

## MISSISSIPPI

**State of Manufacturing:** Manufacturing is and will continue to be a vital industry for Mississippi. The sector accounted for 140,000 jobs in 2010 and remains one of the highest paying industries in the state, with manufacturing employees making an average annual salary of \$53,000. A large share of employment is concentrated in three primary sectors: food, transportation equipment, and furniture. Machinery, wood products, fabricated metals, electrical equipment, chemical and plastics and rubber products are all expected to grow between 5 and 11 percent over the next decade.

**Completion Matters:** Completion of a degree or postsecondary credential with value in the workplace remains a critical strategy in meeting the workforce needs of Mississippi's manufacturers. Mississippi's 15 public community and technical colleges enroll over 97,000 students annually, with a completion rate of just 25%. Compounding poor performance in postsecondary institutions is a high school dropout rate of almost 40%.

**State Champion Driving Change:** Mississippi Manufacturing Association (MMA)

**Most significant "lever" for success in statewide deployment of the Manufacturing Skills Certification System:** Both the current governor and prospective incoming governor have prioritized development of Mississippi's educated and skilled workforce. The president of the Mississippi Manufacturing Association and colleagues from both the manufacturing and energy sectors are currently constructing a Blueprint for Action for the new governor, to be elected November 2011. The MMA CEO chairs the Blueprint's Workforce Subcommittee of the Economic Competitiveness Committee and will ensure the Blueprint includes policy and investment support for SCS deployment through the state's community and technical college system.

### **Action in First Year of Grant:**

- The Mississippi Manufacturing Association, representing 2200 manufacturers, accepted strategic leadership of the state initiative.
- MMA, with the MS State University National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center, released in August 2010, a data-driven report on the State of Manufacturing in Mississippi 2010-2020, providing the necessary research to align educational and career pathways in Advanced Manufacturing.
- On August 4, MMA sponsored a Postsecondary Summer Conference (entitled "Moving on Up to Credentials") for the state's community/technical college system, convening 675 representatives, including presidents, deans, faculty, and CTE experts. The Manufacturing Institute briefed the college system representatives on system deployment, and provided direct technical assistance from the Indiana project manager who is integrating the industry-recognized credentials in the Ivy Tech Community College System.
- On August 5, MMA hosted a convening of critical policy-level officials representing the education system (state Department of Education CTE director, executive director of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and officials from 3 key 4-year

universities), the workforce development system, the economic development system, and the manufacturing and energy sectors. This multi-sector policy team will participate in strategic deployment of the Manufacturing Skills Certification System.

- Early adopter community colleges have been identified. East Mississippi Community College and East Central Community College have begun NCRC credentialing and have developed pathway designs to incorporate the technical credentials in MSSC and NIMS.
- The MS State University Research and Curriculum Unit for Workforce Development, responsible for all community college curriculum frameworks, will incorporate the stackable credentials in the frameworks, including the move to “credit” status, for Board review this fall.
- The Manufacturing Institute, MMA, and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges will take the next steps in developing an implementation plan, mapping resources to support implementation, and partnering on upcoming proposals to support implementation.
- The MMA also holds the license for the Mississippi Dream It. Do It. career awareness program and will fully utilize Dream It. Do It. as an engagement and recruitment strategy to connect students and transitioning workers to educational pathways aligned to career pathways in Advanced Manufacturing.