

INVESTING IN MANUFACTURING COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

LOCATION Northwest Georgia
TIMEFRAME 2013-2016
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In September 2013, the Northwest Georgia region received one of 26 U.S. Department of Commerce challenge grant awards for the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP). In Northwest Georgia, the grant is designed to fund the development of a regional advanced manufacturing strategy focused on the floorcovering industry. The Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²) led the group with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC), serving as the recipient of the award.

The NWGRC and EI² applied for the second phase of IMCP, designation as an EDA-designated manufacturing community, in April 2014. The designation is designed to accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing in communities nationwide by supporting the implementation of long-term economic development strategies to help communities attract and expand investment in the manufacturing sector and increase international trade and exports. **EDA manufacturing communities receive preference points on federally-aligned funding program applications, and exposure to additional investment opportunities.**

In May 2014, the Northwest Georgia region received the designation. One of only 12 communities in the nation to receive the designation, the Northwest Georgia community will receive support for the implementation of their advanced manufacturing strategy from eleven federal agencies with \$1.3 billion available in federal economic development assistance. This support includes a designated federal liaison at partner agencies, and recognition on a government website promoting the community's competitiveness to both foreign and domestic prospective investors.

The Northwest Georgia Regional Advanced Manufacturing Strategy illustrates best practices in attracting and expanding floor covering manufacturing by using long-term planning that targets investments in workforce training, small and medium size manufacturers, supply chain support, infrastructure, export promotion, and research – to support the region's advanced manufacturing ecosystem. The plan provides: (1) a detailed analysis of the region's competitive advantage in the floor covering industry; (2) promotes making investments in public goods to boost innovation in the industry; and (3) encourages collaboration among institutions of higher-education, the private sector and local government, which may expand the area's commercial appeal to investors.

Led by the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program is an Administration-wide initiative that directly supports the President Obama's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership, launched in 2011, and is a critical component of the U.S. Department of Commerce's "Open for Business Agenda," which prioritizes trade and investment.



Floorcovering in a Northwest Georgia facility
Photo from www.industryweek.com



Students learning manufacturing techniques
Photo courtesy of Georgia Institute of Technology