



WisPASS CONTRIBUTES TO NATIONAL MANUFACTURING STRATEGY

In March and April of 2004, the WisPASS office participated in two important NACFAM meetings where national manufacturing policy was discussed, analyzed and clarified. On March 1st leaders from industry and trade associations assembled in our nation's capitol with an agenda to "Focus Manufacturing Voices in Washington." On April 13th a much smaller group of industry leaders met personally with Emily DeRocco, the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, in Chicago to review strategic training needs in today's industries.

Focus Manufacturing Voices in Washington had an excellent turnout of some 150 attendees, including 35 manufacturing organizations and numerous nationally recognized subject matter experts.

Seven breakout sessions did a superb job of reviewing 70 policy recommendations in the Bush Administration's report, "Manufacturing in America: A Comprehensive Strategy to Address the Challenges to U.S. Manufacturers" released by U.S. Commerce Secretary Donald Evans on January 16. Most importantly, the breakouts made progress towards achieving a higher level of consensus and alignment on a broad range of recommen-

dations, including a number that were not contained in the Evans Report.

Secretary Evans was impressive in his luncheon speech on March 1, which was followed by a stimulating 30-minute Q-and-A session. In thanking Evans for his remarks, NACFAM and AMT underlined strong support for his chairmanship of the new President's Manufacturing Council and Interagency Working Group on Manufacturing.

Assistant Secretary DeRocco started out the April 13 meeting by saying that DOL has some specific objectives to 1) Create jobs; 2) Develop (with educators) a high-tech workforce; 3) Help transform (support change in) business; AND 4) Continue success in "traditional" areas (E.G., transportation; energy). Secretary DeRocco also mentioned she will be in Milwaukee for the May 19th Governor's Workforce Development Conference.

Her Administrator for "Apprenticeship,

"A number of industry leaders stressed the importance of WisPASS assessments, and certification against the MSSC standards."

Training, Employer & Labor Services"

(Anthony Swoope) was prominent in introduction and discussions. The ETA Regional Administrator, Byron Zuidema also attended.

(Cont. on Page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Contribution to National Strategy</i>	1
<i>MSSC Skill Standards</i>	2
<i>Certified Production Workers Key in Future</i>	3
<i>Education Key to Jobs</i>	3
<i>Initial Assessments at MATC</i>	4



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WisPASS EXPLAINS THE MSSC SKILL STANDARDS TEST

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) in partnership with the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) is launching an 18-month pilot program to certify the manufacturing skills for production workers. **WisPASS** will establish the processes and the system to benchmark worker skills through an assessment testing protocol, and develop an MSSC model that may be used by other states and regions. The program is partially funded by earmark contract through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Most of the questions to date are about the testing itself, so here is a rundown.

About 4000 workers from 700 companies, 300 subject matter experts and 30 support organizations worked diligently to develop MSSC production worker skills standards. Subsequently, a team from the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) and Raytheon assembled a validated, online assessment protocol. It is a **multiple-choice test, combined with a computer-simulated exercise**, comprised of four modules that in aggregate set the

and experience in three levels of interest. These are academic – math, science and reading, etc., employability – teamwork, problem solving, customer response, etc., and technical – using inspection tools, knowledge of manufacturing processes, etc.

For multiple choice questions, practice examples appear on the computer screen and the test starts only when the test-taker clicks on “start test.” There will be one question per screen, with four choices; the “best” choice is to be marked and then “next” chosen. The online program “remembers” questions and displays each test-taker’s progress on a summary, permitting return to any skipped (or already answered) question.

In the job site simulation portion, each test-taker “enters” a manufacturing job site, looks at shop rules and views workstation job instructions. After a short practice, the “start test” moves sequentially through stations testing safety, QA, manufacturing process and maintenance knowledge. Both static and “reactive”

Two examples of work function, key activity and performance indicators are:

WORK FUNCTION – SAFE/PRODUCTIVE

<u>Key Activity</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Safety Inspection	ID/report potential hazards Corrective action taken Documentation and records
ID Unsafe Conditions	Report health/safety threats Consult others about response Take prompt/correct action

WORK FUNCTION – COMMUNICATION

<u>Key Activity</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Material Specifications	Communicate needs/specs clearly Know customer/business needs Evaluate, track & report issues
Quality Requirements	Knowledge of QA communicated Clear transfer of QA information Timely/accurate to key people

minimum requirement for a worker to gain certification. The four areas of concentration (modules) are **safety, quality, manufacturing process and maintenance**.

The *structure* of the skill standards is based on a hierarchy of *Critical Work Functions*, or major responsibilities in each area of interest (such as Production), *Key Activities* that outline embedded duties and tasks, and *Performance Indicators* that actually indicate competency in that key activity. The tests are designed to measure knowledge

questions are used.

In the demonstration phase a “time out” limit for test-takers will be set for both the multiple choice and simulation parts. For the multiple choice, this time limit will be two hours; for the simulation it will be one hour. If any test taker completes the entire test module within 1.5 hours s/he will be permitted to attempt a second module during the same testing period. No more than two modules will be taken in one test period.

CERTIFIED PRODUCTION WORKERS KEY IN FUTURE MANUFACTURING

National recognition of the importance of industry-based skill standards and occupational certification is based on strong drivers:

- Business needs more highly skilled workers in all industry sectors.
- Workers seek readily benchmarked skills to compete for a living wage.
- Educators must see clearly the elements that will be built into timely, effective workforce training.
- Regulatory agencies, responsible for training/placement, need a better way to select outcomes-based programs.

The MSSC certificate is a nationally recognized, portable way for knowledge workers to show they are prepared to play key roles in sustaining our nation's manufacturing competitiveness. Specifically, MSSC-certified workers may benefit in the following ways:

- Added responsibilities in the workplace.
- Commensurate salary increases.
- Selection for advanced education and training.
- Improved job opportunities, and flexibility.
- College credits toward degree programs.

EDUCATION/TRAINING KEY TO JOBS

On March 11, 2004, testimony to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, FRB Chair **Alan Greenspan** argued that there is a shortage of skilled labor and that education and training are vital to U.S. economic growth and job creation. He argued against protectionist measures, which he believed "would do little to create jobs; and if foreigners were to retaliate, we would surely lose jobs." He advised that, "Besides enhancing education, we need to further open markets here and abroad to allow our workers to compete effectively in the global marketplace."

Dates to Remember:

- June 3-4 State-Called Meeting for Advanced Manufacturing Core Skills, Wisconsin Dells, WI.
- June 10 NACFAM Advanced Manufacturing Leadership Forum Meeting, Washington, D.C.

For more information: contact information is located on page 4.

EMPLOYER

Identify "*knowledge workers*" to match urgent needs in advanced manufacturing.

EMPLOYEE

Follow a promising path to a secure, rewarding career in manufacturing.

EDUCATOR

Develop timely, responsive programs that result in a trained, competent workforce.

INITIAL ASSESSMENTS AT MATC

On May 12, 2004 the first online tests were given to a group of volunteers in one MATC classroom. These tests, based on the MSSC standards, were made available by the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) at the end of April.

Training of proctors was conducted immediately the following week, and the tests were kicked off in the next week. It is anticipated that students from Bradley Technical High School will

take the MSSC test on May 19th. Formal schedules for additional testing at MATC, and at the other two Wisconsin test centers at Gateway Technical College and UW-Stout, will be published soon on the WisPASS website www.matc.edu/wispass.



Volunteers taking the first online test at MATC.

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All submissions should be in Microsoft Word or RTF format and emailed to:

WisPASS on the web:
www.matc.edu/wispass

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National Strategy

(Cont. from page 1)

A number of industry leaders stressed the importance of WisPASS assessments, and certification against the MSSC standards. In fact, Secretary DeRocco said she saw the Wisconsin efforts as supporting the ETA objectives - to develop the workforce of the future. She concurs that developing the "process" will identify the educational gaps and needs, and that responsive, localized training is essential. ETA is amenable to "exporting educational programs" based on MSSC standards, and keen on developing faculty

capacity, with the help of the McGraw-Hill text due out in October 2004.

There was serious discussion regarding "just in time" learning. The concept of immediate response to training needs, followed by almost simultaneous application matches the industry model for efficiency and productivity. ETA is enthusiastic for "partnerships that work." They are attempting to link more effectively with the Department of Education, in order to address the basic academic skills that lead to manufacturing use and to promote specific careers in manufacturing as a desirable goal. This certainly is parallel to MATC's efforts with Bradley Tech.