



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**EDC TeCMEN RECIPIENT OF INCUMBENT WORKERS TRAINING**

*(Okaloosa County, Fla.) April 19, 2010* – The Economic Development Council serving Okaloosa County (EDC) has been awarded a grant to support training programs for its **Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network, TeCMEN**. Through the Incumbent Worker Training program, Florida's Great Northwest has awarded grants for workforce training that encourages employee retention and advancement in targeted high-growth, high-tech industries. The EDC's TeCMEN group is such a recipient.

As part of its January 2010 TeCMEN restructuring, the EDC identified the needed existing worker training requirements of its TeCMEN member companies as a component of its improved program format. The Incumbent Worker Training program targets the industries of Aviation, Aerospace, Defense and National Security; Health Sciences and Human Performance Enhancement; Renewable Energy and the Environment; Transportation, Logistics Services and International Trade; Information Technology; and Research and Engineering.

"We believe these new training opportunities will ensure greater relevancy and return on their investment for those EDC firms participating in TeCMEN," stated EDC President Larry Sassano.

TeCMEN was established by the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County in 1989 to support the county's technology-based business community and will receive \$37,129 to facilitate the training for at least 25 TeCMEN member company employees. After conducting a training needs assessment of its members, TeCMEN, in partnership with the University of West Florida, developed a two-part training program which includes Project Management for Engineering and Technical Employees and Supervisory Skills for Technical Supervisors. The Workforce Development Board for Okaloosa and Walton Counties joined as a third partner to assist with the professional certification process. "We are very excited to have the grant and even more excited by the response from our TeCMEN members. We clearly exceeded our goals and currently have over 50 employees from more than a dozen firms participating in the skills training," said Jim Breitenfeld, TeCMEN Manager.

"The TeCMEN training for incumbent workers is a true collaborative effort between the University of West Florida, the Workforce Development Board, the Economic Development Council serving Okaloosa County, and Florida's Great Northwest. The overwhelming response we received from our TeCMEN participants supports the value these training initiatives provide through improved proficiency and their ability to expand their local business presence," said Larry Sassano, EDC president. "We applaud the opportunities that our education and workforce partners have provided to our member technology, manufacturing, engineering and defense related industry clusters."

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