Harco Metal Products

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OPENED: 1990

Harco engineers assess project specifics at the quality table.

WHY: Before launching Harco Metal Products (Harco), founder and President Jay Hall owned a construction company in a down-turned local economy. Hall was interested in opening a business vastly different from his current endeavor— one with unlimited growth and income potential. Upon realizing that three of the largest global industries (automotive, defense, and medical) dealt with bent tubing, Hall learned everything he could about metal fabrication and started Harco Metal Products.

CAPABILITIES: Harco assists customers with product development, designing, and fabrication of metal tubular parts. Its capabilities include:

1. Tube forming: Expanding, reducing, beading, flaring
2. Tube bending: CNC mandrel, free -orm, dual-head, roll
3. Tubular assembly
4. Tubular fluid lines
5. Machining: Full-service CNC milling and CNC lathe
6. Welding: GMAW, GTAW, robotic, induction brazing, plasma
7. Optical measuring
8. Systems integration

SHOP WORKHORSE(S): Hall believes no one piece of equipment is more important than another. Any job requires several high-tech machines to accomplish client goals, and it is truly the collective group of equipment that is important. Says Hall, "If all I had was tube benders, I would be very limited in what I could provide my client everything is indispensable, including our high-level staff."

MOST UNUSUAL OR MEMORABLE PROJECT: Harco's most memorable project was the result of a problem faced by renewable-energy company Stirling Energy Systems. Stirling needed a small-diameter tube bent using free-form, multidimensional bending techniques, with repeatability and extremely high assembly tolerances.

Harco devised the theory that by combining the capabilities of two unique machines, the company could meet Stirling's stringent requirements. Hall flew to Germany with his team, where he met with the heads of Wafios Machinery Corp. and Aicon 3D Systems. Within six days, Hall, Wafios, and Aicon tested and proved Harco's hypothesis.

This was a highly memorable project because it signified the advent of Harco's adoption of more high-end, state-of-the-art equipment and proved to Hall that the Harco team was capable of completing projects of any size or complexity.

GREATEST CHALLENGE: "This industry as a whole continues to shift from a domestic to a global marketplace. The challenge to adapting well in this environment is being able to read the world ahead of time as customer concerns and technologies change at alarming rates," Hall said.

LOOKING AHEAD: Harco plans to continue diversifying job shop capabilities for increased ability in producing unique metal and tubular assemblies. Going forward, Harco plans to incorporate laser cutting, press brake fabrication**,** more machining capabilities, and much more to the list of services offered in-house.

ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE SHOP OWNERS: Embrace new technology; build on knowledge; and always listen to your customers' concerns.

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