Collaborative Association of Manufacturers and Work Force Interest of North Central Idaho & Southeast Washington

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ABSTRACT

The Clearwater Economic Development Association, (CEDA) was awarded a U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) technical assistance award titled "Collaborative Association of Manufacturers and Work Force Interests" in June 2007. CEDA partnered with the Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association (NIMA) to implement the project. The project served a cross-state border region of nine counties in north central Idaho and southeast Washington. The project emphasized collaboration between private industry, public service agencies, secondary and post secondary education, and economic development entities to identify manufacturing industry collaborative and industry workforce challenges and solution strategies.

The intent of the project was to improve small rural manufacturing business sustainability by fostering opportunities for business growth, and to improve communication and collaboration within the industry and support entities. The strategic collaborative made significant improvement in garnering the cooperation and support of businesses, secondary and post secondary educators, community leaders, and public support agencies.

The project identified industry challenges and laid a foundational long term approach to improve the sustainability and growth of a rural manufacturing industry that is critical to the economic well-being of a regional rural economy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA) in cooperation and partnership with the Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers' Association (NIMA) applied for a grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the development of a regional 'Collaborative Association of Manufacturers and Work Force Interests'.

The applicant was awarded a grant for $75,000.00 with a match requirement of $75,000.00 of cash and/or in-kind. The cash match was provided by a State of Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho GEM Grant of $25,000. The remaining in-kind match was provided in the form of time donated by private employers and school administrators as participants in the project.

CEDA contracted with NIMA to implement the project and NIMA contracted with Bonfield Consulting to do the on-the-ground, in the field, 'scope of work' activity for the project. The NIMA Board of Directors has manufacturer representatives from the Idaho counties of: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nezperce and the southeastern Washington counties of: Asotin, Garfield, Columbia and Whitman. This project served manufacturers in the rural, nine county region of north central Idaho and southeastern Washington.

The initial step of the project focused on creating a process and survey questionnaire to utilize during face-to-face interviews with manufacturers to gather detailed information on manufacturing businesses' specific needs. The survey's purpose was to identify regional manufacturing needs and to guide the development of strategies to address needs.

A collaborative team (*see attachment "A")* was brought together to review the Board of Director's draft questions and to establish the format for the survey questionnaire. The collaborative team discussed and made recommendations on the methodology for conducting the survey. The survey questionnaire was completed and interviews with the manufacturers began on July 30, 2007. The interview process was completed in December of 2007, with 100 of the 184 NIMA manufacturers participating in the interview process. The results were compiled, evaluated, and disseminated by the project consultant, to the collaborative team. A Power-Point presentation of the results was developed for education and information purposes.

As a direct result of the survey results it was determined that the need for a quality workforce was the number-one need/priority to help manufacturers succeed. Within the development of a quality workforce it was also found that training for the existing workforce was a critical need. Following workforce development and training, other identified needs were: increasing the customer base for regional manufacturing businesses, specialized training and information for the manufacturers, employee health

insurance, product liability insurance, marketing and education of the industry, and access to funding.

The strategies for responding to the needs included various focused activities, including the formation of a 'workforce committee', and a completed pilot project which involved the workforce committee working with area high schools to determine superintendents, principals, and teachers that would participate in the pilot project. The pilot project informed educators on the manufacturing industry by providing on site tours of real work places. The pilot project also included the implementation of 'SolidWorks' and 'Haas' software training programs in high schools to educate students and give them exposure to real world manufacturing essentials. The schools that participated in the pilot project were Kamiah, Orofino, Nez Perce, Cottonwood (Prairie), Craigmont, Lewiston, and Troy in Idaho. In Washington the schools that participated were Clarkston (high and middle school), and Asotin high school. In addition, workshops for manufacturers and presentations to community groups were utilized to educate and inform the public of needs and opportunities of the manufacturing industry.

While the rural manufacturing industry faces major challenges because of recent national and global financial and economic problems, it is opportunistic projects such as this that will help provide real solutions for the small rural manufacturer and assist those businesses to sustain operations, which will in turn stabilize a rural regional economy.

In summary, this project developed a cooperative effort by the private sector manufacturing industry group; economic developers; education institutions; and local, state, and federal partners. The project uncovered collective industry needs and laid a constructive foundation for real solutions discovered in the pilot project and workshops. The project brought together private and public entities to define and prioritize the industry challenges and cooperatively brainstorm potential solutions.

This rural region and the manufacturing industry will benefit immensely from the collective information gathered by this project. The region will benefit in the long term as the public becomes more knowledgeable of the industry. The industry itself will benefit as new products, new methods, and solutions are applied to overcoming challenges. All of the various entities that participated in this project have committed to continue seeking improvement for the regional manufacturing industry.

As a result of this EDA award the project met its goals and provided structure to regional rural manufacturing issues and potential solutions that had previously been vague and difficult to pinpoint.

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Report

The Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA), a legally–formed, not for profit 501(c) (4) corporation; in a cooperative effort with the North Idaho Manufacturer's Association, Inc. (NIMA), a legally-formed, not-for-profit 501 (c) (6), submitted a technical assistance grant application to the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The intent of the grant was to develop a project in north central Idaho and southeast Washington which would prepare a 'manufacturing industry collaborative' and 'workforce development interests' targeted to the regional manufacturing industry, with a focus on small, rural manufacturers.

As the award recipient and the contractor with the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, CEDA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with NIMA. NIMA advertised for a consultant to undertake the implementation of the project scope of work. Through a publicly announced and competitive procurement process Bonfield Consulting was contracted to undertake the scope of work for the project.

Since 1968, the Clearwater Economic Development Association has been the major regional economic development entity in the region. CEDA provides the regional perspective on economic, industry, and public – private partnerships on relevant issues. CEDA partners and collaborates with numerous groups providing economic and community development and related service across the region. In addition to the close contractual cooperation with NIMA, CEDA partnered with Valley Vision – a local private economic development organization, SouthEast Washington Economic Development Association, the Clearwater County Economic Development Council, Ida-Lew Economic Development Council, Latah Economic Development Council, Framing Our Community, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the area's school districts, Lewis Clark State College, Walla-Walla Community College, the University of Idaho, and the Washington State University to ensure regional thoroughness and success of the project.

The geographic area served by this project included the North Central Idaho counties of Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce (which are referred to by state and federal economic development circles as, Region II) and the adjacent State of Washington border counties of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Whitman. These nine counties are referred to as "the region" in this project. The region also encompasses the federally recognized Nez Perce Tribe Reservation in Idaho.

Linked by its industries, culture, and transportation systems of rivers, rail, air, and non-interstate highways the region is a single "economic-region". The geography of the region is comprised of mountainous forested terrain and rich agricultural land. The region is bisected by the primary rivers of the Snake, Clearwater, and Salmon. The economy of the region is heavily dependent on natural resources.

This project served small and rural manufacturers in and around approximately 50 rural communities in north central Idaho and southeastern Washington State. The four largest

communities in the region are Lewiston, Idaho with a population of 31,293; Moscow, Idaho with a population of 22,862; Pullman, Washington with a population of 28,860; and Clarkston, Washington with a population of 7,280. *(Source: www.labor.idaho.gov and www.ofm.wa.gov)*

The following is a list of the region's incorporated communities:

Idaho
Clearwater County – Elk River, Greer, Orofino, Pierce, & Weippe
Idaho County – Cottonwood, Elk City, Ferdinand, Grangeville, Kooskia, Stites, Riggins, & Whitebird.
Latah County - Bovill, Deary, Harvard, Princeton, Moscow, Potlatch, & Troy
Lewis County – Craigmont, Kamiah, Nezperce, & Winchester
Nez Perce County – Culdesac, Lapwai, Lewiston, Peck, & Reubens

Washington
Asotin County – Asotin, Anatone, & Clarkston
Columbia – Dayton, & Starbuck
Garfield County – Pomeroy
Whitman County - Albion, Colfax, Colton, Endicott, Farmington, Garfield, Lacrosse, Lamont, Malden, Oakesdale, Palouse, Pullman, Rosalia, St. John Tekoa, & Uniontown

Producing 68% of the region's goods, manufacturing is a major segment of the goods-producing industries in the region. The manufacturing industry is undergoing challenges and change that the industry has not experienced in its history. The regional economy struggled to replace jobs that were lost from the forest and related industries declines over several years. NIMA and CEDA leadership recognized that the manufacturing industry played a critical role in diversifying the regional economy, which for over 60 years was natural resource dependent, as manufacturing provides solid livable wage jobs.

At the beginning of this project, the manufacturers who came together as the North Idaho Manufacturers' Association, Inc. recognized the region could not easily be identified by county and state borders. From the inception of this project, NIMA sought to change their organization's name so that it would be more reflective of the businesses, industry and geographic area they served. To do this, they changed the organization's name to the 'Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association (enabling the organization to retain the same identifying acronym of NIMA during the course of the project).

As a group of concerned and interested private manufacturing business owners the leadership put together an organization to advocate for and promote the regional manufacturing industry with a focus on the small, rural manufacturers. Prior to this project, NIMA's efforts in the region had fallen short of creating and deploying an effective "manufacturing industry collaborative". This project brought focus and structure to bringing industry business owners and representatives together to guide and organize their efforts. A concerted effort was undertaken to engage small businesses in strengthening the industry by developing constructive relationships with each other, as

well as local, state, federal, and private entities. The effort included guidance for the 'collaborative' to move towards improving manufacturing as a regional collective, providing a competitive industry advocacy, identifying industry challenges and solutions, and expanding business opportunities.

The project required focus on strengthening, building and rebuilding of numerous relationships between industry leaders and public and private institutions. Such relationships were and will continue to be critical to build on past efforts and future industry opportunity.

To supplement the federal funding, CEDA assisted the Idaho County Commissioners in applying for an Idaho Department of Commerce' Idaho GEM Grant in the amount of $25,000. This award was used as a "match" component for the federal funding. (See *Attachment L)* Additional match was provided by private industry business owners and educators time contributed directly to the project as a service necessary to the project.

Idaho County was selected to sponsor the GEM grant because County leadership recognized the importance of the manufacturing industry to the region. Regionally manufacturing employs a labor force of over 3,800 people. Idaho County is one of five counties that make up the region of north central Idaho and is the single largest land mass county of the region with 5,454,100 land use acres. Idaho County has major employment in lumber, cabinetry, metals manufacturing, timber, and agriculture. Most recent figures from the Idaho Department of Labor reflect that Idaho County has an average annual manufacturing wage of $40,800. The region's average annual manufacturing wage is $35,256. *(Source: Idaho Department of Labor)*

This project was coordinated with the Washington Workforce Board "Work Readiness Credential Program" and the "Skills Panel" project. The "Work Readiness Credential Program" is a program designed to prepare students in various "soft skill areas" that will make them more readily marketable to employers.

The South East Washington Economic Development Association established a "Skills Panel" made up of manufacturers and service providers to meet in a forum and discuss issues and solutions to workforce problems. The initiative looked beyond the immediate horizon of quantifying a regional workforce problem. This project embraces the principles of entrepreneurship by impacting the future workforce while they are still in high school.

Manufacturers in this region have an average of seven employees. Small manufacturers in the region commonly have two to three employees and up to 20-30 employees. Manufacturers with few employees struggle to meet production and operation demands. They operate and live from one job to the next, which means they do not have the time to line up work and research expansion and growth opportunities as they go. They complete one job and then look for another.

NIMA can help the manufacturers by providing a place for these manufacturers to access real, on time information and other assistance. Because most of the manufacturers in this area are small, it is difficult for them to provide medical insurance for their employees. Most cannot afford to provide insurance for themselves and their families. This issue is huge with the manufacturers and will be one of the ongoing issues that NIMA plans to tackle in assisting the manufacturers. In addition to medical insurance, NIMA is also looking at retirement and product liability insurance as a piece of the insurance package.

The project got off to an enthusiastic start as the NIMA organization, CEDA and the consultant were eager to take on a project that held promise and visionary opportunity for the regional manufacturing industry. Private Industry, represented by the NIMA Board of Directors, made a commitment to the project and brought the critical private industry insight, input, historical perspective, and futuristic view to the project.

Project accomplishments:

The NIMA board met on a monthly basis to organize and strategize on an approach to the grant's scope of work. In cooperation with the Clearwater Economic Development Association Director, a procurement process was undertaken to procure a professional consultant that would bring 'manufacturing industry' related experience and understanding to the project. This necessitated the development of a Memorandum of Agreement between CEDA and NIMA to ensure project effectiveness and award compliance. A separate contract was developed and signed between Dave Bonfield Consulting and NIMA. The consultant met weekly with CEDA staff to gain project knowledge, become familiar with the award expectations, and move the project forward in a structured manner.

One of the first things the consultant did was to begin consultation with board members, partner agencies, and contacting manufacturers in person and by phone. Bonfield made manufacturers aware of the project and secured their support and participation in the project.

The consultant drafted a survey (*See attachment B***)** to be presented to manufacturers in a face-to-face interview. The NIMA Board of Directors developed questions that they thought were appropriate and a collaborative team of manufacturers was developed to review and make recommendations on the survey questionnaire. The collaborative team members were directly involved in providing services and supporting the growth of the manufacturing sector. The collaborative team helped develop a list of manufacturers to be interviewed making sure that the list was random and covered manufacturers over the designated area. The collaborative team recommended that the survey results be analyzed by regional manufacturers.

The questionnaire was completed and interviews with the manufacturers began on July 30, 2007. The interview process was completed in December of 2007 with 100 of the current 193 manufacturers interviewed. Because the region is rural and the manufacturers are spread over a vast territory, the project required the interviewer to

travel many thousands of miles to complete the survey interview process. Many of the manufacturers interviewed were not aware of the manufacturer's association and the services that could be provided. During the interview process, manufacturers were directed to services that could assist them in applying for grants, locating other manufacturers that could work with them in attaining products or building parts, and in importing or exporting of goods. The interviews were completed and the results were compiled, evaluated, and disseminated. (*See attachment D*)

A PowerPoint presentation of the project (*See attachment J*) was prepared and presented to the collaborative team members.

Identification of needs in priority order:

- **A Quality Workforce:** Development and retention of a quality workforce was the number one need identified by the manufacturing industry businesses. Small rural manufacturers have a difficult time finding and retaining employees that have appropriate training and education.

  While the large manufacturers experience labor force challenges, the small manufacturing business with less than 50 employees is seriously impacted and experiences unique and major challenges in finding and keeping a workforce. Without a quality workforce, it is extremely difficult for the small manufacturing business to be competitive and viable in an increasingly technical and globally competitive environment.

  Adding to the workforce quality and availability issue is the factor that the existing labor force is made up of workers who are 'aging', retiring, and taking with them operational institutional knowledge that leaves a huge void. The average age of current workers in the industry is 45.

  In addition to the aging population, the region is experiencing a growing problem with the out-migration of youth from the rural communities. Rural communities do not have the amenities to retain and attract youth. Youth tend to look elsewhere for lifestyle and livable wages. The survey results reflected that there is a negative perception amongst local school district administrators, youth, parents, and instructors regarding the potential for good paying jobs in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing is not readily promoted to high school youth as a quality career potential.

  Most of the north central Idaho and southeastern Washington manufacturers are located in small rural communities; where many of the local school districts experience much larger graduation classes than kindergarten classes (which may imply an out-migration of young people from these rural communities). Through the survey process, it was determined that most of the school districts are completely unaware of the job opportunities available by small manufacturing facilities within their own communities.

Other issues that impact the workforce include the increasing challenge of rural transportation costs for the labor force to access rural job opportunities and the availability of affordable housing.

- **Increased Customer Base:** Increasing the customer base for industry businesses was identified as a critical need. Increasing a customer base means finding customers and distributors within the US that have a need for regional manufacturers' specific products and exploring and finding export markets for regionally manufactured products. This includes developing or finding a customer base that has a need whereby regional manufacturers could adjust their products, services, or manufacturing processes to meet a need.

  The alternative energy generation industry for electrical power generation from "wind farms" was identified as a potential customer. How to access this new and upcoming industry as a customer base was identified and is being explored. One possible avenue to access this new industry is to create a capabilities matrix that would list every manufacturer's abilities, equipment, and expertise. The industry capabilities matrix would provide an information resource for wind energy developers looking for a particular product or manufacturing process to easily find what is available regionally. This matrix/manufacturing information would be marketed to the wind farm industry and posted on the NIMA website.

  To access a customer base the industry needs an effective transportation system to get products to market. Transportation has been a serious regional issue for many years. Southeastern Washington and north central Idaho is a vast region with many hundreds of miles between the manufacturers and those that need their products.

  The highway system in this region is seriously compromised by the narrow mountainous terrain and often times serious winter weather conditions. A significant challenge is that the region does not have an "interstate/freeway" highway system connecting the region to other parts of the national economy. The closest access to a 'freeway' system is approximately 110 miles to the north and 270 miles to the south. With the current escalating costs of diesel fuel it is difficult to be competitive on shipping product.

  The rail system that for decades provided transportation to get products to market is a very limited shipping option, as much of the track has been removed or is being used for storage by the rail system. There is only one small rail line that serves the region and shipping on it requires that all freight go west, then north or south to interconnect with bigger rail systems that move freight to the west or east coast.

  The one significant advantage that the region does have regarding transportation is the port system on the Snake River, Clearwater River and Columbia River.

The region is connected to the west coast and the world through a series of inland water-ways dams and lock system that provide access to barge shipping. Lewiston, Idaho has the deepest and most inland port in the Pacific Northwest, located 465 miles inland from the Portland, Oregon ports. The Port of Clarkston, Port of Whitman and Port of Wilma are located on the Washington side of the river system. Container barging is one of the cheapest transportations available and with the exploding fuel prices, obtaining competitive transportation has become a greater issue. However, many of the small manufacturers are not familiar with how to effectively utilize this transportation system.

- **Specialized Training and Information for Manufacturers:** In-house training was by far the most popular method of training. Nearly 50% of manufacturers do not send their employees to any additional training after hiring. Reasons noted were that manufacturers did not find the training that is available to be beneficial, or the training was too costly, and the training availability was usually during work hours. Training presents a very real dilemma as most small manufacturers cannot afford to have their employees away from work during production and work hours. To be accommodating training needed to be available in the evenings or on weekends.

  An in-depth investigation determined that one-half of the manufacturers surveyed did not utilize off site training because past experiences in the quality of instruction did not meet the outcome expectation of the manufacturer or they just did not believe they got a return on their financial and time investment.

  Manufacturers need access to training and information that will assist them to be competitive in both the domestic and foreign market. Improving access to markets will increase sales, production, and improve the need to hire workers to meet product demand. Training and information must be made available in a variety of mediums and accessibility. Such a delivery of training is necessary to allow business to access training without it cutting into their business production schedule. Training must be available within reasonable commutes, relevant to the specific industry, and provided by institutions that have a core understanding of private business needs and challenges.

  Training, related to export and import markets, was identified as a specific need. Small rural businesses have a strong desire learn about exporting and to desire to identify and diversify into foreign markets; thus increasing their stability by not being solely dependent on domestic markets for their products.

- **Health Insurance and Product liability Insurance:** Employee health benefits in the form of health insurance were identified as a real need. The surveys conducted by the consultant identified that small manufacturers are in most cases unable to provide health insurance for employees. This creates an industry environment where employees, especially those with families, are especially prone to move to positions with larger employers that provide health insurance. High turnover

creates a major issue for the small manufacturer as they invest heavily in one-to-one 'training' that is significantly time consuming. The small business owner is dependent on their trained employees that get familiar with their specific business operation for production and profit generation.

As the workforce moves from the small business to the larger business to access health insurance, the movement makes stabilizing a workforce for the small rural manufacturer extremely difficult. The small business loses institutional knowledge specific to his business when an employee leaves and creates a costly 'revolving door' and time consuming training environment.

Product liability insurance was identified as a separate insurance need. Product liability insurance is insurance that protects the manufacturer in the event that a product because of design defect, manufacturing defect, failure to warn, etc. may cause injury to the end user. The manufacturer may be held responsible for the injury and related costs. Most manufacturers find this type of insurance to be cost prohibitive. NIMA is continuing to seek product liability insurance that would be affordable for the small manufacturer.

- **Collaboration and Communication:** The need to provide opportunity for small rural manufacturers to collaborate and communicate on common issues and solutions was identified. Small rural manufacturers are located where they are because they place high value on independence and the rural quality of life in small communities. This often creates communication challenges within the industry for industry specific information. To impact the communication effort NIMA created an on-going newsletter. (*See attachment K*).

  A need continues to exist for regional manufacturers, with similar operations, to work together to impact how they do business. Several small operators communicating and networking effectively could purchase raw materials and consumables in bulk to reduce the cost for the small user. Collaboration and communicating on improving production processes and local capabilities could enhance the small manufacturers' processes and increase profitability.

- **Marketing and Education on the Industry:** Marketing of the industry and educating the public about manufacturing was defined as a critical need. Manufacturing as an industry in this rural region is misunderstood by most job seekers, educators, elected officials, and the general public. The general public is in most cases not aware of the impact that small rural manufacturers have on the local economy and the potential careers that are available to job seekers. Manufacturers need to do a better job of promoting their own industry or 'tooting their own horn' to the local community. While inroads have been made, most secondary and post secondary educators are not aware of the careers in the manufacturing industry.

- **Access to Funding:** The need for small rural manufacturers to better understand how to access traditional bank and public financing was identified as a need. Many small rural manufacturers do not have an in-depth understanding of private and public funding. Small rural manufacturers often find dealing with private financial institutions an intimidating challenge.

  Many small business owners, focused on the day-to-day task of production and operation are not aware of numerous state and federal programs that may benefit their business. Many may well qualify for Small Business Innovation Research Grants (SBIR) and United States Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grants (USDA-RBEG) but do not understand how those programs work. There is opportunity for improvement for small rural manufacturers to work more closely with the Small Business Administration and Small Business Development Center programs.

  A need was identified for a collaborative entity to promote, educate, and assist manufacturers to explore and access public funding. This would need to be an entity that has the resources to make one-on-one, face-to-face contact with businesses on a regular schedule. It appears that the small business is often overwhelmed by general operations responsibilities and is skeptical that public services will be responsive to and understanding of their specific need.

- **An Implementation Strategy for Responding to the Highest Priority Needs – With a Defined Workforce Component:**

  Workforce: A Workforce Committee was established (*See attachment F*) to implement a strategy to determine the schools that would be involved in the school to manufacturing process. Timelines were established for this process to move forward (*See attachment F*). Schools were identified and contact was made to determine superintendents, principals and teachers that would participate in the process. Once the participants were identified, manufacturer worksite tours/meetings were provided.

  Workforce training: The highest priority identified by the survey was to develop, train, and retain a quality workforce for manufacturers. One of the first components necessary to impact this priority was to develop an ongoing educational and promotional campaign in the elementary and high school education system. A quality on-going informational approach is necessary to inform educators and students of the technical knowledge required to succeed in manufacturing, the creativity required, the working conditions, the varied work environments available, and the career potential that is available in manufacturing. Educating parents, community members, schools and colleges to view small manufacturers as future employers is a necessity if small rural communities are to survive and prosper.

There is a need to systematically encourage postsecondary students to take courses that will lead them to occupations in the manufacturing field and to remind those, that for whatever reasons do not complete college, that there are careers in their local communities in manufacturing. A strategy to work with employment and training entities to access and move the dislocated workers into the manufacturing industry through training and education should be implemented. Manufacturing contains numerous occupations and not all are in production work, many are in support services.

- **A completed pilot, workforce development project:**

  The following is a description of the pilot project NIMA implemented to impact 'workforce development'. The schools that participated in the pilot project were Kamiah, Orofino, Nezperce, Cottonwood (Prairie), Craigmont, Lewiston, and Troy in Idaho. In Washington the Clarkston (high and middles schools), and Asotin high school participated in the project.

  To expose local school districts to the local manufacturing industry it was determined that manufacturers would donate their time to work with faculty that had the most influence with students. Manufacturers decided that math and science teachers would provide that contact. (*See attachment F for goals & tasks*)

  NIMA began this task by providing tours of manufacturing facilities to high school superintendents, principals, and math and science teachers. Principals and superintendents were targeted for the first step in this process which started with an eight hour workshop at a local manufacturing facility. During the workshop, they toured every facet of the facility from generating orders in sales and marketing, bidding and estimating, operations, production, and ending with shipping and receiving. The goal was to provide a total vision of the business as well as the wide variety of occupations that are needed in manufacturing.

  After the tours, the manufacturer and the attendees discussed what they had learned from these tours and brainstormed as to how they could all work together to provide students with a real understanding of the quality jobs that exist in their own community.

  All of the administrators were very surprised and impressed by the modern technology utilized at each of the toured facilities. Although the schools do not have the financial means or ability to create a specific class for these highly skilled opportunities, the focus was on how the schools could incorporate the competencies that comprise these skill areas into an opportunity to show a practical approach or how relevant math and science theory is used in a real world application. The administrators made a commitment to allow their best math and science teachers to replicate their experience.

In setting up the tours for the math and science teachers, it was decided to format the process similar to the process utilized with the administrators; but, with one difference. There was an attempt to tie each occupation within the manufacturing facility to how math and science apply to perform certain tasks efficiently or profitably. Before starting, there was a concern about the math and science teachers only seeing manufacturing opportunities for the underachieving student and not as an opportunity for all students. Once teachers were able to see the complexity of the different job opportunities and after the employees had an opportunity to explain, and in many cases demonstrate, how math and science was used as an on-going tool in their profession they were committed and excited to set up tours for the students. With a greater understanding of the individual jobs within these manufacturing facilities, they could set up their classes to look at specific operations and ask meaningful questions. In each tour, the teachers were ready to schedule tours for math and science students before they proceeded to the next manufacturing facility.

Discussions were held after completing the tour with the math and science teachers on how or what could be done to assist them in creating practical experiences for students and what would assist in establishing the importance of learning these skill.

Ideas with a common thread were discussed that would not only be a valuable learning experience but also teach a skill that could possibly encapsulate the understanding of many math and science subjects into an experience that would be a beneficial learning tool and be a valuable skill for manufacturers. The common thread was three-dimensional software or computer aided drafting. As a result of the survey, it was known that the majority of the manufacturers surveyed used a program called SolidWorks. One of the participating high schools was using a program called Auto Cad. For this school to have enough programs to be shared by math and science classes, NIMA paid for ½ the cost of the additional software seats and a local manufacturer paid the other ½, with the understanding that the high school would create a computer lab with the auto cad software and make the lab available for evening or off hour use to under-employed or dislocated workers.

SOLIDWORKS SOFTWARE AND TRAINING

To address the issue of SolidWorks training for secondary educators, NIMA's Workforce Committee put together scholarships for educators to attend a four day training program. The training was held in July 2008 followed by two more two-day training events. The training was held at Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston Idaho.

The scholarships and travel for teachers were paid from the Idaho Department of Commerce GEM grant. Upon completion, each educator received ten seats of software to take back to their schools.

SolidWorks was chosen because it had software packages applicable from elementary school to the professional level and requires the least amount of computer power.

The SolidWorks software does not time out and can be used without additional cost for as long as the school wants to use it. If the school wishes to upgrade to a newer version at a later date there may be some additional cost. More than 80% of the manufacturers currently use the SolidWorks software. After many years of use, none of them have experienced a need to upgrade. The SolidWorks educational package includes SW Professional, CosmosWorks Professional, and Motion & Flow Works. Quest Integration (QI) supplies technical support to the schools without a fee for as long as they own the product. Teachers can call in at any time to request tech support from the QI experts. Six Idaho schools have requested training and 100 seats of software. Two Washington schools have requested training and 30 seats of software.

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NIMA negotiated with Quest Integration to procure software and training in SolidWorks. **NIMA secured the necessary funding to offer the SolidWorks software and training at no charge to the schools**. The cost for this effort was covered by a joint effort of NIMA, Tech Prep, and Quest Integration. NIMA also acquired a stipend of approximately $500.00 per teacher, for the 4 day training class. Teachers' mileage to the training was reimbursed at the current IRS rate. Training being an extremely valuable part of the package, it insured the teachers were ready to start this program at the beginning of the school year.

Several of the schools did not have adequate computers. A group of post-secondary professionals and local economic development people united to see what could be done to help the schools upgrade their computers.

To date, 30 manufacturers have committed to partnering with interested schools. Several planning meetings were scheduled after the July training. Manufacturers and teachers determined timelines and methods needed to work with the students. Once a student develops a drawing for a product they will take it to a manufacturer and the manufacturer will take the student through the steps in producing their product. This includes showing the student how their drawing is entered into the CNC machine and how the product is processed. Manufacturers are also developing a project for schools that would allow the students to compete on teams to design a concept/idea for which the manufacturer has a need. The students would compete for the best design and the manufacturer would provide an incentive to the students/schools.

HAAS TRAINING

NIMA's Workforce Committee worked with King Machine to obtain Haas on-line training for incumbent workers and new employees. This training is

$999.00 per seat. The Workforce Committee negotiated with King Machine to get the software through NIMA at a volume discount of $299.00 per seat. NIMA made contact with the Idaho Department of Labor that agreed to pay 50% of the negotiated cost directly to the manufacturer. This resulted in the manufacturer being able to purchase this training at $149.50 per seat.

Haas Training is an online, individualized training program that teaches how to operate computerized numerical controlled equipment (CNC). There are three suites available with the Haas Training. Skills Suite teaches basic skills, measuring tools, blue print reading, and relevant math skills. VF Suite teaches vertical milling machines and SL Suite teaches horizontal turning machines. These training courses can be previewed at www.learnhaas.com. Haas is the largest USA manufacturer of CNC machining equipment.

The Idaho Department of Labor has worked with the manufacturers to assist their employees with the "learn more, earn more" philosophy. NIMA is hoping that this program will continue into the future. It is especially beneficial as most of the manufacturers surveyed do not provide training.

NIMA implemented the following training within the pilot project;

1) *Welding:* A current manufacturer employee, who wants to secure a higher paying job classification, would have the opportunity by completing a pre-apprenticeship program on their own time before or after their regular work schedule. The pre-apprenticeship is a combination of technical information and hands-on experience. The technical portion of the training will use **Hobart Training Material**, an industry standard. This curriculum was obtained in both DVD and video tape format. If the worker does not have equipment to use the training material, the manufacturer will provide it.

   Each participating manufacturer would provide a journeyman welder to observe and instruct. Once the student completes this training, they would be placed on a list for the next opportunities for welding openings within their respective manufacturing facility.

2) *CNC Machine operation:* The Haas Tool Machine training program was selected for use in this environment.

   Once these training programs have been completed the employee is given an opportunity to compete for the next available job in this field.

   For a current employee, the manufacturer would pay for ½ the instructional cost. For a dislocated worker or under-employed from outside the manufacturing industry the training costs would be paid by the

Workforce Training fund from the Idaho Department of Labor (for qualified Idaho residents only).

Increased customer base: To immediately impact the customer base, the project principles put together several initiatives: 1.) International Marketing Education workshop for manufacturers; 2.) A Marketing Strategy Initiative for Five Idaho Manufacturers; 2.) Funding Solicitation for a Marketing Strategy Initiative for Southeastern Washington Manufacturers; 3.) Development of a Local Foundry; 4.) Assistance to Specific Manufacturers through Feasibility and Marketing Strategies.

To create additional job opportunities, it was determined to provide specialized training and information to the region's manufacturers teaching them how to expand into wider markets which would increase customer bases.

In February of 2008 NIMA, CEDA, the Port of Lewiston, Port of Whitman, Palouse Economic Development Council, Valley Vision and the Port of Clarkston presented a workshop for manufacturers, Expanding your Business Opportunities through Government Contracting, International Trade, and Use of the Port System. (*See attachment E for workshop information*)

Speaking on the services they provided, the combination of the three port offices provided international shipping information. All of the manufacturers in attendance were pleased to learn that port shipping was not only for use by the large shippers and that there are companies who consolidate partial shipping loads to provide some significant reduction in shipping costs.

Other invited speakers gave presentations on doing business with the government and how to export. It was determined in the survey that only 8% of small manufacturers export making this a logical component for expansion.

This training session was presented by the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade alliance and a private consultant with more then 30 years in the export field. Although only 11 manufacturing companies attended, the training session a good start. The workshop received a lot of attention and was a great conduit for conversation among manufacturers. Four of the attendees have since become clients of the International Trade Alliance and four additional manufacturers have partnered with CEDA on developing business international trade marketing strategies. A second workshop is being hosted by CEDA and SEWEDA on December 10, 2008. After reviewing the class evaluations and observation by the workshop team members a number of improvements have been identified to maximize the workshops benefits to manufacturers.

A USDA-RBEG grant of $78,750.00 has been secured, to assist up to five manufacturers that are interested in the exporting process. The RBEG will allow the manufacturers to develop an exporting strategic plan and identify the potential customer base to increase their sales by 25-30%. This process is in the infant stages of replication in southeastern

Washington with the assistance of the Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA).

Importing products is often essential in keeping a manufacturing company competitive. A number of resources are being used to assist manufacturers in identifying foreign suppliers of component parts. If a manufacturer that is importing a product of a similar nature and it is not in direct competition with the already importing manufacturer then they would be asked to mentor the other manufacturer. This is a win/win situation because they are helping identify additional customers for the off-shore manufacturer and many times they can reduce their own shipping costs thru container consolidation.

State agencies in both Washington and Idaho are being used to help identify a foreign manufacturer of needed components and if they do not currently have offices within the United States, the U.S Department of Commerce will assist. If unable to identify little to no cost services, private consultants with expertise in doing business with a country of interest will be used. Although these consultation companies may be expensive, it is an effective means of ensuring a manufacturer succeeds with the importing endeavor.

There is much more to importing than identifying an off-shore manufacturer. Supply chain management is important. If the manufacturer does not have a total understanding of supply chain management it could be extremely costly to the business. It can cause irreparable financial problems by creating excess inventory or not enough inventories and dealing with customer deadlines that cannot be met. NIMA's experience in working with companies to learn supply chain management found that all kinds of additional manufacturer needs surfaced. A few examples included inventory control, cash management (not all bankers know and understand manufacturing), how to manage cash flow, shipping costs, and product flow.

NIMA strongly encourages manufacturers to learn about supply chain management to assure a successful importing experience. To do this, NIMA worked through the WSU entrepreneurial program which is an EDA-sponsored program to assist manufacturers. Contact information for profit consultation companies that provide similar services can be provided.

This region is fortunate to have State of Washington and State of Idaho agencies that offer a quality program in teaching Lean Manufacturing. This training is invaluable in teaching processes to reduce manufacturing costs and improve quality. In some cases, these classes can reduce costs enough so that manufacturers do not need to look at importing. These classes should always be looked at first before attempting to import a component.

Small manufacturers often need financial assistance in the form of cash influx for a variety of reasons. NIMA encouraged the USDA guaranteed loan program, managed by CEDA, to service Idaho counties and southeastern Washington. In a short time, CEDA was able to assist a number of manufacturers meet their financial needs. This was done

by either a loan directly to the manufacturer or coordinating with a bank to provide gap financing.

Health insurance: NIMA developed a committee to look at possible solutions regarding health insurance options for small manufactures as most of the surveyed manufacturers were not able to provide health insurance. The committee received a number of quotes from health insurance providers. However, providers were only interested in the clients that can make them a profit. To receive discounts large enough to make health insurance a reachable component for small manufacturers, the insurance companies want a pool of 20,000 or more employees. NIMA members comprise around 7,500 employees.

To offer medical insurance, manufacturers would need to raise their production cost from between $3.00 and $4.00 per man hour. Most manufacturers do not have a product line that can justify such an increase in production cost and remain competitive. Much more work has to be done with regard to the cost of health insurance.

Collaboration and communication: NIMA determined the best way to develop an open communication network between manufacturers to drive down costs of doing business, regarding the purchase of raw materials, consumables, improve production processes, and to develop a local capabilities matrix; was to work together in a cohesive group. Collaborative purchases of raw materials: In the spirit of collaboration and communication enhancement a group of manufacturers that use a sizeable amount of brass came together to purchase their material at a significant savings by buying directly from a foreign manufacturer.

In an effort to improve communication the 11 aluminum boat manufacturers in the region, ranging in size from two employees to over 100 employees, began to discuss the possibility of cooperatively finding ways to reduce production costs. However, in order to develop trust amongst the group this will take time and on-going effort.

NIMA has been working with an economic development group to recruit a company to the Lewiston Clarkston Valley. The company has equipment, called a metal break, large enough to form the bottoms of the boats. This particular manufacturing process is currently being done about 120 miles away for the boat manufacturers. Having local access to this manufacturing process would be useful to the industry in reducing both inventory and shipping costs.

To enhance communications within the region NIMA developed a ‘list serve’ that provides a direct line of communication between every manufacturer within the region. The ‘list serve’ provides security in that the system allows for the wide range of manufacturers to communicate without fear of having their information or site accessed by “spammers”.

NIMA, in an effort to improve collaboration amongst manufacturers with similar needs, diligently contacted materials suppliers to assist in obtaining the best price for materials and coordinate small purchases as part of larger or bulk purchases. NIMA is also

coordinating a project to locate a 'foundry' in the region that would benefit any manufacturer that utilizes bulk metals.

Marketing and education on the industry: Manufacturers need to develop an ongoing professional campaign that keeps industry needs and opportunities in the forefront of the general public, educators, and elected officials to mitigate years of negative perception based on lack of information. A quality website should be maintained to ensure global exposure, marketing, and education of the industry. The continued publication of the NIMA organizational newsletter will be an effective marketing and education medium.

NIMA board members developed an effective PowerPoint presentation to utilize in promoting the industry, fund-raising, and education within the industry. (*See attachment J.3)*

Access to funding:

SBIR GRANTS

Through the survey it was discovered that many manufacturers were developing new products or making significant changes to their product line and needed assistance. Five manufacturers were encouraged to apply for the $3000.00 phase zero Small Business Innovation Research funding with the Idaho Department of Commerce. The funding specifically helps applicants work through the application process.

RBEG GRANTS (USDA)

Rural Business Enterprise Grants are to assist businesses in potential growth efforts. Two businesses applied and received RBEG funding to assist the manufacturing businesses in getting new product approval.

In the survey it was found that exporting was a significant portion of sales in only 9% of our regional manufacturers. Nationally it was found that over 50% of small manufacturers export on a regular basis. The "Growing your Business through Exporting" seminar was developed as a starting point to assist these regional manufacturers in increasing the region's percentage of export by manufacturers. A major outcome of the seminar was the International Business Development Strategies grant application which was funded by USDA Rural Development. One business from each of the five (5) counties in north central Idaho represented by NIMA was selected to participate in submitting the RBEG application. The project will hire a consultant to work with the companies to develop and implement individual export market strategic plans. The CEDA wrote and submitted the application for the 5 manufacturers and was awarded the grant on October 10, 2008.

MANUFACTURING CLUSTERS:

Industry clusters are geographic concentrations of competing, complimentary or interdependent industries that do business with each other and/or have common needs for talent, technology, and infrastructure. The industries identified in this cluster may be both competitive and cooperative. They may compete directly with some members of the cluster, purchase product from other cluster members and rely on the services of other cluster members in the operation of their business. (*EDA America, Fall 2008 Issue*)

These clusters are in a rural region with like needs, with the number one need being quality workforce. Several other common needs include marketing, transportation, and economical education/training programs.

It is essential that the manufacturing clusters have access to collaboration among organizations, sectors, and communities in accessing resources and nurturing industry clusters. The cluster framework mobilizes stakeholders and fosters collaboration by bringing together participants from key industries and institutions in the region. This is an invaluable tool in a rural area where these manufacturers must rely on services that are many times not within their communities. This is a critical issue for manufacturing clusters if they wish to survive.

A direct result of the project and survey was the identification of four industry clusters in this region. The four industry clusters wherein manufacturers were interviewed are reflected below.

- ***AGRICULTURE***

  The agriculture industry is one of the largest within this region. Although manufacturers do not have anything to do with the growth of crops, manufacturers in the region provide agriculture equipment, scientific equipment, environmental products, parts and repair for equipment, and secondary services to this industry cluster. Reviewing the connection between manufacturing and the agriculture industry within this nine county region revealed direct connection involved 46 manufacturers that manufacture products for farmers or agriculture suppliers.

  Potential Growth: Statistically the United States is being required to feed more and more of the world's population. The growth potential for this region is high; currently there is a manufacturer that is working to open the market in the region to the garbanzo bean crop which is used widely in Asian countries. This is but one of the potential growth crops in this area.

  Challenges: The greatest challenges are negotiations with farmers to grow the crop, finding a facility that has a large enough freezing facility to accommodate harvest of the product, and transportation of the frozen product to the foreign market.

Potential Solutions: NIMA brought together a host of public service agencies across the region creating a network of information for manufacturers to access. Several state and federal agencies operate specifically in each state. However navigating the specific rules and regulations that apply to any given situation can best occur through collaboration and cooperation to meet the manufacturers' need?

The collaborative agencies within the 9 county regions in conjunction with NIMA are working to assist a manufacturer in finding the funding necessary to open the Seneca plant in Dayton, WA. The manufacturer has purchased farming property and will produce his first crop in the 2008 growing season.

Additionally The University of Idaho, at the request of the USDA, has developed a product that collects soil samples, stores them in a bag, and prints on them the exact location by using GPS technology. NIMA worked with the university and identified a manufacturer, within this region, that can manufacture the sampling product.

- ***BOAT MANUFACTURERS***

Lewiston, Idaho is the site of the first jet boat builder in the world. Within the nine county region there are ten boat manufacturers. They all manufacture whitewater welded aluminum hulled boats. The current downturn in the national economy had a negative impact on the regions boat manufacturers. All of the major boat builders have had to lay off workers.

Potential Growth: Because of the national economic downturn, foreign markets are the best avenue for potential growth.

Challenges: The single greatest challenge is the economic downturn that the national economy has taken. 'Pleasure' boat sales have dropped of significantly. Regardless boat companies have need of a 'press break' large enough to form the bottoms of the boats that are being built. The nearest press break is in Spokane, Washington which is over 100 miles away. Having local access to this type of industry equipment would significantly reduce shipping costs.

In addition there are no galvanizing facilities locally. Manufacturers must send manufactured product to Spokane, WA for galvanizing. The industry also grapples with boat engine fuel efficiency.

Potential Solutions: The economic development organizations within the area are working with companies that have the potential to provide the press break service to relocate or expand their existing business to this region.

All solutions are difficult during the current tough economy. However NIMA will continue to work with manufacturers to find solutions to the challenges.

- ***RECREATION/SPORTING PRODUCTS***

  North central Idaho and south eastern Washington are rural recreational sporting areas. The Snake and Clearwater Rivers along with numerous smaller rivers and recreational areas provide many recreational activities including hunting, fishing, archery, recreational shooting, boating, skiing, white water rafting, four-wheeling and Hells Canyon boat tours. All of these activities support the manufacturers in this region.

  Potential Growth: The potential growth in the recreation area is going to continue to be based on tourism as well as an increase in the retirement population.

  Another factor in the recreation upswing has been the foreign tourist market, which has been noted by Hells' Canyon Boat Tours who are seeing a marked increase. The archery and fly fishing manufacturers have seen an increase and continue to develop a foreign market.

  Challenges: Quality workforce continues to be an issue for this cluster industry.

  Potential Solutions: Continuing education of this regions potential employees, training and use of more economical transportation are going to be essential.

- ***TIMBER INDUSTRY***

  The timber industry is, and has been for decades, one of the largest employers in the region. It continues to have far reaching effects on the economic future of this area. During the last quarter of 2008 the national economic downturn had a significant negative impact on the timber industry. Area sawmills laid off significant number of workers as the demand for lumber utilized in the housing construction industry was dramatically reduced.

  With housing construction expected to remain depressed, low lumber prices are expected to continue, which will cause layoffs, reduction in hours worked, or intermittent shutdowns. (Source: *Idaho Dept. of Labor, Work Force Trends)*

  Potential Growth: New product markets for wood products, biofuel, and reforestation efforts, and managing the forest are areas for opportunity in the industry.

  Challenges: The timber industry has seen many challenges in history; including environmental challenges, forest disease, lack of being able to manage the national forests, and the lack of understanding that logging is a sustainable resource.

  Potential Solutions: The industry needs to continue to develop technology that makes it affordable to remove and use all of the remnants from the logging operation and work to develop natural methods to treat diseases in the forests.

The timber industry needs to work with the federal government to change legislation to allow better management of the national forests, change the perception about logging to let government and citizens know that the forest is a sustainable resource, and identify methods, through research, to produce products within the region that can be competitive within the US and foreign market.

Waste stream elimination and utilizing the waste for bio-fuels is a potential solution. Improving the use of the remnants from the logging operation could be a significant bottom line cost savings. Better use of timber to make products locally and create jobs rather than shipping the whole tree out of the area for processing.

A plan/assessment of existing workforce conditions, recent trends, assets, and opportunities; time line and result measurement:

Manufacturing, for centuries, has been viewed as a smokestack, pollution emitting industry, with jobs that are only done by someone that cannot make it in college. This picture of manufacturing comes from the early 1900's and no longer has a place in the image that manufacturing should portray today. Most of the manufacturing facilities are modern with sophisticated, complex electronics equipment that requires a great deal of computer experience and training to operate. Industry occupations require an understanding and application of math and science in a practical setting.

Recent regional trends have been disrupted by serious national and global financial problems. During the latter part of the project, significant and major negative economic change in the national and global, financial and economic markets profoundly affected the opportunities for the manufacturing industry. The national and global instability has increased the need for a collective advocacy and approach to the challenges and opportunities facing the small rural manufacturer. Industry advocacy, manufacturer support, education, and development are even more crucial to the industry and the regional economy.

The trends are similar throughout the region. The region's economy is fairly diversified for a rural region its size. The region struggles with job losses in agriculture, logging, and sawmills, as its other industries strive to grow. Despite troubles in the lumber industry, manufacturers added 100 jobs between 2002 and 2007. Boat makers in the Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington area and some small manufacturers in Idaho County were the source of most of the new jobs. In 2007, 1,100 people manufactured wood products and 1,140 made paper products. In the last 12 months, wood products lost 350 jobs. With U.S. housing construction expected to remain depressed, low lumber prices are expected to continue. (*Source; Idaho Department of Labor)*

The growth or failure of the national economy to grow within the next 2-5 years will have a huge impact on how measurements occur on the manufacturing challenges. Because of the national economic and financial challenges it is estimated that in most cases it will take two to three years to see significant improvement in the rural opportunities.

Progress will be measured by determining the size of the operation, gross sales and the number of employees and creation of a flow chart that shows yearly growth progress. This is critical to assist the small rural manufacturers sustain their current operations and existing workforce. In small rural communities the closure of a small manufacturing business has a dramatic impact on the sustainability of that rural community.

A major and significant opportunity is in exploring and establishing the small rural manufacturer in the international trade/export markets. It is anticipated that it will take three to five years in exporting for a company to feel comfortable with a foreign customer base. This will necessitate diligent cooperation, education, and advocacy from the public and private sector.

The region has many assets including a long history of small manufacturing business owners that have proven resilient during difficult economic times. The willingness to come together and seek solutions to challenges is a positive asset. There is a strong cooperative effort to collaborate across state lines and develop collective responses with state and federal agencies, for the manufacturing industry. The regional secondary and post secondary education institutions have been willing to learn about the manufacturing industry and cooperate in solutions.

In summary, this project provided constructive steps toward identifying the challenges of the manufacturer, developing strategies and implementing tasks to deal with the identified challenges.

This project identified manufacturers and is working to pull them together to address the work force and other issues. By forming a collaborative partnership between manufacturers, schools, colleges and economic development entities this project will continue to contribute directly to stabilizing and growing the manufacturing industry in this rural region and will provide the industry with a quality and reliable work force.

The NIMA a non- profit organization is dedicated to procure the funding to continue with this project beyond the EDA grant. The PowerPoint presentation will be used to educate students and communities about manufacturing. Presentations to key government agencies, tribal entities, and financial institutions will assist in promoting the manufacturers in the region. This EDA grant award has opened many opportunities for the manufacturers and industry support entities in the region. *(See Attachment 'F', NIMA goals and objectives)*

Performance Measures – self evaluation: Strategy and Technical Assistance Program

1. Quality of strategy, evaluation, and service, 8

2. Helpfulness of strategy, evaluation, in decision making, 10

3. Likelihood of recommendations being realized, 8

4. Effectiveness of the service. 10

The strategy was well thought out by the 'collaborative team'. The evaluation and service process was excellent in that it included the consultant implementing an intensive activity of one-on-one, face-to-face visits with manufacturers.

The strategy of utilizing face-to-face visits often resulted in manufacturers receiving immediate answers to questions. In many instances the consultant was able to provide contact information for technical services, directly to the manufacturer.

The pilot project made significant inroads to establish industry knowledge in the public education system, which will lead to a better understanding of manufacturing needs and opportunities for the work force.

The overall project brought together an effective cohesive effort leading to a continued strategy for improving and assisting the manufacturing industry in the project region.

Partner Associations Websites:

US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration www.eda.gov
US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development www.rurdev.usda.gov
US Department of Commerce, Trade Assistance www.buyusa.gov/boise

Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA) www.clearwater-eda.org
Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association (NIMA) www.northima.org

Lewis-Clark State College www.lcsc.edu
Idaho Department of labor www.labor.idaho.gov , www.lmi.idaho.gov , www.idahoworks.org/services
Idaho Department of Commerce www.commerce.idaho.gov
Valley Vision www.lewis-clarkvalley.com
Clearwater County Economic Development www.clearwatercounty.org
Ida-Lew Economic Development www.ida-lew.org
Latah Economic Development Council www.latahedc.org
University of Idaho www.uidaho.edu
Idaho Tech Connect www.idahotechconnect.com
Idaho Tech Help www.techhelp.org
Port of Lewiston www.portoflewiston.com

Southeastern Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) www.seweda.org
Washington State University www.wsu.edu
Walla-Walla Community College http://www.wwcc.edu/CMS/index.php?id=clarkston
Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) www.cted.wa.gov
SIRTI www.sirti.org
Washington Work Source www.wa.gov/esd/1stop
Port of Clarkston, WA www.portofclarkston.com
Port of Columbia, WA www.portofcolumbia.org
Port of Garfield, WA www.portofgarfield.com
Port of Whitman, WA www.portwhitman.com
Port of Wilma, WA www.portwhitman.com/wilma