



Gregg honored for work in funding program

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Merrimack Senator worked to get funding restored to MEP.

MERRIMACK - U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., advocates on behalf of manufacturers and small businesses, and on Thursday they recognized his efforts with an award.

The New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the American Small Manufacturers Coalition bestowed the "2004 Legislator of the Year Award" on Gregg for his support and his work to restore money for the extension partnerships across the country.

Gregg serves on the U.S. Senate's Appropriations Subcommittee, which in September recommended that \$112 million be restored for the national program, including \$500,000 for New Hampshire.

"Senator Gregg has proven time and again that he is an advocate for New Hampshire's small manufacturers," said Jack Metzemaekers, a board member of NHMEP and head of Scott Electronics in Salem. "Ten years ago, we (Scott Electronics) were teetering on the brink of survival, and we've grown.

"Now we're at 115 employees from 40 then, and we've moved to making a high-mix, low-volume." A high-mix, low-volume means that the company developed a higher-end, more complex product, which are only made in smaller numbers.

The extension partnerships provide businesses with technical assistance, by directing them to different resources and helping to provide training of different kinds, such as exposure to best practices and operating more efficiently.

The award presentation took place on the floor of GT Equipment Technologies, a company that makes machines that manufacture solar cells and semiconductor wafers, both of from silicon.

"It's nice to see such success here," Gregg said after receiving the award, referring to the company's \$23 million backlog in orders that it is working on filling. "Government should be helping people be successful in small businesses."

Gregg said successful government should help keep taxes, energy costs and unnecessary litigation down.

"Whenever we've needed help, you've been there for us," Lucille Jordan, president of the N.H. Community Technical Colleges in Claremont, Nashua and Keene, told Gregg.

Now that the funding has been restored to the NHMEP, a new director has had its funding restored, it has hired a new director, Zenagui Brahim, is on board. Brahim said Thursday that one of the first actions the organization will take is to hire project directors to work with manufacturers.

"We also want to reach out and work closely with the state's Department of Economic Development and we want to strengthen our relationship with the community technical colleges across the state," Brahim said.

Brahim has more than 20 years experience in consulting, manufacturing and training fields, including serving as director of the Institute of Professional and Executive Education at Middlesex College.

According to the NHMEP, there are 2,239 manufacturers in the state, which employ 96,262 New Hampshire residents.