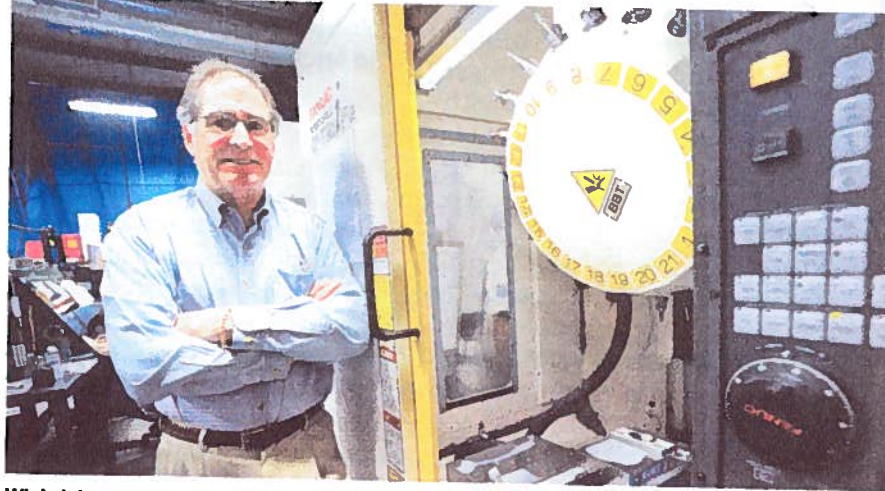


PHOTO / AMBER WATERMAN



**Wick Johnson**, president of **Kennebec Technologies**, says higher efficiency has doubled sales revenue. His precision manufacturing company won this year's Manufacturer of the Year award from the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

## Kennebec Technologies wins Manufacturer of the Year award

AUGUSTA — In Maine's version of an Apple Computer Inc. success story, Kennebec Technologies grew from a garage-shop business in the 1970s into a globally competitive company that on Oct. 4 was named 2013 Manufacturer of the Year by the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

The maker of complex high-precision components for the aerospace, defense, alternative energy, medical, semiconductor and telecom industries won the award for its leadership, vision and excellence that characterize next-generation manufacturers. The award was presented on National Manufacturing Day at the company's factory in Augusta by Maine Economic and Community Development Commissioner George Gervais.

"The key to Kennebec Technologies' success has been its ability to move forward by developing new products, identifying new ways to produce them more efficiently, and invest savings back into the company so that it could expand and create new jobs," Gervais said in a prepared statement.

The company started as Kennebec Tool & Die in 1972, four years before Apple. It pulled in its first contract to make skin dies for Boeing in 1978. It expanded into making aerospace parts, initially for space shuttle fuel cells and later for broader industries, including defense, energy and medical devices.

Kennebec Technologies also is known for improving its processes, investing in technologies and teaching employees advanced manufacturing techniques. The company started working with Maine MEP more than a decade ago to get technical and operational assistance, according to Muriel Mosher, president of Maine MEP *Mainebiz*. "They're always looking to develop new products and new business models."

The company partnered with Maine MEP in 2003 to upgrade its facilities and manufacturing processes to meet ISO 9001:2001 standards. Kennebec Technologies also was trained by Maine MEP on lean manufacturing principles, including a technique that helps the company analyze and design its flow of materials and information to bring products to customers.

Kennebec Technologies President Wick Johnson said partnering with Maine MEP for training was key to the company improving its productivity by 50%, doubling sales revenue and investing in new technologies. It also has reduced its new job introduction process from 10 to 12 weeks to four to six weeks.

MAINEBIZ STAFF

### NOTEWORTHY STATEWIDE

Four Maine wood pellet companies recently received payments for a total

**Pellets LLC**, \$3,081; and **Northeast Pellets LLC**, Ashland, \$2,384.

**Sleeper's Clothing and Footwear** in



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