



**MEP • MANUFACTURING
EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP**

April 17, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

As you well know, the manufacturing industry is of great importance to our nation's economic growth and has been receiving considerable attention from our Federal government and the White House.

Earlier this year the two of us participated in a White House meeting where we were asked to focus on small to medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMEs), and what could be done to strengthen their role in the manufacturing supply chain and to accelerate their growth in our economy. We committed ETA and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), along with our respective networks of service providers in the field to (1) become better acquainted with each other's services and mission, and (2) explore opportunities to build a broad collaboration that works at the intersection of job creation and business innovation.

From a workforce perspective, the rationale is simple: it takes healthy companies to create jobs. From an industry perspective, MEP's focus on small and mid-sized companies is critical: 98% of manufacturing firms are SMEs; they not only supply the large manufacturers, but employ over a third of the manufacturing workforce.

We invite ETA's workforce partners—state and local workforce investment boards (WIBs), state workforce commissioners and agencies, Rapid Response coordinators—to get to know their local Manufacturing Extension Partnership offices at over 400 locations around the country. MEPs should do the same by working with workforce partners in their respective areas.

If you have questions about how WIB-MEP collaboration could benefit your state or local area, please contact the ETA Regional Office nearest you (<http://www.doleta.gov/regions/>) or Mark Troppe, Manager, Strategic Partnerships and State Relations at the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (mark.troppe@nist.gov) for more information.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jane Oates

Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training
US Department of Labor

/s/

Roger Kilmer

Director, Manufacturing Extension Partnership
US Department of Commerce