

# UP-RIMSA Baraga Group Addresses Workforce Development Needs of UP Manufacturers

training providers, economic development organizations and Michigan Works! agencies to address the workforce issues.

The Upper Peninsula Regional Industrial Manufacturing Skills Alliance (UP-RIMSA) is one of the thirty-two MIRSAs across the state. Its mission is to develop a highly qualified labor pool to meet the current and future needs of the Upper Peninsula's industrial manufacturers and develop industry-specific solutions through partnerships with education, legislators and other industries.

UP-RIMSA consists of several locally focused groups working together across the UP. One of the very successful groups is based in Baraga County and includes leadership from representatives of Terex Handlers, L'Anse Manufacturing and Pettibone, to name a few. This group is currently reaching out to additional private sector leaders in the area to join the cause and anticipates branching out geographically to include Houghton and Keweenaw Counties where possible in the future.

Recent surveys indicate both industry growth and 40% retirement of the current workforce by 2012, as a concern in the future. Consequently, nearly 9,000 new skilled workers will be needed during the next seven years to maintain the industrial manufacturing companies of the Upper Peninsula. Based on projected enrollments in educational institutions and skilled trades, there will be a shortfall of more than 5,000 workers by 2012.

The role of UP-RIMSA and its sub-groups is to act as a source for industry data regarding future trends and skill needs, collaborate with key stake-

holders, create strategies and funding streams for implementing solutions, analyze the effectiveness of the RSAs solutions, support Workforce Development Boards (Michigan Works!) and implement development grants from the Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

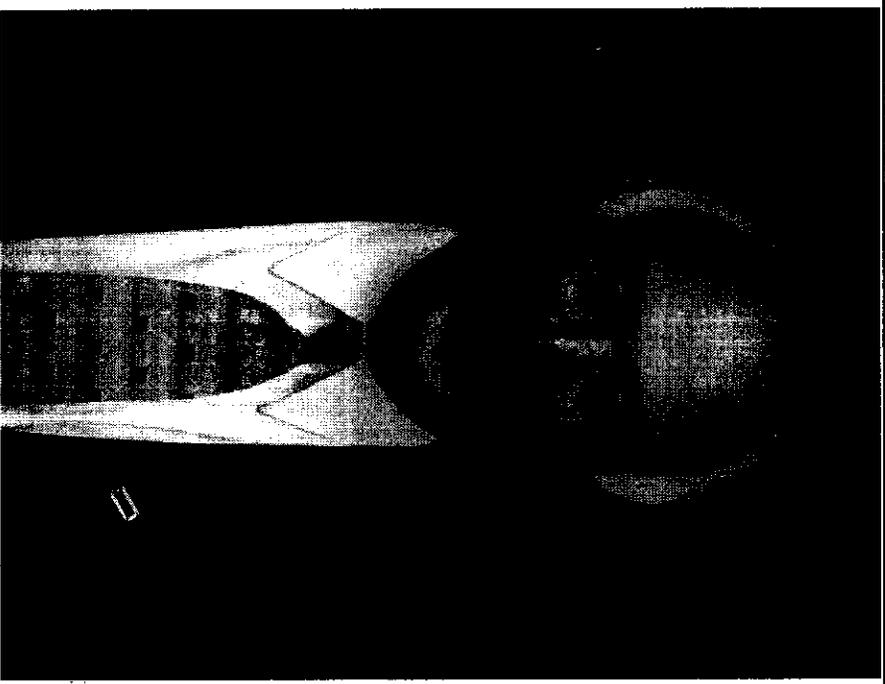
The current projected results of UP-RIMSAs efforts include: an increased applicant pool of potential workers, improvements in the skills of current and potential workers, improved business performance which increases the competitiveness of the industry, attraction and retention of other employers in the industry and of supplier firms to the region, and more jobs and better opportunity for worker advancement.

**Manufacturing Myths:** There are no manufacturing jobs in the UP; Manufacturing jobs are prone to be moved overseas; There is no money to be made in manufacturing.

**Manufacturing Facts:** During the next five years, manufacturing firms in the UP anticipate 2,100 openings for production and maintenance workers; Manufacturing accounts for 22.5% of the 139,000 jobs in the region; Wages provided usually exceed the average salary for all industries in the UP; Growth in the sector is advancing at a rate that exceeds the national average.

A region-wide campaign that educates and recruits new workers is required. The Upper Peninsula Regional Industrial Manufacturing Skills Alliance is in the process of recruiting and educating the local population. Outreach and education efforts have already begun, as part of this collaboration between manufacturers and Michigan Works!.

For more information about Michigan Regional Skill Alliances, visit [www.michigan.gov/rsa](http://www.michigan.gov/rsa), or for specifics on the Baraga Group, contact Dan Mc-



*(Photo Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Deputy)*  
**Will Carne**  
**President Michigan Works! The Job Force Board**

The Michigan Regional Skills Alliance (MIRSA) initiative provides a framework to organize the workforce development needs of the Michigan business community by industry clusters. MIRSAs are business-driven, business-focused partnerships that address workforce issues in a specific region and industry sector. The primary goal of the initiative is to provide Michigan businesses with a highly skilled workforce and connect Michigan citizens to good jobs with opportunities for career advancement.

Governor Jennifer Granholm announced the MIRSA initiative in her State of the State address in January of 2004. Grants are offered to evaluate local labor market information, identify skills