



## Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Rep. Shuler Announces Federal Grant for MARC, Inc. *\$200,000 Grant will Create or Retain 250 Jobs***

**Washington, D.C.** – Representative Heath Shuler today announced that the Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers (MARC) has secured a \$200,000 federal grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The federal grant will be used to support the formation of MARC's Custom Medical Products manufacturing initiative. This program will create or retain 250 jobs, primarily for people with disabilities, in the 17 westernmost counties of North Carolina, while also creating a manufacturing platform for small town rural entrepreneurial development.

"I have seen first-hand the tremendous work being done by MARC and its affiliates across Western North Carolina. They are bringing people with disabilities into the workforce and helping them become full, active citizens," said Rep. Shuler. "MARC has also proven to be a great investment for our communities by creating jobs and providing a great platform for entrepreneurs to work from – by providing services to the factories, transporting needed materials, and repairing machinery. I am proud to have been able to help MARC secure this grant, and I look forward to working closely with them in the future."

The Custom Medical Products manufacturing initiative will produce custom disposable surgical drapes and other devices used in the health care industry.

"We are grateful to Congressman Shuler for his support of creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the MARC Custom Medical Products initiative," said Noel Watts, Executive Director of MARC. "We believe that the Congressman's validation of our project with the Appalachian Regional Commission in Washington was vitally important to MARC's grant request being approved."

ARC's \$200,000 investment in critical administrative and overhead funding will be matched by direct and indirect member investment of \$838,000 over the project duration, a 4:1 direct match. Further funding from other sources, restricted to capital equipment and renovations, will increase total funding to approximately \$4 million.

Rep. Shuler has been a strong supporter of the ARC in Congress. In June Rep. Randy Neugebauer, a Republican from Texas, introduced an amendment to remove all funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission from the Energy and Water Development appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008. Rep. Shuler spoke out against the amendment, detailing the import work the ARC has done throughout Western North Carolina and the entire Appalachian region. The amendment was defeated, and the ARC is scheduled to receive proper funding in 2008.

"The economic development of Western North Carolina depends on us building new industries and seeking out new opportunities. We also need full community involvement," Rep. Shuler concluded. "MARC and its affiliates, with the help of our local communities and the ARC, are doing that."

MARC Inc. is comprised of six distinct manufacturing facilities. With more than 310,000 square feet and an employee base of over 800, MARC ranks as one of the largest industrial concerns in western North Carolina. All six facilities are within two hours of each other, and each provides services and support to fellow MARC members.

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