

Retrofitting for Superior Results

Belco Industries and sister company B&O Saws have helped Superior Extrusion Inc. (SEI) successfully retrofit its Belco Billet Furnace to take advantage of the revolutionary Hot Log Saw system.

According to SEI President John Marshall and Vice President of Operations Myron Debolt, the decision to go with Belco and B&O was clear. The Marquette, Michigan-based extruder considered three bids, one from Belco and B&O, the other two bids featured cold cut saws. SEI did an economic study of the cold cut saws and found they'd need two more people to do what the Hot Log Saw can accomplish.

Plus, SEI knew they needed to avoid the negatives associated with the high-hydraulic pressures of the log shear—leaks, heavy wear and high-energy consumption.

REDUCING RAW STOCK INVENTORY

Before the Hot Log Saw, SEI used cut billets from 18" to 26" running in 2" increments. They used four different alloys and had to order raw material stock for inventory 30-35 days in advance. "Without a crystal ball to know which alloys we'd need in what quantities coupled with the 'tight' aluminum market—we were forced to carry a significant inventory," says Marshall.

Now SEI simply orders logs 7" in diameter, 24' long in the four alloys required, eliminating the need to guess how many billets they'll need. The logs are also more readily available to help control inventory levels and the associated costs.



Superior Extrusion—Hot Log Saw Installation*

SEI has purposefully retained its capacity to handle both hot logs and billets because some of the extruded shapes needed may require billets. With one system to handle both, there won't be a break in production.

PAYING BACK IN TWO YEARS

SEI expanded its 46,000-square-foot facility by 2,600 square feet in part to accommodate the longer conveyor needed for the Hot Log Saw and to also make room for stock piling logs indoors because Upper Michigan weather can literally mean digging out logs from snowfalls virtually year round. The addition also gave SEI the opportunity to tag on expansion of its die shop.

Projecting all of the savings associated with the Hot Log Saw, SEI officials estimate payback of the \$560,000 total project in just two years.

"The Hot Log Saw has meant higher recovery, lower inventory and savings in supplier costs to cut and pallet billets," says Marshall. "We also avoided the costs associated with adding two more people if we'd gone with the cold saw."

(Superior Extrusion continued)

STANDING BEHIND STARTING UP

Marshall and Debolt admit the task of having a unit that handles both hot logs and billets has not been totally problem-free. They chalk it up to normal start-up issues and praise the commitment of Belco's customer service team, readily available throughout the start-up process that has required switching from hot logs to billets and back again.

"They've been willing to work with us to get things right, and they definitely stand behind their equipment," says Marshall. "Computer programming issues are a given during start-up and Belco's technicians have worked with us on a day-by-day basis to make things right," adds Debolt.



Hot Log Saw cutting heated log to precise billet length*

SEI's Hot Log Saw System:

- Allows for reduced raw stock inventories
 - Features flat and square sawed ends on billets
 - Reduces extruded profile scrap due to blistering
 - Improves extruded profile quality
 - Lower hydraulic pressures result in:
 - Fewer leaks
 - Less wear
 - Lower maintenance
 - Less energy consumption
 - Changes the log diameter without mechanical change of the equipment
 - Retrofits with current shear installations
 - Offers more competitive pricing than a shear
 - Features longer blade life than cold saws
 - Reduces labor versus offline cold cutting of billets
-

RECORD-BREAKING CAPACITY PACE

Making it right has put SEI on the track for maximum output in 2005, running three shifts a day, five days a week and lately logging around-the-clock shifts on both Saturday and Sunday, too.

SEI has the capacity to output 12-14 million pounds of aluminum extrusions annually. In 2004, SEI shipped 10.5 million pounds. Thanks to the Hot Log Saw system installed the end of 2004, they expect to ship at capacity by the end of 2005.

Belco Industries and B&O Saws lead the industry as the only manufacturers in the U.S. to successfully offer a Hot Log Saw* system.

ABOUT SUPERIOR EXTRUSIONS INC.

Since 1998, SEI has supplied structural aluminum for the automotive and boating industries, as well as niche areas that range from large aluminum windows for fast food restaurants to rifle scope mounts for the military and recreational hunting.

*Patent pending