

News Release

FOR RELEASE
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ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE GEARS UP FOR AN EXTENDED RUN

Winnipeg, MB – The Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) – Manitoba Division will continue to assist the manufacturing industry in exploring and implementing lean manufacturing principles through the Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (AMI). Funding of \$1.2 million to extend the AMI over the next 15 months will be provided through the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

The Honourable Andrew Swan, Minister of Competitiveness Training and Trade and Rod Bruinooge, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, made the announcement today.

"CME provides a broad range of training intended to improve the competitiveness of Manitoba companies and to enhance their export opportunities," said Swan. "The Advanced Manufacturing Initiative is designed to provide support to manufacturers seeking to become world class and to address the challenges through improving productivity and competitiveness."

"The Government of Canada is proud to support initiatives designed to improve productivity and allow Manitoba's manufacturing industry to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage," said MP Bruinooge. "This project will enable CME to continue to provide lean manufacturing principles and practices needed by local industry to maintain its competitive position and respond to rapidly changing market conditions."

As a result of this funding, manufacturers in the province will continue to have access to a number of AMI programs in areas such as lean training, human resource development, advanced manufacturing, lean manufacturing consortia, association partnerships, and hands-on consulting. With industry contributions, a total of \$4 million will be invested in this current phase of the AMI.

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The CME-Manitoba Division will act as the overall coordinator of the AMI. An Advisory Council, made up of representatives from manufacturing firms, federal and provincial governments and educational institutions will provide guidance and feedback on AMI activities.

“Manufacturers continue to face challenging economic circumstances and the growing demand and competition for skilled workers,” said Roy Cook, First Vice-Chair, CME National Board of Directors. “This agreement recognizes the hard-earned achievements of Manitoba manufacturers in the past three years, and it provides the opportunity to increase and sustain these gains in the years ahead!”

The AMI was launched with a federal and provincial EPA contribution of \$1.85 million and \$2 million from the manufacturing industry. Over the last three years, more than 4,400 Manitoba manufacturing employees have participated in almost 50,000 hours of AMI activities.

Under EPA, the governments of Canada and Manitoba are working together and in partnership with community stakeholders to build the economy and strengthen communities. These priorities promote economic growth and diversification in the province. For more information on this and other projects funded under EPA, visit: <http://www.epa.gov.mb.ca>.

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BACKGROUNDER

The Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (AMI) was launched February 2005 to improve the competitiveness of Manitoba manufacturers in the face of increasing foreign competition and other challenges.

The main objective of the AMI is to help Manitoba companies adopt manufacturing practices that reduce waste and increase productivity. It has pursued this objective by offering programs on lean manufacturing concepts and promoting human resource and leadership development. AMI programs and projects include:

- Lean Training
- Best Practice Tours
- Lean Manufacturing Consortia
- Consulting
- Human Resource Development
- Association Partnerships
- Advanced Manufacturing Discovery Program

Lean thinking focuses on the reduction and removal of waste from manufacturing processes and also results in improvements in productivity, customer satisfaction, employee morale and overall enterprise success. Lean manufacturing consortia are formal groups of 10 to 12 companies willing to share successes as well as challenges with a goal to improve business performance.

Over the last three years, the AMI has enabled the wide distribution of promotional literature, consultations and training programs teaching principles of lean manufacturing. Industry awareness of lean principles has risen sharply. Under this phase, AMI will continue to deliver programs to enhance the global competitiveness of the manufacturing industry in the province.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) – Manitoba Division will continue to coordinate the AMI with input from an advisory board made up of representatives from industry, federal and provincial governments and educational institutions.

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