



Quarterly Report: April – June, 2010

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Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60

Date: 6/30/2010

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 requesting the extension of this grant from January 31, 2010, to June 30, 2010, WAEM partners committed to a target of 1,000 additional training program completers. Final numbers show 1,854 additional completers, exceeding the target by 85%.

Indeed, the extension allowed WAEM WIRED partners to provide training to an additional 2,153 participants. This represents 33% of all training program participants and substantiates our claim that our slow out of the box program would generate high numbers once fully implemented. As a result, WAEM WIRED met or came close to most of its goals (see attached Metrics report for details). The upcoming final report will highlight these accomplishments.

The final event funded by WIRED was a regional workshop on Internet marketing. The “Nexus Hero Workshop for Tomorrow’s Gamechangers” featured Twicpic creator Noah Everett, Peru Paper designer Grace Bateman, Amptweaker.com founder James Brown, and ICanHelpSew.com entrepreneur Allison Slayton. The 70 participants also learned how communities can ramp up Internet business activity from Pelahatchie Mayor Knox Ross, who made his town a wifi hot spot, and WTOK-TV General Manager Tim Walker, whose “web channel” augments his TV channel.

**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.**

Four additional place-building charrettes were concluded during this quarter.

- FRISCO CITY, AL CHARRETTE – ASCC assisted the Auburn University Urban Design Studio with a charrette in the Town of Frisco City, AL. A total of three meetings were held – two in May and the final presentation in June. The number of attendees in the first May meeting was over 60, which is excellent for a town of 1,500. Over 150 people were in attendance overall.
- EXCEL, AL CHARRETTE - ASCC assisted the Auburn University Urban Design Studio with a charrette in the Town of Excel, AL. A total of three meetings were held – an initial meeting in May and two meetings in June. Over 100 people participated overall.
- DeKALB, MS CHARRETTE – EMCC and MainStreet Mississippi conducted a Charrette in DeKalb on May 11, 12, and 13, 2010. Approximately 50 local citizens of Kemper County participated in the Charrette activities. The Charrette encompassed Scooba and surrounding communities. DeKalb is planning a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, a DeKalb Day, and a flea market.
- WEST POINT, MS CHARRETTE - EMCC assisted with a charrette in West Point, MS, on April 12, 13, and 14, 2010. A standing-room only crowd of approximately 150 people were in attendance for both the initial Town Hall meeting Monday evening and the final presentation on Wednesday evening.

Other Goal 1 activities included:

- Through a collaborative effort between the City of Carthage, the Leake County Development Association, the ECCC Workforce Development Division, and the WAEM WIRED Initiative, a downtown Carthage building has been made available to the college where training and small business counseling services will be made available to individuals and businesses. Computer classes, soft skill training, and advanced manufacturing technical classes are planned along with possible daytime GED classes.
- The City of Columbus is following through on the recommendations from its September, 2009 charrette.
  - Columbus has begun a Request for Proposal for the hiring of a comprehensive planning consultant to implement a comprehensive plan for the city.
  - The City of Columbus, Lowndes County, and the Columbus/Lowndes Convention and Tourism Agency have reached funding agreement on implementing the Charrette recommendations for TAN YARD Park recreation complex. Plans have been prepared and presented at a public meeting in Columbus by Neel Shaffer Engineering and Planning Company.
  - The City of Columbus has employed a landscape architect group to implement the Charrette recommended park.
- JCJC staff, working with Jasper County officials, have developed a new Chamber of Commerce in Bay Springs. As part of the continuing community development process, JCJC staff facilitated a town hall meeting with MSCAT, moderated by Dr. Virgil Culver, on June 22, 2010. Nearly 200 participants were in attendance.
- ASCC WIRED staff have assisted the Town of Linden with a process entitled “Grow Linden.” This is an outcome of last fall’s charrette combined with the strategic planning process developed for the community by the University of West Alabama. As a result, an educational wooden toy manufacturer is in the process of locating a manufacturing plant in Linden and projects to employ 200 people once the plant is completed.
- Work continued during the last quarter to create a West Alabama rural health workforce program. This work will continue through partnerships with the University of Alabama, The Rural Alabama Health Alliance, Maude Whatley Community Health Center, Black Belt Community Health Services,

West Alabama Mental Health, Family Medicine Residency Programs -- Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham, Alabama Family Practice Rural Health Board, Alabama A & M University, the Black Belt Action Commission, and the Rural Alabama Action Commission.

## **Goal 2 – *Cultivate community and regional entrepreneurship.***

This has been a record-setting quarter for WAEM entrepreneurship training programs, as 148 participants completed entrepreneurship training. In comparison, the combined number of completers in all previous grant quarters was 91. This level of activity is expected to continue.

An online survey was sent to registered users of the MyBiz.AM entrepreneurial assistance website. Of the 37 respondents to the survey, seven reported starting a business within the past year. Of those seven new businesses, five reported employing 1-4 people and two reported employing 5-8 people.

Other Goal 2 highlights for the quarter include:

- EMCC’s second MyBizAM/SEP Entrepreneurship Class, held on their Scooba campus, has graduated five students (out of seven beginning) in May, 2010. A student who graduated from the EMCC Entrepreneurship Class is renovating a downtown structure for a business in DeKalb.
- MCC’s SEP-based “How to Start and Operate a Small Business” class (started in February, 2010 with 9 students) graduated five students in May, 2010.
- SSCC’s SEP-based entrepreneurship program has been sustained through their Continuing Education Department. Currently, there are 7 WIA students enrolled in the program.
- Overall, the WAEM region had 148 students graduate from entrepreneurship programs this quarter. Other schools of note: JCJC – 30 students (primarily high school students in SEP), ECCC – 74 students (modified SEP, primarily SBDC based training), WCCS – 22 students (REAL-based training through the Ready-To-Work program).
- EMCC and local businesses helped support The West Point Growth Alliance’s first annual Small Business/Entrepreneurship Fair on June 17, 2010. Topics included successful business practices, contracting and procurement, and training opportunities. EMCC touted its entrepreneurship classes for those who want to start and run a business. Approximately 50 people were in attendance
- ECCC reprinted Start-It Cards for several communities including Newton, Union, Hickory, Morton, Sebastopol, Carthage, Walnut Grove, Lena, Philadelphia, Decatur, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. In Walnut Grove and Sebastopol the additional cards were placed in the local banks in each town.

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

This final quarter of training produced the best results to date. Record numbers of participants completed Advanced Manufacturing training, M3 Level I credentialing, and M3 Level II credentialing. There were 571 completers in Advanced Manufacturing, accounting for 25% of all completers during the WIRED grant period. There were 348 participants who completed M3 Level I training and received the regional credential, about one third of all completers and nearly triple the previous grant record of 127 completers

in a quarter. There were 71 completers of the M3 Level II credential training, which accounts for 27 per cent of all completers and more than doubles the previous quarterly record of 28 completers.

This high level of activity will be sustained.

Other Goal 3 highlights for the quarter include:

- BSCC completed its Jasper Business Incubator in May. This is BSCC's third Amatrol training center.
- MCC's Distribution Training operations continue in the Workforce Development Center at an increasing level of demand. Twenty-six participants have completed the training so far this quarter with more classes in progress. The training is undergoing some changes with more racking being added to facilitate additional training in shipping and receiving.
- EMCC has established a new Manufacturing Skills Training Center on its Scooba campus. This center includes an M3 classroom, a designated computer classroom for M3 and CRC testing, and a new classroom to conduct Basic Manufacturing Skills Training. Classes began on the Scooba campus in April, 2010. Added space for second M3 lab and Entrepreneurship Training on Scooba Campus is forthcoming. EMCC is also developing a construction skills training program with a classroom also being constructed on the Scooba campus.
- MCC is adopting the M3 Level I credential as part of five Career and Occupational Technology programs. The M3 credential will be issued each April to students who have completed the requirements. The programs are Construction Trades, Industrial Maintenance Trades, Machine Tools Technology & Millwright Technology, Industrial Maintenance Technician, and Welding & Cutting Technology.

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

The WAEM Community College partners have established lasting relationships with several of the high schools in their districts and plan to sustain those programs in the coming years. Over this last quarter, 76 high school students participated in WAEM related programs.

Other Goal 4 highlights for the quarter include:

- EMCC successfully sought a National Science Foundation Grant to introduce students to Industrial training concepts. Pilot year is with Columbus High School with 15 students being assessed and enrolled. Fourteen teachers are enrolled in training on the EMCC GT campus for summer 2010. Students and teachers are issued a CRC from the state and Amatrol equipment is used for skill upgrades.
- There have been 45 high school juniors who participated in the SEP in classes held at Laurel High School, Bay Springs High School, Heidelberg High School, and Stringer High School. During the 2009/2010 school year, teams from Bay Springs placed in the top ten for in the business plan competition.

**Update on Leveraged Resources in Support of WIRED Activities:**

BSCC reported \$46,392 in leveraged federal funds from an ARRA grant. The funds were used to purchase equipment and trainers for M3 training at the Hamilton Campus. SSCC reported \$18,107 for staff salaries paid by Alabama State Special Populations Funding for M3 training and skills assessing for the Ready-to-Work program. Additionally, SSCC reported \$4,284.98 from Alabama State Appropriations for administration costs for the WIRED program that were not covered by WIRED funding. Finally, EMCC reported \$1,380,966 in leveraged college general fund expenditures for equipment, supplies, and salaries for M3 and advanced manufacturing training for the WIRED program that were not covered by WIRED funding. These expenses were reported in the previous narrative report, but were not accompanied by the official documentation and added to the metrics report until this final quarter.

### **Challenges to Project Process:**

The WAEM WIRED project has enjoyed its most productive quarter ever, just as funding has ended. The only challenge remaining is to follow our sustainability plans to keep the various programs in place throughout the region.

### **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**

<b>GRANTEE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</b>				
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: 6/30/2010	
City <u>Montgomery</u> State <u>AL 36103-5690</u>			6. Report Due Date: 8/15/2010	
<b>GRANTEE RESULTS</b>				
Progress Report Performance Categories and Measures	1/31/2010 Target	Previous Quarters	Current Quarter	Cumulative Grant-to-Date
<b>Category 1: Education/Training/Assessment</b>				
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.		3668	607	4275
2 Total Number Beginning Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs Using WIRED Funds.	4855	3368	494	3862
a. Number beginning Advanced Manufacturing education/training	4500	2998	456	3454
b. Number beginning Entrepreneur education/training	355	370	38	408
3 Total Number Completing Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Using WIRED Funds.	2627	1797	719	2516
a. Number completing Advanced Manufacturing education/training	2451	1706	571	2277
b. Number completing Entrepreneur education/training	176	91	148	239
4 Number of Entrepreneurs Completing Education/Training Who Create Their Own Businesses, as Identified by Survey.	80	3	1	4
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	2071	203	2274
b. Number beginning M3 Production Level II assessment	1200	340	71	411
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	680	348	1028
b. Number attaining Production Level II M3 Credential	800	190	71	261
c. Number attaining Advanced Production Level M3 Credential	400	40	0	40
7 Investment in WAEM WIRED Education/Training/Assessment.	\$4,430,000	\$5,311,204	\$1,430,590	\$6,741,794
a. Investment of WIRED Funds in education/training/assessment	\$4,430,000	\$4,125,180	\$ 3,232	\$4,128,412
b. Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment		\$44,580	\$ 46,392	\$90,972
c. Non-Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment		\$1,141,444	\$ 1,380,966	\$2,522,410
<b>Category 2: Capacity Building</b>				
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	49	0	49
b. Number of outreach/networking events (regional roundtables, WAEM Town retreats, summits, conferences, community roll-outs, teacher/business leader sessions, etc.)	42	137	2	139

c	Number attending outreach/networking events	2760	8244	141	8385
d	Number of communities initiating Place-Building planning (including strategic planning, entrepreneur support planning, and Small Town Design Initiative and related MainStreet planning)	53	79	0	79
e	Number of Place-Building plans completed	25	30	4	34
f	Number of community leader contacts by Community College/Junior College (CCJC) staff (duplicated)	3135	8465	80	8545
g	Number of newsletters published	15	16	0	16
h	Number of presentations on WAEM initiatives and innovations at conferences	12	19	0	19
10	<b>Total Number of WAEM Partners</b> -- 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. <b>(Sum of 10a - 10k)</b>	571	827	5	832
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	2	42
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	2	52
i	Number of business and industry training partners	40	193	1	194
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	<b>Entrepreneur Development Activities</b> -- 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	13359	3741	17100
b.	Total registered users of MyBiz.am	27800	3406	573	3979
c	Total times MyBiz.am Resource Navigator accessed	25000	1140	122	1262
d	Total MyBiz Users self-reporting they started their own business within the WAEM Region	90	12	7	19
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	1173	24	1197
12	<b>Other Workforce Education/Training, Assessment Outcomes</b> -- 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	8946	1465	10411
b.	Total number of individuals registered in the Amatrol "anytime, anywhere" on-line advanced manufacturing training system	4275	2842	361	3203
c	Total number of M3 Assessment labs opened at WAEM colleges	8	14	1	15
13	<b>Youth (16+) Enterprise Ready Activities</b> -- 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	770	41	811
b.	Total number of high school students dual-enrolled in WAEM Skills programs in community and junior colleges.	79	93	35	128
<b>Category 3: Economic Indicators - Annual Figures</b>		<b>2007 Baseline</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
14	<b>Employment by Targeted Industry Cluster</b>				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing Clusters (including non-manufacturing employment related to clusters)	78,073	74,265		
b.	Entrepreneurship	62,117	Data not yet available	Data not yet available	
15	<b>Average Wage by Industry Cluster</b>				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing Clusters	\$19.43	\$19.99		
b.	Entrepreneurship	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	
16	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	5.49%	6.68%	8.15%	

Entrepreneurship	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	5.49%	6.68%	8.15%	
<b>Performance Improvement on Common Measures by WIRED Participants Region Wide as Reported by the Workforce Investment System</b>				
Entered Employment Rate (adult common measure)	ADECA	12.37%	21.41%	<b>16.89%</b>
Employment Retention Rate (adult common measure)	ADECA	78%	87.76%	<b>82.88%</b>
Average Earnings (adult common measure)	ADECA	\$11,190.00	\$ 13,543.95	<b>\$12,366.98</b>
<b>Number Receiving a Degree or Certificate from a WAEM Community or Junior College in one of the WAEM Target Areas</b>				
Advanced Manufacturing	→	569	489	