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## **BINAX, INC., RECOGNIZED AS 2009 MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR BY MAINE MEP**

### ***Award Presented to Medical Diagnostic Test Manufacturer at the Scarborough Facility***

**AUGUSTA** – The Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) announced that Binax, Inc., a division of Inverness Medical Innovations, an internationally known manufacturer of medical diagnostic tests, is the recipient of this year's Maine Manufacturer of the Year award. Each year Maine MEP recognizes a Maine company that has achieved world-class manufacturing status and implemented best manufacturing practices. Binax was recently presented the Maine MEP award at its Scarborough facility.

“Maine MEP is very pleased to present the 2009 Maine Manufacturer of the Year award to Binax, Inc. for its ability to respond to infectious disease outbreaks, such as the recent worldwide influenza pandemic,” said Rod Rodrigue, president of Maine MEP. “As the demand grew for the diagnostic test kits capable of detecting influenza virus, Binax responded to the global surge by dramatically ramping up production. The company’s prescient implementation of Lean training initiatives in 2006 through 2008 helped Binax meet this public health emergency.”

Working with Maine MEP, Binax undertook a Lean manufacturing training initiative in 2006 and 2007 that streamlined the production process in its Scarborough manufacturing center and optimized the facility by introducing a flexible manufacturing cell orientation. The company followed up that intensive training initiative with additional projects in 2008 that built upon the initial efficiency improvements and extended them to key suppliers and the distribution center.

The impact of Maine MEP’s Lean training has dramatically improved production efficiency at Binax. Moreover, rapid improvement gains through Kaizen events allowed Binax to adjust to changes in daily demand by quickly reorganizing its production capacity on an as-needed basis.

“Due to improvements in Binax’s production cycle, a result from LEAN training, today we are able to adapt to the typical seasonal spikes by ramping up to meet the demand. This eliminates the risk of other competitors taking market share from us during a spike and, in fact, provides us a significant competitive advantage. As a result, our LEAN-trained production team has been able to respond to demand spikes and demonstrate the value of our company to customers in the medical and public health community,” said Jason Hallee, Binax’s Director of Operations.

"Binax's response to the global demand for its products demonstrates that fortune favors the prepared," said Maine Commissioner for Economic and Community Development John Richardson. "By implementing the latest Lean manufacturing processes, the company was able to seize a market opportunity and prove that Maine manufacturers can compete with any in the world. The 2009 Maine MEP Manufacturer of the Year award is a well-deserved recognition of Binax's commitment to manufacturing excellence."

"Binax is proud to accept this award," said Hallee. "In our industry, we seldom have advance notice when a viral outbreak causes demand for our products to shoot through the roof. Therefore, our manufacturing processes have to be extremely efficient and extremely flexible, while meeting the highest international quality standards. The Lean training initiatives we undertook with Maine MEP enabled us to develop manufacturing processes that meet these goals."

Swings in the demand cycle for diagnostic test kits are complicated by the nature of the product. Diagnostic test kits have a shelf life limitation that restricts a company's ability to stockpile them. In addition, international quality standards require the subcomponents to be serialized and traceable, so quality assurance is indispensable.

"Maine needs companies like Binax with the vision to identify business opportunities and the commitment to succeed," said Senator Elizabeth Schneider, chair of the Maine Legislature's Business, Research and Economic Development Committee. "Binax's creation of an internal steering committee to keep the Lean experience moving forward and maintain employee commitment to continuous improvement demonstrates the kind of leadership that is required to compete in the international arena. The Maine Legislature has strongly supported the MEP program and is pleased that its services are helping strengthen our state's vital manufacturing sector."

### **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](http://www.mainemep.org).