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For More Information Contact:
Peter Weymouth
321-939-4000

AMCO Awarded IWT Grant to Help Offset Training Costs
Florida MEP Helps Train AMCO on Time Wise Principles of Lean Manufacturing

OCALA, FL – AMCO Water Metering Systems Inc., a leading provider of innovative metering products and solutions received approval from the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT) for \$20,000 in grant monies to be used to train their workforce in Time Wise Principles of Lean Manufacturing. Located in Ocala, Florida, AMCO Water is part of the Elster Metering Group, the world’s largest multi-utility metering company for water, electricity and gas metering. Despite having a comprehensive portfolio of advanced metering products and meter reading solutions, AMCO knew that in order to continue to grow its position in the market, operational improvements were needed.

AMCO’s journey began in April of this year with a change in leadership when Blake Snider became President of the company. Snider quickly realized that in order to sustain the company’s growth, the business needed to embrace Lean Manufacturing; an initiative focused on continuous improvement and elimination of waste. John Bankey at the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) was brought in to begin training the AMCO team in the Principles of Lean Manufacturing.

“Before we began our lean journey, AMCO was a functionally organized manufacturer,” explained Snider. “We moved work around the factory from one functional area to another until the manufacturing process was complete. With our lean focus and training, we have begun to transform our factory into dedicated work cells that focus on particular products by incorporating all required functions into a particular location,” added Snider.

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John Bankey has been working with the AMCO team, and has helped them create a more visual working environment.

“We transformed their working areas using Time Wise Value Stream Management System which shows the flow of material and information as their product makes its way through the production line. Now, the workflow is pulled through the work cell by actual customer demand rather than by needs anticipated by the customer. AMCO has been able to reduce their inventory and product lead-time while maximizing productivity,” explained Bankey.

Bankey also assisted AMCO by leading a series of Kaizen events -- short bursts of dedicated team activity, over the course of a few days, targeted at rapid improvement with the goal of making large gains in efficiency and productivity.

“In support of this training, we restructured some of our staff and added new personnel to the AMCO team. Our new team will be the driving force in our company for lean manufacturing, as we know that training and development of personnel in lean techniques will be a continuous event,” said Alistair Vaughan-Edwards, Vice President of Process Engineering and ‘Lean Champion’ at AMCO.

In order to continue training their employees on lean techniques, AMCO applied for an Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant, and in July, the company’s grant application was approved. AMCO will receive \$20,000 in reimbursement funds to help them maximize their training budget.

“This transformation has utilized our best assets, our employees. The AMCO team consists of over 250 personnel, and we want all of them to be active participants as our company converts to a lean facility. Thanks to the help of the Florida MEP and the IWT grant, this goal is now attainable,” added Vaughan-Edwards.

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AMCO Water Metering Systems, Inc. is a provider of advanced metering products and meter reading solutions. AMCO Water is located in Ocala, Florida and is part of the Elster Metering Group, the world's largest multi-utility metering company for water, electricity and gas metering. For more information on AMCO Water Metering Systems utility, industrial or submetering products, visit www.amcowater.com or call 800-874-0890. In Canada please phone 905-634-4895, in the Caribbean 787-872-2006 or in Mexico 525-55-203-8002. You can also send an email to watermeters@amcowater.com

The Florida MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) 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 2000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits, and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information on the Florida MEP program call 321-939-4000.