

OUR VALUES:

Building Relationships
through:

- Dependability
- Integrity
- Trust
- Quality
- Family

Fall 2007

REMOTE CONTROL

Unique Prefab Project Helps Cal Poly Save on State-of-the-Art Feed Mill

Interstates' integrated capabilities and prefab expertise came into play while maximizing the efficiency of a project half a continent away.

Working with T. E. Ibberson Company, Interstates' electrical and automation teams installed electrical gear in prefab modules for California Polytechnic State University's new feed mill in San Luis Obispo, CA. The nine modules, each 40 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 9 1/2 feet high, were constructed by the Interstates and Ibberson teams working together in

Ibberson's Gaylord, MN, fabrication shop.

The modules were then shipped to Cal Poly on flatbed trucks. The crews ran conduit and wiring, and T.E.

Ibberson Company

installed all the process equipment, material handling equipment, material bins, structural support, and access stairs. ACI Mechanical installed process piping, compressed air piping, and steam piping. The modular units were designed so they could be disassembled in Gaylord and reassembled inside a pre-engineered metal building at Cal Poly's Animal Nutrition Center.

"It's really something to see an entire feed mill operation inside another building," says Interstates project manager Tim Foreman, PMP (project management professional). "It was a different kind of project. It just was not feasible to do all the construction on site."

According to Foreman, controlling costs was a key factor in choosing to use prefab for the modular feed mill project.

"A university has to operate on a very tight budget," Foreman explains. "Just the cost in prevailing wages, travel, and lodging to put an entire crew in California for the length of time it would take to construct the mill from start to finish would have exceeded the entire team's budget. By doing much of the project in Minnesota, we could take advantage of a more favorable rate structure and still deliver quality work. And, we could send a smaller crew, two or three instead of ten or more, to work on the final assembly and startup. This led to savings for the University."

While the reassemble of the mill modules and installation of equipment and automation systems takes time, using prefab saves valuable field hours.

"Lowell Dykstra, Interstates' prefab manager, did an outstanding job in engineering the prefab," Foreman says. "One aspect of the project that

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Cal Poly Feed Mill



Ingredient Feed Bins

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“Join the Ride” Kicks Off Referral Campaign

Foreman Jeremy Rodgers didn't anticipate the news he was about to receive when his phone rang on Monday morning. He put down his tools and picked up the ringing cell phone.

“Hello?” He said.

“Hi Jeremy... this is Dave Crumrine,” the voice said. “Jeremy, I've got some important news for you. You've just won a **Harley-Davidson motorcycle!**”

The Harley-Davidson giveaway was just a small (but exciting!) piece of a large referral campaign, called “Join the Ride,” taking place at the Interstates Companies. In September of 2006, Interstates kicked off a huge push for employee referrals. Interstates' people answered the call by submitting the names and contact information of 352 people they felt would be a good fit for our company and our culture. Jeremy Rodgers was the lucky winner of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle after his name was entered into the drawing for referring two contest-qualified electrical foremen. Although the Harley-Davidson giveaway ended on June 1 of this year, Interstates is continuing to heavily promote the culture of referrals and educating its people on how to find potential candidates and ask the right questions to determine a candidate's interest.

A shortage in construction personnel isn't a problem faced only by electrical contracting companies. The decline is being felt in all segments of the construction industry. While the Bureau of Labor Statistics project the number of construction jobs to increase 18 to 26 percent by 2014, the average age of today's skilled craftworker is 48 years. In about 15 years, when this group of skilled workers begins to retire, the industry is going to have an even more serious problem. For a growing company like Interstates, the challenges of finding the right people to fill the vacant positions becomes increasingly imperative. The “Join the Ride” referral campaign

was implemented as a way to alleviate some of these growing pains. “We know we are facing some daunting statistics when each year an estimated 240,000 skilled contracting workers are retiring or leaving contracting for different occupations,” Theresa Nordstrom, director of human resources at Interstates, says. “But, we also know we have a great resource for referrals in the people we already have on the team and our clients – those who know us best and know what kind of work we do. Our team and our clients recognize what safety, quality, and productivity look like. We value blending both of their perspectives and know that they are our best resources for referrals.”

In addition to the “Join the Ride” referral program, Interstates is also working to establish a strong presence in technical colleges. Career fairs, paid internships, scholarships, and supporting organizations which help prepare students in trade, technical, and skilled services occupations, such as SkillsUSA, are all means to accomplishing the goal of reaching out to students interested in electrical construction. “We visit nearly 20 colleges during a typical year,” says Andrew Thonstad, Interstates recruiter. “Interstates is reaching out to as many people who might be interested in our work as we can.”

A third way in which Interstates has been successful in recruiting leadership is from within the company. Dave Crumrine, president of Interstates Construction, explains, “Many of our leaders have started out as apprentices

and support staff and worked their way to leadership positions. Our goal is to create every opportunity we can for our people to get the training and experience they need to grow their careers with us.” The emphasis on leadership development isn't new to the people of Interstates. Since its inception in 1953, the company has always invested focused time and effort to continue to train and promote strong leaders from within the company.



L to R – Lee Heitmann, Jeremy Rodgers, and Dave Crumrine stand behind Jeremy's brand new Harley-Davidson motorcycle

A workforce shortage is a serious roadblock not only to construction businesses but also to our nation's economy. The “Join the Ride” campaign, college recruiting, and developing people internally are all part of Interstates' continued desire to serve its clients better by having the right people on the job at the right time.

If you know someone who is looking to further their career and join an award-winning team, encourage them to take a look at Interstates. Our experienced staff, excellent benefits, and training opportunities make this the company to grow with.

MAXIMIZE YOUR ELECTRICAL INVESTMENT

How to Make the Most of an Arc Flash Study

by Brent Kooiman, P.E.

Arc Flash and NFPA 70E are topics that you will hear discussed at many facilities all over the country. People are trying to figure out what it requires to be in compliance with this safety standard.

Here is my piece of advice: Don't just try to get by with saying "We will just base it on the worst case." This is going to cause more problems for you than doing the calculations, and you also lose out on the other benefits that go along with working through this process. By doing the work of calculating the arc flash on all major equipment, you can see increases in productivity, a safer workforce, better (and easier) change management, and you will also avoid fines and penalties.

Let's explore a couple of these benefits. By doing an Arc Flash study, you can reduce the level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that a person needs to wear and still ensure their safety. This is going to allow this person to work more productively by not overburdening them with unnecessary PPE. The workforce will continue to be safe, while increasing productivity as they are working on the equipment. More people



Brent Kooiman, P.E.

will wear the PPE when they are supposed to, and therefore the possibility of fines, penalties, or injury due to an arc flash will be reduced.

There are also some secondary benefits to doing an arc flash study in a thorough manner. By doing a comprehensive job, the documentation for the plant is updated, a short circuit study is conducted, and a coordination study is completed.

This does not require a lot of extra work since all these calculations and reviews need to happen for the arc flash to be calculated. By making sure that you are requesting recommendations on improvements to the system from these first steps and through the arc flash study, you will be gaining additional benefits from doing this work at minimal cost.

Some of these additional benefits include:

- Identifying potential problems through a review of the system by a professional engineer
- Planning for expansions by looking at where un-used capacity is on the system

- Identify deficiencies where the system is lightly loaded or not being used correctly
- Increased safety due to better knowledge of the system through provided documentation and training of the maintenance personnel
- Reducing troubleshooting time and therefore reducing downtime by having this knowledge in the right people's hands

Overall, Arc Flash is a topic that is coming your way. If you haven't already addressed it, you should consider starting now. You can do the basics and try to just "get by," but you are missing out on a great opportunity to improve your system and maximize your electrical investment.

For more information on how to maximize your electrical investment, contact Brent Kooiman, P.E., at 712-722-1644 ext. 302.

LEADING THE WAY: Jeff Jansen

Look at a job candidate's resume and what is he or she going to emphasize? Experience? Accountability? Certainly the themes of responsibility and a strong work ethic will be there.

Chances are if Jeff Jansen's coworkers were writing his resume, it would include each of these qualifications and so much more. Jeff, panel shop manager at Interstates Control Systems, Inc., has earned his valued reputation as all of the above, as well as a talented servant leader.

Jeff has a long history working with the people of Interstates. In 1982 he was hired by a construction company owned by the Interstates Companies' founder John A. Franken. One of the major projects the construction crew completed was a remodel of Interstates' existing West Campus facility. When the construction company disbanded in 1985, Jeff's friendly attitude and hard-work ethic earned him a full-time position working in Interstates' panel shop.

From day one, Jeff immediately enjoyed working with the Interstates team. "At the time, I appreciated the flexibility Interstates offered, and I still do. People who work for us have a lot of freedom to make choices about their work, and as long as it's done right, you can (for the most part) do it how you want it," Jeff says. Something else that appealed to Jeff was that the Interstates group felt like a close-knit fami-

JANSEN *continued on page 5*

Van Ravenhorst Joins Business Development Team

Eric Van Ravenhorst has joined the Interstates Companies as a business development representative. According to David Krahlung, vice president of business development, Van Ravenhorst will focus on Interstates' traditional automation business.

"We're excited to put Eric's many years of national level sales experience to work for us," Krahlung says. "He has a heart for serving clients and a gift for understanding their needs."



Eric Van Ravenhorst

Prior to joining Interstates, Eric worked as the eastern sales manager for Old Masters, a division of Diamond Vogel in Orange City, IA. He is a graduate of Northwestern College in Orange City.

Eric now makes his home in Sioux Center, and enjoys all sports including golf and playing in local basketball and softball leagues.

REMOTE continued from page 1

made it even more complex was that so much of the equipment for the project was smaller than normal. We didn't always know what kind of equipment we'd be getting or when because much of the equipment was donated by the feed industry's generous equipment suppliers, and T.E. Ibberson Company had to live within the timetables set by the donors. There was a lot of fact-finding and problem-solving."

Foreman affirms that Interstates' fully integrated capabilities were key to the project's success. "Because we can easily coordinate so many disciplines – construction, engineering, and automation – we were able to work together to control hours and costs. The University and T.E. Ibberson Company had nothing but great things to say."

"T. E. Ibberson Company benefited again in partnering with Interstates. Lowell Dykstra and Tim Foreman professionally handled a difficult design and construction for this challenging project," stated Gerry Leukam, T. E. Ibberson Company senior vice president, technical operations.

Bilby Named ICSI's First Ever Product Manager for I-Track and I-Control

Interstates Control Systems, Inc. (ICSI) has appointed Joe Bilby as product manager for their landmark I-Track and I-Control automation products.



Joe Bilby

I-Track is an inventory management application for process manufacturing that offers advanced warehouse management, process inventory control, and systems analysis; I-Control is a batching application originally developed as a specialty application for feed mills. It is now available for customization to a wide range of batching processes, including pet food manufacturing and flour mills.

"We created the product manager position specifically for I-Track and I-Control," says Jeff Miller, director of automation services. "We're looking to Joe to help us discover new applications for both products, as well as ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of the marketplace."

As product manager, Joe serves a dual role. In addition to working with customers in a range of industries to determine how I-Track and I-Control can be customized for their specific needs, he also works closely with the product development team. This team of programmers will work with Joe to manage the release of product versions and explore improvements and upgrades.

Joe joins Interstates from Diamond Vogel Paints in Orange City, IA, where he administered point-of-sale programming and, as in his current role, explored

improvements to product applications. He graduated from Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, MI, with a master's of theology and philosophy degree. While working his way through college, he had a job maintaining software for a local paint company, which all led to his current career path.

Joe lives with his wife Becky and their four children. The couple serves as directors of children's ministries at the New Hope Evangelical Free Church. Joe also enjoys gardening, biking, and building and launching model rockets.



PROUD TO BE MEMBERS OF



JANSEN *continued from page 3*

ly, but was still doing high tech, complex work for big companies. "I think this is a major reason why people love working for our company. It's definitely why I tell them this is an exciting place to be."

Jeff's history and background in the electrical panel industry came from real world experience. Most of what he learned about building panels he learned in the panel shop, and he used that knowledge to grow his responsibilities and career. In 1994, Jeff became manager of this cohesive group of panel shop professionals. Even as Jeff's job responsibilities were changing, so was basic panel design. "One of the biggest changes I've experienced in panel design was moving from manual control to PLC panels, and of course, all of the adjustments that come with that. When I first started, we had a professional painter come in and paint the graphics on the panel board. Now, with the advancements in technology, we've become far more efficient."

Jeff's dedication to the company and his customers has not gone unnoticed. He's won two customer service awards and was profiled in *Iowa Commerce Magazine* for his leadership. The article states that Jeff has, "the common sense talent for making things work better – to the great benefit of his employers." Jack Woelber, ICSI president, adds, "Jeff has done an excellent job of developing new ways to enhance the organization and professionalism of our panels. His commitment to the company is evident in "doing what it takes" to deliver what he has promised to both our internal and external clients."

When not keeping busy with his work at Interstates, Jeff and his wife Tina spend

time with their children, Derek and Tanya. Derek is a recent college graduate and is working in Des Moines, IA, and Tanya is a student at the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota. Jeff also enjoys hunting, fishing, watching high school and college sports, as well as cheering for his favorite football team, the Green Bay Packers.

Of course, when talking about someone like Jeff, there's always more to say.



Jeff Jansen

Even though he stays busy with family activities and effectively managing the panel shop and the responsibilities that come with it, many of us have personally witnessed him doing the "unsung hero" tasks around the building. Whether it comes to happily packaging boxes for UPS pickup, shoveling snow off the sidewalks on a wintry day, or helping prepare a hog roast for the entire Interstates team, Jeff does it with a smile and a great attitude. Because of his reputation for asking nicely and treating everyone with respect, people are happy to deliver. Thus, Jeff has given us another fine example of what it means to be a servant leader at Interstates.

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*L to R – Lee Heitmann, Jeremy Rodgers,
and Dave Crumrine stand behind Jeremy's
brand new Harley-Davidson motorcycle*

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