



An ATAC Client Success Story



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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Attaining AS 9100 quality certification has required a long-term commitment from Muskogee Metalworks, but achieving this milestone in July brought with it the capture of another long-term dream. The small, 26-employee manufacturing firm owned by the Poarch Creek Indian Enterprises in Atmore, Ala., also is now recognized by The Boeing Company as one of its certified preferred suppliers – a designation granted only to firms who have undergone the aerospace giant’s rigorous evaluation and supplier mentoring/training program. Muskogee Metalworks garnered the two milestone certifications working through the Alabama-Boeing Supplier Development Program and Alabama Technology Network’s (ATN) Auburn University center.



## Firm captures dream by attaining quality credentials

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Muskogee Metalworks garnered the two milestone certifications working through the Alabama-Boeing Supplier Development Program and Alabama Technology Network’s (ATN) Auburn University center. The Auburn Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), AU’s ATN center, facilitated Muskogee’s quality certification training initiative.

AS 9100 is the quality measurement standard for the aerospace industry, said Chuck McPherson, ATAC’s quality



ATAC Director Henry Burdg, front row, left, and Muskogee Metalworks General Manager Mal McGhee, front row, right, are joined by Muskogee Metalworks employees to display the firm’s newly attained AS 9100 quality banner.

specialist who has guided Muskogee Metalworks through the project for more than a year. Criteria are based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) requirements; however, the International Aerospace Standard (AS 9100) includes some 80 certification measures over and above the ISO certification process for other types of manufacturing.

Attaining AS 9100 certification involves an extremely detailed and rigorous process of developing, implementing and training that produces a highly detail-oriented quality system that a company operates within and is measured against, McPherson said.

“AS 9100 gave us a systematic way to know that we are doing things right,” said Muskogee Metalworks General Manager Mal McGhee. “This system provides a way for us to very accurately measure the quality of our products and to have a baseline for our continuous improvement initiatives. We know it will help open doors to new business for us.”

In its 90,000 square-foot manufacturing plant, Muskogee Metalworks produces machined parts for military and private enterprises and participates in the U.S. Air Force Manufacturing Technical Assistance Production Program.

“We are excited that Muskogee Metalworks has achieved this

**“AS 9100 gave us a systematic way to know that we are doing things right.”**

**-- Mal McGhee, General Manager**

certification, and we are honored that Boeing could support them as they went through the process,” said Boeing Huntsville Supplier Management Director Robin McElyea. “We’ve worked with Muskogee Metalworks since 2006, and we look forward to continuing that relationship.”

McGhee credits the assistance provided through ATAC and the ATN for more than just enabling the company to position itself more competitively. He also credits specific financial impacts to ATAC-ATN.

McGhee says ATAC-ATN training and assistance in developing Muskogee’s quality system has directly helped the firm to be able to invest some \$500,000 in additional plant equipment; \$20,000 in information systems software; \$25,000 in workforce development; and some \$10,000 in other areas of the business.

Additionally, McGhee says ATAC-ATN is credited with job retention of at least three positions and the creation of five new ones. And, ATAC-ATN assistance has helped the company to increase sales some \$250,000 - \$500,000 annually and to retain an equivalent amount in annual product sales. Moreover, ATAC-ATN’s assistance enabled Muskogee to reduce overhead by between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annually.

Presenting McGhee with a special banner commemorating Muskogee’s AS 9100 achievement, ATAC director Henry Burdgr called the accomplishment the company’s “passport to compete in the world market.”

Poarch Creek’s tribal council head echoed Burdgr’s statement adding that the achievement is the culmination of an economic dream for the tribe.

### Impact Summary

Muskogee Metalworks credits ATAC-ATN with enabling the following economic and business impacts through its training and project assistance:

#### Investments

- \$500,000 in additional plant equipment
- \$20,000 in information systems software
- \$25,000 in workforce development
- \$10,000 in other business areas

#### Job Retention & Job Creation

- Retained three positions
- Created five positions

#### Increased Sales

- \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually

#### Retained Sales

- \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually

#### Overhead Reduction

- \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually

“When our tribe originally established this operation, it was one of our goals to be involved in a mentorship program,” said Tribal Council Chair Buford Roland. “These achievements are the culmination of a dream for us and the beginning of a strong and productive relationship.”

The Alabama-Boeing Supplier Development Program was funded by Alabama’s Office of Workforce Development – a grant providing matching funds to qualified Boeing suppliers for workforce development training in existing industries. As a pilot project to the aerospace industry sector, it provided a \$250,000 per year line of support for a three-year cycle through which Boeing partnered

with state and local agencies to deliver continuous improvement and quality system training to its supplier base. ATAC-ATN has facilitated this training and assistance throughout the grant period.

Over its three-year cycle, the program has provided assistance to some 15 different firms through more than 18 separate training projects. More than 767 employees have been trained, and economic impacts reported by participating companies indicate that the state’s initial investment multiplied 66 times through increased product sales, retained sales, job retention and creation, and the ability for participating companies to reduce costs and overhead.

*Auburn Technical Assistance Center was established in 1976 and is an affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network and an Economic Development Administration University Center. As an Outreach arm of the Auburn University College of Business, ATAC provides business and technical assistance, customized training, and consultation in implementing value-added strategies to manufacturers and other businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies in Alabama and the Southeast. SOAR is an ATAC publication. Direct inquiries and questions to Mitch Emmons, Sr. Outreach Assoc., 334.844.3881, emmonmb@auburn.edu.*

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