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**Florida Manufacturing Partnership Helps Manufacturing Companies Recover**  
*Hurricane-damaged companies find relief in professional training workshops*

**CELEBRATION, Fla.** – In June 2006, Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) was awarded grant funds from the National Institute of Standards and Technology/MEP Gulf Coast Hurricane Assistance Program to provide customized training to manufacturing businesses in Central Florida. The grant money provided by the Gulf Coast Hurricane Assistance Program allows Florida MEP to host group training seminars as well as direct one-to-one training for manufacturing businesses impacted by hurricane damage or strain.

“Florida MEP has trained over 150 businesses in designated hurricane-impacted counties through 11 training seminars with this grant money in both Acquisition Response Training and Lean,” said Gene Lussier, Florida MEP board chair. “We give companies plans to expand and improve and streamline their production, increasing productivity and profitability.”

In addition to those businesses who participated in consortia events, Florida MEP has qualified over 200 companies in the hurricane affected areas for the SupplyPoint® database. The database allows the organizations to receive information on government bids, as well as providing one-on-one mentoring on how to conduct business with the government.

At the most recent training seminar held in October, Florida MEP partnered with the Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast to conduct a Lean Manufacturing Training consortium. The event provided manufacturing companies with the tools they need to run a lean business that increases production by minimizing required resources and maximizing profit.

Other valued economic development and workforce partners helped increased Florida MEP’s outreach and services under this program. Partners include the Business Development Board of Martin County, the Treasure Coast Workforce Board, the Indian River Chamber of Commerce, Broward Alliance and Workforce One.

“Workforce development and education has become a pivotal issue with the changing demands of business and globalization,” said J.T. Tarlton, President and CEO of the Broward Alliance. “Florida MEP and their unique training seminars give smaller manufacturing companies the tools they need to compete in a global market.”

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In addition to the 11 seminars held thus far, Florida MEP also provides additional outreach to attendees by project managers who will continue to coach these businesses with company assessments and one-on-one training. Each project manager spends 'on-site' time with the corporation to review other training programs and improve operations.

Florida MEP has initiated or completed close to 60 one-on-one training events ranging from two-day to 12 month projects. The training itself covers acquisition response mentoring and lean transformation, as well as ISO Certification preparation. The training each company receives helps them to receive additional grant funds including the Florida Incumbent Worker Training Grant and the Workforce Board Employed Worker Training Funds.

“By giving organizations the tools they need to receive additional grants, Florida is able to provide assistance to more companies with the Hurricane Assistance Program funds,” said Lussier. “As a direct result of Florida MEP’s consortia events, numerous participating companies have successfully submitted and won government bids, thereby significantly benefitting our state’s economy.”

**ABOUT FLORIDA MEP**

Florida MEP is a non-profit service available to every manufacturer in the state. Between 2001 and 2006, the Florida MEP served close to 800 small- to medium-sized manufacturers, like Kinane Corporation, throughout the state. In those five years, MEP has created or retained more than 6,500 jobs, saved nearly \$100 million in costs, and increased or retained \$470 million in sales. To find out more about Florida MEP’s and their consortia events visit, [FloridaMEP.org](http://FloridaMEP.org).

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