



highlights

➔ Belden Inc., headquartered in St. Louis, MO has consolidated its affiliated Belden Europe (Venlo, The Netherlands), HEW-Kabel (Wipperfurth, Germany), Hirschmann Automation and Control (Neckartenzlingen, Germany) and Lumberg Automation (Schalksmühle, Germany) companies into the newly formed business unit of Belden EMEA. Its operational headquarters will be located in the greater area of Stuttgart, Germany. Dr. Wolfgang Babel, who already headed Hirschmann and Lumberg Automation, was named president of Belden EMEA. Together, with more than 2,200 employees worldwide, the four companies combine comprehensive expertise in the field of data transmission. Belden EMEA forms the umbrella for five operating divisions: Industrial Networking, Industrial Connecting Solutions, Electronic Control Systems, Cable Infrastructure, and Cable Specialty.

➔ On May 1, 2008, Lifting Gear Hire opened its 10th warehouse in the US in Kansas City, MO. The 6,400-square-foot building houses an inventory valued at \$1 million. The new facility has the capability to test hoists with a capacity up to 25 tons. While Lifting Gear Hire has existing warehouses in St. Louis, MO and Dallas, TX, the new facility will reduce delivery time and transportation costs and will expand its rental capabilities in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and western Kansas, according to the company. Founded in 1970, Lifting Gear Hire is among the world's largest companies involved in the rental, sale and service of lifting, winching and material handling equipment.

# Tower Crane Taskforce tackles safety issues

On any given day approximately 1,500 tower cranes are working at jobsites throughout the US – almost double the amount of tower cranes working just a decade ago, it has been estimated.

The SC&RA recently assembled a taskforce to review and make recommendations regarding a number of safety and “best practice” issues regarding tower crane operation. Chaired by AmQuip President Frank Bardonaro, the SC&RA Tower Crane Taskforce brings together



Photograph courtesy of AmQuip Corp.

Six tower cranes working on a massive construction site on the East Coast

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Frank Bardonaro, president, AmQuip Corp.

“a group of people who have more knowledge and expertise than ever seen and gathered in one setting in the tower crane industry,” said Bardonaro.

The goal of the taskforce is multi-faceted. Bardonaro explained: “We are taking a look at recent tower crane accidents and we will conduct a root cause analysis that will enable us to put together for the first time a set of industry ‘best practices’ to prevent accidents and injuries in the future. We are working with rigging professionals and unions throughout the country to help determine the best way to put together lift plans and pre-job meeting plans that address tower crane erection and rigging procedures that should take place during erection, climbing and dismantling.”

Additionally, the taskforce

is working on a campaign to effectively communicate that recent accidents were due to rigging procedures and rigging equipment failures rather than crane collapse or crane failure. “We want to make the public aware that this equipment and technology is extremely safe but some of the workforce doing the actual climbing and dismantlement may need additional training on specific types of equipment in the best and safest ways to complete these procedures,” Bardonaro continued.

Other issues the taskforce will take on pertain to local governments taking tower crane regulations into their own hands in an effort to assure a safer worksite. “Cities are passing laws about tower crane operations without talking to anyone in the crane industry until after the law was

passed,” he said. “These new laws often don’t address any of the things related to accident prevention or safety.”

Bardonaro says the taskforce is willing to help municipalities and even state governments formulate legislation that is meaningful and will improve jobsite safety. “We are rising up to take this head on, to make the public aware of the real problems of safety,” he explained.

Comprised of tower crane professionals across the country, the taskforce is ultimately trying to improve safety and awareness of proper tower crane operation. “We’re all competitors but for this cause we are trying to improve the situation by sharing all our problems and productively trying to come up with solutions to correct them,” said Bardonaro.

Forthcoming from the taskforce is a fact sheet to assist tower crane owners when speaking to the media regarding tower crane operator and safety.

He said the taskforce is dedicated to increasing training, certification, and assuring the expertise of workers involved in tower crane erection, climbs, and other operations.