

Advance Storage Products: Focused on the Future



By Nick Fortuna

This year offers Advance Storage Products a chance to look back at an important milestone in the company's history and to launch a new chapter that embraces the material handling industry's shift toward automation.

Ten years ago, Advance opened its second manufacturing plant in Salt Lake City, enabling the company to better serve dealers and end users in the West. Prior to that, Advance had manufactured its large-scale structural pallet-racking solutions solely out of its plant in Cedartown, Georgia.

Given that Advance ships projects totaling more than 100 million pounds of steel each year, opening a plant out West was an especially big moment for the company, according to Steve DiStasio, director of sales.

"It's a big advantage for us because freight is a significant cost when you're talking about the type of product that we're shipping," he said.

While celebrating its history, Advance also is focused on the future, having installed its first ISATellite pallet shuttle system early this year. Advance partnered with Cassioli to bring the system to the U.S. market.

ISATellite is a high-density, semi-automatic pallet-storage solution for warehouses and distribution centers. It allows for storage depths of more than 30 pallets, so warehouse managers can optimize their space. An operator using a remote control with a digital display can monitor operating conditions for many shuttles at once.

"It allows you to create a greater cube of racking with fewer aisles to maximize your space and increase your throughput," DiStasio said. "As we see end users increasingly trying to automate their processes, Advance is making moves to ensure that we can meet those customer demands."

Advance, based in Huntington Beach, California, provides structural pallet-racking solutions in all product configurations, including single selective, pushback, double-deep selective, drive-in, pick tunnels, pick modules, pallet flow and carton flow systems. The company was founded by the late John Krummell Sr. in Compton, California, in 1958 and is owned by his three sons, John, Matt and Chris.

Advance specialized in steel storage equipment and work benches before shifting its focus in 1985 to manufacture components for integration with storage racking systems. The company sold its first large racking project to the Ralphs grocery chain in 1989. Advance now has more than 300 employees, including about 240 in manufacturing.

Advance's LoPro Pushback is the "gold standard" among racking solutions due to its ease of installation and operation, along with its quality and durability, DiStasio said. The company's warehouse pallet-racking solutions are used in major installations owned by a host of Fortune 500 companies, he added.

DiStasio said Advance prides itself on its long-term relationships with dealers across the country, some of which have participated in the design of racking solutions for customers. Advance has robust quality-control measures in place that ensure a high-quality product, so dealers and end users can count on getting the right system, manufactured exactly to their specifications, right on time, he said.

As a just-in-time manufacturer, Advance quotes and produces projects based on customer specifications supplied by dealers, so it doesn't hold any inventory, DiStasio said.

"We're a lean manufacturer," he said. "Dealers are looking for partnerships with manufacturers that provide a higher level of service, and one of the ways we differentiate ourselves is that we always ship on time. That's really important to our dealers and our end users – making sure that we execute and do what we said we're going to do.

"We're always price competitive," DiStasio added. "We're not always the lowest price, but I think our dealers see value in the fact that they can rely on us for a quality product and to meet our commitments. We have a large network of dealers that have a good knowledge of our product and of what their customers want, so they consult with us on the best way to provide customers with solutions, and that's what we're looking for from our dealers." ●