

Two Weeks at the Distillery

How WARE Coordinated and Completed a Massive Demolition and Installation Project in 14 Days

Most people think of a trip to a distillery as a “day off,” but not the team at WARE.

In **early 2014**, Heaven Hill Brands contacted WARE to replace an old boiler at its distillery in Downtown Louisville, Kentucky. The complexity of the project ensured that it would be anything but a “day off” for the team at WARE.

Heaven Hill didn't just need a new boiler installed—they also needed an old boiler to be demolished and replaced. The new boiler would need new valves, pipes, pumps, and a new de-aerator (DA) system.

The project totaled 50 weeks, and, while it wasn't rocket science, it was pretty close.

Early stage meetings between WARE, Heaven Hill, and the engineering firm used for the project, Vitok Engineers, Inc., determined the need for an 82,500 pounds per hour (PPH) Victory Energy boiler. The boiler's design not only had to account for the current needs of Heaven Hill, but also the specifications of the boiler being replaced.

During the planning stages, Mitch Kennedy, Engineering Consultant at WARE, realized that the distillery would benefit from a different burner as well. He recommended a high-efficiency Limpsfield burner to save on fuel costs. The burner would allow the new boiler to use 15% less fuel.

After seeing the potential savings, Heaven Hill opted to install the Limpsfield burner, which ended up saving the distillery about \$140,000 per year.

“We're able to do the same thing we've been doing a lot cheaper...” said Roy Nall, Maintenance and Distillery Supervisor at Heaven Hill.

The size and specifications of the new Victory boiler required that it be custom-made, which necessitated a 34-week lead time. The 35-foot boiler was too large to travel by more traditional means, so it had to be transported by rail.

WARE had to partner with the rail company to make sure that the boiler didn't get held up in any rail yards. Each day, the rail company would communicate the boiler's status to WARE, who would then pass that information to Heaven Hill.

If that doesn't make things interesting enough, consider the fact that Heaven Hill is an operating distillery. According to Nall, the process is a “one-time shot.”

“We have to have perfect steam going into the still exactly the way that it was done since prohibition. So we don't have the ability to go back and do it again.”

There was a two-week production window in which the old boiler had to be demolished and the new boiler, burner, pumps, piping, valves, and DA had to be installed.

Installing the 100,000 PPH BFS Industries DA and controls required pulling a section of roof off the facility and using a crane to drop it in.

As if things weren't already complicated, the old DA and feedwater were running differently than what was required of the new system. So, the WARE team had to call an audible in the middle of the project to accommodate the new equipment.

The days during that two-week window were long. "Some days longer than others," says Kennedy between laughs. "We did a lot of pre-planning to try to make that transition as smooth as possible."

"To do the amount of work in a two-week period...was phenomenal, and especially the ability that WARE had to support that," said Nall.

According to Nall, Heaven Hill didn't just want a boiler or a burner...they wanted the whole package—boiler, DA, pumps, engineering support, and the trusted relationship with WARE.

Kennedy understands the value of that trusted partnership. "We're not there to just sell you something and leave. We're there to be a partner with you and make sure that you stay in business."

The value of that partnership was not lost on Heaven Hill, who turned around a few months after completion and ordered the installation of another 50,000 PPH boiler and a DA system to go with it for an expansion project at the distillery.

According to Kennedy, "That's a testament to how well the first project went."

Nall seems to agree, "It was a great decision with using WARE."

Kennedy has been at WARE for 15 years and has been partnered with Heaven Hill for nearly as long. "I think the partnership that WARE tries to form with our customers and be a resource for them—not just a parts company—goes a long way."

The success of this project and the promise of a future one indicate just that.