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For Immediate Release

SmithCo Installs Custom Frame Rail Welding Tables

Automation improves weld quality, efficiency, and worker safety

LE MARS, IOWA – SmithCo Side Dump Trailers, the industry leader in side dump trailer design and manufacturing, has installed a pair of custom frame rail welding tables. Each table is 64 feet long, 7 feet wide and utilizes a pair of Bug-O Side Beam Automatic Welding Systems coupled with Miller liquid-cooled welders to enable the SmithCo team to weld both the top and bottom flange in a single, continuous weld pass.

“The three main objectives of this project were to improve weld quality, increase manufacturing efficiency, and improve worker safety,” said Scott Lovell, SmithCo President and CEO, “By reducing the number of times we have to move or handle our large frame rails, we greatly improved both worker safety and efficiency. For the customer, they are getting a more consistent and more professionally welded frame rail.”

Automation Creates a Continuous Weld

The automated welder travels at a constant speed and creates a continuous weld down the length of the beam. For many years, SmithCo used a submerged arc semi-automated welding station to weld one pass at a time on our frame beams. Our new rail welding system gives us the straightest, most consistent frame beams SmithCo has ever produced. From an efficiency standpoint, SmithCo reduced their floor footprint and improved material flow by combining the clamping, tacking and welding of frame rails into one process and one area. With the new tables set up, old equipment was decommissioned, and the space was transformed into a large parts storage and staging area. The reduction in the number of workstations and processes to build frame rails allows the team to increase production numbers while also manufacturing a superior product.

Improves safety and efficiency

The idea for investing in a rail table came in 2019 as a way to improve the safety and efficiency of the manufacturing process. SmithCo worked with engineering students from Iowa State University to conduct a feasibility study and produce initial concept drawings. From there, SmithCo refined their concept to meet specific requirements and worked with a hydraulics supplier to create a custom hydraulic clamping solution. In early 2020, the pandemic halted work on the project, but when work resumed in the summer of 2020, the company was able to complete the construction, installation, and testing of the table. SmithCo completed the project with two fully operational tables at the end of 2020.

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Commitment to Annual Capital Projects

SmithCo always strives to be forward thinking. Every year the company aims to invest in capital projects to further enhance capabilities as North America's leading side dump manufacturer. Improvement projects are planned carefully in order to minimize production constraints and manufacturing delays.

“Our goal is to never stop improving our products, our processes, or our people. This automation allows our people to work on producing even higher quality products.” says Lovell.

About SmithCo

For more than 25 years, the mission of SmithCo Side Dump Trailers has been to design and build the world's best side dump trailers, with superior stability, easier unloading, and faster cycle times than conventional dump trailers. Today SmithCo produces more side dump trailers and trailer models than any other company. Our trailers serve our customers' diverse hauling needs in agriculture, construction, demolition, mining, and waste. The company was founded on the values of honesty, integrity, and outstanding customer service. We live these values every day by building side dump trailers the right way, under the careful watch of our world-class engineers. For more information visit sidedump.com.

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