

Red River begins its lean journey

By Billy Roberts, DDRT Lean Team Coordinator

Defense Distribution Depot Red River, Texas, has begun its journey through Lean. Implemented in February 2006, team members worked with Red River Army Depot and their Lean Office for three months learning how the Army depot conducted their Lean events.

Upon returning to the Red River depot, the first event to take place was in the Federal Express/United Parcels Service priority overnight receiving area. This was a joint venture between both the Red River and Army depot team members. The focus of this project was to create a flow cell with standard work for overnight priorities. The project goal was to improve man-hours per line item shipped, reduce floor space usage, in/out same day ship and improve utilization of floor space. All goals were accomplished with at least an 11 percent improvement in all categories with cost avoidance of more than \$200,000.

The second event was the start of a five-week process that began with developing a value stream map of the receiving area. The first focus area was the receiving area of medium/heavy bulk with concentration in off-load, through in-check, induction and out-loading. Project goals were to reduce waste in over processing, smooth product flow, identify safety issues, improve utilization of floor space and establish first-in, first-out processes. The event increased the process area along with the decrease in staging area for a reduction of over 2000 sq. ft. in floor space. By reducing the floor space and implementing FIFO lanes, the total distance for the three operator work stations in this area dropped from more than eight miles per day to slightly more than two.

The next area the team worked on was the multi-pack breakdown area. The focus on this area was to increase the flow of material by reducing the waste of inventory, conveyance, motion, rework, waiting and overproduction. With

conveyance being relocated and work stations being moved, the movement in this area will be reduced from 2148 feet per hour to 537 feet per hour. This also created constant FIFO inside the breakdown area and reduced time outside the area from 68 percent to 43 percent.

The layout period for Red River was from May to September 2006. During that time 18 people went through senior leaders training, 65 through Lean principles training, and 31 through Value Stream Map/Rapid Improvement Event training. Ten employees from the Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Ga., also attended the training.

The Red River Lean team will be looking at all phases of operations at the depot, as well as, participating in other joint ventures with the Army Depot.

The future is bright and implementing Lean thinking will help make the processes better for the worker and the warfighter.



The Heavy and Medium Bulk area for DDRT's new procurement BEFORE Lean implementation.



The Heavy and Medium Bulk area for DDRT's new procurement AFTER Lean implementation.



DDRT's Federal Express and UPS Overnight area BEFORE Lean implementation.



DDRT's Federal Express and UPS area AFTER instituting the Lean process.

DLA'S 4 AREAS OF FOCUS

- ★ WARFIGHTER SUPPORT
- ★ STEWARDSHIP
- ★ GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
- ★ LEADERSHIP