

COMPANY BOOSTS MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE

ABOUT KECO. KECO Manufacturing has a diverse history as a full-service contract manufacturer and a leading provider of body repair products, specializing in glue pull repair (GPR) tools. The firm was established originally as a plastics injection molding company in 1963. Through the years, KECO expanded its capabilities and evolved into a comprehensive manufacturing solution provider. The company operates out of its main factory in Oklahoma City with a workforce of about 50.

THE CHALLENGE. Like most manufacturers, Manager Mike Britten fought a constant battle to maintain enough skilled workers to operate his production efficiently. It was an even greater challenge for machine maintenance technicians, which are crucial to avoid costly production downtime. For advice, Britten turned to Sharon Harrison, vice president of workforce development for the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, part of the MEP National Network™. The Manufacturing Alliance has worked with KECO on numerous projects and is considered a trusted advisor.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Harrison worked with Britten to develop a registered apprenticeship program specifically designed to target relevant skills and meet KECO's unique situation. Harrison has expertise in guiding companies through the design and implementation of customized training programs. The initiative launched with four apprentices, drawn from a pool of young people as well as seasoned workers. Harrison was able to secure federal grants to offset a portion of the cost to develop the plan. The apprenticeship program offers participants a solid career path to grow within the manufacturing industry. For KECO, it not only improves the skills of its employees, but provides a boost to new employee recruitment. The endeavor is paying off by dramatically reducing downtime, which increases production capacity. In addition, OMA engineers helped KECO purchase new equipment to facilitate more efficient maintenance and operations.

"Assistance from Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance has been a game-changer for our company. The apprenticeship program provided us with highly skilled workers who meet our specific and unique needs."

-Mike Britten, Operations Manager

RESULTS



7 jobs created, 2 jobs retained



\$800,000 in cost savings



\$200,000 in new annual sales



\$100,000 in new capital investments

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