

## NEW PLANT LAYOUT BOOSTS PRODUCTION CAPACITY

**ABOUT MIDWEST COOLING TOWERS, INC.** Woman-owned Midwest Cooling Towers manufactures parts and components for more than 200 companies worldwide, working with firms on design, planning, testing and installation. Founded in 1987, the enterprise and its 350 employees operate from headquarters in Chickasha, a rural area southwest of Oklahoma City.

**THE CHALLENGE.** When Ann Pate acquired Midwest Cooling Towers in 2014, she found herself with a successful but inefficient manufacturing operation sprawled across 20 acres and numerous buildings. Pate knew the disjointed production flow was affecting her business capacity and threatening growth potential. Midwest Cooling Towers was simply not able to capture all the business available to it.

Pate turned to Scott Smith for advice. Smith, a manufacturing extension agent with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance and part of the NIST MEP national network, had worked on several projects with Midwest Cooling Towers and was considered a trusted advisor by Pate.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Smith met with owner Ann Pate and other company leaders to discuss production objectives. To help create maximum efficiency and meet future capacity goals, Smith brought in Rajesh Krishnamurthy, an applications engineer working for the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance. Krishnamurthy has vast experience in plant layout and design. He examined flow, digitizing certain operations to create a computerized model of production movement. This allowed Krishnamurthy and managers to test different scenarios without having to shift actual equipment or combine tasks. Optimal schemes were established for individual functions and those processes were then streamlined to create the most efficient overall operations. Several buildings were consolidated, and significant new capacity was created. Smith helped managers establish a systematic continuous improvement program to help prevent waste from creeping back into the organization. A second phase of the initiative is underway. Midwest Cooling Towers hopes to merge an offsite business element into its Chickasha campus, further increasing the ability to share resources and increasing overall sales.

"In reality, I don't think you can read a book and understand operational efficiencies. Knowing someone who knows the nuances is a lifesaver. I really appreciate the expertise the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance brings to the table. Leaning on that kind of support makes our success possible."

-Ann Page, Owner

## RESULTS



40% increase in production capacity



\$5,000,000 in retained sales



20 jobs created



\$250,000 in annual cost savings



\$250,000 in new capital investments

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