There shall be a review for the need of a committee and when it has completed its purpose it shall be terminated.

- Committees shall comply with reasonable cost controls and record keeping requirements.
- There shall be a degree of government oversight and support in such committees. Committees have designated management personnel known as the secretariat.

General facts concerning federal advisory committees

- Federal advisory committees are required to have a Designated Federal Official (DFO). The DFO will approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.
- The DFO also ensures efficient operations in maintaining records for the public. The DFO is tasked with providing advisory committee reports to the Secretariat for transmittal to the Library of Congress, which then becomes part of the permanent public record. Access of the information to the public is provided under the Freedom of Information Act.
- An advisory committee's objective is to assemble people with expertise to provide consensus advice. Committee meetings must be reasonably convenient and provide the public with an opportunity to attend. Advance notice must be published in the Federal Register.
- It is the responsibility of the Secretariat and DFO to make meetings open to the public unless there is an exemption. Exceptions allow advisory committees to close the meeting, generally only when the subject matter is financial or confidential. Typically only a portion of the meeting will be closed. Approval is then needed through the Secretariat at the Department of Commerce level.

MEP Advisory Board Charter

The MEP Advisory Board Charter sets forth several guidelines regarding the committee's work. The Advisory Board provides a forum for input and guidance from MEP program stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of tools and services focused on supporting and growing the U.S. manufacturing industry. It is a stakeholder committee, which ensures that MEP considers the views of certain stakeholder groups.

Description of duties specified in the charter:

- Provide advice on MEP programs, plans, and policies;
- Assess the soundness of MEP plans and strategies;
- Assess current performance against MEP program plans; and
- Function solely in an advisory capacity, and in accordance with the provisions of the FACA.

Mr. Wixon stated that people often want to know why a federal agency exerts so much control over what is supposed to be a public committee. He said it is to ensure that the committee

activities fall within the statutory and charter scope. The purpose of the DFO is not to control what the committee does, but to ensure activities don't exceed its authority.

The duties of the MEP Advisory Board include submitting an annual report to the Director of NIST, which is then submitted to the Secretary of Commerce, and finally to Congress. Mr. Wixon emphasized the importance that NIST places on the report as a tool to identify any possible needs for change in program direction. Additionally, Congress is a stakeholder that needs to understand the MEP program and this report provides valuable insight.

Advisory Board makeup

- The DFO is currently the Acting Director of NIST MEP and is charged with Secretariat functions. The Board meets at least twice a year and has the ability to call additional meetings.
- The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) shall appoint the members of the Board
- The Board shall consist of 10 members, broadly representative of stakeholders, appointed by the NIST Director. At least two members shall be employed by or on an advisory board for the MEP Centers, and at least five other members shall be from US small businesses in the manufacturing sector.
- No member shall be an employee of the Federal Government.
- Committee members from the manufacturing industry and those representing specific stakeholder groups shall serve in either a representative capacity or as a Special Government Employees (SGEs). Committee members from the academic community will serve as SGEs. All SGEs will be subject to all ethical standards and rules applicable to that designation.

Questions and Answers

Q: In 2007 and 2010 there was language in legislation regarding an obligation to report to Congress. If Congress directly contacts the Board with questions on insight, how should Board members proceed?

A: You are both a member of the Advisory Board and a member of the public, and may certainly provide information.

Q: If a subcommittee works on a particular task, under what charter does this fall?

A: Subcommittees are to be formed from membership of the committee itself and fall within the same rules.

Q: Are there any applicable rules regarding fiduciary responsibility as an advisory board?

A: A board is not in a fiduciary relationship with a government agency or NIST.

Speaker: Alan Taub, Chair, NIST Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology
http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/NIST-MEP_alan.pdf

- Mr. Taub opened his presentation by saying that a leader sets the tone for an organization. He believes that the current NIST Director is a change agent leading NIST in a new direction.
- Mr. Taub then presented information on the Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology (VCAT). The VCAT reviews and makes recommendations regarding general policy for NIST, its organization, its almost billion dollar budget, and its programs.
- The VCAT assesses all of NIST, including the MEP program.
- The VCAT has the same fundamental structure as the MEP Advisory Board, consisting of members from industry, a Chair, and a Vice Chair. The major difference is that VCAT was formed much earlier.
- The selections of members reflect people who will implement change as quickly as the government allows.
- The Chair and Vice Chair meet with the Secretary of Commerce and present to information to staff on Capitol Hill.
- VCAT meets two to three times a year. It relies heavily on the subcommittee structure and conference calls to get work done between meetings. Mr. Taub noted that this approach is very effective as opposed to long meetings.
- The subcommittees may engage external experts that are not members of the Board.

Mr. Taub outlined two examples where he has seen a real cause and effect at the hands of a subcommittee.

- The first was in response to a nuclear material spill at the Boulder, CO facility. A safety subcommittee was set up, and it went beyond simply touring the lab by working to develop a new safety culture at NIST. He urged the Advisory Board not to feel constrained when suggesting improvements and recommendations.
- The second example was related to the most recent economic recession. Manufacturing was hit hard by the downturn and VCAT was asked by NIST leadership to look into how NIST could support growth in the industry. This led to the focus on advanced manufacturing and many of the initiatives that are being suggested today.

Questions and Answers

Q: Can we deal with cyber security issues as an Advisory Board to MEP?

A: NIST has a major role in cyber security and is looking to create a federally funded research and development center in cyber security. NIST is aware that the greatest threat lies in the supply chain, where often companies do not have the resources to institute expensive protections.

Q: It is difficult for SMEs to have the skill set and resources to deal with cyber security and disaster recovery requirements for government contracts. Is there something MEP can do to help this?

A: There are some Centers working on this now, and as the need for these services increases, it's likely more Centers will address it.

Q: What is the set of standards that can help disseminate off the shelf manufacturing tools and processes to SMEs? How can we help off the shelf applied technology reach the 3rd tier and beyond?

A: In this area MEP and the Advisory Board can consider where "off the shelf" technology will have the most impact for SMEs. MEP is also geared toward bringing the mature industry base up, and these types of offerings may be easier to apply to those industries.

Memo from NIST Director Patrick Gallagher to MEP Advisory Board

Speaker: Phillip Singerman, Acting Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Manufacturing Extension Partnership

<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/Memo-from-NIST-Director.pdf>

Acting MEP Director Phillip Singerman presented to the MEP Advisory Board a set of charges from NIST Director Dr. Pat Gallagher. These charges are areas related to the MEP program and detailed where the Advisory Board's guidance could be of greatest use to the program.

Dr. Gallagher's areas of interest for the Advisory Board to address over next 9 – 12 months:

- Review of the MEP program's response to Advisory Board recommendations.
 - Specifically, which of the recommendations the Advisory Board has made over the past 3 years should MEP consider as priorities to address?
- Recommendations on MEP cost-share.
 - The Advisory Board is charged with reviewing the MEP cost-share structure and making a recommendation to Director Gallagher by September 30, 2013.
- Selection of the new MEP Director.
 - The selection process for the new MEP Director needs to be conducted. It generally takes 4 – 6 months from selection to inception of the Director. NIST to outline the criteria for the job description to make the community aware of the requirements and generate a pool of qualified applicants. The Advisory Board is asked to help identify qualities that should be included in the description.

- Guidance on the development of a MEP strategic plan.
 - The current strategic plan was adopted several years ago. MEP has begun to develop a strategic framework to respond to increased emphasis on manufacturing. NIST is required by statute to create a three-year programmatic plan. The statute requires the MEP Advisory Board to comment on the plan.
 - In 2011, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was commissioned to perform an independent study of MEP, entitled *21st Century Manufacturing: The Role of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology*. NAS formed a research group to prepare the report, and this report is due to NIST on September 30th. It will provide input into MEP strategic planning efforts.

Questions and Answers

Q: What was the cost of the NAS report?

A: \$800,000.

Q: Who develops the criteria for the acceptance new centers into the MEP system and to evaluate their performance?

A: The criteria are outlined in the statute. A center must be in financial good standing, is subject to a successful bi-annual panel review by peers, is subject to quantitative ratings around core diagnostics and survey impact measures and an annual review.

Q: Does the Advisory Board review requirements for strategic planning or the fundamental operating requirements for NIST MEP and the MEP centers?

A: The Advisory Board can add the most value in programmatic planning. The strategic plan for the MEP system and the role of the Board is open for comments.

Q: Are the goals of the centers going to be standardized?

A: The federal component is in the formal requirements, but local flexibility and variations respond to the needs of manufacturers in particular regions and the resources available in those regions. A major challenge of the MEP program lies in tying together federal guidance and local implementation.

Briefing and Update on Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report on Cost Share
<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/P-Singerman-GAO-Report-Update-for-MEPAB-June-24-2013-editable.pdf>

Dr. Singerman provided an update on the report Congress requested GAO conduct on MEP cost-share, “Factors for Evaluating the Cost Share of Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program

to Assist Small and Medium Sized Manufacturers” <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11437r.pdf>. When looking at the long-term sustainability of the program, the report identified a number of factors to be considered when reviewing cost-share:

- Centers are encouraged to leverage resources and improve partnerships with other organizations
- Centers avoid duplication
- The need to collect client fees gives manufacturers a stake in the program
- Centers emphasize services that are relevant to manufacturers

Since the GAO didn’t offer any recommendations, Congress has asked NIST for a report. The Director of NIST has asked the Advisory Board to look at the issue and provide recommendations to him by the end of September.

Questions and Answers

Q: Is it possible for the Advisory Board to get background information to prepare the report?

A: Yes. The staff will provide whatever information the sub-committee needs, including current levels of cost share, and responses from centers and other organizations on their view of cost share.

Budget Briefing

<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/Singerman-Budget-Update-Denver.pdf>

In opening his talk on the budget, Dr. Singerman announced the anticipation that Ms. Penny Pritzker will be named Secretary of Commerce very soon [she has since been confirmed]. He went on to explain that since 2007, NIST been roughly on a path to doubling its budget. He believes it reflects certain factors unique to NIST that include:

- NIST has scientific integrity, and its staff includes four Nobel prize winners.
- NIST is a non-regulatory agency, contributing to its professional reputation.
- NIST has good management and is continually given new tasks by Congress and the Administration.

That the MEP program received increased support in the President’s proposed FY14 budget is a direct reflection of the NIST Director. There is a strong focus on manufacturing supply chains, and the Director wants the committee to provide input on supply chains as NIST designs a new programs focusing on this area. MEP has always been stable in terms of funding and is actually seeing an increase with funding in FY13 at \$120 million and a proposed budget of \$158 million in FY14. MEP is also working to reduce operating costs by reducing travel and cancelling the national conference for FYs 13 and 14. The NIST overhead portion of the MEP budget pays for things such as NIST facilities management, budget, and human resources. As required by statute,

there are expenses for the Advisory Board, panel visits, the IT system, etc. that roughly equal \$3.2 million of the NIST MEP budget annually.

Multi-agency Initiatives: Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge (AMJIAC) and Make it in America

Speaker: Mark Troppe, Manager of Strategic Partnerships, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, National Institute of Standards and Technology

<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/Strategic-Competitions-June2013-AdvBrdMtg-final.pdf>

Mr. Troppe discussed the country's focus in the last few years on innovation growth strategies that help companies grow. Manufacturing has become more visible on the national agenda as a way to create jobs and bring the U.S. out of a recession. There are more multi-agency initiatives coming out of the White House.

He explained one challenge NIST MEP faces in taking advantage of the favorable climate is being cautious about bringing too much activity to MEP centers that take away from the core mission. NIST MEP is looking at how to align and facilitate these activities with the MEP center's core mission. MEP involvement in multiagency initiatives demonstrates MEP's capabilities and resources to other agencies. MEP's strategy has been and will continue to be to focused on better connecting MEP centers to partners and leveraging national initiatives. MEP strives to align centers with opportunities to test new services needed by manufacturers. This leads to growing skills among center staff. By participating in these activities, MEP brings new Federal investment to centers. MEP's goal is being the go-to entity for manufacturers in the U.S.

Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Acceleration Challenge (AMJIAC)

- The goal of AMJIAC is to provide strategic, catalytic funding for regional partnerships that have the potential to accelerate innovation and strengthen capacity in advanced manufacturing.
- This was a good fit for MEP because it focused on growing clusters of manufacturing firms within a regional strategy.
- The AMJIAC is a partnership among the DOC, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Labor (DOL), the Small Business Administration, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Mr. Troppe noted that there were some challenges in putting five agencies together to create a single grant program.

Make it in America competition

- Make it in America is an initiative that came out of the White House to advance the reshoring of manufacturing and increase foreign direct investment.
- There are no cost share requirements for the MEP centers selected.

- It aims to take advantage of the reshoring trend to bring investment back to the U.S.

MEP Specific Competitive Awards, Manufacturing Technology Acceleration Centers (M-TACs)

***Speaker: Alex Folk, Director of Program Development, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, National Institute of Standards and Technology,
<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/Strategic-Competitions-June2013-AdvBrdMtg-final.pdf>***

Mr. Folk discussed the goals of the M-TACs focused on establishing industry/technology focused Centers with specialized expertise that will constitute a program that is nationally connected and locally deployed.

- NIST MEP is funding two pilot projects to develop a sustainable model that can be deployed nationwide.
- The awards will seek to accelerate U.S. innovation, support manufacturing supply chains and their needs, increase U.S. exporting, promote and integrate environmental sustainability, and develop renewable energy options through technology or processes.

eCARs and tCARs

In FY2010, MEP implemented two competitive award programs 1) expanding the delivery of services known as Expansion of Services Cooperative Agreement Recipient (eCAR), and 2) tool or product development (tCAR). The focus was to promote cross-project learning and collaboration, as well as to promote learning beyond the award recipients to the entire MEP system. The purpose of the awards is to strengthen the competitiveness of the MEP center delivery system and more broadly, to strengthen the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers. The eCAR project work with clients included an impact survey to collect project results.

Impacts of the eCAR projects include:

- 274 projects were completed
- \$11 million in capital investments
- Nearly 400 jobs were retained
- 30% of clients reported an increase in sales

Common themes in all of the initiatives:

- The approach used by the awardee is important but no single system has been better than another.
- Projects and awardees should have flexibility in the creation and integration of tools/methods.
- Centers are starting to take different pieces of the eCARs and tCARS and integrate them into their established approaches.

- Well-functioning partnerships are important, especially for strategy and creating sustainable models.
- Access to capital is a potential hurdle in adopting technology around new products.
- When making investments, it is critical that sustainable business models are established early. Clients must see value in return on investment (ROI).
- There is large variation between centers on the amounts of Federal/state/local support.

Questions and Answers

Q: If MEP is looking mostly at the new/next technologies and processes are we going to lose the revenue driving/fundamental services? What is the platform/scope of the Center/MEP services?

A: The Centers are very comfortable with the more fundamental services, thus competitions can peak interest in innovation offerings.

Q: Is there a way to share the successes/successful foundational services among Centers—How do we share the development that have been done by other MEP Centers?

A: Meetings like the regional one starting tomorrow are great for knowledge sharing, additionally best-practices are passed along in panel reviews and by regional managers, and hopefully will soon be a part of the collaborator.

Q: Are these programs a separate line item in the budget?

A: No, they come from funding in the current line items in the budget

Q: Does eCAR and tCAR work?

A: It has varied among each project, and there is not one answer. tCAR has no cost share requirement and eCAR does. The impacts they have on the system will be measured over time.

Discussion

- MEP needs to make sure core business functionality is stabilized so businesses have a good platform for innovation.
- Many customers have gone through risk assessments that have led to change. Risk assessments force customers to learn how to standardize and formalize strategic planning. Once these tools are learned, the client can repeat the assessment as needed.
- To effect change in a supply chain, it is ideal to have small companies lay the foundation to be a more efficient suppliers, especially in an era of constant innovation.
- Centers are looking at strategic supply chain engagements and a strategy that brings together other centers to share resources and tools.

M-TACS

Using the supply chain is seen as one of the best starting points for adoption of new technology in manufacturing. The Administration included \$25 million in the FY14 budget to create Manufacturing Technology Acceleration Centers (M-TACs).

The M-TACs goals are to:

- Provide technology acceleration support
- Focus on leveraging networks in the MEP base
- Amplify a nationwide network to reach many manufacturers
- Build on the CAR awards
- Deliver technical transition services for SMEs on a nationwide scale
- Leverage existing resources/capabilities

The M-TACs Request for Information was announced on June 21 and closed on July 22. The responses will be considered when designing the M-TAC program. A pilot federal funding opportunity should be out in July. The pilot will look at testing critical areas to define the M-TACs role in relation to supply chain needs and metrics for success. The targeted deployment is in early 2014.

A major challenge the M-TACs will address is that supply chains are national, and need a national business model. The current MEP business model is contingent upon regional resources and varies from state to state. MEP needs to create a mechanism to provide a national scope program.

Q: Does the M-TAC RFI give a framework to the questions asked?

A: It is very open ended

MEP Strategic Planning Process and Collaboratory

Speaker: Gary Yakimov, Manager of Policy and Research, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, National Institute of Standards and Technology,

http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/Strat-Plan_Process_June-Meetings.pdf

http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/MEP-System-Collaboratory_June-21.pdf

Mr. Yakimov stated that the presentations and board comments during the day stress a need for a new strategic plan. MEP's Next Generation Strategy (NGS) has a good vision for centers in talking to manufacturers, but it doesn't specify a way to go about doing it.

The NIST MEP management team has been talking about growth/innovation services in the last year, and it was decided that there was a need to revisit the strategy and make more explicit to what the MEP program needs to achieve.

- Long-term strategic plans aren't required of centers. MEP seeks to co-mingle center strategy with MEP strategy.
- MEP has 60 centers and 1,300 field staff.
- Internal pushes include increasing market penetration and a focus on growth.

The five NGS areas below have created some limitations for centers and how they work with manufacturers:

- Continuous Improvement
- Technology Acceleration
- Supply Chain
- Sustainability
- Workforce

MEP is looking at the needs of new markets, processes, and business models while revisiting its growth framework.

Process moving forward

- MEP is waiting on the National Academy study to integrate its recommendations.
- MEP will re-engage with the Board in January to move forward on this topic.
- By next May, MEP will present a formal process plan for comments.
- The MEP mission goes hand in hand with the strategic planning mission. This process will update the program to reflect the current reality for manufacturers.
- MEP is working more collaboratively with centers, encouraging them to work more collaboratively with one another.

Questions and Answers

Q: Whose strategy is this - MEP's or the centers'?

A: It will be a collaborative process to develop a national strategy and will likely trickle down through the system. Much is still undecided. MEP needs to have this conversation with the centers. Then NIST MEP will come back to the subcommittee with the centers' recommendations.

Q: Can the new Advisory Board members get a backwards look at the last plan as they are not familiar with it?

A: Yes. Reviewing the plan to see what works and what didn't will be helpful for the Board to get up to speed. MEP needs to engage stakeholders and wants centers to be part of this process without burdening them.

Q: Is the Board invited to webinars?

A: Yes. Notifications will be sent out in an E-blast.

Key areas for consideration in the strategic planning process

- Does MEP aim to be a national franchise system or a federal collaborative entity? The primary funding stakeholder is the US government.
- Areas to focus on include national initiatives, budget information sharing, MEP updates, growth framework, and what centers want to share with one another.
- MEP needs to fit peer-to-peer learning in the plan and reward centers for it. The current performance and evaluation system discourages sharing.
- MEP needs to align a shared strategy on what works and what doesn't.
- The plan should focus on growth, continuous improvement, new markets, new customers, and new services/products.

Public Comments

Scott Broughton announced that the Kentucky MEP is officially open.

Questions and Answers

Q: A large part of the proposed FY14 MEP budget is going toward the MTACs. The Board is concerned about the structure of RFI and criteria for the award. NIST asked for the Board for input but it appears the RFI is complete. How does NIST expect the Board to be involved in this?

A: Constraints around budget preparation are reflected in the RFI wording but the goals are not settled. The process for developing the program was designed to elicit a broad range of answers. It is a mechanism to identify what centers think about creating a business model. It has to be a national model and can't call on states for match. NIST set aside \$1 million for a few pilots/tests to solicit information from the FY13 budget. The design of the program awaits the results of the pilots.

Q: When will the pilots roll out?

A: This fiscal year, but the results of the 12-month pilots won't be available by the time NIST issues the federal funding notice. There may be a chance that early results will be available. The results will be presented to the Board as required by statute. One of the greatest challenges is that the new strategic plan is not in place.

Board Discussion

- It was decided that the Advisory Board Chair and Vice Chair will head the subcommittees.
- There may be a cost-share subcommittee meeting in Philadelphia on July 23.

- Recommendations for a sustaining model of MEP will be discussed regarding a 50/50 or one third/ two thirds cost share.
- State support offers a large variation region to region.
- In strategic planning, the views of manufacturers need to be incorporated.
- The MEP strategic plan needs to change substantially if centers are going to find success by bringing in revenue. Having the federal system put in more money is not the answer.
- SMEs are in the least healthy position to aspire to the goals MEP has for them. A major focus of MEP is how to garner resources to help them.
- MEP needs to look at how to get big companies to invest in the supply chain.
- There are many things the federal government cannot do with industry that MEP can. The MEP public/private partnerships model uses leverage. MEP can tap into the big industry supply chain.
- The missing piece is the participation of big industry as a funding source for developing supply chains.
- The MEP system has gravitated toward a federally controlled system, and lost its core strength. This resulted in the gradual erosion of a center's ability to be the voice of manufacturers and the region they represent.
- The three priority recommendations the Board would like updates on include:
 - MEP growth services/innovation metrics
 - MEP efforts to support manufacturing workforce needs
 - Development of a personnel exchange program
 - Connections with NIST
 - Strategic planning
 - Interagency collaboration

Next Meeting

The next Advisory Board Meeting is to be determined (TBD).

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Singerman adjourned the meeting.