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**MANUFACTURER'S EDGE RECEIVES \$400K GRANT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND
LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS FOR COLORADO MANUFACTURERS**

Colorado's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center Manufacturer's Edge will utilize a \$400,000 federal grant to connect Colorado manufacturers to opportunities, resources, and services that will make domestic supply chains more efficient and resilient.

Golden, CO – August 30, 2023 – [Manufacturer's Edge](#), Colorado's [MEP Center](#), was awarded a \$400,000 federal grant to launch the Supply Chain Operations Optimization Program (SCOOP), an initiative of the [Colorado Manufacturing Network \(CMN\)](#), to help Colorado's manufacturers transform and strengthen their supply chains. The non-profit consulting group has selected Jennifer Hagan-Dier, Manufacturer's Edge's Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, to lead grant administration and the CMN; Karen Zrebiec, Manager of Quality Systems, to manage the SCOOP initiative, including ecosystem mapping, supplier scouting, and an expanded portfolio of supply chain solutions; and Ryan Burns, Owner and Principal Consultant for RBB Management Consulting, to work with Manufacturer's Edge to provide supply chain operations and optimization services to Colorado manufacturers.

"This funding makes it possible for Manufacturer's Edge to focus on assessing and addressing gaps in critical supply chains for Colorado and the nation with an expanded and more robust suite of supply chain services and solutions for Colorado's manufacturers," said Glenn Plagens, CEO for Manufacturer's Edge. "By convening the Colorado Manufacturing Network and launching SCOOP utilizing the Sustainment platform, Manufacturer's Edge will give Colorado manufacturers who join the Colorado Manufacturing Network access to buyers, suppliers, federal procurement opportunities, and support resources and services they might not otherwise have access to – all in one place. Services provided through SCOOP will reduce the cost, friction, and risk in supply chains across Colorado."

Manufacturer's Edge is one of 51 Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers that make up the [National Institutes of Standards and Technology \(NIST\) Hollings MEP National Network](#).

In June, each MEP Center was awarded \$400,000 through funding authorized by the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. Each center was challenged to develop a plan for expanding their supply chain services and to support a new national Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network (SCOIN).

“With this dedicated funding, Manufacturer’s Edge will initially focus on mapping, assessing, and connecting three critical manufacturing supply chains: Aerospace, Clean Energy, and Semiconductor while also fast-tracking the expansion of our supply chain services available to all Colorado manufacturers,” said Jennifer Hagan-Dier, Vice President and COO. “SCOOP services and solutions are specifically designed to address the unique needs of Colorado’s smaller manufacturers. We want every manufacturing company in Colorado, no matter how large or small, to have the tools to assess and manage risk and connect to new markets and customers to ensure strong and secure supply chains.”

Examples of services and solutions available through SCOOP over the next few months include:

- Opportunities for no-cost or low-cost Supply Chain Operations Optimization audits for manufacturers who join the CMN as a Verified manufacturer on Sustainment.
- Expanded matchmaking and procurement opportunities through the CMN powered by Sustainment.
- Access to no-cost supplier scouting across all 50 states and Puerto Rico through the established [NIST MEP “Supplier Scouting” platform](#).
- Tailored services to address supply chain quality and gaps in areas such as workforce, cybersecurity, access to capital, and technologies.
- Education, awareness, and resources for identifying, validating, and incorporating alternative or advanced materials.

In a statement, NIST noted that the CHIPS and Science Act funding will also help develop the [Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network \(SCOIN\)](#), a national database designed to support the coordination of supplier scouting services.

“Supply chain shortages are due to a lack of supply chain capacity. To address this issue, we are creating an information system that lays out all the suppliers across various industries. This way, we can connect small suppliers to more opportunities in the supply chain,” said Pravina Raghavan, director of the NIST MEP program.

Karen Zrebiec, manager of SCOOP, has been with Manufacturer’s Edge for more than five years and has over 19 years of experience working for and with manufacturers as a quality engineer. Zrebiec has a Master’s degree in Engineering Management from University of Colorado, a Six Sigma Master Black Belt, and holds several certifications including Certified Manager of Quality (ASQ), Certified Quality Auditor (ASQ), and Certified Lean Master (APICS). Of the supply chain program, Zrebiec said “Manufacturer’s Edge will leverage the program and funding to connect original equipment and Tier One manufacturers from across the U.S. with small and medium-sized manufacturers in Colorado.”

“Addressing supply chain challenges and promoting domestic and local sourcing is critical to growing and retaining high-skilled, well-paying manufacturing jobs in the U.S. and supporting industries critical to our domestic security,” said Dan Salvetti, Semiconductor Industry Manager for the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, adding that he believes Manufacturer’s Edge, as the MEP Center for Colorado, is uniquely qualified to work statewide with partners and industry to generate measurable impacts with the new grant. “As a part of the MEP National Network, Manufacturer’s Edge is well-connected statewide and in the region.”

For more information, visit the Manufacturer’s Edge [website](#) or email info@manufacturersedge.com.

ABOUT MANUFACTURER'S EDGE

As Colorado's official Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center, we provide onsite support, strategy, planning, training, and technical assistance to manufacturers of all sizes. Colorado's unique manufacturing landscape has given us experience across industries. Our clients drive technology development, creativity, and new products, and we work closely with them to make sure their work reaches its intended audience. Local insights, diverse experience, and true dedication to providing manufacturers support – use the support we provide to empower your decisions as you continue to grow and improve the manufacturing landscape.

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