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Small Manufacturers Convene in DC to Support MEP

Washington, D.C. (March 8, 2006) – Last week, more than 200 members and clients of the American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC) convened in Washington, D.C. to meet with their respective Congressional delegation to request full funding of \$106 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program. More than 200 meetings were held with Congressional offices, which have resulted in support from over 180 member offices in support of the program. The main goal of ASMC's annual Hill Day event is to gain Congressional support by means of signature on a Dear Colleague letter sent from members of Congress to House and Senate Appropriators requesting the MEP funding be restored to \$106 million from the President's proposed budget of \$46.3 million for fiscal year 2007.

The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a network of 59 centers, with over 350 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 served 16,448 in fiscal year 2005, report over \$721 million in cost savings directly attributed to the program's assistance as well as creating or retaining over \$4.532 billion in sales. The program also helped manufacturers create or retain 43,624 jobs and increase investment of \$941 million back into the economy based on an independent survey of 4,644 clients served by the program in federal fiscal year 2004.

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. Mike Coast, Chairman of the ASMC and President of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, the Michigan NIST MEP affiliate, states "ASMC's annual Hill Day event is a time for ASMC members and small manufacturing clients to educate members of Congress on the impact of the MEP program, but also its importance in maintaining the competitive advantage of the U.S. industrial base. It is the implementation of technology that occurs through the MEP program which is a catalyst for innovation, without which we cannot compete. MEP is a critical program in this nation's efforts to sustain, improve and grow the economic impact of the American industrial base in the global economy."