

HOIST LIFTRUCK — BIG TRUCKS FORGED IN AMERICA

Hoist Liftruck manufactures high-capacity (7.5 to 60 ton) liftrucks for both indoor and outdoor materials handling applications. Last March, the company opened a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in East Chicago, Ind., where forklifts are completely built from the ground up using locally-sourced components. Thanks to close supplier relationships and efficient logistics, Hoist Liftruck delivers unmatched industry-best lead-times. David Soyka reports on how this Made in America manufacturer builds quality and efficiency in its own backyard.



Hoist Liftruck is a U.S. manufacturer of high capacity forklifts, container handlers and reach stackers engineered to maximize durability, productivity and serviceability under the most demanding conditions, indoors and out. The company's tag-

line—"Big Trucks Forged in America"—characterizes how Hoist Liftruck is different in two significant ways.

One is that Hoist Liftruck specializes in heavy duty liftrucks that range from 15,000 pounds to 120,000 pounds, in contrast to full line forklift



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manufactures whose products typically don't exceed 20,000 pounds in capacity. These high capacity liftrucks are used in a range of industries, including steel, aluminum, automotive, concrete, forging, lumber, machinery moving and rigging, marina, military, oil and gas, paper, port and intermodal.

A further distinction is that Hoist Liftruck is only one of two high capacity forklift OEMs that manufactures in North America. Stu Jacover,

Pictured left: Hoist founder and President Marty Flaska joins Indiana Governor Mike Pence is cutting the ribbon on Hoist's new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in East Chicago, IN.

Vice President for Strategy and Development, wants to make clear that for Hoist Liftruck, "Made in America" is more than a mere marketing slogan.

"All our liftrucks are built from the ground up here in the U.S. using components sourced from local American-based manufacturers," Jacover emphasizes. "Some companies claim 'Made in America' status because they assemble their products here, even though many of their components are manufactured overseas. Hoist Liftruck uses only local suppliers within a 250 mile radius of our plant. So when we say our liftrucks are proudly made in America, that's 100 percent the case."



Jacover points out that making products in America goes beyond good marketing; it is good for product quality and overall profitability. “You don’t have the on-site control if you outsource to Mexico or somewhere overseas. As a vertically integrated manufacturer, we can guarantee that everything that goes into making a liftruck meets our highly exacting standards.

Keeping manufacturing in-house is also more cost-efficient. “The argument to source overseas is that labor is less expensive. But when you look at the costs of shipping internationally, delays

Pictured above: Hoist founder and President Marty Flaska stands with Indiana Governor Mike Pence and East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland by one of Hoist’s P Series forklifts.

in shipping, and the rejection and replacement of unacceptable parts, the way it all adds up is it winds up costing you more in higher operating costs and lost productivity. Plus, when you consider the differences in currency valuation, it pays to stay in America.”

Unmatched Lead Times

More than 75 percent of the material on each of liftrucks is manufactured in-house, including chassis, steer axles, cabs, masts and cylinders with the remaining sourced from nearby vendors. Hoist Liftruck’s close working relationships with those vendors is why it can claim an unmatched 16 weeks delivery lead time, compared to the more common 6 months to 1 year time frame of

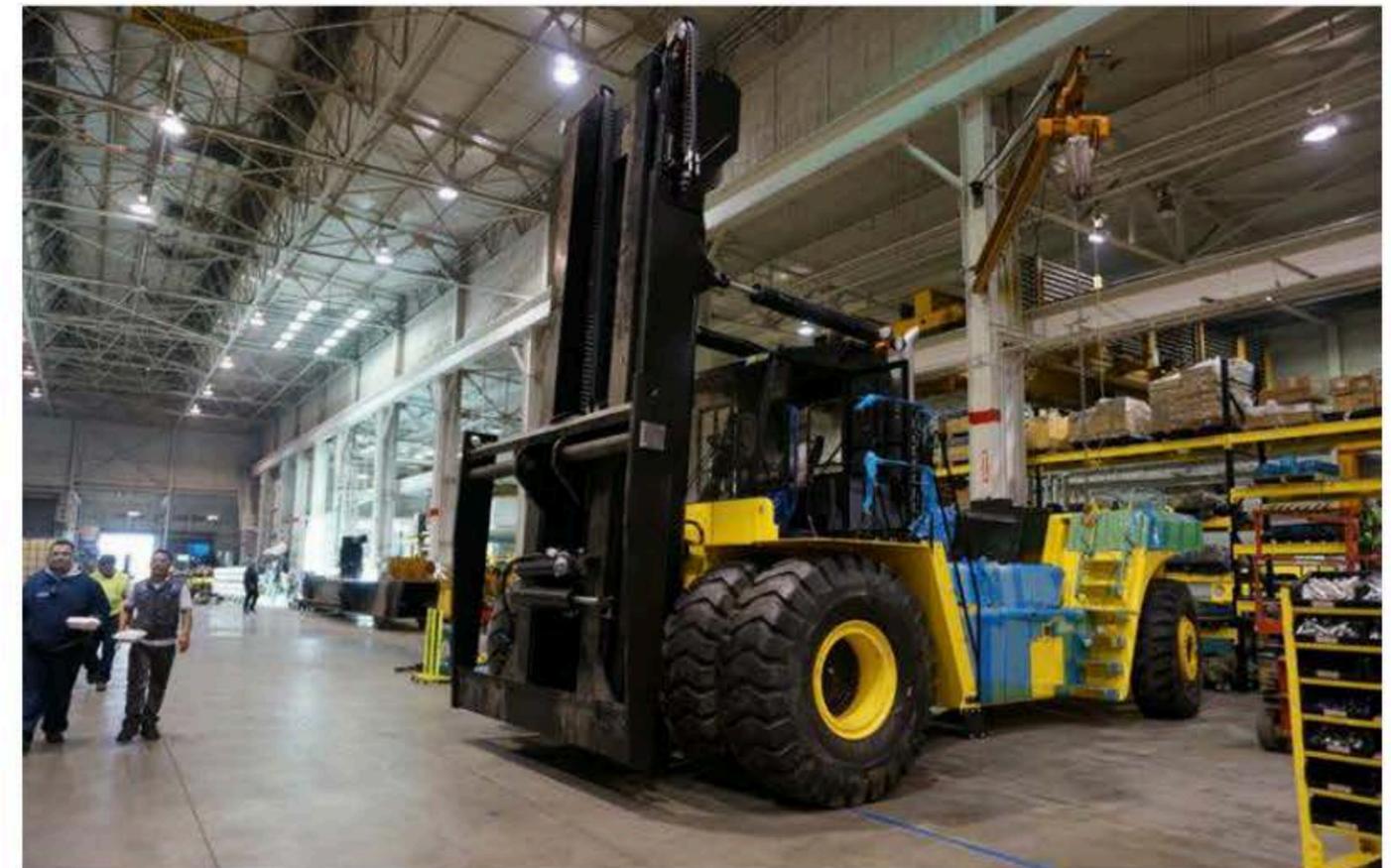
“Hoist Liftruck specializes in heavy duty liftrucks capacities that range from 15,000 pounds to 120,000 pounds capacity, in contrast to full line most forklift manufacturers whose products typically don’t exceed 20,000 pounds. A further distinction is that Hoist Liftruck is only one of two high capacity forklift OEMs that manufactures in North America.”

its competitors.

“Making the chassis of the liftruck isn’t what takes time,” Jacover explains. “It’s getting all the components you need. When you need an engine and a drivetrain, you just can’t call the manufacturer and say send it over. You get put on their production schedule and it’s not like

you can get something by next week. That’s where significant delays come into play.”

To avoid long waits, Jacover explains, “We maintain close working relationships with all our major suppliers and most importantly, we stock engines and other critical components while continually forecasting and reordering in



FINDING FORKLIFTS NEW HOMES

Hoist Liftruck founder and owner Marty Flaska didn't start out intending to be a manufacturer. In 1980, he started Forklift Exchange to buy, sell, and rent material handling equipment. Flaska acquired the rights to build material handling equipment from Silent Hoist and Crane in 1994, a longstanding equipment manufacturer based in Brooklyn that was the primary supplier to the steel, aluminum and canning industries. Flaska rebranded the company as Hoist Liftruck Mfg., Inc. In 1998 the business moved operations from Addison, IL to Bedford Park, IL. Two years later, it acquired the assets of Elwell Parker, Ltd., a pioneer in electric powered forklifts.

Forklift Exchange continues as one of the largest reseller in North America of previously owned material handling and construction equipment as well as new products of not only Hoist Liftruck, but other manufacturers in capacities ranging from 2,000 to 100,000 pounds. Other Hoist Liftruck companies include full service dealerships and distribution centers in Florida, Arizona, Denver and Los Angeles. Specialized Liftruck Services (SLS) provide forklift repair and services and Xpress Steel provides a wide range of steel products and services such as cutting, bending and powder coating.

anticipation of future needs. This enables us to pull whatever we need when we need it. Sure, that increases inventory costs, but it more than makes up for it with our quick lead times. That's one of our key value proposition that differentiates us from our competitors."

Hoist Liftruck also prides itself on after-sales support, so it also makes sure the majority of commonly used parts are stocked at its dealer

locations and ready for immediate pickup or delivery. When parts aren't readily available locally, Hoist Liftruck maintains inventory to support its customer base.

Versatile options

Another unique characteristic of Hoist Liftruck is that it makes a full portfolio of heavy duty material handling vehicles for both indoor and

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outdoor uses; it also makes electric vehicles as well as the more common internal combustion engine driven. "It's a smaller niche, but we want to be able to serve those customers who prefer electric," Jacover says.

A newer model that has been well received in the marketplace is the FR Series extendible counterweight forklift. Jacover explains that, "The

extendible counterweight provides additional capacity when needed. For example, you might normally need to lift up to 25,000 pounds, but if you needed to move something heavier, you push a button and the hydraulics extend the chassis so you can now lift up to 35,000 pounds. This kind of versatility is great for customers who don't need the extra capacity now, but might need it in the future, or only occasionally for certain loads or machinery. This way they don't have to buy another vehicle when the need arises."

He adds, "The ability to handle different size loads with one forklift has been extremely well received. It's just the latest example of our commitment to identify customer needs and then make a product that satisfies those needs."

Another part of that commitment is Hoist Liftruck's recent move from Bedford Park, Ill. to East Chicago, Indiana. The newly equipped 550,000 square foot headquarters and manufacturing facility in a building originally designed



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Congratulations to Marty Flaska and the Hoist Liftruck team on their newly expanded location in East Chicago, IN! RelaDyne looks forward to growing with Hoist in their future success.

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to make tanks for the U.S. Army and is centrally located to major highways and rail lines as well its vendors. It currently employs 350. By 2020, Hoist Liftruck plans to increase staffing to 500 in anticipation of continuing demand.

“Like every manufacturer, we look to automate and make our processes as efficient as possible,” Jacover notes. “That’s one thing we’ve strived for in the new plant and we have implemented the processes of lean manufacturing. At the same time, there’s a certain amount of skilled labor, particularly welders and machinists, involved in building our product. An additional advantage to our move here is our partnerships with local trade schools, such as IVY Tech, to provide programs to train people with the precise skills we need. This area has a pretty good labor pool to draw from, but the welding skills we require are highly specific and different from other kinds of welding.”

Lifting sales

Hoist Liftruck sells through its authorized Hoist dealer network. “Although we do sell globally, North America is our primary market,” Jacover says. The company recently announced an exclusive agreement with Toyota Material Handling USA, Inc. (TMHU) to manufacture private label pneumatic tire forklifts ranging from 22,000 to 72,000 pound lifting capabilities.

Jacover stresses how current trends in engineering and design emphasize operator safety. “We’re always looking to see how we can improve



ergonomics and make the operator comfortable and protected. Nobody wants accidents, needless to say. An operator who is comfortable is not only a safer operator, but a more productive one as well.”

Given its recent investment in a new facility as

well as new strategic partnerships and product offerings, Hoist Liftruck would seem to have high capacity for increased sales. “We anticipate strong business growth,” Jacover says. “Overall, the industry has experienced slower growth than last year. But last year represented an unusually

high growth spurt. So what we’re experiencing now really isn’t necessarily a downturn, even though some people look at it that way, it’s just a return to a more normal growth curve.”

That’s uplifting news for Hoist Liftruck, its customers, and its Made in America spirit.