

QUALITY FROM THE START

ABOUT GRADY-WHITE BOATS, INC. Grady-White Boats got its start in 1959 in the Old Star Tobacco Warehouse No. 2 on Albemarle Avenue in Greenville, North Carolina. The fledgling business offered two boat models—a 16-foot and 17-foot runabout. They shipped their first four boats in February 1960 with 38 employees.

"The lap-strake mahogany boats developed a reputation for quality and seaworthiness. They were beautiful. They were functional. But, in spite of the boats' appeal and acceptance, the company was in financial trouble within a decade," explained Shelley Tubaugh, Vice President Marketing at Grady-White Boats. Then, by happenstance, Eddie Smith learned about Grady-White's plight. "He acquired Grady-White and took the helm, making the decision to steer the company into a world-class manufacturing operation."

THE CHALLENGE. True to his word, Smith did his research and hired the most qualified engineering and manufacturing experts to set up an efficient manufacturing process. They set up a standard cost system that included time and motion standards to measure the efficiency of individuals and the boat building process. In 1968, while virtually unheard of, Grady-White hired a computer expert to design a materials requirement plan to keep track of materials. These tools, and others used in current day manufacturing operations, catapulted them ahead of the entire boat building industry. The company became more efficient and lean and started to grow quickly.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. That's when Grady-White turned to the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), a partner of the North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP) for personalized assistance to address their expansion needs and coordination of resources. Tim Ivey, Director of Regional Operations, Northeast Zone for EDPNC, got to work right away. He was able to find assistance for the project from several North Carolina agencies including the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Grant program, matching funds from the Pitt County Development Commission (PCDC) as well as funds for educational credits for training at Pitt Community College. With \$500,000 in grant money secured via EDPNC, Grady-White was able to undertake a 70,000-square-foot expansion and add 65 jobs.

"EDPNC's assistance has continued long after our expansion. Tim continues to serve as a liaison in areas such as providing information about other resources the state has to offer. We are truly grateful for EDPNC's support. We have learned so much from their vast experience and knowledge as they guided us through this process."

-Jill Carraway, Vice President of Finance

RESULTS



\$500,000 in grant funding secured



65 jobs created

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