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Maine MEP Appoints Larry Robinson as Director of Operations

Augusta, ME – The board of directors of the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) today announced that Larry Robinson has been appointed the organization’s director of operations. Robinson is returning from Maine MEP after nearly a year of active military service with the U.S. Navy. He takes over the reins from interim director John Karp, who will transition to a Maine MEP Business Growth Coach.

“Maine MEP is pleased to announce the appointment of Larry Robinson as our new state director of operations. Larry brings to the position eight years of experience as a project manager for Maine MEP and two decades of experience working with leading manufacturers. He has demonstrated an outstanding record of success working for Maine MEP clients and is distinguishing himself as one of the nation’s leading instructors in Innovation Engineering,” said Bruce Pulkkinen, chairman of the Maine MEP board of directors.

As operations director, Robinson will oversee Maine MEP’s field staff of project managers, where he will play a leading role in ensuring that small and mid-size Maine manufacturers have access to the latest strategic tools and management practices for improving productivity and global competitiveness.

Robinson has served as an MEP project manager since joining the organization in 2004. He has more than 20 years of experience in Maine manufacturing, having previously worked as a program manager for the international electronics manufacturer Sanmina-SCI and as a process engineer for Hussey Seating.

“I am very pleased to return to Maine MEP and assume the position of operations director,” Robinson said. “Maine MEP provides a valuable range of services to manufacturers that can dramatically improve a company’s productivity. Our work with Alere (formerly Binax), the Maine MEP 2009 Manufacturer of the Year, is a great example of how lean training can help a company exponentially increase production capacity and become a global leader in its market.”

A Portland native, Robinson was recalled to active military duty for a master’s program in Military Operational Art and Sciences at the U.S. Air Force’s Air Command and Staff College located in Montgomery, Alabama. While he was away on service, Maine MEP launched a new initiative with the Maine State Chamber of Commerce to encourage Maine manufacturers to hire military veterans. The MEP Board Chair congratulated Robinson on his service to country and welcomed him back to organization.

As one of his first assignments, Robinson will be co-hosting a workshop on Innovation Engineering for companies attending the Lean Systems Summit in Portland on Thursday, August 9, 2012. The summit is designed as an opportunity for manufacturers, healthcare providers, service providers and state and local government agencies to learn more about lean strategies for improving organizational effectiveness.

The Innovation Engineering workshop will focus on a state-of-the-art system of management tools that enable companies to develop new products and services at lower cost and with less risk. Employed by some of the most successful corporations in the world such as Nike, Hewlett Packard, Walt Disney and the Ford Motor Company, the Innovation Engineering tools are now available to small and mid-size manufacturers in Maine through the Maine MEP.
“Innovation Engineering is a revolutionary system for rapidly developing, testing and going to market with new products and services. Every Maine manufacturer should understand the concepts that underlie this system, because innovation is the key to manufacturing success in a global environment,” Robinson stated.

Innovation Engineering combines a unique set of tools. It integrates very creative techniques for idea generation with rigorous quantitative analysis to identify which ideas have the best likelihood of market success. By generating large numbers of new product ideas and then analyzing them against a database of known product lifecycles, it can guide companies to the concepts with the greatest potential sales, thereby reducing the risk of a new venture.

Robinson will continue to focus on Innovation Engineering in the coming months. In September 2012 Maine MEP will be cosponsoring with the University of Maine a 2 1/2-day Innovation Engineering Leadership Institute for companies that want to learn how to implement the system. For more information on the Leadership Institute contact Maine MEP at 623-0680 or register for the event here.

About Maine MEP

The Maine MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2,000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits and enhanced global competitiveness. For information on the Maine MEP program, please visit www.mainemep.org, or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.