MSU launches IACMI with ribbon cutting and tours

Michigan State hosted local students, dignitaries and researchers this morning for the official ribbon cutting and tours launching the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation, or IACMI, in Detroit's Corktown.

The institute is a partnership of industry, universities, national laboratories and federal, state and local governments exploring ways to use composite materials to make automobiles lighter and more fuel-efficient. This partnership between the government, private sector, and research universities will lead to innovation across the auto industry – a vital part of Michigan’s economy.

MSU is leading the light- and heavy duty-vehicle component of the institute, a 150-member consortium funded by a more than $70 million commitment over five years from the U.S. Department of Energy. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is providing an additional $17.5 million.

“Michigan State has long set the standard for research in the field of composite materials, and we are proud to be a part of this national endeavor,” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. “The advancement of composite-material research is particularly important in the state of Michigan. These materials are crucial to the auto industry, which continues to look for ways to manufacture vehicles that are fuel-efficient and safe.”

The ribbon cutting falls on National Manufacturing Day, a celebration of modern manufacturing meant to inspire the next generation of manufacturers, and caps off many months of planning and development since the Department of Energy’s Advanced Manufacturing Office first tapped IACMI in a heavily competitive national solicitation.

MSU is one of IACMI’s core partners, chosen to lead the large-scale manufacturing facility in 2015. IACMI is co-located with LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow – in a repurposed, formerly abandoned facility in historic Corktown.

MSU is investing in state-of-the-art composites processing equipment to create a collaboration center unrivaled in the U.S. Investments from the two Institutes in the Corktown facility are expected to near $50 million, including cost sharing from equipment manufacturers and about $2 million in new equipment provided by Oak Ridge National Laboratory for IACMI.
LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies. It implements education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of Manufacturing USA, and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research. Both LIFT and IACMI are Manufacturing USA institutes.

"With the opening of MSU’s facility in Detroit’s Corktown, Michigan State is a full partner with IACMI, the Department of Energy, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, OEMs, Tier 1 and other contributors in inventing the automobile of the future," said MSU College of Engineering Dean Leo Kempel. "Light-weighting is essential for improving fuel economy while maintaining performance. Together with IACMI and our partners, we envision a future automobile with energy efficiency not available today but essential to maintaining the global leadership of the Michigan automobile industry."

MSU, with more than 25 years of research excellence in the field of composite materials, serves as the primary academic partner in the state and will work closely with key industry and research partners like BASF, Dow Chemical Company, Ford Motor Co. and Volkswagen.

Lawrence T. Drzal, MSU University Distinguished Professor in Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, is the director of the Vehicle Technical Application Area at IACMI. He is also the director of MSU's Composite Materials and Structures Center.

For more information on IACMI, visit http://iacmi.org.