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**THEY TESTED THE WATERS, AND ARE PERFORMING SWIMMINGLY:
MICRO TECHNOLOGIES BUILDS A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE GROWTH**
*Maine MEP Assists the Laboratory with Workforce Development Opportunities, Lean
Training, and Quality Management System Implementation*

RICHMOND, ME – As the only commercial laboratory providing comprehensive testing and health services to businesses and scientific research institutions involved with aquatic species, it comes as no surprise that Micro Technologies is growing rapidly. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved laboratory, which provides diagnostic, certification, and veterinary services to a domestic and international client base, as well as running a grant supported research and development program, was outgrowing their current space, and also wanted to find ways to keep that competitive edge in the marketplace.

“We approached the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) in search of business methods that would help us maximize efficiency through potential workforce development opportunities. More importantly, we wanted to explore implementing an ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Quality Management System, which is an industry standard used by testing and calibration laboratories,” said Bill Keleher, CEO of Micro Technologies.

Bob Doiron and the Maine MEP team performed a strategic business assessment and issued a report with strengths and weaknesses that led to workforce development recommendations that was partially funded by the H1B Technical Skills Training Program.

“The Micro Technologies management team was energized by the assessment and we immediately began ISO/IEC 17025:2005 training, Time Wise® Lean training sessions, Time Wise® 202 Kaizen Rapid Improvement Workshops, and Value Stream Mapping, a

Lean technique used to analyze waste and ways to eliminate it in the manufacturing process,” said Doiron. “We then identified an internal Lean champion to monitor and continue the initiatives, and established a plan to perform kaizen events on a periodic basis to continuously improve. Micro Technologies also created a Quality Manager position to support the efforts of the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Quality Management System, and identified specific training for key individuals in the company in functional areas such as microbiology and internal auditing.”

Because of this intensive training, Micro Technologies was able to keep up with the increased workload over the past year while remaining in their laboratory, and even allowed the lab to increase sales by 20 percent.

“Lead times were reduced and throughput increased through our work with Maine MEP. We reduced our overall fish health inspection process lead times by 15 percent and reduced travel by 55 percent. I think the key factors in the lead time reductions were the elimination of redundant process steps and improvements to the overall process and standardization of work. Now that Bob and the Maine MEP team helped us to become compliant with ISO/IEC 17025:2005, we can also keep pace with anticipated changes within our industry,” added Keleher. “But most importantly, by sending most of our employees and management to the public Lean 101 training sessions, there has been a shift in our thinking, giving us an excellent foundation to deal with anticipated future growth. Our work with Maine MEP has certainly changed how we will approach the layout and flow of our new facility.”

About Maine MEP

Maine MEP is an affiliate of the 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 Maine MEP program call 1-800-637-4634 or visit www.mainemep.org.

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