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Feb. 10, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TechSolve Launches Next Generation Manufacturing Study

Study will benchmark Ohio manufacturers on world-class manufacturing practices and strategies.

CINCINNATI, February 10, 2009 – A research study to assess the progress of Ohio manufacturers in adopting strategies to win in the global economy was launched today by TechSolve, one of Ohio’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership service providers. The study is the first step in a long-term effort to help manufacturers weather today’s recession and improve manufacturing competitiveness over the next decade.

The study asks manufacturers to rank their progress toward the world-class performance benchmarks of Next Generation Manufacturing, a framework of strategies that will drive manufacturing growth and profitability in the 21st century. The elements of Next Generation Manufacturing are customer-focused innovation, systemic continuous improvement, advanced talent management, global engagement, extended enterprise management and sustainable products and processes.

The web-based Next Generation Manufacturing Study questionnaire can be accessed at www.NGMstudy-Ohio.com. Any manufacturing owner, CEO or senior level executive is eligible to participate. Participation in the study is confidential and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participation also can be anonymous. Deadline for participation is March 15. The benefit for the study participants is that they will receive a customized benchmarking report comparing their progress to the overall results as well as to other respondents of manufacturing companies of similar revenue and number of employees.

“What we see here in the U.S. and around the globe is that the adoption of these strategies aligns with better business performance,” said John Brandt, CEO of the Manufacturing Performance Institute (MPI), a global research firm that is conducting the study. Brandt said a recent Wisconsin study of more than 500 manufacturers confirmed the strong correlation between next-generation strategies and readiness to compete globally.

“We want to ensure that TechSolve is supporting Ohio’s manufacturers’ greatest needs” said Gary Conley, president of TechSolve. “By reviewing the study results, we will be able to develop the programs and services most important to them.”

The study is part of a national effort announced today by the American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC) being spearheaded by 17 states. “The adoption of Next Generation Manufacturing strategies represents a historic opportunity to strengthen and

improve the nation's manufacturing base and achieve a long-term competitive advantage across all industries and sectors," said Mike Klonsinski, ASMC board chair.

The study results will provide a wealth of valuable data for manufacturers, business leaders and state and national policymakers. Manufacturers can see how they rank against world-class performance benchmarks and target improvements where needed. Policymakers can strengthen and improve programs and services supporting manufacturers knowing where the critical needs are. "The study results will provide a scorecard, and the scorecard will tell us what we need to do to improve," Klonsinski said. For example, a low score on global engagement may indicate to policymakers actions are needed to help manufacturers sell into overseas markets, he said.

A strong manufacturing industry is imperative to southern Ohio. According to the Ohio Department of Development's 2008 Ohio Economic Analysis, Ohio manufacturers employed 772,800 jobs in 2007, making the largest employment sector in the state. Manufacturing also accounts for the largest single industry segment of the gross state product (GSP).

For more information on the Next Generation Manufacturing Study, contact Deb Perkins at 513-948-2116 or perkins@techsolve.org.

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Over the past 25 years, Cincinnati-based TechSolve has helped small to mid-sized companies implement process improvement and advanced manufacturing solutions that deliver measurable top-line and bottom-line results. TechSolve implements Supplier Development, Lean Enterprise and Machining Process Solutions that help companies worldwide increase profits and productivity throughout their organizations. More information is available on the internet at www.TechSolve.org.