

Have tools, will travel.

Joe Heinecke

JOE HEINICKE, RICE LAKE field service engineer, goes a long way to install CB-2 automated concrete batching systems. The farthest, so far, has been to historic Tinian island. Tinian is one of the Northern Mariana Islands, a commonwealth of the United States.

The Marianas consist of 15 islands about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to the Philippines. Only three of the Marianas are inhabitable, due to mankind's discouraging experience with active volcanoes. One of those more hospitable islands is Tinian, with a population of less than 4,000. (It was from Tinian's lone airstrip that the Enola Gay, B-29 Superfortress, took off for Hiroshima one August day in 1945.)

Joe never expected to become a world traveler, but that's exactly what he has become. Last year alone, Joe traveled at least 30 out of 52 weeks. So far this year, he has worked with Rice Lake distributors in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, Iowa, and, of course, all the way to Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, 20 hours from the United States to Tokyo, Nagoya, Saipan, and then a short hop to Tinian.

Being a field service engineer for Rice Lake is not a nine-to-five job and doesn't always involve travel. On one occasion, Joe spent hours on the telephone, until nearly 10 PM, helping a customer work through some issues with their equipment. While working with one customer to gain NTEP approval on a product, he worked 12- to 18-hour days for 21 days in a row, with only two days off — for a nap!

The majority of jobs that Joe works on are CB-2 installations. These usually last about three days. The first day is reserved for defining and marking all existing wiring. Day two consists of wiring the controller and calibrating the plant by noon. The afternoon is dedicated to running a couple batches and tuning the plant. Day three is

set aside for employee training and making concrete. Depending on the situation, installation sometimes takes only two days and other times, it can take longer. Everything depends on the amount of preparation done ahead of time and the skill level of the people who will be using the CB-2.

One of the most important aspects of any installation is the site evaluation done prior to the installation. This is usually completed by the Rice Lake distributor Joe is working with. Everything needs to be looked at, including the power supply, wiring, location, space, and the size of the equipment. When the site evaluation is not conducted properly and thoroughly, there will almost always be problems. "A big time-consumer is when the wires aren't labeled," Joe says. "The CB-2 can automate any batching system in the world, but it can't fix sticky gates or bad relays."

Even though most of Joe's jobs are with the CB-2, it's not the only Rice Lake equipment Joe installs. He is fully trained on everything Rice Lake has to offer and available to assist with any installation. Some of his past jobs also consist of installing the Omni-4000 wrapper, in-motion checkweighers, 920i programmable indicator and numerous other Rice Lake products.

An Omni-4000 Wrapper installation makes a good example of what can go wrong when everything is not evaluated. When the wrapper was delivered, it was soon discovered that it wouldn't fit through the door to the room where it was to be set up. The owner of the company used a Sawzall® to cut around the door frame and enlarge the entrance. Then he reframed the door after the wrapper was installed.

Joe not only does installations, he has also completed product training, trained classes in preventive maintenance, and assisted with NTEP certifications. He's a "Joe of all Trades"!



Traveling over half of the year can get old fast, but Joe keeps it interesting. New York's Empire State Building, Canton, Ohio's Pro Football and Rock & Roll Halls of Fame are a few of the sights he's seen. Customers have commented on Joe's work ethic and professionalism, of course, but also on his sense of humor. One of Joe's favorite non-work-related adventures happened in Florida. He and a friend from the area tried their luck at alligator hunting. As you can see, Lucky Joe hauled in a luncker!

If you would like Joe to assist with an upcoming installation, service project, training or certification, please contact Rice Lake's Inside Sales Manager at 1-800-472-6703 or via the Request Service link at www.ricelake.com. ■

