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## **Defense Contractor Teams with MassMEP to Meet Increasing Demand for Military Aerial Surveillance Systems**

**Chelmsford, MA** - In the ongoing military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the ability to have an "eye in the sky" observing enemy troops and equipment, and reporting back real-time data and video can be an invaluable tool.

Goodrich Corporation's Surveillance and Reconnaissance Systems (Goodrich SRS) team based in Chelmsford, Massachusetts is providing many of the aerial cameras for American and British military aircraft flying reconnaissance missions in combat zones overseas.

Each surveillance system is made-to-order, engineered to meet the unique needs and specifications of its ultimate mission, so as demand for their product increased, executives at Goodrich recognized a need to meet demand without stressing its budget. The company called upon the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP) to help them streamline their production process.

"Like any good company, Goodrich is always looking for ways to be innovative and make positive changes in their production processes," said Kevin Smith, MassMEP project manager. "The company had obtained a workforce training grant through the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training and they contacted the MEP to help them do some continuous improvement training."

Smith and his MassMEP team worked with Goodrich to incorporate several principles of Lean Manufacturing in Goodrich's Optical Electronic Assembly area. Lean is a technique utilizing simple but effective methods to identify and reduce waste and excess inventory, clear shop floors and streamline production processes all with a goal of decreasing costs and increasing productivity.

"As a result of the Lean training program, we've been able to dramatically reduce our cycle time and part of that is a reduction in the time it takes to set up a project," said Dan Nash, Goodrich director of operations for its SRS team. "We had a goal of cutting time in half and the results have actually been closer to 85 percent."

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With reduced cycle time, jobs flow more smoothly, speeding up the production process and reducing the amount of time between the start of a job and delivery to the customer. Active work orders were reduced from a matter of months, to just over a week.

As with any program aimed at improving productivity, the improvements are measured by its affect on the bottom line.

"There have been a lot of benefits," said Nash. "The changes have helped reduce our inventory levels and when that happens, the cost of building the product goes down."

The project has been such a success that Smith and his MassMEP team are going back to Goodrich in February for more Lean training programs.

"On our next project we'll implement what we call Kaizen events to further control inventory," said Smith. "We'll also be doing more Value Stream Mapping, where we map out the current state of how materials flow through production and then we create a future value stream map to improve flow, reduce waste and identify initiatives to implement for the future. The work we do with companies is focused on making immediate changes that will not only pay immediate dividends, but also prepare them to make improvements in the future."

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.

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