

Whitney

METAL FABRICATION NEWS

Hard Work, Dedicated Employees, Faster Machines Build Success at Waste Gas

What happens when a small family business was created to service steel mills...then the mills cutback or close? If it's Waste Gas Steel Fabrication in Fairless, Pennsylvania (just outside of Philadelphia), it struggles, stabilizes, changes and succeeds as a versatile metal fabricating shop.

Founded in 1975 by the Cloman family as a rebuilder of steel furnace waste gas devices such as recuperators and

precipitator products, the company was redirected into steel fabrication services with the decline of the mills.

The Waste Gas of today meets virtually any plate fabricating need including laser, plasma and oxy-fuel cutting, grinding, machining, bending, rolling, drilling, welding, painting, shearing, sawing, delivery and, in some cases, even storage. A separate and very active



Furnace Division creates housings for ceramic furnaces that ship worldwide.

A move and four expansions have brought the shop from the beginning 3,200 square feet to 60,000 square feet.

Growing with the Company Kyle Cloman, president and owner, has worked in the business since he was a junior in high school.

"I'm a welder/fitter by trade," Cloman says. "I learned from my dad who started the business to do mill furnace repair jobs that no one else wanted to handle. He taught me how to weld, bend, fit and fabricate. I learned from the best craftsman in the business."

Today, even though he is more comfortable in the shop, the majority of Cloman's time is spent making sales calls and aggressively pursuing growth for the company and its 48 employees. His "hands-on" background adds value to his customer interactions, "I can sit down with a customer and quite often tell them if they're doing something wrong, why it's wrong, how long it will take to do a job and the best way to get the job done."

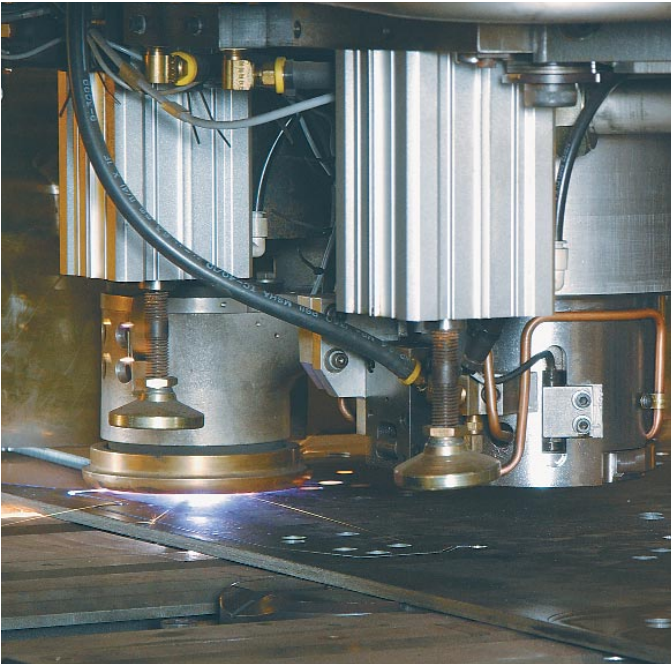


Tony Martelli, V.P. Operations (left), and Kyle Cloman, president and owner, review prints.

Cloman uses his close customer relationships to gain market intelligence and direct his business decisions. He looks at the individual industry needs rather than general trends and believes that the only way to succeed today is to work hard and provide production on bigger and faster equipment.



The fully integrated load/unload material handling system frees the operator for other tasks once the production cycle is initiated. The drop table on the machine's outfeed side removes completed skeletons.



The combined punching/cutting capability of the 3400 XP allows Waste Gas to complete many parts in one operation rather than two.



Operator Jim Millward shows edge quality on one of the parts completed on the 3400.

Investing in Tomorrow

To get the job done, Cloman has invested heavily in new equipment throughout the past three years, positioning the company to run with the economy as it begins its climb out of the recession. His expectation is that 2003 will be better, though not a banner year.

“You’ve got to look at each year getting a little bit better instead of saying, ‘When are we going to come out of

this?’ We need people to have faith in one another to get everything going and get busy again. We have to work our way out.”

What is helping Waste Gas work it’s way out? The broad customer base of 365 companies that require a wide variety of work, the ability to effectively handle jobs of one or two parts as well as production runs, a talented, dedicated group of employees, and new equipment.



The PartHANDLER-II loads material into work clamps on the infeed side of the 3400. Plate up to 1,000 lbs. can be automatically loaded.



Nine tools can be positioned on the 3400 XP backrail for punching, forming or marking material up to 1" thick.

Expanded Capabilities

A Whitney 3400 XP with a PartHANDLER-II is a new addition. The punch/plasma machine and integrated material handling equipment was purchased to fill a productivity gap between Waste Gas' laser and large plasma tables, and machining operations.

Cloman saw the opportunity to produce parts in one operation rather than two, saving time and reducing production costs. Savings that could be passed on to his customers.

Parts that used to be cut on the laser or plasma machine, then moved to a machining center for internal configurations, are now cut and punched in one step on the 3400 XP.

"It's very cost effective for us to shift some of those parts. A lot of the parts can go on the Whitney and be produced in half the time than on the laser," says Cloman. "And the savings is substantial when we compare the hourly rate to run the Whitney to the big laser.

"The Whitney is allowing us to go back to some of our customers and give them cost cuts they've been asking for," Cloman adds. "We're revisiting customers today saying, 'Hey, we have a Whitney now.'"

As with all new equipment, there is a period of adjustment and the discovery of what the new machine can do. Cloman reports that every day they find additional parts that can be produced more economically on the 3400 XP. Each time a job is moved to the Whitney, they are impressed by the machine's capabilities.

Tony Martelli, Operations Manager, is very pleased with the edge quality as well as the increased production speed. Waste Gas is finding that the cut is "90 percent" of what they get from their laser and considerably better than the cut from their plasma burning tables.

Material Handling Advantages

The combination of the 3400 punch/plasma with the skeleton drop table and the PartHANDLER-II automatic load/unload system, creates a fully functional unit called the 3400 FLEX.

On the 3400 XP the production cycle is automatic and complete. Raw material is loaded and positioned by the PartHANDLER-II. Parts are punched and plasma cut by the 3400. Small finished parts are removed via drop door; larger parts are off-loaded by the PartHANDLER-II using programmable magnets. A drop table removes the completed skeletons while production continues, uninterrupted, on the next plate.

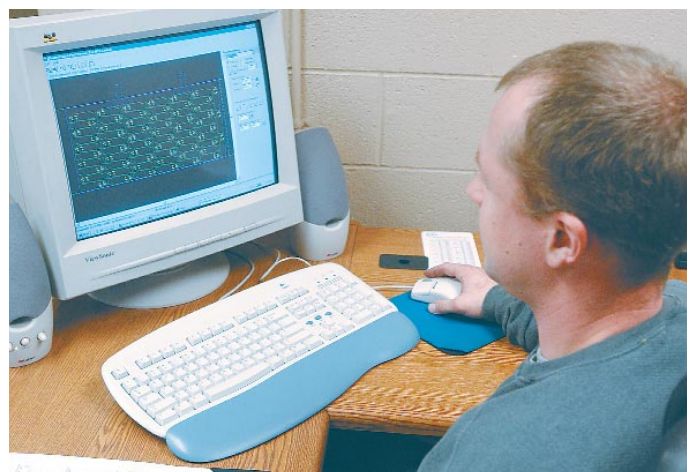
"The Whitney load/unload allows the operator to run the machine and also do other things in the general area," Cloman says. "The Whitney might be running and instead of standing there he might stack, or quality control parts. The machine can be producing while he is doing quality work which is done at every work station here."

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Moving Forward Together

Waste Gas' ability to run parts of all sizes and thicknesses contributes to their success. Their primary business is steel plate fabrication but they are also strong in structural fabrication including duct work. Nine certified welders create assemblies from mild steel, aluminum and stainless.

Most of the Waste Gas employees have been with the company many years—several began their working careers at the shop and worked their way from one position to another. Regardless of what position they are in, they all agree with the company philosophy of doing the job right the first time while taking customer service to the highest level.



Scott Johnson, programmer/operator, works with nesting software to assure efficient material usage on the 3400 XP.



Waste Gas has found that the cut from the 3400 XP is 90 percent of what they get from their laser and considerably faster. Many of the parts move on to a press brake or weld station. Right: Press operator Zihad Ibric works with parts from the 3400 XP.

Cloman repeatedly credits his employees, including Ruthann, his wife, who handles Human Resources, with the company success, "Anyone who owns a business and says, 'I did this', is wrong. In this day and age, you need more than one guy. You need a good group of dedicated individuals. We've all worked our way up the ladder as the company grew.

"You have to believe in yourself, your company and your people...and work. We're all working harder today than ever before." ♦

Find out more about Waste Gas Steel Fabrication at www.wastegas.com.



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