



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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WMSA Starts Initiative to Boost Green Manufacturing Jobs *\$20,000 Department of Labor Grant Supports Effort*

WEST MICHIGAN—November 3, 2008—The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) is launching a new initiative to create a Regional Skills Alliance (RSA) focused on preparing workers for jobs in the alternative energy sector. Such jobs would be related to manufacturing components used in alternative energy, such as solar panels, or the production of alternative energy, such as workers at a wind-generating power plant.

Planning for the **West Michigan Green Jobs RSA** will be led by regional employers. WMSA will convene a group representing employers, manufacturing councils, colleges, and Michigan Works! Agencies in the eight-county region. The group will conduct a green jobs market analysis for West Michigan and then construct a set of specific objectives with a timeline and budget to achieve them.

“Essentially, we will work with employers to determine what skills are in demand in the alternative energy sector,” said Greg Northrup, WMSA President. “Then we’ll work with colleges and intermediate school districts (ISDs) to help provide education and skills training for West Michigan residents to be able to obtain these new jobs.”

The effort is funded by \$20,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG), which administers the Michigan Regional Skills Alliances (MiRSA) program. DELEG was recently renamed by Governor Jennifer Granholm to include a focus on energy. See press release from Michigan Governor’s office for details: <http://www.michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7-192--202409--00.html>

The Michigan Regional Skills AlliancesSM (MiRSA) is a Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth program introduced by Governor Jennifer Granholm in 2004. Today, there are more than 30 MiRSAs statewide, comprised of regional consortia of businesses, educators, and workforce and economic developers. The MiRSA helps groups of employers identify and address workforce challenges to increase their competitiveness, including workforce development assistance with job training grants, tuition reimbursement scholarships and career fairs. Statewide, MiRSAs include participation by hundreds of businesses that employ thousands of Michigan residents. For more information visit the MiRSA Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/rsa>.

The RSA concept has already benefited West Michigan; the Alliance for Health (<http://www.afh.org/RSA.htm>) is an example.

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Northrup will explain more details about the West Michigan Green Jobs RSA at the “Alternative and Renewable Energy Manufacturing 101” event hosted by the Right Place Program at the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center in Muskegon on November 5. Learn more about the event: <http://www.rightplace.org/events/alternative-energy/>

About the West Michigan Strategic Alliance

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance serves as a catalyst for regional collaboration among the businesses, institutions and governmental units serving more than 1.4 million people living in a eight-county region including: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa. The Alliance works to encourage a regional mindset, which will foster collaboration on critical issues that impact how we live, learn, work and play. Additional information is available at www.wm-alliance.org

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