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Steam Generators: Small and Fast Fits the Bill

One packaging company saw big gains with a small steam boiler.

If you traveled to Modesto, CA, in 1973 you would find a small upstart packaging company called Pacific Southwest Container, LLC. Traveling forward to the present, you would see the same company continuing to thrive in not only Modesto, where it has a second facility, but also in Visalia and Chatsworth, CA.

Since its startup, PSC has grown from a small, family-owned business to one of the largest packaging companies on the West Coast, and it continues to grow. Despite its success, PCS is still a family-owned company committed to giving customers the very best in design, delivery, and manufacturing. And with more than 1,000,000 square feet between PSC's four facilities, the company is always looking for ways to improve and provide quality products for its customers.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STEAM

One of the most important ingredients in box production is the use of steam. Steam provides the necessary heat and moisture to make the box material pliable, and conditions it to be flattened or corrugated as necessary. Steam is also used in heating the presses that flatten and shape the boxes.

Because PSC strives to maintain high quality products for its customers, a good steam boiler is an important investment. To this end, the company looks for boilers that are small, efficient, and meet their emissions requirements.

To meet these goals, in 1996 PSC upgraded one of its facility's steam boilers to a Clayton steam generator. These generators provide the quality control that PSC needs to continue to provide a quality product. The generators are small enough to be easily placed in the facility and take only about 5-15 minutes to create a fine steam. This start-up time eliminates the need for keeping the generators in a power-wasting stand-by phase, and reduces the fuel spent warming it up.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Today, the company website states that PSC is "embracing a new era in sustainable packaging," so boiler efficiency is even more important. Reduced fuel use supports other company sustainability efforts such as a low product-to-package ratio, the use of recycled and SFI-certified paperboard, energy-efficient lighting and HVAC, and reducing emissions of its operations.

Since 1996, PSC has used gas-fired Clayton Generators in three out of its four factories: a 125-BHP unit at their Visalia plant, a 100 BHP unit at Modesto Riverside, and a 300 BHP at Modesto Leckron. The company plans on using more in the future.

"Clayton Generators were not only easy to install and move," says Dave Henneman, maintenance team leader at PSC, "but their design and frame size make them remarkably safer than conventional generators. We don't need a new generator for our last facility yet, but when we do we will certainly be going with Clayton."

Clayton steam generator installed at a Pacific Southwest Container facility.

Clayton's Chip Maguire checks the readout on the steam generator.

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