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## **NEWS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Local Manufacturers Seek Skilled Labor**

*SOREDI Partners to Survey Industry Needs*

**Medford, OR. – November 29, 2016**

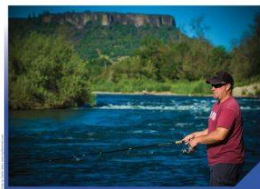
In efforts to respond to a growing need among local manufacturers for skilled labor, Rogue Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (RAMP), a consortium of numerous local businesses, in partnership with the Rogue Workforce Partnership (RWP) and Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (SOREDI), is requesting targeted information from local manufacturers.

A 10-minute/10-question online survey has been created with input from RAMP. The survey was sent out via e-mail on November 28, to manufacturing companies in the two-county region in order to determine the highest-value skills and certifications they seek in building up their workforce. Given a large percentage of local manufacturers are small and complete contact information is not available for each, RAMP is strongly encouraging local manufacturers to access the survey online here: [http://bit.ly/RAMP\\_Survey](http://bit.ly/RAMP_Survey). Companies are also asked to inform their peers.

SOREDI has long understood that some of the region's highest paying jobs are offered in the Advanced Manufacturing sector. At the same time, these manufacturing companies continue to encounter difficulty in finding and hiring local workers to fill jobs that require specialized technical ability or certification. Determining precisely which certifications are most needed, will allow certification programs to be developed and offered locally, in order to fill this need.



*CareStream*



*Quantum Innovations*



*Rogue Valley Microdevices*

RAMP consists of 13 local manufacturing sector leaders, RWP, SOREDI and Rogue Community College. Mike Donnelly of CareStream, Jessica Gomez of Rogue Valley MicroDevices and Norm Kester of Quantum Innovations have been instrumental in leading the effort. Nationally-renowned manufacturing workforce consultant, Audrey Theis, has been assisting RAMP in this work. The workforce needs survey was developed under the advisement of RAMP participants' direct experience in their manufacturing businesses. Theis is helping the group focus and collaborate to bring the regional partnership between industry and education/training to a higher level of effectiveness. The overarching goal of the project is to fill the talent pipeline and meet the Advanced Manufacturing industry's demand for skilled workers.



*Audrey Theis*

Colleen Padilla, SOREDI's Executive Director says, "This collaboration is an investment in our local companies and their prosperity long term....the intent is to align skills training and certification programs with local demand. We have hundreds of small manufacturers locally. We desperately need to catalog their needs so that we can deliver training to the workforce they need."

The region's manufacturing sector is a vital economic engine, employing skilled workers, often exporting goods outside our region and importing dollars that go directly into higher-than-average-pay jobs and tax-based support for our communities. This activity often goes unnoticed. Further, more businesses are considered part of the manufacturing sector than might be expected.

Manufacturers are urged to participate and collaborate with RAMP by taking the 10-minute survey, no later than January 15, 2017. A direct link to the survey is found here: [http://bit.ly/RAMP\\_Survey](http://bit.ly/RAMP_Survey).

It is RAMP's goal that the broadest possible range of industries are reached in the manufacturing sector. When results of the survey have been tabulated, a report will be generated and shared with local workforce development partners and educational institutions. Questions about the survey and requests for a copy of the final report when it is available may be directed to Aurora King at the Rogue Workforce Partnership. King can be reached by calling 541-842-2518 or by e-mailing [AuroraK@rogueworkforce.org](mailto:AuroraK@rogueworkforce.org).

**About Audrey Theis:** Dr. Theis holds a Ph.D. in Educational Policy, Planning and Administration from the University of Maryland, College Park, an M.S. in Curriculum from The Johns Hopkins University and an M.Ed. in Instruction and Supervision from the University of Pittsburgh. Her primary fields of interest and expertise include development and application of industry-recognized standards in education and training program, with a focus on manufacturing/construction and emerging "green" occupations; filling the skilled worker

shortage through targeted career technical training and industrial apprenticeships; and linking economic and workforce development initiatives at the state and local levels.

**About SOREDI:** SOREDI is a private, membership-based, non-profit organization, governed by a board of directors. Its seven-person staff is charged with local business expansion and new business recruitment efforts, financial assistance to start-up companies through its business loan fund, and management of Enterprise Zones in Jackson and Josephine Counties. The agency was formed as a regional economic development agency in 1987. Learn more at <http://www.soredi.org>.