

GAINING EFFICIENCIES THROUGH PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

ABOUT ALLENFARM FENCE COMPANY. Founded in the early 1990's, Allenfarm Fence Company is a family-owned and -operated commercial and residential fence company. Allenfarm Fence manufactures custom-built steel and iron fences, custom wood fence panels and gates, and vinyl fabricated fence products. They employ 30 people in their Hermon, Maine facility.

THE CHALLENGE. Allenfarm Fence recognized the need to eliminate waste in their processes in order to grow their business. Senior management became interested in lean training and focused Kaizen improvements, but lacked the internal expertise to lead these changes within their organization. They reached out to Maine MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, for assistance. To ensure employee engagement company-wide, management wanted to engage their workforce in Kaizen in both shop floor and front office processes.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maine MEP facilitated Principles of Lean Manufacturing workshops for all Allenfarm Fence Company's employees. This awareness training enabled the Allenfarm Fence team to identify wastes in their wood fabrication shop and order processing system, which were addressed through focused Kaizen improvements in each area. Additionally, assistance with a 5S implementation in the wood fabrication shop, provided the team with the skill set required to implement 5S in other parts of the fabrication shop and warehouse.

Maine MEP also worked with a cross-departmental team on a Kaizen focused on improvements to their order processing system. Countermeasures implemented as a result of this Kaizen include mistake proofing, visual systems, and the elimination of redundant entry and checks in their order processing system. The combination of shop floor and front office improvements have resulted in shorter response time to their customers.

"It has been such a privilege and tremendous opportunity to be able to partner with Jim Fay and the fine folks at Maine MEP. Jim and the team have the winning combination of in-depth expertise in lean methodologies coupled with an effective ability to teach and facilitate the application of these principles. Jim's extensive management experience shined through as he so effectively guided our cross functional teams through the challenges of focused Kaizen events. Jim and the Maine MEP team are sincere in their interest in our success including going above and beyond to connect us with other resources as well as proactively reaching out to share insights and knowledge as we navigated our way through the twists and turns of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. We are truly thankful to have such a strong relationship with the exceptional people of Maine MEP."

-Brent West, Jr., CEO

RESULTS



\$110,000 in inventory reduction during the first year



30 employees trained in lean awareness, 5S, and Kaizen



\$29,000 invested in cost share for workforce training



50% reduction in order process time cycle

CONTACT US



87 Winthrop Street
Augusta, ME 04330-5554



(207)623-0680



www.mainemep.org

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