



MONTANA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION CENTER (MMEC)

The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) is a statewide manufacturing outreach and assistance center focused on growing Montana's economy by helping manufacturers succeed in a nationally and globally competitive environment. Part of the NIST MEP National Network, we have access to an extensive network of resources throughout Montana and the U.S.

In today's rapidly changing business environment, MMEC provides Montana manufacturers with hands-on assistance plus the knowledge and resources needed for growth, innovation and profit enhancement. Staffed by proven professionals with extensive manufacturing and business experience in a variety of industries, our team can help you achieve positive, measurable, and sustainable growth for your top and bottom line. Our areas of expertise include product and market development, strategic and exit planning, workforce/talent development, business financials, food safety and processes, quality management, lean manufacturing, supply chain optimization, and many others.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2023



\$53.3 Million

Total Increased/Retained Sales



399

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



\$35.5 Million

New Client Investments



\$12.8 Million

Cost Savings

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GET A GRIP: FIBER REAPER AND MMEC PARTNER ON INNOVATIVE CABLE CLAMP

ABOUT FIBER REAPER. Sometimes your biggest pet peeve becomes a promising business opportunity. After 25 years in the fiber optics industry, Jeremy Holm had never found a clamp that would secure cables tightly enough during the splicing process. He created the Fiber Reaper, an adjustable clamp that quickly grips and holds cables in place. In 2022, he and his wife Amber founded a start-up company in Kalispell, Montana, to develop and commercialize the product for the fiber optic industry.

THE CHALLENGE. Fiber Reaper has made significant progress in the development and testing of its product. However, as a two-person company, the Holms quickly realized that it would be extremely helpful to have support for many of the other tasks related to commercialization, such as developing the supply chain for the clamp components and navigating the patent application process.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Fiber Reaper partnered with the Montana Manufacturer Extension Center (MMEC), part of the MEP National Network™, on several projects to help the company move forward. Business Advisor Lane Gobbs first focused on identifying, researching, and obtaining quotes from contract manufacturers who could provide the metal pieces used in the tool. Sharing his own industry experience, Gobbs offered recommendations for improvements in the company's initial production design. By partnering with MMEC, the Fiber Reaper team could focus on the central product development tasks while still making progress on business development and commercialization activities. Moreover, the changes in design for manufacturing and having production ready blueprints resulted in valuable cost savings and quality improvements for the start-up.

"The MMEC Team has been instrumental in helping us get our business up and running. We could not have completed our patent application or filed internationally without the help of MMEC. They helped us to save an incredible amount of time and money with their expertise and industry knowledge, and the streamlined process made huge impacts to our bottom line."

-Amber Pacheco-Holm, Owner



RESULTS



1 new or retained job



\$200,000 in cost savings



\$50,000 in new investment

