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## **SKED Launches Regional Quality Certification Program**

### *ARC and AEP Invest in Business Training/Growth*

SOMERSET, Ky. – A new business certification program is projected to create at least 30 new jobs, increase business growth and result in a \$10 million in investment in Eastern Kentucky, by giving companies the training they need to compete nationally for federal defense contracts.

Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) will help 12 businesses earn key certifications that will give them a competitive edge, thanks to grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and American Electric Power (AEP).

The Eastern Kentucky Supplier Education & Economic Development (SEED) quality certification program is a partnership between SKED and Advantage Kentucky Alliance (AKA). Through this new competitive program, 12 businesses will receive assistance in paying for ISO 9001 or AS9100 quality certifications.

Fifth District Congressman Harold “Hal” Rogers and Governor Matt Bevin announced the \$200,000 ARC grant to SKED at the 2017 SOAR Summit held earlier this month in Pikeville, Ky.

“We have some of the best machinists in the country, and I believe we should be fueling our nation's military with our skills,” said Congressman Rogers. “The grant will help 12 companies become ISO certified, elevating our regional resume for better paying jobs and federal contract opportunities.”

AEP presented SKED a \$60,000 Kentucky Power Economic Growth Grant (K-PEGG) grant in May, to assist in Eastern Kentucky SEED’s funding.

This program has been one of SKED Executive Director Brett Traver’s goals, since he began working for the regional, nonprofit economic development organization three years ago.

“The manufacturers across our region have been doing quality work for decades, but they didn’t have the certifications that proved that and would allow them to compete for federal contracts nationally,” Traver said. “Thanks to ARC, AKA, AEP and, of course, the confidence and guidance of

**Southeast Kentucky  
Economic Development**   
A Regional Growth Corporation

Congressman Hal Rogers and Governor Bevin, these hard-working folks will now have the tools they need to put them on the path to more growth and development and create more jobs here in Southeast Kentucky.”

As a part of this program, SKED will kick off the Eastern Kentucky SEED Defense Contracting Symposium on October 19 at the Corbin Center in Corbin, Ky. At the event, businesses will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from major national defense companies to learn what they’re looking for in defense contractors and market their products and services.

Business representatives interested in applying to be a part of the Eastern Kentucky SEED Quality Certification Program may access an application at SKED’s website:

[www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com). Click on the SEED logo at the top of the page.

Submit forms to [cmeadows@centertech.com](mailto:cmeadows@centertech.com) or Eastern Kentucky SEED, 2292, S. Highway 27, Somerset, KY 42501. Deadline for submission of the one-page application is Sept. 6, 2017.

The applicant will contract with the AKA to provide ISO 9001 and AS9100 Quality Certifications to manufacturing businesses in Southeast Kentucky, thereby increasing their market opportunities for new customers. AKA is the US Department of Commerce NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program for Kentucky, and in the last year has increased sales at Kentucky Manufacturers by \$10.8 million and cut costs in the amount of \$12.1 million, helping create over 1,335 jobs in Kentucky.

Participating companies will pay 20 percent of the AKA MEP consulting fees. Total costs are anticipated to average \$20,000 per company.

For more information about this program or other SKED services, contact Traver at (606) 677-6100 or by email at [btraver@centertech.com](mailto:btraver@centertech.com).

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*Formed 31 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky, the economic development organization, based in Somerset, serves a 45-county region in Kentucky. Staff works with business owners, small and large, throughout its service area to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs. For more information, visit: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).*