

# Board Converting

Serving the North American Corrugated and Folding Carton Industries for 35 years

NEWS

## Acme Corrugated Welcomes Sen. Casey For Plant Tour

BY LEN PRAZYCH

Any member of the corrugated, folding carton or package print industry who has attended an annual Fly-In in Washington, DC, understands the time and energy required to plan for and to meet with their representative on Capitol Hill. While such visits are generally brief and much of the conversation focuses on what our industry does – we make boxes, Senator – the Congressman usually does not completely understand what is involved in their construction without actually visiting a box plant and witnessing the process firsthand.

Which is why Bob Cohen of Acme Corrugated Box Co. hosted Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) for a visit and plant tour – his first ever to a box plant – on Monday, April 9, at the company's headquarters and corrugated plant in Hatboro, PA.

A third-generation, family-owned independent, Acme celebrated its 100th anniversary last year – Cohen is celebrating his 50th anniversary with the company this year – and continues its mission of service to its customers with the purchase of newer, faster also a regular partici-Day, during which it in- the community to vis- more about who it is event last October of the process of mak- a reality.

After Cohen wel- gave a short history of in 1918 by Cohen's fa- scrap paper and waste manufacturing boxes Product Development ator on a tour of Ac- foot facility, which in- to the design depart- and explanation of Acme's 98-inch Fosber



**From left, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA); Bob Cohen, President, Acme Corrugated Box Co.; Wayne Exum, Machine Operator; Jeff Bittner, Product Development Manager; and Ebony Stanton Weidman, Senator Casey's Regional Director, during a tour of Acme's corrugator plant in Hatboro, Pennsylvania.**

singlefacer; a demonstration of how board is converted on one of Acme's six Bobst flexo lines and its recently installed Apstar diecutter; and had a look at how finished boxes are moved by WSA robots and bundle breakers.

Bittner explained that Acme is a three-shift operation producing over 115-million-square-feet of product every month. Orders are produced as fast as they come in, usually within eight hours and that the company is a low inventory, high-demand, quick turnover facility.

After the tour, Cohen welcomed Senator Casey into Acme's conference room for a discussion on some of the issues Acme, as well as many other independent companies in the corrugated industry, is concerned about.

Cohen said that employment issues are on the top of his list, specifically, finding qualified candidates to fill his manufacturing jobs. He mentioned that difficulty in hiring and drug issues, including the legalization of marijuana, is creating problems toward having a full staff capable of meeting ever-increasing production goals.

"Surveillance of our people will create tremendous complexities for us," said Cohen. "It's not what we want to do. We're in the business of making boxes. This issue could be very significant for us."

Cohen also mentioned he would like to see the development of a statewide apprenticeship program, something similar to what is done in Germany. German citizens who are academically oriented are put on one path to employment,

equipment. Acme is pant in Manufacturing vites hundreds from it its plant to learn and what it does. The marked the beginning ing the Senator's visit

comed Casey and Acme – it was founded ther, Edward, who sold before selling, then – Jeff Bittner, Acme's Manager, led the Sen- me's 250,000-square- cluded an introduction ment; a close-up look how board is made on corrugator with a BHS

those technically oriented on another. The result is a worker who is trained for the job for which they are best suited. Senator Casey said a similar program built on the German model was started in the 1990s in Pennsylvania and that



**Senator Casey learns the nuances of corrugated board production from Jeff Bittner, Acme's Product Development Manager**

he would connect Cohen to those resources.

Casey said the previous federal administration proposed a good idea that is still worthy of pursuit: "We should assume that every student needs at least two more years of education, which should be treated as an extension of



**Chad Stauffer, Acme's Corrugator Supervisor, shows Senator Casey the company's corrugator control room.**

high school. It's better than the idea that everyone should have to go to college, which is not correct, and that somehow it has to be free, which is also not correct. Having four years of high school is just not enough.



**Bob Cohen**

with under 50 employees can avoid the tremendous costs we bear by having as many employees as we do.

Cohen also expressed frustration when dealing with the

complexities of employment law. "We have three people in our Human Resources Department. Not that that's a lot for a company our size, but the problems are significant and a lot of it has to do with avoiding lawsuits by employees, which is not where you want to be as a business owner."

### **More Growth On The Horizon**

Even as it is challenged by hiring and employment is-



**Tom Russomanno, Scheduling Manager, left, explains the process of scheduling jobs to Senator Casey.**

ssues, Acme Corrugated is looking to expand. Cohen asked for Senator Casey's assistance with state and federal programs to assist with the 80,000-square-foot expansion, which is approximately a third of Acme's current footprint. The initiative would involve adding 50-75 employees.

Senator Casey said that Pennsylvania has capital dollars on which it can direct funds for expansion projects like Acme's. It will be the state's financing authorities and ultimately, the Governor, however, that will determine which projects are worthy and which projects get funded.



**The administrative team at Acme Corrugated Box Co., which celebrated its 100th anniversary last year.**

"To see and learn up close what goes into producing a product is remarkable," said Senator Casey. "It's also remarkable to see the work ethic of an operation like Acme Corrugated Box Co. and the technology and the degree of excellence that is brought to bear. We have to spend more time focusing on these manufacturing jobs. Here's to the next 100 years for Acme Corrugated."