January 21st, wasn’t exactly a Minnesota winter day that anyone would be thinking about mowing a lawn. This perspective changed somewhat as the TC-CCAI hosted a tour of 30 people to see the Whirltronics, Inc. manufacturing facility in Buffalo, MN. Whirltronics is a lawn mower blade manufacturer producing over 4 million OEM lawn mower blades a year with 70% of the blades powder coated.

Whirltronics Director of Operations Neil Bengtson began the program with a presentation of the manufacturing process for its lawn mower blade production including the powder coating line. Whirltronics is a ISO 9001 Certified company using 6-Sigma as well as 6S principles.

When the presentation was concluded the tour attendees gathered into three groups for a guided factory tour. In addition to Neil Bengston, Lee Schultz and Matt Severson were the Whirltronics tour leaders.

The tour attendees viewed blades starting out as coil stock and after forming and sharpening procedures were put through a heat treating process. Most blades are racked while on a conveyor line and sent to a powder spray booth with a six automatic powder spray gun application and then into an IR cure oven. Cured powder coating blades are removed from the conveyor line and placed into cartons ready for customer shipments. After the factory tour, the group consumed nine large pizzas with soft drinks and cookie deserts.

Thanks to the Whirltronics organization for a really fine company presentation and tour of their manufacturing facility.