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Governor
Deval Patrick in Governor's Office

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Patrick-Murray Administration Highlights Growth in Robotics Sector, Manufacturing**iRobot to receive a \$242,514 Workforce Training Fund grant**

BOSTON - Tuesday, July 15, 2008 - Governor Deval Patrick met with members of the Massachusetts Robotics Cluster Advisory Board today to discuss opportunities to help grow the Commonwealth's local robotics industry.

"Extraordinary advances are happening in the robotics industry, and today's discussion will help us foster this critical and burgeoning sector of our economy," Governor Patrick said at the cluster meeting at the iRobot Corporation in Bedford. "We have the opportunity to help robotics emerge as have other high-tech industries, such as the life sciences and clean energy sectors, which thrive on our unique concentration of educational resources, innovative capacity and entrepreneurial spirit."

Massachusetts is poised to become an international leader in robotics innovation. More than 2,500 people are currently employed in the Massachusetts robotics sector and annual sales exceed \$942 million, more than half of that consisting of government contracts. The market could continue to grow as the military defense and public safety market continues to surge. Marine robotics and surgical robot systems are also seeing an upward trend.

Massachusetts ranks first in the Milken Institute's "2008 State Technology and Science Index," earning the best position of any state to achieve high-quality economic growth thanks to its vast array of technology and science assets, such as world-class research institutions, cutting-edge firms and its ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Highlighting this identified strength in the knowledge-based economy will assist the Commonwealth in retaining cutting-edge firms and attracting high-tech companies from around the world.

Today's discussion comes as Northeastern University released its report, "Staying Power: The Future of Manufacturing in Massachusetts," which highlights the Commonwealth's success in transitioning the state's manufacturing industry into the 21st Century global economy focused on technology-intensive and high value-added products.

"Manufacturing continues to be a critical sector of our economy that provides good jobs and good wages to 300,000 people in the Commonwealth," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray. "Whether it is high tech, life sciences, plastics, or paper, we are committed to seeing manufacturing succeed in Massachusetts and are working hard to support this important industry."

The Governor also announced today that Bedford-based iRobot will receive a \$242,514 Workforce Training Fund grant, which will train 130 employees in Lean Management concepts and assist in facilitating the incorporation of Lean tools and culture. Workers will complete the training using several tools such as Lean Leadership, Policy Development, Value Stream Mapping, and Standardized Work and Pokayoke. Additional training includes Team Building, Project Planning and Management Coaching, delivering performance reviews, interview skills as well as presentation skills to help team members better communicate.

The Workforce Training Fund (WTF), administered by the Department of Workforce Development, under the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, provides business and labor organizations with matching grants of up to \$250,000 or more in certain cases to finance incumbent worker training. Statewide, 75 Workforce Training Fund grants totaling \$6.7M will help train 6,763 workers.

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