

## PURDUE MEP LEADING THE WAY TO A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE AT TRI-STATE INDUSTRIES

**ABOUT TRI-STATE INDUSTRIES INCORPORATED.** Located in Hammond, Indiana, Tri-State Industries (TSI) is an innovator in the steel manufacturing industry. For more than 40 years, TSI has been a leading contract manufacturer to large OEM's in the rail car, construction, and mobile trailer industries across Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The company's services include welding, fabrication, coating, tooling, and assembly. TSI continues to evolve as the lessons learned have led the company to understand the best combinations of technology and manufacturing that deliver quality products to its clients.

**THE CHALLENGE.** TSI needed a partner to help build a strong and productive workforce for the future. With this goal in mind, TSI chose Purdue MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, to assist it with continuous improvement training. TSI recognized Purdue MEP brought a plethora of expertise that aligned with the company's Lean, quality, and workforce needs.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Purdue MEP's team worked extensively with TSI to develop a training regimen to meet its continuous improvement and workforce skills development needs. Purdue MEP conducted a gap analysis to determine points of improvement in TSI's workforce. This analysis identified 3 areas of focus: developing team leadership, reinforcing lean tools and techniques and improving standard work processes.

Purdue MEP outlined a plan to address these gaps, including Purdue MEP's Leadership Skills for Success program, a nine-day training series that gives frontline supervisors exposure to better communication skills, leadership techniques, problem solving, project management, teambuilding, stress management, and conflict resolution. Purdue MEP also provided lean practitioner training, which teaches and reinforces several lean tools, such as 5S, total productive maintenance (TPM), value stream mapping (VSM), and quick changeover (QCO). Purdue MEP also recommended training within industry (TWI), which helps supervisors and employees improve TSI's standard work procedures through TWI's job methods, job instructions and job relations modules.

In addition, Purdue MEP assisted TSI with training grants from the State of Indiana that allowed TSI to undertake this important training without impacting its cashflow. TSI qualified for over \$125,000 of Next Level Jobs and Workforce Ready grants that will keep its workforce competitive into the future.

**"Our experience with Purdue MEP leadership and lean training was highly rewarding with benefits that should reach beyond the topics covered by the instructors. On an educational level, the material was able to reach across all functions of the operation, while staying relevant to the diverse responsibilities of the group in attendance. As a bonus, I feel the leadership team now has a stronger bond and greater appreciation for work done by others in our organization. I would highly recommend Purdue MEP training and expertise for any company looking to grow the skillsets of its team."**

-Tim Keller, President

## RESULTS



15% increase in operational efficiency



Training instilled a continuous improvement mindset with TSI employees



Leveraged over \$125,000 in Indiana workforce training and skills enhancement funding



Focused on workforce training to support operations and company objectives



Improved workforce retention because of greater engagement

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