

TNT Welding Supply Invents New Transport System for Volatile Gasses

BATON ROUGE, Aug. 30 -- After a year in development, TNT Welding Supply recently unveiled a new, safer system for the deployment of welding and breathing gasses to offshore and other remote worksites. Responding to marine construction company Cal Dive International's persistent logistical problems, TNT provided a solution based on durable, stackable, holding cages designed to carry sixteen and twenty-five canister "clusters" of any pressurized gas.

"Breathing gases are just a small part of the pie at Cal Dive," said Graham Atkins, gas specialist at TNT and leader of its development team. Cal Dive is a forty-year veteran of offshore construction, specializing in the maintenance and repair of oil rigs and other marine properties worldwide. "Say a storm comes up on the Gulf," explained Atkins. "The minute it passes, Cal Dive needs to ship out immediately to any number of platforms, checking for damage and seeing to repairs." Securing enough breathing and welding gases for each job is only the first hurdle: "They have to load these heavy canisters safely onto the boats, and keep them from falling off."

Until recently, no one had devised a reliable way to do that. Atkins drew on TNT's wide range of industry contacts—cylinder manufacturers, coating specialists, top welders and even the U.S. Coast Guard—to devise the company's new product. The unbreakable containers, roughly the size and shape of shark cages, are constructed of quarter-inch tubular steel, galvanized and hot-dipped in liquid zinc. Inside fit the gas-filled cylinders, stacked prone in five layers of five. A similar, smaller model holds clusters of sixteen, standing upright. Atkins remembers the customer's initial reaction: "They went over our first effort with a fine toothed comb ... When we brought back the final product, they asked if we could load it up and leave it with them. They wanted it immediately!"

In order to distribute its clusters efficiently and guarantee customers like Cal Dive a ready supply of gasses, TNT developed a companion tracking system. Each canister is tagged with a tracking number and the international color code for the gas it contains. The epoxy-coated canisters are shrink-wrapped for safety, bolted to their cages and delivered via flatbed trailer. Every cluster is electronically monitored from hose, to truck, to dock, to ship and back again.

According to Atkins, response to the TNT cluster delivery system is large and growing. Other industries are finding uses for the product as compelling as those that prompted its development. "We've got customers telling *their* customers about it," exclaimed Atkins. For more information on the TNT cluster delivery system, contact Lori Kneepel, Managing Director, TNT Welding Supply, 225-291-9300, ext. 304, or lori@raymondmartin.com.