

Volusia Manufacturers Association's "Manufacturer of the Year" Expanding its Business and VMA President speaks on VMA Benefits

The Volusia Manufacturers Association's Manufacturer of the Year and President/CEO are featured in the online Volusia/Flagler Business Journal.

December 21, 2009 (FPRC) -- Volusia Manufacturers Association (VMA) is the only manufacturing trade association established by manufacturers uniting Volusia and Flagler County Manufacturers and Associates. An article in this month's issue of the Volusia/Flagler Business Report (<http://www.vfbr.com>) showcased the Volusia Manufacturer Association's Manufacturer of the Year, A.O. Precision LLC of Daytona Beach. The second article in the Volusia/Flagler Business Report offers perspective on this year's manufacturing challenges and how the VMA supports its members going through hard times.

Even though this has been a tough year for many manufacturers in Volusia and Flagler counties, A.O. Precision Manufacturing LLC of Daytona Beach has had a record-breaking year. Their sales have never been better, continuing a six-year trend of double-digit increases in annual revenue. To accommodate the increasing sales and future plans, they are increasing production space by moving to a new 48,592 square foot facility in the summer of 2010. A.O. Precision LLC also added 28 employees to its work force increasing the number of employees to 183, positioning them in the top 20 companies by number of employees in Volusia and Flagler Counties.

The best part of this success story is that under direction of their president, Stephen Koch, their success was largely attributed to a major restructuring of their manufacturing operations to include all employees' opinions. They broke their employees into small teams with one appointed leader. They installed television screens throughout the manufacturing areas so that the employees could observe real-time progress. Most importantly, they solicited feedback from the employees on a monthly and quarterly basis. Koch said, "They have the best ideas. I always ask them what they think can make us better, or what we can improve on." Then they invested in training these employees. A new internal training manager evaluated each employee's skills and what areas of training they needed. A.O. Precision worked with two VMA members, The Center for Business Excellence and Advanced Technology Center, to provide training for these employees. They also provided training for managers on topics such as interviewing skills, performance reviews, and goal setting.

A.O. Precision's revenue mainly comes from government contracts for manufacturer of components used for government firearms (M16 assault rifle and M249 machine gun) or parts used in Aerospace for F16 and F18 fighter jets. They also manufacture components for civilian firearms for commercial gun manufacturers DPMS Firearms in Minnesota and Bushmaster Firearms International, Inc. of Maine. Future plans include expanding manufacturing to include medical surgical components and defibrillator parts after securing medical contracts. The new building with increased space will definitely be needed with all of these future plans.

Secondly, the Volusia Manufacturers Association President & CEO, Jayne Fifer, reflected on the manufacturing year in a second article. Some local companies were forced to close or lay off

workers due to the recession. However, the Volusia Manufacturers Association supported these companies and laid-off individuals by listing local job openings at other companies on its website, and by connecting them to manufacturers who might be interested in purchasing their manufacturing assets. This year, the VMA offered special training in lean manufacturing to help companies learn from each other to increase operational efficiencies. Though this year was hard for many companies and workers, some local companies had their best year yet and are expanding operations. Fifer said, "In the VMA, where one company succeeds, the group succeeds, as the VMA is dedicated to being an organization where hope begets hope, and can offer encouragement to those businesses, which are not quite on the upswing yet."

For more information on these articles, please see the current edition of the Volusia/Flagler Business Report online at <http://www.vfbr.com>. The Volusia/Flagler Business Report is the leading source of business news and useful information about companies in Volusia and Flagler counties and the issues affecting them. The Business Report covers a wide range of topics including residential and commercial real estate, construction, manufacturing, banking and finance, economic development, tourism, professional services, health care, and manufacturing.

For more information about the Volusia Manufacturers Association, please contact Volusia Manufacturers Association or Jayne Fifer at 386.673.0505.

About Volusia Manufacturers Association:

The Volusia Manufacturers Association was founded in 1980 in Volusia County, Florida by manufacturers for manufacturers. Volusia Manufacturers Association provides information, education and networking opportunities to help manufacturers grow and succeed. VMA are made up of companies that range in size from one employee to over 500. If you are interested in joining the Volusia Manufacturers Association, please visit <http://www.VMAOnline.com>.

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