NEWS RELEASE:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Department of War Awards $15 Million in NDEP Grants to Support Manufacturing Engineering Education Programs

The Department of War today announced grant awards totaling up to $15 million to 4 institutions under the National Defense Education Program (NDEP). The grants support the NDEP's Manufacturing Engineering Education Program (MEEP) to better position the current and next-generation manufacturing workforce to produce systems and components that ensure technological superiority for the U.S. warfighter.

"To safeguard our nation's security and maintain our strategic edge, we must invest not only in technology itself, but in the brilliant minds that will create it," said Joseph Jewell, Assistant Secretary of War for Science and Technology. "The Manufacturing Engineering Education Program is a cornerstone of this commitment. By fostering robust partnerships between education and industry, particularly in critical fields like optics and photonics, we are cultivating the next generation of innovators and empowering a skilled workforce ready to tackle complex defense challenges. These grants are a direct investment in our technological superiority and, ultimately, in our national security."

The following MEEP three-year grants establish programs or enhance existing programs to better position the manufacturing workforce through optics education and workforce development initiatives:

- **Connected DMV** (McLean, Virginia): "Pathways to Advanced Manufacturing and Optics: A Scalable, Employer-Integrated System for Defense-Aligned STEM Talent Development"

- **Frontier Technology Institute** (Studio City, California): "National Optics Career Readiness Initiative: Advancing Pathways into Advanced Manufacturing"

- **Monroe Community College** (Rochester, New York): "Fortifying Optics Capabilities for U.S. Security & Defense (FOCUS-D)"

- **Spark Photonics Foundation, Inc.** (Waltham, Massachusetts): "A Scalable Career-Connected Learning Continuum in Optics, Photonics, and Integrated Optical Systems"

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