



consideration a little ingenuity

Improve Safety in Tennessee

Not all of the innovations that DENSO crafts are envisioned inside our facilities. Sometimes, they're not even produced here. Just ask production associate Fred Bowers, who runs the Service Mount Device (SMD) line in our Maryville, Tenn. plant.



Bowers and his team on the SMD line help produce circuit boards that control air bags in Toyota Camry, RAV4 and other vehicles. Last year he was training new associate April Davis when he noticed she was having difficulty removing a C clamp that must be detached to perform maintenance on the line.

"April wasn't able to get the C clamp off and that bothered her," Bowers said. "So the next day, I was cutting the grass at home, thinking about how I could help her."

Bowers, a self-proclaimed tinkerer like so many of his DENSO colleagues, hopped off his mower and went into his garage. He grabbed a wrench, bent one end up and ground part of the other end down. He reconfigured the tool to give Davis the ability to safely pop the clamp off with one end of the wrench and push the clamp back into place with the other end.



The next day Bowers showed the tool to group leader Will Prince, who enthusiastically approved of the tool and the initiative Bowers had taken to help a colleague. Davis was elated to receive the tool.

"I was tickled to death; just very happy – and everyone else was really impressed with Fred's invention," Davis said. "I'm very appreciative that DENSO empowers us to come up with solutions like this."

"Safety is very important for us," she added. "And Fred's tool provides a safer solution than the screwdriver I had been using; it jabbed my hand whenever I applied pressure to remove the C clamp."



Left to Right: Will Prince, Fred Bowers and April Davis

In recognition for Bowers' efforts, Prince nominated him for a DENSO Spirit Award, which Bowers won in February. When asked about his motivation for creating the tool, Bowers reflected on his first days at DENSO.

"I remember when I first started here five years ago," Bowers said. "It was a big change for me. I know how it felt to try to learn a new career. I try to remember that experience now when I train people."

Fortunately for Bowers — and for his colleagues on the SMD line — remembering that experience is easy because it was so positive. On his first day, Bowers met team leader Johnny Walker. Bowers recalls that encounter fondly: "Johnny said, 'I'm gonna make you a success.'"

By all accounts, that's already happened. You can tell by what Bowers says when he describes his philosophy on collaborating with his colleagues. "Work with your associates, not against them. If someone needs help, help them," he said. "The whole idea of teamwork and helping each other really boils down to simple kindness and respect."

It's no wonder at all that Fred Bowers is a core part of our Maryville team.