BWE in Lenoir Coping with COVID-19 Cases

Lenoir, NC June 22, 2020

Bakers Waste Equipment (BWE), located in Lenoir since 2014, is maintaining full operation while experiencing the first COVID-19 cases among its workforce. Designated an essential business by the North Carolina Governor due to its support of waste and sanitation services, BWE has operated throughout the NC shutdown with no layoffs of any of its 160 Employees and is preparing for return to growth. Within the past two weeks, a total of seven employees have been diagnosed with the virus.

Since the NC shutdown BWE closed its facility to non-essential outsiders, screened employees daily upon entry to work, required hand sanitizing for all entering the facility, provided masks as requested for employees and required masks for all visitors. Six-foot distancing was strongly encouraged. In addition, senior management implemented a weekly meeting to optimize BWE policies and practices as COVID knowledge develops. Following the first reported case, mandatory mask use was enforced, office and production areas segregated, surface sanitizing treatment regularly applied, and six-foot distancing actively enforced.

“BWE enjoys some natural advantages that discourage transmission of the virus as our products are physically large, promoting natural employee separation. Also due to the amount of welding in the process, air turnover is high, almost replicating outdoor conditions.” reported Ric Raines, president. On the risk side, we know that a portion of our workforce has interacted with some of the near-by poultry processing communities, and that industry has been challenged by the virus.

Victoria Mabry, Director of Human Resources, reflected on the close association and support from many Caldwell County organizations, especially the Caldwell County Health Department. “We appreciate their guidance and have tried to follow all recommendations to protect our employees. We credit these practices with helping keep us COVID free March through mid-June. Currently we are waiting to follow up on contact tracing which might direct testing for specific individuals. BWE is considering facility wide testing of employees but has not yet developed an operating policy to utilize this step.” she stated.

Bakers Waste Equipment has been in operation 39 years and supplies waste and recycling containers throughout the southeast and ships large compactors nationwide.

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