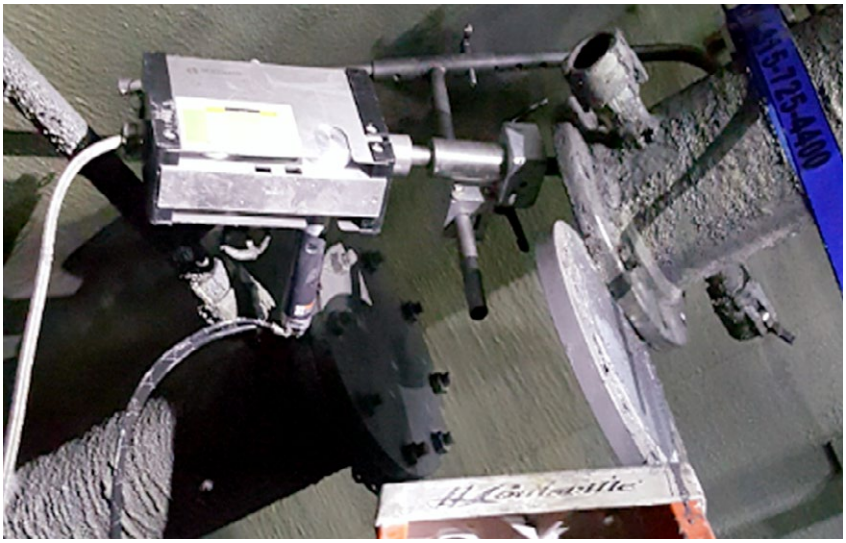
Improved pipe-cleaning process for Southeastern auto manufacturer



AUTOMATION IMPROVES SAFETY, EFFICIENCY OF PIPE CLEANING

An automotive manufacturing facility in the Southeastern United States sought a partner with the innovative capabilities to improve the safety and efficiency of its industrial cleaning processes. Specifically, the plant required improvements for its procedures to remove sludge buildup from pipes inside phosphate tanks.

Previous cleaning attempts were performed with manual-lancing techniques that required technicians to enter the blast area and stand on ladders, while another operator worked the dump valve with a foot pedal.

SOLUTION

MPW, which had completed similar projects for this customer using automated equipment, was selected by the plant to complete the project. MPW experts set the following main goals for making the cleaning process safer and more efficient:

- **Move the operator away from the blasting area**
- **Eliminate the need for the operator to stand on a ladder**
- **Eliminate the heavy lifting associated with hand lancing**
- **Prevent the possibility of lances backing out of pipes**

MPW used its automated tube lancing tooling, which produces a constant and consistent clean throughout the entire length of the tube. Ratchet straps allow the lance to be mounted to multiple objects. Utilizing air motors, these systems drive the lance forward and pull the lance back under pressure. Additionally, MPW's HFD Autodrive is a portable, air-powered, remote-controlled device for the hands-free feeding of a high-pressure blast hose that utilizes a safety back-out preventer.

These systems allow the operator to control the indexing, speed and pressure of the lance, while having the freedom of movement to easily inspect cleaned areas. This is accomplished by one technician standing in a safe area with access to the remote control of the dump valve. There is no need for blast boots or a face shield.

RESULTS

MPW accomplished all four of its goals and completed the extensive project in 12 hours with no safety incidents. Plant personnel were impressed with MPW's use of automation to improve the safety and efficiency of the pipe-cleaning process.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

MPW recorded zero safety incidents during this project