

EXIT SIDE WITH EASE

Construction contractor implements TONGHAND® as a timesaving solution on Missouri job site

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Gabe's Construction is a fourth-generation family-owned construction services company based in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Their focus is on innovative techniques and applications in the construction industry, offering solutions in wireless, electrical, telecommunications, pipeline and HDD.

A recent job involving their HDD capabilities offered up an opportunity to tackle an old problem in a novel way. With the bulk of their HDD experience drilling in hard rock, this Missouri work site—a 4,600 ft. shot with 10 in. nominal pipe—featured an unknown expansive clay seam. This feature has the potential to present additional challenges, which include more frequent reamer trips and weeper sub runs due to the friction of the clay resisting the drill stem, gripping it tightly.

The increased frequency of tooling trip in and trip outs that were witnessed during the drilling process at this particular job site resulted in an unforeseen addition of time and overhead to the job budget. Not to mention putting workers at risk with increased exposure to traditional joint torquing methods using tong wrenches.

INTRODUCTION

At the Distribution Contractor's Association's 2019 convention, Gabe's Construction had the winning bid on an equipment rental at the event's greatly anticipated live auction. This piece of equipment was the TONGHAND®, a hydraulically actuated excavator attachment designed and engineered for HDD exit-side operations by LaValley Industries.

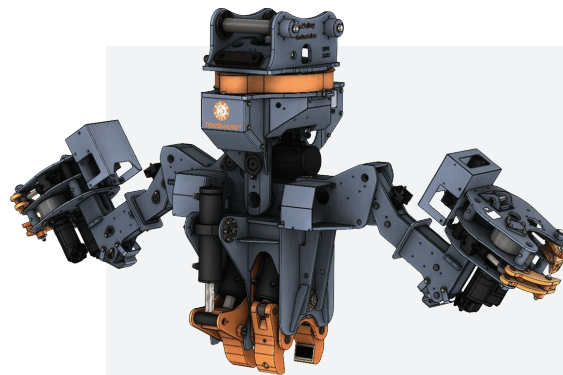
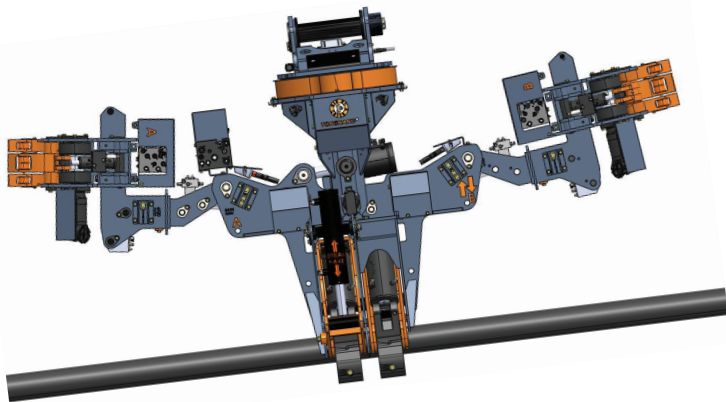


"We did not have a project in mind for it at the time of the bid," said Gabe's VP of HDD and Specialty Projects, Nate Eastway. "We were interested in test driving the TONGHAND® and saw the DCA auction as an opportunity to benefit DCA, Gabe's and LaValley."

Included within the 30-day equipment rental was transportation, setup and training. With this particular job, Eastway saw an immediate opportunity to put TONGHAND® to the test.

IMPLEMENTATION

After Eastway made a call to LaValley Industries to make good on their auction win, a training team was quickly dispatched to Missouri with ►



CHALLENGE

Drilling in rock containing unconsolidated deposits was going to add extra time and cost to a project due to the need for increased reamer trips and weeper sub runs.

SOLUTION

The TONGHAND® was implemented to cut down time and costs on exit-side operations while providing a safer way to do the job.

OUTCOME

Using TONGHAND® resulted in the reduction of 14 shifts and a 40 to 65% increase in production, along with conservation of materials.

► TONGHAND® in tow. Operating off of a “train-the-trainer” model, the Gabe’s day shift operator was instructed on use of the TONGHAND® by LaValley’s technical specialists. The operator was then able to train the night shift operator himself. Both operators had TONGHAND® controls committed to muscle memory in little over a day’s worth of hands-on time.

The knowledgeable LaValley team also worked closely with Gabe’s to address routine maintenance and provide technical assistance to keep a high level of TONGHAND® performance.

RESULTS

The primary benefit to Gabe’s Construction that the TONGHAND® provided amounts to the reduction in job length by about 14 shifts (224 hours). This equated to notable cost savings for the contractor and customer.

Eastway explained its specific impact: “Using TONGHAND® led to an increase in overall productivity on our tooling trip-in and trip-outs for reamers and weep subs. We had a decent amount of room on the exit-side to run tail string, but on those trips it was anywhere between a 40-65% increase in production just tripping in and out.”

In addition to the cost savings of decreased job time, there was also a savings on spent material. Traditional exit-side tong wrenches can have a tendency to damage drill stem, because the required torque specs can be difficult to attain with precision when torquing up from rig (hole) side. Because TONGHAND® is able to apply torque in a controlled and consistent manner directly at the joint, the correct specs are met with efficiency and ease, eliminating any guesswork.

TONGHAND® also got the seal of approval from the rest of the field crew, with the on-site supervisor requesting it be added to Gabe’s full-time equipment fleet.

LaValley Industries specializes in engineering products that increase not only job site efficiency, but safety as well. This is another benefit that Eastway wanted to stress, as Gabe’s Construction takes the safety of their people as number one priority. Utilizing TONGHAND® solidified the safety-conscious position that the company upholds, which bolstered their image on this Midwest job site—their first for a new client.



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