

Not Just a Pipe Dream

Union Tank Car's on time delivery and can-do attitude gives Aux Sable confidence to achieve its goals



Mike Van Winkle, Aux Sable's Manager of Propane Marketing, interviewed every possible tank car vendor before deciding to award Union Tank Car Company an order for new pressure cars. "Dave Murawski, (UTLX Midwest regional sales manager) was the only tank car company representative that shared my enthusiasm for Aux Sable's project. When we initially spoke our company's facility was just a vision, it wasn't even up and running yet. But, Dave shared our vision and helped make it a reality. I knew when we started processing natural gas, we were going to need a fleet of tank cars and quickly."

"And when the time came, Dave got us the tank cars we needed to transport our propane and C5 natural gas mixture and we were ready to do business," says Van Winkle.

Aux Sable Liquid Products' Channahon, Illinois, facility is located approximately 50 miles southwest of Chicago. The plant is directly connected to major natural gas fields in northern British Columbia by the almost 2,000-mile-long Alliance Pipeline. The pipeline brings at least 1.325 billion cubic feet of natural gas to the plant per day. Aux Sable is one of the largest facilities of its kind in the United States.

From the natural gas piped in, the Aux Sable plant recovers 70,000 barrels of ethane, propane, normal butane, iso-butane and natural gasoline. Van Winkle



Aux Sable's Channahon, Illinois, facility has nine storage tanks that have the capacity to store 200,000 barrels of natural gas liquids.



Union Tank Car Midwest Regional Sales Manager Dave Murawski (left) discusses the tank tank needs of Aux Sable's Channahon, Illinois, production plant with Manager of Propane Marketing Mike Van Winkle.

markets the propane that the plant produces.

The plant now ships its products via an all UTLX car fleet including the latest 33,800 gallon LPG cars on a full service lease. "At the last minute Aux Sable asked for the cars to be fitted with a Midland gauge device compatible with the Midland cargo load monitors installed at their loading rack," says Tom Rybarczyk, Union Tank Car project engineer. "When the device indicates a full tank, the flow of product into the tank car is automatically shut off. It's a useful product for them; but the problem was that we had already shipped some of their new cars from our plant. So, we easily resolved the problem by sending Hank Miller of our Joliet mobile repair unit out to Channahon to install the devices at their location."

"Other additions to the Aux Sable cars that differentiate them in the industry include locks on the fittings to ensure that the product is not tampered with in transit," says Rybarczyk "They also request on their Ready-to-Load specifications that the cars be shipped fresh from Union Tank Car's manufacturing plant with a nitrogen pad which helps prevent rusting."

"Within five years, we're envisioning a fleet of at least 150 cars," says Van Winkle. "And, as we add to our fleet we'll look for the same tank car reliability and flexibility that Union Tank Car has demonstrated already. We started out with 30 cars in October 2000 when we began operations, by mid January of 2001 we needed even more cars to ship our products and UTC was right there. We ship LPG, Propane and C-5 (a natural gas mixture) all over the U.S. and we ship C5 to Alberta, Canada."

Aux Sable President and CEO Bill McAdam, says that the future is looking good for the Channahon facility. "Thanks to the Alliance Pipeline we have a secure source of hydrocarbon fuel; so, we've been able to readily supply our customers in what had previously been a supply-constrained marketplace." **UTLX**



UTLX Regional Sales Manager Dave Murawski goes over Ready-To-Load specs at the Aux Sable loading rack in Channahon, Illinois.



Dave Bernard, senior operator, monitors the whole plant from his seat in Aux Sable's high-tech control room.