

## Chicago | Industrial

# Mortenson Consolidates Six Plants into One

CHICAGO—The builder worked double-shifts for weeks so manufacturing lines wouldn't be down more than five days during the transition.

By **Brian J. Rogal**

CHICAGO—**Mortenson Construction** has just finished turning an empty warehouse at 6300 W. Howard St. in suburban Niles into a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant for **Woodward Inc.'s** aerospace components business. **Ghafari Associates** designed the \$90 million project, which consolidated the company's engineering, R&D, production, testing and administrative operations, which had been spread across separate facilities in Niles and nearby Skokie.

Woodward, which designs and manufactures products used by aerospace and energy companies to manage fuel and energy use, was founded in Rockford, IL in 1870. The company, now based in Fort Collins, CO, bought the property, which had what was originally a 366,931 square foot warehouse and production facility, last year from **Duke Realty** for nearly \$24 million, according to **Cook County** records. The structure was partially demolished and a new, two-story, 100,000 square foot office space was added, resulting in a facility with 334,700 square feet.

"Mortenson worked closely with us to meet our highly aggressive and complicated construction schedule, which was constrained by different lease expirations and the need to minimize any disruption to our clients as we moved 950 employees and operations from six

different locations," says **Dale Sylvan**, vice president/general manager of Woodward.

To accommodate new workstation configurations, Mortenson constructed a grid suspended from the ceiling and ran conduit and piping for gas power, vaporized water, nitrogen, waste removal and data. Since the existing building did not allow for a raised floor, it placed the grid at an accessible height of 20 feet above the floor versus attached to the 35-foot ceiling. Mortenson also installed new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems using existing and new ductwork on the roof and outside of the building.

Other enhancements include a series of rooms for stress-testing plane parts. The second floor, which overlooks the manufacturing and testing operations, features an open floor plan with conference rooms, gathering spaces, R&D labs, flight simulator and tables for disassembling finished parts that will allow more collaboration among managers, engineers and other professionals.

Mortenson's "team worked double-shifts for weeks, including over the holidays, so we could keep our customer promise that our manufacturing lines wouldn't be down more than five days during the transition, including physical move, connecting and calibrating equipment, inspection and AS 9100 certification," Sylvan adds.

