Auburn Manufacturing profits during planning and expansion

AUGUSTA, Me. – When Auburn Manufacturing Inc. needed to develop new strategic goals and objectives, president and CEO Kathie Leonard called Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP). Auburn Manufacturing develops, manufactures and markets textile products for extreme-temperature industrial applications and has facilities in Mechanic Falls and Auburn. After a Lean process improvement revealed disparate goals and objectives throughout the company, Leonard worked with Maine MEP senior project manager Wayne Messer on a strategic planning process that included developing new space, new markets and new products.

“In a see-saw economy, we maintained profitability, even with sizable investments in plant, equipment and people,” said Leonard. “Had we not invested in the training we obtained from MEP, we may now have been wondering what to do next. Instead, we are setting in place another three-year plan.”

To help develop the strategic plan, Maine MEP’s Messer brought in Suzanne Hamlin from Transformational Knowledge Group. The three-way team used external assessments and a baseline financial forecast to analyze market dynamics, company priorities and corporate-wide operational metrics. A $1.4 million investment added 30 percent additional manufacturing space, and streamlined market identification and product development.

“Their new, proactive approach eliminates barriers to getting more products into development and to the market,” said Messer. “Auburn has added a key, senior level employee and is tapping into outside resources for necessary new skills.”

Since its founding in 1979, Auburn Manufacturing has produced textiles for various uses including fire safety during welding, industrial insulation, safety apparel, gaskets and seals, and other MROP (maintenance, repair, operations and production) applications throughout the world. The company employs 50 full-time workers.

“Linking clients with sources of expertise is what Maine MEP does best,” said president Muriel Mosher. “In the past year, as a result of their relationship with us, 48 companies have created or retained 413 jobs, spent $6.99 million on new investments and experienced $10.1 million in cost savings.”

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 207-623-0680.