



# Clockwork Operations at JSC



Maker of Honda structural parts ramps up new plant in northwest Georgia

The immaculate plant floor of Jefferson Southern Corp. is a sea of colorful automatons rising up and down, swiveling and dipping like midway rides at the state fair. The mechanical clanging of steel against steel and the whoosh of air in pneumatic machinery add further to the impressive sensory experience at this new, 137,000-sq.-ft. facility in Rockmart, Ga., where components for Honda Odyssey minivans are produced at a rate exceeding 500 per day.

Efficiency is king at JSC, already exemplified at its two sister plants in Ohio and Ontario (called Jefferson Industries Corp. and Jefferson Elora Corp., respectively). So when Quick Start officials visited these sites two years ago in the early stages of planning a workforce training program, they knew the project would proceed like clockwork.

And it did. Construction of the building was completed last summer; by November the plant was operational, with 110 associates fully trained on such topics as operating a 2,500-ton press, welding, plant safety and assimilation into the Japanese workplace philosophy — all taught by Quick Start. The training, which began in May 2001, continues today.



JSC associates change work positions throughout the day to alleviate stress on one part of the body, thereby ensuring maximum efficiency.

Company president Koichi Miyazaki, who previously worked at the Ohio site, remarks on the near-perfect launch of operations at the Georgia facility. “Quick Start enabled us to have a smooth and speedy opening,” he says. “The training gave

us a good focus and concentration on safety. This start-up was extremely efficient, in comparison to other experiences I’ve had.”

Scott Brooks, sales and purchasing manager, also came from the Ohio site and initially found it difficult to

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Scott Brooks (left), sales and purchasing manager, and Steve Blankenship, HR manager, view rows of steel components on the plant floor. Brooks and Blankenship are already gearing up for the plant's expansion, which will serve new customers and add 50 people to the workforce.

Fifty-five robots are placed throughout the plant floor, with 90 percent performing resistance-welding and 10 percent doing sub-assembly. The plant produces integral structural parts, so absolute precision is required to meet Honda's stringent safety standards.



believe what Quick Start offered. But he soon became a believer. "We have since recommended Quick Start to other companies relocating here," he says.


The training provided by Quick Start was custom-tailored to fit JSC's needs. Although many trainees had years of prior manufacturing experience in the textiles industry, skills learned in Quick Start classes represented an entirely different approach to the manufacturing process.

"The class in Total Productive Maintenance was eye-opening to them," recalls Mike deGrauw, plant manager. "It introduced the idea of involving operators in maintenance of the machinery, which takes the burden off the technical people."

Maintenance can't be down-

played in a plant that has 80 percent automation, with 55 robots welding, drilling, transporting and doing quality checks on chassis and dashboards — 11 different parts altogether.

With Honda vehicles already in great demand and JSC seeking additional automaker customers, the company plans to expand its production capabilities, adding square footage to the existing plant and hiring 50 new team members. Quick Start will be involved in Phase II as well.

"I want to offer my sincere appreciation to Quick Start for enabling us to have a top-quality business in Georgia," Miyazaki says. "We ask for Quick Start's continued support, so we can have a second smooth start-up." 

## Good Neighbor

One key component that strengthened JSC's start-up strategy was Coosa Valley Technical College, whose Polk County campus sits adjacent to JSC's 46-acre spread.

The college hosted company executives while the plant was under construction. Coosa Valley furnished office space, computers, telecommunications and other necessities of conducting business, as well as classroom space for the Quick Start training.

Pete McDonald, VP of economic development at Coosa Valley, notes that the school's direct role in the JSC project was an educational one.

"But we also play an important indirect role, providing local support and helping families move here," he says. "That's the great advantage of the teamwork



Pete McDonald

between the technical colleges and Quick Start. After Quick Start does the initial training, the technical college remains a partner to the company in the long term. JSC will still need well-trained people, and we'll be here to help them with that."

Some 350 people have completed the Certified Manufacturing Specialist (CMS) program at Coosa Valley since the beginning of 2001.

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VP of Economic Development  
Coosa Valley Technical College