

Wisconsin Lift Truck Helps Modernize Mining Company

The South Milwaukee, WI, branch of Caterpillar Global Mining was being hamstrung by antiquated equipment and poor layout. The manufacturer, which builds products for coal mining, had its parts scattered across multiple buildings. The parts were being stored in small bins and handmade wooden drawers and shelves that dated back to the 1950s and '60s.

It could take days to find a specific part and subsequently the company could only build 12 to 15 machines per year. The company was desperate to upgrade its storage system and consolidate all of its parts together into a 75,000 sq. ft. warehouse.

Enter Tom Stephens, fleet service manager for Wisconsin Lift Truck Corp. (Brookfield, WI). Tom is a 34-year veteran of the industry and has a very long-standing relationship with Cat Global Mining. Tom proposed building a state of the art automated storage and retrieval system from Hanel Storage Systems. "Not only would the Hanel parts retrieval system make finding inventory more efficient, it also provided a much more secure system," says Stephens.



Tom contacted Bob Brooks at Hanel and the two discussed how many retrieval systems Cat would need. Then, Tom and Bob took representatives of Cat to several locations that employed Hanel retrieval systems.

"The customer was blown away by the durability, speed and reliability of the systems," Stephens says. "After seeing the Hanel's in action, they were sold."

The project began in 2007, with the installation of three model 2460 systems with 80 pans. Each system is 36 ft. tall and is governed by a security system. That system automatically tells the customer what to reorder and has an automated inventory system. Each shelf had a capacity of 800 1,100 pounds, ideal for the small assembly parts that the mining company was storing.

"Before, it could have taken days or weeks to find a part," Stephens says. "With the new system, it's minutes. All of the information

is right at the operator's fingertips and the part doesn't have to move more than 300 ft. The Milwaukee branch is now building 24 machines per year, up from 12 before we installed the Hanel solution."

The customer was so impressed that they ordered two more in 2009 and another two in 2010. All told, there are 3,000 active bin locations with 95 percent of pans fully utilized, 5,370 SKUs with a total quantity of 87,000 stored

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Tom Stephens, Wisconsin Lift Truck Corp

CASE STUDY

parts and 175 multi line order picks per day. The company even purchased two Hanel units for their Denison, Texas, location and is looking to add more retrieval systems as they continue to expand.

“It brought a company out of the ‘50s and ‘60s and into the present. The solution helped them step into a global environment and brought them a level of security,” Stephens says. “And Hanel was indispensable throughout the entire process. Bob Brooks helped present the solution and also assured the customer that they would be there to support the product after it was installed. Everything they said they would do, they did. They are a first class organization with top of the line products.”

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