



OJ Industrial Maintenance

Suncor Irathane Pipeline – Phase II pipe-racking project

The Situation

In June 2008, OJ Industrial Maintenance was contracted to complete the construction of a three-kilometre multi-pipe pipeline and racking project on a tight timeframe. The line was to pass through the unique environment of an oilsands tailings area, at the Suncor Main Plant just north of Fort McMurray, Alberta.

The pipeline engineering consultant requested the use of environmentally-friendly screw piles for the foundation of the project, based on their speed and ease of installation and the advantage of being able to group them together to accommodate large horizontal forces at anchor block locations. OJ needed a partner who knew the industry, knew the product and could work efficiently within the constraints of the job. That partner was Almita Manufacturing Ltd.

With more than 15 years experience in the oil and gas industry and with multiple oilsands projects completed, Almita had the expertise and resources necessary to complete the job. Their unique combination of a diverse fleet, skilled fabrication and installation teams and excellent project management services allowed OJ to come in on time and on budget on this project

The Solution

This install didn't happen without challenges. Soil in the construction area was made up of very dense, tightly-packed tailings sand, which few installation units in the industry would have had the power to penetrate. Almita pushed it to the limits, using their most powerful equipment and the largest drive heads in the industry to screw the piles into position.

Almita's skilled fabrication team worked tirelessly on the Suncor job at its semi-automated manufacturing facility in Ponoka, Alberta, producing a quality product while meeting the demanding schedule of the project. As piles were completed and passed individual quality assurance testing, they were shipped north in batches to Fort McMurray. This allowed the installation crews to start making progress immediately while the fabrication of the piles was still in progress.

On site, the Almita field supervisor coordinated efforts with each of the project partners and kept progress on track. Under these challenging conditions safety was considered paramount, so mandatory checks were conducted every hour to ensure the workers' safety and strict adherence to the on-site codes of conduct.

As complications arose, the field supervisor was able to report back to the engineering team at Almita headquarters and quickly implement solutions. Under their direction, two installation units worked in tandem to install the piles, while three welding teams followed behind to complete the cutting and capping. The majority of the piles were installed in pairs to support the pipeline. The remainder, were installed in clusters of up to 16 piles, to form anchor blocks that would support the substantial thrust forces of the line.



The Result

Almita worked closely with the OJ team on a daily basis to complete the fabrication and installation of the 1,096 screw piles and caps and provide engineering expertise as required. The project was completed from contract to capping in less than two months.

In spite of the project's many challenges Almita+- completed the project on time and on budget. Two key end results were a high-quality finished product and a highly impressed client.

Testimonial

Based on our previous experience with Almita Manufacturing Ltd. we knew we could count on them to get this job done right. There were lots of variables and uncertainties involved and Almita was acceptable to the unknown and able to adapt quickly to frequent project modifications.

Our business's success is dependent on our people so their safety is always top of mind and we look to align ourselves with companies who share the same values. Almita really showed us that safety was their number one priority and they proved that commitment to us on a daily basis. They worked side-by-side with us through the duration of the project and ensured the highest standards of quality were met.

Almita is a valued partner of OJ Industrial and will continue to be in the future. We are always looking for new opportunities to grow this relationship and are already working on our next project.

Bill Neely

OJ Industrial Maintenance