

State's Manufacturing Industry Shaped by Innovation, Education and Information

Public and Private Sector Leaders Reach Out to Manufacturers



Stuart Arnett, Director, Department of Resources and Economic Development, Jack Healy, Business Service Manager Governor John Lynch, and Zenagui Brahim, NH MEP, Director of Operations.

Fueled by state of the art technology, cutting-edge research and development, and a skilled workforce ready to meet the challenges of a global economy, New Hampshire's manufacturing industry is healthier and stronger than ever before. Thanks to support from public and private sector leaders, whose outreach to the industry is shaping the Granite State's overall economy and communities through innovation and transformation, the state's manufacturers now have the resources they need to compete and thrive in local, national and international markets.

What started as informal roundtable discussions among manufacturing CEOs, business leaders and government officials has since been launched into the groundbreaking Manufacturing Initiative. This progressive venture unites business, trade, education and government leaders with local manufacturers to identify issues that impact the state's manufacturing industry and develop viable strategies to overcome the challenges.

The New Hampshire Division of Economic Development (DED) has partnered with several private and public sector entities to promote and support a new way of manufacturing that best meets the demands of a changing marketplace. DED, in cooperation with the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire (BIA), NH Manufacturing Extension partnership (NH MEP), New Hampshire High Tech Council (NHHTC), New Hampshire Workforce Opportunity Council (WOC), Knowledge Institute, International Trade Resource Center (ITRC) and New Hampshire Small Business Development Center (NHSBDC), listened to manufacturers' current concerns and needs, and they transformed those issues into action plans, including funding sources, workforce development programs, input/export resources, advocacy initiatives, and research and development programs.

“We listened to our manufacturer’s concerns, studied the important issues at hand and proactively followed through on those issues with workable solutions,” said DED Director Stuart Arnett. “There are more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs in New Hampshire, from management-level positions to machine operators. If manufacturing businesses are successful, then families thrive, and the state’s economy and communities prosper.”

As part of this initiative, manufacturers now have easier access to resources and information through a new, interactive web portal, www.nhmanufacturer.com. Designed by the Knowledge Institute of Kingston, NH, this centralized source of targeted information for manufacturers provides access to comprehensive business and community assistance resources. The web portal serves as a networking engine and learning environment, which connects manufacturers to specific resource providers that can help create competitive advantages, support research and development initiatives, and improve profitability.

“This interactive web portal is a community that lives and breathes,” stated Deb Osgood of the Knowledge Institute. “Through web-based technologies and navigational features, this virtual network is designed to promote collaboration, develop and leverage resources, facilitate shared learning and problem-solving, and involve manufacturing stakeholders in the ongoing development process.”

According to Osgood, this web-based resource community promotes active learning and participation. Visitors of the site can both receive value from and add value to the web site. Programs and information can be submitted on-line for posting. While the Knowledge Institute’s free service can be of particular value to businesses with limited funding, it is a networking tool available throughout the global marketplace.

“Not only can manufacturers receive valuable information from the site, but they also can share information on the site,” said Osgood. “And this information extends well beyond the in-state business community; it’s shared among businesses all over the world.”

The educational outreach to New Hampshire manufacturers continues to generate interest and active participation. Thus far, two sessions in the “Governor’s Manufacturing Leadership Series” workshops have been held and have resulted in enthusiastic reviews.

"After attending the first conference, I felt like we'd been given strategies to successfully compete with outsourcing and the international markets in countries like China," said Val Zanchuk, president of Graphicast in Jaffrey, NH, a manufacturer of precision metal parts for large manufacturers.

Mark Godfrey, president of Felton Brush in Londonderry, NH finds the workshops particularly helpful since his company manufactures brushes for industrial applications around the globe. He also believes manufacturers of all sizes will come away with useful and innovative techniques.

"Presenters walked us through ways to identify the strategies to successfully position any size company to come out ahead in the market," said Godfrey,

"Workshops like these are helpful because they encourage you to think creatively, and innovation is one of the keys to sustainability in manufacturing."

The last workshop in the Governor’s Manufacturing Leadership Series will be held on September 8, 2005 at the Grappone Center in Concord with “Outsourcing” and “Integration Into the Department of Defense Supplier Base” being the main themes. Registration is \$50 – for more information, call Cathy Doty at the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership at 226-3200.

New Hampshire public and private sector leaders have pioneered the transformation of the state’s manufacturing businesses into a competitive, sustainable industry. Through active networking and creative problem-solving, this public/private collaboration will continue to build upon the state’s manufacturing strength by empowering local manufacturers to capitalize on the information and resources available to them.

For more information about the Manufacturing Initiative, contact the New Hampshire Division of Economic Development at (603) 271-2341, or visit www.nhmanufacturer.com.

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