

UA Leads the Way with Advanced Welding Process

Over the past year, the UA has invested in equipment and specialized training classes to be on the leading edge of a newly developed welding process known as “Tip-Tig”. Tip-Tig is a semi-automatic hot wire gas tungsten arc welding process. For the first time since 1941, the standard manual GTAW welding process has taken a giant leap forward allowing our UA welders to perform at the highest of levels in this new Tig welding process. Using this new technology, UA members and our signatory contractors will have a significant advantage in the pipe welding industry. With the high quality of welding and up to 600% increase in production, this new process will allow the UA welder and contractor to be successful for many years to come.

The newly developed UA Tip-Tig Welder Training Course was first introduced at the 2011 Instructor Training Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan. During the week of classes, the course instructors were pleased to talk and interact with approximately 600 visitors that showed up to see the new process. Among the visitors were General President William Hite, Assistant General President Steve Kelly and UA local union members ranging from business managers to field personnel. Numerous industry representatives from organizations such as Bechtel, Pioneer Pipe and Duke Energy were extremely interested in the new welding system and its applications in large scale construction projects. Many of the visitors were able to receive some hands on training. At the end of the week we were able to show all the visitors a new process that will have great benefits for the United Association members and contractors. Since that time interest has grown considerably in the application of the new process. We recently received a mailing from Bechtel that included an excerpt from one of their technology bulletins that talked about the first job site use of the TIP-TIG welding process.

In southeastern Washington State, Bechtel National, Inc. is designing, constructing and commissioning the world’s largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy. When complete, the Hanford Tank Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant will process and stabilize 56 million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste currently stored at the Hanford Site. Although the process was used by a subcontractor to Bechtel, it’s currently being evaluated for use on Bechtel’s LNG projects around the world.

