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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WIRE-Net's Work to Build a New Manufacturing Economy Receives \$350,000 Grant from Cleveland Foundation**

**Cleveland, Ohio, Wednesday, March 30, 2011** –WIRE-Net is pleased to be the recipient of an Economic Transformation grant announced by the Cleveland Foundation Board of Trustees.

WIRE-Net received funding in the amount of \$350,000 for the second year of a three year initiative to create conditions for manufacturing expansion into new markets in Northeast Ohio. The Initiative will:

- Provide practical tools and methods to help manufacturers identify, plan and make connections to emerging markets,
- Fuel new business connections to wind industry-related markets and strengthen Cleveland's profile as a center for wind manufacturing, and
- Stimulate public investment to support industrial site redevelopment, business expansion and improvements in infrastructure in blighted industrial districts in Cleveland.

Tom Schumann, WIRE-Net Board Chair and general manager at Kitzel & Sons, Inc., is very proud to be a community partner with the Cleveland Foundation. "We appreciate our dynamic partnership with the Cleveland Foundation. Together we are clearing a pathway that will lead to a brighter future for Cleveland manufacturing. Funding this proposal will move our region closer to meeting our goal for achieving the global recognition that supports and attracts new investment in our region as a world-class center for clean, advanced manufacturing and supply chain growth." He believes that WIRE-Net's work aligns well with the foundation's priorities in Innovation, Industry Clusters, Business Growth, Healthy Core City, and Globalization. Schumann noted that WIRE-Net also actively collaborated on five infrastructure and redevelopment sites accounting for \$42 million in investment in the City of Cleveland that created 420 jobs over a 3 year period.

WIRE-Net executive director, John Colm, said that WIRE-Net is proactively 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 GLWN, our Global Wind Network, to connect North American firms to business opportunities in the wind industry. Working with our colleagues at MAGNET, we are now implementing 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.”

This past week, 80 manufacturers attended a half day workshop to learn from several Equipment Manufacturers where they have “pains in the chain”. There will be a series of eight more workshops to help guide manufacturers through their own strategic thinking and planning for new technology and innovation. Any manufacturing-related company can access a short assessment to connect to the WIRE-Net robust database that will serve as matchmaker for suppliers by logging on to <http://data.wire-net.org>.

WIRE-Net and MAGNET will continue planning events for suppliers to learn about new growth opportunities. At a recent GE Supplier Fair for their Lighting and Appliances divisions, 90 leaders from 62 firms participated and received \$3 million in new business contracts.

Ed Weston, WIRE-Net’s Director of GLWN, said that his team is also undertaking a market expansion effort. 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 BlueGreen Alliance Foundation and each of the state’s Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP) to help domestic manufacturers learn about the requirements of the wind market. This July they will be hosting an International Wind Conference & Exhibition at the Cleveland Convention Center that will focus on growing business opportunities for American companies through the wind industry. Industry experts will be speaking on public policy, manufacturing competitiveness, new technologies, new markets like off-shore wind, and wind farm construction.

#### **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).

**About GLWN™:** The mission of GLWN is to increase the domestic content of North America's wind turbines and to localize new business opportunities in the growing wind industry. GLWN works with wind turbine OEMs and developers, identifies critical needs, and connects manufacturers and suppliers with new customers. Launched in 2007 as an initiative of WIRE-Net, GLWN is a leading online industry resource with over 1,600 suppliers. For information about GLWN, visit [www.glwn.org](http://www.glwn.org).

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