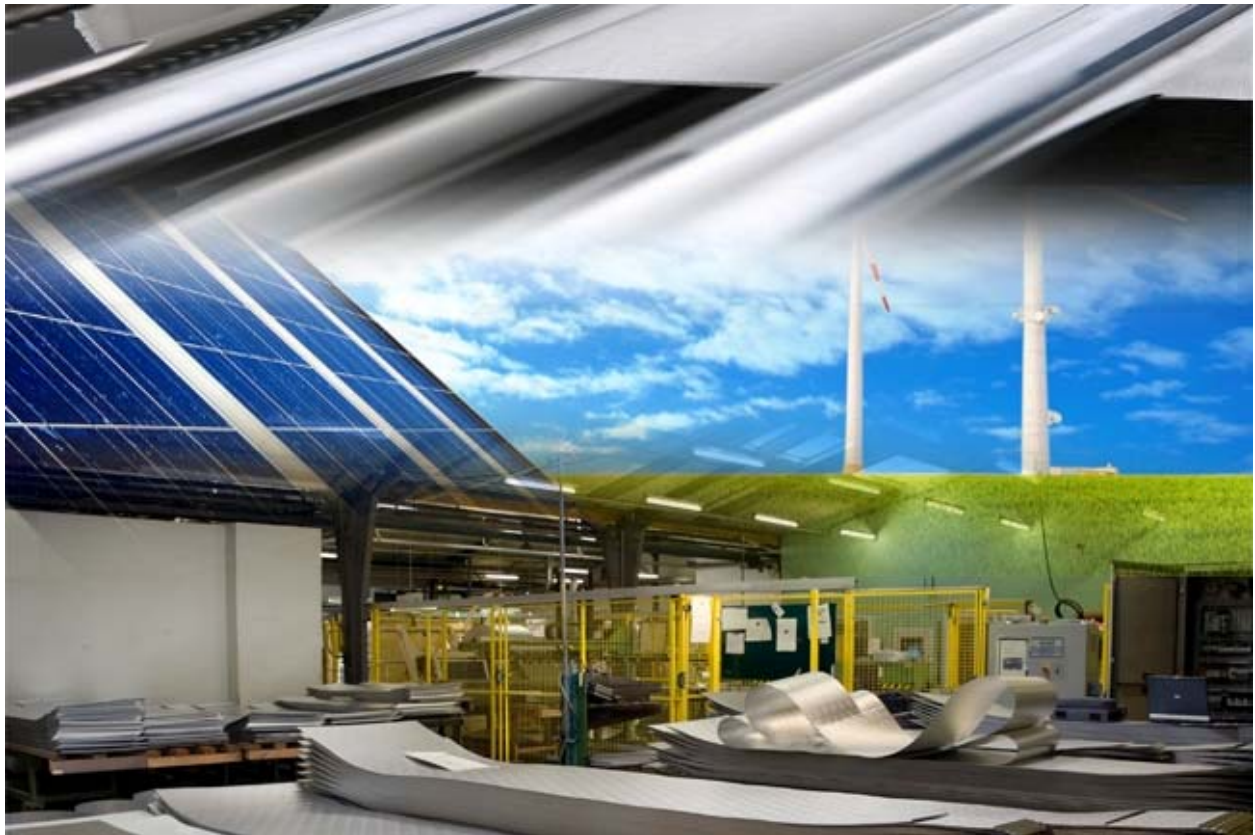


# Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership: Advisory Board Annual Report 2009

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## Letter from the Chair

While the recession appears to have ended, the recovery will be uneven, with manufacturers around the nation experiencing tremendous transition and volatility. Yet, they are not alone. Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEPs) across the country are working with these manufacturers every day to help them reduce costs and grow profits through technical assistance and partnerships addressing continuous improvement, supplier development, product development, instituting sustainable business practices, technology acceleration and workforce training.

In 2008 the MEP Advisory Board concentrated its effort on working with the program to develop a Next Generation Strategy for MEP that will serve as a guide for future activities and initiatives focused on improving the profitability and competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers. While 2008 was the year of planning the work, 2009 was the year of working the plan. MEP is leading the way on a multitude of fronts that are at the center of the Next Generation Strategy. For that reason, we have chosen to focus this year's Annual Report on those efforts to implement the major components of the plan. A handful of initiatives are identified and discussed within this document. Along with initiatives we have identified for exploration and launch in 2010, we believe that the current set of products and services that MEP offers the nation's manufacturers are a critical component of America's manufacturing competitiveness.

Despite all the efforts of MEP and its partners and stakeholders, much work remains to be done. In February 2010 the Board released a policy paper entitled *Innovation and Product Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. That report outlines the complex realities of manufacturing and opportunities for action for both federal policy and individual businesses. The combination of both is essential to maintaining and growing a competitive manufacturing industry.

There are encouraging signs on the horizon. The Obama Administration's Framework for Manufacturing released in December 2009 identifies key issues and opportunities for manufacturing policy and actions that can help build a competitive future. As the MEP Advisory Board, we were particularly pleased to see the goal of doubling the MEP budget within the next few years. We believe the MEP, with a combination of the Next Generation strategy, the national staff, and manufacturing experts located across 60 centers, is positioned to help manufacturers invest in emerging opportunities and successfully navigate the continued changes facing this important industry.

Sincerely,



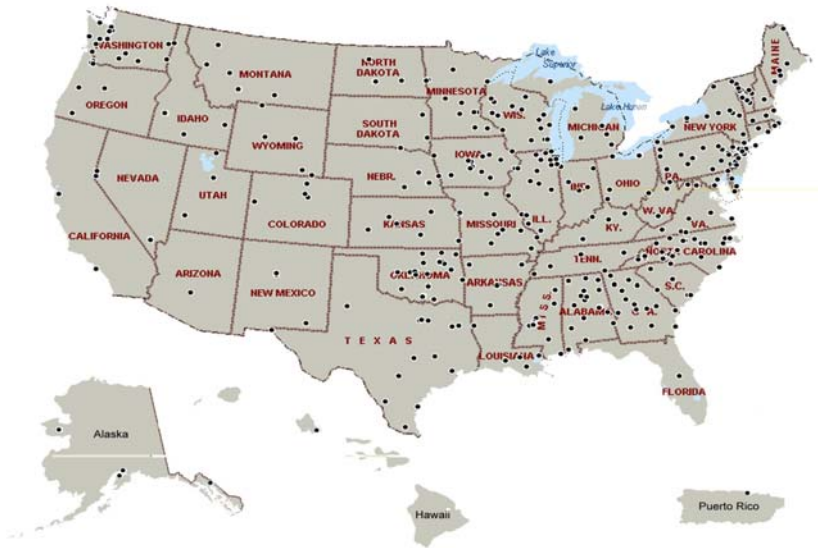
Edward (Ned) Hill  
Dean, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs  
Cleveland State University

## Preface

### About the Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 created the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program (MEP) to improve the competitiveness of U.S.-based manufacturing by making manufacturing technologies, processes and services available. During the past two decades, MEP has 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 national network of 60 affiliated organizations, MEP provides its manufacturing customers with a wide array of fundamental services in business and process improvements. Today, the MEP Centers and their partners provide manufacturers with the services needed to reduce bottom-line expenses and grow top-line profits, both necessary to thrive in the global marketplace.



### About the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Advisory Board

In August 2007, Congress passed the America Competes Act (P.L. 110-69) establishing the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Advisory Board. The Board meets biannually to provide advice and recommendations on:

- The programs, plans and policies of MEP;
- The soundness of MEP's plans and strategies; and
- Current performance in relation to MEP program plans.

The MEP Advisory Board consists of members broadly representing the interests and needs of the manufacturing sector. The MEP Advisory Board met twice in 2009 and performed its three chartered functions. In addition, individual Board members worked directly with the MEP staff and attended relevant meetings to collect information on MEP program status and planning activities.

This report highlights the Advisory Board observations, findings and recommendations. Detailed meeting minutes are available on the MEP website at: <http://www.mep.nist.gov/about-mep/mep-advisory-board.htm>.

## Board Members

### BOARD MEMBERS



**EDWARD W. (Ned) HILL, CHAIR**

Term expires: April 2011

Edward W. (Ned) Hill is Dean, Professor, and Distinguished Scholar of Economic Development in the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs. He is also a Nonresident Senior Fellow of the Metropolitan Policy Program at The Brookings Institution, an independent public policy research organization in Washington, D.C. and a Nonresident Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at the University of California at Berkeley. He edited Economic Development Quarterly from 1994 to 2005. Economic Development Quarterly is dedicated to publishing research on the development of the American economy. He led a joint Deloitte Consulting-Cleveland State University team that wrote two manufacturing strategy reports: Industry-based Competitive Strategies for Ohio: Managing Three Portfolios and Manufacturing Pennsylvania's Future.



**MARK RICE, VICE CHAIR**

Term expires: April 2011

Mark Rice is President of the Maritime Applied Physics Corporation. After working for several engineering firms and U.S. Government laboratories, he formed Maritime Applied Physics Corporation (MAPC) in 1986. MAPC has both R&D and production work with offices in Maryland, Virginia and Maine. MAPC currently designs and manufactures electro-mechanical systems that range from submarine and surface ship components to commercial motion control systems. The company has recently completed two unmanned surface vessels for the U.S. Navy along with prototype distributed power and water systems for use by individual families in Afghanistan. MAPC has had several export contracts supplying ship components to foreign shipbuilders. He is a member of the local District Export Council for the Department of Commerce as well as a member of the National Association of Manufacturers. He has a BA in Physics from the University of Maine and is a licensed Professional Engineer.



**JAMES R. (Jim) BEAN**

Term expires: April 2010

Jim Bean is the President and CEO of Preco Electronics, Inc. a wholly owned subsidiary of Saber Holdings, Inc. Preco is recognized worldwide as an innovator, designer and manufacturer of vehicle communications systems. He has over 20 years of operational experience with Fortune 500 companies including National Semiconductor Corporation, Apple Computer, and Sun Microsystems. He held positions in both domestic and international manufacturing. While at Sun, he was part of the executive team responsible for taking the company public and its rapid growth as a market leader. In addition to his experience as an employee in the international economy, he has served on the Board of Directors for both public and private organizations. He currently serves on the advisory board for TechHelp, the MEP-affiliate center in Idaho. He holds a degree in Industrial Engineering from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico.



**LYDIA CARSON**

Term expires: April 2011

Lydia Carson is President and CEO of Balm Innovations, LLC (BI), a University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Arkansas BioVentures firm established to commercialize Omnibalm®, a topical cream developed by a UAMS pharmaceutical researcher. She founded BI in 2004 and negotiated a license on behalf of BI to obtain exclusive, worldwide rights to the intellectual property associated with Omnibalm. After leading BI to a successful market launch of Omnibalm in late 2005, she introduced a second Omnibalm product in 2006 and Omnibalm Daily Foot Therapy in 2008. Prior to Omnibalm, she served as Vice President of Industry for the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority and as Director of Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions (AMS), the MEP-affiliate center in Arkansas. She has also held engineering and leadership roles with Lexmark International and Ford Motor Company. Currently, she serves on the Arkansas District Export Council (DEC). She also serves on the Planet Eureka! National Innovation Marketplace Advisory Board and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Strategic Initiatives & Innovation Committee and on the boards of the Central Arkansas Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas Inventors' Network. She was awarded the NAWBO Rising Star Award in 2006. She graduated from Vanderbilt University with a Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering and earned a MBA through the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Executive MBA program.



**CHERYL HILL**

Term expires: April 2011

Cheryl Hill is owner and CEO of Hill Manufacturing, Inc. in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Hill Manufacturing is a 65 employee CNC machine shop with customers in energy, aerospace, and other industries. In June 1996, she became sole owner of Hill Manufacturing with five employees and annual sales of less than \$500,000. Since that time, she has purchased Ketchum Manufacturing (later renamed Hill Aerospace) and created an additional firm, Hill Equipment Manufacturing. Her company's sales have grown to more than \$7,500,000. She was elected to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance in 2002 and is currently serving her second year as board chair of the Alliance, the MEP affiliate in Oklahoma. She is an active business owner and articulate advocate for Oklahoma's manufacturing community. In addition, she has been a mentor to other women in manufacturing through the Oklahoma Women in Business and Agriculture Conference. She also has been a speaker at State Career and Technology Education Conferences on behalf of manufacturers. She currently serves on the Bank of Oklahoma Wealth Advisory Board and is a valued member of the prestigious Executive Women's Forum. She is assisting the mayor of Tulsa with the development of a manufacturing training program for incarcerated offenders as they are released from prison. A member of the 2007-2008 class of Leadership Oklahoma, she serves on the board of the Oklahoma Academy. She attended Mankato State College in Mankato, Minnesota, and moved to Oklahoma in 1974.



**JAMES JACOBS**

Term expires: March 2010

James Jacobs is President of Macomb Community College in Michigan. Prior to this, he served as the Associate Director for Community College Operations at the Community College Research Center as well as the Director of the Center for Workforce Development and Policy. He was the former president of the National Council for Workforce Development. Currently, he is the Vice President for Partnerships and Collaborations for the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE), a national postsecondary organization of occupational education and workforce development specialists. He is a national expert on workforce development and community colleges with more than two decades' experience working through community colleges to meet the training needs of manufacturers in multiple industries. At Macomb Community College, he initiated the Machinist Training Institute, a college program that trained entry level machinists for small and medium sized manufacturing firms. This program was the first NMCS (National Metalworking Standards Council)-certified machining center at any community college in the nation. He was also responsible for the establishment of community college training programs between the Industrial Technology Institute and Michigan community colleges. He coordinated the Mid-American Training Group, a group of 15 major



community colleges in the mid-west that performed education and training activities with auto and steel manufacturers in their communities. He has conducted major studies on the impact of new manufacturing technologies on skill requirements of firms both for the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor.



**FRED P. KELLER**

Term expires: March 2010

Fred P. Keller is chairman and CEO of Cascade Engineering, a leading multi business manufacturer in the renewable energy, automotive, industrial, and recycling industries, primarily with plastic injection molded products. A materials engineer by training, he founded the Company in 1973, following an earlier career as a metallurgist with Pratt & Whitney. Cascade has been widely recognized for its business achievements and community involvement. The Company's industry recognition includes the Society for Human Resource Management's top 10 "Best Medium Companies to Work for in America"; the White House's Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership; and Goodwill Industries' "Employer of the Year" award, and Chrysler's "Technology Role Model" award. In 2004, he was named to the U.S. Department of Commerce Manufacturing Advisory Council, where he serves as Chairman. He is also the recipient of a "Distinguished Service Award" from the National Governors Association. He serves as a director of Meijer, Inc. and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is past chairman of the Economic Club of Grand Rapids, and has chaired several community boards. His innovative management approach and work in advancing sustainability are featured regularly in business and industry publications, and he serves as a visiting lecturer on Sustainability at Cornell University's Johnson School of Management. A Grand Rapids native, he earned a B.S degree from Cornell and a master of science in business management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.



**KEITH MAYEAUX**

Term expires: February 2010

Keith is president of A+ Corporation, a company that develops, manufactures, and markets Analyzer Sample Conditioning Components required for extracting samples from process lines or vessels, transporting the sample to the analyzer, and conditioning it so that it may analyzed. Keith has been heavily involved with A+ Corporation from the foundation of the company from its infancy to present time. He has provided day-to-day management, serving as both sales manager and marketing manager. In 2005, Keith became president and is currently responsible for overall management and strategy for the company. In his various roles he has been involved in all aspects of the business, from mapping process flows to implementing strategy to overseeing the



negotiation, sale, and transfer of technology to a 3rd party. Keith has been heavily involved with the Louisiana MEP center (MEPOL) using their services for a company-wide lean transformation and currently serving on their Industrial Advisory Board.



**CAPERS W. McDONALD**

Term expires: March 2012

Capers McDonald is presently an Executive in Residence and faculty member of Johns Hopkins University's Carey Business School. For 12 years previously, he led BioReliance Corporation as President and CEO, providing innovative testing and manufacturing services for the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries from operations in the U. S. and Europe. When acquired during 2004, the company was valued at a 32-fold increase and greater than 33% annual return for investors and employees over his 12 years of leadership. During 2003, BioReliance was ranked #1 nationally by Forbes in earnings per share growth among "200 Entrepreneurial Hot Shots" and #11 by Fortune Small Business among "America's Fastest-Growing Small Companies." He has served three terms as Chair of the Technology Council of Maryland and was named a 2002 Greater Washington Entrepreneur of the Year. He has been recognized as a national Distinguished Eagle Scout and included among Who's Who in Science and Engineering and Who's Who in the World. He earned an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from MIT, and a B.S. in Engineering from Duke University.

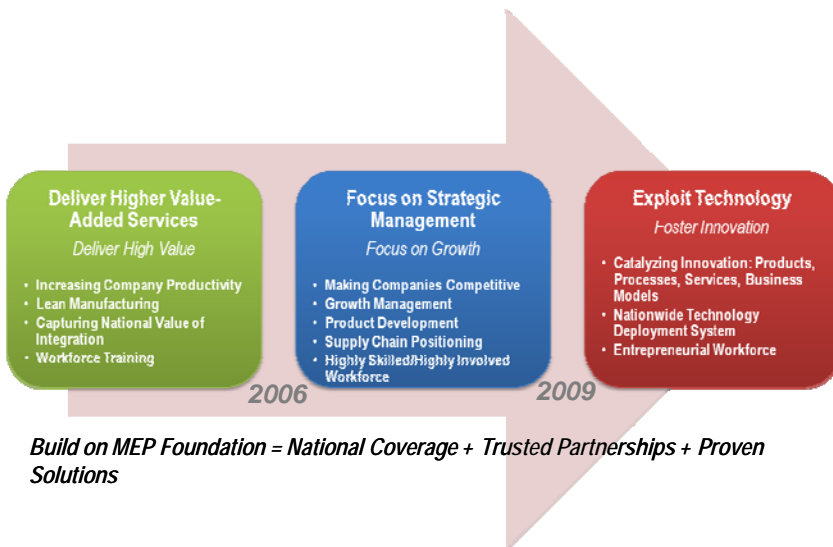
## The Advisory Board Activities in FY 2009

In 2008 NIST-MEP released its next generation plan entitled “*The Future of the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership*” in which the five key elements of continuous improvement, supplier development, sustainability, technology acceleration and workforce were outlined. That publication was the result of significant planning efforts undertaken by the Board, staff, and key partners.



While 2008 was about planning the work, 2009 became about working the plan. NIST MEP and its network of 60 state and local centers have been involved in a wide variety of projects and practices. Some of these began in 2008 and rolled out and/or expanded in 2009; others are just beginning to take hold.

The Board met two times, in April and September. Through these meetings, the Board reviewed existing programs and provided advice regarding ongoing MEP initiatives and planned program changes. The proposed evolution of the MEP program is depicted on the right. In addition to the formal Board meetings, MEP Advisory Board members had the opportunity to interact with MEP center staff, partners and stakeholders at the MEP National conference and other venues.



## Advisory Board White Paper: Innovation and Product Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The MEP program received increased attention from policymakers as the recession drew renewed attention to programs that have an impact on job retention and creation. The MEP Centers have historically served the small and medium size businesses where many of the new jobs are created. As the MEP program was identified as a potential component in a broad range of employment initiatives, the Board grappled with its own collective opinion regarding the correct role for the MEP program with respect to the services offered through the program and their impact on short-term and long-term job creation.

Sensing a need to create a framework for the Board's position regarding future MEP program changes, the Board developed a white paper entitled: "Innovation and Product development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The report and the subsequent Opportunities for Action call for a federal policy that promotes technical assistance over compliance and recognizes that America's manufacturers need the public, private, and education sectors operating in unison and taking responsibility for a competitive future based on reasonable economic fundamentals. This paper lays out the complex realities of the manufacturing industry, identifies responses of successful firms to the dynamic technological and economic changes in front of them, and suggests opportunities for action that can be taken to help leading manufacturers retain their global competitiveness while helping all manufacturers navigate the difficult terrain before them. By developing the arguments in this paper, the Board articulated key opinions and created context for its review function.

Specifically, the paper identifies four key characteristics of successful manufacturers and identifies a dozen opportunities for action across those characteristics for policy makers and manufacturers to explore together. These characteristics and corresponding opportunities for action include:

### **Characteristics of Successful Manufacturers and Opportunities for Action**

#### ***Innovate constantly to adapt to economic and technological changes.***

- *Streamline innovation and growth services targeted to manufacturers.*
- *R&D investments should be targeted to where measures and outcomes indicate success.*

#### ***Embrace green and "green lean."***

- *Invest in clean energy innovation and expand the clean energy supply chain while clarifying linkages between green lean and continuous improvement and product development.*
- *Increase awareness, understanding of, and implementation of green and new energy economy industrial standards.*

- *Create market opportunities for global challenges.*

***Recognize and navigate opportunities in the global value chain.***

- *Increase efforts to help manufacturers navigate export markets and streamline technology export processes.*
- *Increase efforts to help manufacturers diversify their markets.*
- *Improve the data available to present the value of manufacturing.*
- *Rebrand manufacturing as “innovation to product development.”*

***Develop and retain current and future talent.***

- *Promote and expand career pathways.*
- *Endorse and promote national certification and skill standards related to manufacturing.*
- *Partner with federal, state, and local workforce system to proactively avert layoffs.*

The Board believes that MEP’s implementation and focus on these recommendations will position the program to best address the current and future needs of U.S. manufacturers as well as provide an opportunity to expand discussions about a federal manufacturing policy.

## **MEP Activities and Initiatives**

The information and updates shared by the MEP program in FY2009 allowed the Board to provide ideas and feedback on the direction and expansion of new service offerings. The Advisory Board is pleased to report MEP’s progress in implementing elements of its Next Generation strategies. The program has entered into a number of partnerships that allow MEP to maintain integral program elements while expanding service offerings focused on developing new opportunities for manufacturers with the identification of new markets and customers. MEP continues to serve manufacturers with a deep level of understanding and commitment to help ensure their competitiveness, growth, and transformation into 21<sup>st</sup> century manufacturing.

In the sections below we highlight a number of MEP’s national initiatives and expanding service offerings that are only possible through the experienced and committed MEP centers and the important partnerships at the federal, state and local levels. While this is not a comprehensive list it provides an indication of a number of the key activities MEP expanded and developed in 2009.

### *ExporTech*

ExporTech is focused on helping manufacturers enter or expand into global markets. The program assists participating companies in developing an international growth plan, provides experts who will vet their plans, and connects the companies with other partner organizations that will help them move quickly beyond planning to actual export sales.

Developed as a pilot by the Maryland District Export Council, Baltimore U.S. Export Assistance Center, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, ExporTech is now deployed nationally as a collaborative partnership between MEP, U.S. Export Assistance Centers, and state international trade offices, among others. The program is customized to the specific learning needs of participants, typically six or eight companies so that each workshop provides sufficient time and attention to work through each company's specific objectives and challenges. The participating companies meet for three one-day sessions over a three-month period, and in between sessions, participants work on developing their export plans.

In 2009, 14 ExporTech programs were conducted across the nation for 133 companies. Throughout the program local experts knowledgeable in all aspects of exporting provide information and guidance that enable companies to accelerate their growth plan and speed to market. By the final session each participant has developed an export growth plan, which local experts review and provide feedback. As exporting continues to present significant opportunities for manufacturers and is receiving significant support at the federal and local levels, MEP anticipates expanding the ExporTech program into more states in FY2010.

### *Economy, Energy, and the Environment (E3)*

E3 is a partnership between five federal agencies (Department of Commerce, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Small Business Administration, and Department of Labor) to work with manufacturers, utilities, local governments and other industry partners to enhance sustainability and competitiveness in local and regional economies and to spur job growth and innovation. Ultimately these efforts lead to increased productivity and energy efficiency, reduced costs of production, and improved competitiveness. In 2009 the E3 program was piloted in Columbus, Ohio and San Antonio, Texas. The Ohio pilot identified \$853,000 in savings opportunities, \$50,000 in potential increased sales, and 33 new jobs opportunities across four companies, in addition to measurable savings in the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>, water pollution, and solid waste. Additional regions have begun to coordinate E3 pilots including Alabama, Michigan, North Carolina and South Carolina. Ramp up of these activities will take place in early 2010. Additional 2010 target locations that have expressed interest include West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

### *Layoff Aversion*

Several MEP Centers across the nation (including those in California, Indiana, Oklahoma, Michigan, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania) have or are beginning to form partnerships to proactively work with manufacturers who are "at risk" of closing or necessitating layoffs for a variety of factors – ranging

from quality problems to management instability to declining sales – to address these risk factors before they become critical and increase the available options and the likelihood of successfully averting layoffs. Typically the companies undergo a risk assessment and are then provided a blueprint for addressing risks, including process improvements, cost reductions, waste and energy reduction, increasing efficiencies, and others. Once costs are stabilized, the company can consider a variety of business growth options (including potentially moving into “green” product development or expanding abroad into new markets) that can lead to new job creation.

As an example, results from Layoff Aversion efforts in Missouri, coordinated through the Missouri Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, indicate that through 2007-2009:

- 69 companies were engaged
- 371 jobs were retained
- 202 jobs were created
- \$42.3m in sales increases
- \$25.4m in sales retained
- \$41.2m in cost savings
- \$6.7m in investments created

### **Market Diversification**

The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC) is helping Michigan manufacturers to transition from traditional customers in declining industries to new markets and customers based on the firm’s core competencies. For example, MMTC helped a company who had made parts for a car transition into medical devices using the same core competencies. Market diversification deliverables typically include market research reports, custom prospect and contact lists, and website services. Customers are taken through four phases in 90 days including assessment, sales enhancement, website and communication, and custom growth actions. Over time the results lead to new customers in current markets, new customers in new markets, improved sales effectiveness and return on investment, and marketing support for the new sales efforts. It is the intent of NIST MEP to expand this service offering to other centers in 2010.

## National Innovation Marketplace

On June 23, 2009 at a Middle Class Task Force meeting in Ohio, Vice President Joseph Biden and Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke announced the expansion of the National Innovation Marketplace that connects innovators and manufacturers, helping companies diversify their products and developers to find a home for their technologies. The National Innovation Marketplace involves the translation of emerging technologies first into business applications, second into market opportunities, and third into new marketable products.

The National Innovation Marketplace uses an open innovation strategy, which includes partnering, licensing, and co-developing innovation with partners outside of a company instead of the traditional internal research and development. The NIM connects innovation sellers, buyers, investors and distributors in all industries.

The NIM currently includes over 600 public innovation offers from technology sources and over 1000 buying requests. The sources of these offers and requests include federal laboratories, universities, individual inventors, large and small companies, and member-based organizations. As NIM expands, gaining more acceptance and use, it is expected to reduce the transaction costs associated with technology commercialization.





## MEP Measures and Impacts

The MEP Advisory Board is pleased with the measurable outcomes produced by the MEP system. The MEP Advisory Board applauds the multi-faceted evaluation components used by the MEP program, including:

- **Operating Plan:** Each of the 60 centers submits an Annual plan (linked to the center’s strategic plan) that outlines the anticipated activities and results for the coming year.
- **Quarterly Data Reporting:** Each center reports progress and client project data quarterly.
- **Annual Review:** Each year prior to annual renewal of federal funding, the performance of the center is reviewed comprehensively by NIST MEP or an external panel.
- **External Peer Panel Review:** At least every two years, the center is reviewed by a peer panel that assesses the center performance and alignment with NIST MEP programmatic strategic goals.
- **Third Party Client Survey:** NIST sponsors a national survey conducted by an independent third party that quarterly collects data from center clients on the business impacts of the services provided by their local center. NIST MEP uses this performance data as a core component in reviewing center performance. The results also provide the centers with a tool to measure their effectiveness and benchmark their performance against other centers.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** The focus is on comparing the competitive performance of MEP clients relative to similar firms that did not receive MEP services.
- **Case Studies:** Success stories that focus on successful MEP projects to gain insight into variables at both the firm and industry-level that impact technology adoption and business transformation.

### FY 2008 results

▪ <b>New Sales</b>	<b>\$3.6 Billion</b>
▪ <b>Retained Sales</b>	<b>\$5.5 Billion</b>
▪ <b>Capital Investment</b>	<b>\$1.7 Billion</b>
▪ <b>Cost Savings</b>	<b>\$1.4 Billion</b>
▪ <b>Jobs Created and Retained</b>	<b>52,948</b>

As reported by clients receiving MEP services.  
Data are collected 6 -12 months after project completion.

The MEP program consistently demonstrates significant impacts from the services provided to its manufacturing clients. As MEP continues to implement the Next Generation strategy, the MEP Advisory

Board encourages the program to explore other measures and evaluation methods to capture client impacts and programmatic outcomes that result from innovation service expansion.

## Looking Ahead

As exciting as 2009 has been, the MEP Advisory Board anticipates an even busier 2010. February 2010 featured the release of our white paper that was developed through ongoing activities in 2009. We also anticipate working on a follow-up paper related to technology and innovation as part of an ongoing annual series of white papers. We believe these papers will complement and inform federal dialogue regarding the future of U.S. manufacturing.

In 2010 we expect to see the expansion of several of MEP's key initiatives such as E3 and ExporTech into additional states. Sustainable operations and taking advantage of the global marketplace will both remain very important aspects of manufacturing. We also anticipate additional program support to be given to layoff aversion activities and the National Innovation Marketplace with the program identifying new and expanding partnerships to support these efforts.

Another area of focus for FY 2010 will be in the area of workforce development. While NIST MEP and the Advisory Board acknowledge the important work that partners such as the Employment and Training Administration (within the U.S. Department of Labor) and community colleges across our nation play, we hear a continued call from manufacturers regarding the future quantity and quality of skilled manufacturing talent, and this is a natural role for the MEP program.

The MEP Advisory Board is pleased with the progress the MEP program has made in FY 2009, and we look forward to working with the program in the coming year to better position the MEP as a key resource supporting U.S. manufacturers.