



SUCCESS STORY

TC/American Manufacturing Helps Thriving North Dakota Equipment Manufacturer Keep Up with Demand

Minnesota Metal Fabricator Helps Fisher Industries Overcome Booming North Dakota's Skilled Labor Shortage, Keep Delivery Schedules

Located within a stone's throw of Western North Dakota's booming oil fields, Fisher Industries had a shortage of skilled workers just when it needed them the most. The Dickinson, N.D., aggregate and mining equipment manufacturer had a steady stream of orders, but not enough experienced welders, machinists and fabricators to keep reasonable delivery times. They had to find a reputable fabrication shop to help them through the labor shortage. That's when a cold-calling metal fabrication salesman from Minnesota found himself at the right place at the right time.

With the rest of the nation still mired in sky-high unemployment and stagnant wages, stories of Western North Dakota's epic bonanza seem like tall tales from the edge of the western frontier. But Larry Novak knows better.

The veteran travelling salesman for TC/American Manufacturing has zigzagged the vast prairies, badlands and wide open expanses of North Dakota for years, selling machining and fabrication services for the Waite Park, Minn., metal fabricator. He has seen the oil boom firsthand. That's why he knew he was not wasting his time making cold calls out in Teddy Roosevelt country. He knew that TC/American has exactly the capabilities that North Dakota manufacturers desperately need. And when he contacted Fisher Industries, he had their attention.

Fisher Industries was just beginning to look for an outside fabrication shop when Novak contacted them, recalled Greg Schafer, engineering supervisor for Fisher Industries' General Steel and Supply Company.

"We have always tried to keep 100% of the fabrication work in our shop, but our manufacturing location relative to the oil field activity in western North Dakota was making it difficult to hire new employees," Schafer noted. "The cost of living in our area has skyrocketed, and a lack of reasonably priced housing, along with competing against oil field companies for skilled welders and fabricators was pushing our delivery schedules out."

Management at Fisher Industries was pleasantly surprised that TC/American's shop rates were nearly identical to its own, while other shops had quoted unjustifiable high rates, so it decided to try out the Minnesota fabricator, starting with some basic fabrication work, then progressing to more complex assemblies, a dozer trap assembly, multiple truck scale chassis and air separator chassis, as well as contract machining work.

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Fisher Industries Continued....

TC/American had the services that Fisher Industries needed: fabrication, machining, vertical turning, welding, sawing, flame cutting, punching, sandblasting, painting and final assembly. Most importantly, it had no shortage of highly skilled workers who knew how to get the job done. The metal fabricator's massive 73,700 square foot shop, unique high bay and proximity to I-94 put it in a strong position to help North Dakota's manufacturers through the state's labor shortage.

"Overall I would say TC American has done a very good job on the items they have fabricated for us," Schafer said. "We have a very good working relationship with TC/American and appreciate the help they have given us in the past 9 months. Their capabilities and skills have been a good fit for us. We hope our sales pace continues so we can send more work to TC/American in the future."

Novak credits the hardworking team at TC/American Manufacturing with earning Fisher Industries' confidence.

"It's not easy for a company that never outsources to take that leap of faith and put their trust in an outside shop," Novak said. "Our guys back in the shop made sure the projects were done on time and to Fisher Industries' specifications. They earned our customer's trust and are the real heroes of this story."

About TC/American Manufacturing

A division of TC/American Monorail, Inc., TC/American Manufacturing is a full-service metal fabrication and machine shop. Its capabilities include fabricating, machining, vertical turning, welding, sawing, flame cutting, punching, sandblasting, painting and assembly.

About Fisher Industries

A division of Fisher Sand & Gravel Co., Fisher Industries serves all aspects of the aggregate processing industry – from the design and fabrication of aggregate equipment, to processing and end use of aggregate materials. Its affiliate companies include Fisher Grading & Excavation, Arizona Drilling & Blasting, Southwest Asphalt, Southwest Asphalt Paving, Fisher Ready Mix, General Steel and Supply Company, Southwest Concrete Paving Co., and New Mexico, Inc.



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**-Greg Schafer
Fisher Industries**

Find Out More

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