



## **If we design it, then let's build it**

**By The Republican Editorials**

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A \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation should go a long way toward helping Western Massachusetts remain a leader in innovative machining technology and manufacturing.

The money will allow the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association and the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County to join together to develop and create the latest in high-tech products.

The folks at UMass would work at the design and research end of the process, while the machinists would build prototypes and hopefully the final products.

Machining Association President Edward T. Leyden said his organization has already chosen four projects to work on, including one in polymer science technology and a new medical implant.

Hopefully, the collaboration will create more jobs for an industry that already employs about 7,000 people in Western Massachusetts.

It's also another example of how the region's schools, colleges and manufacturers have forged an alliance to build and strengthen this vital industry.

For example, Springfield gunmaker Smith & Wesson recently donated a \$100,000 state-of-the-art computer-controlled cutting machine to Roger L. Putnam Vocational and Technical High School, where there are now 40 students enrolled in its precision machining program. Other companies have also donated high-tech machinery to other vo-tech schools.

Precision machining is a rewarding field. Not only can skilled machinists take pride in building beautiful and functional products, they're also paid well.

It makes sense that products designed in our region should be built here.

As Leyden told The Republican on Wednesday, "There are some really great things going on up there (UMass). I think its a crime to let it leave the state."