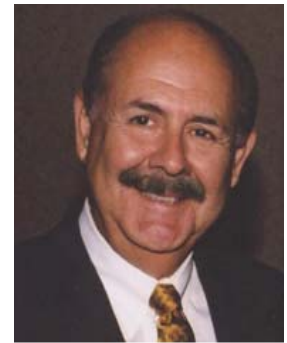



WISCONSIN PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
NEWSLETTER

AL FRINK CONFIRMED AS NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MANUFACTURING & SERVICES

On September 10, 2004, **Al Frink**, CEO of a carpet manufacturing firm in San Diego area, was confirmed as the first Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing and Services--the so-called "Manufacturing Czar." In his case, the confirmation process lasted 90 days, a relatively brief period of time by federal senior appointment standards. One of his first acts was a September 16 meeting with the heads of about 12 leading manufacturing organizations, including NACFAM CEO **Leo Reddy**. A few minutes into his welcoming remarks at this meeting, Frink requested a copy of NACFAM's report, *Manufacturers Answer: A Comprehensive Manufacturing Strategy*, based upon the NACFAM/AMT March 1, 2004, conference of manufacturing groups. Frink made a favorable impression at this meeting with his strong personal commitment to serving as a vigorous advocate for manufacturing in Washington.

Frink with the following words, "Al's extensive background as a manufacturer makes him a great candidate to serve because he has walked in their shoes and knows first hand the barriers that are challenging American manufacturers." "President Bush understands that manufacturers are the engine that creates jobs, grows our economy and raises our standard of living."


Background on Al Frink

- Frink, an Hispanic-American, is Co-founder and Executive Vice President of Fabrica International, a manufacturer of fine carpets and rugs, in Orange County, California. Thirty-years ago, Frink helped lead the business into an internationally recognized company. Fabrica's commitment to research and development has helped the company grow in the last decade and stay on the cutting

Secretary of Commerce, Evans previously announced

Frink

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WisPASS is funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant and administered by Milwaukee Area Technical College.

ASEE CONFERENCE ADDRESSES CRITICAL SKILLS IN MANUFACTURING

Changes within the manufacturing sector require entry-level employees to work with increasingly more academic and technical skills. For employers, it is necessary to be able to quantify any skills-gaps. MSSC assessment allows employers to assess workers and identify training needs.

WisPASS Director, Joe Hurst, recently presented MSSC Skill Standards at the annual American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) conference. This year's theme, *Partnerships for Engineering Education*, brought together students, faculty members, Deans and industry/community partners in engineering education.

The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) is committed to furthering education in engineering and engineering technology by promoting excellence in instruction, research, public service, and practice; exercising worldwide leadership; fostering the technological education of society; and providing quality products and services to members. The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, hosted this year's

ASEE North Midwest Regional Conference. Attendees had the opportunity to dialogue and share ideas on how to effectively partner with industry, community and the K-12 sector to enhance engineering education in meaningful ways.

Hurst's presentation *Critical Core Skills for Manufacturing* outlined the basic academic skills, as well as specific (positional) skills and training, for frontline production level employees identified by manufacturers nationwide. The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) set out to isolate and specifically identify those "core skills" that modern production workers need, and that fill the gap between academic/socialization and technical skills. The MSSC assessment modules become the "gap analysis" tool for developing responsive training, and productive workers.

More information on this and other presentations from the ASEE Conference can be found at:
(<http://www.uwm.edu/CEAS/ASEE/>).

COMPANY PROFILE: REGENCO

ADDRESSING SKILL STANDARDS IN INDUSTRY

ReGENco has begun NOCTI Skill Standard testing online in the workplace, taking advantage of the pilot demonstration assessments based on MSSC standards available through MATC's WisPASS program.

Although the company name has changed since its founding in 1901, ReGENco's dependence to product quality and service has remained steady. One of "industry's largest inde-

pendent steam and combustion turbine and generator repair organizations," the Company mission is "to preserve and improve upon the high quality turbine and generator service historically provided to our customers."

Customer driven; over two-thirds of its business is from former customers. ReGENco relies on its Value Proposition: **On-time Delivery**—assured by master

ReGENco

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HIRE CENTER ASSESSING DISLOCATED WORKERS

High unemployment rates, off-shoring, and downsizing in the manufacturing sector are concerns for many job-seekers. As more people compete for fewer open positions, possessing critical skills is a necessity. Today's laid-off and dislocated workers often need to possess technical and "core" skills. Employers are seeking workers with such skills. How do workers know what employers are looking for—and how their strengths compare? MSSC Skill Standard assessments now allow workers to make such comparisons.

The HIRE Center, in conjunction with MATC, is assessing dislocated workers within the Milwaukee area.

The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) set out to isolate and specifically identify those "core skills" that modern production workers need, and that fill the gap between academic/socialization and technical skills. The MSSC assessment modules become the "gap analysis" tool for developing responsive training, and productive workers.

The structure of the skill standards is based on critical work functions, or major responsibilities in each area of interest, 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 and experience in three levels of interest. These are **academic**—math, science and reading; **employability**—teamwork, problem solving, customer response, etc.; and **technical**—using inspection tools, knowledge of manufacturing processes, etc.

The NOCTI tests are multiple choice questions that are online, with one question per screen, with four choices. In the job

simulation portion, each test-taker enters the factor, looks at posted shop rules and views workstation job instructions. The test-taker moves sequentially through workstations testing process, fabrication, subassembly and final assembly, answering questions pertaining to safety, quality/continuous improvement, materials and specifications, and maintenance

Test-takers who successfully prove proficiency in the performance indicators, will receive an MSSC certificate. This serves as a nationally recognized, portable way for workers to show they are prepared to join existing manufacturing teams. Test-takers who fall short in any area will receive relevant, tailored training and be retested.

Value of MSSC Standards

- Know skills employers need
- Establish best career paths
- Describe your skill set
- Focus on training needs
- Upgrade existing skills
- Choose best curriculum

Value of the WisPASS Assessment

- Know/compare how you stack up
- Identify training gaps/needs
- Pick a strategy for advancement
- Develop needed skills
- Gain portable MSSC credentials
- Pursue a stable, secure career

For the employer, the WisPASS tests (MSSC standards) can be used in screening prospective employees, and be used to "check their fit" against company needs and expectations for their performance. The results again may show gaps in certain areas, but the employer will be able to match those with other team members' skills to make sure there is adequate coverage.

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



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Frink
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edge. Fabrica has been in business since 1974 and employs more than 400 people.

- Over the years Frink has held numerous leadership positions and served as a member of the Commerce Department's Exporters' Textile Advisory Committee. Frink is a 2004 inductee to the Small Business Administration's Hall of Fame.
- As the Assistant Secretary, Frink will advocate, coordinate and implement policies that will help U.S. manufacturers compete globally. Some of the challenges he will focus on include:

1. Enhancing Government's Focus on Manufacturing Competitiveness;
2. Creating the Conditions for Economic Growth and Manufacturing Investment;
3. Promoting Open Markets and a Level Playing Field;
4. Lowering the Cost of Manufacturing in the United States;
5. Investing in Innovation; and
6. Strengthening Education, Retraining, and Economic Diversification.

ReGENco
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scheduling and material inventory; **Cost Effective Solutions**—engineering diagnosis assures only necessary work is performed; and **Superior Safety Practices**.

MSSC Skill Standard testing helps ReGENco assess skills gaps against its Company's needs. The WisPASS program fit perfectly its passion to improve productivity and value to customers.

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.