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**Y.E.S PROGRAM RECEIVES INNOVATION INVESTMENT FUNDING FROM
WALL STREET WEST**

Program Seeks to Further Develop the Talent Pool in Northeast Pennsylvania

BETHLEHEM, Pa., March 17, 2008—The Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Council, Inc. announced today that it is a recipient of a Wall Street West Innovation Investment for the YES (Your Employability Skills) Certificate Program. The program, which will provide skill-building opportunities for northeastern Pennsylvania students, was one of nine programs chosen from across the region for the second round of this funding opportunity.

Innovation Investments help sustain Wall Street West's goal of building a stronger financial services sector in northeastern Pennsylvania through a qualified workforce. They also support workforce development organizations in relationship building, education, training, and economic development in the financial services industry.

“Wall Street West is committed to providing the region's workforce the education and training needed to meet the growing needs of the financial services industry,” said Susan Schaffer, director of workforce initiatives, Wall Street West. “Through the Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Council's creative program, we hope to continue the excitement and enthusiasm among the region's educational institutions, businesses, and residents alike.”

YES is a 120-hour, one credit, year-long elective course focused on high school students. The program was originally developed for adults in the York County area by a group of business and education professionals in order to address the lack of qualified applicants for available positions. The high school phase of YES began in York in 2001, and moved to both Erie and Schuylkill counties in 2006. YES teaches students the basic

employability skills that business leaders in all phases of business and industry require, including Conflict Resolution, Resume Writing, Interview Skills, Personal Finance, and Team Building. Additionally, YES introduces students to possible career paths, including those in the financial, IT, and engineering sectors. In Northeastern Pennsylvania, YES is administered by the Northeast PA Manufacturers and Employers Council, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

“The YES program links economic development and workforce development and has been a successful program since originating in York County in 2001,” said Darlene J. Robbins, President of the Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Council. “As we continue to grow the YES program we will help Northeastern Pennsylvania in creating a pool of workers with employability skills for the financial services and other industry sectors which will produce the pipeline of workers business and industry continues to demand.”

To receive an Innovation Investment, programs are required to demonstrate innovation, collaboration, regionalism, transferability, and sustainability. Additionally, they must focus on the needs of financial services and information technology; customer service and key supporting industries, as well as be directly relevant to education and training.

About Wall Street West

Wall Street West is a not-for-profit partnership of more than two dozen local, regional, and statewide economic development agencies, technology investment groups, workforce development organizations, educational and research institutions, and experts from the private sector. The group secured a \$15 million Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to help fund its effort to attract New York City-based financial institutions to establish their back-up and back-room operations in the region. The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania is the fiscal agent of Wall Street West. The following institutions are Wall Street West partners: PA Dept. of Labor and Industry, U.S. Dept. of Labor, PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development, Air Products & Chemicals, Berks County Workforce Investment Board, Berks Economic Partnership, Blue Cross of NBPA, BobHay.com Realtors, CANDO Inc., Coronel Management Group, Inc., Department of Community and Economic Development Lehigh County, Diversified Information Technologies Inc., DSS Corporation, East Stroudsburg University; Fulton Bank, Great Valley Division; Greater Berks Development Fund, Greater Reading

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, Junior Achievement, Berks; Junior Achievement of Northeastern PA, Inc.; Kutztown University, Lackawanna County WIA, Lakeland High School, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Lehigh University, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Luzerne County Community College, Luzerne County Workforce Investment Office, Mid-Atlantic Venture Funds, Monroe County CareerLink, NE PA Educational Intermediate Unit, NEPA Alliance, Northampton Community College, Northeast Pennsylvania Technology Institute, PA Office of Financial Education, Penn State University, Berks; Penn's Northeast, Pike County Workforce Development Agency, Pocono Counties WIA, Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board, Pocono Mountains Chamber of Commerce, Pocono Mountain Economic Development Corp., PPL Corp., Reading Area Community College, Riverside School District, Team Pennsylvania Foundation, Technology Development & Innovation-University of Scranton, Wayne County Economic Development Corp., and Wilkes University.