



WAEM

West Alabama – East Mississippi

Enterprise-Ready

April 2008

New M3 Credential Will Make WAEM Workforce Competitive

Workers with verified skills will attract modern manufacturing jobs to West Alabama and East Mississippi (WAEM). That is the cornerstone strategy of the WAEM Initiative sponsored by Governors Bob Riley and Haley Barbour. Monday, WAEM Initiative leaders announced the final mechanism to put this strategy in place.

“Today we unveil the M3 Credential, the final piece of our new system to create a globally competitive workforce for our West Alabama – East Mississippi region,” said Dr. James Mitchell, president of the WAEM Alliance

and president of Meridian Community College.

“M3” in the M3 Credential name stands for “modern multi-skill manufacturing.” The M3 Credential was developed by the workforce directors and career tech leaders at the eight WAEM Alliance colleges after a summit hosted by Governors Riley and Barbour last May chose advanced manufacturing as the WAEM region’s top priority.



and president of Wallace Community College – Selma. The WAEM Alliance is a formal consortium of the eight community and junior colleges in the 37-county WAEM region.

“Coupled with the ‘anytime, anywhere’ modern manufacturing training system announced by Governor Barbour last October and a \$4 million direct investment at our eight colleges authorized by Governor Riley, the M3 Credential makes West Alabama and East Mississippi ready to compete for the best manufacturing jobs in the world,” said Dr. Scott Elliott, vice-president of the

“We’ve got to get more serious about our workforce and job training needs in our states,” Governor Barbour said at the summit. “And, we have to expect, rely on, and count on our community colleges to take the lead.”

Governor Riley echoed the call for community colleges to provide leadership. “If you don’t provide the services we’re going to need over the next two to three years, that will be the limiting factor in our ability to compete,” he said.

The colleges and their workforce and career tech

professionals took this charge to heart. They identified skills used and needed at local advanced manufacturers as well as those at worldwide companies.

For example, the M3 Credential matches up well with Toyota training requirements. “My review of types of skills taught to workers recently hired for Toyota Manufacturing in North Mississippi shows the M3 Credential matching up very well,” said Dr. Shannon Campbell, Dean of Workforce Development at Jones County Junior College. “These skills represent the basic requirements that modern manufacturers expect from people they hire.”

“The M3 Credential is based on national skill standards established for advanced manufacturing,” explained Roger Whitlock, credential task force leader and workforce director at East Central Community College. “The M3 skill-sets will qualify workers in a variety of occupations requiring applications of technology.”

Economic developers see the M3 Credential as a boon to their job creation and retention efforts.

“This will let us prove that our region has competent qualified workers,” said Phillis Belcher, executive director of the Greene County Industrial Development Board. “A credentialed workforce will make us highly competitive,” said Wade Jones, president of the East Mississippi Business Development Corp. in Meridian. Both are members of the WAEM Commission appointed by the governors to oversee the WAEM Initiative.

“This region is building one of the most innovative, accessible, advanced manufacturing training systems in the United States” Governor Barbour said.

The M3 Credential will be available to incumbent workers, dislocated workers, underemployed workers, and students seeking to “verify” their skills. By verify,

the WAEM Alliance means workers actually demonstrate the skills.

“This is not just a paper and pencil test,” says Whitlock. “This is authentic, hands-on assessment of modern manufacturing skills.” To accommodate workers, WAEM Alliance colleges will hold open assessment labs on Saturdays. At least one of the eight colleges in the region will hold an open lab on each Saturday. Workers interested in being assessed for the credential will need to make an appointment.

The “anytime, anywhere” modern manufacturing training system will allow workers to prepare for the M3 assessments at home, at work, at libraries, and any location with broadband Internet access. The eight colleges will also offer instruction on these skills.

The eight colleges intend to have all components of the training system and M3 Credential operational by June 1. For more information, contact one of the eight participating colleges: Alabama Southern Community College, Beville State Community College, East Central Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Jones County Junior College, Meridian Community College, Shelton State Community College, and Wallace Community College – Selma.

For more information on the M3 Credential and the WAEM Initiative, go to www.WAEM.us on the Internet.

The WAEM Initiative and the M3 Credential result from a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs serves as the fiscal agent; The Montgomery Institute as the program manager.

“This is authentic, hands-on assessment of modern manufacturing skills.”



*Roger Whitlock
Workforce Director
East Central Community College*

WCCS Hosts Workforce Informational Meeting

SELMA – On Tuesday, March 19, 2008, Wallace Community College Selma, along with the Selma/Dallas Renaissance: Workforce Development Committee, Black Belt Action Commission: Skills Training and Labor Force Committee, and WIRED Community Agencies & Institutions hosted an informational meeting regarding Work Keys and Modern Multi-Skill Manufacturing Training (M3), which are new worker skills credentialing and training for the region and State. Also present were school administrators and HR managers from local companies.

Sara Horton, Alabama State Coordinator for Career Readiness presented information on Work Keys and how it assesses and enhances the quality of the region's labor force. "Many businesses and industries are already using Work Keys in employment and employee job placements and it is expected that more Alabama employers will begin to use Work Keys," said Horton. "Total certificates issued to-date are 9,510."

In addition, Lula Snowden, WCCS Adult Education Director provided information on the Ready to Work initiative. Ready to Work is a free seven week, 200 hour program that provides trainees with entry level skills required for employment with most industries and businesses in Alabama. Upon completing this program trainees will receive the Alabama Certified Worker Certificate and the state career readiness credential.

In conclusion, Eric Rogers, WCCS Electrical Instructor made an informative presentation featuring information about the proposed M3/Industrial Maintenance course offerings at WCCS. "M3" in the M3 Credential name stands for "modern multi-skill manufacturing."

"The College, along with its community partners such as the Black Belt Action Commission and Selma/Dallas Renaissance Committees, are collectively addressing methods to enhance and build a first-rate regional workforce. So preparing future employees, as well providing new training to those already employed will certainly help in our collective mission," stated Shandra Smith, WCCS WIRED Entrepreneurial and Enterprise Development Facilitator.



Dr. James Mitchell, WCCS President and WAEM Alliance President, address meeting attendees.



Shandra Smith, WCCS WAEM WIRED Entrepreneurial and Enterprise Development Facilitator, informs meeting attendees on Work Keys and the new M3 credential.

Pilot Entrepreneurship Program Provides Opportunities

LAUREL, MS - - A pilot entrepreneurship program at Laurel High School, “has been a refreshing and informative experience for the students,” according to Marcus Price, instructor at Laurel. “The hands on opportunity to blend instruction with personal experience just makes sense to students.”

The University of Southern Mississippi, Jones County Junior College, Small Business Assistance Center, Area Development Partnership, Harrison County Economic Development Authority, Economic Development Authority of Jones County, and multiple schools districts teamed together to develop this program. The Southern Mississippi Youth Entrepreneurship Program (SMYEP) will enable the program partners to empower the youth of this region to develop and maintain homegrown businesses. SMYEP are being conducted in four school districts in Forrest, Harrison, and Jones Counties.

Jones County Junior College, a partner of the WAEM Alliance, worked with SMYEP creator Dr. Brent Hales, over several months to discuss the connections his program would have with the WAEM Initiative. An objective of the initiative is to engage K-12 schools and youth development programs in regional branding and

Enterprise-Ready activities. JCJC agreed to help facilitate the pilot program.

“The students in this program are excited about school,” stated Gwen Magee, Civic Facilitator at Jones County Junior College. “They see this class relating directly to what they want to do when they graduate; they feel empowered.”

Fifteen, junior and senior students, from Laurel High School are participating in this nine month training program. These students were identified by the school districts as those who have a business interest. The training is being executed as part of the schools existing career discovery program. Training elements include marketing, accounting, Quickbooks, and business plan development. Students are also receiving entrepreneurship preparation through the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship.

As part of the SMYEP, students are creating and designing a “proposed business” idea. The students have been to a series of symposiums to aid them in their business efforts. The first symposium, October 12 & 13, 2007, gave students an opportunity to interact with small business owners and share business start-up secrets. They also engaged with college instructors whose genre relates to their proposed business. During the second symposium, January 25, 2008, students were paired with lenders and small business entrepreneurs to explore funding opportunities.

Magee explained, these students have the ability to meet with young successful entrepreneurs and envision themselves in their shoes. The training they are receiving is not available in any other venue.”

Students will pitch their business plan to potential investors at the final symposium, May 2, 2008. The winning business plan will receive incubator space at the Jones County EDA. The SMYEP program will continue through the funded WAEM Initiative period, January 2010. SMYEP partners hope the school districts will value the program enough to continue; with the potential of growing throughout the Mid-South Region.



Students from Petal High School are engage in the warm up activity at the first symposium. Students produced a cradling device that would protect an egg when it was dropped from a great height.

“SMYEP will enable students to see opportunities for themselves post high school and college benefiting a region with better overall quality of life as our best and brightest are retained,” Dr. Brent Hales, University of Southern Mississippi.

To learn more about the Southern Mississippi Youth Entrepreneurship Program visit:
<http://smyeps.ning.com>



A group of students share their smiles with the camera as they construct their egg cradling device during the first entrepreneurship symposium.



Dr. Brent Hales, developer of the Southern Mississippi Youth Entrepreneurship Program, speaks to symposium attendees.

Hughes Joins WAEM Commission



Dr. Matthew Hughes
Director
Alabama Governor's
Office of Workforce
Development

Gov. Bob Riley has appointed Dr. Matthew Hughes to the WAEM Commission that oversees the WAEM WIRED Initiative. Hughes is Director of The Governor's Office of Workforce Development and Director of Workforce Development for the Alabama Community College System. He is responsible for managing Alabama's workforce development system so that training programs and services are efficient, effective, and responsive.

Prior to becoming Workforce Development Director, Dr. Hughes was Dean of the Mobile and Ozark aviation campuses of Enterprise-Ozark Community College. He also served as Director of Career and Technical Education for the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education for nine years. Before moving back home to Alabama, Dr. Hughes was a technical education administrator with the Ohio Department of Education.

Dr. Hughes received his baccalaureate degree from Mississippi State University, master's degree from the University of Florida, and doctoral degree from Ohio State University. He has more than 20 years experience in technical education and workforce development, including 11 with The Alabama College System.

While at the Department of Postsecondary Education, Dr. Hughes led development of *Workforce 21*, the long-range strategic plan for technical education in Alabama. He also had lead responsibility for developing *Ohio's Future at Work: Beyond 2000*, Ohio's plan for technical education.

Dr. Hughes is a native of Geneva, Alabama.

Workforce Development *Works* for Wilcox Central HS Students

THOMASVILLE, AL - - This spring, 14 Wilcox Central High School students are attending an Accelerated Welding program at Alabama Southern Community College in Thomasville on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Funding for the program was provided by Dr. Matthew Hughes, State Director for Workforce Development. Students were identified to attend by Mr. James Thomas, Principal of Wilcox Central High School.



"This is a case where there was involvement from multiple interests: Postsecondary Education, the local Board of Education, Alabama Southern Community College, and community leaders such as Judge Pettway and several churches - to ensure we could overcome any obstacles we might encounter when offering such an important program for our area youth" said Dr. Matt Moore, Campus Director at Alabama Southern in Thomasville.

One such obstacle was how to transport the students from the high school to the community college. College staff from Alabama Southern and Wallace Community College Selma have been developing and fostering relationships with community members over the past two years through their outreach with the WAEM Initiative. They decided to reach out to community members of Wilcox County to solicit their assistance in providing transportation.

"When we first began reaching out to Wilcox County, the response was instantaneous," explained Nichole D'Andrea, Community Development Coordinator & WAEM team member at Alabama Southern Community College. "After talking with Judge Jo Celeste Pettway; herself and the Children's Policy Council were instrumental in the effort! They immediately began to make the necessary preparations to ensure the success of the program."

"The community was very responsive to meeting the transportation needs. They knew the importance of training the youth and were willing to do whatever necessary to allow this to become a reality," stated Glen Haab, Community Development Coordinator & WAEM team member at Alabama Southern Community College.

Tuition, fees, and toolkits are provided to these students making their costs minimal. Additionally, area churches are providing transportation.

"It is our hope to be able to continue to identify funding to again offer this program in the future. And, I look forward to working with these groups then" said Moore. "Clearly, this is a win-win for both our students and our surrounding industries. There is a tremendous demand for welders and that demand is only getting stronger. Anything we can do at Alabama Southern to help students get the skills they need to meet that demand, and eventually get a good, high-paying job, is beneficial for everyone" stated Mr. Brian McIntosh, head of the welding program at Alabama Southern.

"A program like this is more than workforce development; it is about youth retention as well," express D'Andrea. "It is important not only to give these students a skill, but provide them with an opportunity to stay in this area."

The following community leaders also assisted with coordinating transportation for students: Judge Jo Celeste Pettway, Sheryl Threadgill Matthews, The Children's Policy Council, Pastors Monett Dear, Stanford Angion, C. Autrey, Altheria Mack and the members of Little Rock Baptist Church, and Mrs. Goldie Harris.

**WEST POINT
CLAY COUNTY**
A prime location for growth.



The West Point Clay/County Community Growth Alliance is the agency for economic development, Chamber of Commerce activities, tourism, and Main Street functions. For anyone wanting information about our community, they need only make one stop at this location.

The mission of the Growth Alliance is to provide leadership in all aspects of economic and community development for West Point and Clay County with an emphasis on job retention, expansion, and creation as well as on enhancements to the quality of life.

510 E. Broad Street, West Point, MS 39773 662-494-5121 Toll Free 866-494-5127 www.westpointms.org

Current MyBiz.am Service Providers

Alabama Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Mississippi Small Business Administration
Alabama International Trade Center	Mississippi Small Business Development Center
Alabama Entrepreneurial Research Network at UA	Mississippi State University Library
Alabama Secretary of State – Corporations Division	Mississippi State University Small Business Development Center
Alabama Small Business Administration	Mississippi Technology Alliance Innovation Center
Alabama Virtual Library	Mississippi Technology Alliance Readiness Level (on-line)
Alabama's Career Center Southwest CareerLink	Mississippi Virtual Library
Business Owners ToolKit (on-line)	Mississippi World Trade Center
Center for Capital Formation – Mississippi Technology Alliance	Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce
Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship – Mississippi Technology Alliance	MSU Technology Resource Institute
Choctaw County Chamber of Commerce	MSU Meridian Small Business Consulting at MCC Webb Center
Community Enterprise Investments, Inc.	Neshoba County Business Enterprise Center
Crudup-Ward Women's Business Center	Neshoba County Community Development Partnership
East Central Community College Small Business Development Center	Northeast Mississippi Contract Procurement Center
East Mississippi Business Development Corporation	Quick MBA (on-line)
Easter Seals West Alabama	SBA – Alabama
Golden Triangle Planning and Development District	SBA - Mississippi
Greater Starkville Development Partnership	Selma and Dallas County Chamber of Commerce
Hinds County Community College International Trade Center	Selma Career Link
Internal Revenue Service (on-line)	SME Toolkit (on-line)
Jackson, AL Area Chamber of Commerce	Southwest Alabama Chamber of Commerce
Jones County EDA	The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama
Jones County Junior College Small Business Development Center	Thomasville Public Library
Kauffman Venturing	Tuscaloosa Career Link
Legal Services of Alabama, Selma Office	Tuscaloosa Employment Service, Alabama's Career Center System
Meridian Community College - Community & Workforce Dev.	Tuscaloosa One Stop Business & Learning Center
Meridian Downtown Association	University of Alabama Angelo Bruno Business Library
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Small Business Development Center	University of West Alabama Small Business Development Center
Mississippi Development Authority	Walker Area Community Foundation
Mississippi Manufacturing Extension Partnership	Walker County Career Center
Mississippi Secretary of State – Corporations Unit	Walker County Economic and Industrial Development Authority
	West Point-Clay County Growth Alliance
	Women's Business Center, Mobile, AL
	Women's Center for Entrepreneurship at MUW

Federal Research Priorities in Manufacturing



A new federal report outlines the top priorities for federal research in manufacturing: hydrogen energy

technologies, nanomanufacturing, and intelligent and integrated manufacturing.

Each of these areas has a potential for job growth and serving broader national interests.

In addition, the report points out that these three areas of research are interdependent.

The report, released by the National Science and Technology Council, is designed to highlight areas of manufacturing research that are likely to generate high returns for the national economy.

You can read more about the report here:
http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/manufacturing.html

The report, starting on page 73, outlines some of the workforce issues facing the future of manufacturing. The authors start by outlining the main conclusions of the 2005 Manufacturing Skills Gap report of the National Association of Manufacturers:

In its 2005 skills gap survey of more than 800 manufacturing businesses, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) found that 81% were experiencing “severe” (13%) or “moderate” (68%) shortages of skilled workers overall, and 90% reported shortages of skilled production employees.

The report goes on to outline the skills needed by tomorrow's manufacturing workers:

To operate a modern production facility, manufacturers

require workers with adequate preparation in fundamentals such as mathematics, science, reading comprehension, and writing; strong workplace competencies, including computer literacy, teamwork, and critical thinking; and technical competencies in areas such as quality and process control, supply chain management, and integrated production systems. Manufacturing workers may also need to develop specialized skills tailored to specific jobs, industrial needs, and technology requirements...

Manufacturing skills certification is one of several steps toward ensuring an adequate supply of “knowledge technologists,” a term coined by management and quality pioneer Peter Drucker. In future manufacturing operations, as well as in other sectors of the economy, Drucker predicted, workers will continue to engage in manual tasks, but their jobs will require a “substantial amount of theoretical knowledge which can only be acquired through a formal education, not through an apprenticeship.”

You can download a copy of the report here:
http://www.manufacturing.gov/pdf/NSTCIWGMFGRD_March2008_Report.pdf

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Enterprise Ready is a monthly publication of the WAEM Regional Initiative. For questions, comments, ideas, or stories for this publication contact:

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