

## Massachusetts defense industry group broadens its reach

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The Massachusetts Defense Technology Initiative has shortened its name and broadened its mission.

The organization, which was first created by the Massachusetts High Technology Council in 2003 to protect the state's military bases from closure, last month expanded its reach to support the defense industry throughout New England. The Waltham group is now known as the Defense Technology Initiative.

Donald Quenneville, the group's executive director, was to appear at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in Manchester, N.H., today with New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch and other industry officials to discuss the new organization. Quenneville, a Plymouth resident, said it would be his group's first public event in its new form.

Quenneville said he has been working to broaden the organization to include the other New England states since he started in the executive director's job in January. He said a regional approach makes sense because the economic benefits from the public and private sector jobs that rely on places like Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford and the Natick Soldier Systems Center don't stop at the state line.

His organization is working with the New Hampshire High Technology Council, TechMaine, the Connecticut Technology Council and the Rhode Island Economic Development Corp.

"It was a no-brainer for us to get involved," said Melissa Withers, director of communications for the Rhode Island organization. "It's an important sector for Rhode Island's economy. ... New England has a unique opportunity to drive the next generation of defense industry growth."

Quenneville said he would like DTI to focus on convincing the Air Force to locate the headquarters for its new "Cyber Command" unit at Hanscom. However, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on the Maine-New Hampshire border has also been touted as a potential site.

The new Air Force unit would focus on a range of activities, including the defense of computer networks and the use of global positioning system satellites. The Air Force expects to narrow down a list of potential sites by the end of a year, and to announce a new home for the Cyber Command unit by September 2009. Until that time, the unit temporarily will be based at the Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

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