

IN CANADIAN OIL

CONTRACTOR BRINGS A NEW ALLY INTO PETROCHEM WORK

Like any veteran industrial painting contractor, Chris Repchinsky of Advance Coating Solutions knows nature can throw a “monkey wrench” into a well-laid plan.

But even Repchinsky had never seen Canada Geese swimming in what was once the job site parking lot. That was the case last summer when his firm battled seemingly endless heavy rains and tried to tackle a recent project at a new tank farm on the outskirts of Edmonton, Alberta. And when Repchinsky then encountered a coyote that seemed to have more than a passing interest in jobsite activities, Calvin Heyden, the Edmonton firm’s manager of business development, had to laugh.

At A Glance

A challenging Edmonton project marks the debut of Sherwin-Williams industrial coatings on the local petroleum scene.

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A one-year recoat window on the prime coat has allowed contractor Advance Coating Solutions to address weather delays.

COUNTRY...



The coyote eventually found other interests on the vast Canadian plain, but weather did its best to waylay a recent tank project Advance is performing for Gibson Energy Ltd., pushing its completion out of the 2006 painting season and into 2007. Fortunately for Gibson Energy, the project marks the debut of Sherwin-Williams Industrial Marine coatings on Edmonton's booming petroleum scene. The three new tanks on the site are spending the winter wearing a prime coat of Sherwin-Williams Recoatable Epoxy, awaiting a finish of SherThane 2K Urethane. With a one-year recoat window on the Recoatable Epoxy they applied, Advance Coating Solutions painting crews can simply pick up next spring where work had stopped the previous fall.

"The weather pushed us back about seven weeks," says Heyden. "But it's good that when we come back we don't have to reblast. With all the challenges we've had on this project — and there have been several besides the weather — it's really been a very positive experience working for this client and with Sherwin-Williams for the first time."

Long history

Working for the client — Alberta-based Gibson Energy — is nothing new for Advance Coating Solutions. Gibson has been in the business of providing the structural and logistic links between oil and gas producers and their

These petroleum tanks will bear the winter with a coat of Sherwin-Williams Recoatable Epoxy applied by Advance Coating Solutions of Edmonton, Alberta. Above right, inspector Clayton Graham (left) of inspection firm Icon International visits with Calvin Heyden of Advance Coating Solutions.

“downstream” refineries in Canada since 1953. Advance Coating Solutions has a history serving the petrochem market that dates back to 1970. During that time they’ve completed numerous projects for Gibson as well as the other oil companies working in the Edmonton area, where the surging oil economy is limited only by the availability of labor and infrastructure, according to locals.

“When my father started the company, he was doing 100 percent on-site work,” says Chris Repchinsky, the company president. “In 1987 we put in a new shop and started doing more shop work. What it’s allowed us to do is be more versatile for our clients, be a single-source solution for them.”

Perhaps more than ever, facility owners in Alberta are fast-tracking their projects in order to get facilities working as quickly as possible and meet the growing product demand, according to Repchinsky. While some refinery pieces are best coated onsite, some piping, for example, can be most efficiently finished in any weather conditions at the shop. After erection, on-site crews can apply touchups where necessary.

“The fact that our staff includes NACE-certified coatings inspectors gives our clients confidence that we have the knowledge to get the job done right on-site or in our shop,” Repchinsky adds.

Three tanks

The contractor’s recent project for Gibson Energy just outside of Edmonton is typical of owners’ growing needs to fast-track their facilities. In fact, as soon as the tanks — two of which are 117 feet in diameter and one of which is 160 feet — were completed by Alberta engineering and construction firm Sandy McLellan, Advanced Coating Solutions crews were on-site, applying a Sherwin-Williams DuraPlate UHS lining system. Their work was done by October 2005, before it would be necessary to bear the added expense of heating the interiors during application. Gibson Energy brought the tanks on-line in February 2006, before work had even begun coating the exteriors.

Repchinsky has coated “live” tanks before, but doing so provides additional challenges. The

plant’s petroleum-related operations often dictated painting schedules, whereas no such conflicts exist on empty tanks. And painting crews had to watch for the presence of hydrogen sulfide gas, a deadly byproduct of petroleum storage that necessitates further precautions. Throw the unusually wet weather into the mix the following spring and summer and Heyden and painters had their hands full — and that’s before some of Canada’s wildlife took a liking to the site.

“If you’re not a leader, you’re not in this industry for long..”

“Normally you’ve got one issue of some kind to deal with on a project,” Heyden says. “The client still made this a positive experience by pushing the system we used, and looking at ways we could be innovative and keep costs down. They were a pleasure to work with in spite of the circumstances.”

Repchinsky and Heyden were also impressed with the initial foray of Sherwin-Williams onto the local petrochem scene.

“The interiors went exceptionally well,” says Heyden. “And I really liked how quickly Sherwin-Williams responded when we did have product or application questions. The information flow has been excellent.”

Coatings innovation paid off on this project with the extended recoat window of the Recoatable Epoxy, and it’s a demonstration of the innovation necessary to gain a footing in the market.

“This is very much an industry where if you’re not at the forefront of innovation, if you’re not a leader, you’re not in the industry for long,” says Repchinsky. “That’s why we’re developing a strategic partnership with a leader in coatings innovation. We’re going to be presenting to potential clients as a joint effort between us and Sherwin-Williams. We can come in and say we’ve been doing this for 36 years and Sherwin-Williams has been doing this for 140 years, and here’s what we can do.

“They’ll see up front the technical support behind both of our companies, get to meet our people and the supplier’s people, and I think we can instill some confidence. In the long run, we expect this partnership to be very beneficial.”

Advance Coating Solutions painters take care of some on-site stripe coating work.

