WMEP Helps Create 800 WI Jobs, $160m Impact

MADISON, Wis. — Despite the recession, many Wisconsin manufacturers are benefiting from efforts to modernize and improve their operations.

The Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP) [1] said today that projects it completed with state manufacturers generated an economic impact of $164 million – most of it from increased and retained sales. The FY 2009 economic impact is based on data provided by 176 WMEP-assisted companies and compiled by an independent firm.

“These are solid results during a very difficult economy,” said Michael Klonsinski, executive director of WMEP, a non-profit consulting organization that helps manufacturers grow and succeed. “These numbers underscore the gains that can be achieved with proactive measures to improve business performance. The manufacturers represented in this data are better positioned to survive the recession and take advantage of business opportunities once the recovery begins,” he said.

WMEP-assisted companies reported:

- $118 million in increased/retained sales
- $17 million in cost savings
- $29 million in investment, including new plant and equipment
- 798 created/retained jobs

In addition, an analysis of the data projects an $8 million tax revenue benefit to the State of Wisconsin as a result of increased/retained sales.

Kurt Wollenberg, vice president of Freedom-based Performance Welding, Inc., said WMEP has been a valuable resource in helping the firm on its lean journey. “We’re not working any harder but we are working smarter,” said Wollenberg, who estimates the company has saved nearly $250,000 from lean improvements. The firm also has expanded its capacity to handle new business as a result of better space utilization and increased efficiency, he said.

Other firms reporting notable positive impact as a result of WMEP services include: American Laser Products, Inc., Middleton; Centerline Machine, Inc., Waupaca; Dalco Metals, Inc., Walworth; Design Specialties, Inc., Milwaukee; G&G Machine, Inc., Kaukauna; Lindquist Machine Corporation, Green Bay; Mid-States Aluminum Corp., Fond du Lac; Reliable Plating Works, Inc., Milwaukee; Terso Solutions, Inc., Fitchburg; and Trilary, Inc., Waunakee.

During the past five years, WMEP-assisted manufacturers reported impact of nearly $1 billion – $977 million – with 7,965 jobs created/retained. WMEP provided

services to 676 state manufacturers last year.

WMEP's impact data is compiled by an independent firm for the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). Manufacturers are surveyed six months after the completion of a project facilitated by WMEP. WMEP is an affiliate of NIST MEP, a national network of 59 centers that provide assistance to small and midsize manufacturers.

Manufacturing contributes $48.8 billion to Wisconsin's economy and employs 442,000 workers.

Looking ahead, Klonsinski said this is a pivotal time for state manufacturers. "We're seeing some signs that the economy is recovering, and when that occurs manufacturers will need to be ready for it," he said.

"Firms with outdated processes and poor operational performance could be left behind when the economic recovery begins."

WMEP consultants bring best practices and business resources to help Wisconsin's small and midsize manufacturers improve competitiveness and profitability. In December 2008, WMEP released the results of the state's first-ever Next Generation Manufacturing Study, which revealed that many Wisconsin manufacturers, especially smaller firms, do not have the necessary strategies in place to compete effectively over the next five years.

ABOUT WMEP

WMEP is a private, nonprofit consulting organization committed to the growth and success of Wisconsin manufacturers. WMEP is a leader in bringing Next Generation Manufacturing best practices to Wisconsin firms to help them achieve world-class performance through innovation and transformation. WMEP receives financial support from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, and partners with many public and private organizations to serve Wisconsin manufacturers. For more information, visit www.wmep.org [1] or call 1-877-856-8588.

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