

## PLANT EXPANSION AND NEW HIRE TRAINING

**ABOUT UNITED FURNITURE INDUSTRIES NC, LLC.** United Furniture, headquartered in Verona, Mississippi, currently employs about 3,500 employees at its facilities including Nettleton, Tupelo, Okolona, Hatley, Sherman, Vardaman and Amory in Mississippi. United Furniture also has locations in Archdale, High Point, Lexington, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Victorville, California.

**THE CHALLENGE.** United Furniture completed the Lane furniture company acquisition in 2014 which brought two of the largest furniture production facilities in Northeast Mississippi under one corporate umbrella and created a double brand opportunity for United Furniture as an emerging industry leader with the purchase of the iconic Lane brand. This expansion allowed United Furniture to reduce the complexity of the company's portfolio and sharpen its focus on the growth of core well-recognized brands, including Broyhill, Thomasville, Henredon, Drexel, Lane, Venture and Hickory Chair. At the same time, the proceeds of the furniture products provided additional capital to further strengthen the company's prestigious portfolio and help fund expansion.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** United Furniture's main focus is developing a skilled workforce in all areas: customer service, new product development, upholstery and framing skills, developing quality machine sewing operators, and more. United Furniture reached out to the MMA-MEP Center at Itawamba Community College for assistance with workforce training funds to train new inexperienced workers who needed training in multiple products. The company's success has been anchored by the productivity of its employees and being able to create new product designs, and United Furniture has continuous training needs in upholstery, frame building, sewing, cutting, bundling, packing, and backfill. Continuous attention to quality and an intense training program is one way that this company continues to remain competitive. The training classes are provided during regular work hours by both in-house trainers as well as contract trainers.

"By utilizing MMA-MEP Center at Itawamba Community College (ICC) training resources, United Furniture Industries has been able to stay competitive in the fast growing furniture market, create 67 new brand styles with 620 different combination options in the last 16 months. Workforce training supported through the MMA-MEP Center at ICC is a strategic asset to United Furniture as it grows in a competitive global market. This partnership is strengthened and validated daily by ICC's commitment to provide quality services and training."

-Gene Pierce, Vice President of Manufacturing

## RESULTS



Created **67** new brand styles with 620 different combination options



**\$2.7** million in new investment in workforce training, capital investment and new processes



**80** new jobs created; 100 new jobs retained



**\$2,000,000** increase in sales; **\$1,000,000** in retained sales



Over **\$1,000,000** in cost savings

## CONTACT US



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Mississippi Manufacturers Association

