

IHEA Member Provides Community Support During Pandemic



The team at Alabama Power's Technology Applications Center (TAC) recently turned their focus from keeping the lights on to helping save lives. Through a partnership with the Alabama Productivity Center at the University of Alabama and UAB's School of Engineering, they are meeting the needs of local medical workers.

Ordinarily, Alabama Power's TAC serves as a demonstration and test facility that investigates ways to reduce production costs and improve energy efficiency and productivity while addressing environmental concerns. Lately, their attention on this new project means a different type of service for their customers.

"I look at it from our group's perspective; we are helping our customers," said Scott Bishop, team lead at Alabama Power and IHEA's current president. "In this case, our customer is the hospital's staff. We are still helping our customers, just in a different way."

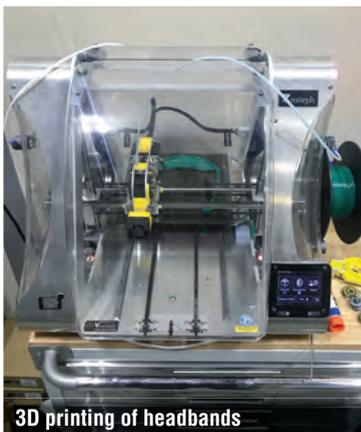
Medical personnel across the country are in dire need of personal protective equipment (PPE) to continue the fight against COVID-19. While traditional supply chains are struggling to keep up, technology is

helping fill the gaps for PPE.

When Bishop got word that 3D printers were needed to make headbands for face shields for medical staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, he rallied a small crew within his company to produce the needed equipment. In addition to 3D printing headbands, the project evolved into making full face shields when the TAC realized they could use their laser-cutting capabilities to cut the headbands from acrylic and they would last longer. The TAC is producing approximately 100 per day. Also, Alabama Power's Print Shop is cutting the shield material itself to allow the team to provide the medical workers with a complete face shield.

Knowing that the most contaminated part of the body is the face, the shields play an essential role in keeping healthcare workers safe when dealing with infectious diseases. Using the laser-cut acrylic face shields will go a long way during the COVID-19 crisis.

Countless people have stepped up in support of their communities and the nation during this unprecedented emergency, and IHEA is proud to recognize the team at Alabama Power and their partners for making a difference. Using their internal network to support an idea has created hope for so many people.



3D printing of headbands



Newly designed face shield



Finished acrylic headbands