



**Office Locations:**  
 Celebration, Ft. Lauderdale, Largo

FLORIDA MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY CENTER (Florida MEP), through its experienced staff of engineering, technology and business management professionals, assists small and medium-sized manufacturing firms implement changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits, and enhanced global competitiveness. Contact Maria Alfano, 1180 Celebration Blvd., Suite 103, Celebration, FL 34747-4950, (321) 939-4000, Fax: (321) 9399-4001, Email: [director@floridamep.org](mailto:director@floridamep.org), Website: [www.floridamep.org](http://www.floridamep.org)

**THE  
 MANUFACTURING  
 EXTENSION  
 PARTNERSHIP  
 IN FLORIDA**

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a nationwide system of services and support for smaller manufacturers to become more globally competitive. At the heart of the system is a network of affiliated, locally-based manufacturing extension centers. Each center, like Florida MEP, is a partnership, typically involving federal, state, and local governments; industry; educational institutions; and other sources of expertise, information and funding support.

**COMPANY CLIPS**

**Eastern Aero Marine Reduces Inventory To Boost Customer Service**

Eastern Aero Marine is a \$10,000,000 domestic producer of life vests and rafts for the worldwide aircraft and marine industry. The company serves government, commercial, and retail marine markets, and supplies companies such as United Airlines, Air France, Boeing, Airbus, and the United States Department of Commerce. Located in Miami, the company employs less than 250 people.

High levels of raw material inventory at Eastern Aero Marine consumed excess cash and space. Unable to find a solution to the problem, the company asked the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP) for help. Florida MEP performed a three-day value stream map (VSM) analysis of the processes and procedures for both adding inventory and relieving inventory. Interviews of the purchasing, materials, and manufacturing managers and the Director of Manufacturing prompted an analysis of the top dollar parts used to manufacture the most popular vests, which were compared to actual annual usage and market demand. Florida MEP compared these results to the current inventory levels, which showed dramatic overstock on almost every part.

Florida MEP then prepared a current state map that provided important material and information flow, laying the groundwork for recommendations and a proposed future state. Important current state conditions pointed to opportunities for significant cost reduction. Among other suggestions, Florida MEP replaced several warehouses with point-of-use storage solutions, recommended purchasing policy be dictated by customer demand, significantly reduced paperwork, and eliminated redundant approval processes. All these suggestions helped lower costs, reduce inventory by 71 percent, shorten lead times by 10 days, and improve customer service.

*Continued*

**STATE STATS**

DATA\* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Number of firms served	<b>124</b>
Number of firms served for the first time	<b>146</b>
Number of projects completed with firms	<b>200</b>
Federal cost share for current operating year	<b>\$3,423,800</b>
State/other cost share for current operating year	<b>\$6,847,600</b>

*\*Data as reported from center*

DATA\*\* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Increased sales & retained sales	<b>\$32,118,000</b>
Client capital investment	<b>\$21,233,500</b>
Total cost savings	<b>\$6,243,016</b>
Jobs (created & retained)	<b>474</b>

*\*\*Source: Independent client impact survey*

**For additional information,  
 contact Dede McMahon 301-975-5020**



### **Long's Wheel & Rim Rolls Lean Practices Into Its New Facility**

Long's Wheel & Rim Inc. has been manufacturing almost any type of off-road wheel since 1968. Whether the wheels are for agricultural, construction, mining, logging, or industrial equipment, Long's can manufacture them to standard or customer specifications. Long's was among the first to manufacture specialty and high flotation wheels for log skidders and turf maintenance vehicles. The company employs 200 people at its Jacksonville, Florida facilities.

Long's Wheel & Rim, Inc. needed a larger facility to accommodate its growing business. Roger Brodt, Long's owner, attended Management Briefing sessions hosted by the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP) and found the information discussed at the meetings very helpful. When the time came to construct a new building, the company asked Florida MEP to provide a plant layout of the interior manufacturing space and review company operating procedures to identify improvement opportunities.

Florida MEP performed an on-site review of current space allocation and operating procedures. The organization also conducted a productivity study which included in-depth focus on areas such as material flow, issues related to process changes, and production bottlenecks. The study allowed Florida MEP to make recommendations to streamline production flow. Long's employees participated in an on-site lean transformation event conducted by Florida MEP and helped the organization develop a list of areas and processes that could produce substantial improvement results. Florida MEP also made features and layout recommendations for the new facility. Long's new facility is experiencing the benefits of product flow and space utilization in the form of company growth and a \$2 million increase in sales.