

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub at TechWorks one of first projects to receive Iowa's New Strategic Infrastructure Funding

\$2.7 million for additional 3-D printers at UNI's Metal Casting Center

Cedar Valley of Iowa -- The Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub (IAMNH), at the TechWorks campus in Waterloo, is one of the first projects in the state to be awarded funds through Iowa's new Strategic Infrastructure Fund (SIF). The funding was approved by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Board at their June meeting. The project, Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub – Phase I, Additive Manufacturing Center, will receive \$2.7 million to fund additional 3-D printers for the UNI Metal Casting Center, building improvements and a design center to be operated by Hawkeye Community College and UNI.

“With this financial support from the IEDA and Iowa Innovation Council, UNI is excited and anxious to move forward with creating a full-service additive manufacturing center to meet the innovation and technology needs of Iowa companies,” said Randy Pilkington, executive director of UNI's Business and Community Services. “Thanks to support from IEDA, UNI is building on the momentum of the past 18 months of 3-D printing success to create a full-service additive manufacturing center for Iowa manufacturers. Expansion into plastics, metals and ceramics will create one of the best equipped 3-D printing facilities in North America.”

The Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub's application for the Strategic Infrastructure Fund (SIF) was completed by TechWorks staff and a team, including UNI's Randy Pilkington and Metal Casting Center director Jerry Thiel; Hawkeye Community College President Linda Allen, and vice president of Academic Affairs Jane Bradley; and TechWorks board chair Tim Hurley. The team worked with the State of Iowa and the Iowa Innovation Council's Advanced Manufacturing Workgroup to finalize the application.

The IEDA funding will help move Iowa to the forefront of technology in additive manufacturing and establish a premier center for support of its manufacturing base. This funding is a critical step in advancing the state's technology base and providing a central location for technology advancement.

“We are proud of the collaborative and diligent work of the TechWorks board and staff with our Cedar Valley partners. Their commitment to cultivate innovation in advanced and additive manufacturing in Iowa is producing immediate results,” said Steve Dust, CEO of the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber and president of the TechWorks campus. “This same kind of spirit established a legacy of manufacturing in the Cedar Valley years ago. The Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub on the TechWorks campus ensures the legacy continues.”

Jerry Thiel, director of the UNI Metal Casting Center/Additive Manufacturing, is already working with a large number of manufacturers from Iowa and across the country with the ExOne 3-D printer, purchased with IEDA funds in 2013. The Metal Casting Center provides opportunities for students to train on the most advanced machines available while gaining real world experience helping manufacturers with cost saving rapid prototyping to better compete globally.

“This funding will provide research opportunities for all three universities as well as interaction at the community college level,” said Thiel. “We look forward to the funding and its positive impact on the state of Iowa.”

History

TechWorks and the University of Northern Iowa have developed a partnership to execute a key initiative to grow prosperity through expansion of additive manufacturing technologies and launching the Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Network Hub.

Cedar Valley TechWorks is a subsidiary of the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber.

For more information on Cedar Valley TechWorks, contact Cary Darrah, general manager of Cedar Valley TechWorks Campus, at 319-232-1156 or cdarrah@cedarvalleyalliance.com, or Wes James at wjames@cedarvalleyalliance.com.