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THE MOUTAT COMPANY

# KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY



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The Mouat Company relies on nine decades of experience to streamline the construction of industrial facilities with the design/build method.

# Knowledge is the Key

IN THE MOUAT COMPANY'S 90 YEARS IN BUSINESS, IT HAS EVOLVED FROM AN EQUIPMENT REPRESENTATIVE TO A DESIGN/BUILD FIRM.

By Kecia Bal

**W**ith clients such as Halliburton and EOG Resources, there is little question that The Mouat Company has a few things down to a science. Company leaders have made complete process knowledge a priority - and the work has paid off, Mouat President Michael Morris says.

"There are a lot of engineering firms that will design structures and foundations to support equipment, but they are not familiar with the process required to produce the end product so they cannot optimize the layout of the facility,"

Morris says. "Then there are contractors who can take drawings produced by the engineering company and simply build the facility as it is designed. However, they have no responsibility for the performance of the plant. As a result, it is often up to

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Williams would like to congratulate The Mouat Company on its 90 year anniversary, as both companies continue to provide innovative mineral processing solutions in the future.



the customer to do much of the design and retrofit to obtain a fully functional facility.

"What differentiates us is that we combine these two disciplines together; we are an engineering design/build firm," Morris adds. "We truly integrate the two, which allows us to streamline the entire process in the concept phase and create continuity during construction of the facility that is often missing. More importantly, performing the construction provides a feedback loop for continuous improvement to our designs."

## 40 YEARS AND COUNTING

The company's 40 years of design/build experience has landed it repeat clients due to a thorough understanding of each step of the process in foundry, frac sand and mineral processing operations. "Clients will often give us a sketch of what they want. But they look to us to optimize the process," he says. "They are looking for the best concept at the best value."

The company also makes a point to develop long-term, multi-project

relationships with customers. About 70 percent of Mouat's business is for repeat clients.

"You have to treat each customer with the intent to do business again," Morris says. "If you treat people honestly and do a good job, they will come back to you. Even if it is the only facility that they build in the next 30 years, in this business a recommendation or testimonial is essential."

The Birmingham, Ala.-based firm has been serving industrial facilities since 1924, when Harry G. Mouat founded it as an equipment sales representative company for the foundry industry.

That all changed in the 1970s when the company stepped into the automotive sector, eventually picking up clients such as Chrysler, GM and Honda.

Building on the company's track record in process control and technological innovation, the company expanded in 2003 to include clients in industrial mineral processing. Today, frac sand and mineral processing are the company's target markets, though the firm occasionally still works with foundries.

"The common denominator between the facilities that we build is that each is a tightly controlled process," Morris says. "The core of the foundry is the sand system. It is a series of bulk-handling equipment including conveyors, elevators and bins with an extensive process-control system. Water, bentonite and other additives are fed into the system at precise rates to make sand with specific physical properties that produces quality castings. The same precision is applied to resin-coated frac sand plants. It is just one large sand system. Much like foundries and frac sand plants, mineral processing facilities use similar bulk handling systems and PLC controls."

In the past few years, the firm has taken 3-D modeling from a marketing and sales tool to an integrated part of the entire design/build process.

"At a conceptual phase, it facilitates collaboration between us and our client," Morris says. "Further down the line, when we are doing general arrangement drawings, it allows us to have multiple systems illustrated in one model. Through this, we are able to confirm that there are no interferences between systems."

"For example, in the past, the environmental ductwork was on separate drawings from the equipment so that it was easy to create interferences between the ductwork, structures and equipment," Morris continues. "With a 3-D model, you see all the systems at one time are able to eliminate those interferences. As we begin fabricating structures and equipment, our fabricator can download the dimensions in this model to their machines that cut and punch the steel. This results in structures and fabricated equipment being made exactly as it is represented in the model and the structures coming together in the field with little to no field modifications. It has really rev-



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olutionized what we do.”

The company recently finished a 66,000-square-foot barite grinding processing plant for Halliburton, the second of four projects Mouat has received for the industry giant. The facility in Dunphy, Nev., took about 19 months to complete, including design, site prep, construction

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*—Michael Morris, president*

and commissioning.

“Over those 19 months, we probably have had more than 100 people working on the project at different times throughout its design and construction,” Morris says. “It is tremendously gratifying to see all the efforts come together as the plant is brought on line.”

Next is a design/build challenge that is new to the company: a modular mineral processing plant that will be built, set up and tested in the United States and then shipped to Central Asia.

“There are a number of challenges,” Morris says. “One of the biggest is we have to get the equipment mounted in a way where it can ship in modular form by rail, truck and ocean freighter. It is an exciting opportunity; and by refining how we do this, it is something we can do a number of times. The same processes would apply to the frac sand industry.”

That cycle of learning how to perfect a process or technique in one industry and applying it toward improving a facility in another is one of the company’s keys to longevity that will keep it growing among its target markets. ■



**Top:** The Mouat Company has taken 3-D modeling from a marketing and sales tool to an integrated part of its design/build process. **Middle, bottom:** The Mouat Company expanded its capabilities to include industrial mineral processing. Today, frac sand and mineral processing are Mouat’s target markets.

