
Targeted support attracts businesses

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Are you considering a business move or a second plant? Companies setting up shop in the Tri-Cities can benefit from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Targeted Support Program. This new program is a part of the laboratory's technology transfer programs and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Here's how it works: For any technology-based or manufacturing firm that announced plans to locate in the Tri-Cities area, the laboratory will offer the equivalent of three person-hours of support for each permanent, full-time-equivalent, family-wage job (a job that pays at least \$26,000 a year).

The technical support can take many forms: technical services, environmental and energy management consultation, product studies, access to special equipment and facilities, and cooperative research. The range and nature of support are identified on a case-by-case basis. A simple agreement between the laboratory and each participating firm describes the specific terms and conditions.

Support services are tailored to specific business needs. Laboratory researchers can assist in developing a product and building a prototype, using - or perhaps creating - advanced materials to meet particular needs. The laboratory and its many partners also can help with factory modernization, scientific peer review, or testing a new product. Through the support program, a company can access the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory and its advanced computing and analysis resources.

Outreach for the Targeted Support Program is accomplished by the Tri-City Industrial Development Council (TRIDEC), the cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland, and the Benton, Kennewick, and Pasco port districts. This teamwork is paying off; the Targeted Support Program and the resources behind it have helped attract two firms to the Tri-Cities: Oremet and Precision Castparts.

Oremet cited the Targeted Support Program as a deciding factor in its decision to build a new plant in the Horn Rapids area. The new facility will produce titanium and is expected to employ 50 to 80 people initially. The titanium will be shipped to a variety of manufacturers who will use it in parts built for the aerospace and prosthetics industries and in sports items such as golf club heads. The Oregon-based Oremet, also known as the Oregon Metallurgical Corp., announced its decision in May.

The Targeted Support Program also is appealing to Precision Castparts, of Portland. In December, the company announced its plans to build metal castings finishing plant in Richland. Up to 225 hours of access to specialized expertise, facilities, and equipment (three for each of 75 projected local jobs) will be available to Precision Castparts through the program. This resource was a strong incentive for choosing a Tri-Cities location.

To find out more about the Targeted Support program and how a company can take advantage of it, contact Gary Spanner at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, 372-4296.