



Keeping The Workers In Mind

Recognizing The Changing Times, Local Companies Are Offering Flexibility To Hire, Retain Employees

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Employers in Yankton are recognizing the need to demonstrate flexibility in the workplace in order to retain the best talent.

Mike Dellinger, executive director of the Yankton Office of Economic Development and president of Yankton Area Progressive Growth, said there is still structure within Yankton's workforce, but the need to become more flexible is growing.

"We still know we need to work at least a 40-hour week as a full-time employee to gain the full wage and benefits — that kind of thing is important," he said. "Many times, we're seeing companies, who do things project by project or piece by piece, might find a way to let some flexibility within the team. Instead of all four laborers having to work hard through the project, there might be a constant of three, and one person is getting time off at some point in time. It's a way of thinking outside of the box."

Dellinger said there is also a need for businesses to become more creative to attract and retain the kind of talent they want.

"Another area of interest is job sharing. That is to take what might be a normal 40-hour week job and sharing it among two or three people,

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like a semi-retired person or a couple of retired folks," he said. "The older work force can get back into play with the job-share perspective. Some companies are doing that here, which is very interesting to me, because the older workforce is where all the skill and experience is. They don't want to work 40 hours a week, but it might be that their pension took a hit over the last few years and they could use some extra money."

Mayor Nancy Wenande has also noticed that companies have to adjust to a more mobile generation of workers.

"The generation coming out of high school is

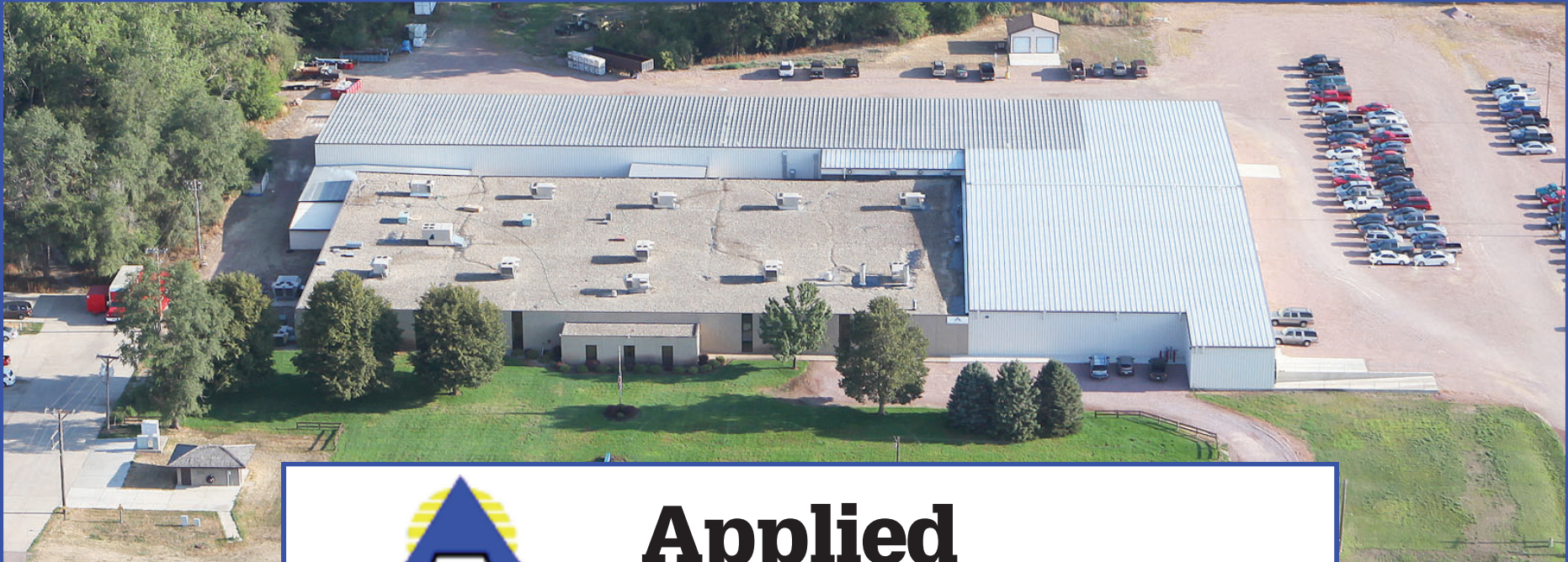
expecting to get more by working less as opposed to the baby boomer generation who worked more and received less," she said. "You really do see it, and it's about learning how to manage a different generation of people. It's not necessarily a bad thing, but it's very different. People seem to just up and move on a whim sometimes. It's interesting."

With a growing work force comes a growing population. Some people fear that happening, Wenande said.

"Importing people to fill some of these jobs and also to get more kids in our schools, more homes built — all of that is good for Yankton," she said. "We can still grow as long as we're growing smart and it's managed growth. Even if Hyperion comes into play, that could be a positive impact on Yankton if we're prepared for it and we have a logical plan in place to handle an influx of either a workforce that needs to be bused down to work, or we have upper-level executives who are looking for a home on the lake."

For Dellinger, growing smart can be a challenge, especially because employees who are retiring are not being replaced with the same level

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Applied Engineering, Inc.

Applied Engineering Inc., a manufacturer of precision machined aluminum parts and assemblies for the aerospace, defense, medical and other industries, moved to Yankton in 1984 from Rochester, Minnesota.

In 1984, there were only 10 employees; today there are 170 employees. Applied has added three large building additions to the original structure and much advancement in technology. We started with two horizontal CNC machines and now there are 37. Primarily, we produce products for the aerospace industry but continually pursue opportunities in other industries.

Tom Bohnet, President and owner of Applied, continues to invest in our employees, technology and the community.

Employees:

The success of our employees impacts Applied's success as a company. We believe in continuous education. Whether it is a seminar, class, college course, or a full degree Tom looks to give his employees the tools necessary to do the job. As Technology advances our employees need the knowledge to advance as well. Monetary incentives are also offered to employees for process, safety and quality improvements. Employees of Applied are provided a safe, clean, and climate controlled working environment.



Technology:

Our investment in technology is what will keep Applied competitive in today's market; technology, whether it be a software program or machine that can give us the ability to be more effective and efficient. Our customers have specific specifications that consist of extremely tight tolerances (which would be difficult if not impossible for the human hand or eye). We have made many investments throughout the years from our rail-systems to our 5-axis machining center.

Community:

The growth and development of the Yankton community greatly impacts Applied's ability to grow. Applied Engineering takes a proactive role in informing our youth and educators on the career opportunities that exist in the manufacturing sector; Applied works closely with RTEC on classes and programs that would benefit individuals in finding careers locally. Tom has helped sponsor a variety of community organizations throughout the years to help with the success of events and charities.

If we have a building and technology we still do not have a business until we have employees that produce quality products on time for our customers. What truly made Applied grow and develop over the years is the commitment, loyalty, and drive of its employees. Thank you to all of you!!!

