

Purdue part of White House pilot program

Smaller manufacturers to benefit

By MAUREEN GROPE • Gannett Washington Bureau • March 3, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Purdue University is part of a pilot program announced Wednesday by the White House to help Midwestern manufacturers use advanced computer techniques to speed product development.

The \$4.5 million program will benefit small- and medium-sized businesses in the manufacturing supply chain in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan.

Purdue's participation will benefit up to 50 Indiana companies.

"This is going to dramatically change how these firms operate," said U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke.

He said computer simulation and modeling can cut six months off the typical 14-month product development cycle. If the pilot program is successful, it could be expanded. It's being tested in the Midwest because of its manufacturing base, major universities and other infrastructure.

"This is the heartland of America's manufacturing prowess," said Deborah Wince-Smith, president of the private Council on Competitiveness. "When you think of the work that's under way in advanced batteries, and storage capability and next-generation vehicles, this is the place to be."

The Council on Competitiveness, a nonpartisan group of CEOs, university presidents and labor leaders, is leading the project. The federal government is contributing \$2 million, and companies and other participants are contributing \$2.5 million.

Purdue is giving \$90,000 in state funds that it receives to assist businesses.

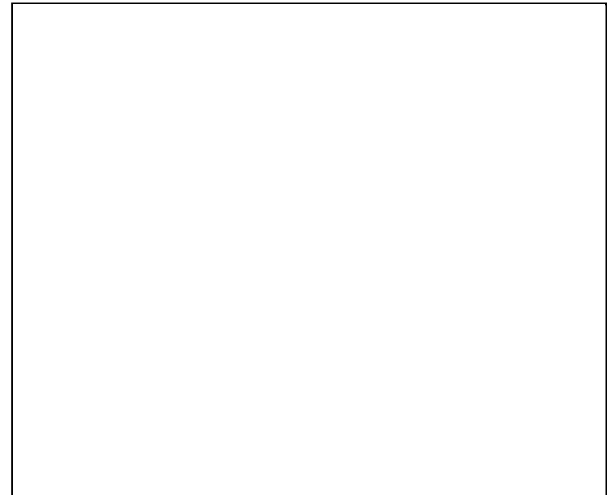
"The fundamental reason Purdue is involved in this is because of our commitment to the competitiveness of Indiana manufacturers," said David McKinnis, director of Purdue's Technology

Assistance Program.

Purdue's participants are:

- The Technology Assistance Program, a partnership among Purdue and state and local communities.
- NanoHUB.org, an international resource for nanotechnology theory, simulation and education.
- HUBzero, a Web platform that serves up interactive simulation and modeling tools in any Web browser. Those resources could, for example, help automakers figure out ways to reduce the weight of engines, improving a car's gas mileage. McKinnis said a range of industries will be helped, but the auto and aerospace industries will be particularly involved as they do a huge amount of modeling and simulation. The Council on Competitiveness sought out Purdue's involvement because of its experience and technology. "They have tremendous long-standing capability in computational sciences, but also in materials in many of the fields," said Wince-Smith. "Usually universities are asking money from the federal government. Here's a case where universities are investing with the federal government." Besides Purdue's contribution, other funding came from General Electric, John Deere, Lockheed Martin, Procter & Gamble and the state of Ohio.

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