

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – STOUT
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REQUEST FOR FUNDS:
STOUT TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER INSTITUTE (STTI)

ORGANIZATION: The Stout Technology Transfer Institute (STTI) is a nonprofit unit of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. STTI's mission is to promote technology transfer between Stout and Business and industry. The Institute, a division within Stout's College of Technology, Engineering, and Management (CTEM), draws on the University's extension technical resources, including expertise of faculty, staff, and students, well-equipped and diversified laboratories, and a substantial network of private sector and public partners. These resources are made accessible to inventors, entrepreneurs, and business and industry through STTI's 13 technical centers: Technology & Business Incubator, Center for Innovation and Development, Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center, EDA University Center, Risk Control Center, Stout Advanced Management Assistance, Packaging Research and Development Center, Center for Performance Improvement (CPI), Food Packaging and Technology Center, Apparel Design and Development, Construction Outreach Center, Graphic Communications, and People Process Culture.

A division within Stout's College of Technology, Engineering, and Management (CTEM), STTI has an established constituency and leadership, proven experience with the needs of a diverse clientele (ranging from startup companies to established corporations), industry input via a board of directors, and established procedures for accountability and evaluation.

DESCRIPTION: The primary goal of this proposal is to stimulate entrepreneurial activity in northwestern Wisconsin through the expansion of the highly successful research and development services offered through the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Technology Transfer Institute (STTI). Specifically, funds would target the Technology & Business Incubator and the Center for Innovation for expansion because of their focus on innovation – a focus that addresses critical needs on the homeland defense scientific front, enabling new technologies to move rapidly from development into testing and deployment. In addition, the NWMOC works with small and medium-sized manufacturers who want to improve their efforts to innovate their product lines and processes to become more competitive in the global marketplace.

Innovation and research are key drivers in the development of new technologies to support national defense and homeland security. Innovation is also the key driver that will grow America's economy. Many of the jobs lost over the past few years will never return to the U.S. Wisconsin alone has lost over 80,000 manufacturing jobs in a very short time. Job creation through innovation is critical. A recent report by the Wisconsin Technology Council stated, *"In an age when innovation is king and knowledge-based solutions are being pursued for Wisconsin's economic growth, it is essential that support for research and development conducted through various Wisconsin research institutions remains high."*

Currently, a majority of the state's academic R&D spending is channeled through the large UW Universities in the southern part of the state. In contrast, resources to promote innovation in the northern part of the state are relatively limited. UW-Stout, through STTI, is one of the few resources available to innovators and entrepreneurs in our region. By providing a healthy environment for innovation, technical assistance and incubation sites to new ventures, access to specialized equipment and facilities, and the transfer of knowledge acquired through research, STTI helps create new companies and jobs. Nearly 80% of the startups graduating from the STTI's Technology & Business Incubator have been successful. These new businesses have added new products and hundreds of high-wage jobs to the region's economy.

Established businesses also benefit from STTI's research and development services. In today's heightened homeland security environment, the Department of Defense needs efficient, productive contractors to achieve its programmatic and weapons development capabilities. In turn, defense contractors need personnel who understand the government contracting and program management systems. STTI centers aid defense contractors in procuring and managing government contracts and helps build competence and productivity in a number of ways including business plan development, business management, entrepreneurial training, and technology assistance. STTI's success warrants additional support to ensure continued development of entrepreneurs and defense contractors in the region. Additional funding would expand STTI's present services to a larger population of companies that have limited access to innovation-related services in northwest Wisconsin and enable STTI to offer an array of new products and services.

Funding in Fiscal Year 2008 will be channeled by STTI toward:

1. Expansion of R&D technology transfer services to reach a greater population:
 - Increased staffing of the three STTI centers targeting inventors, entrepreneurs, and startup companies: Technology Incubator, the Center for Innovation and Development (CID) and the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC).
 - Development of seminars and workshops addressing innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - Increased capacity of Technology & Business Incubator to incubate more companies simultaneously.
2. Offering new products and services through existing Technology Incubator and CID:
 - Rapid prototype development
 - Product ideation

TIMELINE:

The Stout Technology Transfer Institute is requesting funding for Fiscal Year 2008.

CONTACT:

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PAST FUNDING: The Stout Technology Transfer Institute has received funding for manufacturing workforce development initiatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and NIST/MEP.

BUDGET: The funding goal for FY08 is \$150,000.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Institute, founded in 1994, has a proven record of successfully managing collaborative relationships with funding sources including Federal Agencies (U.S. Department of Commerce NIST/MEP, USDA), UW System institutions, Wisconsin Technical College System, UW-Extension, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Regional Planning Commissions and the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Workforce Development, and NIST/MEP centers and affiliated organizations. One of the most active centers, NWMOC, is part of the NIST Manufacturing extension partnership and is a vital resource for manufacturers across the country.

CONTACTS WITH

CONGRESS: Senator Herb Kohl, Congressman David Obey, and Congressman Ron Kind.