Augusta, Maine: The Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) today announced that Mathews Brothers, a 156-year old window manufacturer with a history of innovation, is the recipient of this year’s Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award. The award will be presented at a ceremony at the Mathews Brothers manufacturing facility in Belfast on June 15, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. The award is presented each year to a Maine company that has demonstrated outstanding leadership, vision and manufacturing excellence.

“The 2010 Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award reflects updated criteria which were modified this year to reflect changing global circumstances. In a recessionary and highly competitive global economy, manufacturing excellence is no longer the only attribute necessary for success,” explained Maine MEP President Rod Rodrigue. “To survive today, American manufacturers must embrace cutting edge management and production techniques that control costs while improving production efficiency, quality and on-time delivery.”

“This year’s award recipient exemplifies what it takes to succeed in the face of today’s global challenges,” said Thaxter Trafton, Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner. “In the world of cutting edge manufacturing, these attributes are known as Next Generation Manufacturing.”

Next Generation Manufacturing (NGM) refers to a framework of strategies developed by industry leaders and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program that represent the essential strategies for driving growth and achieving competitive world-class performance. The Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award now recognizes manufacturers, such as Mathews Brothers, that have undertaken the necessary strategies to position their operations for growth.

The Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award assesses companies in six strategic areas that represent the core of Next Generation Manufacturing:

- **Customer-focused innovation:** Deliver new and better customer solutions at a faster pace than the competition;
- **Advanced talent management:** Secure a competitive performance advantage by having superior systems in place to recruit, hire, develop, and retain talent;
- **Systemic continuous improvement:** Record annual productivity and quality gains that exceed the competition through a company-wide commitment to continuous improvement;
- **Extended enterprise management:** Leverage a flexible network of supply chains and partnerships to provide competitive advantages of speed, cost and quality;
- **Sustainable product and process development:** Design and implement waste and energy-use reductions at a level that provides superior cost performance and recognizable customer value;
- **Global engagement:** Secure business advantage through people partnerships and systems capable of engaging global markets, talent, and resources.

“The 2010 award reflects the Mathews Brothers success in achieving excellence in Next Generation Manufacturing strategies,” remarked State Senator Elizabeth Schnieder, Chair of the Business, Research and Economic Development (BRED) Joint Standing Committee. “In the past year the Belfast-based manufacturer embarked on a two-month train-the-trainer Lean manufacturing initiative with Maine MEP that focused on continuous improvement activities. The initiative delivered Lean training to 116 company employees and helped the company achieve preliminary cost savings of $75,000.”
Key Mathews managers also attended a Maine MEP program designed to train participants in ways to innovate products and improve profits. The workshops were offered by Maine MEP as part of a new Innovation Initiative in response to national surveys indicating that the number one need of small- and mid-size manufacturers was for innovation and the development of new products and services that could lead to growth.

“Mathews Brothers also has aggressively pursued a strategy of global engagement,” said State Senator Carol Weston. “Recently, the company received a Maine MEP grant that enabled it to participate in a trade mission to Asia organized by the Maine International Trade Center (MITC). The trade mission was the latest example of the company’s continuous search for new global markets for its products.”

“Mathews Brothers has long displayed a commitment to customer relations and community service,” stated State Representative Jayne Crosby Giles, House ranking member of the BRED Committee. “The company’s WOW! Customer Service program instills in employees the importance of quality service and customer satisfaction, a key attribute of Next Generation Manufacturing success; and the company has been recognized in the past by the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce and others for its outstanding contribution to the community.”

“We’re deeply honored to receive the 2010 Maine Manufacturing Excellence Award,” stated Mathews Brothers President Scott Hawthorne. “Our company has 156 years of commitment to product innovation, quality service and community involvement. With help from Maine MEP, we’ve continued to build on that tradition and implemented world-class manufacturing strategies that have enabled us to succeed in the face of challenging economic circumstances.”