

Time Wise MEP Centers Rank Tops in Latest NIST/MEP Survey Response Rate

Celebration, Florida: In the latest announcement of performance measures by the nationwide network of Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers, the four state MEP programs managed by [Time Wise Management Systems](#) ranked among the top performing programs. The four state programs – **Florida, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine** – all achieved 100 percent client reporting scores for the fourth quarter 2009.

Nationwide, only eight of 60 state and territorial programs achieved a score of 100 percent in 2009 Q4. In addition to the four Time Wise-managed MEP centers, Alaska, Kentucky, Vermont and Puerto Rico MEPs also achieved 100 percent client reporting. The nationwide average reporting rate was 78.7 percent.

Client surveys constitute the core of a rigorous independent evaluation process that federal law requires for all MEP programs. Overseen by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the MEP evaluation process uses an independent third party to collect quarterly data from MEP center clients. These quarterly surveys measure the impact of services provided by MEP centers to manufacturers in their state. The 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 nationwide.

"The final quarterly client reporting rates for 2009 reflect our centers' commitment to client service," said Rod Rodrigue, president and CEO of Time Wise Management Systems. "We expect all Time Wise-managed MEP centers to achieve 100 percent reporting status. Our MEP project managers develop close collaborative relations with their manufacturing clients and deliver services that impact their bottom line. I'm very proud that Time Wise-managed centers represent half of the nation's top-reporting states."

The client Q4 surveys, which were conducted by an independent third-party, began on January 17 and were completed on February 12, 2010.

The regular achievement of 100 percent client reporting rates serves as a quality control measure and helps ensure the accuracy of economic impacts resulting from MEP services in the four states. In Time Wise-managed MEP centers impact results are never extrapolated and no client is ever removed from the survey.

"Our states' congressional delegations have shown a remarkable appreciation of the MEP program over the years and understand the value of the services we provide to manufacturers. One of the reasons for that sustained level of support has been the hard numbers that we can produce about impacts and results. Through client surveys, we can demonstrate the impact that MEP services have had in terms of increased manufacturing sales, improved worker skills, enhanced workforce productivity, increased production efficiency and new product development," Rodrigue stated.

"The current economic downturn has hit small manufacturers particularly hard. In response, we've developed two new initiatives to help manufacturers cope with these challenging conditions. The first was our MEP [Innovation Initiative](#) that helps clients identify new growth opportunities and provides them with tools for developing new products in response to changing market demands. That program has had good success in teaching small manufacturers how to become innovative," explained Rodrigue.

“The second initiative we launched in 2009 focuses on cutting energy costs and reducing the environmental impact of manufacturing processes. It was developed as a pilot project of the MEP programs in Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The [Lean Energy and Environment](#) program pioneers a new approach to energy efficiency by integrating energy and environmental metrics into the lean manufacturing methodologies traditionally employed MEPs. Unlike conventional energy audits, the Lean Energy and Environment program identifies manufacturing process inefficiencies that, when improved, can reduce or eliminate the need for energy in the first place,” Rodrigue stated.

The Lean Energy and Environment pilot program, Rodrigue noted, achieved a 10:1 return on investment. For a modest \$140,000 investment in direct and program management costs (\$67,000 coming from the EPA and \$73,000 in associated match dollars), the project produced a total of \$1.4 million in expected energy savings and operational efficiencies for the participating firms.

That kind of creative program development and ROI has help ensure that TimeWise-managed centers regularly perform among the best in the country.

NIST-MEP uses five measures to evaluate a center’s performance:

- 1) **Bottom-line client impact ratio**, which provides a measure of the new and retained resources available to manufacturing firms as a result of MEP delivered services;
- 2) **Impacted clients per million federal dollars**, which provides a measure of a center’s ability to generate client impacts;
- 3) **Investment leverage ratio**, which measures the sum of new investments reported by MEP center clients compared to the federal government’s investment in the MEP center;
- 4) **Percent quantified impact**, which provides a measure of the breadth of a center’s impacts, as well as a good overall measure of customer satisfaction;
- 5) **Clients served per million federal dollars**, which provides a measure of a center’s market penetration.

For Q3 2009, which is the latest data currently available for the five evaluation metrics, all four of the TimeWise-managed MEP centers received the maximum points awarded by NIST-MEP for each of the five measurements.

For additional information on the NIST/MEP evaluation process, see:

[Manufacturing Extension Partnership: Demonstrating Innovative Strategies in Performance Metrics.](#)

Presentation by Ken Voytek, chief economist, NIST/MEP, and Carroll Thomas, Partnership Catalyst, November 2008.

[MEP System and Center Performance:](#) Presentation to the MEP Advisory Board, October 2008 by Ken Voytek, chief economist, NIST/MEP. (pdf)

[NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership Client Impact Survey:](#) Presentation by Ken Voytek, chief economist, NIST/MEP, November 2007.