

Mass. MEP to participate in pilot project integrating energy conservation practices with Lean manufacturing

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MEPs Will Work to Implement EPA Guidelines on Energy Savings for Its Clients

The Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership, in collaboration with MEPs in Maine and New Hampshire, has announced the creation of a pilot program to integrate government conservation guidelines into its training programs. The MEPs will evaluate the terms and measures of the Environmental Protection Agency's Lean and Energy Toolkit working directly with regional manufacturers. A final report assessing effectiveness and making recommendations will be made to the EPA.

"For years, the MEPs have been showing manufacturers how to streamline and improve operational efficiency with Lean training," said Jack Healy, director of operations of the Massachusetts MEP. "It makes sense to include energy efficiencies as part of Lean training. Those techniques will help save money and help save the planet."

The MEPs will integrate the EPA's suggestions while working with six manufacturing clients in three New England states.

"No segment of the U.S. economy has as much to gain from energy-use reduction as manufacturing. The manufacturing sector consumes 70 percent of industrial energy usage," said Zenagui Brahim, Director of Operations for New Hampshire MEP.

Within the manufacturing sector, the largest consumers of energy are the food, paper, petroleum and coal products, chemicals, and primary metals subsectors, accounting for 83 percent of the sector's energy consumption. Primary energy sources for manufacturers are Natural Gas and Electricity. Process heating accounts for 62.8 percent of direct energy end use at manufacturing facilities, while machine drives and motors account for another 27.3 percent.

A September 2005 poll taken by the National Association of Manufacturers revealed that 93 percent of directors from small and medium-sized manufacturing companies believe that higher energy prices are having a negative impact on their bottom line.