

COMPANY BOOSTS MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE THROUGH OMA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

ABOUT STROUD SAFETY, INC. For more than 35 years, Stroud Safety has designed and manufactured high-quality, innovative equipment for professional racing and the industrial workplace. Products include drag racing parachutes, fire extinguishing systems, safety restraints, and driver apparel. The company operates out of its main factory in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with a staff of about 25 people, most of whom are women.

THE CHALLENGE. Like most manufacturers, Manager Daniel Meek fought a constant battle to maintain enough skilled workers to operate his production efficiently. It was an even greater challenge for sewing machine operators, who require specialized training and often benefit was hands-on experience. For advice, Meek turned to Sharon Harrison, director of workforce development for the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, part of the MEP National Network™. The Manufacturing Alliance has worked with Stroud Safety on numerous projects and is considered a trusted advisor.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Harrison worked with Meek to develop a registered apprenticeship program specifically designed to target relevant skills and meet Stroud Safety's unique situation. Harrison has expertise in guiding companies through the design and implementation of customized training programs. The initiative launched with four apprentices in the company's sewing department, drawn from of pool of young people as well as seasoned workers. Harrison was able to secure federal grants to offset a portion of the cost in developing the plan. The apprenticeship program offers participants a solid career path to grow with the company. For Stroud Safety, it not only improves the skills of its employees, but provides a boost to new employee recruitment. The endeavor is paying off by helping maintain consistent production quality. It also contributed and helped secure a recent business expansion.

"At Stroud Safety, our family of employees is our most valuable resource. Thanks to the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, we created long-term, sustained benefits to not only our workers but to the growth of our company."

-Daniel Meek, Manager

RESULTS



4 jobs created



\$200,000 in new annual sales



\$150,000 in retained annual sales



\$50,000 in annual cost savings



90% employee retention rate

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