

# Exports for region total \$721m

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**MANCHESTER** — Led by computer and electronic products, goods and services from businesses in the Manchester-Nashua metropolitan area accounted for the nearly half the state's exports during the first six months of last year.

Through the first half of 2007, Manchester-Nashua firms exported \$721 million worth of merchandise, according to figures released yesterday by the U.S. Commerce Department.

U.S. Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Priest was in the state yesterday to present an Export Achievement Award to Warwick Mills in New Ipswich to acknowledge its new exports to Brazil.

Warwick's success includes supplying 15,000 U.S. Marines in Iraq with protective gloves and exporting products to the Netherlands, Brazil, Mexico, Germany and South Korea.

"We thought it was a perfect example of how exports are so important to New Hampshire and the New Hampshire economy," Priest said in a telephone interview.

"It's amazing to have such a historic building and they're making technology for the military to be used in theater today," he said.

Last fall's Defense Appropriations bill included \$1.6 million for Warwick Mills to develop chemical-biological protective materials for tent structures for U.S. military personnel.

Warwick Mills makes specialty fabric for military, aerospace and industrial uses as well as civilian, commercial uses. It supplies armored protection to the Dutch National Police Force.

Yesterday, Commerce official Priest said U.S. exports set a new record last year of \$1.6 trillion and year-to-date numbers put the country on pace to break last year's record.

"This area is a key component to increase our export growth," he said during his visit to New Hampshire.

In a tight economy, exports are a key to sustaining positive economic growth, he said.

A quarter of Manchester merchandise exports go to NAFTA countries, Commerce said, with \$178 million worth of goods services going to Canada and Mexico and \$8.9 million went to Central America and the Dominican Republic. Exports from the Manchester-Nashua area totaled \$692.3 million for the year in 2005 and grew to \$1.25 billion in 2006.

For the first half of 2007, the top category for Manchester-Nashua exports was computer and electronic products, accounting for \$243 million of exports, or 34 percent of the metropolitan total.