



## ARKANSAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS (AEDC-MS)

Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions is the MEP Center for the state of Arkansas and is part of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. Our mission is maximizing enterprise value for manufacturers through Organizational Excellence, Operational Excellence, Advanced Manufacturing, and Family Business services. Manufacturing Solutions works closely with many public and private organizations to bring world-class resources to Arkansas manufacturers. AEDC-MS has formal partnership agreements with four state universities, the World Trade Center, and other third party providers. In addition, the Center works with community colleges and local economic development organizations to ensure local resources are utilized in delivering assistance to manufactures.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2023



**\$244.4 Million**

Total Increased/Retained Sales



**2,155**

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



**\$49 Million**

New Client Investments



**\$10.9 Million**

Cost Savings

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 **ARKANSAS**  
Economic Development Commission  
MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS

## BUILDING BETTER BIKES IN AMERICA

**ABOUT ALLIED CYCLE WORKS.** Allied Cycle Works is a made-in-america bicycle brand based in Bentonville, Arkansas. Allied was formed out of the recognition that there was nothing really separating bikes from bikes, as most bicycle companies were outsourcing to Asian manufacturing for their bikes. Allied's mission was to build better bikes here in America.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Allied Cycle works is competing directly with offshore manufacturing. They need to take advantage of anything that will give them the edge with efficiency, which means adding automation. Sam Pickman, one of the founders of Allied, enlisted Ben VandeHoef, with Phillips Corporation, an AEDC- Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions automation partner, to help with the project. AEDC- Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions is part of the MEP National Network™.

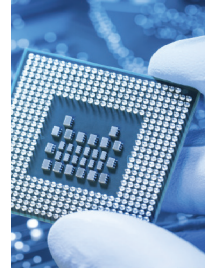
Ben is an OPTO (optimizing your machining process) application engineer at Phillips. Ben says, "There are some places that you need to go in and convince the customer that automation is a solution." That wasn't the case with Allied. Sam says, "We're going head to head with Asian manufacturing, and the only way to do it is to pull costs closer in line, and for us, efficiency and automation are the only way that we're going to be able to make it."

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Allied has a wide variety of parts but generally runs lots of 50 parts. Because of this, they needed a system that was easy to do changeovers with and wouldn't require a ton of supporting tooling. They needed a flexible solution that could support a high mix of parts.

Ben returned to Sam and the team at Allied with two solutions: a Phillips custom solution utilizing a UR robot and VersaBuilt's CNC Mill Automation System. Ben proposed both systems but was confident that the VersaBuilt system would be the best solution. Pickman chose to automate with Versabuilt

**"We are really happy with the system. It is incredibly well thought out and has allowed us to keep our spindles running for 2-3 times longer than we were previously. VersaBuilt's strategy of using one interface on the robot (MultiGrip Gripper and jaws) to connect to the work holding means you can adapt any part to the system really easily. The concept is a no brainer."**

-Sam Pickman, Director of Product & Engineering



## RESULTS



2 new or retained jobs



\$230,000 in new investment



\$100,000 in new or retained sales



\$70,000 in cost savings

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