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Business investment rises in region

By Kris B. Mamula

PITTSBURGH – Business investment in Allegheny and nine surrounding counties reached \$2.9 billion in 2015, a 26 percent increase from 2014, the marketing arm of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development reported Thursday.

Manufacturing was the most active sector and the increased investment resulted in 14,951 new and retained jobs, including 4,460 jobs in advanced manufacturing, David Ruppertsberger, president of Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, said at a news conference. The manufacturing jobs total of 4,460 was the highest in five years.

“What’s trending is that, in addition to the actual anticipated job creation and retention that are associated with the deals we track, many investments are

tied to a robust regional supply chain,” Mr. Ruppertsberger said. “Businesses that are growing here need other businesses to supply all that’s necessary to keep operations humming.”

The PRA’s 2015 Business Investment Scorecard was based on activity in five key sectors of the region’s economy — advanced manufacturing, energy, financial and business services, health care and life sciences and information technology.

Manufacturing was the most active sector for the seventh time in nine years of reporting with 63 deals at a value of \$174 million, followed by 37 deals each in financial and business services and in information technology, at \$46 million and \$25 million, respectively.

Manufacturer **E.A. Fischione Instruments** finished work on a \$5 million, 26,000-square-foot addition at its Export headquarters. The expansion

will accommodate the creation of 20 jobs, bringing its total workforce to 80 employees, CEO Paul Fischione said.

Fischione is marking its 50th year in business as a manufacturer of specimen preparation equipment and related supplies that are used with electron microscopes. Energy, research, life science and other companies in more than 50 countries worldwide are among the company’s customers.

Manufacturing is defined in different ways, but nationwide the sector’s output has risen to more than \$2 billion in 2014 from about \$1.6 billion in 2000, according to the National Association of Manufacturers, based in Washington, D.C. Manufacturers forecast sales and production increases of 0.4 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively, in a survey of the first quarter by the group.