

For Immediate Release
October 30, 2006

For More Information Contact:
Zenagui Brahim
603-226-3200
zenaguib@nhmep.org

NH PULLEY PRODUCER PUTS LEAN PRINCIPLES UNDER ITS BELT
*NH MEP Helps New Hampshire Industries Reduce Inventory,
Increase Space and Keep Competitive*

LEBANON, NH – New Hampshire Industries (NHI) is a leading supplier of pulleys, spindles, and other pulley-like products, and is committed to product innovation and customer satisfaction. When NHI formed more than 45 years ago, the company primarily made idler pulleys. Since then, the manufacturer has expanded its production business to drive pulleys, cast pulleys and sheaves to better serve their clients' needs. With an expanded production line, NHI keeps very busy, with winter and spring the most active time.

“We definitely had a production peak in the winter and spring, but were looking to keep a steady, more efficient pace year-round. We had done some training on basic lean principles on our own, but we knew we could use some additional training and guidance from someone outside our company,” said J. Todd Miller, Company President and CEO of NHI. “John Simpson of the New Hampshire Department of Resource and Economic Development introduced us to Jane T. Ely, project manager at the NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NH MEP). Jane rolled up her sleeves and got right to work with us, and also assisted us in obtaining a Workforce Training Grant to defray training costs.”

Tom Green, Operations Manager and his team of 10 other employees received the majority of the training. The first training this group received was the basic lean manufacturer training, Le101. At an off-site location, the participants combined classroom work with hands-on simulation and learned how they could apply these concepts to their work environment. Jane also showed the group the importance of Time Wise® Value Stream Management System (TWVSMS) on their heavy duty idler manufacturing process. TWVSMS maps out the existing factory's product and process flow and helps a company determine a more efficient layout. From the TWVSMS in this area, the NHI team came up with 13 different projects that needed to be addressed in order for them to reach their future state.

-MORE-

“The team at NHI realized they had to change the sequence of manufacturing and the order of operations. They moved the machines and processes into a cell,” said Ely. “They decided to move a machine which had not been moved in twenty years to make things flow better. The team felt after they moved that piece of equipment, they could do anything. The success in this area helped pave the way for creating cells in the other production lines.”

Using cellular flow, reducing inventory and cleaning up the manufacturing floor resulted in smaller lot sizes, smaller inventory and increased space. NHI decided to clean out their storage space in the warehouse next door, and cleaned out more than 70,000 obsolete parts. On-time delivery and productivity have all been effective positively.

“This training with the NH MEP was extremely beneficial to us. Our very committed team has been meeting weekly with over 28 items to address on our lists,” said Green. “We are just getting started on our lean journey, and will continue implementing the techniques we have learned. Jane has been very dedicated to our success. We were not looking for a prepackaged solution, but rather one that was made just for us.”

NH MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP 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. NH MEP works in partnership with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development. For more information on the services NH MEP provides, contact the Concord office at (603) 226-3200 or go to www.nhmep.org.

-END-