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WIRE-Net Celebrates 23rd Annual Meeting Manufacturing Optimism – Turning the Corner

Cleveland, Ohio, Wednesday, June 22, 2011 – Speaking in front of a crowd of 250 enthusiastic manufacturing-related companies and community supporters at Windows on the River, WIRE-Net Board Chairman Tom Schumann, pointed out that Cleveland's economy is on the rebound, thanks to manufacturing. Schumann thanked the dedicated team of board, staff, and members for their hard work and many accomplishments that continue to strengthen manufacturing and fuel economic growth in the region.

The Keynote address was delivered by Cuyahoga County Executive, Ed FitzGerald, who spoke about working to eliminate job entitlement and corruption in Cuyahoga County, his Economic Development Strategy for the county especially as it pertains to manufacturing, and his thoughts on Regionalism.

Three new members were appointed to the board of directors and will serve a two-year term. Larry Fulton, President for LEFCO Industries, Robert Carpenter, Sr. VP at PNC Bank, and Mary Beth Holdford, External Communications Manager for ArcelorMittal. Membership voted for the following officers for the 2011-2012 year: Chairman – Thomas Schumann, General Manager, Kitzel & Sons; Vice Chairman – Mark Dawson, President, Cleveland Steel Tool; Treasurer – Larry Fulton, President, LEFCO Industries; and Secretary – Charles Mintz, former President, Superior Tool.

Since 1990, WIRE-Net has recognized manufacturing leaders who demonstrate through their work and results, their commitment to WIRE-Net's mission. WIRE-Net's Mission Builders Award winners are selected for their role in leading their company's efforts to strengthening manufacturing in Northeast Ohio while supporting WIRE-Net's mission to create healthy communities and fuel economic growth.

Receiving WIRE-Net's top award were Erin Hlavin from Thogus Products Co., Martin Eble and Bob Searles from Flow Polymers LLC, and Manny Glynias and John Poulos from Eaton Bay Investments and Cleveland Specialty Products. Eaton Bay and CSP were honored for demonstrating commitment to Cleveland's urban core, Flow Polymers was honored for demonstrating a commitment to innovation and growth, and Thogus was honored for demonstrating a commitment to youth workforce development.

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. 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 GLWN to connect North American firms to business opportunities in the wind industry. Starting 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, aerospace and other markets to identify market segments where they have 'pain in their supply chain' and where there may be opportunities for domestic manufacturers."

For WIRE-Net, turning the corner in 2010 also meant: rolling out the plan for the New Max Hayes Career and Technical education program with 8th grade recruitment for summer camp orientation; signed national wind manufacturing partnerships with AWEA and BGA Foundation; supporting five Infrastructure and Redevelopment projects for a total Cleveland investment of \$42 million that will save or create 420 jobs over 3 years; CIRI delivered service interventions to 22 firms where jobs were at risk or new jobs could be added impacting over 1900 direct jobs; and joined a five-year workforce partnership led by Towards Employment to address employer needs for entry-level manufacturing workers

The WIRE-Net 2010 annual report citing accomplishments in six programmatic areas can be found on the organization's website at http://www.wire-net.org/pdfs/wn_10anrpt.pdf .

WIRE-Net has six audacious goals in it's 2011-2012 strategic plan, including Creating Pathways to New and Emerging Markets, Building the Talent Pipeline, Leveraging CIRI Relationships, Redeveloping NEO's Urban Centers, Growing Our Membership and Building Organizational Capacity and Funding.

The 23rd WIRE-Net Annual Meeting was sponsored by MAGNET, Midwest Box/Walford Properties, Charter One Bank, JRN Group, Equipment Merchants International, EA Group, and Lorain National Bank.

About WIRE-Net:

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 To learn how your company can become a member or take part in learning opportunities, contact Mark Pinto at mpinto@wire-net.org. Future events include Nordson Plant Tour on June 30, GLWN Wind Summit at Cleveland Public Auditorium July 13 & 14, and Matt Hlavin of Thogus speaking September 15 as first speaker for the WIRE-Net Lunch n Learn Speaker Series.

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