

## PORTA-BRACE TRADES CASES FOR MASKS TO ASSIST IN STATE OF VT PPE PROJECT DURING HEIGHT OF COVID-19 SURGE

**ABOUT PORTA-BRACE INC.** Porta-Brace, Inc. is a North Bennington, Vermont, manufacturer of custom-designed protective carrying cases, soft and hard covers specifically intended for use by the professional audio and video recording industry, including broadcast news, TV production, music video, and film production units. Porta-Brace, with a second facility in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, designs all products in-house with a dedicated team of professionally-trained designers using state-of-the-art design hardware and software for the textiles fabrication industry. Launched in 1972, they currently serve North America and more than 50 global markets. Both facilities combined employ 45 people full time.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Porta-Brace has had existing and long term relationships with State of Vermont (SOV) procurement departments. Based on this and wishing to assist in whatever way they could at the start of the pandemic in spring 2020, the company quickly and successfully developed a COVID-19 surgical mask prototype.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** This design was quickly approved by SOV and the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMHC). Both of these entities asked Porta-Brace to supply the state with 500,000 masks. This led the company to call back all employees laid off at the start of the pandemic to ramp up production for 6-8 weeks. VMEC, part of the MEP National Network™, played an important role in this rapidly developing project, aligning SOV and UVMHC communications, material and elastic sourcing, alternative designs, re-tooling and general support in this important project to, for and with Porta-Brace.

**"VMEC facilitation of an emergency State of Vermont contract was essential to ensuring adequate PPE for public employees and health workers. VMEC coordination of multiple parties and organizations ensured imperative timetables were met. In the absence of domestic supply chain and sourcing networks, VMEC's 'local knowledge' and presence was invaluable to the state of Vermont and to the hospital group."**

-Gregg Haythorn, President

## RESULTS



**\$181,000** in increased sales



**\$2,500** in new investment in plant and equipment

## CONTACT US



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