

EMPOWERING TECHNICIANS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL THROUGH ADVANCED ROBOTICS TRAINING

ABOUT KOHLER ENGINES INC. Kohler Company is one of America's oldest and largest privately held companies. Kohler Engines of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, produces small engines for lawnmowers and other kinds of machinery. The company has approximately 400 employees and is currently expanding to a full employment level of 600. The Kohler Hattiesburg plant has been operational since 1997 and has experienced consistent growth during that entire time, including most recently, the addition of a second plant. Kohler Hattiesburg has been a key contributor to economic development in the Hattiesburg community. Kohler headquarters is located in Kohler, Wisconsin.

THE CHALLENGE. In March 2019, Kohler announced plans to consolidate its North American gasoline engine manufacturing operations from a facility in Wisconsin to the Hattiesburg facility. For the local expansion, Kohler Engines leased an additional 300,000 square feet of manufacturing and office space, investing more than \$15 million in moving and upgrading equipment and retrofitting the space. Kohler's expansion includes 250 new jobs over the course of three years as the company ramps up production at the new facility.

With the new facility and final employment levels, Kohler Engines will be positioned as the second largest manufacturing employer in Greater Hattiesburg. The success of the expansion relies largely on Kohler's ability to find and train employees on advanced production techniques, particularly for its large scale FANUC robots.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. MMA-MEP Center at Pearl River Community College (PRCC), part of the MEP National Network™, provided a series of 32 hours of FANUC Certified courses for Handling Tooling Operation and Programming. The course covers the operational tasks to be performed by an operator, technician, engineer or programmer who needs to setup, record and/or troubleshoot programs on a FANUC Robotics Handling Tool Software Package.

"Driven by a smart manufacturing framework, our further expansion into south Mississippi depended largely on our ability to access and/or build a skilled technical workforce. The capacity to develop qualified local technicians and operators is key to our product line expansion and job investments. The cost savings and local accessibility of this training compared to other comparable options across the country was a key selling point in our decision to work with MMA-MEP Center at Pearl River Community College, and high-quality local training will continue to drive our expansion efforts over the next two years."

-Trey Smith, Manager – Human Resources

RESULTS



16 participants earned the 32 hours robotics certification



\$15 million in new investment in moving and upgrading equipment and retrofitting the space

CONTACT US



720 North President
P.O. Box 22607, Jackson, MS
39225
Jackson, MS 39202



(601)709-2921



www.mma-web.org/mep

Mississippi Manufacturers Association

