

Kinder Morgan expands relationship with expert welders

Advanced Welding Solutions

Advanced Welding Solutions has perfected its niche by staying true to its core focus: welding.

“We have had companies tell us there isn’t a contractor out there that can beat us on execution,” explained Vice President of Operations Tim Choate. “That gets us in the door, and it is our strong supervision, the quality of our welders, our very low weld rejection rate and our safety performance that bring us back to the table time and again.”

And the company’s clientele agrees. Advanced Welding Solutions has executed multiple capital projects at Kinder Morgan’s Galena Park and Pasadena, Texas, terminals over the past two-plus years. Kenneth Armer, senior project manager at Kinder Morgan, has worked closely with the company during that time. He first gave Advanced Welding Solutions small jobs because, as he noted, not every company can handle the complexities of pipeline terminals.

“There really weren’t any problems to speak of, and our relationship with Advanced Welding Solutions has grown

bigger and bigger over time,” explained Armer. “They have a good core group of individuals working for them.”

In fact, the relationship has grown so much Advanced Welding Solutions expanded with a large fabrication shop just across the street from Kinder Morgan to accommodate the pipe fabrication and installation and structural steel projects.

“Things can change quickly here, and they are very reactive to our needs,” said Armer. “Their location and availability are unparalleled, and they are very good at changing direction as needed.

“Additionally, they are very honest with us, and honesty goes a long way here.”

Armer’s site is a DOT facility, so it gets audited on a regular basis.

“That means the turnover books and paperwork are as important as the actual work going on,” said Armer. “Advanced Welding Solutions has an excellent person who does these packages well.”

That high level of customer service is just one part of the package the Advanced

Welding Solutions team offers.

“We like to offer ‘value adds’ to our customers,” explained Choate. “An example of this is the expansion of our fabrication facility, which allows us to do pipe fabrication before we arrive at our clients’ sites. We can actually do the fabrication, NDE/inspection work and QA/QC at our shop and then haul it to the jobsite. This allows us to minimize the time we are in our customers’ facilities impacting their operations.”

Once on-site, the work is executed safely in line with Advanced Welding Solutions’ safety motto, “Be your brother’s keeper.” The company completed Kinder Morgan’s 2015 projects with zero incidents and zero weld rejections.

“We set our safety goals very high, and they have maintained a very good rapport with all of our safety folks and permit writers and have really just kept everyone in the safety group happy,” said Armer.

Advanced Welding Solutions’ workforce includes a core group of 200 welders and pipefitters, with an additional 400

welders and pipefitters in its database. They are supported by a management team with more than 150 years’ combined experience. That includes Choate, who has more than 30 years’ experience executing specialty welding, turnarounds and capital projects for the petrochemical and power industries, and President Dale Johnston, who has more than 35 years’ experience in the construction industry.

“We aren’t trying to be everything to everybody,” said Johnston. “We will stay focused on the welding deliverable with a high level of expertise. That is our commitment.”

“We enjoy our relationship with Advanced Welding Solutions and plan to continue working with them,” said Armer. “We just met today on starting a new project, in fact.

“I do recommend Advanced Welding Solutions to other companies looking for these services but only as long as they don’t take my people!”

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