

Sun Journal

Project aims to bolster manufacturing

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PORTLAND - Maine manufacturers facing challenges in international competition and lagging economic conditions can access a new Maine program to help them strengthen their market position. The Maine Small Business Development Centers of Portland has designed a 10-week program, called "The Successful Business Plan: Your Fast Track to the Next Level," to target small manufacturers who need to respond to these pressures quickly. The program helps manufacturers revise their strategic direction, plan growth, and establish priorities. The sessions begin March 29 and conclude in June.

The Maine SBDC program will assist up to 20 small manufacturers. Katherine Arno, Maine SBDC director of training and communications, says the project will use a blended training approach, combining on-site and online training modules that meet participants' need for flexibility and convenience. Participating manufacturers will also have opportunities to meet and learn from successful Maine manufacturers who have utilized a redefining business plan to launch, significantly grow, and adjust to market conditions. Maine SBDC certified business counselors will provide up to 15 hours of one-on-one business counseling and will work with participants to guide them through each phase of the business plan writing.

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership is offering, at no charge to each company that graduates from the 10-week course, up to eight hours of MEP services. These services may include operational/lean assessment, a quality management system review, a plant layout review and other services. Maine SBDC is working with the Maine MEP to identify manufacturers for the project.

Because it is grant-funded, the cost to participating manufacturers is only \$100. To register, or for more information, call 1-800-679-7232, or visit www.mainesbdc.org.