

LEAN TRAININGS AND FOLLOW-ON KAIZEN EVENTS RESULT IN BIG SAVINGS FOR AMBER WAVES

ABOUT AMBER WAVES INC. Established in 2002, Amber Waves, a family-owned manufacturer in Richardton, North Dakota, engineers and constructs hopper bottom grain bins for customers in Western North Dakota. Their story began in early 2001 when Ambrose Hoff and his son Jody, along with Gerald Hauck and his son Doug, tinkered with the concept of manufacturing hopper bottom bins in the small rural community of Richardton, where their families have farmed for generations.

When a tenured manufacturing company closed its doors in town these forward-thinking gentlemen sprung in to action, acquiring property and buildings, and Amber Waves, Inc. was born. The company opened for business in January 2002 and in August the very first hopper bottom bin was manufactured, sold and delivered.

Today, with thousands of Amber Waves smooth wall bins in service across the USA, their talented staff can assist with every aspect of your project. From design and engineering through manufacturing and delivery, Amber Waves has the knowledge and experience to get it right the first time. Amber Waves, Inc. is proud to be producing in the USA and operates from a 60,000-square-foot factory and company headquarters located in the heartland of America.

THE CHALLENGE. Amber Waves had previously worked with Impact Dakota, part of the MEP National Network™, so when they started experiencing workforce issues, they remembered their previous partnership with Impact Dakota and turned to the center for help. With limited workforce available in their area of North Dakota, Amber Waves needed to be creative and innovative with their current staffing.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Amber Waves began engaging and investing in their workforce by attending Impact Dakota's Lean 101 training, Lean Enterprise High Performance Manufacturing (LEHPM) training, and holding Kaizen events. They also participated in a business excellence assessment (BizX) in which they were provided an implementation roadmap to engage their strategy, organizational structure, workforce, lean concepts, communication and metrics/rewards. From the BizX assessment they started to implement huddle boards on the shop floor to understand their issues, problems and opportunities to engage their workforce in identifying items for improvement. During the kaizen events, employees trained were able to see the improvement process firsthand, see their ideas at work and make their areas more productive and efficient.

"Lyle and Wendy came to Amber Waves with a great attitude, they listened to our concerns and lead two, two-day events with Mike and Erik as champions of the events. They did a great job helping us use the Lean tools to effect long term positive change, the event was well attended by AWI production workers whose ideas were promptly implemented. I would invite them back anytime."

-Brent Swanson, Engineering Manager

RESULTS



\$20,000 in cost savings in assembly area



\$2,000 in cost savings in each fabrication saw area and ladder assembly area



12 employees trained in Lean 101



4 kaizens were held to implement lean training



2 employees attended 5-Day Lean Enterprise High Performance Manufacturing training

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