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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EXPAND SYSTEMS, LLC INSTRUMENTAL IN NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF TEXTILES WALMART GRANT INNOVATION FUND**

**Kennesaw, GA** - A team from NC State University's College of Textiles was awarded a \$639,112 grant from Walmart U.S. Manufacturing Innovations Fund on August 14, 2014 from Walmart, the Walmart Foundation and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM). The announcement was made at the 2014 U.S. Manufacturing Summit in Denver.

The implementation of new technologies in digital fabric printing and assembly operations will enable significant portions of the outdoor furniture soft goods production to be cost effectively manufactured in the U.S. and become globally competitive. College of Textiles faculty members Lisa Chapman, Harold Freeman, Trevor Little, Nancy Powell, Andrew West and **Mark Sawchak from Expand Systems** are working with industry partners such as Arden Companies and specialty chemical suppliers to develop an optimal digital printing system. Digitally printed fabrics for outdoor furnishings, coupled with an efficient cut and sew fabrication process offer a game-changing strategy for the domestic textile complex. Digital technologies enable product innovations not feasible using current production methods in the category, as well as a flexible and responsive supply chain capable of quick response to customer market trends.

"This year's grant recipients represent the ingenuity and inventive thinking that could ultimately unlock the full potential of manufacturing in the U.S.," said Cindi Marsiglio, Walmart vice president of U.S. sourcing and manufacturing. "We're thrilled to support the efforts of North Carolina State University to transform the processes that will ultimately drive resurgence in American manufacturing."

**Expand Systems, LLC** has been at the forefront to bring digital textile printing to the U.S. The company is solely dedicated to fabric printing and is a leader in education, consulting and implementation of digital textile printing solutions in North America.

"We are very excited to be a part of this project with NC State and Walmart. We firmly believe that implementing a technology-based solution to produce products here in the USA will enable Walmart to meet its objectives of fostering the movement of manufacturing back home," said Mark Sawchak, managing partner of Expand Systems.

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