

# Coalition tries to land high-tech center for state

Michigan could be the site of a proposed federally funded Software Engineering Institute (SEI) if Michigan business and government leaders along with a consortium of four Midwest universities are successful.

With a projected employment figure of 250 people after five years, and funding of \$103 million, the institute could be highly beneficial to Michigan, said William R. Lukens, director of the Michigan High Technology Task Force and coordinator of the project.

"An institute of this size will have a significant economic impact on Michigan," he said.

THE ANN Arbor-based Software Engineering Development Corp., an organization formed for the purpose of attracting the institute to Michigan, announced its proposal had passed the initial screening.

The notification is seen as a significant

step in narrowing the field from approximately 40 interested parties in May to perhaps three or four serious proposals.

SEI is to be established as a federal contract research center, similar to 34 other such centers around the country. None is in Michigan. Among the most notable are Ames Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Solar Energy Research Institute and Lincoln Laboratory.

GROUPS TAKING part in efforts to bring the institute to Michigan, Lukens said, include Arthur Andersen & Co., the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, the Environmental Research Institute of Michigan, ISDOS (a computer software company) and the Michigan High Technology Task Force.

Governmental agencies taking part are the state of Michigan, Washington

Development Council, as well as a consortium of universities — the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, Purdue University and the University of Illinois.

The proposed center is to be a new, private non-profit corporation funded by the U.S. Department of Defense to bring the best professional minds and the most efficient technology to bear on the rapid improvement of quality, operational computer software. The vehicle for achieving this will be the development of a new, automated software factory, or a software development environment.

"IN THE SHORT term, this institute will bring over \$100 million in new federal funds into Michigan and allow for the recruitment of some of the best professional software engineers in the nation," Lukens said.

"In the long term, that talent will produce technologies which could improve Michigan's software industry and be the basis for numerous private sector 'spin-off' companies."

"In essence, this institute will be the seed of what could well become a national center for software engineering, much as the Silicone Valley has become the national center for computer hardware chips," he noted.

"We know this institute could help existing Michigan businesses and universities while at the same time diversifying the state's economy."

THE GROUP began work on its pro-

posal last January, and has involved a large number of business, academic and governmental interests.

In April, support for a Michigan-based institute was secured from three non-Michigan universities who agreed to work in support of the Michigan proposal. Along with the University of Michigan, the university group includes Ohio State, Purdue and the University of Illinois.

Businesses involved in the development of the proposal also included Ford Aerospace, Detroit Edison, and a number of non-Michigan firms in-

involved in software engineering: Hughes Aircraft, General Dynamics, Singer, GTE, Lockheed Electronics, TRW and others.

The legal firms of Honigman, Miller, Schwartz & Cohn; Devine, Devine, Miller, Canfield; and Dickinson-Wright, through former U.S. Rep. Lucien Nedzi, also are assisting in furthering the proposal.

GOV. JAMES Blanchard endorsed the proposal and pledged the state's long-term support for the new institute.

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