

Steelworkers Nationwide to Tour Satsop Development Park This Weekend

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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ELMA — How do you convert an enormous building, originally constructed to house twin nuclear power plant turbines, into a successful steel fabrication company? That's what more than 120 engineers, technicians and owners from steel tank manufacturing plants throughout the Americas will see for themselves Saturday morning when they tour BMT-Northwest at the Satsop Business Park. The industry's top experts from across the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean are in Seattle this week to attend the Steel Tank Institute/Steel Plate Fabricators Association's (STI/SPFA) required Quality Control conference. Although the association's biennial meetings usually take place in a more central location, Washington State offered the chance to visit a very unique manufacturing plant in the unlikeliest of places.

Saturday the attendees will leave early to travel to Satsop Business Park in Elma to see how BMT-Northwest has transformed a building once meant to house twin steam turbine generators for the never-finished WPPSS nuclear plants, into one of the largest steel fabrication plants in the country. "It is an honor for BMT-Northwest to host the STI gathering at our Satsop facility," said Chuck Travelstead, owner of the BMT family of companies. He has served on the STI board of directors for more than 15 years, the last three as the association's president.

"It gives us the chance to showcase our newest facility, which is unique in every way possible, from its size — over 300,000 sq. ft., to its crane capacity — we can move a million pounds in a single lift, to having access to our own barge slip that is capable of shipping oversized components anywhere in the world — and the list goes on," Travelstead said. Rollie Irwin, vice president of manufacturing for BMT-Northwest, echoed Travelstead's comments. "We are excited to share the Satsop story with our peers — manufacturers from a broad spectrum of specialty steel shops — who are our partners, contractors and friendly competitors. We are really proud of this facility and the capabilities we have today, which are unmatched across the country," Irwin said. In addition to leading the tour, Irwin is slated as one of the conference's speakers. "Our Quality Control meeting gathers together the most prominent manufacturers of underground and aboveground storage tanks in the Americas," said Larry O'Shea, Director of Quality Assurance for STI/SPFA. "Our standards are the highest for the industry," added Lorri Grainawi, the association's Director of Technical Services. The association's membership consists of manufacturers of shop-fabricated tanks, field erected tanks, steel pipe, steel pressure vessels and other specialty fabricated steel products. These products are used in the petrochemical, power generation, food, drug, fuel, wastewater and water transmission, storage and processing industries. The meeting attendees will see a unique shop when they tour BMT-Northwest. The first thing they will notice is the size of the building. It is 600 feet long, 207 feet wide and 150 feet tall with two floors and a "mezzanine" along with drive-through access. Then there are the twin 250-ton cranes that can travel the entire 600-foot length of the building. "I don't know of another fabrication shop in the United States that can lift a million pounds — 500 tons — but we can," Irwin said. In addition, many other elements of the super-sized infrastructure

created for the nuclear power plants have become assets for this large manufacturer. Plentiful, reliable, low-cost power and an industrial water supply that allows for easy testing of tanks have helped the business thrive, Irwin said. So has a recently renovated barge slip that was built originally to transport oversized, over-weight-limit nuclear reactor parts to the site and now allows over-width tank projects to be loaded and shipped down the Chehalis River to the Port of Grays Harbor with ease. In fact, Irwin said that after more than 85 years on the Olympia waterfront, in the two years since moving its operation to Satsop Business Park, BMT-Northwest has successfully tackled several extra-large projects that it couldn't have attempted at its old shop.

"The BMT success story is also the story of Satsop Business Park," said Tami Garrow, CEO of the Satsop Business Park. "We like to think of the Park as the ultimate 'recycling project' putting these buildings, grounds and super-sized infrastructure back to work for the benefit of the community," Garrow said. "It requires a great leap of faith and a powerful imagination to redeploy these buildings into something positive, and working in partnership with BMT, we've been able to achieve a true win-win for the business and for our community. We are so proud of what they have been able to achieve here at the Park and are glad for the chance to show others what we can do at Satsop. "We are hoping that the BMT story will encourage other companies to give us a serious look as a place to grow their business," she said. "We feel so fortunate that we found this unique place," said Travelstead. "Not only is it perfectly suited for our operation, we cannot imagine a more helpful partner than Satsop Business Park." *Satsop Business Park is a 1,700-acre mixed-use business and technology park located in scenic Grays Harbor County in Southwest Washington just 30 minutes from Olympia and the I-5 corridor. It is home to more than 30 businesses, offers 440 acres of developed, pad-ready land and buildings supported by super-sized infrastructure and surrounded by 1,200 acres of sustainable managed forestland. The Park is managed by the Grays Harbor Public Development Authority, a public corporation whose mission is to create new jobs and investment for the region. More information on Satsop Business Park can be found at www.Satsop.com.*