

Helping employers keep jobs in region

Wood products innovation leads to opportunities for growth



“We have employees that have 40-plus years of service. They’ve raised their families on QubicaAMF; some have kids who work here. Any changes we make are done to secure the future of our employees and the plant.”

—Wayne White, Lowville, NY

*General Manager and Senior Vice President,
Pins Division at QubicaAMF*

“What I love about our product—bowling pins—is that it’s unique,” said Wayne White, general manager and senior vice president of the pins division at QubicaAMF in Lowville, NY. “This is a very fun business to be in.”

Wayne—who has worked for QubicaAMF for 22 years and oversees 85 employees in the pins division—knows how important the business is as one of the four largest employers in the area. The company is the largest producer of bowling pins in the world, but industry changes have posed challenges, and the number of bowling centers has declined steadily.

“We have made the product the same way for 40 years, and it’s the best in the world,” said Wayne. “We’re not changing that. Our new focus is on being as lean as we can so we can remain competitive and develop new products.”

The Center has twice provided financial support for QubicaAMF to consult with CITEC Business Solutions on innovations. The current project has focused on two priorities, the first of which is staff training to permanently integrate lean manufacturing principles into QubicaAMF, to continuously improve efficiency, reduce expense and increase customer satisfaction.

The second component focuses on engineering innovation that will help the company identify and test new products and services it can offer due to increased production capacity gained through lean manufacturing. QubicaAMF has tested cutting boards and shooting pins, and is considering providing other wood product manufacturers with services such as kiln drying, planing, turning, laminating, and more.

“The Center’s wood products program is helping us expand our manufacturing capabilities by networking with other companies and building new markets,” said Wayne. Even with these changes, the heart of every QubicaAMF bowling pin remains hard maple, all sourced from local or New England sawmills.

“Any changes we make are done to secure the future of our employees and the plant,” said Wayne. “I think running lean is the only way to run a business. You should always be looking for ways to do things more efficiently. Lean manufacturing can make the employees’ jobs easier, eliminate steps, and make duties less physically demanding.”

“Our employees take great pride in what they put in the box. We have a very solid workforce that stays at QubicaAMF,” said Wayne. “They’re great workers. Without them we wouldn’t be here today.”