

NEWS RELEASE – May 28, 2014

## **South Kansas is named a ‘manufacturing community’**

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that south Kansas is a designated ‘manufacturing community,’ giving the region elevated consideration for a portion of \$1.3 billion in federal funding in the next two years through Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP).

The proposed program prioritizes public investment in research and innovation as the catalytic element to improve support for existing advanced manufacturing businesses and workers, and to build on and strengthen the region’s competitive edge in attracting global manufacturers.

“Our goal through the IMCP is to secure south central Kansas as a global leader in advanced materials, ensuring increased high-wage employment opportunities for Kansans,” said Wichita State University President John Bardo.

South Kansas is one of 12 regions to receive the designation in phase two of the IMCP. The proposal was submitted by Wichita State in partnership with local government, industry, economic development organizations and other community groups.

Debbie Franklin, director of business development for WSU’s Office of Research and Technology Transfer, coordinated the regional task force and application.

“Our investment strategy builds on regional strengths and addresses gaps in our advanced manufacturing ecosystem,” Franklin said.

“Development of this infrastructure will allow Wichita to attract private investment from new and existing manufacturers,” said John Tomblin, interim vice president for research and technology transfer at WSU. “It will allow the university to carry on its strategic plan to be a model for applied learning and research.”

The proposed program will allow for the accelerated insertion of advanced materials and automation in to the production process and bring together large and small business, defense contractors, research entities, university researchers, students, support organizations and government agencies to accelerate innovation by investing industrially relevant advanced manufacturing technologies.

Last September in phase one of the IMCP, Wichita received \$200,000 to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy to identify, verify, refine and prioritize key tactical manufacturing ecosystem investments and strategically align resources to support the region’s advanced manufacturing sector.

The IMCP is a critical component of the Department of Commerce’s “Open for Business Agenda,” which prioritizes trade and investment.

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