

Training lays groundwork for the success of Anel Corp.

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Grenada — Anel Corporation located in Carroll County was a struggling metal fabricator before being purchased by Charles Holder, owner of Hol-Mac in Bay Springs. A strong emphasis on workforce training has allowed Anel Corporation to thrive, thereby preserving jobs and the local economic impact of the manufacturing operation located in a rural area. “The training has allowed us to move into being a more competitive manufacturer,” said Randy Watkins, plant manager of Anel Corp.

Anel Corp. partnered with Holmes Community College seven years ago for workforce training. An initial assessment found that a large portion of employees were lacking in mathematical skills.

“Through Holmes we did the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) before and after training with a software program called PACE,” Watkins said. “We ran every current and new employee through the PACE math module. Through doing that we had about 30 hours of on-the-clock training in the math module alone that increased those math skills up to an average of three grade levels per employee. We also ran them through reading and language modules in PACE.”

The community college also has assisted with safety training and forklift training. More recently Holmes has been partnering with Anel Corp. to provide QS9000 training and certification, and instruction in lean manufacturing.

Watkins said employees have embraced the process. They enjoyed the training, and that is reflected through improved employee retention.

“Our turnover rate has dropped dramatically since we started the training,” Watkins said. “Employees are getting more than just a paycheck. On the surveys we have done employees have given us positive feedback on the training. They appreciate the training and feel it has been beneficial to their jobs. It has been difficult to pull people out of production for 30 hours. But it has definitely been worthwhile.”

Liz Wilson, workforce development coordinator and assistant director for career and technical education at the Grenada Center of Holmes Community College, said she believes the workforce training has benefited Anel tremendously.

“We have worked with them in several different areas providing high quality training to meet the emerging trends and challenges of the manufacturing industry today,” Wilson said. “The training has ranged from pre-employment training to pretty sophisticated training dealing

with QS9000 and ISO9000, precision measurement and blueprint reading training and Kaizen training.”

Kaizen training is designed to facilitate continuous improvement of manufacturing by getting every employee involved. “It is very exciting because every individual employee has an important role to play by offering his input to the improvement of the process,” Wilson said.

“We have also been able to work with them in team management training and overall safety training to help Anel be a safer work environment and also more efficient and productive,” Wilson said. “Anel has been a great company to work with. They have a plan. They have a vision, and they work from that. We sit down each year and talk about the training plan that will help them follow their mission statement and vision for the company. The organization has outstanding leadership from Mr. Charles Holder at the corporate level down through Randy Watkins, the local manager, and his team.

“The company provides all the resources that are needed to implement that plan. Our role is to provide the training for employees to reach the vision and mission the company stands for. We try to find the very best qualified instructors to deliver the training.” Anel Corp. has received the Best Practices Award, awarded through the State Board of Community and Junior Colleges for best practices for workforce training.