



## Alliance for Materials Manufacturing Excellence

In conjunction with a DOE Industries of the Future (IOF) meeting, representatives of the industries that make up that group met in Washington, Feb. 21, 2001, to explore possible avenues for collaborating to ensure that all the benefits to be derived from this valuable program were leveraged to the maximum.

### The Goals

We planned to learn how each industry interacted with DOE, what research projects we had in place that might be applicable to other industries, and in general, to seek, through collaboration, to ensure that each industry was able to optimize its own evolution.

That group consists of representatives from seven industries (see chart). It has been meeting about twice a year and has built itself

**Industries of the Future  
Associations  
Become  
Alliance for Materials  
Manufacturing Excellence**

- Aluminum
- Chemicals
- Forest Products
- Glass
- Metalcasting
- Mining
- Steel

into an effective instrument for cooperation among the high-energy-use industries that account for ~37% of this country's energy requirements.

### Collaboration for Survival

Even though many of us are competitors, we all recognize that our individual survival as viable and thriving industries depends on finding the best answers to the technical challenges we face. Frequently, a solution in one industry can be of value to another.

One important part of our work has been to ensure that the IOF program continues to receive sufficient funding to permit productive research to be carried out in pursuit of Grand Challenges. These are projects that promise the possibility of "step changes" in the improvement of our operations and efficiencies. Each of the seven industries seeks to implement such programs.

Our work with DOE has been productive; but as you will appreciate, to be cofunded by DOE, a research project must hold out the promise of decreasing energy use as a part of its results. While reducing energy use is of great value to industry, leading as it does to improvements in the bottom line, it is only one of the areas where technology developments could be of value.

### Facing World Competition

In the face of strong overseas competition, each of our process industries can no longer afford to

be merely a commodity producer. Commodities are products whose success or failure is frequently a question of price rather than features. This is no way to thrive and grow, especially if you are not the low-cost producer!

To be successful in the long term, we must offer added value. We must offer products that surpass commodities in their value to a purchaser and represent the best technology that can be developed at any given time.

### The Next Step

To open a new chapter in our evolution, the IOF Associations have begun to look beyond DOE for possible partnerships. In so doing, we have renamed ourselves the Alliance for Materials Manufacturing Excellence (AMMEX).

AMMEX is seeking new relationships with government agencies and other industrial groups. We started off with a visit to the Dept. of Commerce, which is in the process of appointing a new Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing, to initiate discussions toward the development of a new partnership.

Other agencies will follow and so, hopefully, will technical and commercial successes! Stay tuned.

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