

2016-08-17 / Front Page

Ayotte stresses high-tech during area visits



U.S. SEN. KELLY AYOTTE talked to employees on the floor at Milpower Source in Belmont on Tuesday afternoon. (JIM CLARK/CITIZEN)



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BELMONT— U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte stressed the importance of high-tech industries in small New Hampshire towns and cities during a tour of Laconia and Belmont on Tuesday afternoon.

The tour, described by her office as a working visit and not a political trip, took place at Aavid Themalloy, 1 Aavid Circle in Laconia, and later at Milpower Source, 7 Field Lane in Belmont.

Ayotte toured both facilities escorted by management officials, and met employees who worked on the floor.

Milpower Source provides custom power supplies to the U.S. military, the aerospace industry, civilian aircraft companies, and elsewhere in the commercial marketplace. Its products are utilized on airplanes, and also are part of radar systems, ground vehicles and missiles. It has contracts with such aeronautical-defense contractor giants as Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, as well as Honeywell, and L3 Communications, a space communications system design and production company.

The company ships its products to locations all over the United States. Milpower Source employs 50 full-time workers, who usually work a shift from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Milpower Source General Manager Tomer Eshed gave Ayotte a tour of the working floor of the facility, along with Human Resources Manager Holly Lewis, and others on the management team. There were about a dozen workers on the floor during Ayotte's mid-afternoon visit, which lasted almost an hour.

Also with Ayotte were three new employees of the company – Ryan Scruton, Courtney Stevens and Sam Wilkenson. Scruton is a graduate of New Hampshire Technical Institute; Stevens received a certificate from the Huot Center program in Laconia and Wilkenson, who serves as an electrical engineer, is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire.

Before entering the work floor, the senator and all others on the tour had to wear special protective blue coats and eyeglasses.

Milpower Source began operations in Belmont in 1984. One of the floor employees who spoke to Ayotte at length was Ron Brooks, a technician who assembles new products and repairs old products that have been sent in for reservicing. Brooks has been with the company for 31 years. He and other floor employees discussed the nature of their work with Ayotte. Brooks told the senator simply, "We build good products."

Ayotte appeared fascinated by the work being done at both facilities, and asked many questions of both management officials and employees.

When asked for a comment following her tour of Milpower Source's main working floor, Ayotte said, "I've been very impressed with Milpower Source in terms of its ability to produce parts for the military – B22s, F-18s and equipment for the Patriot missile system. It's been nice to meet with two recent college graduates who are working here."

There are good paying jobs here for local grads," Ayotte said. "As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I know how important the business of supplying the military is."

Ayotte said that high-technology businesses need to be encouraged and developed in New Hampshire: "We need to have a good tax climate, as well as good work force preparation, including training through STEM courses. That includes maintaining high-tech manufacturing-based education at the university level."

She added, "This is a beautiful area with a great way of life. It's good to know that you don't have to fight a traffic jam in Boston in order to work at a high-tech company such as this."

Earlier in the afternoon, Ayotte toured the Aavid Thermalloy facility in Laconia. Aavid Thermalloy engineers, designs and sells thermal management products for large scale technology concerns. The company manufactures and sells heat pipe and heat sink assemblies, liquid cooling systems, fans and blowers and other products.

[Return to top](#)