

News & Views: Economic Development

An Informational Resource

Manufacturing: Heating Up in 2011

U.S. manufacturing technology orders in 2011 were up 108.0% as of May compared with orders made last year during the same period according to the American Machine Tool Distributors' Association and The Association for Manufacturing Technology. This figure is based on actual data reported by companies participating in the United

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Broadband: Vital for Economic Development

According to Gary Locke, secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, "Expanding high-speed Internet access is critical to improving America's economic competitiveness because it promotes economic development and increases educational opportunities.

Business applications for broadband are extensive: management, marketing, customer service, teleconferencing, training, automation and more. So it's not surprising that faster broadband promotes business development, growth and the ability to compete.

Businesses need broadband to improve their performance and expand their markets while schools need it to offer distance learning opportunities that are delivered in real-time via high-quality video instruction. Meanwhile, healthcare practitioners need it to enhance their ser-

vices via remote medical consultations, resource sharing, reduce travel time for patients, etc. And, agribusinesses need it to monitor their operations and market conditions. The fact is that virtually any business can perform better with broadband applications.

To underscore broad-band's importance in economic development, communities are creating broadband availability maps to entice business development and to encourage service providers to expand their markets.

An informal poll of businesses in Charleston, West Virginia, by Citynet, reveals that they think broadband must be a key component of a community's economic development plans. According to respondents, high-costs, limited bandwidth and limited capacity are the big challenges that must be addressed to avoid missing business opportunities.

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Consulting Program Retained/Saved Jobs

A federally-funded business consulting program successfully helped regional manufacturers and businesses become smarter, leaner and more competitive in California's San Bernadino County this year. More than 900 jobs were retained and over 200 new jobs were created to date as a result of San Bernadino's \$1 million Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) program.

Product Techniques, Inc. benefitted

from the partnership between WIB and California Manufacturing Technology Consulting® (CMT) which helped the company become ISO 9001 certified—a requirement of its government clients. As a result, Product Techniques upgraded its quality management system and retained employees.

The WIB program also partnered with another consulting company, Deisell

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Forbes Lists Hot Business Towns

Texas scored big in the latest Forbes list of metro areas with the best business growth statistics by claiming four of the top ten spots in the nation this year: Austin led the way at number one, followed by number four San Antonio, number five Houston and number seven Dallas.

They all have high rates of immigration and migration of educated workers that accounted for healthy increases in population. They are also economic superstars, with job-creation records among the best in the nation. In fact, about 37% of all net new American jobs since the recovery began were created in Texas, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Relatively low housing prices, buoyant economies and world-class transportation facilities have helped these Texas cities become major hubs. Dallas is an ideal place for corporations to relocate thanks to its strategically-located airport. Meanwhile, a growing port and a thriving energy business have positioned Houston to become an even more important business center in the future.

Coming in at number two was Raleigh, N.C., which isn't a surprise to anyone who has followed that city's business development activities. However, the third spot on the list was claimed by Nashville, Tenn., which raised a few eyebrows. Apparently the country music

capital has more than the music industry going for it. Nashville's low housing prices and pro-business environment, has stimulated rapid growth among educated migrants; ethnic groups, such as Latinos and Asians, have doubled in size over the past decade there.

In addition, Nashville's mild climate and smaller scale have made it an attractive destination as they do for other Southern cities like number eight Charlotte, N.C. These smaller metropolitan areas don't suffer from transportation bottlenecks that are common in the older, larger cities. Meanwhile, these growth areas are building roads, cultural institutions and airports. Charlotte, for example, has an airport that serves both major national and international routes.

Manufacturing

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States Manufacturing Technology Orders (USMTO) report.



Analysis of manufacturing technology orders provides a reliable leading economic indicator as manufacturing industries invest in capital metalworking equipment to increase capacity and improve productivity. According to this report, the Midwest led the nation's five regions with an increase in orders of 168.5 percent, followed by the Central region at 106.6 percent, the Northeast at 92.4 percent, the West at 66.3 percent, and the Southern region at 56.9 percent.

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Consultants LLC, to help Brickley Environmental create an effective marketing strategy; and this partnership helped retain 44 jobs and create six new ones.

The WIB program leaders attribute their successes to the consultants who provided their valuable expertise, which helped employers retain employees and increase their profitability.



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