



Great Lakes Bay Manufacturers Association
7400 Bay Road, Curtiss Hall 201
University Center, MI 48710
989-964-2881

For Immediate Release
Tanya Blehm
989-964-2881
tlblehm@svsu.edu

Saginaw, MI – The Great Lakes Bay Manufacturers Association (GLBMA) is pleased to announce they have been selected to receive the regional Industry 4.0 Readiness Initiative Grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

The regional grants will help drive Industry 4.0 readiness in small and mid-sized manufacturers statewide. The GLBMA was one of the ten organizations to be awarded monies. The grant amount received is \$106,175 to study the Industry 4.0 readiness of prosperity region 5 covering Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw counties.

As a result of the grant, the GLBMA will partner with the local Resource and Economic Development Partners: Bay Future, Middle Michigan Development Corporation, Midland Business Alliance, Saginaw Future, Gladwin County EDC, Greater Gratiot Development Inc., Arenac County Economic Development Corporation, Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, Michigan Works! Small Business Development Center, Central Michigan Manufacturers Association, Saginaw Valley State University, and Saginaw ISD to develop an Industry 4.0 readiness questionnaire, informational webinars, manufacturing roundtables, and a regional Industry 4.0 event.

Serving on the regional grant team are as follows:

Jim McBryde, Middle Michigan Development Corporation

Bob Blazer, Gladwin County Economic Development Corporation

Steve Jonas, Saginaw Future

Matt Shoffner, Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center

Jennifer Geno, Saginaw Intermediate School District

Joe Kaczmarek, Michigan Works! Great Lakes Bay Region

Harry Leaver, Central Michigan Manufacturers Association

Beth Roszatycki, Michigan Small Business Development Center – Northeast & Great Lakes Bay Region

Tanya Blehm, Great Lakes Bay Manufacturers Association

Taken from the MEDC press release from April 27, 2021

The Michigan Strategic Fund today approved nearly \$2 million in grants for 10 nonprofit organizations around the state to provide regional Industry 4.0 programming and services to increase manufacturers' readiness to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies. The funding is part of an MEDC-led effort to ensure that 50 percent of Michigan manufacturers – or 6,200 businesses – are prepared to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies at some level by 2025.

MEDC issued a Request for Proposals on December 8, 2020, soliciting proposals from Michigan-based nonprofits and Michigan-based governmental entities currently engaged in economic development activities to develop and implement regional activities that encourage innovation and increase manufacturers' awareness and readiness to adopt and implement Industry 4.0 technologies.

Grants will be used for a variety of efforts to further Industry 4.0 readiness within each specific region, including technology demonstrations and pilots, outreach and education efforts, readiness assessments and awareness-building activities. These projects range in scope from establishing regional consortia and roundtables to supporting pilot projects and planning, and physical infrastructure and equipment to provide sandbox opportunities.

Industry 4.0 is defined as the convergence of digital and physical technologies, including artificial intelligence, 3D printing, robotics, augmented and virtual reality, the Cloud and cybersecurity. Approximately 42 percent of Michigan's current labor force could be negatively impacted by automation, and with MEDC's strategic focus on retaining companies and fostering high-wage skills growth in target industries such as Advanced Manufacturing, there is a strong need for a multipronged effort to ensure Michigan's small to medium-sized manufacturers adopt Industry 4.0 technologies.

The Industry 4.0 initiative aligns with MEDC's strategic focus area of advanced manufacturing and continues to extend Michigan's rich manufacturing heritage and technological know-how to develop the innovative, high-tech products of the future. With the fifth-largest advanced manufacturing workforce in the country and more than 13,000 workers employed in industries related to Industry 4.0 and automation – the most in the nation – this effort also secures continued opportunity and stability for Michigan's manufacturing workforce for years to come.