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## Early Warning Network Program Achieves High Impact

"Statistics, compiled from actual participant surveys, show that the Early Warning Network Program started last year by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, has successfully identified 29 at-risk companies, assessed the reasons for their at-risk status and brought together state and local community resources to help avert business closings and layoffs," said Missouri Enterprise President Mary Davis.

"We are very happy with the program's first year's results and that the Division has decided to renew the program and expand it to six Workforce Investment Act Regions," Davis continued.

Last year, Missouri Enterprise managed the program in coordination with

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Business Retention Committees in Southwest Missouri, Northwest Missouri and the Kansas City Metro Area.

This year the program will also cover West Central Missouri, St. Charles County and Southeast Missouri.

Counties covered in the West Central Region are Chariton, Carroll, Lafayette, Saline, Johnson, Pettis, Henry, Benton, St. Clair, Hickory, Vernon, Bates and Cedar.

In the Southeast Region, Iron, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Perry, Madison, Bollinger, Scott, Cape Girardeau, Stoddard, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties are included.

It also covers all of St. Charles County.

Counties in the Northwest region that will continue to be included are Atchison, Holt, Andrew, Buchanan, Nodaway, Worth, Gentry, Dekalb, Clinton, Harrison, Davies, Caldwell, Mercer, Grundy, Livingston, Putnam, Sullivan and Linn.

In the Kansas City Metro Area, Platte, Clay, Ray, Jackson and Cass counties continue to be included.

And, in the Southwest, businesses in Barton, Dade, Jasper, Lawrence, Newton, Barry and McDonald will continue to be eligible.

Modeled after a very successful program pioneered by the Steel Valley Authority in Pennsylvania, the

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### Early Warning Network Results - Year One

The following results were compiled from actual participant surveys and were not derived from economic models.

Sales Increased -----	\$3,454,000
Sales Retained-----	\$7,208,000
Cost Savings-----	\$8,371,392
Investment in Equipment, Software or Other Business Areas-----	\$1,504,900
Investment in Workforce Employment -----	\$265,300
Jobs Created-----	47.5
Jobs Retained-----	76

**Early Warning Network**

Missouri program's impressive first year results are shown in the table on page one.

In addition to the assessment program, Missouri Enterprise will continue to work closely with the WIB's Business Retention Teams to target at-risk companies for assistance, including business and technical training and hands-on implementation assistance so they can become more competitive and profitable and support local economic growth rather suffer closure and job losses.

Companies in any of the six Workforce Investment Act Regions that would like to participate in the program should contact their local Workforce Investment

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Board Business Retention Coordinator. They are: Northwest Region / Lisa Hostetler at 660-359-3622 ext 15; West Central / Larry Hightower at 660-827-3722; Kansas City Metro / Karen Tannen at 816-471-2330 ext 272; Southeast / Scott Sattler at 573-334-0990 ext 261; St. Charles County / Don Holt at 636-278-1360; Southwest / Gary Box at 417-629-3000; or their local Missouri Enterprise Area Business Manager at 800-956-2682.

Missouri Enterprise Vice President of Continuous Improvement Dusty Cruise will lead the Missouri Enterprise team participating in the Early Warning Network Program.

**Dusty Cruise, Missouri Enterprise Vice President / Continuous Improvement**

In nearly 30 years in manufacturing, Dusty has held a variety of positions encompassing manufacturing engineering, operations management, process improvement, plant engineering, facility layout, quality management, tool and fixture design, remanufacturing, production planning and project management.



Dusty also has a proven track record in a variety of "Lean Enterprise" implementation and training projects including development of current and future state value stream maps and facilitating Kaizen events.

Prior to joining Missouri Enterprise, Dusty was employed by Springfield Remanufacturing Corporation, Marathon Electric Manufacturing, International Harvester, Avatar Components, Whirlpool Corporation, and Newstream Enterprises.

Dusty holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management from Missouri State University, a variety of professional certifications and has served as a Missouri Quality Award Examiner.

"We are continually finding ways to improve our business whether in working lean or our additional focus now on working green. These steps will improve the business as well as the environment while maintaining a safe work setting for our most valuable resource, our employees," said Bernie Thebeau, company continuous improvement manager.

For further information about Missouri Enterprise Six Sigma Green and Black Belt training, contact your Missouri Enterprise Area Business Manager at 800-956-2682.

**Six Sigma Training Pays Dividends at PlayPower LT Farmington, Inc.**

Six Sigma is a systematic, fact based, problem solving methodology that many large multinational corporations are using very effectively to create and maintain a culture of continuous improvement across their entire operation.

But, Six Sigma is not only effective for companies with thousands of employees and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. PlayPower LT Farmington, Inc. is a good example of a medium sized manufacturer that has enjoyed great success in using Six Sigma tools and techniques to reduce variation and improve quality and profitability.

PlayPower LT Farmington, Inc. began operations as Iron Mountain Forge in 1979. Housed in a 2000 square foot facility, the company made picnic tables, fire rings and grill products. In 2004, it became part of PlayPower and is now one of the nation's leading designers and manufacturers of indoor and outdoor commercial playground equipment.

Between late 2004 and 2006, a number of the company's key employees participated in Missouri Enterprise Six Sigma Training and earned their Green and Black Belts. Those earning Green Belts were Lloyd Reese, Brian Jenkins, Chris Newburry and Eric Clinton. Tim Brines, Buddy Bordewick, Katie

Schwent, Bernie Thebeau and Dave Welker earned their Black Belts.

They learned to use the DMAIC process which means Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control and other techniques of the rigorous, disciplined metric, methodology and management system that focuses on:

- *Understanding and meeting customer requirements;*
- *Aligning key business processes to achieve these requirements;*
- *Utilizing rigorous data analysis to minimize variations in those processes; and*
- *Driving rapid and sustainable improvement to business processes.*

Improvements have been attained in many areas since the training, including:

- **32% reduction in Customer Service claims from 2005 - 2007**
- **11.71% improvement in On-time and Complete Shipments for 2005 - 2007**
- **3.7% improvement in First-Pass yield on shipped orders for 2006 - 2007**

Play Power LT Farmington, Inc. received the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management certification in June 2002. The company is now working on ISO 140001 Environmental certification and on becoming Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified.