

Company Utilizes Site for Hands-on Training

When OK Champion wanted to train nearly 50 distributors and customers from across the country using one of their cable scrapers, they wanted a place that would allow for hands-on use of the equipment. OK Champion, a company that provides products to meet the need for cable pulling, removal, placing, and reel handling, found the ideal spot at The Planet Underground in Manteno, Illinois less than an hour southwest of Chicago.

OK Champion has typically held their trainings at their headquarters in Hammond, Indiana, but using a facility where real-life conduits run through what was once a state health facility provided the perfect venue for showcasing the equipment, said Harvey Reed, Vice President of OK Champion.

“What is ideal about the campus is that we did not have to worry about going into a network or disturbing a system or the dangers of traffic,” Reed said.

Those attending the training came from as far away as Hawaii, California and Pennsylvania with some distributors coming from Canada. They began their day at OK Champion’s Indiana factory learning how to properly maintain and care for cable scrapers, power rodders, cable pullers, reel carriers and other equipment.

Afterward, they loaded onto a chartered bus for the trip to Planet Underground. With its realistic setting and interactive capabilities, The Planet Underground is the ideal site to showcase and sale new products, services and processes as well as for networking with customers and for research and development. On June 26 and 27, The Planet Underground will be the site of the World of Training, an underground utility construction show complete with activities, a trade expo atmosphere and training.

After lunch, they saw the cable scrapper in action. Cable scrapers will remove power and communication cables including copper, aluminum and lead from underground conduits. The cable is pulled to the surface, cut into sections and loaded into containers for transport. Cable diameters of half inch to



four and a half inches are removed at speeds up to 90 feet per minute. During the demonstration more than 600 feet of cable was pulled up to street level where a guillotine type device cut the cable into three to four feet pieces depositing it into a dump truck.

“A cable scrapper is the most efficient method for cable reclamation,” Reed said. “The cable does not want to come out. It takes a lot of force.”

OK Champion’s cable scrapper combines the power and innovation necessary to provide easy and effective access to some of the most challenging conduit environments. It combines both cable pulling and cutting functions and allows for high-speed cable installation with absolute simplicity. The boom features a rugged cantilever design, hydraulic sequencing, a 32-foot extension and maneuvering and positioning with great flexibility. It has a pulling force of 25,000 pounds and a pulling speed of 140 feet per minute.

Reed said their customers raved about the hands-on demonstration and the quality of the training and the location. OK Champion is dedicated to training. They will provide customers with any requested training on all of their equipment line.

Dedicated to Training, Safety

The staff at OK Champion developed an acronym called TOPPS to explain their tenants for on-the-job safety. TOPPS stands for Training, Operation, Positioning, Protection, and Standardization.

OK Champion was first founded by Otto Knoerzer in 1897 as the Champion Potato Machinery Company. It manufactured and designed machinery for the agricultural industry. The company made sewer cleaners in

the early 1900s, but it is the communication and utilities products that have become the company's main business producing cable pullers, reel loaders, handlers, trailers and other equipment for utilities and the telecommunications industry. Today's company name honors its founder by incorporating his initials into its moniker.

Now under the leadership of the fourth generation of the Knoerzer family, OK Champion is noted for a tradition of developing products to solve problems and will work closely with customers to create equipment that will meet their needs.

This was evident when OK Champion partnered with Arizona Public Service of Phoenix to modify a scrapper that was capable of pull-

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ing, placing and scrapping 3.5 million feet of heavy-duty cable in one year.

The modified scrapper, which the APS crew affectionately refers to as "The Champion" was developed through a joint effort of APS, a Phoenix-based OK Champion distributor and the OK Champion team.

APS had only one piece of equipment that could install heavy-duty cable. With the growth in the Phoenix area, there was concern as to whether this machine could handle the added work load. APS' cable foreman had seen an OK Champion scrapper at a show and contacted Reed to see if they could modify it to meet his exact requirements.

The OK Champion team worked closely with APS staff to build an entirely new unit to meet these requests including a high-volume blower, high-pressure compressor, an articulation method that uses a series of rollers and a certain type of hydraulic system. **UF**

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