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Manufacturing Extension Partnership Receives $106 Million for FY06

Washington, D.C. (November 16, 2005) – With today's Senate approval of H.R. 2862, the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership received $106 million in federal funding for fiscal year 2006. The legislation provides level funding but represents a significant increase above the administration-proposed $46.8 million.

The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a network of 59 centers, with nearly 400 locations across the country and in Puerto Rico, providing technical assistance and business support services to America's small manufacturers. The public/private program, which serves roughly 14,000 businesses annually, has helped manufacturers create or retain more than 50,000 jobs, create or retain over $4.1 billion in sales, generate more than $686 million in cost savings, and invest more than $912 million in modernization in fiscal year 2003 alone.

The American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC), the trade association of NIST MEP Centers, have advocated for Congressional support of the program through its members and manufacturing clients. These efforts have resulted in overwhelming bi-partisan support for the program as evidenced by the 243 House members and 62 Senators who signed supportive letters to appropriators. Mike Coast, Chairman of the ASMC and President of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, the Michigan NIST MEP affiliate, states "The fiscal year 2006 appropriation will allow the NIST MEP program to continue to serve the thousands of the nation's manufacturers that contribute to maintaining and improving this nation's economic vitality. ASMC and its members greatly appreciate the tremendous Congressional support for the MEP program and hope that together, ASMC, MEP and Congress can work to restore and enhance the U.S.-based manufacturing community in the future."