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**AddisonMckee helps world's leading stairlift manufacturer move up to the next level**

Global leader in the design, manufacture and supply of the world's finest tube bending and end forming technologies, AddisonMckee, has supplied another one of its state-of-the-art DB 89 electric bending machines to the world's leading stairlift manufacturer.

AddisonMckee's relationship with the customer in question is a longstanding one with its origins in two hydraulic machines supplied some sixteen years ago.

**The electric machine. Harnessing current technology**

One key advantage of the electric machine over its hydraulic forebears is the fact that the machine 'teaches' itself and reduces set-up times, automatically making any necessary adjustments and eliminating the need for manual re-setting. What's more, wherever the metal is sourced from and whatever its grade, the machine will manufacture a far more repeatable component that matches the original drawing first time.

Most importantly of all, because no two staircases are exactly the same and many have a gentle curvature, one of the customer's prime requirements was the capability for freeform bending. So, as well as using standard tools, the DB 89 machine uses rollers on to the die and clamp, then pushes the tube to generate an infinitely variable radius between the rollers. A minor angle variation put into the bend arm is reflected in the tube radius as it is pushed forward.

It's another example of how AddisonMckee's innovative approach is eminently transferable from one sector to another, the technology having originally been developed for Nissan roll bars.

## **Less tolerant than ever**

A further requirement was the reduction of the envelope tolerance the middle of the tube needed to follow: from 10-12 mm down to a mere 5. This was something the DB 89 machine could achieve with aplomb.

But all of this precision has a purpose in closing the loop between what the customer requires and what it actually gets out of the machine. Precision is of the utmost importance here since, especially in the current climate, AddisonMckee's customer simply cannot afford to throw away raw material. So getting things 'right first time' is crucial.

Not only that but there are major benefits for the end user, too, since even the most minor indentations in the tube produce a noticeably less smooth and more uncomfortable ride.

## **Ensuring a smoother ride for all its customers**

The fortunes of AddisonMckee itself have certainly taken a turn for the better in recent months too as the market climbs out of recession.

New ownership has galvanized the company by introducing a number of measures to ensure a smoother ride for all its customers, in, amongst others, the automotive, aviation, truck and shipbuilding industries.

First and foremost, while the company remains a truly global concern with partners all over the world, in response to overwhelming demand from its European customers, AddisonMckee has restored the manufacturing facility at its HQ at Bamber Bridge in the UK, a move which underscores the company's commitment to its European partners not least by significantly reducing costs.

## **Superior tube, more flexible chain**

With two manufacturing facilities in the US and the UK, AddisonMckee can offer something its erstwhile competitors are unable to: namely, an eminently flexible supply chain to market.

The company now has no less than 55 engineers committed to research and development with service personnel on hand in every continent.

While the new owners themselves come with the benefit of a wealth of business and industry experience, not least in the key emerging markets of the Far East.

### **A commitment to change. And continuity**

While it's true that many things have changed at AddisonMckee, many things have also remained the same.

For example, AddisonMckee's commitment to its core values of quality, durability, timeliness, price, integrity and flexibility has never wavered. Nor has its passion for providing its customers with unique solutions for highly complex tube forming problems whether it be in muffler assembly and sub-assembly machinery, catalytic converter making solutions, hydraulic presses, inspection systems, cell automation solutions, production cell integration or lubricants.

### **Core values, core people**

Many of the core people at the company's Bamber Bridge facility have been with AddisonMckee, not just throughout the recent twists and turns of the recession, but for many, many years.

As AddisonMckee CEO Alastair Tedford remarks: "The Company has emerged stronger than ever with an extremely healthy order book. As a management team, we believe this is due both to the restoration of our manufacturing facility here in the UK but also to building on the company's core values to offer customers a better service than ever before. What this means in practical terms is continuing to pursue a programme of innovation in new product development but coupled with a major initiative to drive down costs for our customers".

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For more information about AddisonMckee and its products and services, please contact:

Phillip Aspinall – General Manager

Tel: +44 (0) 1772 334511

Email: [paspinall@addisonmckee.com](mailto:paspinall@addisonmckee.com)

Website: [www.addisonmckee.com](http://www.addisonmckee.com)

Jennifer Rankin

Tel. +513.228.7000

Email: [jrankin@addisonmckee.com](mailto:jrankin@addisonmckee.com)