



Quarterly Report: January – March, 2010

Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60

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Project Name: West Alabama/East Mississippi (WAEM) WIRED Project

Grantee: Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs/Office of Workforce Development (ADECA/OWD)

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For brevity, the following references are used in this report: ADECA – Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; TMI – The Montgomery Institute; ASCC – Alabama Southern Community College; BSCC – Beville State Community College; JCJC – Jones County Junior College; ECCC – East Central Community College; EMCC – East Central Community College; MCC – Meridian Community College; SSCC – Shelton State Community College; WCCS – Wallace Community College – Selma; MDA – Mississippi Development Authority; DOL – U.S. Dept. of Labor; ETA – DOL Employment Training Administration; USM – University of Southern Mississippi; WAEM – West Alabama and East Mississippi; WIRED – Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development; CRC – Career Readiness Certificate; M3 Credential – Modern Multi-skill Manufacturing Credential.

Summary of General Grant Activities and Successes:

In late January, the Southern Growth Policies Board announced that The Montgomery Institute was selected to represent Mississippi as the winner of its 2010 Innovator Award. “Your program, Rural Place Building, was chosen from a strong pool of nominees in the Southern region as an outstanding initiative that helps communities recover from the economic downturn.” The Rural Place Building program is Goal 1 of the WAEM WIRED Initiative.

Then, in early February, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced The Montgomery Institute and three WIRED partners will receive \$4.5 million over three years to implement a model training and residency program for approximately 1,000 Health Care workers in East Mississippi and West Alabama. This opportunity was a direct result of WAEM WIRED, its workforce partnerships, its focus on healthcare as a priority, and the connection ETA made between TMI and CAEL.

WAEM WIRED completed its product submissions. Included was the definitive Rural Place Building report developed under the terms of Goal 1. Click on Rural Place Building at www.WAEM.us for the full report.

Goal 1 – Stand-up and embed the capacity to identify key assets and strengths, target opportunities, and recruit champions to build an Enterprise-Ready region.

The place-building activities are winding down as the grant nears its June 30, 2010 completion date. The majority of the Goal 1 activities in the WAEM Region now involve follow-up work after the charrettes to keep those communities on task during the implementation stage. This is a long-term activity, and all WAEM community college partners have pledged to continue working with their communities to upbuild the region.

Because of the limited funds during the no-cost grant extension period, most community college partners are in the process of transitioning to their sustainability plans to cover the Goal 1 activities. The majority of the remaining grant funds are now being used to provide education, training, and assessment activities.

Goal 1 activities included:

- **BEATRICE CHARRETTE:** The final meeting for the Beatrice Charrette was held on January 14, 2010, with 11 community members in attendance. Currently, the Town of Beatrice posters are in the “editing and printing phase, and the posters should be ready by early May. Once the posters are completed, a planned event is scheduled to take place for the “poster unveiling” in the Town of Beatrice.
- **PHILADELPHIA CHARRETTE:** The City of Philadelphia, MS participated in a community planning Charrette held March 2-4, 2010. ECCC had been requested by the city to help provide resources and assistance in helping secure the charrette and was able to do so through the WAEM initiative. The plan developed by the design team was well-received by 59 attendees at the presentation on the final night. The ECCC WAEM staff will continue with follow-up support as needed.
- **CARTHAGE CHARRETTE:** At their February 1 meeting, the Carthage Board of Aldermen officially adopted the Master Plan developed by the design team during the charrette held in October of 2008. The plan includes reworking the downtown traffic flow, widening sidewalks, establishing crosswalks, adding green space and trees, and enhancing downtown lighting. The city is funding this work through a matching grant of \$100,000.
- **NEWTON CHARRETTE:** ECCC has been working with a group of volunteers and Chamber of Commerce Board members to move forward implementing ideas from the Charrette held in June, 2009. In March, 2010, plans were made to paint the new logo developed by the design team on a building that faces an entrance to the downtown area. Private investment has increased as a result of the new attention to revitalizing the downtown. Two vacant buildings have been purchased, remodeled, and are now available to potential new businesses. Also, a previously vacant downtown building has been remodeled and converted into a townhouse.
- **DEKALB CHARRETTE:** The EMCC WAEM Staff has been working closely with the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, the Kemper County Economic Development Agency, and Main Street Mississippi to prepare for the city’s charrette to be held May 11, 12, and 13. The WAEM Staff has already assisted with the charrette pre-work, including a

windshield analysis, a developed assets matrix, and a list of specific areas to be addressed by the design team.

- WEST POINT CHARRETTE: EMCC WAEM Staff assisted the MS Main Street Team with a charrette held April 12, 13, and 14. The process was warmly embraced by the community, as evidenced by the standing-room only crowd of approximately 150 people in attendance for both the initial Town Hall meeting Monday evening and the final presentation on Wednesday evening. EMCC has committed to long-term involvement in the implementation phase of the charrette process.
- BSCC Staff is continuing to work with Guin Mayor Phil Segraves and Doni Ingram, Director of ADECA, to secure funding for developing the Interstate 22 area, which is currently under construction. Last quarter, Mayor Segraves was told that if one of his hotel prospects commits, ADECA will assist in acquiring the funds for developing the land. In March, the Mayor received a commitment from a developer to build an 85-room hotel on the site.
- ECCC WAEM Staff worked with the City of Forest on their application to join the Mississippi Main Street Association. Forest was accepted as a Downtown Network Member and has hired a part-time Director to lead its Main Street efforts. The interest in joining Mississippi Main Street was prompted by the success of the charrette programs in neighboring communities.
- EMCC WAEM Staff met with Dr. Jack Russell, an Appalachian Regional Commission consultant working on the Noxubee County Renaissance Plan, to discuss the implementation of place-building activities within the updated Renaissance Plan.
- JCJC WAEM Staff has taken a leadership role in the town of Bay Springs by chairing the Committee to Preserve and Revitalize (CPR) Bay Springs. The team is focusing on downtown restoration, which includes murals and green space areas. CPR is currently working on the renovation of downtown buildings to provide for 2nd floor apartments, painting murals on downtown walls, establishing a City Park and other green spaces, and façade improvements. The group is in the process of electing a Board of Directors.
- As a result of JCJC WAEM efforts, Bay Springs is in the beginning stages of re-establishing its Chamber of Commerce. Recruitment has begun to bring back former members as well as bring in new members to the Chamber.
- JCJC WAEM Staff is working with the Town of Taylorsville to establish a Chamber of Commerce. The staff has made presentations to local business leaders as to the importance of a local Chamber of Commerce.
- WCCS WAEM Staff hosted the March Black Belt Action Commission Executive Committee Meeting. This meeting consisted of community Mayors, State Government Officials, University Directors, Community Organizers, and Regional Commissioners.

Goal 2 – Cultivate community and regional entrepreneurship.

The WAEM entrepreneurship training programs continue to gain traction through the extension period. Enrollment in entrepreneurship training was very high in the first quarter of 2010. The 119 participants were the second-highest quarterly enrollment level of since the grant began. However, because most of the training programs are ten to thirteen weeks in duration, higher completion numbers will not appear until next quarter's report.

Of particular interest is the expansion of entrepreneurship training to the career/technical fields which have a propensity for self-employment. For example, Shelton State Community College WAEM staff was asked to start an entrepreneurship class for the college's Culinary Arts students that may want to open their own restaurant someday. This class was not required by the curriculum, did not count toward credit for graduation, and the students attended the class on their own time. Nineteen of those students will complete the SEP Entrepreneurship program next quarter. Meanwhile, SSCC's Cosmetology department has expressed an interest in a similar class for their students.

Goal 2 highlights for the quarter include:

- BSCC has reported increased entrepreneurial activity in the region, as six new businesses have opened in the first quarter of 2010. BSCC staff visited all Start-It card locations to replenish cards for the remainder of the grant period.
- ECCC staff replenished the Start-It Cards for Philadelphia, Carthage, Walnut Grove, Lena, and Union. Also, the staff placed cards in one new location in Philadelphia and three new locations in Union.
- MCC scheduled a "How to Start and Operate a Small Business" class in February with nine students enrolled. The class is based on the Southern Entrepreneurship Program (SEP) developed, in part, through the WAEM Initiative.
- SSCC has expanded their SEP-based entrepreneurship classes in response to demand from the college's academic students. Nineteen Culinary Arts students are enrolled in the non-credit class, which is not part of their regular curriculum and was not a requirement of the class.
- WCCS incorporates entrepreneurship training as a non-credit elective for their Ready-to-Work program for the unemployed in the region. Seventeen participants completed the entrepreneurship training this quarter.

Goal 3 – *Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce.*

The training and education activities continued to increase dramatically this quarter, as the number of participants beginning Advanced Manufacturing training more than doubled any other previous quarter to date with 1,043 enrollees. The number beginning M3 Production Level 1 also hit a new high mark with 446 participants enrolled this quarter.

These increases are due to several possible factors: 1) All eight colleges have now had their training equipment and online training system in place for at least one quarter, and most instructors have now had the opportunity to teach at least one initial class. Therefore, the learning curve and comfort level of both students and instructors has increased; 2) The

instructors, participants, and local and state workforce investment partners have now seen the value of the training and are providing excellent word-of-mouth advertising for the programs; 3) The community college partners understand this training will be in place for the long-term and are encouraging greater participation in the programs by incumbent workers, displaced workers, their own Career/Technical student population, and the high schools; 4) The long-established workforce training programs at the community colleges have adopted the Amatrol modules and the 24/7 online Learnmate system to enhance and update their Advanced Manufacturing custom training programs. 5) Because the WAEM WIRED grant period is coming to a close, grant resources have become more focused on education, training, and assessment; 6) There are indications that job losses and plant closures have leveled off and employment may turn around soon. Therefore, those displaced workers now show an increased interest in training; 7) Local and state economic developers recognize the value of a credentialed workforce and support these training efforts; and 8) The modern 24/7 online Learnmate system allows for much greater accessibility to training throughout the region.

Here is a summary of the quarterly and cumulative completion figures:

- Career Readiness Certificates: Quarter (Q) 1,081; Cumulative (C) 8,946
- Advanced Manufacturing Training Completers: Q 555; C 1,706
- Entrepreneur Training Completers: Q 21; C 91
- M3 Credential Level I Production: Q 112; C 680
- M3 Credential Level II Production: Q 28; C 190

Goal 3 highlights for the quarter include:

- ASCC staff reported 124 Advanced Manufacturing certificates were awarded to paper mill workers in the region. However, because the mill is unionized, the labor group did not list their Social Security numbers or birthdates on the WIA intake forms because of perceived privacy concerns. ADECA is taking steps to ensure that ASCC gets credit for the training provided.
- BSCC reports all leveraged funds have finally been cleared and received for the new training center at the Jasper Business Incubator. The center is nearly complete after more than a year of delays and is slated to begin M3 and Advanced Manufacturing training May 17, 2010.
- BSCC has begun offering M3 training to the college's Ready-to-Work program at the college's Carrolton, AL, campus. This is patterned after the success of M3 training as a part of the Ready-to-Work programs at SSCC and WCCS. Sixteen of BSCC's 47 participants earning the M3 Credential this quarter were enrolled in the BSCC Ready-to-Work Program.
- ECCC continues its successful relationship with the Leake County Technical Center, as eight high school students earned the M3 Production Level 1 credential this quarter.
- EMCC has now expanded its workforce training capacity to both its campuses. EMCC opened an M3 Training classroom and a Basic Manufacturing Skills Training classroom on its Scooba campus in April. EMCC has also designated a computer lab for M3 and CRC testing. The first classes were offered on the Scooba campus in late April.
- EMCC has partnered with the Mississippi WIN Centers (the state's one-stop provider) to offer online M3 Certification training across the entire state. This designation allows 24/7 statewide access to M3 training, with skills assessments currently available at any of

the four WAEM community colleges. Additionally, EMCC has partnered with the Meridian and Philadelphia WIN Centers to provide online Advanced Manufacturing and Entrepreneurship training to dislocated workers.

- JCJC reported several of their Career & Technical teachers have now adopted certain Amatrol training modules in their classrooms. This is part of an ongoing attempt to include the M3 as part of a stackable credential program offered to students.
- The MCC Distribution Training program has more than doubled the number of completers this quarter. This Distribution Training program was made possible in part through the WAEM WIRED sponsored train-the-trainer program. The first class began in the 4th quarter of 2009 and boasted 12 completers. This quarter, 28 more participants have completed the 40-hour training program. Many more completers will be needed to fill the estimated 375 positions at the new Handy Hardware distribution center, which is scheduled for completion in the 4th quarter of 2010.
- MCC's Aircraft Assembly training program has incorporated several M3 modules and the Amatrol e-learning system as part of the training curriculum. Many of these students are continuing M3 Production Level 1 training on their own and will complete the M3 next quarter.
- WCCS has reported 145 participants enrolled in M3 Production Level 1 training through the college's Ready-to-Work program. These participants are scheduled to complete training May 20, 2010.

Goal 4 – Engage high schools and youth in regional branding and Enterprise-Ready activities.

The WAEM Community College partners continue to work with the high schools in their districts and have found particular success with instituting entrepreneurship programs. However, inroads are being made in providing the Career/Technical students with advanced manufacturing and workforce credentialing programs as well. SSCC has enjoyed such a successful relationship with its local school board that the board has now adopted the WorkKeys Career Readiness Certificate as a required credential for all district Career/Tech students.

Goal 4 highlights for the quarter include:

- EMCC successfully sought a National Science Foundation Grant to introduce students to industrial training concepts. This will be the pilot year and 15 students from Columbus High School will be assessed and enrolled. Five teachers are enrolled in training on the EMCC Golden Triangle campus for summer 2010.
- EMCC hosted the 2010 SEP High School Entrepreneurship Symposium entitled "I Am My Own Boss" on January 22, 2010. Nearly 60 students from Columbus High School, Bay Springs High School, Stringer High School, and Jasper County High School attended the symposium. The students are all enrolled in a one-year business and entrepreneurship program at the schools as the result of a partnership among community colleges, the WAEM Initiative, and local school districts.
- JCJC reports that 23 students in the Entrepreneurship programs at Bay Springs High School, Stringer Attendance Center, and Heidelberg High School were supplied with Quick Books programs for the financial management of their business plan projects. All

three schools have announced their intention to continue the program beyond the WAEM WIRED grant period.

- SSCC and the Tuscaloosa Board of Education have partnered to offer CRC credentialing for all Career/Technical students at the Tuscaloosa Center for Technology. Last quarter, 15 high school students were dual-enrolled through SSCC and received M3 training and CRC assessments. As a result, the Tuscaloosa Board of Education adopted the CRC for all career tech students as a credential necessary for completion of a Career/Tech program.
- WCCS is working with the Dallas County School District to provide introductory entrepreneurship training to 145 students this quarter.

Update on Leveraged Resources in Support of WIRED Activities:

BSCC reported \$44,580 in leveraged federal funds from an SBA grant. The funds were used to refurbish a classroom to create a training center to be used for M3 instruction. ECCC reported \$7,644 in leveraged non-federal funds from the college's general fund. The funds were used to pay for salaries for WAEM staff and M3 instructors. MCC reported \$2,842 in leveraged non-federal funds from Mississippi WET Funds and \$1,620.00 non-federal funds from the Lauderdale Board of Supervisors. The WET funds were used to pay for M3 instructor salaries and the Supervisors funds were used to complete construction of required systems for Industrial Maintenance and Welding training programs.

The \$4.5 million healthcare award from ETA, the \$400,000 Walmart Foundation grant described in the previous quarterly report, and \$205,000 in matching funds for the Walmart Foundation grant from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (\$155,000) and the National Institute for Rural Community Colleges at Mississippi State University (\$50,000) are leveraged funds that will be reported when they are expended.

Challenges to Project Process:

The project has now overcome most of its obstacles and is currently producing results at a favorable pace. Because of delays in getting the training equipment, we are only now at the point where we can produce these results. Unfortunately, this point has come just before the grant's end. However, the WAEM partners have a sustainability plan in place and we will continue to produce similar results long after this grant is ended.

Other Information

Other Promising Innovation Processes and Success Stories:

APPENDIX – An Appendix showing the Community Involvement Matrix from each community and junior college partner for the region is provided as a separate document.

METRICS – See Metrics beginning on next page.

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (WIRED)
WAEM METRICS PROGRESS REPORT ADDENDUM TEMPLATE**

GRANTEE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION				
1. Grantee Name: Alabama Dept. of Economic & Community Affairs/Office of Workforce Development (ADECA/OWD)			2. Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60	
3. Program/Project Name: West Alabama/East Mississippi (WAEM) WIRED Project				
4. Grantee Address: P O Box 5690			5. Report Quarter End Date: 3/31/2010	
City <u>Montgomery</u> State <u>AL 36103-5690</u>			6. Report Due Date: 5/15/2010	
GRANTEE RESULTS				
Progress Report Performance Categories and Measures	1/31/2010 Target	Previous Quarters	Current Quarter	Cumulative Grant-to-Date
Category 1: Education/Training/Assessment				
WAEM WIRED targeted advanced manufacturing (education, training, credentialing) and entrepreneurship (networking, training, support) as its top priorities.				
1 Total Number of Intakes into Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs and M3 Assessments Using WIRED Funds.		2488	1180	3668
2 Total Number Beginning Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs Using WIRED Funds.	4855	2206	1162	3368
a. Number beginning Advanced Manufacturing education/training	4500	1955	1043	2998
b. Number beginning Entrepreneur education/training	355	251	119	370
3 Total Number Completing Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Using WIRED Funds.	2627	1221	576	1797
a. Number completing Advanced Manufacturing education/training	2451	1151	555	1706
b. Number completing Entrepreneur education/training	176	70	21	91
4 Number of Entrepreneurs Completing Education/Training Who Create Their Own Businesses, as Identified by Survey.	80	3	0	3
5 Number Beginning Assessment toward an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds by Level (M3 is a national standards based, modern multi-skill manufacturing credential based on assessed competency).				
a. Number beginning M3 Production Level I assessment	3065	1625	446	2071
b. Number beginning M3 Production Level II assessment	1200	263	77	340
c. Number beginning M3 Advanced Production Level assessment	600	400	0	400
6 Number Attaining an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds by Level				
a. Number attaining Production Level I M3 Credential	1620	568	112	680
b. Number attaining Production Level II M3 Credential	800	162	28	190
c. Number attaining Advanced Production Level M3 Credential	400	35	5	40
7 Investment in WAEM WIRED Education/Training/Assessment.	\$4,430,000	\$4,939,317	\$371,887	\$5,311,204
a. Investment of WIRED Funds in education/training/assessment	\$4,430,000	\$3,809,979	\$ 315,201	\$4,125,180
b. Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment		\$0	\$ 44,580	\$44,580
c. Non-Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment		\$1,129,338	\$ 12,106	\$1,141,444
Category 2: Capacity Building				
8 Other Funds Leveraged by WIRED Partners (excluding 7b), see quarterly reports for details.		\$4,188,433	\$ -	\$4,188,433
9 Region Building Activities -- WAEM WIRED was challenged to build the capacity of its partners while at the same time building a sense of region in 37 mostly rural counties in West Alabama and East Mississippi.				
a. Number of WAEM WIRED staff training events	48	46	3	49
b. Number of outreach/networking events (regional roundtables, WAEM Town retreats, summits, conferences, community roll-outs, teacher/business leader sessions, etc.)	42	131	6	137
c. Number attending outreach/networking events	2760	7880	364	8244

d	Number of communities initiating Place-Building planning (including strategic planning, entrepreneur support planning, and Small Town Design Initiative and related MainStreet planning)	53	78	1	79
e	Number of Place-Building plans completed	25	27	3	30
f	Number of community leader contacts by Community College/Junior College (CCJC) staff (duplicated)	3135	8209	256	8465
g	Number of newsletters published	15	15	1	16
h	Number of presentations on WAEM initiatives and innovations at conferences	12	19	0	19
10	Total Number of WAEM Partners -- WAEM WIRED is heavily dependent upon Partners to accomplish its mission...indeed, building the bi-state partner network for this rural region is one of the main transformation goals. (Sum of 10a - 10k)	571	826	1	827
a.	Number of college, university, state, and federal agency partners	18	22	0	22
b.	Number of WAEM region Mayors participating in the WAEM Mayors' Network	80	27	0	27
c	Number of Place Building partners (MainStreet, Urban Center, tourism,etc. excluding university and agency depts. included in 10a)	21	40	0	40
d	Number of MyBiz Entrepreneur Network partners	3	6	0	6
e	Number of MyBiz Resource Partners added to network	100	213	0	213
f	Number of MyBiz Community Connectors recruited and trained	163	198	0	198
g	Number of MyBiz Network Navigators identified and trained	48	30	0	30
h	Number of Workforce partners (SWIBs, Local WIBs, one-stops, etc.)	21	50	0	50
i	Number of business and industry training partners	40	192	1	193
j	Number of high schools and youth program partners that have agreed to offer WAEM skills in their programs	61	48	0	48
k	Number of business partners receiving Governors' Seal awards	16	0	0	0
11	Entrepreneur Development Activities -- WAEM WIRED connects communities to entrepreneurs to local, regional, state and national resources and training opportunities.				
a.	Total unique hits to MyBiz.am entrepreneur referral website	50000	11331	2028	13359
b.	Total registered users of MyBiz.am	27800	2888	518	3406
c	Total times MyBiz.am Resource Navigator accessed	25000	1067	73	1140
d	Total MyBiz Users self-reporting they started their own business within the WAEM Region	90	12	0	12
e	Total number of communities for which MyBiz Community Start It Cards have been developed and distributed	146	165	0	165
f	Total Community Connector referrals	660	1088	85	1173
12	Other Workforce Education/Training, Assessment Outcomes -- Including activities emphasized and encouraged by WIRED but for which WIRED dollars were not expended.				
a.	Total number of Career Readiness Certificates (CRCs) Awarded in the WAEM Region by state workforce agencies	3335	7865	1081	8946
b.	Total number of individuals registered in the Amatrol "anytime, anywhere" on-line advanced manufacturing training system	4275	2262	580	2842
c	Total number of M3 Assessment labs opened at WAEM colleges	8	13	1	14
13	Youth (16+) Enterprise Ready Activities -- A goal of WAEM WIRED is to engage youth in WAEM Skills programs while still in high school.				
a.	Total number of students reached by schools implementing WAEM Skills programs	350	585	185	770
b.	Total number of high school students dual-enrolled in WAEM Skills programs in community and junior colleges.	79	93	0	93
Category 3: Economic Indicators - Annual Figures		2007 Baseline	2008	2009	2010
14	Employment by Targeted Industry Cluster				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing Clusters (including non-manufacturing employment related to clusters)	78,073	74,265		
b.	Entrepreneurship	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	
15	Average Wage by Industry Cluster				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing Clusters	\$19.43	\$19.99		
b.	Entrepreneurship	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	
16	Unemployment Rate	5.49%	6.68%	8.15%	

17	Performance Improvement on Common Measures by WIRED Participants Region Wide as Reported by the Workforce Investment System				
a.	Entered Employment Rate (adult common measure)	ADECA	25.71%	12.37%	19.07%
b.	Employment Retention Rate (adult common measure)	ADECA	96.08%	78%	80.34%
c.	Average Earnings (adult common measure)	ADECA	\$32,094.52	\$11,190	\$18,932.53
18	Number Receiving a Degree or Certificate from a WAEM Community or Junior College in one of the WAEM Target Areas				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing	→	1158	28	1186
b.	Entrepreneurship	0	0	0	0
19	Number of New Business Startups or Expansions	713	600		