



E3: Economy, Energy, and Environment

By Christina Lorino Schutt

Federal funds are available to assist manufacturers in promoting sustainability initiatives through Alabama's E3 program. E3 – short for Economy, Energy, and Environment – is a collaboration among federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership of the Department of Commerce, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Energy, aimed at promoting and supporting sustainability in manufacturing. Through the E3 initiative, these agencies coordinate with state and local partners to offer manufacturers customized, hands-on assessments of production processes aimed at reducing energy consumption, minimizing their carbon footprint, preventing pollution, increasing productivity, providing grant and loan-seeking advice, and promoting sustainability. In addition to technical assessments, E3's pool of existing resources is leveraged to provide training and recommendations to assist manufacturers in reducing costs, material and energy use, as well as their overall environmental impact.

Alabama's E3 program, managed by the Alabama Technology Network, is one of the first E3 pilot programs in the country. The E3 service providers in Alabama are the Alabama Industrial Assessment Center (AIAC), the WRATT Foundation, and the Alabama Technology Network (ATN). Alabama's E3 program is comprehensive and includes four general components:

1. Lean, energy, and environmental assessments
2. Lean and green implementation projects based on the results of the assessments
3. Two levels of "Green" skills training
4. Counseling and assistance from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Small Business Development Centers to help eligible companies access affordable funding and financing to support new systems and equipment necessary to reduce energy and reduce costs

These services are provided through a combination of grant funds and client fees, with clients generally being asked to contribute one-third of the cost of services. Alabama's E3 partners have been working with fifteen automotive supply manufacturers in Huntsville, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa and are looking to expand the initiative's scope.

For more information regarding the program or how to apply, please contact Christina Lorino Schutt at 205.521-8920 or via email at cschutt@babbc.com. You may also contact ATN directly by contacting LaVada Varner at 205-856-8005 or via email at lvarner@atn.org or Dana Stone at 205-943-4806 or via email at dstone@atn.org. For AIAC, an application is available online at <http://iac.ua.edu/application.html>, and you should indicate "I'm interested in the E3 program" in the "Other Information" box on the application.

continued on page 2

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