The MEP National Network™ is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

 MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2018

- $235.5 Million
  Total Increased/Retained Sales

- 3,448
  Total Increased/Retained Jobs

- $127.5 Million
  New Client Investments

- $70.1 Million
  Cost Savings

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MID-AMERICA MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY CENTER (MAMTC)

The Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center (MAMTC) was founded in 1991 with a simple purpose: to help companies realize never ending growth in the rapidly changing global marketplace. MAMTC is a not-for-profit corporation that is supported by a public and private partnership of Kansas companies, the Kansas Department of Commerce and the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP). NIST MEP is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce with a mission to help make American businesses more innovative at home and more competitive abroad.

MAMTC works directly with area manufacturers to provide expertise and services tailored to their most critical needs, ranging from process improvement and workforce development, to business practices, exporting and supply chain. Additionally MAMTC connects manufacturers with government and trade associations, universities and research laboratories and a host of other public and private resources to help them realize individual goals.

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ABOUT EAST KANSAS AGRI ENERGY. East Kansas Agri-Energy (EKAE) was formed in 2001 by a steering committee of farmers and businesspeople in Eastern Kansas, along with the support of the Agriculture Sub-Committee of the Anderson County Economic Development (ACED) organization. The objective was to build a value-added ethanol production facility in the area. Today, EKAE converts more than 16 million bushels of corn a year into more than 45 million gallons of fuel grade ethanol. Along the way, the plant produces more than 200,000 tons of distiller grains, in both wet and dry form, for livestock producers every year. EKAE is based in Garnett, Kansas, and has 13 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Previously, the EKAE plant was illuminated by high-pressure sodium (HPS) lighting. While HPS lighting is very energy efficient, it has two drawbacks. First, the color rendition capabilities of the light source are poor. Second, the lights have a very long re-strike time, so they cannot be used with occupancy sensors. The EKAE plant runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, on nights and weekends a very small crew staffs the plant, and the company was lighting a huge percentage of the facility where no one is working. Overall, EKAE needed to replace 11 different types of light fixtures in the plant, totaling 364 fixtures.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. Plant management decided to use their in-house maintenance electricians to complete the installation themselves, greatly saving on the cost when compared to using contract electricians. They also reached out to the Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center (MAMTC), part of the MEP National Network, for assistance in applying for a grant under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) through the USDA. REAP provides grant funding to small- to medium-sized rural businesses for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. During the application process, MAMTC staff gathered all the necessary materials, including the energy audit information, technical reports, and all of the many applicable USDA forms. They finalized the application package with EKAE before hand-delivering it to one of the local field offices. The REAP grant covered 25 percent of the cost of the lighting project, and EKAE electricians made the installations in four phases over a 12-month period to bring the project in well under budget.

The switch to LED lights dramatically improved the color quality of the lighting in the plant. Now, occupancy sensors allow only those areas of the plant being used during the nights and weekends to be lit, rather than the whole facility. The difference is striking. EKAE is in a better position to increase sales and jobs, creating a significant financial impact.

"We were really glad to have MAMTC’s help with the REAP grant application. There was no way that we would have pursued the grant ourselves because the process and paperwork seemed too complicated."

-Doug Sommers, Chief of Operations