

**For Immediate Release  
May 4, 2009**

**For More Information Contact:**  
Gene Lussier  
Board Chairman, Florida MEP  
954-565-0047

**FLORIDA MEP LIGHTS UP THE WAY FOR SOL**  
*Internationally-Known Solar Lighting Designer and Manufacturer  
Implements a Series of Lean Trainings, Increases Productivity*

**PALM CITY, FL** –Sol, Inc. (Solar Outdoor Lighting), the world’s leading designer and manufacturer of solar LED outdoor lighting solutions, has worked on some pretty big jobs since their inception in 1990. Since 1990, Sol has manufactured over 38,000 systems for dozens of businesses, universities, and governments around the world, including Walt Disney World, the Statue of Liberty, the Pentagon, Miami International Airport, the public works department in Curacao, and the Jamaica Petroleum Company. Their mission is to provide environmentally friendly, attractive lighting systems in both solar-powered and efficient grid-tied LED variants.

Due to the firm’s rapid sales growth, the company decided to look for innovative ways to increase production without sacrificing the quality of their work.

“Having worked with the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP) years ago at another company, I knew they’d be the perfect organization for us to partner with to improve our business,” said Keith Bloomer, director of production engineering at Sol. “Their Lean methodology training helps us keep pace with the demands of our customers, while increasing our productivity and improving service.”

After Sol’s initial work with the Florida MEP, which involved help with a new factory layout, Sol embarked on a series of trainings. Those included Kaizen trainings in which a series of structured activities enabled a team to achieve rapid, action-oriented improvements in problem areas, and also Time Wise® principles of Lean manufacturing and other Lean implementation events to improve productivity and efficiency. Bloomer says fifteen people in the operations group at Sol were involved in the Time Wise® lean training and continue to use their training to evolve the shop as they move forward.

“Our production lines are implementing the Lean process and we’ve seen an increase in productivity by more than 50 percent,” added Bloomer. “We went from producing 30 fixtures a day to 80 fixtures a day. We are experiencing a growth spurt for our product overseas, as well as a reduction in lead time on our production lines. We will also start to see some profit increases as well.”

Sol also participated in the Florida MEP's Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) program, which is funded through the Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, and promoted by the Business Development Board of Martin County to area businesses. Several of Sol's inspectors participated in the formal training and as a result, one of those inspectors received a promotion for his work.

"Sol is really dedicated to growing its business. Each time the company participates in a Lean training, they immediately implement what they've learned. They are a very proactive company, with loyal employees, which is a testament to their work," said Phyllis Morese, project manager at the Florida MEP.

Ron Bunch, executive director of the Business Development Board of Martin County added, "When we talk about the high-tech green companies we want to encourage to grow in Martin County, Sol is a prime example. The assistance they received from our economic development partners at the Florida MEP and the successful results affirms the high caliber of resources available to help companies in our community – it is a great example of team effort."

Among other projects, Florida MEP project manager Wilhelm Barb recently delivered an internal audit/mentoring session. With the assistance of an Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant, Barb was able to work with Sol to obtain its ISO 9001:2000 certification through trainings and manual writings.

"We wanted to demonstrate that Sol is committed to quality design and quality manufacturing that consistently meets and exceeds our clients' expectations, which is why we wanted to be certified," said Bloomer. "From the ISO training to streamlining our production process, the folks at the Florida MEP have been extremely helpful and we hope to maintain our relationship with them as we continue to grow our business."

#### **About Sol Inc. – [www.solarlighting.com](http://www.solarlighting.com)**

Sol is the world leader in solar LED outdoor lighting solutions with over 35,000 systems installed in more than 60 countries on six continents. Since 1990, Sol has introduced innovative, reliable and cost-effective solar lighting systems that provide unsurpassed levels of illumination and reliability. Sol develops, manufactures and markets commercial/industrial-grade solar powered and energy efficient lighting systems for a wide range of lighting applications including area and security, street and roadways, sign and billboards and transit and shelter lighting. Sol is ISO 9001:2000 certified and committed to superior design, manufacturing, and customer satisfaction.

#### **About Florida MEP**

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.

**-END-**