

## Weighing the Value of Recycling

There was a time when you could see aging abandoned cars along the side of the road in Henderson, KY, and obsolete rotting farm equipment in nearby fields. Various objects of scrap metal could also be viewed protruding from the ambling current of the Ohio River that forms the northern border of the town.

But these eyesores are a thing of the past thanks in large part to one of the local recycling plants and the rising cost of steel. Now, businesses, organizations, and individuals in and around the Henderson area sell their scrap metal to the plant, which opened in 1989. This plant, located along the Ohio River, takes scrap metal products – such as cars, appliances, siding, etc. – and shreds it, separates it, and sells it to steel mills.

Materials are brought to the Henderson plant from destinations as far as St. Louis, MO., nearly 150 miles to the northwest. Even the regional Maytag appliance manufacturing operation sells and delivers its scrap to the plant. They also pick up scrap material from junkyards and bring it to their facility to be processed for sale. Using the GammaTech Crossbelt® Metal Analyzer, the plant analyzes steel content of the shredded material and communicates the information to the steel mill. But the plant also recycles aluminum, copper, and other non-ferrous metals. Materials that might otherwise be taken to county landfills or left to decay in fields, yard, and roads, are now being recycled.

A significant portion of the business comes from scrap vehicles. About a year and a half ago, this particular plant's management decided to invest in its own car crushing business. Up to that point, independent businesses had hauled crushed vehicles to the plant, selling the scrap based on price per ton. Unfortunately, these companies would come and go, in terms of staying in business, and were often unreliable. This company wanted dependability for the long haul and the only way to ensure that kind of commitment was to invest in its own car crushing crews.

The decision to get into the scrap vehicle recovery business meant the company had to purchase portable car crushing equipment and large wheel loaders to move scrap vehicles. They also put together a truck fleet to haul large volumes of flattened vehicles to the plant for processing. The company would only travel to salvage yards where it could buy 100 or more vehicles. These yards usually had scrap vehicles that had been stripped of parts for sale and met the requirements for processing at the plant (e.g. tires removed). The only remaining issue was how to make sure the company trucks were within compliance of state DOT highway hauling standards.

### Solution to a Weighty Matter



The company ardently adheres to state DOT weight guidelines when hauling materials to its plants, however, there are typically no truck scales near salvage yards. In the past, some experts could estimate vehicle weights based on visual impressions or make and model, but today with plastics and composites making up more of a vehicle's composition, this has become a lost art. In addition, DOT weight

laws in states such as West Virginia and Kentucky have been strictly enforced recently due to damage caused to state highways due to overweight trucks. Accurate weight measurement was a must.

While the company had wheel loaders for existing plant operations, the car crushing crews needed units with a special feature that would solve the weight compliance issue – an onboard scale. An onboard weighing scale or “bucket scale” is a loader component that allows the operator to weigh the material in each bucket load as it is being transferred from the source to the truck. The company turned to its trusted relationship with Rudd Equipment to provide delivery of an initial or of wheel loaders fitted with onboard weighing systems. Rudd Equipment then contracted with Steve Lerch, of HiFax Industrial Components to install the systems the company needed for their wheel loaders. HiFax would install the units either at Rudd Equipment or the customer location and would back them up with expert on-site training and service.

### **Weighing Systems Integral Part of Business Success**



The recycling company was pleased with the units and quickly purchased more Volvo L90E Loaders from Rudd Equipment as their car crushing business increased. By the end of 2006, this company had purchased nine new loaders, with systems install by HiFax. The company has plans to buy an additional 13 units as the business continues to grow.

HiFax’s Steve Lerch recently installed yet another scale unit on a new Volvo L90E loader

purchased from Rudd Equipment. Lerch owns and operates HiFax Industrial Components and has installed systems in a variety of loaders in Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. A welder by trade, he has worked with Rudd Equipment to take care of customers in the aggregate, coal, landscape, and concrete industries among others. His reputation for service and knowledge of weighing systems and the loaders on which he installs them fosters strong relationships with anyone who does business with him. This was important to the recycling company because they knew they couldn’t afford to deal with a weighing system that wasn’t reliable, wasn’t installed properly, or was hard to operate or understand. They also appreciated the fact that Steve personally trained each operator during and after installation. “The units are simple to use and can be easily viewed by the operator”, says Steve as he trained one of the car crushing unit load operators. It was the second installation and training Steve had done in a week for the plant, a facility that now processes between 12,000 and 15,000 tons of material a month.

This is quite an improvement from just a few years ago when junk cars poisoned the landscape. Recycling companies, with the help of HiFax Industrial Components developed efficiencies and solutions that enable companies to manage a profitable business while helping to clean up the environment. HiFax Industrial Components will be there to help “tip the scales” in their favor.