Xuron, Corp. Named 2015 Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award Recipient

Saco, Maine: A Saco hand tool manufacturer has been selected as the recipient of the 2015 Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award. In a ceremony at the company’s facility, the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) today presented its annual award to Xuron, Corp. and saluted the firm’s commitment to innovation, quality production and continuous workplace improvements.

Founded in 1971, Xuron, Corp. is one of the world's leading manufacturers of ergonomic, electronics grade hand tools. Headquartered in Saco since 1986, the company produces and distributes globally more than 100 different Xuron® brand hand tools and associated products for use in the electronics, aerospace, plastic molding, wire processing, hobby, craft, jewelry and fishing industries.

Maine Governor Paul R. LePage applauded the company’s selection and noted that its utilization of Maine MEP services has helped Xuron Corp. maintain a competitive edge.

“I congratulate Xuron, Corp. for its selection as the recipient of the 2015 Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award,” said Governor Paul R. LePage. “This company recognizes that success in today’s economy requires continuous improvement. No manufacturer can afford to sit back and do the same thing year after year. There’s a constant pressure to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and develop new products and processes. Xuron, Corp. has met this challenge and is a deserving recipient of this year’s award.”

The Maine MEP Manufacturing Excellence Award is presented each year to a company that demonstrates the leadership, vision and manufacturing excellence that characterize Next Generation Manufacturers. This year the Maine MEP award is being presented in conjunction with National Manufacturing Day, a nationwide celebration of America’s manufacturing excellence.

“Maine MEP is pleased to announce that this year’s Manufacturing Excellence Award is presented to Xuron, Corp. This award recognizes the company’s efforts to achieve world-class manufacturing status, implementing Next Generation Manufacturing strategies that have helped it advance in the global marketplace. Xuron, Corp. is renowned for its flawless craftsmanship and has demonstrated a commendable commitment to improving the lives of its customers with ergonomic tools and innovative design concepts,” said Maine MEP President Muriel Mosher at the award ceremony.
Over the past five years, Xuron, Corp. has worked with Maine MEP on a variety of projects designed to enhance its manufacturing efficiency and implement Next Generation workforce development and continuous improvement strategies.

The company first approached Maine MEP in 2008, as the global economic recession hit hard and the company saw a steep decline in orders. Looking for ways to cut costs and achieve greater efficiencies, Xuron, Corp. engaged Maine MEP for three successive initiatives. One initiative focused on key product lines, where a new work cell process was introduced that reduced employees needed in the cells by 33 percent.

Through a series of kaizen events and value stream mapping initiatives, a second initiative redesigned the company’s front end quoting and order processing. The project team developed an improved work area that placed 90 percent of finished goods within a six-foot radius, reducing travel distance by 65 percent and thereby reducing time to prepare orders by 25 percent. Scheduling and PO creation process time were reduced by 50 percent, and freed up shipping and receiving employees were cross-trained for other assignments.

A third project targeted the setup time for the company’s three grinding machines. By cross-training personnel and reorganizing the process, the project team was able to reduce the setup time by 49 percent and substantially cut the employee downtime while waiting for setup, with significant cost savings.

In subsequent initiatives Maine MEP provided an Innovation Engineering JumpStart workshop that focused on product innovation and worked with Xuron Corp. on business improvement and strategic planning.

“Xuron, Corp. is on pace to become a Next Generation Manufacturer,” stated Maine Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner George Gervais. “The company has done an outstanding job training its employees to utilize Lean principles, identify waste and focus on continuous improvement.” Xuron Corp. has developed innovative new products like the Micro-Shear® blade by-pass cutting technology used on all Xuron cutters. And, it’s promoted a safer working environment for its employees, while maintaining a global reputation for product quality.

Xuron, Corp. CFO Dennis Shores accepted the 2015 award and noted the efforts underlying his firm’s success.

"This award reflects the effort of our management and employees to achieve excellence in manufacturing and our dedication to delivering value to customers,” said Shores. “Equally as important as the physical and operational improvements that have resulted is the culture of team spirit and the desire for continuous improvement that has taken root throughout the company. We’re honored to receive this recognition and look forward to a continued partnership with Maine MEP."
About Maine MEP

The Maine MEP is a program of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and 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 professionals 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.