



# *impact!*

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## **K & S Wire Products Honored For Continuous Improvement**



Participants in the Missouri *impact!* Award ceremony included, from left, State Representative Ron Richard, State Senator Gary Nodler, Missouri Enterprise President Mary Dean, K & S Wire Products President Gene Schwartz, Sr., State Representative Marilyn Ruestman, State Representative Kevin Wilson, Terry Campbell district director for Senator Jim Talent and Jon Bledsoe, field representative for Congressman Roy Blunt.

On Thursday, February 23, just one day before receiving the Missouri *impact!* Award for Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing Excellence, K & S Wire Products loaded a shipping container with some 111,000 wire frames and sent it on its way to China. There the parts will be used in building displays for marketing the popular "flip-flop" shoes in retail outlets across America.

According to K & S Wire Products President Gene Schwartz, Sr., the company's commitment to "Lean" Enterprise principles and continuous improvement enabled it to successfully compete for the project and complete it. "This was a first for us," Schwartz said, "and I hope we will have many more in the future."

Missouri State Senator Gary Nodler and State Representatives Kevin Wilson, Ron Richard and Marilyn Ruestman presented the award to Schwartz in a ceremony at the company's newly expanded plant.

"K & S Wire has been an outstanding corporate citizen of my district. Gene Schwartz and his team have a history of creating jobs and expanding opportunities through a commitment to excellence and quality in the products they produce and the service they provide to the consumer. I am proud to have them in my district." Senator Nodler said at the ceremony.

Neosho City Councilman Jeff Werneke, Gary Pearman of the Neosho Economic Development Department and Teresa Hauke,

executive director of the Mid-America Trade Adjustment Assistance Center also participated in the award ceremony. Others in attendance included Rita Needham, executive director, Southwest Area Manufacturers Association and Gary Marble, president, Associated Industries of Missouri.

Missouri Enterprise President Mary Dean said the K & S Wire Products is being honored for its company wide commitment to achieving world class manufacturing status and for the exceptional growth the company has recorded since its founding 10 years ago.

Schwartz accepted the award on behalf of the company's employees

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K&S Wire

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K & S Wire President Gene Schwartz, Sr., receives the Missouri *impact!* Award from Missouri Enterprise President Mary Dean.

and thanked Missouri Enterprise for its contributions to the company's growth.

The company manufactures a variety of steel CNC wire forms, grills, grates, guards, display units and custom products for various other manufacturers and for consumer use. The company recently completed a 30,000 square foot addition. It is the sixth expansion in the company's history and the workforce has grown from 3 in 1995 to 105 currently.

The current expansion provides space for a new division of the company called Neosho Powder Paint Company. The new division does custom coating on small or large quantities as well as product assembly, packaging and storage.

The new division recently received a contract to paint 875,000 parts. "The project was originally intended to go to China," Schwartz said, "but with 'Lean Manufacturing', we proved it could be done here in Neosho."

In response to its dramatic growth, Schwartz said, the company is continually seeking ways to incorporate industry "best practices" and state-of-the-art techniques to enhance produc-

tivity and further compete with low cost producer countries. The company has worked with Missouri Enterprise for several years to create a culture committed to "Lean" Enterprise principles and to integrate those principles into its everyday operations.

"Lean Enterprise" is a systematic means of identifying waste in a company's operations and reducing or eliminating those activities that do not add value to the company's products, Schwartz said. "It's not a way to reduce the workforce," Schwartz emphasized. "For K & S, it's the opposite. As we have embraced a 'Lean' culture, we have been able to grow and add employees," he said.

Missouri Enterprise created the Missouri *impact!* Award in 1998 to recognize the accomplishments of its business clients and associates who have excelled in the areas of continuous improvement in manufacturing, innovative technology development, environmental solutions or contributions to the success of Missouri business and community/state economic development.



Dave Padgett, K & S Wire Products Executive Vice President told the audience about the company's continuous improvement efforts as Gene Schwartz looks on.



Guests at the Missouri *impact!* Award Ceremony at K & S Wire Products enjoyed a plant tour following the presentation.



Chuck Knight to Keynote St. Louis ASQ Conference

The St. Louis Section of ASQ will celebrate its 60th anniversary at its annual quality conference April 5 - 7. Emerson Chairman Emeritus Charles F. Knight will deliver the keynote address and there will be three conference educa-

tional tracks, including **People and Process; Safety and Health; and Quality Tools and Standards.**

The purpose of the conference is to facilitate continuous improvement and increased customer satisfaction by identi-

fying, communicating and promoting the use of quality principles, concepts and technology, according to the Section.

For more information about the Conference, contact Steve Mundwiller at 314-239-4685.