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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Turning the Corner: Manufacturers' Forecast Reveals Growing Optimism**

**Cleveland, Ohio, Monday, January 10, 2011** –WIRE-Net's 1st quarter 2011 manufacturing outlook survey gives reasons for optimism for the year ahead. WIRE-Net surveyed 2538 manufacturing executives and got responses from 187 manufacturing firms in the networks of WIRE-Net and GLWN.

WIRE-Net's first Manufacturing Outlook survey of 2011 finds reason for optimism in manufacturer's projections as over half project adding new employees in 2011, and 66% project sales increases of 5% or more in the coming year.

187 companies responded to the survey, conducted by WIRE-Net and GLWN. A majority reported both positive hiring experience in 2010, and optimistic hiring projections for 2011. According to John Colm, WIRE-Net's president and executive director, "51% of our manufacturing leaders reported adding people in 2010, compared to just 7% in the middle of 2009. Additionally, 56% project adding more workers in 2011." Colm noted that 66% believe 2011 will be a better year for profits than in 2010, whereas just 6% believed so in mid-2009.

As for priorities, manufacturers report that "Growing Sales" remains the most critical issue, but finding appropriately skilled workers is creeping back in to the equation. 42% of respondents said sales growth was their top issue (it was 68% in August 2009), and 20% said labor skills and availability was the top issue, compared to just 8% in August 2009. Colm noted that almost 70% of the firms had sales below \$11 million. "These small and midsized firms have the toughest time finding the right talent," Colm said. "Its tough competing with bigger firms, and finding good talent also requires having good recruitment and assessment procedures in place. Small firms are challenged on both fronts."

The profit picture for 2010 was better for 66%, compared to just 6% of respondents in 2009.

Colm said that WIRE-Net is responding to these issues by expanding and developing two market development initiatives to help companies grow their sales by diversifying into new growing or emerging markets. "In 2007, we launched our Global Wind Network, GLWN, to connect North American firms to business opportunities in the wind industry. In 2010, working with our colleagues at MAGNET, we are developing the New Markets Initiative to develop pathways to new markets for more companies," Colm said. "We are talking now to customers in the medical manufacturing, solar energy, water and aerospace markets to identify market segments where they have 'pain in their supply chain' and where there may be opportunities for domestic manufacturers."

Ed Weston, WIRE-Net's Director of the GLWN, said that his team is also undertaking a market expansion effort. "The recession led to a stall in new wind farm development in 2009-2010," Weston said, "yet developments that were already in the pipeline were moving forward and there is also significant repair and remanufacture business developing as installed turbines come out of warranty." Weston said that GLWN saw an opportunity to help more manufacturing and construction firms identify new business opportunities." GLWN began delivering its technical workshops on the repair, maintenance, construction and installation side of the wind business late in 2010, and is now expanding its programs into other states, including West Virginia, Montana, Illinois and Indiana. GLWN is working in partnership with the Blue Green Alliance Foundation and each of the state's Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP) to help domestic manufacturers learn about the requirements of the wind market.

#### **About WIRE-Net and GLWN:**

**WIRE-Net** is a membership based, non-profit economic development organization that provides services to manufacturing leaders to strengthen their businesses, create healthy communities and fuel economic growth. For information, visit [www.wire-net.org](http://www.wire-net.org)

**GLWN** is WIRE-Net's Global Wind Network, established in 2007. GLWN is organized to increase the domestic content of wind turbines installed in North America, and has over 1400 companies registered. GLWN delivers supply chain and business development services to companies across North America. For information, visit [www.glwn.org](http://www.glwn.org)

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