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E3 in FRP Project Update

On November 18, 2014, MnTAP hosted an FRP Best Practices Training at St Cloud Technical College with about 30 people in attendance. Representatives from event co-sponsor Composites One, along with their partners RTM Ltd. and MVP, demonstrated the latest FRP spray equipment, presented information on setting up a spray gun for efficient coverage, and demonstrated operation of a small scale closed molding process.

In addition, there was an overview of money saving opportunities through the E3 in FRP project, information on energy savings, utility rebates, financial assistance from the Small Business Development Council, and the benefits of Lean Manufacturing.

The first company has been selected for the E3 in FRP project and the project is underway! Pollution Prevention and Energy Efficiency assessments have been conducted and the Lean assessment is planned for January 2015. While analysis is still in progress, a number of money saving opportunities have already been identified. Stay tuned for updates on this project.

Don't miss your company's chance for FREE help in identifying savings and efficiency opportunities. Submit an application to participate in the E3 in FRP Project today!

Did you know…

Lean manufacturing is all about eliminating wastes that can have a real impact on your bottom line. Lean tools have proven results in helping companies become more productive, more efficient, and save money. Some examples:

- Lasco Bathware, a 136 employee fiberglass and acrylic tub and shower manufacturer in Washington State, identified almost $200,000 per year in annual savings as a result of their participation in a Lean project. Some of the improvements included 5S organization of tools and inventory, optimizing their conveyor spacing to improve flow and reduce damage due to collisions, eliminating an underused oven, providing visual feedback on final unit weights to spray gun operators, implementing a spray gun calibration system, and improving mold setup and changeover procedures.

- A Lean project run by a MnTAP's intern at Schwing America identified savings of $7700/year with zero capital costs for implementation. Improvements included optimizing paint booth loading, repairing costly compressed air leaks, and reducing

unnecessary forklift travel.

- A MnTAP intern project focused on Lean and Energy Savings at Uponor identified $60,000 in annual savings by turning down equipment that was set higher than necessary, adding insulation, and eliminating unneeded equipment.
- A MnTAP intern project at STS Foods used Lean tools to identify $21,000 in annual savings with a 14 month payback period. Changes included setup and changeover optimization, 5S workspace organization, and repairs and updates to the compressed air system.
- Enterprise Minnesota, one of the Lean Providers partnering with MnTAP on the E3 in FRP project, reports average annual Lean savings opportunities of nearly $400,000 per company.

Some of the improvements that can be achieved through a Lean project include:

- Reduced inventory.
- Eliminating non-value added tasks, freeing employees for more productive work.
- Increased production using existing workspace, equipment, and workforce.
- Lower variability leading to improved quality and less scrap.
- Faster delivery times.

Find more case studies and ways to save in the FRP industry on the MnTAP website. This is the ninth in a series of newsletters providing helpful tips on how to improve YOUR economic results, energy efficiency, and environmental impact! Stay tuned for the next newsletter with more helpful tips, and updates on the E3 in FRP project.

Let us know if you are interested in getting involved in the E3 project, and send us your ideas for future newsletter topics! Contact Jane Paulson, MnTAP Senior Engineer, at janep2@umn.edu. If you are not the appropriate recipient for this email or if you know of additional people who should receive this communication, please send their email addresses to mntap@umn.edu.

The Minnesota Technical Assistance Program would like to thank the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the US EPA Office of Pollution Prevention for financial support of this project, and our project partners, SBDC, Manufacturers Alliance, and Enterprise Minnesota for their support.

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