

2009
FOCUS ON
Advanced
Manufacturing

Manufacturing remains vital to the AdvantageWest economy, with nearly 60,000 workers and an annual payroll of \$2.1 billion.



"We created or retained 373 jobs and generated \$10 million in new sales. It's not likely we would have seen that success without AdvantageWest."
–Noel Watts, MARC Custom Medical Products

Advanced manufacturing in Western North Carolina remains a vital component of the economy across the 23-county AdvantageWest region. Our commitment to recruiting and supporting industry is as strong as ever, with an emphasis on advanced manufacturing such as precision metalworking, optics, plastics technology, aerospace/aviation and advanced materials. Our goal is to market and promote the region to retain and create quality jobs.

"Our goal is to market and promote the region to retain and create quality jobs." –Kyle Edney, Executive Vice President, AdvantageWest

MARC Custom Medical Products is the largest manufacturer of custom medical drapes in the US, with sales of \$10 million in its first three years. It is a venture of the Marketing Association of Rehabilitation Centers, a nonprofit association of community rehabilitation programs across WNC that provide vocational rehabilitation and employment for individuals with and without disabilities.

MARC launched the medical products initiative in 2006 with significant assistance from AdvantageWest, which included Economic Development Initiative (EDI) grants. The support has paid off: a Western Carolina University study of MARC and its 14 member consortium estimated the organization's total economic impact in the region to be \$60.7 million in 2008. The organization has created or retained 373 jobs and more are expected in 2010. According to MARC's executive director, Noel Watts, AdvantageWest has been a "true partner" in the organization's success: "We'd be nowhere near this successful without the tremendous support of AdvantageWest."