



Standing Ovation!

Southern Millwrights Steal the Spotlight in San Antonio Theater Project

What used to be a broken down municipal building in San Antonio, Texas, is now an elite, state-of-the-art events venue, thanks to the ability of UBC Southern District members to learn fast and produce stellar work. At the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, a new seating technology, which has yet to infiltrate American theaters, needed to be successfully installed in the 1,750-seat, 8,200-square-foot performance hall.

Created by Gala Systems, the technology transforms seating arrangements using mechanical equipment housed below the hall into dozens of theater, flat floor, banquet, and cabaret configurations. The transfer is done within minutes. The company has completed more than 1,400 projects in 63 countries, but the Tobin project, which features telescopic technology, was different. It is the first of its kind in the country, according to the Tobin Center web site.

A Plus Industrial Installation brought a composite crew of millwrights from Locals 1421 and 2232 of the Southern States Millwright Regional Council (SSMRC).

“This type of job allows our members to show how versatile their skills are. They can respond to an ever-changing market with an eagerness to learn and yet maintain productivity,” said Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the SSMRC, Dennis Donahou.

“The special challenge was that it was the first of its kind, so nobody had experience in working with this engineering marvel,” said Dean Simonek, vice president of A Plus. “Gala Systems provided installation experts to train our crew onsite. The feedback we got was great. They said our guys performed very well. Since this is new technology, it

was a learning curve but they picked it up quickly and ran with it.”

Getting the right equipment in place for the installation required planning of its own. A Plus needed to use a Maeda mini-crawler crane for construction, since conventional equipment like a forklift or a carry-deck crane couldn’t gain access or was too heavy. A telescoping platform had to be built in the stage pit to get the mini-crawler crane down to floor elevation for assembly of the telescopic seating. The Maeda crane dealer in Houston sent a technical expert to San Antonio to qualify the millwrights in authorized operation of the crane.

“The labor supplied by A Plus was qualified and hard working. The A Plus crew showed great pride in their work, and the end result reflects it,” said Guillaume Le Brun, the Gala Systems engineer who coordinated the project onsite.

“We faced a few challenges throughout the installation of the project, as we do on any construction site. But, the workers of A Plus were an integral part of overcoming these challenges through good communication and teamwork with the different trades,” Le Brun added.

UBC Southern District Vice President Danny Maples said the successful Tobin project is another example of how UBC members in the Southern District are able to convert training opportunities into productivity on the job site.

“The UBC’s combination of skill, communication, and leadership training is creating a total professional that can handle technical challenges, learn new skills quickly to keep the project on time, and communicate with others so that the project remains productive,” Maples said.

Les Simonek Keeps a Steady Hand at A Plus Industrial Installation’s Wheel

A Plus Industrial Installation began when Les Simonek, the company’s founder and current vice president, saw an opportunity.

He chose “A Plus” as his company’s name because the term is synonymous with outstanding performance, service, and value.

“Our goal has been to build a company focused on providing exceptional value to our clients with a commitment to service that exceeds their expectations,” Simonek said.

For more than three decades, the family-owned business grew. With access to an unlimited pool of millwright manpower from the Southern States Millwright Regional Council (SSMRC), Simonek steered A Plus through successful projects year after year.

A Plus accepts assignments throughout the USA. Clients range from automotive, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, baggage handling and building products, to paper mills, aerospace, medical, bulk material handling, and packaging.

Simonek is a 29-year member of UBC Local 1421. His company has played a vital role in providing scores of jobs throughout the years for the local workforce. His son Dean is a 19-year member and has been working with his dad for several years now to run the family business.

“A Plus is one of our most successful contractors, and I believe that’s because of Les’ commitment to hiring skilled professionals to represent him on the job site,” said SSMRC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Donahou.

“Having the right mix of millwrights for any particular project is one key component for success,” Simonek said. “What I want more than anything is for a young millwright to want to learn and get better. That’s what creates opportunities.”