

HEAVYBILT LEVERAGES NEW TECHNOLOGY TO EXPAND

ABOUT HEAVYBILT. Since 1990, Heavybilt Manufacturing Incorporated (HMI) has made agriculture and energy-industry products in the rural community of Coalgate, Oklahoma. It has been on the leading edge of product design and development and early in its history manufactured the first “feed buggy,” which is a trailer designed for smaller farmers and ranchers to competitively buy in bulk. Today, the company employs about two dozen and offers products to the energy, construction, wildlife, and food service industries.

THE CHALLENGE. Over the years, HMI grew into a well-respected and successful brand across the agricultural and energy industries. But company president Steve Cody always worried about the seasonal demands of his agriculture customers and the cyclical nature of the energy sector. To diversify his business, Cody wanted to explore other markets and build on his employee base, which is vitally important to his rural community. He needed help in finding the right equipment to handle new, larger, and an expanded variety of materials. For advice, Cody turned to Kay Watson, a manufacturing extension agent with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, part of the MEP National Network™. Watson had worked with HMI on several projects and enjoyed a solid relationship with Cody and other company leaders.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Watson met with Cody as well as General Manager Waylon McKinney and other key leaders. The group discussed expanded production needs, process flows and the technology necessary to handle additional product lines. Watson brought in Rajesh Krishnamurthy, an applications engineer with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance. Krishnamurthy studied the necessary requirements and recommended purchase of new equipment, including a knuckleboom crane that he customized to fit HMI's new production lines.

With new capabilities in place, the factory's overall production flow was optimized with much of the work done virtually by Krishnamurthy. It allowed the leadership team to try various layouts without moving large pieces of equipment. The various schemes permitted Watson and Krishnamurthy to seamlessly integrate advanced manufacturing tools and concepts. Further, Watson developed employee training programs to ensure equipment was operated efficiently and safely.

Thanks to Watson and continuous innovation, HMI is now able to identify emerging markets and position the company to meet those requests in a cost-effective manner. “We continue to expand in areas where the competition has yet to recognize the coming need,” Cody says.

"The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance is a great partner for small companies like Heavybilt who have limited resources for technical advice and advanced manufacturing concepts."

-Waylon McKinney, General Manager

RESULTS



\$500,000 in increased annual sales



\$500,000 in retained annual sales



15 new high-wage jobs and 10 retained jobs



\$700,000 in new capital investments

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