



The Buffalo Niagara Advanced Manufacturing Institute to be supported by \$45 million

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The Buffalo Niagara Advanced Manufacturing Institute will be supported by \$45 million in state funds from governor Andrew Cuomo's "Buffalo Billion" pledge, but operating group EWI said the goal is self-sufficiency by five years.

The institute will be modeled on nonprofit EWI's flagship Columbus operation, which employs more than 140 people in a 130,000 s/f facility, funded mostly through projects with industrial partners. EWI officials said the Columbus operation funds itself without government support.

The Buffalo facility will be positioned as a service-provider to local companies, large and small, with the end-goal of ushering in a new era of manufacturing innovation and competitiveness in Western New York

It will also have a substantial partner in the University at Buffalo, seeking to develop and commercialize expertise from the university's faculty and staff.

"Let's revive that manufacturing legacy that we've lived with here for such a long period of time," said Martin Berardi, chair of the "Buffalo Billion" Advanced Manufacturing Working Group and VP of Moog Inc.

EWI is currently searching for an executive director to run the institute.

The following details are about the endeavor:

- * The \$45 million allocation, which will fund startup costs for the institute and initial operating funds, and is in addition to an \$8 million state grant funding the purchase of 847 Main St., the former headquarters of SmartPill Corp.

- * "The 847 Main St. building was initially billed as a temporary home for the institute, but it now seems clear it will support the institute for at least five years," said Howard Zemsky, co-chair of the Western New York Regional Economic Council which authored the "Buffalo Billion" plan and is overseeing its rollout.

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Inc., which operates as a broad administrator for the campus, will own the building and has reached an agreement with the state to host EWI there.

- * The building is scheduled to formally change hands in April, and a phased roll-out of operations will take place throughout the rest of 2014. About five employees will make up the initial footprint of the institute - but the plans are to grow along with the programs.

- * Initial industrial partners will include Buffalo-based Praxair Inc., Tonawanda-based Sherex Fastening Solutions, Buffalo-based InVentures Group and Lancaster-based Jiffy-tite.

Connections with industry are the crux of the entire model "as the Columbus operation is funded about 8 percent by membership packages and the rest by projects with various companies.

The Buffalo offerings will be comparable, with memberships and proprietary projects aimed at individual partners, both big and small, toward the goal of improving operations for individual

companies and thus the broader manufacturing environment.

"The goal is to create something special nationally, not just something you can find in every other manufacturing city in the U.S.," said Chris Conrardy, EWI's chief technical officer and vice president for technology and innovation.

UB - an integral partner in most of the growing list of "Buffalo Billion" projects - is again expected to be a major contributor. In this case, it will collaborate on everything from finding partners to writing grants to collaborating on training and more.

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