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Federal grant aimed at helping polymers industry increase productivity and a skilled workforce.

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By

Representatives of the Ohio polymers industry received a \$1 million federal grant to build a computer-based resource center that companies in the state can utilize for workforce training and product development, the Ohio Business Development Coalition said on May 21.

Industry networking group PolymerOhio and the Ohio Supercomputer Center will jointly develop a "polymer portal" that will offer computer models to simulate and test new consumer products, as well as university-supported certificate programs in computational science. The certificate courses will link to a master's degree program in The Ohio State University's College of Engineering.

In addition to PolymerOhio and the Ohio Supercomputer Center, the University of Akron, Ohio State and the Ohio Learning Network will receive grant money to help develop the program.

The program will help the state's \$49 billion-a-year polymers industry be more competitive by decreasing product development time and building workforce competencies, the grant recipients contend.

"The courses and certifications that will be established under the program will be invaluable in preparing the workforce in our industry to move quickly and surely into the computer age," said Wayne Earley, president and CEO of PolymerOhio, in a written statement. "By establishing a 'polymer portal,' this important collaboration makes available to Ohio's polymer companies a variety of computational methods that will cost-effectively help increase their competitiveness in the global marketplace."

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