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UTILITYSOURCE

May 2024

Products and Services for Today's Electric, Telecom, and CATV Utilities

**Moving Beyond
Break/Fix to
Prevent
Downtime
of Critical
Conveyors**

**Unlikely Technology
Combo KOs Large
Suspended Solids
in Power Generation
Industry**



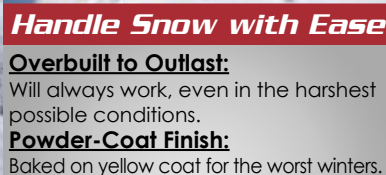
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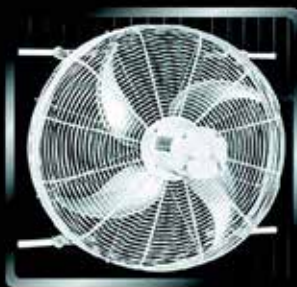
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Our History

As it was the year of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally 50th Anniversary, motorcycle enthusiast and HitchDoc owner, Brad Mohns was waiting on the backordered motorcycle hitch he ordered for the trip. Tired of waiting, he went out to his farm shop and started working his own hitch. That year, Brad took a custom-built trike and chopper to Sturgis, South Dakota with hitches he had designed for common models of Harley Davidsons. The effort, design and quality was apparent to the motorcycling community so the orders rolled in from that day forward.

As a full-time farmer, Brad had all the tools he needed to make hitches for his bikes and friend's but when orders kept coming in, it was time to upgrade and grow. Brad built his first CNC plasma table in 1994 because the quality of machines on the market weren't up to his standards. Local OEM's learned of the cutting capability and HitchDoc's Contract Manufacturing division began. That drive for high quality and machines is still felt on the production floor today.

Brad knew he needed to upgrade his space during the early 2000's. In 2005, he built a new 50,000 sq.ft. facility and moved his 18 employees from the farm shop in Round Lake, MN to Jackson, MN. Growth exploded and an expansion of another 50,000sq. ft. was already needed in 2007.

When the Great Recession hit in 2008, the minds at HitchDoc did not slow down. In effort to keep all of the employees working, HitchDoc Management began adding product lines through acquisition and development. It evens out the work flow and has kept the company stable during the ups and downs of contract manufacturing.

Today, HitchDoc is still family owned and Brad and his wife, Linda, have welcomed their children, Chad, Stacy, Tasha and their families, into the ISO certified operation. Constantly innovating and improving HitchDoc's already high quality product lines, the Mohns family will continue to discover great OEM partners, diversify product offerings, improve capabilities and strive for success.

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Unlikely Technology Combo KOs Large Suspended Solids in Power Generation Industry

Automated scraper strainers paired with macerators eliminate high volumes of large, suspended solids from slurries for “set it and forget it” approach.

In the power industry, industrial strainers are utilized to separate unwanted suspended solids from liquids and slurries from boiler water slag or for filtering Bunker C fuel supplied to burners for power generation. However, conventional strainer methods can prove to be unreliable and lead to extensive maintenance, particularly in cases where the debris or solids are of substantial size and there is a significant amount of suspended solids present.

Fortunately, the utilization of a novel blend of industrial wastewater technologies now allows for the efficient removal of solids without the need for extensive manual labor, worker exposure to messy or potentially hazardous substances, or constant maintenance. Specifically, the design involves a one-two punch combination of a macerator, which breaks down large solids into smaller fragments, and an automated scraper strainer flexible enough to efficiently filter out larger debris along with tiny particles. This innovative solution can even accommodate high solids loading without clogging.

The combination of these two established technologies is already being applied to some of the toughest, dirtiest straining applications including wastewater debris, power plant boiler water slag, asphalt transloading, and meat processing waste streams.

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Overcoming Traditional Limitations

Duplex strainers are often used in continuous flow processes that cannot be shut down for cleaning purposes. Duplex basket strainers employ two distinct chambers that function independently. When one chamber needs cleaning, the flow is seamlessly diverted to the alternate chamber, enabling the removal and cleaning of the first basket.

Cleaning is a messy, laborious process that involves equalizing pressure between the baskets, diverting flow to the off-line chamber, opening the cover, manually removing the clogged basket, and cleaning it before refitting the basket, ensuring the seal, and tightening the fasteners.

If an operator fails to adequately clean the basket strainers for any reason, both strainers can become clogged at the same time. This compromises the filtration process, resulting in quality issues or unexpected downtime until the problem is resolved. For many processors, this can occur simply due to having insufficient personnel to keep basket strainers clean along with their other duties.

“As an alternative, a combination of established complementary technologies such as a macerator and an automated scraper strainer can essentially ‘knock out’ even the toughest problems related to large solids and high solids loading in an automated way,” says Robert Presser, Vice President of Acme Engineering Prod., Inc., a North American manufacturer of industrial self-cleaning strainers. The company is an ISO 9001:2015 certified manufacturer of environmental controls and systems with integrated mechanical, electrical, and electronic capabilities.

In this configuration, a macerator would be installed upstream to reduce large solids down to a manageable size. The capabilities of the automated strainer are crucial to the process as well, according to Presser.

“Although the macerator cuts up the biggest solids, the strainer must still be able to separate both relatively large pieces and tiny particles while handling high solids loading without becoming obstructed,” explains Presser.

In the case of Acme, the OEM’s automated scraper strainer is designed to continually remove both very large and very small suspended solids from liquids and slurries. Cleaning

is accomplished by a spring-loaded blade and brush system, managed by a fully automatic control system.

Four scraper brushes rotate at 8 RPM, resulting in a cleaning rate of 32 strokes per minute. The scraper brushes get into wedge-wire slots and dislodge resistant particulates and solids. This approach enables the scraper strainers to resist clogging and fouling when faced with large solids and high solids concentration.

Blowdown typically occurs only at the end of the intermittent scraping cycle when a valve is opened for a few seconds to remove solids from the collector area. Liquid loss is well below 1% of total flow.

If additional pressure is required to clean the screen, Acme Engineering can add an inexpensive trash pump to the blowdown line to assist in removing the solids from the strainer sump.

“Since the solids are small, a little trash pump can pressurize the blowdown line to evacuate solids from the strainer. The combination provides quick ROI because operators no longer have to monitor and clean out heavily loaded basket strainers, resulting in substantially less labor and downtime,” says Presser.

Alternatively, the sump can be replaced by a cylinder bracketed by two gate valves that open and close as needed to remove the solids waste.

“When you are ready to empty the cylinder, you close the top gate valve momentarily and open the bottom one by depressing a button to dump the accumulated solids into a receptacle like a dump truck or a conveyor bucket so there is no manual handling required,” says Presser.

According to Presser, Acme has already worked with power plant operators and managers to implement a wide range of specialized straining systems for difficult applications with exceptionally large solids or very high solids loading.

One example is boiler water slag. Over time, boilers accumulate ash that forms slag deposits, which act as insulation on the boiler tubes. Consequently, more fuel is needed to achieve the desired temperature and output

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compared to a clean boiler. By removing slag deposits, boiler efficiency can be improved by 1 to 4 percent, leading to reduced emissions from power plants due to decreased fuel consumption.

For one power plant, Acme Engineering addressed the slag issue by employing large cylinders and gate valves to strain out slag from a waste slurry produced during boiler washouts. The size of the cylinders used exceeded typical dimensions, with the largest cylinder measuring six feet tall and 18 inches wide.

In another application, the OEM employed a strainer, cylinder, and gate valve configuration to eliminate solid impurities and debris from Bunker C fuel oil. Bunker C, a low-cost residual byproduct derived from the crude oil refinement process, is a viscous substance with a high asphalt content that includes concentrated trace minerals. In this scenario, Bunker C fuel was supplied to burners for power generation, necessitating the removal of any large clumps or oversized particles that could potentially obstruct the nozzles. Failure to do so could result in decreased production and unscheduled downtime for maintenance or repairs.

According to Presser, adapting strainers for the specialized filtration of uncommon liquids and slurries requires not only expertise but also collaboration with the processor as well as some design iterations.

"For unusual applications, it may take a few attempts to get it right. You may have to adjust the timing and frequency of cleaning as well as adjust the screen slot size. There are quite a few variables involved," concludes Presser.

The power generation industry depends on the filtration of liquids or slurries to meet quality and regulatory standards. When the removal of large solids or managing excessive solids loading exceeds the feasibility of manual basket strainer cleaning, integrating a combination of highly effective technologies may be the best decision.

For more info, visit Acme Engineering Prod. Inc. at acmeprod.com or phone Robert Presser, Vice President at: 518-236-5659; fax: 518-236-6941; mail Acme at Trimex Building, Route 11, POB 460 PMB 10, Mooers, New York 12958. In Canada phone: 514-342-5656; fax: 514-342-3131; mail them at 5706 Royalmount Ave., Montreal, Quebec, H4P 1K5.

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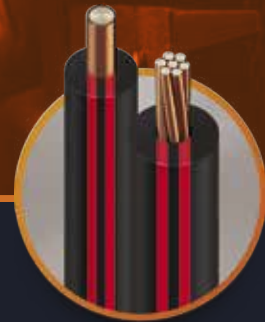
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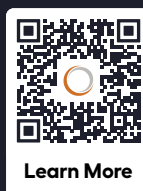
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Moving Beyond Break/Fix to Prevent Downtime of Critical Conveyors

By Del Williams

To optimize production and extend the lifespan of tubular drag cable conveyors, it is ideal to involve an expert OEM for total preventative maintenance.

Processors in a wide range of industries rely on tubular drag cable conveyors to move sensitive materials and powders; therefore, it is important to properly design, install, and proactively maintain these systems to minimize production downtime and maximize longevity.

In today's fast-paced processing environment, it is a standard practice to run conveyors until something breaks or needs to be repaired, which can lead to significant unnecessary downtime.

"Processors traditionally have relied on third parties such as local millwrights to install and maintain conveyors. These third parties may not have access to technical specifications or have not had the opportunity to read the manual and can therefore be unaware of system acceptable specifications and best practices. This can result in not only excessive downtime and maintenance, but also costly repairs and even premature system replacement," says Fernando Mejia, Director of Product Life Cycle Management & Aftermarket for Automated Handling Solutions (AHS).

AHS combines the strengths of two market leaders, Cablevey Conveyors and Spiroflow, to provide customers with a specialized handling and automation product portfolio for mission-critical applications.

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Instead of reacting to individual problems as they arise, a more effective approach is to implement total preventative maintenance (TPM) for conveyors. This involves ongoing service and engineering support, resulting in reduced downtime and lower Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs.

"We are here to assist customers reducing their total O&M costs. We are looking forward to partnering with our customers to inspect their systems, review layouts, and formulate a total preventative maintenance plan based on their needs. Failing in this, customers may continue to replace parts prematurely with all the needless downtime this involves," says Mejia.

According to Mejia, the goal of a TPM program is to work with our customers to maximize the

output of their conveyors and extend the lifespan of their critical capital equipment.

The Value of Prevention

With the sophistication of state-of-the-art conveyors, proactive, preventative, and predictive maintenance is an effective strategy. This is the case with tubular drag cable conveyors, which gently move product through a sealed tube using a coated, flexible stainless-steel drag cable pulled through on a loop. Solid circular discs (flights) are attached to the cable, which propel the product through the tube without the use of air.

While it is possible to utilize third parties to install the systems and in-house maintenance teams to maintain them, there are considerable advantages to involving an OEM Supervisor, since they possess unparalleled training and expertise on

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“Many recurring problems stem from incorrect installation, which can involve improperly positioning the conveyor’s hangers, excessive tension, misaligning tubing, leaving gaps, or insufficient supports. All these defects can generate friction, noise, and prematurely wear parts, requiring replacement,” says Mejia.

An OEM can also proactively recommend the appropriate spare parts kits or high wear parts such as cables, connectors, or sweeps that are known

to have shorter lifecycles. This method encompasses assessing both the condition and usage of the conveyor, while also leveraging predictive data to efficiently resolve numerous issues before any downtime occurs.

“As the OEM, we can analyze system usage as well as component wear and lifecycle data to accurately predict when vital parts will likely need to be replaced and have them replaced before something breaks,” says Mejia.

“The more a processor adheres to this type of total preventative maintenance schedule, the more likely the conveyors will provide optimal service throughout their anticipated lifespan,” adds Mejia.

A comprehensive annual inspection of the conveyor system by the OEM is highly recommended. With the shortage of skilled mechanics combined with high employee turnover, we are here to

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perform in-depth inspections and recommended maintenance. This solution is mainly targeted to processors that have one or multiple tubular drag conveyors running constantly throughout the year.

According to Mejia, detecting problems such as gaps or misalignments requires camera inspection. The annual inspection also assesses the conveyor's tubes, walls, sweeps, connectors, input, and output. In addition, cables should be checked for integrity and tension, discs and sprockets for wear, and joints should be validated.

During the inspection process, the OEM can recalibrate or replace any components outside of system specifications. In the case of AHS, service technicians also advise on the use of any available

update or retrofit kits that can further facilitate increased output.

While the frequency of the annual service visits depends on the system application and environment conditions, several factors can help determine the optimal frequency. As a partial list, this can include the type of conveyor systems in the facility, system length and complexity, average daily use, environment conditions and the type of material conveyed. When these factors are analyzed, a service visit might be scheduled once or twice per year, as the situation warrants.

Many processors can benefit greatly from collaborating with a knowledgeable conveyor OEM to establish a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan. For instance, Mejia highlights the case



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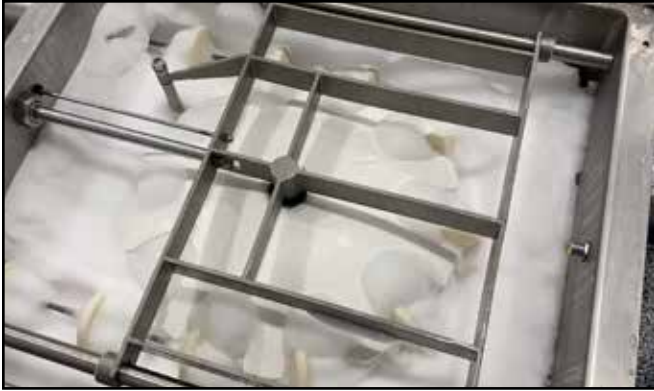
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of a coffee processor that aimed to revamp their maintenance strategy.

This customer had expanded operations and was about to double their capacity. Although their conveyors were running well, they didn't want to risk unnecessary downtime. "So, they told us, 'We would like to avoid the 'break/fix' approach and move forward to a total preventative maintenance culture,'" says Mejia. "I was thrilled to hear that our goal and vision were aligned."

To meet the demands of the industry and address the requested services, AHS is increasing their service capacity to assist processors in proactively mitigating issues and minimizing downtime. The OEM will be establishing a service hub and parts depot on the West Coast, enabling localization, onsite inspections, and comprehensive preventive maintenance by qualified technicians with a local presence.

The OEM is now offering long term service agreements that will comprehensively cover all aspects of maintenance, so the processor can focus on their core business with confidence in the performance of their conveyors.

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TICO Announces Availability of the Next Generation TICO Pro-Spotter Electric Terminal Tractor



Offers Higher Levels of Onboard Energy, Flexibility for Any Application, Especially for Port Operators

TICO (Terminal Investment Corporation) Manufacturing, the leading terminal tractor manufacturer and one of the largest terminal tractor fleet owners and operators in North America, announced today at the Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) Expo the launch of the next generation of its Pro-Spotter Electric Terminal Tractor. The next generation Pro-Spotter Electric terminal tractor offers users unprecedented levels of onboard energy.

"It was clear that the market demanded more flexibility in electric terminal tractors. End users should not have to change their entire operations to meet sustainability initiatives and requirements. We set out to tailor our next generation terminal tractor to meet each set of customer requirements and have succeeded in establishing an all-new benchmark for the industry," said Mallery Pindar, TICO's Senior Director of Sales and Marketing. "This level of onboard energy finally conquers the challenge that port operators have of runtime when addressing demanding port applications and uses."

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TICO announced production of its first generation electric terminal tractor in 2023 with its partnership with Volvo Penta, leveraging the Volvo electric technology into its industry leading terminal tractor design. Recognizing the additional requirements that many terminal tractor users have, TICO's new Pro-Spotter Electric incorporates additional battery and driveline options from a diverse set of suppliers. Full production will commence in 2025.

Key features of the new TICO Pro-Spotter Electric Terminal Tractor include:

- Scalable range of onboard energy levels, with top end of 312 kWh
- Top end unit GCWR of 160,000 lbs. plus 61,000 ft-lbs. of wheel end torque tailored to the port operator
- 175 kWh max fast charge or inductive charging adaptable
- BABA Compliance (Build America, Buy America Compliant), qualifying for the nation's major grant funding programs such as the Clean Ports Program

"We understand very well the challenges port operators face," said Dean Newton, TICO's Director of Engineering. "Drawing on our experiences operating over 2,000 units internally, we also examined every aspect of our customer's operations to help develop this product. We are

confident it will meet the challenges our customers face, particularly port operations. Now, 312 kWh is the new benchmark for the industry. This finally conquers the challenge for greater runtime in the work settings that these operators have."

"The launch of the Pro-Spotter Electric Terminal Tractor once again demonstrates why we are the leading terminal tractor manufacturer in the industry," said Jim Grooms, Division President of TICO. "We listened to our port operators and other customers, and delivered a product that meets their needs exclusively as well as those of intermodal operations and distribution centers alike.

ACT Expo 2024 is taking place from May 20-23 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

About TICO Manufacturing

TICO Manufacturing is the quality manufacturer of the Pro-Spotter and Pro-Spotter Electric on- and off-Highway terminal tractors for distribution centers, rail terminals and ports, and the Pro-Shuttle terminal trailer. TICO terminal tractors are built in Ridgeland, SC to be "Your Best Move." For more information, please visit ticotracors.com.

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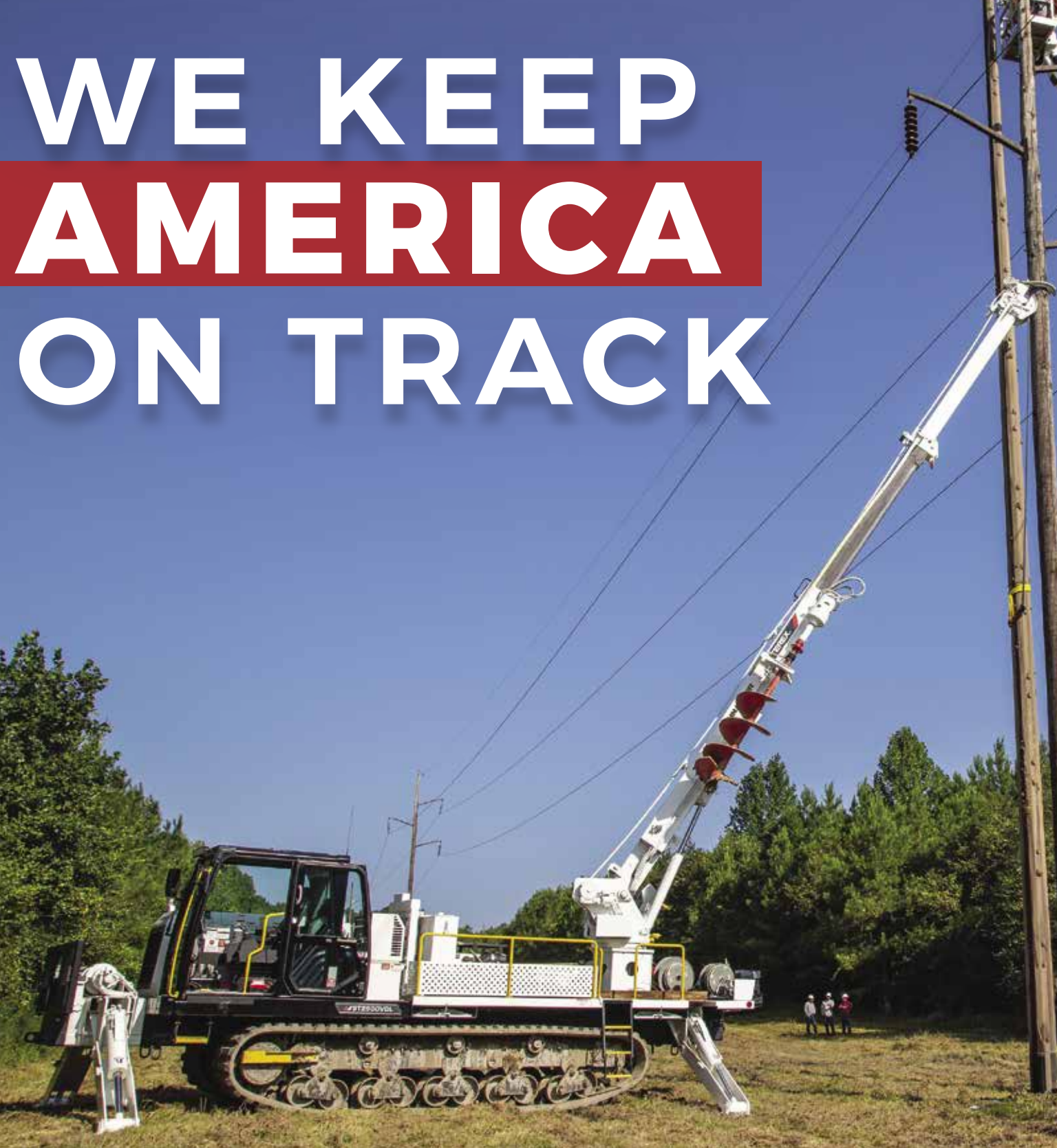
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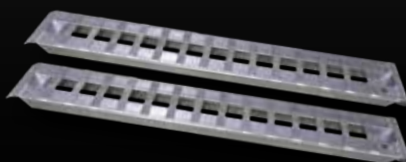


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