
CHAIN REACTION

A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES ON SASKATCHEWAN'S
INDUSTRIAL AND MINING SUPPLY CHAIN

JNE WELDING

CASE STUDY # 0 0 6



JNE Welding: Big Steel Keeps on Rollin'

As you drive along the highway, an ominous sight appears on the distant horizon. It's a cylindrical structure, four storeys high and nearly as wide, shepherded by a convoy of trucks with lights flashing – a larger-than-life example of how a Saskatchewan company taps into global opportunities.

It is, in fact, a pressure vessel, making the three-day journey from JNE Welding in Saskatoon to the K+S Potash mine site in southern Saskatchewan; the final leg of a journey that began in China.

“We do not want to be a ‘me-too’ company,” says Jim Nowakowski, president of JNE Welding, which explains JNE’s continual investment in steel fabrication capacity and capability that few companies in western Canada can match. For the K+S contract, JNE took 17 truckloads of prefabricated pieces shipped from China and transformed them into the two truckloads of finished Crystallizer pressure vessels delivered to the mine site.

The ability to handle all aspects of the project was a key factor in awarding the contract. “We saved K+S from the problems of taking delivery of the parts and assembling the units on site,” says Nowakowski. “Instead, JNE did the work in a controlled shop environment. As well, these were very high nickel alloy materials that added complexity. Quality assurance was a major factor.”

Ronald Kikkert, senior manager procurement at K+S, says, “They have an open culture in doing business. I like their flexibility and understanding of our needs. They focus on getting things done. We’ve recently awarded another contract to JNE. I would strongly recommend them.”

The delivery of the finished units also demanded sophisticated logistics. Bill Murray, project director of Veolia Water Technologies, HPD® Evaporation and Crystallization, says the contract was not awarded until the ability to transport the units to the final destination was confirmed. Planning the transport can take a year, including a route survey to identify all potential obstacles. “We were very happy with JNE and their organization,” says Murray. “The quality was excellent. Plus, they were very flexible and easy to work with.” He adds, “JNE was better than many companies we have worked with, in both the US and Canada. In fact, we’re now looking at involving them in future contracts.”

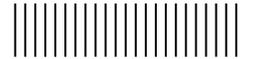


PHOTO:
Route surveying and planning was a major consideration for shipping the large vessels from JNE to the K+S Legacy Project site approximately 200 km south.





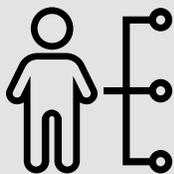
“The Saskatchewan work ethic” is term you’ll hear in many HR departments throughout Canada. It refers to the natural inclination of prairie workers, many of whom grew up on the family farm, to unassumingly do the right thing, in the right way. At JNE Welding, that ethic – beginning with the founder and president and resonating throughout its workforce – has earned a reputation over the last 36 years for unsurpassed quality in structural steel fabrication.



Capacity



Quality



Flexibility

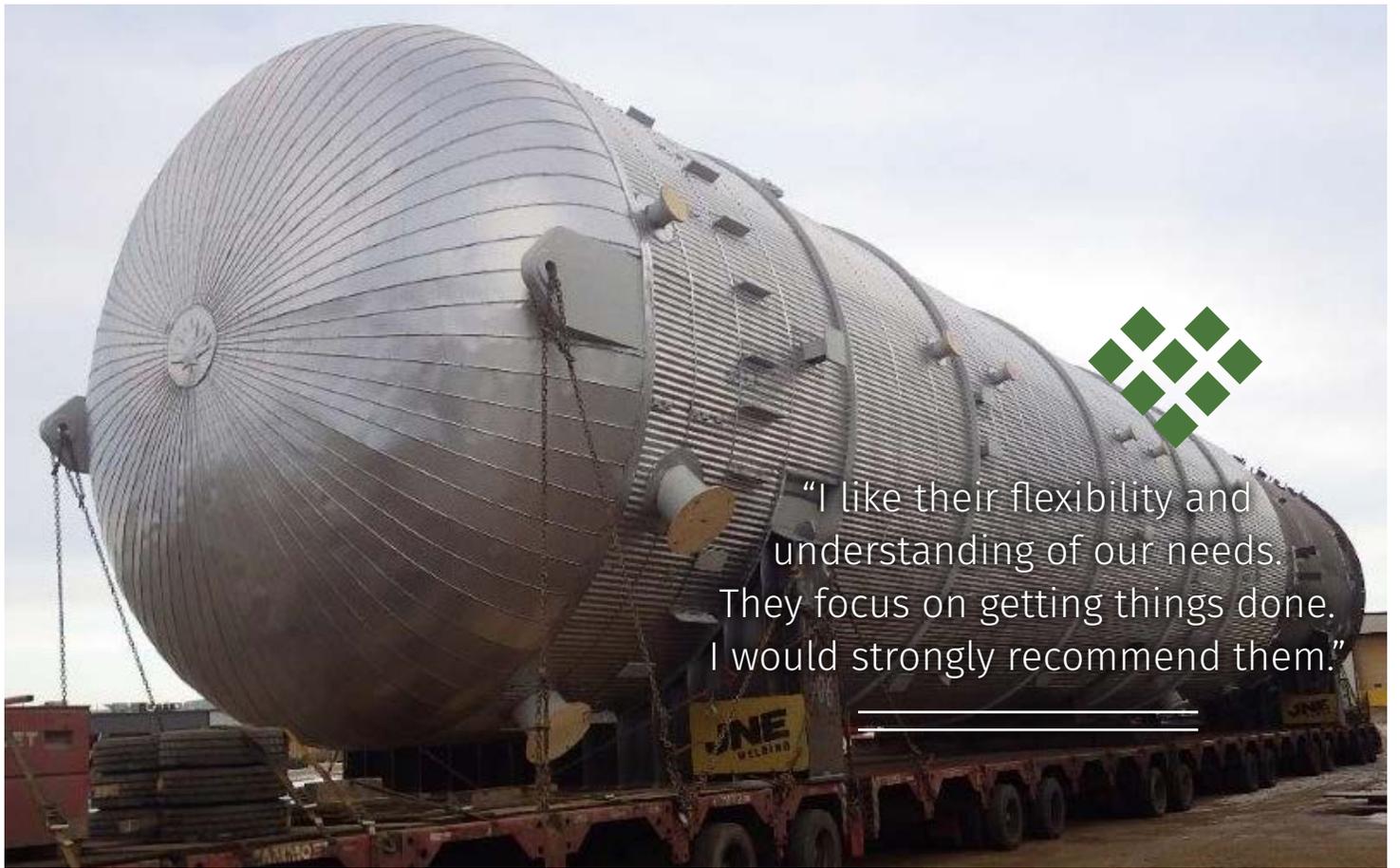
JNE’s experience, facilities and certification recently led to another signature contract involving massive pressure vessels for a highly confidential installation. The story begins with a phone call from Eta Process Plant in the UK, looking for a quote to build three process pressure vessels 136 feet high and 23 feet in diameter. There was also a stringent code and details which had to be followed. “We bid aggressively on the project,” recalls Nowakowski, noting that JNE was one of five Canadian companies being considered. The British company sent its representative to Saskatoon to assess the JNE facility and people, to ensure the work could be done within the deadlines. As a result, JNE won the contract to build not only the three vessels, but also a fourth, for a total price of \$14 million.

The actual fabrication, however, did not begin until several months later, but the original deadline did not change. Pressure to perform regardless was squarely on JNE, under detailed scrutiny. “There were a lot of intense questions regarding the ability to meet deadlines and perform to expectations,” says Nowakowski. “We ended up working around the clock. It was an incredible effort of the entire team, including our shop superintendent and project planner.”

JNE WELDING

www.jnewelding.com
(306) 242-0884





“I like their flexibility and understanding of our needs. They focus on getting things done. I would strongly recommend them.”

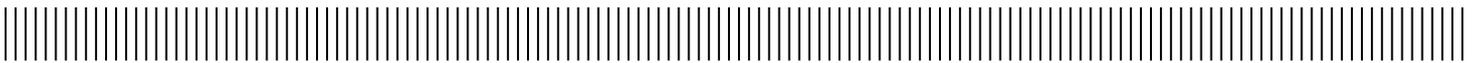
Eta’s John Morgan says, “They bought in to the spirit of the contract to complete the job within the required time scales, cope with the demands of visiting inspectors, and to work with us to ensure the vessel internals and packing media were installed prior to shipment. It was an excellent team effort.”

JNE’s confidence in the Saskatchewan work-ethic of their employees, which now number over 130, is at the heart of the company’s reputation. “Our employees have high expectations of themselves,” says Nowakowski. In 2015, JNE was named as one of Canada’s best-managed companies, further validating JNE’s ability to achieve the highest standards not only in what it does, but how it does it.



PHOTO:

Ready to go: weighing about 500,000 pounds, this was one of four pressure vessels shipped from JNE Welding in Saskatoon to Fort McMurray.



SIMSA is the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association, representing Saskatchewan based companies who provide goods and services to industrial projects.

811 - 56 St. E.
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 5Y9

(306) 343-0019

simsaadmin@sasktel.net

www.simsa.ca