

For Immediate Release
February 3, 2009

For More Information Contact:
Steve Boucher, NH Division of
Economic Development,
Communications & Legislative
Director, 603-271-2341
Zenagui Brahim, NH MEP
Director of Operations
603-226-3200

**New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership Launches Next Generation
Manufacturing Study
Study Will Benchmark the State's Manufacturers on World-class Manufacturing
Practices and Strategies**

CONCORD – New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NH MEP) announced today that it has partnered with the New Hampshire Division of Economic Development to launch a research study to assess the progress of state manufacturers in adopting strategies to win in the global economy. The Next Generation Manufacturing Study is the first step in a long-term effort to help state manufacturers weather today's recession and improve manufacturing competitiveness over the next decade.

The web-based survey, which starts February 10 and ends March 15, is confidential and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Manufacturing participants will receive a customized benchmarking report comparing their progress to the overall results as well as to other respondents of similar revenue and number of employees.

The questionnaire asks manufacturers to rank their progress toward the world-class performance benchmarks of Next Generation Manufacturing, a framework of strategies that will drive manufacturing growth and profitability in the 21st century. The elements of Next Generation Manufacturing are customer-focused innovation, systemic continuous improvement, advanced talent management, global engagement, extended enterprise management and sustainable products and processes.

“Manufacturing has long been the backbone of the state's economy and it is imperative that we keep this industry at the forefront of our efforts,” said New Hampshire Division of Economic Development Interim Director Roy Duddy. “We're pleased to partner with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership in unveiling this new important tool in ensuring the ongoing health and vitality of our state's most valued economic development sector.”

The study is part of a coordinated multistate effort by the American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC) that includes 15 other MEP Centers. “The adoption of Next Generation Manufacturing strategies represents an historic opportunity to strengthen and improve the nation's manufacturing base and achieve a long-term competitive advantage across all industries and sectors,” said Zenagui Brahim, NH MEP Director of Operations.

The survey results will provide a wealth of valuable data for manufacturers, business leaders and state and national policymakers. Manufacturers can see how they rank against world-class performance benchmarks and target improvements where needed

For more information on the Next Generation Manufacturing Study, contact Zenagui Brahim at zenaguib@nhmep.org or call 603-226-3200.

The NH MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits, and enhanced global competitiveness.

The New Hampshire Division of Economic Development is comprised of two operating centers – the Business Resource Center and the International Trade Resource Center. The Business Resource Center helps to expand opportunities in the Granite State through the attraction of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses. The International Trade Resource Center was established to design, implement and coordinate programs for the promotion and development of international trade in the State of New Hampshire.

-END-