

Vermont's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership
by Ken Horseman, Vermont Agency of Commerce
and Community Development

In Governor Peter Shumlin's January Budget Address to the legislature, he asked Secretary Lawrence Miller "to lead an Advanced Manufacturing Initiative that will bring together education, industry, labor and government to advance the manufacturing gains we are making."

Thanks in part to the hard work of VMEC, Vermont has made manufacturing gains – but not in terms of jobs which have declined throughout the nation. However, during the recent period of job loss Vermont's productivity is up almost five times. Our manufacturers are weathering the storm and coming out of the recession in a more competitive position. But we need to do more.

The primary goal of the Vermont Advanced Manufacturing Partnership is to bolster and advance the state's manufacturing sector by creating a collaborative working partnership between manufacturers, state government, academia, key technical assistance providers and other resources to manufacturers.

The Advanced Manufacturing Partnership will identify the most pressing challenges and transformative opportunities to improve and revitalize manufacturing in Vermont in ways that reignite innovation and accelerate profitable and sustainable manufacturing growth with the creation and retention of good paying jobs.

A Steering Group was convened in June to help form four Working Groups to focus on the following:

- Customer-Focused Innovation – This group is working on how Vermont can deliver new and better customer solutions at a faster pace than the competition.
- Advanced Talent Management – How can we recruit, develop and retain the best people?
- Systemic Continuous Improvement – How can we achieve productivity gains through enterprise-wide commitment to continuous improvement?
- Extended Enterprise Management – How can we leverage a flexible network of suppliers and partners to gain competitive advantage?

A final report will be forthcoming this fall that will be a roadmap for policy makers, industry and academia and will also serve to inform the White House Office of Advanced Manufacturing on Vermont's priorities and recommendations.

We welcome your input. Please contact Secretary Lawrence Miller directly at Lawrence.miller@state.vt.us or (802) 828-5204 with your ideas. You may also reach Ken Horsemen at ken.horseman@state.vt.us or (802) 828-5236.