

Vulcan takes the 'emergency' out of your emergency turnaround

Vulcan Finned Tubes

At Vulcan Finned Tubes, fast turnarounds on finned tubing are the company's specialty, according to owner Mike Soulant. Emergency turnaround work accounts for more than half of the company's revenue, and business has been steadily increasing since 1999. It is no coincidence that after nine years in business, Vulcan has built a solid reputation in the industry as the one to call when delivery is critical.

"In the beginning, emergency work was all we had," Soulant said. "Our competitors were all fighting over the OEM work, but we were more than happy to handle the emergency turnaround business."

"Don't get me wrong, I like my weekends off, and I like planned production, but emergency turnaround work is still what really excites me. It's extremely satisfying to get a call on a weekend, take a job that would typically take three to four weeks to produce, and crank it out overnight."

"You know you're providing a service that no one else can. There's a lot of stress associated with this type of work, and I'm afraid it's made me a bit of an adrenaline junkie. But that's the kind of thing we do at Vulcan, and we've never been late on an expedited job."

Delivering during emergencies

William (Bill) Weber, planner and estimator for Ohmstede Industrial Services in St. Gabriel, La., recently purchased aluminum L-foot finned tubes on an expedited basis from Vulcan Finned Tubes.

"During the Suncor Energy project, unexpected problems came during a turnaround," Weber said. "They had discovery work that involved re-tubing of fin fans (air-cooled exchangers) and since Ohmstede was already on site, they called on us to provide the re-tubing services."

"Vulcan was able to deliver the finned tubes within a very short time frame to meet our needs, even on a Saturday afternoon call out. For the first set of tubes we had one week for completion, but the second and third sets of tubes had to be



When Vulcan received an emergency order on a Sunday, the company was ready to ship the supplies the following Tuesday.

turned around within four to five days and that included two days trucking time just to get the tubes to us. That was definitely above average. They really went above and beyond for us."

In the aftermath of Hurricane Rita in 2005, Rhonda Navarro, purchasing buyer at Solutia's Chocolate Bayou, Texas, plant, called on Vulcan Finned Tubes one weekend during an emergency outage caused by the storm.

"The company was available 24 hours, and reliability was a plus," Navarro said. "I was very impressed that I was able to reach them by phone and talk to a person. The communication was great, and status updates were provided routinely."

Solutia's turnaround involved the replacement of finned tubes from the primary and secondary superheat tube bundles of a boiler. These finned tubes were bent to exact specifications. Since adequate drawings were not available on the old boiler, Solutia's mechanical contractor cut out some existing tubes, and Vulcan was able to use those as a pattern for the replacements.

"What was amazing was that Mike Soulant, the owner, knew exactly what we needed and worked with our mechanical contractor and our reliability personnel to meet the schedule," Navarro said. "Mike has past chemical plant experience and when I mentioned Vulcan's name to our mechanical contractor, they had worked with Vulcan on other jobs and had positive input."

Over the years, Vulcan has gained experience working with mechanical contractors and field service groups who work in many of the major refineries, and that experience has been beneficial to the company.

"They are our life blood," Soulant said. "They are on the front lines working directly inside the plants. Our orders will usually come from them or directly from the plants. In most cases when the plants call us, it's because a contractor has referred them to us."

"When delivery is critical, you can't screw up. Not only is your word at stake, but often the contractor has put his neck on the line for you as well."

A growing company

Vulcan's success at delivering emergency turnaround work is evident by the company's rapid growth.

"We are on a roll, and there seems to be no end to it," Soulant said.

Vulcan started its operations in 1999 with one finning machine

inside a 22,500-square-foot leased facility. Today, the company operates nine finning machines around the clock from its own 50,000-square-foot facility that sits on five acres in Tomball, Texas.



In its facility, Vulcan Finned Tubes operates nine finning machines around the clock.



Vulcan Finned Tubes handles all emergency situations from its 50,000-square-foot facility that sits on five acres in Tomball, Texas.

business. First you add night shifts to stay ahead of demand, next you add machinery, and then you run out of room in your shop so you have to expand your building. It's a continuous struggle to maintain the proper balance."

However, Soulant has found that balance and will continue to provide solutions to his clients' emergency needs.

For more information about Vulcan Finned Tubes, please call (281) 255-4775 or visit the company's Web site at www.vulcanfinnedtubes.com. For emergency situations, please contact Soulant directly at (281) 435-5467. □

But handling all this emergency work is not without its challenges.

"You must have excess capacity at all times so you'll be ready when you get the call," Soulant said. "It totally shapes your



Service...

when you need it most.

Vulcan's sales staff is available 24 hours every day to meet your emergency needs. If emergency circumstances warrant, our shop staff can begin your job immediately and continue working around the clock to meet your turnaround delivery needs.



- Welded helical solid finned tubes
- Welded helical serrated finned tubes
- Welded longitudinal finned tubes
- Aluminum L-foot finned tubes
- Pipe, fittings and flanges
- Bending services
- Turbulators
- Tube supports
- Tube Ferrules
- Shoulder plugs & gaskets



Vulcan Finned Tubes, L.P.
27951 Commercial Park Drive
Tomball, Texas 77375
vulcanfinnedtubes.com

Phone 281-255-4775
Toll Free 877-466-0055
Emergency 281-435-5467
Fax 281-516-7878