



Business

Industry groups unite to boost economic growth

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Journal staff report

The Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service is forming a new alliance with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and relocating to EDC's headquarters on Valley Street in Providence.

"We are pleased to partner with an organization as respected as RIMES to support this important industry sector," said Saul Kaplan, EDC executive director.

He pointed out that there are 51,000 manufacturing jobs in Rhode Island in a variety of sectors including jewelry, boat building, biotechnology and precision electronics.

Created in 1996, RIMES provides comprehensive manufacturing solutions to Rhode Island's small and medium-size manufacturers, helping them solve business problems and raising their level of competitiveness and profitability. Since its inception, RIMES has provided support to more than 600 Rhode Island manufacturers.

The organization offers services and access to experts, including programs aimed at helping manufacturers run more efficient factories, facility planning counseling, strategic growth services, organizational development and supply chain services.

Chief executive officer Leslie Taito said, "Across industries and around the state, on the factory floor and in the front office, RIMES works with manufacturers to identify their core issues and develop pragmatic, cost-effective solutions that produce high-impact, measurable results. We are thrilled to now offer these services in alignment with the business development programs offered by the RIEDC. By streamlining our services with the state's offerings, we hope to make it easier for Rhode Island's manufacturers to access the tools and resources they need to grow."

RIMES serves a broad range of manufacturers, including those in the electronics, textile, biotechnology, plastic products, printing service/equipment, metal casting/forming, jewelry, boat building/marine equipment, medical device manufacturing, and food production industries.

"We can create new manufacturing jobs in Rhode Island if we focus on helping companies to innovate," said Kaplan.

Manufacturers who worked with RIMES between 2000 and 2005 reported increased or retained sales totaling \$67.8 million, \$24 million spent on new investment, 1,202 jobs created or retained, improved quality in services, up to a 50-percent increase in space utilization, and productivity improvements of 10 percent to 30 percent.

Effective next month, RIMES will take up residence in the American Locomotive Works, giving the organization new visibility to EDC's clients and making it easier for Rhode Island manufacturers to gain access to the full spectrum of resources available. Additionally, members of the RIMES team will work closely with members of

the EDC's business development team.

“Our partnership with RIMES is another step towards reconfiguring the RIEDC's programs to better meet the needs of today's businesses,” said Kaplan.