

KONECRANES HELPS RAIL CAR MAKER GET BACK ON TRACK AFTER SLOW DOWN

The U.S. offshore drilling boom in 2010 fueled a renewed demand for rail tank cars to transport oil and gas.

And this boom gained Konecranes a contract to conduct crane maintenance audits at three tank car manufacturing plants that a rail car maker shut down in 2008 after the Great Recession put the brakes on rail transport and tank car orders.

CAPACITY OVERLOAD

The manufacturer decided to reopen the plants after securing a major tank car contract, and wanted to make certain the cranes were in good operating order.

Konecranes' audits in two of the plants found that each had a 110-amp runway conductor bar serving four cranes with a combined amperage draw exceeding the bars' allowable load. Chad Rooney, Konecranes sales manager in Grand Prairie, TX, said this likely contributed to daily breakdowns the plants experienced before closing. The breakdowns damaged bridges, hoists and at least one trolley motor a month at each facility.

To solve this problem, Konecranes installed new 220-amp conductor bars.

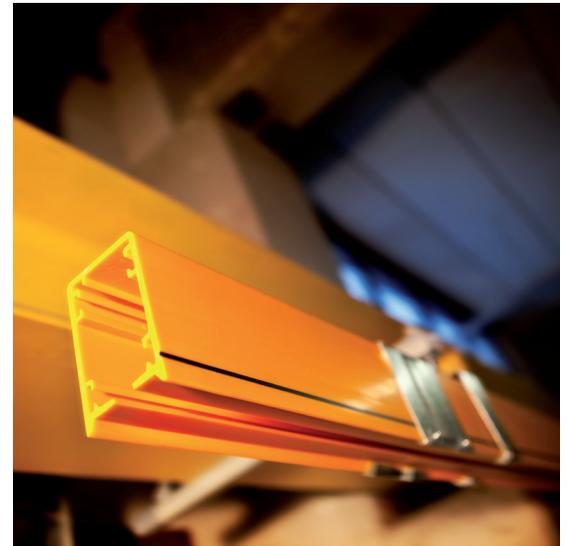
BACK IN ALIGNMENT

In the third plant, the audit uncovered tracking issues that were likely the reason the customer's previous crane service provider had to repeatedly repair or replace wheels, motors, gearboxes, couplings, line shafts and bearings, before the facility closing.

To get to the root cause, Rooney said, Konecranes performed a Rail Alignment and Crane Geometric Survey. A 300-foot crane rail, worn beyond repair, had to be replaced, and new drive wheels were installed on two cranes with spacers added to align the wheels within tolerance.

SOLUTIONS THAT PAY THEIR WAY

Cost of the corrections were substantial, but not next to their combined average annual return on investment of \$562,000, Rooney said. The conductor bar replacements alone have resulted in a 50 percent reduction in downtime and a 75 percent reduction in motor rewinds and replacements.



“This is the value that Konecranes brings,” Rooney said. “We presented these success stories to the customer’s executive board, and they decided to allocate the savings to new equipment.” That new equipment includes 14 Konecranes CXT wire rope hoist cranes and six other new cranes, in addition to other improvements that are on the way.



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