



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA Announces Support for Michigan Robotics Cluster

*Mills Highlights Recovery Act Progress, Innovation and Job Creation
Potential of Regional Economic Cluster*

Auburn Hills, MI – U.S. Small Business Administrator Karen Mills appeared at Oakland University today to announce the SBA's support for a new Automotive-Robotics Cluster Initiative. This unique cluster will open new markets for automotive suppliers in Michigan while harnessing the region's work force and its strength in manufacturing.

Mills, whose background includes work with a successful boat-building cluster in Maine, praised the effort. "Michigan is ripe for building an economic cluster in robotics," she said. "This Administration is excited about the opportunity to support this cluster because of its high potential to transform Michigan's economy while creating 21st Century jobs."

The cluster will also enhance the military's ability to meet its objectives. Initial demand for this cluster's products will be driven by the Department of Defense, which uses a wide range of robotics components to support its needs. For example, robotics technologies are currently assisting with the detonation of unexploded roadside bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More than 250 entrepreneurs, small business owners, as well as government officials and members of the academic community, gathered at Oakland University this week to lay the groundwork for this regional economic clustering initiative.

Mills cited the success of recent clusters to underscore the opportunities for innovation and job creation possible in the robotics technology field. "This could be the industry which takes Michigan manufacturing to the next level. It's a win-win for everyone involved," she said.

In addition to the SBA, the cluster is being supported by the Great Lakes Chapter of AUVSI (Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International), Oakland University, the Department of Defense, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Automation Alley, and TARDEC (The U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research Development Engineering Center).

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