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## **ESAB CANADA'S VISION BECOMES REALITY**

### **ESAB Automation a Hit in North America!**

*Mississauga, ON* – In May 2001, when Richard Hadley, President of ESAB Canada, received the stamp of approval from ESAB's head office in South Carolina, to start distribution of the ESAB welding automation product line in North America, he may have paused for a moment to consider the breadth of responsibility he was about to take on. He had recognized the potential for market growth for welding automation in North America; now he was faced with the task of turning his vision into reality. Five years later, ESAB Automation is now one of the most recognized names in welding automation equipment in North America with distribution from ESAB Canada to the Canadian, U.S. and Mexican markets.

Hadley began by putting together a Canadian team dedicated to the product line, which was to be the foundation of this new business. The team, made up of engineers and product specialists, attended training at ESAB's facilities in Sweden where welding automation was already a large market. Since product would be sourced from ESAB in Europe, training the Canadian team would be the key to success. "With the distance and time zone delay between Sweden and Canada, we must have the knowledge and ability to locally support the projects," said Hadley.

Once Canada's automation team was trained, they in turn started to train ESAB USA's sales force, as they would become the main channel to the U.S. market. Technical training was held at ESAB Canada's headquarters in Mississauga. Now, as an integrated sales force, ESAB Canada and ESAB USA were ready to take welding automation to the North American market.

ESAB Canada officially launched ESAB Automation North America on September 25, 2001 at an open house hosted at the Mississauga headquarters. Many representatives of the press attended the event from Canada and the U.S. as well as

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many local clients and distributors. With live demonstrations and walk-through explanations of the products and processes, the event was a resounding success.

Although there was some speculation that perhaps the time was not right to launch the product line in North America, Hadley remained confident that the timing was perfect, the driving factor being the exchange rate at the time. In 2001, the U.S. dollar was high against all other currencies driving the economy down and forcing some competition out of the market leaving customers to search for alternative suppliers. "By starting our automation business now, we will be able to build our structure in a more controlled fashion and this will position ESAB to capture market share when the economy improves, which it most certainly will," said Hadley.

Also, the product line itself was suited to the North American market being world-class, well proven and affordable. ESAB would also be able to integrate their other product lines with the automation line to provide the customer with a total solution from one source including service and support, something no other supplier in the market was able to do. "Once customers recognize the quality and performance of the products, the orders will follow quickly," remarked Hadley. And he was right.

Today, automation is ESAB Canada's fastest growing product line. With market segments such as wind energy and oil and gas growing, the shortage of skilled welders and the constant demand to be more productive, ESAB Automation North American has definitely made its mark on the North American market with many notable installations.

In Canada specifically, ESAB has installed some smaller solutions such as the AristoMig machines at Formet Industries in Ontario, a division of Magna, the largest automotive frame manufacturing plant worldwide, as well as some larger installations such as the MKR column and boom system at Jasper Tank. The MKR installation at Jasper Tank, a distinguished tank manufacturer operating out of Spruce Grove, Alberta, drastically improved their production rate reducing the welding time by 40% when welding baffle rings inside the tanks.

When Hitachi Canadian Industries located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, decided to expand into manufacturing windmill towers, they chose ESAB to supply the equipment and filler metals. Hitachi started off with one complete system for windmill tower production and is now operating with four complete systems for a diverse range of products including pressure vessels. "The fact that ESAB supplies completely integrated

welding solutions results in a higher level of user-friendliness. ESAB's solution has really brought us more arc time and less defects," said Warren Becker, Assistant Manager Fabrication Services, Hitachi Canadian Industries.

ESAB's most recent Canadian installation was at Silverado Certified Energy Equipment in Red Deer, Alberta. Silverado manufactures new and reconditioned oil field equipment and also supplies used equipment to the Western Canadian oil and gas sector and had become inundated with orders for very large pressure vessels.

They originally had a submerged-arc beam system, which had become dated and increasingly time-consuming when setting up for the larger vessels. When they had received orders to build 9 ft. diameter by 38 ft. long vessels, they decided to invest in some new equipment that would make production more efficient. ESAB installed a CaB 300M Mobile submerged-arc welding system to accommodate their production requirements. The system was outfitted with a three-axis hydraulic positioner with a 1686 lbs load capacity; an A6S welding head with 1600A capability; a pre-programmable digital process controller; automatic joint tracking; super flux recovery system; 1250A DC power source; pilot laser lamp; and rear-mounted twin wire.

The system was successful in reducing lengthy set-up times by 15-20%, which has had a major impact on their production rates. The system also improved weld quality and provided more welding versatility opening up new business opportunities for Silverado. According to Randy Hofer, General Manager, Silverado, "The system has been a real productivity enhancement for us. We are able to take on work now that we were maybe able to do before, but which would block up the entire shop. Now, we can get work in and out much faster."

As products are continually tested, improved and developed, ESAB Canada will continue to offer innovative, technologically-advanced, automated welding solutions to the North American market. So far, ESAB Canada has enjoyed much success with the launch of this product line. Customers are happy with their installations and know they can rely on ESAB for service and support whenever they need it. "Building long-term relationships based on trust, quality product and superior service and support is what ESAB is all about," says Shara Hrdalo, Marketing, ESAB Canada. "We will

always strive to be an industry innovator dedicated to improving the manufacturing processes of our customers to help them be more productive. I believe we've proven our commitment through our various automation installations across North America," she continues, "The future is exciting."

For more information on ESAB Welding & Cutting Products, please call 1-877-935-3226 or visit [www.esabna.com](http://www.esabna.com).