



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LAKE COUNTY CENTER FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AT LAKE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

REQUEST

\$2.8
MILLION

for the construction of the Lake County Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Lake Technical College in the City of Eustis.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY:

- The project would support workforce needs in manufacturing. The total cost of the project is \$4.6 million, with previous contributions of \$1.8 million.
- This year's request would complete the project.

BACKGROUND:

Over the last two and half years, the Lake County Economic Development staff has visited well over 800 local businesses to determine their workforce needs. Lake County is in need of trained manufacturing skilled trade employees. Specific skills in extremely high demand are welders, computer-numeric-controlled (CNC) machinists, fabricators, shop workers, and quality control and production supervisors.

With the highest concentration of manufacturing employees in all of Central Florida, Lake County's economy is especially sensitive to the needs of the manufacturing sector, which currently accounts for almost six percent of Lake County's workforce; making it Lake County's second-largest industry sector. Unfortunately, there is a serious shortage of skilled workers/technicians in the manufacturing field which is inhibiting the growth potential in the sector.

Manufacturing, machining and welding are increasingly high-tech skills requiring the postsecondary training/certifications. Welders and machinists must be able to operate robots and other automated systems that use lasers, electronic beams, highly computerized machines and complex software programs that are vital to the successful operation of the processes. More and more companies are searching for workers who are skilled in these new systems as the technology continues to evolve and as the aging workforce enters retirement.

Lake County's proposed solution to the workforce issues facing Central Florida and the State of Florida is to develop a regionally serving manufacturing incubator and advanced manufacturing and IT training program within the county. This would enable Lake County to support local manufacturing and IT businesses, and attract new manufacturing employers to the region in a way that historically has been unachievable. Such a program could be further enhanced through a partnership with Lake County's Lake Technical College (Lake Tech), which would create a seamless strategy for providing workers with state-of-the-art training, and IT companies with the tools, training and infrastructure they need to create financially stable companies.

The goal will be job creation and business development, and the skilled workforce will be ready for employment. In addition, the training provided in the facility will also provide a skilled workforce for those manufacturing and IT companies that already are established in the region but who are searching for workers. The combination of classroom and workplace learning is the ideal instructional strategy in order to prepare the 21st-century middle skilled employee. The Center has acquired a 3-D virtual CNC machining software to start training students this fall. Lake Tech currently has a waiting list for welding and machining students without space to train them. To date, the state has allocated \$1.4 million this project. The requested funding will complete the renovation and expansion of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Lake Technical College.

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