



NEWS RELEASE

900 N. Stiles Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3234, USA • Tel: 405-815-6552 • OKcommerce.gov

Media Contact:

Amy Blackburn
Oklahoma Department of Commerce
405-855-8155
amy.blackburn@okcommerce.gov

For Immediate Release

August 12, 2022

Commerce Team Tours Northeast Oklahoma Companies

TULSA, OKLA. – Commerce executives visited three manufacturing companies in Northeast Oklahoma that were awarded funds through the Oklahoma Innovation Expansion Program (OIEP). The companies included Hill Manufacturing & Fabrication, Shen Te Enterprises and VMI Inc. During the visits, Commerce staff spoke with the companies about how they will utilize funds from OIEP to grow or diversify their operations. Hill Manufacturing & Fabrication (Broken Arrow) was awarded \$75,000 which will support expanded capabilities and shorten lead-times by approximately 25 percent. Shen Te Enterprises (Tulsa) was awarded \$50,000 which will help the company produce component parts, eliminating a regular supply chain issue and opening the door for new operational capacity. VMI, Inc. (Cushing) was awarded \$25,000 to go toward the acquisition of property near its existing facility to relocate its sand blasting operations and also expand its pipe storage capacity. By relocating these operations, VMI will be able to replace its manual machining centers with new CNC machines and, eventually, 3D printing machines.

“Getting to visit with these companies and see their operations first-hand is invaluable,” said Brent Kisling, Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Commerce. “Commerce is committed to supporting Oklahoma businesses and we are proud of the way the Oklahoma Innovation Expansion Program is impacting so many across our state. It’s exciting to see how these companies are diversifying their operations and growing, creating more jobs and investment in our state and offering an incredible ROI on the state’s investment.”

“When I talk to my peers around the country, it is clear to me that what the state is doing to help existing small businesses is nearly unprecedented,” said Mike Payne, President, Hill Manufacturing & Fabrication. “The OIEP funding is truly unique and will allow Hill to increase our capacity, creating jobs and growth for our team.”

“Meeting the demands of a growing woman-owned small business amid a supply chain crisis takes extra manpower and equipment which was made possible with the OIEP program,” said Kim Goza, Marketing & Human Resource Manager. “The OIEP program came along just as Shen Te was working on a financial plan to expand and add more employees to our

manufacturing and engineering departments. Thank you, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, for looking out for those companies who strive to grow and keep it Oklahoma-made.”

“The OIEP funding is a huge boost to VMI to help kickstart our expansion and growth into the future,” said Cash Maitlen, President, VMI, Inc. “Manufacturing requires constant innovation to stay ahead of global competition and with the assistance of the OIEP funding we will be one step ahead in improving our operations. We are proud of Oklahoma and want to represent the state and our community around the globe the best we can. Thank you to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce for your trust to invest in us and others to continue to bring great things to Oklahoma.”

"It is a privilege to work with many great Oklahoma companies through OIEP," said Michael Davis, President and CEO of Oklahoma Finance Authorities. "And even more rewarding to have the opportunity to visit with them and see firsthand how they are utilizing the awarded funds to increase capabilities, address supply chain bottlenecks, diversify revenue streams and grow their workforce."

Hill Manufacturing & Fabrication was founded in 1976 and is a leader in precision machining and fabrication. The company is an ISO 9001:2015 certified job shop with more than 30 CNC machines, employing machinists, welders, and manufacturing professionals in its 37,000-sq-ft. facility.

Shen Te Enterprises was founded in 1996 and is a certified woman-owned small business supporting the aerospace and defense sector. The company specializes in logistic support, engineer support, and building low fidelity maintenance, cockpit, and cabin training equipment. The company supports all branches of the U.S. military and is skilled in all aspects of Military Specification and Commercial Training System requirements.

VMI, Inc. designs, manufactures, and rents dredges and sludge handling equipment for customers worldwide. VMI supplies machines for all types of operations including environmental, agricultural and mining to dig and clean out bodies of water. The company was recently featured on Manufacturing Marvels® on the Fox Business Network® and is celebrating its 50th year in operation. Cash Maitlen represents the 3rd generation of the Maitlen family to run the company.

OIEP utilizes funds set aside by the Oklahoma Economic Development Pooled Finance Act (62 OS 891.1 et seq). Participating businesses are required to provide quarterly reports verifying employment levels and expenditures, as well as submit verification of purchase and installation of machinery and equipment. The full list of OIEP recipients can be found on the Commerce website at www.okcommerce.gov/OIEP.

###