

A conversation with Tony Sims of Coastal Refractory Services

Starting a business in the economic climate that persisted in 2009 may have been perceived as a great risk to many. Industry veteran Tony Sims, however, saw specific needs within the refractory industry that he knew could be filled with the right amount of hard work, flexibility and customer service. Since he began Coastal Refractory Services, he has written the beginning of a success story that will only add new chapters as the economy begins its gradual recovery.

Q: What led you to start your company?

A: Coastal Refractory Services Inc. was launched last year to meet a growing demand for solutions to refractory installation quality assurance, project management and new API 936 Standard implementation. The API 936 Standard is increasing awareness of the need for refractory quality assurance, and Coastal Refractory Services is prepared to meet that need with a unique system of quality assurance tools and services. Although the industry is currently served with third-party quality-control companies, a focus on quality

assurance oversight and implementation is needed. Coastal Refractory Services is committed to meeting the changing demands of the refractory industry by offering seminars in practical training in refractory installation and applications of the API 936 Standard, in addition to quality assurance and project management procedures for refractory projects.

Q: What is the biggest news in your company right now?

A: The biggest news in our company is the success we have had with our training seminars. Our seminar clients have been pleased with our services and have been able to pass the API 936 exam with a clear understanding of the API 936 Standard and how it applies to the refractory industry. Our first seminar was held at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston, Texas, in August and we look forward to more training seminars there, along with other locations where we have had success.

Q: What was your biggest start-up hardship?

A: Our biggest start-up challenge has been launching our company during a down economy. But this has kept us cost focused and allowed us to focus our efforts on our start-up marketing investment. Our company is successful because we are flexible to client needs and are able to respond with personalized service. We believe in hard work and being cost focused and we can weather the economic cycles as they come.

Q: What's the most important thing a person should know before taking a career path similar to yours?

A: I think a person starting out in this industry should begin with an entrepreneurial mindset and always think like an owner. Regardless of your craft or position in a company, you are always You Inc. Your boss and co-workers are your customers and you are responsible for managing yourself like a business. This means managing your affairs so that you are always prepared for opportunities. I once heard that the definition of luck is “when opportunity meets preparedness” and I believe that is so



Tony Sims
President & CEO
Coastal Refractory Services Inc.

in our industry. Be prepared to work hard and enjoy what you do no matter what it is at the time.

Q: When you retire, what do you want to be remembered for?

A: One of my favorites quotes is “If you give a person a fish you feed them for a day ... if you teach a person to fish you feed them for a lifetime.” I would like to be remembered as someone who taught a lot of people to “fish” — in other words, to make a living through hard work and integrity. Since I am nowhere near retirement at only 45 years of age, I believe I can achieve this goal during my career in the industry. ●

For more information, visit www.coastalrefractory.com or call (409) 267-7818.

NEWS UPDATE

ASSE urges haste in finalizing HCS rule

DES PLAINES, Ill. — American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) President C. Christopher Patton, CSP, noted in a letter sent recently to Assistant Secretary for OSHA David Michaels that ASSE supports the goal of the hazard communication proposed rule, a rule that seeks to ensure that the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported are evaluated and communicated to employers and employees. ASSE noted that modifying OSHA's existing Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) is a step forward in harmonizing chemical hazard communications worldwide and will help U.S. employers compete in the international marketplace as well as increasing work safety.

“Modifying OSHA's existing HCS to incorporate major portions of the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) is necessary to help this nation's workers deal with the increasingly difficult challenge of understanding the hazards and precautions needed to handle and use chemicals safely in the world market-

place,” Patton wrote. “At the same time, harmonizing hazard communications with GHS will help U.S. employers compete in that marketplace by lessening the burden of conforming with different regulations and by ensuring their products will meet hazard communication requirements in other nations.”

Patton applauded OSHA for its leadership in undertaking the HCS rulemaking and urged every possible step be taken to achieve a final rule as soon as practical.

In June 2005, ASSE published “Control Banding and the Future of the HazCom Standard,” a position paper that urged OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration to consider the use of Control Banding (CB) models in a revised HCS. From the ASSE review of the leading international resources on CB — the HSE/COSHH-Essentials process as well as the International Labor Organization's Tool Kit — ASSE has called on OSHA to update the HCS to incorporate elements of CB.

For more information, visit www.asse.org or call (847) 768-3413. ●

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