

**For Immediate Release:  
March 6, 2006**

**For More Information Please Contact:**  
Jack Healy, MassMEP  
508-831-7020 ext. 12

### **MassMEP Produces Stellar Results for Thermal Management Company**

**Millbury, MA** – For small manufacturers, on-time delivery and high quality, long-lasting products are what separates them from larger companies and overseas competition.

Stellar Industries, a manufacturer with just over 30 employees makes a unique product, which is good for business, but the types of custom requests it receives from customers can slow down delivery.

The Millbury based company makes miniaturized heat conductive ceramic blocks, similar to circuit boards, which are made-to-order for customers in the telecom, biomedical, and defense industries. Demand for their products is increasing and as the company grew, management recognized a need to more efficiently manage their production process. Stellar called on The Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP) to help streamline their performance on the production lines. The MassMEP then helped the company obtain a Workforce Training Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training to finance the program.

“We trained all 32 employees on the basic principles of Lean manufacturing for job shops,” said Kevin Smith, MassMEP project manager. Lean is a technique that uses simple methods in order to eliminate waste and reduce manufacturing costs, and as a result, increases productivity.

“Stellar Industries not only showed great progress in the time it takes to produce a product, but they also improved their teamwork skills, and have continued to implement more improvements on their own,” added Smith.

**- MORE -**

“The MassMEP team opened our eyes to different ways of manufacturing,” said Ron Visser, President of Stellar Industries. “We can now look at everything from a different standpoint. We take what the customer wants and break it down into smaller steps to increase productivity and product quality.”

Since the program was implemented, the dollar output per manufacturing employee has increased 8 percent to an all time high for the company. Product output has increased by 25 percent. For the first time ever, all weekly work orders were delivered on time.

“Communication is key. As a result of the training, we have opened up lines of communication that weren’t there before,” added Visser.

The company also conducts frequent Kaizen events, short bursts of activity to make small improvements with a goal of making large gains in efficiency and productivity, which will continue to wring out more waste from their operation. They now also have a Lean steering committee that monitors such activity.

“The next step for us is to be certified by the International Organization of Standardization (ISO), the world’s largest developer of production and manufacturing standards,” said Visser. “Lean has allowed us to be more disciplined, so we should be able to go into ISO much easier than a year ago. Every day, we see improvements. It takes a continual effort.”

The MassMEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system 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 2,000 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, please visit [www.massmep.org](http://www.massmep.org), or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.

**-END-**