

PROGRESS 2007

Clow Valve continues progress

OSKALOOSA — Clow Valve Company has been one of the mainstay companies in Oskaloosa. They continue to expand facilities providing safer working conditions and more opportunities to serve their expanding customer base.

Meeting specific safety and production goals are key to Clow Valve's success. Reducing accidents and injury remains the company's goal for its workforce.

Reducing the amount of scrap metal is a key to the company's profitability. Meeting the goals of reducing the scrap was at an all-time low in 2006. Here is a look at Clow Valve Company.

Metal Casting Facility

This past year we have managed to meet some significant operational goals at the Metal Casting Facility. The 2006 iron foundry scrap was an all time low of 4.08 percent versus a 5.0 percent goal. This is the lowest scrap rate on record for this operation. An accomplishment like this reflects the commitment to detail our team demonstrates every day.

The brass foundry operations have followed the same suit as the iron foundry. We finished 2006 at a 3.21 percent scrap rate vs. a 4 percent goal. Brass shipments were steady at over 40,000 pounds shipped daily and customer service and delivery continue to be positive.

Safety and employee involvement are a critical part of our operation and we continue to make strides to be best in class in the metal casting industry. The activity that has taken place this past year with plant safety, committees, and training highlights our accomplishments. We ended the year below the national average for OSHA recordables for metal casting facilities. The standard for our industry is 17.0 and we were 11.49.

Project work continues moving forward. The iron grinding baghouse is in the final completion stage.

Iron Grinding Baghouse

The electrical upgrade for the plant is near completion. This was a million dollar project that will allow for expansion and a reliable in plant electrical network.

Electrical Substation

The iron grinding room had a new floor installed during shutdown by department employees, good job guys!

Iron Grinding Room asphalt brick floor

The brass grinding baghouse and make up air project is underway and set for

completion in March. We are in process of installing the flask lifting station in the iron foundry. The iron foundry scrap yard will soon have a new rollup door, to reduce the cold draft in the scrap yard and melt deck. We continue to do minor changes and upgrades throughout the plant, making us cleaner, safer, and more efficient.

The OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) kicked off last March when our application was sent to OSHA. We were visited and provided bench marks on what we need to do to achieve this goal of becoming the first iron and brass metal casting facility in the United States to receive the VPP award. Our goal was to have zero accidents and incidents at Clow Valve, assuring our employees are going home safe from work to spend time with the people they care about. Employee involvement is a key component to our success. Committee involvement continues to be positive, from our VPP, Communications, PEO, to Machine Guarding to name a few.

Engineering and Quality Control

Considering the established industry Clow's products serve, you might wonder what is left to be engineered. Well, like home improvement, by the time one project is complete there is another one waiting to be started. Whether it is "new" or "improved," Engineering and Quality Control are busy working on projects that will help Clow stay strong in established, yet aggressive, markets.

Specifically, the 48-inch R/W valve with Clow Clean Track Technology has successfully passed the prototype testing in its flanged end configuration, and we will now continue with the formality of testing the 48-inch bodies with alternative end connections. Testing of all body styles is expected to be complete the first quarter of 2007. Having had the opportunity to oversee the initial testing at Davis Machine in Calera, Ala., I have to say that standing next to a valve nearly twice your height is an interesting experience for the kid in any of us!

Next on the schedule is the 42-inch R/W. This valve will basically be a 48-inch valve with a different body. All components of the 42-inch are the same as the 48-inch, except the body, which will have the necessary reduced end connections.



The construction of the 41,000-square-foot addition (Building #39) on the south side of the plant is completed.

Herald photo provided

The updated plan is to have a sample 42-inch body ready for prototype testing in January, 2007.

Clow's new 24-inch R/W with Clow Clean Track Technology is also in the prototype testing stage, and performing well. Closing torque has been acceptably low at the new pressure rating of 250 psi, and wedge strength has proven to be sufficient for the "one-time" 500 psi prototype strength test. Further testing will be performed in January, including the "one-time" 625 psi hydrostatic strength test to see if the body, cover, bolts, and seals are sufficiently over-designed for the rated pressure. Expected completion of all testing is the first quarter of 2007.

Turning our attention to fire hydrants, our new 8-inch Model 985 wet barrel fire hydrant is still waiting to be tested by UL and FM to gain their approvals. Our in-house testing has shown this to be a "tank" of a wet barrel hydrant (as designed), with strength enough to survive the punishment of a 350 psi pressure rating. To be approved at this pressure, the prototype hydrant has to successfully pass a 1,750 psi hydrostatic strength test. Preliminary tests at Clow have already shown the hydrant up to the task, so now we are waiting on the approval organizations to

confirm these.

Finally, we are even working on a new "vertical shoe" option for the Medallion hydrant. This option will consist of a normal Medallion hydrant with a new straight shoe, instead of the standard 90-degree elbow style. Tooling is being made now, with testing expected to occur the first

quarter of 2007.

Machine Shop

The construction of the 41,000-square-foot addition (Building #39) on the south side of the plant is completed. Contractors finished the new restrooms, offices and lunchroom. The second 30,000 CFM make-up air units located in Building #39 is also finished and operat-

ing.

The large Fanuc robot coupled with the new Okuma LU45 lathe to produce hydrant standpipe has been installed in the east end of Building #39. Mike Thomas and Mark McDougall have been writing programs and debugging

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