



Media Release

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For immediate release

Appalachian Economic Development Groups Receive \$1.7 million Grant to Attract Re-shoring Jobs

Nelsonville, Ohio -- Economic development in Appalachian Ohio got a boost in the form of a \$1.7 million *Make it in America Challenge* grant announced yesterday (October 22, 2013). One of only 10 awards made, the monies will be invested in incumbent worker training for the region's metal fabrication, polymers and chemicals industries, and in the creation of an online inventory of regional facilities and land available for new or expanding industry development.

"Both projects are designed to attract the re-shoring of manufacturing from Europe, the Middle East, and Russia," said John Molinaro, president and CEO of the Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (and its parent organization Ohio Appalachian Business Council) which coordinated the grant application. "A well-trained workforce in combination with available job sites accessible to our world-class highway-rail-river infrastructure, proximity to locally sourced fuel and feedstocks, and manufacturing strength in the target industries will make Appalachian Ohio attractive as production returns to the U.S."

Partners in developing the grant included the three Appalachian Local Development Districts: Omega, Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District of Reno, and Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission; and the Ohio Valley Employment Resource. A grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission supported the application expenses.

“The partners came together giving us the resources necessary to create a complex application for our region in this very competitive grant environment,” said Misty Casto, executive director of Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District, the grant recipient. “We’re very proud of our region’s willingness to collaborate and of this success.”

Funded through a collaborative effort by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the Delta Regional Authority, the *Make it in America Challenge* is designed to help distressed regions build on existing assets, promote a competitive environment for foreign-owned and domestic firms to establish and grow their U.S. operations, create jobs and develop a skilled workforce for specific industries.

“We are pleased that the region’s business climate will be bolstered by the *Make it in America Challenge* grant and its renewed focus on our highly-skilled and productive workforce and our strong natural resources,” said Rebecca Safko, executive director of Ohio Valley Employment Resources which is also a partner in the grant.

“When the Local Development Districts asked us to undertake this application we knew it wouldn’t be easy,” said a delighted Molinaro. “We wove funding streams from three federal agencies into a single unified project with a different applicant for each agency. Everyone rose to the challenge, pulled together and developed our region’s first-ever successful application for a major national competition.”

A third component of the grant request is pending an announcement from the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership. It focuses on developing greater connectivity in regional supply chains.

The Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) is one of JobsOhio’s six regional partners engaged in economic development. Located in Nelsonville and representing 25 Appalachian Ohio counties, plus three border counties for Manufacturing Extension Partnership services, APEGs’ 14,000 square mile region is a rare mix of assets: outstanding road, river and rail access; one in seven adults working in manufacturing; cost-effective business locations; affordable labor; 25 institutions of higher education; and the epicenter of Ohio’s natural gas development.