

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 2

manufacturing

BEST PRACTICES FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS

TODAY

manufacturing-today.com

QUALITY ON DISPLAY

T.C. Millwork brings revolutionary design and engineering to retail shelving and visual display elements. **PAGE 30**

Conex Cable increases its offerings by adding a galvanized steel wire production line. **PAGE 72**



AMF Canada prides itself on offering the best equipment to add value to its customers' lines. **PAGE 96**



A SINGLE SOURCE

CONEX CABLE INCREASES ITS OFFERINGS BY ADDING A GALVANIZED STEEL WIRE PRODUCTION LINE. BY JIM HARRIS



PLANT MANAGER CHARLES DOBBEL (LEFT) AND PRODUCTION MANAGER BRIAN STARR ARE DEDICATED TO MONITORING CONEX'S MANUFACTURING QUALITY.

Conex Cable LLC prides itself on its ability to react quickly to its customers' needs. "We can make anything happen in an emergency or on short notice; our quick response is our greatest strength," says Jerry Bills, a consultant to the company for more than 25 years. "We recently had a customer from California call us to say they needed something to be in Hawaii in a hurry. That was prepared for shipment the next day."

The company's management team is in constant contact with its customers as well as sales, manufacturing and facility teams. "We are a very lean and mean company," says Plant Manager

Charles Dobbel, a 14-year veteran of the company with 40-plus years of industry experience.

"We have a small management staff that gives us the ability to take action when needed without going through corporate bureaucracy," he adds.

Conex in recent years has added to its capabilities in response to customer demands. The company, which specializes in producing aluminum-clad (AS) steel wire, in 2015 expanded its manufacturing facility in DeKalb, Ill., to also produce galvanized steel wire. The facility began producing galvanized steel wire the following year.

The \$3.5 million expansion project

made Conex the only company in the United States to offer both AS and galvanized wire. "This gives our customers one source for both products," Bills says.

The company supplies both AS and galvanized steel wire to customers such as electric utilities, cable manufacturers, telephone companies and accessory manufacturers.

Both types of wire are used for applications including as guy and messenger wires and overhead ground and shield wires on electrical transmission and distribution lines. A large portion of the company's electric utility customers are involved in



CONEX IS THE ONLY COMPANY IN THE UNITED STATES TO OFFER ALUMINUM-CLAD STEEL WIRE AND GALVANIZED WIRE.

minum tubing for overhead cable ground wire. Allan Coleman, the owner of the Chicago-based Coleman Wire/Nehring Electrical Works, bought the plant with the intention of manufacturing AS wire.

Coleman also formed a joint venture with Hitachi Cable in Japan, which had the U.S. patent on the manufacturing process of the wire. Together, the companies started Conex Cable Inc. under the direction of Raymond Hott, chairman. Later, Hitachi Cable acquired all of the company in 1994. »

high-voltage transmission, for which Conex provides AS wire used as aluminum conductor steel reinforcement for transmission lines.

The company's history goes back to

1988, when Alcoa Inc. and Kaiser Aluminum Corp. were closing the doors on their wire and cable plants.

Those operations included a plant in Dublin, Calif., that was built to make alu-

Metal Link Since 1976, Metal Link has been a leading manufacturer of wire and cable machines in Korea. Our innovative thought in pursuit of the most advanced technologies available in the modern wire and cable industries has enabled us to build a strong client network around the world. From stranders to drawing machines to our environment-friendly electrolysis cleaning system, our machines keep our clients more competitive.

The Engine of Wire & Cable



Metal Link Inc.
K O R E A



The Engine of Wire and Cable since 1976

***Congratulations Conex Cable on your 30th Anniversary!
We are proud to be a part of your great achievement.***



April 16 through
April 20. Visit us at
Booth #12E12.



Nashville Wire Expo 2018
May 15 through May 16.
Visit us at booth #605.

Please visit our website for more details: www.metallink.co.kr
Geoffrey Kim 714-308-2828 | gdk@emetallink.com

» In 2004, a private investment group in Chicago bought Conex, resulting in the firm moving its plant from Dublin to DeKalb. Although it required the company to move all of its machinery and wiring, the transition was seamless, Production Manager Brian Starr says. Starr celebrated his 25th anniversary with the company in February.

NEW METHODS

The 18,000-square-foot expansion to Conex's manufacturing facility includes a galvanization line. The line includes areas where steel wire is drawn and stranded. The company manufactures both Class A zinc-coated galvanized steel wire as well as its own brand, CONZINAL, a zinc and aluminum alloy with rare earth metals.

The company uses the Deloit process to galvanize steel wire. The process involves using an electrical current to wipe the zinc to a specific coating, Dobbel says.

The galvanizing process is unique in that it is environmentally friendly, as the company does not use acids or high oxidizing materials to prepare material for process

and produces no waste byproducts to prepare products. The process also reduces the ferrite properties of the zinc used to make the wires, making them more resistant to cracking and bending than competitive products.

The steel used in Conex galvanized wire is coated before it goes through one of the company's two draw lines, giving it a smooth surface, Starr notes.

Conex's AS wire is manufactured by the continuous extrusion method, which bonds high-purity aluminum to high-strength steel wire. "The thick aluminum cladding provides AS wire with superior corrosion resistance as well as high conductivity," the company says. "AS wire incorporates the capability to vary the aluminum thickness as required for the higher conductivity described in the latest ASTM and IEC standards."

The company produces and stocks a variety of strengths of wire from utility grade to extra high strength. Coated steel wires are offered in 3-, 7- and 19-wire constructions. Wire packages are available in 250-foot or 500-foot hand coils and in reels up to 20,000 feet long.

HIGH QUALITY

Conex closely monitors manufacturing quality. Quality begins with the machine operators, each of whom reports to a supervisor. The supervisor performs quality checks and sends samples to the quality control department, which is managed by a quality engineer. The company's quality auditor audits the entire factory and provides manufacturing staff with feedback, Starr says.

The company has several Six Sigma techniques and tools in place and receives materials on a just-in-time basis. "Right now, [Conex] is 4.4 Sigma," Dobbel says. "I'm certified as a leader in Six Sigma and I've got two trained inspectors." Conex is always looking for ways to improve. This includes implementing a 5S program.

Conex works closely with its suppliers. "We work together jointly to improve quality at all times," Dobbel adds, recalling a case when a client requested more flexibility in its product.

Although flexibility is not the first thing many associate with steel, "We joined [together and] worked on a very much-improved product," he recalls. "We got full customer satisfaction."

The company also hones its workers' skills with training. "It's a continuous process," Starr says. "Whenever we come across a situation where somebody falls behind, we always retrain and review progress to meet the required customer demands." **mt**

We make the products you need!





**AZTECH
LUBRICANTS**

Aztech Lubricants provides quality products and innovative solutions to customers in a variety of industries including wire drawing, galvanizing, wire forming, agricultural, tires, automotive, construction and more!

Our product range includes an extensive line of wire drawing lubricants and supplies for wire drawing.



New packaging. Reduce Waste, Reduced Cost and Increased Efficiency

Aztech products include
EZDraw™, EZCoat™,
EZClean™, EZFeed™ and
AZWipe™.



29047 State Highway 59 • Wayne, OK 73095
Ph: 405.310.0034 • Fx: 866.251.0666
www.aztechlube.com • info@aztechlube.com