



PRELIMINARY Quarterly Report: April – June, 2008

Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60

Date: 07/31/2008

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

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

Contact Person: Steve Walkley, Division Director, ADECA/OWD

Contact Data: Phone 334-242-5300

Email: steve.walkley@adeca.alabama.gov

Alternate Contact: Ken W. Hollingsworth, Workforce Initiatives Coordinator

Contact Data: Phone 334-242-5882

Email: ken.hollingsworth@adeca.alabama.gov

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 – Bevill 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.

General Grant Activities, Successes, Strategic Partners, and Transformation Indicators:

WAEM WIRED weathered a difficult start, then, spent many months developing its “enterprise-ready” programs, staff, and relationships. Today, these efforts are beginning to show the transformation effects so needed and sought as shown by activities, trainee figures, and leveraged funds reported for the last quarter.

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.*

Active WAEM Partners now total 429. Building and branding a region take many partners and active relationships. “WAEM,” through the work of these partners, is gradually transforming from a collection of communities and counties into a known region.

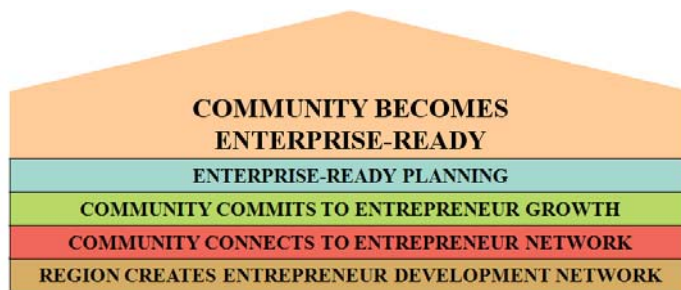
- Colleges continue to aggressively engage in community strategic planning – adding WAEM Place Building strategies wherever possible. 63 such engagements have been initiated with 3 completed. 10 more engagements occurred during this quarter. See college community matrices for details in Appendix.
- Colleges made 768 community-leader contacts during the quarter.
- ASCC partnered with the Region 6 Workforce Development Regional Council to develop an area-wide strategic plan encompassing five counties. WAEM WIRED is also partnering with the Region 3 Workforce Development Regional Council to assess workforce skills in an area that overlaps both BSCC and SSCC districts.
- 14 college and TMI staff participated in Alabama’s “Your Town” program in June to prepare for the first WAEM Town program to occur this Fall. These programs emphasize asset-based development and community design.

- 29 tourism leaders participated in the second WAEM Tourism meeting on June 3rd in Meridian. Rather than form another “council” – they already attend too many meetings – the group determined to form a “network” and keep in regular touch by email, blogs, and teleconferences. All agreed to participate in developing a WAEM plan for constructing economies around tourism assets.

Best Practice: WAEM is developing a “best practice” in its approach to rural place building by using existing programs and then building upon them. Mississippi State’s *First Impressions* program modeled by JCJC for WAEM provides an excellent first view of a community and its assets. Alabama’s *Small Town Design Initiative* provides an excellent place building planning process for rural communities. Alabama’s *Your Town* program provides leaders from communities not yet ready for planning an opportunity to learn about asses-based planning. And, WAEM’s *Enterprise-Ready Development System* provides communities a methodology to develop strong place-based entrepreneur support and development programs. WAEM is working to pull these programs together and offer them throughout the region. This is taking commitment and cooperation among many partners in both states.

Goal 2 – Cultivate community and regional entrepreneurship.

The MyBiz System is taking root in WAEM and spreading outward in both Alabama and Mississippi. “MyBiz” is the name of WAEM’s primarily rural place building initiative that encourages communities to transform themselves into “enterprise-ready” communities and adopt entrepreneurship as an alternative economic development strategy. The comprehensive MyBiz System includes community Start It! cards to connect entrepreneurs, the MyBiz Entrepreneur Network to support entrepreneurs and continuously improve MyBiz, the innovative MyBiz.am web tool to link entrepreneurs to nearest resources, and the Enterprise-Ready Development System (ERDS) planning process to help communities become “enterprise-ready.” Highlights include:



- Following on \$627,000 in CDBG funds to take MyBiz to low-and-moderate income and Katrina-impacted communities, Gov. Haley Barbour and MDES committed \$500,000 in WIA funds to take MyBiz to all other communities.
- ETA just announced a \$1 million grant to implement Project GATE in Alabama, which includes taking MyBiz statewide.
- The MyBiz.am website has been expanded and upgraded, including a regional training calendar. There were 22,620 unique hits this quarter and the new registration system developed by the University of Alabama and implemented this quarter signed up 236 users.
- 36 individuals began and 35 completed entrepreneurial training. “Common measures” intake and exit were processed for these trainees.
- 108 of 157 WAEM communities have Start It! cards in place including the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; 124 communities outside of WAEM have cards in process. In the WAEM communities 165 “connectors” have been recruited and trained, 74 this quarter.

- The MyBiz Network continues to grow, including 125 current active Resource Partners.
- More communities are undertaking Enterprise-Ready Development activities:
 1. EMCC is nearing completion of the incubator/leadership center for entrepreneurship in Noxubee County. This center results from ERDS planning conducted in the county by WAEM staff. The planning process led to the county and EMCC partnering with the Mississippi Department of Corrections and Noxubee County Sherriff Department to utilize prisoners for this construction project. Training in construction skills was provided to prisoners and six certificates of achievement were awarded.
 2. Leake County, working with ECCC, has completed 30 of 47 objectives in its new strategic plan that embraced ERDS planning. ECCC staff have been active in Leake County’s total strategic planning process, allowing them to incorporate ERDS components in a number of areas.
- WAEM tourism efforts are focusing on tourism entrepreneurs and product development.

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



The WAEM Alliance’s advanced manufacturing programs are catching on with major industries. And, the first “common measures” intakes – 424 of them – occurred this past quarter. The WAEM Workforce Training Framework developed to transform the region’s workforce provides for: 1) a permanent WAEM Alliance of the eight WIRED community and junior colleges to offer credentials and advance training initiatives, 2) authentic skills assessment

based on national standards provided by the M3 (modern multi-skill manufacturing) Credential, 3) readiness training through Career Readiness Certificates, and 4) innovative access to training provided by over 450 online modules from the Amatrol-based “anytime, anywhere” advanced manufacturing training system and weekend availability of M3 labs at the colleges.

- EMCC reports PACCAR (motor vehicle), SeverCorr (steel), and American Eurocopter (aerospace) have now adopted the M3 Production Level Credential coupled with the Career Readiness Certificate as their pre-hire training program. PACCAR will use the M3 Advanced Production Level Credential for post-hire training. Among those successfully completing this training were five dislocated Sara Lee employees in West Point, MS.
- ECCC reports Taylor Machine Works (heavy equipment), La-Z-Boy (furniture), and Weyerhaeuser Company (wood products) have 37 workers taking advantage of the flexibility and convenience of the “anytime, anywhere” online system to receive customized advanced manufacturing training on-site.
- MCC reports Lockheed Martin (aerospace) and Tower Automotive (motor vehicle) are now requiring CRCs as part of their application processes. MCC also used external funds to conduct training for 115 individuals in 23 varied courses in preparation for M3 Production Level assessment.
- Since all colleges have not yet received and installed equipment needed to comply with the Framework, this program is still in its early stages, however 424 intakes for M3 assessment and/or WIRED related advanced manufacturing training were processed this quarter. Many more are in the pipeline. 767 CRCs were awarded in the WAEM Region this quarter, bringing the WAEM total to 1,850.

- SSCC has integrated the M3 Production Level Credential into its *Ready to Work* pre-employment program.
- JCJC is working with Georgia-Pacific Chemicals (chemical), Sanderson Farms (poultry), and Bancorp South (financial services) to require applicants to have a CRC before hiring takes place and talking with them about the M3 program. The college has leveraged WIRED funds to establish a CRC assessment center.
- In concert with its WIRED commitment, WCCS received approval to establish an Associate in Applied Science Degree and Certificate Award in Industrial Maintenance.
- M3 assessment labs are now open at East Mississippi and East Central community colleges.
- BSCC and MCC are leveraging WIRED equipment funds to help establish new manufacturing training facilities.



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

Eighteen school (18) districts agreed this quarter to incorporate WAEM entrepreneur or advanced manufacturing training in their curricula, bringing the total to 19. And, 75 students participated in those programs this quarter. Another 10 engaged in dual enrollment opportunities with WAEM colleges.

- WAEM colleges are working with high Schools and youth programs to integrate REAL, NFTE, and other entrepreneur programs into their curricula. Columbus High School will implement the USM Youth Entrepreneur Program this fall.
- WAEM colleges are dual enrolling and training youth in advanced manufacturing. MCC began dual enrollment in electronics and machine tool trades. EMCC and ECCC held summer programs in advanced manufacturing. WCCS received a grant to dual enroll Career Tech students this Fall Semester. Eight career and technical schools are considering MOAs to implement M3 training.

Update on Leveraged Resources in Support of WIRED Activities:

WAEM Partners reported \$2,883,583 in leveraged funds to support advanced manufacturing and entrepreneurship – the top priorities of the WAEM Region and the WIRED Initiative.

1. MCC reported leveraged funds totaling \$2,428,583 related to its in-process creation of an advanced manufacturing center of excellence. MCC purchased and is remodeling and equipping a former Wal-Mart facility using \$2,056,033 in college funds (metrics line 8). Another \$362,550 in State Board for Community and Junior College (SBCJC) workforce funds are being used to purchase additional advanced manufacturing training equipment over and above WIRED funded equipment (metrics line 7b). These expenditures will support advanced welding training, basic and advanced production level M3 training/assessment, fitter training, distribution operations training, tool and die training and industrial electricity training. Other improvements will be reported as they occur.
2. ECCC reported the purchase of \$304,000 of training equipment with SBCJC funds to augment WIRED funding for equipment used in M3 assessment and Amatrol Anytime, Anywhere training (metrics line 7b).

3. JCJC reported it is investing \$10,000 of college funds to equip a designated testing center on campus (metrics line 8). The center is currently used for Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) Assessments. The JCJC Small Business Development Center is partially funding in the amount of \$25,000 the salary of an individual who will have WIRED Goal 4. This person will work with secondary schools in the district to implement youth entrepreneurship programs (metrics line 8).
4. BSCC reported a state commitment of \$300,000 to revitalize its Advanced Manufacturing Center (where the WIRED advanced manufacturing equipment will be housed) to effectively serve the needs of business and industry, and entrepreneurs (metrics line 8). The center may also house a small business development center to promote entrepreneurship.

Challenges to Project Process:

High gasoline prices are affecting people's choices to attend training. Most of our region is rural where mass transit and affordable transportation is unavailable.

Other Promising Innovation Processes and Success Stories:

- The JCJC WAEM Team has partnered with MDA and the City of Ellisville to offer *First Impressions* reports for its communities. *First Impressions* is a partnership between JCJC and MSU to allow communities to see themselves from outsiders' points of view. The assessment consists of representatives from one community going to another community as visitors and reporting on their first impressions of the area. An asset mapping exercise will take place in August.
- WCCS received \$100,000 in funding over two years from the Babcock Foundation. The funding will be used to create CABLE (Center for Advancements in Business Leadership and Education). CABLE will serve as an outlet for the implementation and sustainability of WIRED Initiatives (workforce training, entrepreneurship, and K-12 activities).
- Final planning is underway for the Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA) to offer its Community Leadership Training via BSCC's distance learning capabilities. This provides the opportunity for interactive participation at any campus throughout the BSCC service area. The first training date is set for August 8, 2008.
- The MCC team has formed relationships with area bankers to encourage entrepreneurship and distribution of the Start It Cards.

APPENDIX – An Appendix showing detailed reports from each community and junior college partner for the region is provided as a separate document and can be accessed at <http://waem.us/qreports.html>.

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: 6/30/2008	
City <u>Montgomery</u> State <u>AL 36103-5690</u>			6. Report Due Date: 7/30/2008	
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.	5315	0	460	460
2 Total Number Beginning Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs Using WIRED Funds. (Sum of 2a and 2b)	4855	0	445	445
a. Number beginning Advanced Manufacturing education/training	4500	0	409	409
b. Number beginning Entrepreneur education/training	355	0	36	36
3 Total Number Completing Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Using WIRED Funds. (Sum of 3a and 3b)	2627	0	97	97
a. Number completing Advanced Manufacturing education/training	2451	0	62	62
b. Number completing Entrepreneur education/training	176	0	35	35
4 Number of Entrepreneurs Completing Education/Training Who Create Their Own Businesses, as Identified by Survey.	80	0	0	0
5 Total Number Beginning Assessment toward an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds (M3 is a national standards based, modern multi-skill manufacturing credential based on assessed competency).	3065	0	433	433
a. Number beginning M3 Production Level assessment	3065	0	424	424
b. Number beginning M3 Advanced Production Level assessment (subset of 5a)	832	0	9	9
6 Total Number Attaining an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds.	2160	0	23	23
a. Number attaining Production Level M3 Credential	1620	0	14	14
b. Number attaining Advanced Production Level M3 Credential (subset of 6a)	540	0	9	9
7 Investment in WAEM WIRED Education/Training/Assessment. (Sum of 7a and 7b)	\$4,430,000	\$3,356,865	\$482,550	\$3,839,415
a. Investment of WIRED Funds in education/training/assessment	\$4,430,000	\$3,230,000	\$0	\$3,230,000
b. Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment		\$126,865	\$482,550	\$609,415
Category 2: Capacity Building				
8 Other Funds Leveraged by WIRED Partners (excluding 7b), see quarterly reports for details.		\$1,053,900	\$2,401,033	\$3,454,933
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	36	3	39
b. Number of outreach/networking events (regional roundtables, WAEM Town retreats, summits, conferences, community roll-outs, teacher/business leader sessions, etc.)	42	20	5	25
c. Number attending outreach/networking events	2760	1516	114	1630

d	Number of communities initiating Place-Building planning (including strategic planning, entrepreneur support planning, and Small Town Design Initiative and related MainStreet planning)	53	48	15	63
e	Number of Place-Building plans completed	25	3	0	3
f	Number of community leader contacts by Community College/Junior College (CCJC) staff (duplicated)	3135	1276	768	2044
g	Number of newsletters published	15	7	2	9
h	Number of presentations on WAEM initiatives and innovations at conferences	12	7	1	8
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	230	199	429
a.	Number of college, university, state, and federal agency partners	18	18	2	20
b.	Number of WAEM region Mayors participating in the WAEM Mayors' Network	80	25	1	26
c	Number of Place Building partners (MainStreet, Urban Center, tourism, etc. excluding university and agency depts. included in 10a)	21	0	25	25
d	Number of MyBiz Entrepreneur Network partners	3	3	3	6
e	Number of MyBiz Resource Partners added to network	100	68	57	125
f	Number of MyBiz Community Connectors recruited and trained	163	91	74	165
g	Number of MyBiz Network Navigators identified and trained	48	8	5	13
h	Number of Workforce partners (SWIBs, Local WIBs, one-stops, etc.)	21	16	1	17
i	Number of business and industry training partners	40	0	13	13
j	Number of high schools and youth program partners that have agreed to offer WAEM skills in their programs	61	1	18	19
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	27734	22620	50354
b.	Total registered users of MyBiz.am	27800	0	236	236
c	Total MyBiz.am users accessing the Resource Navigator	25000	11398	12986	24384
d	Total MyBiz Users self-reporting they started their own business within the WAEM Region	90	0	0	0
e	Total number of communities for which MyBiz Community Start It Cards have been developed and distributed	157	51	79	130
f	Total Community Connector referrals	660	53	166	219
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	1083	767	1850
b.	Total number of individuals registered in the Amatrol "anytime, anywhere" on-line advanced manufacturing training system	4275	471	480	951
c	Total number of M3 Assessment labs opened at WAEM colleges	8	0	8	8
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	83	75	158
b.	Total number of high school students dual-enrolled in WAEM Skills programs in community and junior colleges.	79	0	10	10
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)	2007 Baseline data not available			
b.	Entrepreneurship	2007 Baseline data not available			
15	Average Wage by Industry Cluster				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing Clusters	2007 Baseline data not available			
b.	Entrepreneurship	2007 Baseline data not available			
16	Unemployment Rate	2007 Baseline data not available			

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)	<i>2007 Baseline data not available</i>			
b.	Employment Retention Rate (adult common measure)	<i>2007 Baseline data not available</i>			
c.	Average Earnings (adult common measure)	<i>2007 Baseline data not available</i>			
18	Number Receiving a Degree or Certificate from a WAEM Community or Junior College in one of the WAEM Target Areas				
a.	Advanced Manufacturing	<i>available later in 2008</i>			
b.	Entrepreneurship	<i>available later in 2008</i>			
19	Number of New Business Startups or Expansions	<i>available later in 2008</i>			