



Final Report: February 2006 – June 30, 2010

Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60

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Project Name: West Alabama/East Mississippi (WAEM) WIRED Project

Grantee: Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs/Office of Workforce Development (ADECA/OWD)

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For brevity, the following references are used in this report:

ADECA – Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs;
ARC – Appalachian Regional Commission;
ASCC – Alabama Southern Community College;
BSCC – Bevell State Community College;
CAEL – Council for Adult and Experiential Learning;
CRC – Career Readiness Certificate;
DOL – U.S. Dept. of Labor;
ETA – DOL Employment and Training Administration;
ECCC – East Central Community College;
EMCC – East Mississippi Community College;
JCJC – Jones County Junior College;
M3 Credential – Modern Multi-skill Manufacturing Credential;
MCC – Meridian Community College;
MDA – Mississippi Development Authority;

MDES – Mississippi Department of Employment Security;
MSU – Mississippi State University;
RUPRI – Rural Policy Research Institute of the University of Missouri;
SBA – U.S. Small Business Administration;
SSCC – Shelton State Community College;
TMI – The Montgomery Institute;
UA – University of Alabama;
USM – University of Southern Mississippi;
WAEM – West Alabama - East Mississippi;
WCCS – Wallace Community College – Selma;
WIA – Workforce Investment Act
WIRED – Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development.

SECTION I:

Summary of General Grant Activities and Successes:

Citizen input came first in the WAEM WIRED Project. In the end, 8,587 citizens participated in planning and outreach activities.

The rural, bi-state region needed that input to build its comprehensive regional development plan. To enable this process to reach across state lines, a Joint Memorandum of Understanding was executed by Alabama Governor Bob Riley and Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour on May 10, 2006. It authorized and established the West Alabama – East Mississippi WIRED Commission. This unique bi-state authority provided the means to pull the region together despite traditional jurisdictional barriers.

Technical assistance provided by ETA staff, CAEL, and RUPRI, helped WAEM partners develop a goal framework and planning process. Meeting with leaders throughout the 37-county region, WAEM community and junior college partners recruited 120 representatives to serve on four Goal Committees.

Committees worked from September 29, 2006, to develop detailed start-up strategies and action plans for each goal. The RUPRI Center for Regional Competitiveness conducted extensive research on the region's economy and economic assets. Over several weeks, WAEM partners held four roundtables to gain feedback from 152 citizen leaders from across the region on the proposed plan and opportunities identified by RUPRI research. A super roundtable followed with 49 representatives from earlier roundtables to consolidate and prioritize feedback.

On May 14, 2007, in Monroeville, AL, this year-long, participative planning process led 181 regional representatives to a bi-state Governors Summit in Monroeville, AL. Governors Riley and Barbour hosted the event and applauded participants as they used electronic voting devices to set strategic priorities and confirm the overall plan. Their recommendations were later affirmed by the WAEM Commission and accepted by ETA.

This participative goal setting and planning process was one of the great achievements of the WAEM WIRED Project.

Best Practices:

- WAEM partners offer both the bi-state MOU and the participative planning process as best practices for regional development and planning.

Products Developed (see the attached Products worksheet for details):

- West Alabama – East Mississippi Plan and Governance Structure
- Regional Priority and Strategy Development System

Research:

- “The Western Alabama – Eastern Mississippi Region: A Strategy for the Future” prepared by the RUPRI Center for Regional Competitiveness.

The following Goal sections describe continued citizen involvement and strategy implementation results from this extraordinary planning process. Also, the attached **WAEM Chronology** lists every event held during the project period.

Goal 1 – Stand-up and embed the capacity to identify key assets and strengths, target opportunities, and recruit champions to build an Enterprise-Ready region.

The RUPRI Center for Regional Competitiveness taught us that the foundational process for building a competitive rural region is building competitive rural communities...a long-term transformation process. WAEM partners created its “Rural Place Building Initiative” to describe the process they developed, earning a “2010 Innovator” award from the Southern Growth Policies Board.

WIRED funded “place building” coordinators at each of the eight partner community and junior colleges. They collaborated with the UA Center for Economic Development, the Auburn University *Urban Studio*, the MSU *First Impressions* Program, Mississippi Main Street, Your Town Alabama, the MDA Asset Development Program, ARC, TMI, and RUPRI to reach out to the 158 communities in the rural 37-county WAEM Region. A total of 8,545 contacts were made with community leaders during the grant

period. The attached **Community Involvement Matrix** shows activities completed for each community by each college partner.

A key strategy was to “build the capacity of the eight WAEM Region community and junior colleges to facilitate asset and strength identification, opportunity targeting, champion recruitment activities, and place building efforts.” Results – and the formal commitment of each college to sustain these activities – show the success of this strategy. Over the period of the grant, WAEM college partners facilitated 141 workshops reaching 8,587 citizen leaders and spurred over half the communities, 79, to initiate place building activities; 34 completed the process before the grant ended.

The WAEM Mayors Network was established to provide mayors from both states the opportunity to share ideas, challenges, and pursue regional opportunities. TMI is sustaining the Mayors Network.

Another key strategy tapped the capacity of area universities to advise place and region building strategies. To this end, UA and MSU collaborated with RUPRI to conduct extensive research and craft the regional development strategies prioritized by the Governors Summit; UA, MSU, and Auburn collaborated to thoroughly research and present opportunities for better utilizing the region’s primary natural asset – forest resources; and UA collaborated with TMI to study rural health needs in the region. This research continues to guide regional development activities.

Best Practices:

- WAEM partners identified “Your Town Alabama” as a best practice for training community leaders in place building skills such as leadership engagement, community design, and asset-based planning. As a result, the “WAEM Town” three-day retreat and workshop was developed to reach out to WAEM communities in both states. For sustainability, WAEM Town morphed into Your Town Mississippi, a complement to Your Town Alabama, with operational control passing to MSU and MDA.
- WAEM partners identified the Auburn University *Urban Studio* charrette-based “Small Town Design Initiative” as a best practice for engaging rural communities in place building activities. As a result, WAEM WIRED not only funded charrettes for seven towns in Alabama, but got Auburn to train Mississippi Main Street to offer the program in Mississippi. WIRED and ARC funded 11 charrettes in Mississippi; Main Street continues to offer the program beyond the grant period.
- WAEM partners found that utilizing Your Town and the *Small Town Design Initiative* in coordination with other initiatives such as MSU’s *First Impressions* program, MDA’s *Asset Development* program, and Alabama’s *Communities of Excellence* program resulted in greater impact for communities.
- WAEM’s “Rural Place Building Initiative” was identified by the Southern Growth Policies Board as a best practice, earning its “2010 Innovator” award.

Important Long-term Transformations Accomplished:

- Sustainable capacity was established at the eight community and juniors colleges to nurture and support community and regional place building activities.
- Working relationships built among place rural building advocates will result in place building partnerships far beyond the WAEM WIRED Project.
- WAEM (pronounced “wam”) has become a recognized name for the region.
- TMI has become an accepted intermediary for bi-state talent development and place building initiatives.

Products Developed (see the attached Products worksheet for details):

- WAEM Staff Training and Performance Process
- Rural Place Building as a Transformation Strategy
- The WAEM Regional Initiative Website www.WAEM.US
- WAEM News Flashes
- WAEM Regional Initiative Newsletters

Research:

- “Forestry and the Forest Industry in West Alabama and East Mississippi” prepared by the University of Alabama Center for Economic Development.
- “Health Care Service Environment and Strategies in West Alabama and East Mississippi” prepared by TMI. (Report attached since not previously submitted.)

Goal 2 – Cultivate community and regional entrepreneurship.

Growing businesses dependent upon local assets and resources is a priority WAEM rural place building strategy set by the Governors Summit. WIRED funded “entrepreneur” coordinators at each of the eight partner community and junior colleges who collaborated with the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, USM, MDA, UA, MSU, SBA, Small Business Development Centers, WIA One-Stop Centers, and other partners to develop systems and programs to help rural communities identify, nurture, and train local entrepreneurs.

The MyBiz Alabama-Mississippi Entrepreneur Network was formed to link entrepreneurs, communities, and service providers. The <http://www.MyBiz.AM> website was crafted to facilitate these linkages and provide real-time access to entrepreneurs. Targeted access to services from 213 Resource Partners is now provided to 3,979 registered users. Start It! Cards were developed and “community connectors” recruited for 165 communities to show new entrepreneurs how to connect to support services as well as to local utilities and regulators; through this system community connectors referred 1,197 individuals to services. Entrepreneur instructors were trained at all eight community and junior colleges and provided instruction to 408 entrepreneurs, with many still in training classes. Dependent upon self-reporting, WAEM partners counted 23 trainees and MyBiz.AM users as starting their own businesses.

As a result of MyBiz, Governor Haley Barbour called on TMI to facilitate a multi-agency workgroup to formulate a set of policy recommendations to enhance entrepreneurship and small business development in Mississippi. These recommendations – Balancing Recruitment With Entrepreneurship (BRWE) – were completed in 2009 and submitted to agencies and policy groups for review.

Best Practices:

- WAEM partners identified the USM *Southern Entrepreneur Program (SEP)* as a best practice for training entrepreneurs at both community colleges and high schools. Instructors at all eight WAEM colleges, seven other Mississippi colleges, and six high schools were trained in the *SEP* program. Governor Haley Barbour also identified *SEP* as a best practice and provided access to \$289,000 in ARRA funds to provide *SEP* training scholarships to dislocated workers and adult workers.
- Governor Haley Barbour and two state agencies, MDA and MDES, identified the MyBiz Alabama-Mississippi Entrepreneur Network program as a best practice and provided \$1.3 million in funding to

expand the program, first to Hurricane Katrina impacted and low and moderate income communities, and then to all Mississippi communities.

- The University of Alabama identified MyBiz as a best practice and used it to help design a proposal for a Project GATE application to the U.S. Department of Labor. The resulting award created Project LEARN in Alabama that provided entrepreneur training and support for dislocated workers.
- In partnership with Meridian Main Street, TMI developed a *Nexus Hero Workshop* to advise both entrepreneurs and communities about opportunities to expand markets using the Internet. As the grant ended, TMI was preparing to take this workshop on the road throughout the region.

Important Long-term Transformations Accomplished:

- WAEM partners built sustainable regional capacity for entrepreneurship training and nurturing.
- WAEM partners built a strong entrepreneurship training and education system for the Mississippi part of the region, but more work remains to be done on the Alabama side.

Products Developed (see the attached Products worksheet for details):

- A comprehensive Entrepreneur Development System.
- The WAEM MyBiz Entrepreneur Website www.MyBiz.AM.
- MyBiz Start It! Took Kit
- Enterprise-Ready Community Certification
- MyBiz Resource Partner Checklist

Goal 3 – Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce.

Advanced manufacturing was selected as the top training priority by the Governors Summit, but no regional workforce training system existed. Rather, each state and each college had unique systems.

Guided by workforce training directors at the eight WAEM community and junior colleges, in direct collaboration with major employers and economic developers, WAEM partners developed a **WAEM Regional Training Framework**, the **Amatrol Anytime Anywhere e-Learning System** to provide 24/7 virtual advanced manufacturing training, and the regional **M3 Credential** and authentic assessment system. The eight colleges also formed the **WAEM Alliance** to maintain the training framework and skills credentials beyond the WIRED grant period. A total of \$4.1 million of the WIRED grant was invested in these training systems.

A total of 3,454 individuals entered advanced manufacturing training programs offered by the eight colleges. Of these, 2,277 had completed training by the end of the grant period and 1,028 had achieved at least one level of the M3 Credential. Colleges have committed to maintain training, assessment, and credentialing beyond the grant period. At about the time the training programs began turning out completers, the recession hit, so employment consequences of this training has been difficult to assess.

Early in the WIRED grant, Governor Bob Riley rolled out Alabama's *Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)* Program. WAEM partners worked with Governor Haley Barbour and MDES to develop Mississippi's program in alignment with Alabama's. The CRC is a knowledge-based credential upon which the skills-based M3 Credential can be stacked. WAEM partners strongly encouraged individuals to attain CRC credentials. By grants end, 10,411 CRCs had been awarded in the WAEM Region.

WAEM partners worked with the University of Alabama Center for Economic Development to host regional meetings on forestry and forest products. The meetings presented highlights of the forestry study conducted by the Center.

Working with area health care providers, WAEM partners crafted a Nursing Career Lattice Model to better train dislocated and low-wage incumbent workers for entry-level nursing positions, increased the number of certified nurse aids, and improve retention and wages at employers. This model was used as the basis for an application for funding to the U.S. Department of Labor. In February 2010, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced a \$4.5 million award within WAEM partners.

Best Practices:

- The Walmart Foundation *America Works Initiative* identified the WAEM advanced manufacturing model as a best practice and awarded the region \$400,000 to continue to offer M3 training and assessments to dislocated workers and unemployed youth. As part of the match for this award, Governor Haley Barbour provided \$156,000 for a two-year extension of the Amatrol Anytime Anywhere e-Learning System.
- The WAEM Alliance of eight community and junior colleges is offered as a best practice. The Alliance adopted by-laws, set up operating committees, and seeks to sustain the regional training system established through the WIRED grant.
- Shelton State Community college augmented its Ready to Work Program with the Amatrol Anytime, Anywhere e-Learning System and training systems. Phifer, Inc. reports the augmented programs gets excellent results and improves retention. Phifer said its hiring process has greatly improved “by validating skills through WorkKeys assessments and teaching manufacturing skills through Amatrol such as precision measurement and statistical process control....Amatrol opens many doors for pre and post-employment training. Our goal is to expand Amatrol training to the current legacy workforce as we prepare employees for technical jobs.”

Important Long-term Transformations:

- Innovative workforce training capacity was increased at each of the community and junior colleges in the WAEM Region.
- The WAEM Alliance was created as a permanent bi-state, regional workforce vehicle to coordinate regional credentialing and training initiatives and brand the workforce.
- Partnership building capacity and networking capacity across the region were increased and have led to sharing innovation and best practices.
- WAEM partners made significant strides toward providing a sizeable cohort of M3 Credentialed workers to help existing manufacturing clusters move to high-productivity/ high technology value-added production and to help attract new advanced manufacturing clusters and innovation jobs to the region.

Products Developed (see the attached Products worksheet for details):

- WAEM Regional Training Framework
- WAEM Alliance
- M3 Production Level Certification
- M3 Advanced Production Level Certification
- WAEM Modern Manufacturing Training Programs

Goal 4 – Engage high schools and youth in regional branding and Enterprise-Ready activities.

After strong encouragement by ETA staff and CAEL to establish a goal targeting youth, WAEM partners found their intent largely neutered by a subsequent DOL ruling that WIRED funds could not benefit, directly or indirectly, youth under the age of 16. As a result, WAEM partners focused Goal 4 activities on providing high school juniors and seniors access to entrepreneur and advanced manufacturing training. By the end of the grant, 811 students had been provided skills training and 128 were dual-enrolled in high school and community college training programs.

Best Practices:

- WAEM partners identified the USM *Southern Entrepreneur Program (SEP)* as a best practice for training entrepreneurs at both community colleges and high schools. Instructors at six high schools were trained in the *SEP* program.

Important Long-term Transformations Accomplished:

- WAEM partners increased partnership building between high schools and community colleges that led to greater training and educational opportunities (dual enrollment) for youth.

Products Developed (see the attached Products worksheet for details):

- WAEM Youth Entrepreneurship Outreach Program
- Meridian Community College Dream Train Business Camp

Status Update on Strategic Partnership Activities

As the narrative in the General Summary of Grant Activities and Successes relates, the WAEM WIRED grant was partner driven. During the grant period 832 different partners participated at one level or another.

Key partners with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs were The Montgomery Institute, Mississippi Development Authority, and eight community colleges: Alabama Southern, Beville State, East Central, East Mississippi, Jones County, Meridian, Shelton State, and Wallace – Selma. Research partners included the University of Alabama, Mississippi State University, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the Rural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri. The Council of Adult and Experiential Learning provided technical assistance.

Strategic partnerships built during WAEM WIRED continue today in all four Goal areas.

Update on Leveraged Resources in Support of WIRED Activities:

WAEM partners provided \$2,581,533 in non-federal leverage plus \$90,972 in federal funds for education, training, and assessments directly related to the WIRED grant. In addition, WAEM partners attracted \$13,017,677 for capacity building related to the WIRED grant. The combined overall amount of WAEM partner funds leveraged for this grant totaled \$15,690,182.

Education/training/assessment (Metrics line 7.b and 7.c): 96.6 per cent of the leveraged funds for grant-related education, training, and assessment activities came from state and local sources. The bulk of the leveraged funding came from the Mississippi community colleges, through accessing the Mississippi State Board of Community and Junior Colleges (MSBCJC) workforce training funds and local district funds. Total per college by source were:

1. EMCC -- \$1,380,966 in non-federal funds
2. MCC -- \$598,799 in non-federal funds
3. ECCC -- \$452,511 in non-federal funds
4. JCJC -- \$126,865 in non-federal funds
5. SSCC -- \$22,392 in non-federal funds
6. BSCC -- \$90,972 in federal funds (SBA and ARRA)

Capacity Building (Metrics line 8): The majority of the \$13,017,677 in capacity building leveraged funding came by way of grants received by WAEM partners.

Concurrent with the WIRED grant, TMI received funding to expand entrepreneur activities through Mississippi CDBG grants totaling \$627,000 and a federal HUD grant of \$198,000. TMI also received smaller grants of \$900 from a local community foundation to expand Goal 4 activities and \$3,000 from a local philanthropic foundation for a summer intern. WAEM partner MSU received an ARC grant of \$225,000 to provide asset-based planning and development in three distressed ARC counties located within the WAEM district, and ADECA received a DOL Project GATE grant of \$1,000,000 to expand entrepreneurship assistance throughout the state of Alabama.

At the end of the WIRED grant and continuing beyond it, TMI received an MDES ARRA Grant for \$289,000 to provide funds for community colleges to offer entrepreneur training to dislocated workers. TMI and WAEM partners were awarded a \$4,519,625 million ARRA HGEI health care training grant from DOL. TMI and WAEM partners also received a \$400,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation through its *America Works Initiative* to provide M3 training to dislocated workers; these funds were matched by \$155,000 from MDES in WIA funds, \$50,000 from the MSU National Institute for Rural Community Colleges, and \$100,000 from participating community colleges.

SECTION II:

Metrics:

The following worksheets reveal both the measureable and other metrics used for this project. The first worksheet shows the measureable metrics. The next four show the other metrics.

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (WIRED)
WAEM METRICS PROGRESS REPORT ADDENDUM TEMPLATE**

| GRANTEE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Grantee Name: Alabama Dept. of Economic & Community Affairs/Office of Workforce Development (ADECA/OWD) | | | 2. Grant Number: WR-15405-06-60 | |
| 3. Program/Project Name: West Alabama/East Mississippi (WAEM) WIRED Project | | | | |
| 4. Grantee Address: P O Box 5690 | | | 5. Report Quarter End Date: 6/30/2010 | |
| City <u>Montgomery</u> State <u>AL 36103-5690</u> | | | 6. Report Due Date: 9/30/2010 | |
| GRANTEE RESULTS | | | | |
| Progress Report Performance Categories and Measures | 1/31/2010 Target | Previous Quarters | Current Quarter | Cumulative Grant-to-Date |
| Category 1: Education/Training/Assessment | | | | |
| WAEM WIRED targeted advanced manufacturing (education, training, credentialing) and entrepreneurship (networking, training, support) as its top priorities. | | | | |
| 1 Total Number of Intakes into Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs and M3 Assessments Using WIRED Funds. | | 3668 | 607 | 4275 |
| 2 Total Number Beginning Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Programs Using WIRED Funds. | 4855 | 3368 | 494 | 3862 |
| a. Number beginning Advanced Manufacturing education/training | 4500 | 2998 | 456 | 3454 |
| b. Number beginning Entrepreneur education/training | 355 | 370 | 38 | 408 |
| 3 Total Number Completing Training in Advanced Manufacturing or Entrepreneurship Workforce Education/Training Using WIRED Funds. | 2627 | 1797 | 719 | 2516 |
| a. Number completing Advanced Manufacturing education/training | 2451 | 1706 | 571 | 2277 |
| b. Number completing Entrepreneur education/training | 176 | 91 | 148 | 239 |
| 4 Number of Entrepreneurs Completing Education/Training Who Create Their Own Businesses, as Identified by Survey. | 80 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 5 Number Beginning Assessment toward an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds by Level (M3 is a national standards based, modern multi-skill manufacturing credential based on assessed competency). | | | | |
| a. Number beginning M3 Production Level I assessment | 3065 | 2071 | 203 | 2274 |
| b. Number beginning M3 Production Level II assessment | 1200 | 340 | 71 | 411 |
| c. Number beginning M3 Advanced Production Level assessment | 600 | 400 | 0 | 400 |
| 6 Number Attaining an M3 Credential Using WIRED Funds by Level | | | | |
| a. Number attaining Production Level I M3 Credential | 1620 | 680 | 348 | 1028 |
| b. Number attaining Production Level II M3 Credential | 800 | 190 | 71 | 261 |
| c. Number attaining Advanced Production Level M3 Credential | 400 | 40 | 0 | 40 |
| 7 Investment in WAEM WIRED Education/Training/Assessment. | \$4,430,000 | \$5,311,204 | \$1,339,618 | \$6,650,822 |
| a. Investment of WIRED Funds in education/training/assessment | \$4,430,000 | \$4,125,180 | \$ 3,232 | \$4,128,412 |
| b. Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment | | \$44,580 | \$ 46,392 | \$90,972 |
| c. Non-Federal Funds Leveraged by Partners for education/training/assessment | | \$ 1,291,539 | \$ 1,289,994 | \$2,581,533 |
| Category 2: Capacity Building | | | | |
| 8 Other Funds Leveraged by WIRED Partners (excluding 7b), see quarterly reports for details. | | \$ 6,877,635 | \$ 6,140,042 | \$13,017,677 |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 9 | Region Building Activities -- WAEM WIRED was challenged to build the capacity of its partners while at the same time building a sense of region in 37 mostly rural counties in West Alabama and East Mississippi. | | | | |
| a. | Number of WAEM WIRED staff training events | 48 | 49 | 0 | 49 |
| b. | Number of outreach/networking events (regional roundtables, WAEM Town retreats, summits, conferences, community roll-outs, teacher/business leader sessions, etc.) | 42 | 137 | 4 | 141 |
| c. | Number attending outreach/networking events | 2760 | 8244 | 343 | 8587 |
| d. | Number of communities initiating Place-Building planning (including strategic planning, entrepreneur support planning, and Small Town Design Initiative and related MainStreet planning) | 53 | 79 | 0 | 79 |
| e. | Number of Place-Building plans completed | 25 | 30 | 4 | 34 |
| f. | Number of community leader contacts by Community College/Junior College (CCJC) staff (duplicated) | 3135 | 8465 | 80 | 8545 |
| g. | Number of newsletters published | 15 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| h. | Number of presentations on WAEM initiatives and innovations at conferences | 12 | 19 | 0 | 19 |
| 10 | Total Number of WAEM Partners -- WAEM WIRED is heavily dependent upon Partners to accomplish its mission...indeed, building the bi-state partner network for this rural region is one of the main transformation goals. (Sum of 10a - 10k) | 571 | 827 | 5 | 832 |
| a. | Number of college, university, state, and federal agency partners | 18 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| b. | Number of WAEM region Mayors participating in the WAEM Mayors' Network | 80 | 27 | 0 | 27 |
| c. | Number of Place Building partners (MainStreet, Urban Center, tourism,etc. excluding university and agency depts. included in 10a) | 21 | 40 | 2 | 42 |
| d. | Number of MyBiz Entrepreneur Network partners | 3 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| e. | Number of MyBiz Resource Partners added to network | 100 | 213 | 0 | 213 |
| f. | Number of MyBiz Community Connectors recruited and trained | 163 | 198 | 0 | 198 |
| g. | Number of MyBiz Network Navigators identified and trained | 48 | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| h. | Number of Workforce partners (SWIBs, Local WIBs, one-stops, etc.) | 21 | 50 | 2 | 52 |
| i. | Number of business and industry training partners | 40 | 193 | 1 | 194 |
| j. | Number of high schools and youth program partners that have agreed to offer WAEM skills in their programs | 61 | 48 | 0 | 48 |
| k. | Number of business partners receiving Governors' Seal awards | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Entrepreneur Development Activities -- WAEM WIRED connects communities to entrepreneurs to local, regional, state and national resources and training opportunities. | | | | |
| a. | Total unique hits to MyBiz.am entrepreneur referral website | 50000 | 13359 | 3741 | 17100 |
| b. | Total registered users of MyBiz.am | 27800 | 3406 | 573 | 3979 |
| c. | Total times MyBiz.am Resource Navigator accessed | 25000 | 1140 | 122 | 1262 |
| d. | Total MyBiz Users self-reporting they started their own business within the WAEM Region | 90 | 12 | 7 | 19 |
| e. | Total number of communities for which MyBiz Community Start It Cards have been developed and distributed | 146 | 165 | 0 | 165 |
| f. | Total Community Connector referrals | 660 | 1173 | 24 | 1197 |
| 12 | Other Workforce Education/Training, Assessment Outcomes -- Including activities emphasized and encouraged by WIRED but for which WIRED dollars were not expended. | | | | |
| a. | Total number of Career Readiness Certificates (CRCs) Awarded in the WAEM Region by state workforce agencies | 3335 | 8946 | 1465 | 10411 |
| b. | Total number of individuals registered in the Amatrol "anytime, anywhere" on-line advanced manufacturing training system | 4275 | 2842 | 361 | 3203 |
| c. | Total number of M3 Assessment labs opened at WAEM colleges | 8 | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| 13 | Youth (16+) Enterprise Ready Activities -- A goal of WAEM WIRED is to engage youth in WAEM Skills programs while still in high school. | | | | |
| a. | Total number of students reached by schools implementing WAEM Skills programs | 350 | 770 | 41 | 811 |
| b. | Total number of high school students dual-enrolled in WAEM Skills programs in community and junior colleges. | 79 | 93 | 35 | 128 |

| Category 3: Economic Indicators - Annual Figures | | 2007 Baseline | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 14 | Employment by Targeted Industry Cluster | | | | |
| a. | Advanced Manufacturing Clusters (including non-manufacturing employment related to clusters) | 79,537 | 75,729 | 66,485 | <i>Data not yet available</i> |
| b. | Entrepreneurship (employed through current start-ups) | 2,749 | 2,234 | <i>Data not yet available</i> | <i>Data not yet available</i> |
| 15 | Average Wage by Industry Cluster | | | | |
| a. | Advanced Manufacturing Clusters | \$19.35 | \$19.90 | 19.76 | <i>Data not yet available</i> |
| b. | Entrepreneurship | <i>Data not available</i> | <i>Data not available</i> | <i>Data not available</i> | <i>Data not available</i> |
| 16 | Unemployment Rate | 5.49% | 6.72% | 11.31% | |
| 17 | Performance Improvement on Common Measures by WIRED Participants Region Wide as Reported by the Workforce Investment System | | | | |
| a. | Entered Employment Rate (adult common measure)* | ADECA | 12.37% | 21.41% | 22.30% |
| b. | Employment Retention Rate (adult common measure)* | ADECA | 78% | 87.76% | 33.44% |
| c. | Average Earnings (adult common measure)* | ADECA | \$ 11,190.13 | \$ 13,543.95 | \$16,499.34 |
| <p>*Note: Because the majority of the participants were exited within the final two quarters of the grant, these ratios are skewed and do not yet accurately reflect the accomplishments of this project.</p> | | | | | |
| 18 | Number Receiving a Degree or Certificate from a WAEM Community or Junior College in one of the WAEM Target Areas | | | | |
| a. | Advanced Manufacturing | → | 569 | 489 | <i>Data not yet available</i> |
| b. | Entrepreneurship | 0 | 39 | 52 | <i>Data not yet available</i> |
| 19 | Number of New Business Startups or Expansions | 713 | 600 | <i>Data not yet available</i> | <i>Data not yet available</i> |

WAEM WIRED Implementation Plan

| Goal 1 <i>Stand-up and embed the capacity to identify key assets and strengths, target opportunities, and recruit champions to build an Enterprise-Ready region.</i> | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| KEY STRATEGIES | PARTNERS (*indicates lead) | CRITICAL ACTIVITIES / TIMELINES | LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS |
| <p>1.1 Build the capacity of the eight WAEM WIRED region community and junior colleges to facilitate -- and the two area research universities to advise -- asset and strength identification, opportunity targeting, champion recruitment activities, and place building efforts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs* • ADECA • RUPRI • Goal 1 Committee • WAEM Commission • Universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and staff a GOAL 1 Place Building Committee co-chaired by CCJC presidents. Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Community and junior colleges (CCJCs) will provide Goal 1 field staff. Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Recruit technical assistance to help create the Place Building process. Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 11/3/2006 • Partner with area research universities for trend analyses and market/niche opportunity identification Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 1/31/2007 • Gather, review, and cull information from existing research, studies and reports Launched: 7/28/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Submit Place Building process and implementation plan to GOAL 1 Place Building Committee Launched: 9/29/2006; Completed: 12/14/2006 • Submit Place Building Process and implementation plan to WAEM WIRED Commission for approval. Launched: 12/14/2006; Completed: 1/25/2007 • Train staff and partners for the WAEM Place Building Process Launched: 12/14/2006; Completed: 1/25/2007 • Complete a baseline assessment of the region's economy Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 2/28/2007 • Compile information on current economic/workforce development initiatives and synthesize findings of existing reports Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 2/28/2007 • Complete preparations for regional roundtables Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 2/28/2007 • Hold four regional roundtables and one super regional roundtable to compile economic assets identified by regional champions Launched: 2/28/2007; Completed: 4/15/2007 • Complete preparations for the Governors' Summit Launched: 4/15/2007; Completed: 5/14/2007 • Improve and update the Place Building process as experiences and input with and from communities occur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop capacity at CCJCs to implement community and regional Place Building activities ✓ Develop better and ongoing partnerships between CCJCs and local and regional leaders ✓ Develop an environment which encourages regional perspectives and alliances ✓ Maintain WAEM.US website to serve as an information resource for the region |

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| | | <p>Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 3/16/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train community college, university, TMI, and other participating partner staff for Phase II. <p>Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 8/28/2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deploy the WAEM.US website that can serve as a technical resource, a current events information source, and a success celebration source <p>Launched: 3/31/2007; Completed: 8/28/2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and continually update the WAEM.US website <p>Launched: 8/29/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> | |
| 1.2 Pull together local and regional community, business, education and other leadership to utilize Goal 1 Place Building process information to plan and implement local and regional economic, workforce, and community development initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs* • RUPRI • Goal 1 Committee • WAEM Commission • Economic and workforce developers • MainStreet • Universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Phase I planning at a regional, Governors-convened Summit <p>Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 5/14/2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm selected near-term development initiatives <p>Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 5/31/2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize and implement regional initiatives <p>Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Phase I regional initiatives <p>Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the most promising long term directions for the region and engage regional leadership to take necessary steps to make them a reality <p>Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communities to initiate Place Building planning, develop plans, and implement <p>Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and support community implementation of Place Building activities in the region <p>Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold events/presentations to celebrate Place Building successes and highlight innovation <p>Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a newsletter and distribute articles to news outlets about Place Building initiatives and successes <p>Launched: 11/15/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a prioritized, long-term economic and workforce vision for the region ✓ Develop and maintain community understanding of the importance of Place Building and planning |
| 1.3 Utilize a persistent Place Building process to develop and engage local and regional leadership; encourage innovation; transform workforce culture, build regional identity, and sustain such | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs* • MainStreet Program • RUPRI • WAEM Commission • Universities • Mayors • AHECs • Tourism organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the region <p>Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 5/31/2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a broad-based WAEM Regional Council and hold periodic meetings to promote regional activities and planning <p>Launched: 7/15/2009; Complete: In Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition WAEM Commission to a new broad-based WAEM regional council <p>Launched: 2/25/2009; Complete: In Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and promote GOAL 1 and GOAL 2 innovations at national conferences <p>Launched: 10/1/2006; Completed: 3/31/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and sustain a WAEM Mayors Network to address regional community interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide the region with a brand identify that unites communities and regional leadership ✓ Engage community leaders to actively participate in and take ownership of the WAEM |

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| <p>efforts beyond the grant period</p> | | <p>Launched: 10/12/2007; Completed: 6/39/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a regional Place Building leadership institute (WAEM Town) to train leaders, identify and communicate best practices, and apply quality improvement review Launched: Fall 2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Associate and cooperate with Area Health Education Councils (AHECs) in Alabama and Mississippi to pursue strategies to accomplish the healthcare employment and training priority set at the Governors' Summit Launched: 1/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Present healthcare strategies to WAEM WIRED Commission for review and affirmation Launched: 8/1/2008; Completed: 8/31/2008 • Implement healthcare strategies Launched: 9/1/2008; Complete: 6/30/2010 • Create a bi-state Tourism Panel to pursue strategies to accomplish the tourism priority set at the Governors' Summit Launched: 2/27/2008; Incomplete: • Present tourism strategies to WAEM WIRED Commission for review and affirmation Launched: 8/1/2008; Incomplete • Implement tourism strategies Launched: 9/1/2008; Incomplete • Hold regional conferences and summits related to GOAL 1 regional priorities Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Encourage integration of Place Building methods into local leadership development/strategic planning programs Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 | <p>region-building process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop regional healthcare cluster strategies • Develop regional tourism cluster strategies ✓ Develop regional wood products cluster strategies ✓ Sustain WAEM Town Leadership Institute |
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Goal 2:
Cultivate community and regional entrepreneurship.

| KEY STRATEGIES | PARTNERS (*indicates lead) | CRITICAL ACTIVITIES / TIMELINES | LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS |
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| <p>2.1 Design a regional, integrated My Biz Entrepreneur Network and Enterprise-Ready Development System to spur and sustain and community entrepreneurship, and build the capacity of WAEM WIRED region community and junior colleges to deploy the MyBiz Entrepreneur Network</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs* • ADECA • RUPRI • Goal 2 Committee • WAEM Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and staff an Enterprise-Ready Development System Committee (ERDS - Goal 2 committee) co-chaired by CCJC presidents Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Obtain commitments and agreements from CCJCs to provide staff for the support of the Goal 2 strategy Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Recruit technical assistance to help design the MyBiz.AM Entrepreneur Network and ERDS Launched: 7/15/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Train CCJC GOAL 2 staff on Entrepreneurship development components Launched: 7/15/2006; Completed: 2/15/2007 • Meet with regional and state workforce and economic development entities to gather input for ERDS Launched: 8/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Design the Enterprise-Ready Development System and prepare to implement Launched: 8/1/2006; Completed: 12/14/2006 • Submit MyBiz.AM and ERDS implementation plans to WAEM WIRED commission Launched: 12/14/2006; Completed: 1/25/2007 • Affirm the MyBiz.AM and ERDS implementation plan Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 1/25/2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build regional capacity for entrepreneurship training and nurturing • Establish capacity to develop small businesses equal to the current capacity to recruit manufacturers |
| <p>2.2 Stand-up the MyBiz.AM Entrepreneur Network with special attention to minority business support.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAEL • 8 CCJCs* • TMI* • Universities • RUPRI • MyBiz.AM Resource Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map entrepreneur education and training programs at each community and junior college, university, K-12 school, and WIA center in the region. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 7/31/2007 • Assess availability and access issues related to education and training programs above; identify gaps; and make recommendations for improvement. Particularly assess barriers to minority participation. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 7/31/2007 • Develop a regional plan to provide and enhance needed entrepreneur education and training programs at CCJCs, universities, and WIA Centers. Launched: 8/1/2008; Completed: 10/31/2008 • Present regional entrepreneur education and training plan for affirmation by the WAEM WIRED Commission. Launched: 10/1/2008; Completed: 11/31/2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a sustainable single-site resource guide for all entrepreneurs in the region. ✓ Build a strong entrepreneurship training and education system for the region. • Reduce barriers to entrepreneurship and business start-ups across the region. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the regional entrepreneur education and training plan (this activity may overlap Innovative Workforce System initiatives in Goal 3 and should be coordinated with such). Launched: 12/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Map and load into the MyBiz.AM website state and national entrepreneurial resources, services, and programs. Also map the state and national entrepreneurial policy environment. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 11/30/2007 • Map and load into the technical resource website state and national minority business resources, services, and programs. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 5/30/2010 • Map and load into the technical resource website district and regional entrepreneurial resources, services, and programs. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 5/30/2010 • Design and deploy the MyBiz.AM technical resource website complete with a virtual resource directory, entrepreneur development advisor, client services database, and other innovative functions. Launched: 5/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Continually update the technical resource website. Launched: 12/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Identify and map technology transfer and innovation commercialization programs within the region. Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Link CCJCs and communities to technology transfer and innovation commercialization programs within region. Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Formalize the MyBiz.AM system of support tying service providers together, building collaboration among them, and linking them to entrepreneurs and communities. Launched: 1/1/2008; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Provide access for all service providers to the technical website common-client database. Launched: 2/1/2008; Completed: 7/31/2010 • Identify policy, regulation, and ordinance barriers to entrepreneurial activity and develop initiatives to eliminate or reduce such barriers. Identify any such barriers especially harmful to minority entrepreneurial development. Launched: 3/1/2008; Incomplete • Use a regional summit to address entrepreneur barriers and opportunities to reduce/eliminate such. Launched: 3/1/2008; Incomplete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of individuals starting new business either through CCJC entrepreneurship training or access to the MyBiz.AM entrepreneurship network – ten year target: 1,135 ✓ Integrate One-Stops, Small Business Development Centers, and CCJCs to form an entrepreneur delivery system. |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a newsletter and distribute articles to news outlets about initiatives and successes. Launched: 11/15/2006; Completed: 6/30/2010 | |
| 2.3 Build the capacity of communities to connect to MyBiz.AM and use Place Building to transform themselves into Enterprise-Ready Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 CCJCs* • TMI* • Universities • MainStreet • Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit each community and identify a “first champion,” a community connector, and information to put on the communities’ Start-It Cards. Launched: 11/30/2006; Completed: 3/31/2008 • Train community connectors to distribute Start-It Cards and collect and report contact information for entrepreneurs. Launched: 1/26/2007; Completed: 6/30/2008 • Train staff at Alabama Career Links and Mississippi WIN Centers to serve as connectors and/or navigators. Launched: 1/26/2007; Completed: 9/30/2008 • Identify and train MyBiz.AM Network Navigators throughout the region to whom community connectors will refer entrepreneurs for services. Launched: 1/26/2007; Completed: 9/30/2008 • Through community connectors and the MyBiz.AM website, connect entrepreneurs to service providers. Launched: 1/26/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Work with communities to initiate ERDS Place Building planning, develop plans, and implement plans over time. Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Monitor and support community implementation of Place Building activities in the Region. Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Institute a sustainable, accessible, comprehensive resource directory for the region. ✓ Enhance and encourage partnership-building and capacity building among resource providers in the region |
| 2.4 Sustain Place Building activities to develop and engage local, district, and regional leadership, build robust networks, encourage innovation, transform workforce culture, and build regional identity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 CCJCs* • TMI* • WAEM Commission • Universities • MainStreet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link entrepreneurs, service providers, and MyBiz.AM Communities into robust networks to share successes and problems, identify new opportunities, and continuously improve MyBiz.AM and ERDS offerings. Launched: 11/30/2007; Completed: 6/30/2010 • Hold district and regional conferences related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial networking. Launched: 11/30/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010 • To sustain Enterprise-Ready and place Building activities beyond the grant implementation period, create a broad-based WAEM Regional Council and hold periodic meetings to promote regional activities and planning. Launched: 2/25/2009; In Process • Transition WAEM Commission to a new broad-based WAEM regional council. Launched: 10/15/2009; In Process • Create a regional Place Building leadership institute (WAEM Town) to train leaders, identify and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase the leadership capacity of the region’s current and potential leaders ✓ Create a focused approach to region-building through transformational place-building activities ✓ Increase regional awareness of place- and entrepreneur-building activities through |

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| | | <p>communicate best Enterprise Ready practices, and apply continuous improvement review to Enterprise-Ready systems. Launched: Fall 2008; Completed: 5/31/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and promote GOAL 1 and GOAL 2 Place Building innovations at regional and national conferences. Launched: 10/1/2006; Completed: 3/31/2010 • Assess the successes/failures of the MyBiz.AM Entrepreneur Network; identify commonalities and gaps; develop a sustainable MyBiz.AM plan. Launched: 2/1/2009; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Meet with local, regional, and state partners and leaders to gather input Launched: 2/1/2009; Completed: 3/31/2010 • Submit sustainable MyBiz.AM plan to the WAEM WIRED Commission. Launched: 4/1/2009; Completed: 4/15/2010 • Affirm sustainable MyBiz.AM plan Launched: 4/16/2009; Completed: 5/15/2010 • Implement sustainable MyBiz.AM plan Launched: 5/15/2009; Completed: 1/31/2010 • Develop criteria for annual Place Building and Regional Innovation Awards Launched: 3/1/2008; Incomplete • Hold annual regional summits and present Place Building and Regional Innovation Awards Launched: 5/31/2008; Incomplete | <p>conferences and events.</p> |
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Goal 3:
Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce.

| KEY STRATEGIES | PARTNERS (*indicates lead) | CRITICAL ACTIVITIES / TIMELINES | LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS |
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| <p>3.1 Using community and junior colleges as the operators and innovative jobs and Goal 1 regional analyses as the guides, build regional, innovative Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems to help credential, certify, transform, and brand the workforce.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs* • ADECA • CAEL • RUPRI • Goal 3 Committee • WAEM Commission • Economic Developers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and staff an Enterprise-Ready Workforce Systems Committee (GOAL 3 Comm.) co-chaired by CCJC presidents to develop and implementation plan for this goal Launched: 1/25/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Community and junior colleges (CCJCs) and their workforce directors will play key roles in this strategy. To provide for this, TMI must obtain presidential commitments, formal agreements, and commitments of staff and other resources. CCJC staff in collaboration with area universities, TA, and TMC will help develop GOAL 3 initiatives. They will then implement the GOAL 3 plan and operate the GOAL 3 initiative. Launched: 7/1/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Recruit additional needed technical assistance (TA) to help develop Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems in collaboration with CCJCs and TMI. (TA from Goal 1 will also help with this goal.) Executive necessary contracts. TA will provide evaluation and design help for the GOAL 3 Plan, help develop the certification and credentialing plan (Strategy 3.2), and assess existing workforce training programs (Strategy 3.3), assess and recommend K-12/youth development programs, and help CCJCs, universities, and TMI institutionalize expertise needed to drive the GOAL 3 process in the future. Launched: 7/15/2006; Completed: 11/3/2006 • Conduct assessments of existing workforce training programs. Launched: 8/15/2006; Completed: 8/1/2007 • Meet with regional and state workforce and economic developers and other partners to gather input on existing programs and needed programs. Launched: 1/26/2007; Completed: 5/14/2007 • Using input from the Goal 1 Summit, develop the regional GOAL 3 Workforce Training Framework and submit it to the WAEM WIRED Commission for review. Launched: 5/14/2007; Completed: 5/31/2007 • Implement GOAL 3 Workforce Training Framework including advanced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase innovative workforce training capacity at the community and junior colleges in the WAEM region ✓ Increase emphasis on collaborative training focused on key industries for the region ✓ Build partnerships to gain consensus on needed training for jobs of the future |

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| | | <p>manufacturing/M3 Credential Plan. Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010</p> | |
| <p>3.2 Implement a Regional Workforce Training Framework (certification and credentialing) that builds common language and credentials across jurisdictions, emphasizes skills certification and helps brand the regional workforce.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCJCs* • TMI* • WAEM Commission • MDES • ADECA • Manufacturers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and compare existing and proposed credentialing and certification agreements in Alabama and Mississippi, identify gaps and common areas, and with TA help propose a regional approach and agreement that will brand the regional workforce and accomplish this strategy. (Parallel statewide initiatives may serve this same purpose.) Launched: 8/1/2006; Completed: 5/31/2007 • Form the WAEM Alliance of community and junior colleges and adopt a regional agreement as policy of WAEM region. Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 1/31/2008 • Use the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) credential developed in Alabama to develop a similar credential for Mississippi. Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 9/30/2007 • Encourage use of CRCs as the foundation for advanced manufacturing training in the Region. Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Implement an anytime, anywhere innovative access advanced manufacturing training system to support the M3 Credential and other advanced manufacturing training needs in the Region. Launched: 2/1/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Implement Regional M3 Credentials and related training systems. Launched: 2/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2008 • Hold an open lab at one college each Saturday to provide access to workers seeking M3 Credential assessments. Launched: 4/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • In concert with Strategy 3.3, establish a regional network of workforce training professionals as a committee of the WAEM Alliance to regularly review and update the credential and skills certification components of the M3 Credential. Launched: 1/1/2008; Completed: 1/31/2008 • Regularly review and update the M3 Credential and skills certification requirements. Launched: 2/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a permanent bi-state, regional workforce vehicle to coordinate regional credentialing and training initiatives and brand the workforce ✓ Increase emphasis on innovative and accessible training across the region ✓ Increase capacity for CCJCs to provide targeted training ✓ Provide a sizeable cohort of M3 Credentialed workers to help existing manufacturing clusters move to high-productivity/high technology value-added production and to help attract new advanced manufacturing clusters and innovation jobs to the region |
| <p>3.3 Establish a regional network of workforce training professionals to share expertise, develop regional access to specialized</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • CCJCs* • CAEL • ADECA • MDES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy time of CCJC workforce directors to implement with strategy. Launched: 6/25/2006; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Workforce directors and CAEL assess existing workforce programs per Strategy 3.1 Launched: 8/15/2006; Completed: 8/1/2007 • Recommend improvements and regionalization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase emphasis on continuous improvement for workforce training systems ✓ Increase |

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| <p>programs, and continuously recommend improvements to workforce training credentialing, certification, and branding programs.</p> | | <p>opportunities to existing workforce systems and programs. Launched: 8/1/2007; Completed: 5/31/2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit recommended improvements to the WAEM Alliance for review and action. Launched: 2/1/2008; Completed: 9/19/2008 • Implement WAEM Alliance approved improvements as they occur. Launched: 6/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Network community and junior college, WIA, university, and other workforce training professionals to share expertise, continually identify regional approaches to training, and review credentialing, certification, and branding programs. Launch: 4/1/2008; Complete: 5/31/2010 • Annually survey network participants to identify needed improvements, eliminate problems, and gauge activity. Launch: 9/30/2008; Incomplete | <p>partnership building capacity and networking capacity across the region, leading to sharing innovation and best practices</p> |
| <p>3.4 In collaboration with workforce and economic developers, develop the “brand” for the regional workforce, publish data about the brand, and begin outreach efforts to make the brand known.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • CCJCs • WAEM Alliance • WAEM • Commission • Economic developers • Workforce developers • Universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the M3 Credential and MyBiz Entrepreneur Network as the basis, engage CCJC workforce directors; local, regional and state economic developers; local regional, state WIA professionals; university partners; and others to forge a “branding” strategy for the regional and its workforce. Launched: 6/1/2008; Completed: 5/31/2010 • Present branding strategy to the WAEM Alliance and the WAEM WIRED Commission for review and affirmation. Launched: 1/1/2009; Completed: 1/31/2009 • Affirm branding plan. Launched: 1/1/2009; Completed: 1/31/2009 • Implement branding strategy and outreach activities. Launched: 2/1/2009; Completed: 5/31/2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a permanent regional workforce credentialing system to coordinate regional training initiatives and brand the workforce ✓ Increase emphasis on innovative and accessible training across the region ✓ Increase capacity for CCJCs to provide targeted training |
| <p>3.5 Determine the market demand for delivery of workforce and entrepreneurship training over Broadband Internet throughout the rural WAEM region, investigate options for meeting this demand, and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • CCJCs • Broadband Committee • Commission • Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and staff a broadband committee (BBC) of community and junior college workforce directors and other interested partners. Launched: 10/1/2006; Completed: 8/31/2008 • Assess broadband availability in the Region as well as market demand. Review options and develop a broadband plan. Launched: 1/15/2008; Completed: 8/31/2008 • Affirm Broadband Funding and Implementation Plan if market demand warrants. Launched: 9/1/2008; Not warranted: 9/30/2008 • Secure funding for broadband adopted plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build awareness of the need for broadband for training and education across the region. • Develop partnerships with broadband providers to deliver affordable, |

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| <p>develop a Broad-band Funding and Implementation Plan. Parts of this strategy may overlap with initiatives in Strategy 3.2.</p> | | <p><i>Launch: 10/1/2008; NA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement adopted broadband plan (if funded). <p><i>Launch: 8/1/2009; NA</i></p> | <p>accessible services to individuals and businesses needing broadband for training.</p> |
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| Goal 4: <i>Engage high schools and youth in regional branding and Enterprise-Ready activities.</i> | | | |
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| KEY STRATEGIES | PARTNERS (*indicates lead) | CRITICAL ACTIVITIES / TIMELINES | LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS |
| 4.1 Find innovative and appropriate places in public school curricula/ programs to integrate/enhance regional-brand skill development, provide incentives for schools to integrate such skill development, and train teacher trainers and program leaders to integrate the skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs • WAEM • Commission • Goal 4 Committee • Other partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and staff a Goal 4 Committee co-chaired by CCJC presidents to develop a strategic plan for this goal. Launched: 7/15/2006; Completed: 9/29/2006 • Utilize technical assistance (TA) Goals 1 and 3 and other TA to help develop this plan. Launched: 9/29/2006; Completed: 12/14/2006 • Recommend school skill program strategic plan to the Goal 4 Committee. Launched: 9/29/2006; Completed: 12/14/2006 • Affirm initial school skill program strategic plan. Launched: 12/14/2006; Completed: 1/25/2007 • Meet with local, regional, and state school leadership to gather input on existing programs and needs. Launched: 1/25/2007; Completed: 8/31/2007 • Form a Goal 4 Task Force of interested partners to identify and assess existing skill development programs in schools, determine regional-brand skills identified in Goal 3, and develop a Skill Integration Plan. Launched: 1/1/2007; Completed: 4/30/2008 • Affirm WAEM Skill Integration Plan. Launched: 5/1/2008; Completed: 5/30/2008 • Recruit high schools and youth to participate in WAEM skill programs. Launched: 6/1/2008; Complete: 5/31/2010 • Inform and provide materials to teachers and trainers at participating schools and in participating programs. Launched: 7/15/2008; Complete: 5/31/2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase partnership building between high schools and CCJCs, leading to greater training and educational opportunities for youth |
| 4.2 This strategy deleted as a result of new DOL directives on engaging youth under the age of 16. Activities retained are now incorporated in Strategy 4.1 | | | |
| 4.3 Explore credit-based secondary to post-secondary transition programs such as dual enrollment as means to broaden, align, and accelerate school Enterprise-Ready learning experiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMI* • 8 CCJCs • WAEM • Commission • Goal 4 Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership to high-school-to-college initiative. Launched: 1/1/2007; Completed: 1/31/2009 • Identify and assess existing Enterprise-Ready high school-to-college programs and map policy opportunities and barriers. Launched: 2/15/2007; Completed: 3/31/2009 • Review and cut useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to dual enrollment and other high school-to-college | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build partnerships between educators in high schools and CCJCs and business leaders • Seamless transition from high school to |

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| | | <p>programs. Launched: 2/15/2007; Complete: 3/31/2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with regional and state educators and business leadership to gather input. Launched: 6/1/2007; Completed: 1/31/2009 Recommend Enterprise-Ready high school-to-college plan. Launched: 4/1/2008; Completed 12/4/2008 Affirm high school-to-college plan. Launched: 8/1/2009; Competed 12/4/2008 Pursue plan implementation and funding with state education authorities in both states. Launched: 12/4/2008; Incomplete | college |
| <p>4.4 Encourage business leadership to partner with high schools and youth programs in establishing Enterprise-Ready programs and recognize exemplary programs with a “Governor’s Seal” award.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 CCJCs* TMI WAEM Commission Local businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria and name for a “Governor’s Seal” award program to recognize businesses supporting implementation of school/youth skill programs. <i>Launch: 4/1/2008; Incomplete</i> Present Governor’s Seal program plan to WAEM WIRED Commission for review. <i>Launch: 8/16/2008; Incomplete</i> Affirm Governor’s Seal program plan. <i>Launch: 9/1/2008; Incomplete</i> Promote Governor’s Seal program to schools, youth programs, and business leaders. <i>Launch: 9/16/2008; Incomplete</i> Hold regional award programs. <i>Launch: 3/15/2009; Incomplete</i> Publish recognition details in local media. <i>Launch: 3/15/2009; Incomplete</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase emphasis and recognition for school-business partnerships |

Discussion of Results:

The WAEM WIRED Grant originally proposed three major goals. Working with ETA staff and technical advisor CAEL, WAEM partners added a fourth goal targeting K-12 schools and students. This fourth goal was later substantially neutered when DOL ruled WIRED funds could not be utilized for youth under the age of 16.

Within these four goals, 16 major strategies were developed with 139 critical activities. In addition, 47 measureable targets were established as metrics. Fourteen data points were established for reference without targets.

WAEM partners achieved substantial success for Goal 1 and its three major strategies; 35 of the 40 critical activities were completed with two remaining in process and four abandoned. WAEM partners achieved substantial success for Goal 2 and its four major strategies; 39 of the 45 critical activities were completed with two remaining in process and four abandoned. WAEM partners achieved substantial success for Goal 3 and four of its five key strategies – the fifth strategy was determined to be beyond the scope of the grant; 29 of 32 critical activities were completed with one abandoned and two determined to be unneeded. WAEM partners achieved partial success for Goal 4 with one major strategy achieved, one partially achieved, and two abandoned; 15 of 22 critical activities were completed and seven were abandoned.

Of the 47 measureable targets, 26 were exceeded; 9 substantially achieved (2/3 or greater); 2 partially achieved (1/2 or greater); 9 somewhat achieved (less than 1/2); and 1 was abandoned.

SECTION III:

Challenges to Project Process:

Significant challenges to the project process arose from: 1) the rural, multi-jurisdiction, bi-state nature of the project; 2) leadership turmoil (unrelated to the grant) at major partners; 3) delays in approval of equipment requests; 4) delays in approval of our implementation plan and metrics; and 5) deteriorating economic conditions.

WAEM WIRED was the only rural, multi-jurisdiction, bi-state demonstration among the Generation I awards. The 37-county bi-state initiative brought challenges that slowed progress beyond that of other Generation I projects. The April 4, 2008, WIRED Generation I evaluation report prepared by Berkeley and Associates for DOL/ETA documented these challenges:

“Regions that were less ready for WIRED, such as WAEM, needed first to consider the types of governance and decision-making that might be most effective or appropriate for their WIRED initiatives, and then to create the required structures and procedures.”

“Establishing a region across state lines using agencies that had never worked together in the past also slowed implementation of their WIRED initiative.”

“Regions like WAEM, on the other hand, were relatively slower to implement certain activities, such as training programs in the target industries, due to their need to do the asset mapping and other research necessary to identify priorities and develop specific strategies and activities.”

“These regions needed time, not only to get the new structures up and running, but also to allow themselves the chance to see how their creations were working before tinkering with them.”

Further impact of these challenges can be seen in the timeline information presented later.

Reaching across state-lines and multiple jurisdictions not only takes time, but extraordinary leadership is required to overcome jurisdictional and institutional turf. When turnover occurs in key leadership positions, there is a learning curve to bring the new leaders up to date so that they can make meaningful decisions and contributions. WAEM WIRED has suffered from extreme turnover in key leadership positions. As a result, the grant has suffered unavoidable delays beyond those cited by Berkeley in authorizing and implementing programs, budgets, and equipment purchases.

- The Alabama Chancellor of Postsecondary Education, a major partner in pursuing the grant, turned over five times. Partner colleges and agencies require approval of appointments and actions from the Chancellor to implement grant activities. This turnover has unavoidably resulted in delays in presidential appointments at our partner colleges and project approvals:
 - Roy Johnson fired as Chancellor July 11, 2006.
 - Tom Corts served as Interim Chancellor through Feb. 28, 2007.
 - Renee Culverhouse served as Interim Chancellor through May 8, 2007.
 - Bradley Byrne served as Chancellor through May 19, 2009.
 - Joan Davis served as Interim Chancellor through Dec. 2009.
 - Freida Hill was named Chancellor in Dec. 2009.
- The Alabama Office of Workforce Development had two directors with a gap in between:
 - Tim Alford served as director through May 1, 2007.
 - There was no director between May 2007 and Sept. 2007.
 - Matthew Hughes was appointed as director in September 2007.
- Three of the partner community colleges in Alabama had nine presidents during the term of the grant, delaying program approvals and equipment purchase authorizations:
 - Beville State Community College: Harold Wade president through Aug. 2007; Neal Morrison interim president through Dec. 2008; Anne McNutt serves as current president.
 - Shelton State Community College: Rick Rogers president through Nov. 3, 2006; Joanne Jordan interim president through Dec. 2007; Mark Heinrich serves as current president.
 - Alabama Southern Community College: John Johnson served as president through June 30, 2009; William Blow served as interim president through June 30, 2010; Reggie Sykes serves as current president.
- Five of the nine positions on the West Alabama – East Mississippi WIRED Commission that oversees grant activities turned over, some several times.
 - Roy Johnson; replaced by Susan Miller Norman; seat was unfilled.
 - Vicki Locke; replaced by Bill Johnson; after a period unfilled, filled by Doni Ingram.
 - John Covington; replaced by Phillis Belcher.
 - Tim Alford; replaced by Matthew Hughes.
 - Wayne Stonecypher; replaced by Eric Clark.

The following timeline exposes other issues. While the grant was awarded in February 2006, it was not until May of 2006 that a bi-state governance structure was agreed upon. It was not until July 26, 2006, that budget and capacity building implementation plans (minus metrics) were approved. All Generation I demonstrations were granted a one-year extension based on similar delays, but WAEM delays continued.

To utilize the regional partner input model pushed by DOL/ETA staff and technical advisors in the WAEM implementation plan, partners formed committees, held regional roundtable meetings, and staged a bi-state summit to determine the major talent development strategies for the region. To do this over our rural, 37-county, bi-state region took time – from the September 29, 2006, committee kick-off event through the May 14, 2007, regional summit hosted by the two Governors. Out of this summit came two key talent development priorities: advanced manufacturing (primary) and entrepreneurship (secondary).

Guided by the summit results, WAEM WIRED in June 2007 adopted its regional workforce training framework. This framework called for advanced manufacturing training systems and related equipment to be purchased. Its cornerstone was to be an online advanced manufacturing training system. WAEM WIRED utilized an RFP process to select a vendor for this system. But the selection got tied up through a vendor complaint for which DOL/ETA required an independent review – delaying purchase until October 10, 2007. This delay caused delays in selection of training equipment to be purchased.

It was not until December 2007 that WAEM WIRED submitted its list of training equipment to be purchased (costing over \$5,000 per unit) to DOL/ETA for approval. That approval arrived Feb. 4, 2008. But, equipment related delays were only beginning. In Alabama, equipment purchases for community colleges require State Purchasing Board approval. Due to delays in getting equipment selected, then, approved by DOL/ETA, and, as shown below, approvals at the college level obtained, submissions to the Alabama board were delayed. It was not until the summer of 2008 that most of the equipment arrived on-site and was installed.

Delays between equipment selection, purchase authorization, and actual purchases resulted in price changes by vendors. When this occurred for items costing \$5,000 or more, the revised prices had to be resubmitted to DOL/ETA and others for approval – again delaying purchase and installation. The reason for these additional requests had to be explained and discussed with new leaders at multiple levels...causing more delays.

DOL/ETA grant drawdown limits required WAEM WIRED to divide equipment purchases into two rounds over two funding periods. Second round equipment costing \$5,000 or more was submitted to DOL/ETA for approval in late September 2008. Approval was received from DOL/ETA on March 6, 2009. It was not until July 16, 2009, that final approval of minor price changes were approved...equipment that was not be placed into service and available for training until late 2009.

Further complicating WAEM WIRED performance were the missing performance metrics. DOL/ETA had decided to approve WAEM WIRED's implementation plan and defer metrics approval until later. Despite continued work to develop the metrics, it was not until July 2008, two years after the implementation plan was approved, that WAEM WIRED performance metrics were accepted by DOL/ETA.

This timeframe, ironically, coincides with installation of most first round training equipment (see above). Ability to train (equipment access) and who to train (guided by metrics) were, then, limited to the final 23 months of the grant.

SECTION IV:

Promising Approaches, Processes, and Lessons Learned:

Promising approaches and processes are shown in the General Summary of Grant Activities and Success section as “Best Practices.”

The main lesson learned is that capacity building in a large rural, bi-state region takes lots of partners, lots of patience, and significant resources. While four years and \$15 million sounds like a long time and a lot of money, with 37 counties, two state systems, and numerous funded partners, it is not that long or that much.

We appreciate the support and patience of ETA staff throughout this project.

Sharing “Success Stories”

Major success stories are reflected in the General Summary of Grant Activities and Success section. Many other success stories were detailed in the quarterly reports filed during the grant period. They were also highlighted in weekly “WAEM News Blasts,” which can be found at <http://waem.tmi.ms/news.html>.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WAEM Chronology
2. WAEM Community Involvement Matrix
3. WAEM Products Worksheet
4. Health Care Service Environment and Health Care Strategies in West Alabama and East Mississippi”