

NEWS

From GEORGIA TECH'S ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

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GEORGIA TECH MAY BECOME
NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTER

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For Immediate Release

ATLANTA, GA....Georgia Tech may become the center of a national engineering research institute dedicated to improvements in industrial productivity.

Researchers from Tech's Engineering Experiment Station will make their case for the institute in a nine-month feasibility study sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

A team from Georgia Tech will focus their research on the possibilities for productivity gains through materials handling innovations in manufacturing operations.

"There are now many new research developments which could greatly reduce costs in industry if these techniques were used," says Dale Atkins, Director of the study project. "Right now, there is no concerted effort to use the available technology."

As an example, Atkins cited the use of robotics in motor assembly by Westinghouse, an innovation which is expected to increase productivity by a factor of three.

If created, the institute would operate in its initial phase with supporting money from the NSF. Financial backing from industry would have to increase later until the center became entirely industry-funded.

With energy costs rising and government environmental regulations stiffening,

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improvements in industrial productivity have become more critical than ever in manufacturers' effort to turn profits. Atkins thinks a center is needed to aid them in this quest.

"With proper support, it would be possible to have a center where private companies, universities and other research groups would be able to conduct engineering experiments," he said.

Assistance could be provided by developing technology fit for industry as a whole or dealing with specific problems at individual plants.

The center would initiate research and respond to requests. It also would serve as a clearinghouse for information pertinent to all aspects of materials handling as it relates to productivity, bringing together research data at a centralized location on the Tech campus.

Georgia Tech is now soliciting ideas to help guide them in their study. To contribute thoughts or get more information on this program, write or call Dale Atkins, Georgia Institute of Technology, Engineering Experiment Station, Atlanta, Georgia 30332 (Telephone: 404/894-3448).

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