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CREATING LIVING-WAGE JOBS IS FOCUS OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND LOCAL LEADERS IN MANUFACTURING

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Date: 16 August 2010

EVENT: August 19, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; PSU Campus (details below)

At 10.5 percent, Oregon's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the United States. However, a coalition of leaders in government, industry and education believe they can help change that statistic and put people back to work.

On August 19, 2010, a roundtable discussion at Portland State University, sponsored by the Manufacturing 21 Coalition, will address ways of creating jobs by growing a more robust manufacturing sector in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Manufacturing 21 is a regional industry coalition that secures funding for local workforce training programs as well as higher education institutions.

Manufacturing recently has seen renewed federal focus, with President Obama signing the Manufacturing Enhancement Act of 2010 into law on August 11. This new law complements the work of the members of the Oregon and Washington Congressional delegations, who recognize manufacturing's potential to power economic recovery and provide quality jobs.

Congressmen Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and David Wu (D-OR) will join the discussion between federal representatives and coalition members. In addition, staff from the offices of Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Patty Murray (D-WA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) will be on hand to engage in the dialogue.

The roundtable will focus on ways of making the manufacturing sector globally competitive by strengthening the region's applied innovation and workforce training resources. Participants will discuss how to build on past successes, including the importance of cooperation between government and the private sector.

According to Gary Gaussoin, chair of Manufacturing 21, "Oregon and Southwest Washington are home to some of the world's most innovative manufacturing companies. The sector provides quality jobs to 179,700 people in Oregon and Southwest Washington. We look forward to meeting with our federal representatives to discuss how to sustain and create more living-wage jobs."

Event Details

- What: Manufacturing 21 Coalition Congressional Roundtable on the Future of Manufacturing
- When: August 19, 2010 9:00-10:30 AM
- Where: University Place, Portland State University in the Multnomah Falls Room. 310 SW Lincoln Street Portland, Oregon 97201

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About Manufacturing 21

The Manufacturing 21 Coalition was founded in 2005 by a small group of manufacturing companies in collaboration with regional economic development, workforce and university partners. The organization promotes the growth of manufacturing in Oregon and Southwest Washington through education, research and capital improvements. With the help of federal and state funding, Manufacturing 21 has developed innovative programs to further the state of manufacturing in the region.

In the past five years, Manufacturing 21 has:

- Brought resources to Portland State University, University of Oregon, Oregon Institute of Technology and Washington State University, Vancouver to expand innovative technology development programs and training opportunities for our next generation of technology and business leaders.
- Forged an ongoing alliance with local workforce training boards to make sure federal training dollars devoted to manufacturing skills training are spent preparing workers for the jobs our companies have today and will have in the future.
- Helped grow and sustain the Northwest Career Expo, an industry supported annual career fair for high school students. The Expo attracts more than 4,000 students each spring.
- Brought new training resources to Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, Portland Community College, Mt. Hood Community College, Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, non-profit trainer New Horizons and Oregon and Washington State's Manufacturing Extension Programs, serving 51 Oregon and Washington companies.
- Helping to launch Oregon's new Career Readiness Certificate within the manufacturing community. The CRC will be used by industry and educators to certify graduates from community college programs have the fundamental skills manufacturing companies need.
- Shaped the proposed Northwest Collaboratory for Sustainable Manufacturing. This unique multi-institutional partnership has mobilized the engineering and business school resources of the Oregon University System and Washington State University, Vancouver to collectively work with manufacturing industry.