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# Winning the Future: Building A 21st Century Manufacturing Industry

March 2, 2011 By [mbellamente](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

*Washington, D.C. (March 2, 2011) – Assistant Secretary Fernandez and Deputy Assistant Secretary McGowan participate in a White House event to announce a [\\$2 million EDA grant to the Council on Competitiveness](#) to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers in the Midwest compete in the 21st century global economy.*

American manufacturers are struggling to compete in the global economy, especially the small to medium sized enterprises (SME). The federal government is working with these companies to catalyze cooperation between large and small suppliers. This type of alliance will not only help us to win the future, but it will also be a win for the American economy and small businesses, the nation's job creation engine.

In the Midwest, SMEs and large manufacturing firms, known as original equipment manufacturers (OEM), rely on technology to simulate new breakthrough products in advanced manufacturing and get them to the marketplace. Small companies, however, do not have the level of access to cutting edge technology as larger manufacturers.



The Obama administration is working with industry leaders to help bridge the gap with the launch of the National Digital Engineering and Manufacturing Consortium to strengthen the competitiveness of small, medium and large manufacturers throughout Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. The Midwest has tremendous assets and infrastructure and the caliber of university resources for this initial pilot program. The consortium will work to foster collaboration between large manufacturing firms and their smaller supply chain manufacturers. This public-private partnership initiative is made possible through a \$2 million investment from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and \$2.5 million in matching funds from private sector partners.

This investment is an important example of how the public, private and academic sectors can work together to accelerate the growth of the new economy by out-innovating and out-competing the rest of the world.

One of the goals of the initiative is to provide modeling and simulation resources that use high-performance computing (HPC) technologies that are prevalent at universities, especially those in the Midwest. HPC is a game-changing platform that will revolutionize the manufacturing process for SMEs. This cost-efficient method of manufacturing uses top-of-the-line technology to cut the design cycle by half and quickly provide a realistic simulation of the final product. Currently these powerful, customized simulation tools are primarily available to larger businesses. Increasing access to these advanced technologies and training will better prepare the nation's small manufacturers to out-build their global competitors.

The is being coordinated by the Council on Competitiveness, a non-partisan group of CEOs, university presidents and labor leaders that work to advance economic prosperity, in partnership with the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences, Inc., the National Center for Supercomputing Applications in Illinois, the Ohio Supercomputing Center. The partners that have provided the \$2.5 million match are Purdue University, General Electric, John Deere, Lockheed Martin, Procter & Gamble, and the State of Ohio.

Today's announcement with Assistant to the President for Manufacturing Policy Ron Bloom, U.S. Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and Council on Competitiveness President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith is part of President Obama's commitment to building a 21st century manufacturing economy by supporting small business development to create the technologies and industries of the future. This effort aligns with the administration's national innovation agenda to invest in the building blocks of innovation.

Manufacturing goes hand in hand with innovation. The President is working to revitalize domestic manufacturing by making investments in the Recovery Act and STEM education, providing businesses full expensing of capital investments, offering support to small businesses through the Small Business Lending Fund, and spearheading an initiative to double American exports. His budget bolsters R&D investments and allocates \$5 billion for the Energy Manufacturing Tax Credit.

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