

Ellwood City Ledger

April 4, 2012

By: Mark Crepp

ELLWOOD CITY -- "It's amazing to see the work they do here," U.S. Rep. Jason Altmire, D-4 McCandless, said after touring Jet Industries' factory Tuesday morning.

"The work they do is significant to the country," Altmire said, noting that the company makes transmission towers for the electric power grid as well as large highway signs for the nation's transportation system. "And it happens right here in Ellwood City."

Jet Industries was recently awarded a contract to build the steel structures that will carry electric transmission lines throughout the northeastern section of the country, part of the Maine Power Reliability Program.

"I've known about Jet Industries for a long time, but it's impressive to see how important the jobs that are being performed here are to the region," Altmire said. "It's also important for the region for Jet Industries to grow and thrive," he said.

Don Williams, company owner and chief executive officer, conducted the tour for Altmire and his representative,s as well as Kevin Bowser, a legislative aide with state Rep. Jaret Gibbons (D-10, Franklin Township).

"It's exciting that Rep. Altmire visited," said Williams, noting that it is important for the government and small business to work together. Williams noted that Altmire expressed his ongoing support for the facility.

"It's exciting to be a part of the community," Williams said, adding that while jobs at the company are important, the jobs also help with the nation's economic recovery. The company's payroll as well as the number of steel haulers that enter the plant each week "are textbook to

what America's economy is about," Williams said.

"I wanted Representative Altmire to see the whole staff so he could see the people that make it happen," Williams said.

The company is helping to manufacture more than 200 steel structures, the tallest of which is 175 feet high, that will be installed as part of the power grid project.

Steel structures are preferred because of the need for additional height and because of the increased tension with lines being carried longer distances between poles and to traverse obstacles such as rivers. The steel structures are also used instead of poles that would use guide wires because of other structures or because of the proximity to others' property.

In March, the company added 15 certified welders, an increase of 25 percent to the local plant's workforce. The additional workers were added to a second shift. Williams said the company is looking to add more employees to help the company grow.