

## CO-LINE EXPANDS WITH HELP FROM IADG AND USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**ABOUT CO-LINE WELDING INC.** In 1979, Dale and Tana Brand opened a welding shop south of Sully, Iowa. Because their business was located on the Jasper-Mahaska county line, they named it County Line Welding. Customers liked the quality work and personal service. With the introduction of the proprietary Sure-Latch in 1988, the company underwent a significant expansion and it has grown steadily in the years since. Today, Co-Line maintains a 300,000-sq.-ft. complex with advanced capabilities in all aspects of metal fabrication. The company's employee team numbers 150 professionals who commit to excellence for every customer. Co-Line is a private, family-owned company where the owners are daily involved.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In order to grow at a high rate, the company needed to expand its production facility and ramp up its capacity. CIRAS, part of the MEP National Network™, had worked with Co-Line as far back as 2005 to increase its productivity, but as the company continued to expand and grow, it needed to increase and adjust its production space.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** CIRAS MEP partner Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) had the expertise Co-Line needed when the Co-Line team started looking for financing options. IADG works with companies by meeting with their leadership to first assess the company's needs and then to help them determine if their company is eligible for any programs that can assist the company in meeting those needs. After assessing Co-Line's situation, IADG used their expertise to assemble the proper documentation and create an application for a low-interest loan. An IADG utility member then sponsored the application. With IADG's help, Co-Line was successful in being awarded a pass-through loan from a USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, a program which is designed to spur economic development in rural areas. The \$2,000,000 in low-interest funds helped finance the additional production space in a project overseen by Co-Line's owners. After receiving the award, Co-Line created a 120,000-square-foot expansion that now houses production space for multiple products, plus a new paint and powder coating line. The new space allowed the company to reconfigure manufacturing space throughout the entire production facility and to maximize productivity within the space.

**"The build-out received enormous support from the \$2 million loan. 'It was the best thing out there.'"**

-Monica Nikkel, Financial Accountant

## RESULTS



38 new or retained jobs



\$3,000,000 in increased or retained sales



\$2,000,000 in new investment

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