Ash Grove Midlothian TX purchases Bricking Solutions MOR and Port-A-Trac

MOR with Port-A-Trac

Ash Grove Midlothian, TX. Crew

Mike Kelly of Ash Grove Cement decided to try to improve the brick installation process for his two 12 ft shell diameter kilns in late 1994. They were then utilizing a single arch Bricking Solutions (Pneumat O Ring) manufactured in 1983. Mike knew that double arch machines were available and called Bricking Solutions to discuss the advantages and possible improvements that might be obtained utilizing a double arch machine in lieu of his single arch machine. From the conversation he had with Bricking Solution personnel he decided to rent a double arch machine to test the theoretical advantages. Mike also learned of Bricking Solutions "Port-A-Trac" system, which allowed a full pallet of brick to pass underneath the bricking machine to the bedding crew. He decided to try this system also. After an initial set back resolved by Bricking Solutions, the trial was a success. The very positive results allowed Mike to convince management to invest in a double arch bricking machine and Port a Trac system.

In 2005 Ash Grove Texas, L.P., Midlothian TX, Purchased a Bricking Solutions MOR Bricking Machine and a Port-A-Trac to facilitate their upcoming outage. Their previous method was using a Bricking Solutions POR, which is a single arch bricking machine. The POR takes approximately two hours to set up and typically the Ash Grove crew could brick 18-20 courses of brick in a 10 hour shift, running two shifts per day, with an average of 80-100 feet of refractory to replace each outage. This meant at the very best operating two 10 hour shifts they could brick 100 running feet in approximately 4 days.

The new MOR and Port-A-Trac takes approximately two hours to set up and the first time using the machine, they bricked 35-38 rows per shift. Completing the job in 24 hours. The MOR accommodates a pallet of brick for the top crew and the Port-A-Trac supports a pallet of brick for the bedding crew keeping the brick at a constant flow. The Port-A-Trac is used primarily when the kiln is small and there is no fork truck access under the machine to transport brick to the bedding crew.

Safety is a big factor for all crews. With the bending, twisting and the throwing of bricks accidents are going to happen. Weather it's a smashed finger, an aching back, or just plain fatigue at the end of the day. The set up at Midlothian eliminated this. The crew was still going strong when the last brick was installed.

Commissioning the machine was an added cost that was well worth spending the extra money. Bricking Solutions production manager Don Coates reviewed the workings of the machine, including set up, preventative maintenance and safe use with the crew. Since Bricking Solutions' machines are custom to each kiln it is important to have feedback to insure that the machine meets the crew's expectations and needs. It is Bricking Solutions philosophy to have factory personnel in the field as often as possible to keep our product consistently evolving with the industry changes and needs.

After using the machine a few times Ash Grove installers improved their average to 40-45 courses per 10 hour shift. This allowed Mike to decrease the shifts from 2 per day to one per day, utilizing the second crew for other needed maintenance during an outage in the plant. Mike's goal is 50 courses per shift, which I am sure they will achieve soon.

Mike Kelly would absolutely recommend this to anyone who has not used an MOR or Port-A-Trac in an outage. Ash Grove Midlothian's improved bricking system has resulted in shorter, less costly down time, increased kiln usage factor, more tons of clinker per grams of brick (better refractory usage), fewer lost time accidents and increased morale. "It will pay for it's self in no time" said Mike Kelly of Ash Grove Texas L.P., Midlothian TX.