

Handled Right — AACOA Extrusions Adds Second Belco Extrusion Handling System

AACOA's \$8.5 million, 91,000 square-foot plant located in Niles, Michigan is one of the most technologically advanced extrusion and fabricating facilities in the U.S.

Before operations started in the fall of 1998, Plant Manager Dave Sheaks considered four vendors to vie for their new extrusion handling system. Belco Industries, Inc. won the job, in part, because “they were the only company that listened,” says Sheaks.

CONFIDENCE TO DELIVER

“Belco listened to our needs and said they'd build to our specs,” says Sheaks. “Unlike their competitors that said ‘here's what we have to fit,’ Belco asked, ‘what do you want?’”

Three years and double-the-capacity-needed later, Sheaks remained impressed with the Belco system and asked them to work on another — without the need to engage in a time consuming bid process.

“We received the order before we even had a chance to write the proposal,” says Nicholas Kohn, the Belco Sales Engineer who spearheaded the project and has remained the dedicated front contact for Sheaks. “It's unusual, but it shows how much confidence our customer has in us.”

Sheaks was confident he could challenge Belco to implement an identical system, but also recommend improvements. With his ability



AACOA's New Extrusion Handling System

to design with the computer onsite, Kohn was able to help articulate improvements to the building layout and equipment positioning without the time consuming exchanges of drawings.

IMPROVEMENTS WITH IMPACT

One improvement with impact was the addition of the Hot Extrusion Saw “Cut on the Fly” in conjunction with a new Dual Puller System. According to Sheaks, it reduced the cycle time by 10 seconds per billet and increased pounds per hour by 20% compared to the first system. Cutting at the weld mark also increased recovery 1% in the early stages of the new system.

While the Single Puller made sense for the initial system — it was ideal for a new crew because it simplified training and maintenance — the timing was right to recommend the advanced capabilities of the Dual Puller and “Cut on the Fly” Hot Saw. The addition of the second ROLT system made good sense for AACOA to improve quality of the product.

“Incorporating Kevlar rollers, pads, and belt conveyors with the ROLT system dramatically reduces scratching and denting of extrusions” says Sheaks. “It minimizes movement of the material

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*DAVE SHEAKS,
PLANT MANAGER , AACOA*

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and keeps it evenly spaced for smooth operation.” Equally as important as their products, Sheaks is quick to point out Belco’s service is a big benefit.

TOP-NOTCH SERVICE

“Belco stands behind its commitment; they have a great support staff and if we need assistance they are here within hours,” says Sheaks. “We’re on a first-name basis with the guys and know that they’ll jump through hoops and stay with us until things are up and running.”

Sheaks appreciates the fact that Belco has service professionals on-staff, as opposed to other companies that subcontract service. And while he understands that the process of implementing a new system can be frustrating, he admires the fact that the Belco service team always maintains a positive attitude.”

The 2nd Line Belco Extrusion Handling System for AACOA includes:

Belco “Tee” Furnace with Log Saw
Dual Puller
Hot Extrusion Saw “Cut on the Fly”
Overhead Duct and Under Table Cooling Fans
Roller Run Out Conveyor
ROLT Cooling Conveyor
Stretcher Feed Belt Conveyor
One-Person Stretcher
(with automatic stretcher to length program)
Saw Storage Belt Conveyor
Saw In-Feed Conveyor
B & O Inc. Finish Saw
Saw Gauge Table with Off-Load Belts
Dual End Flow Age Oven with Powered Conveyor
Five Drawer Die Oven



ROLT Cooling and Belt Storage Conveyors

“For example, the system programmers are patient and businesslike,” says Sheaks. “Really, the whole team is dedicated and works with us — we truly have a great working relationship with Belco.”

The close relationship means Sheaks allows Belco to use the Niles facility as an example. Sheaks authorizes other extruders (within competitive consideration) to see Belco systems in action onsite.

“I believe in the product and support staff — they’re really a notch above the rest,” Sheaks concludes.

ABOUT AACOA EXTRUSIONS, INC.

Established in 1972, AACOA Extrusions has maintained an industry-wide reputation for quality anodizing products and services. In 1998, operations expanded to include aluminum extruding and fabricating for a wide variety of industries including automotive, architecture (i.e. store fronts), marine and residential (i.e. garage door opener tracks).