

# REINFORCING NEWS

JULY 2007

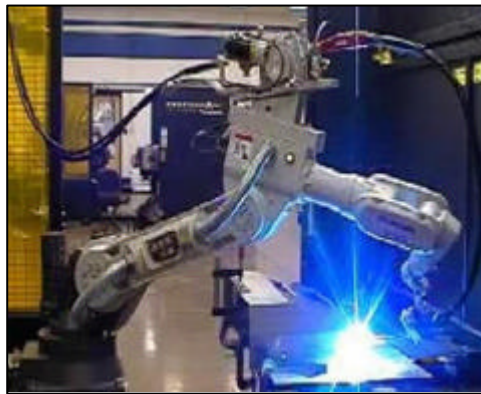
VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1

## StelCrete consolidates facilities and modernizes production with robotic arc welder

By Robert Nichols

StelCrete is consolidating its operations and relocating to Welland, Ontario after 18 years in its facilities in Fort Erie and Niagara Falls. Plans have been in the works for some time to improve services to customers through a complete overhaul of facilities, production plants and upgrade of its workplace environment for employees. The result of the consolidation will be higher and more consistent quality of products shipped to customers, customized service, and staff with more skills to add greater value to services and precast concrete products.

The new facility is an existing twenty year-old 50,000 square foot building located west of Highway 406 and north of East Main Street. The building is currently undergoing modifications to accommodate two 10-tonne cranes inside, and an



Panasonic Tawers™ PerformArc robotic welding cell.

outside runway crane with a capacity of 10 tonnes. The main feature of the new facility will be a Panasonic Tawers™ welding robot with expansion capabilities.

The site has 10 acres to stockpile pre-welded rebar reinforcing and mesh products. The close proximity to Highway 406 will shorten shipping and delivery time when clients need just-in-time delivery, or have limited space for storage of reinforcing products at their facilities. The site requires a new internal access road alignment. Yard lighting will be supplemented with solar panels, and recycled asphalt will be used for surfacing the storage and shipping areas. It is expected that the surface will have a 5-year service life, thereby improving yard safety and reducing maintenance and associated delays in loading and shipping.

Inside the plant, the workplace environment is being improved by the installation of translucent lighting panels in the walls. The panels will reduce the demand for conventional industrial lighting and reduce energy needs.

Health and safety is at the top of the list of improvements to the facility. Walkways inside the building will be wide and access to work areas will be clearly defined. The company's Health and Safety Coordinator is participating in the facility design meetings. The new facility will have a training room, modern washrooms and change rooms. Access to the building for the physically challenged is being accommodated in the upgrade of the building.

Staff will be relocating to their new work stations through July and August, as production is scaled down at the old facilities and stepped up in Welland. The move will be staged so that customers will not notice any interruption to service while the move is completed by the end of September.

Delcan Corporation is the planner and project manager for the approvals and design of the modifications.

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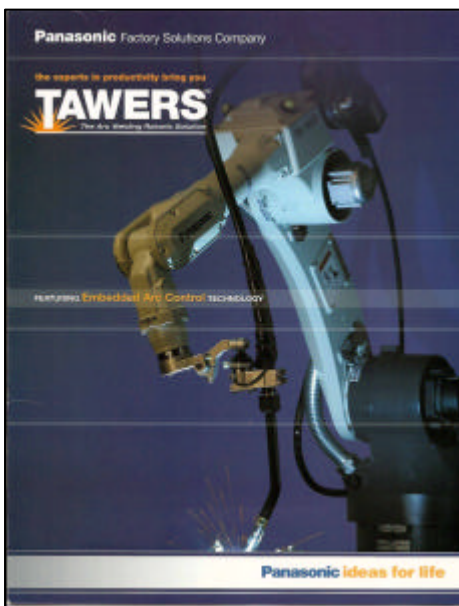
## Welland facility

(continued from page 1)

King Contractors of Niagara Ltd. is the general contractor and project manager for the construction.

### The Panasonic Tawers™ PerformArc

StelCrete is advancing its production capabilities and range of products by installing a robotic welding plant that can weld both carbon and stainless steel rods and wire. The plant has a floor space requirement of about 5 metres in length, 3 metres wide and 2 metres in height. The robot is fully enclosed to prevent accidental welding flash, and guarded by infrared beams to prevent accidental entry while operating. If the beams are interrupted, the robot shuts down automatically.



The level of quality of pre-welded products is raised significantly because once the robot is programmed, it performs the same repetitive functions precisely and consistently throughout a cycle. Because the robot is used extensively in the automotive industry, it meets North American standards for welding.

Operators of the robot will be trained to program the system,

which has an inherent operator-friendly protocol. Operators do not need to be trained computer programmers or software designers. If necessary, production and system monitoring, and programming can be conducted offsite through Internet technology.

This fall, the robot will be used by one shift, but by year end, its operations will be expanded to two. It will be producing numerous products that have high volume and repetitive welds. The plant requires one operator per shift. The efficient productivity of the robotic workstation will translate into cost controls within the StelCrete operation that will make it easier for clients to budget the production costs of their products. The robot has been introduced to StelCrete's production capability to increase product quality and to control escalating costs.

The robot is designed for high volume repetitive reinforcing products such as maintenance hole components and I-LOCK connectors for highway medium barriers (Ontario Provincial Standards). The robot's technology is proven worldwide in automotive assembly and parts plants, and will perform as expected with minimal maintenance. Panasonic has local support technicians and facilities to assist StelCrete in commissioning the workstation and to provide any advice or service as needed.

The City of Welland is welcoming the StelCrete facility with as much support as possible to showcase its latest industrial business. StelCrete's presence in the community may provide reasons for other industries to relocate to the City's industrial lands. A grand opening is planned for the fall where tours of the facility will be at the top of the list of events.

StelCrete

## StelCrete joins Canadian Concrete Pipe Association

ACTB



Canadian Concrete Pipe Association  
association canadienne des fabricants de tuyaux de béton

The concrete pipe industry is a major client group of StelCrete, and several producer members of the Canadian Concrete Pipe Association (CCPA/ACTB) are customers. Many have a range of precast concrete products that require special pre-welded reinforcing products in addition to standard mats and cages. StelCrete is a member of the Ontario Concrete Pipe Association and Tubécon. Since the company is now well established in the industry, it is looking for ways to support producers in a broader context. Its Associate Membership in the CCPA/ACTB provides the means of participating and helping grow the industry nationwide. StelCrete's core clients are precasters. It is important to the company to fully understand industry issues that can be resolved through association work and to help gain market share for concrete pipe.

The CCPA/ACTB is a non-profit industry association established to coordinate research and development, promotion, education and government relations programs pertaining to the marketing of high quality precast concrete wastewater and storm drainage products. It was established by member firms of the Ontario Concrete Pipe Association, Tubécon (Québec concrete pipe producers) and producers from Eastern and Western Canada.

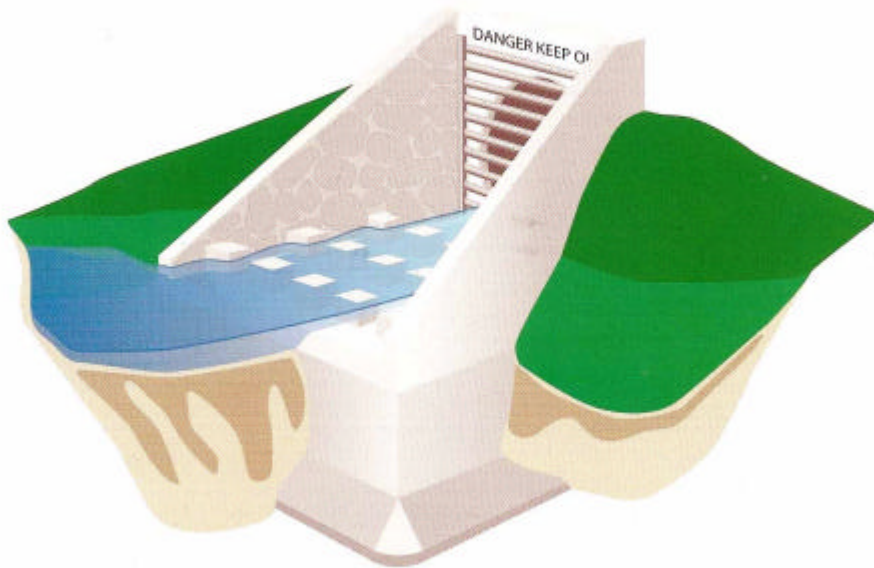
StelCrete



# Two piece precast concrete headwall for concrete pipe produced with pre-welded assembly

## Hanson QuickHeadWall™

### Two Piece Precast Headwall



Hanson Pipe & Precast, Canada has introduced a new product in Ontario called the Hanson Quick Head-Wall™. The precast concrete product is a two-piece headwall that installs in the fraction of the time it would take for construction of a cast-in-place structure. The system arrives on site complete with chute blocks and standard lifting devices for a speedy installation. The headwall is used for round and elliptical concrete pipe storm sewer outlets and inlets in pipe sizes commonly ranging from 600 mm to 1800 mm in diameter.

With assistance from Hanson staffs, StelCrete was able to design and build a jig system that enables production of all sizes of headwalls and incorporate all sizes of pipe accommodated by the Hanson Quick Head-wall. The assembly arrives at the



Welded wire assembly for headwall.

Hanson plant ready for placement in the mold. Use of the pre-welded assembly in the controlled environment of Hanson's plant ensures a product with consistent quality. The product is certified by the Ontario Plant Pre-qualification Program, and the reinforcement is designed to the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code.

The jig for the reinforcing assembly

is currently producing products for three sizes of pipe. The jig is designed to produce single assemblies, but the capability exists for production on a far greater scale.



Precast concrete headwall system.



Installed Hanson Quick Headwall.



Functional Hanson Quick Headwall.



## StelCrete site updated and linked to new Salit Steel website

Industrial websites tend to be overlooked and ignored as sources of current and archived information because it takes too much time for many to find the information being sought. All too often, visitors to sites become frustrated and leave minutes after entering a site. Simple information like the basic contact coordinates may be buried deep within the pages and sometimes painful to locate and access on the "Contact Us" page. After sites are built and launched, links sometimes break and visitors encounter broken links and missing pages. It is important to constantly refresh websites and check all content to be sure that it remains relevant and informative.

A recent client survey by StelCrete suggested that its website is underused for accessing information about products and services. There are many ways to boost traffic to websites, but attracting any visitor to boost traffic is as undesirable as an underused site.

StelCrete's site has been refreshed with software that provides immediate contact with management for fast responses to inquiries. The site details

the wide range of services and products for various sectors of the precast concrete industry through images of the reinforcement assemblies and how they are used.

The site has been linked to the new site for StelCrete's parent company, Salit Steel.



Salit's site opens with an historical account of the company that may be skipped. It was created for informing visitors of the lengthy history of the company in an interesting way. By skipping the introductory video, visitors can quickly access information about Salit's products or navigate quickly to one of its subsidiaries, Salit Specialty Rebar and StelCrete, or its Service Centre or Rebar Division.

Established in 1905, Salit Steel is a family-owned enterprise serving the construction industry in Canada and the USA. Its philosophy that has built its success through the 20th century is built upon the relationships it has firmly established with industry partners. See Salit's new site at [www.salitsteel.com](http://www.salitsteel.com) and StelCrete's refreshed site at [www.stelcrete.com](http://www.stelcrete.com).



## Football mania

Salit's clients will soon be receiving an invitation to join the company at its annual **tailgate party** at a Bills game in Buffalo. This celebration of business partnerships is **September 9** at the Bills' season opener with Denver. The marvels of the summer season are upon us, but it is not too early to begin to think about an end-of-summer finale with the Bills.

Quality  
Service  
Value

**StelCrete**  
[stelcrete.com](http://stelcrete.com)

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*StelCrete's core business is to supply precasters with fully pre-assembled, pre-welded reinforcing cages for all types of products*