August has been just a little better than July (which was our slowest month in years). We took advantage of the slowdown to hold a Tech Meeting in Lexington. Here's a few photos from the event.

During the meeting, we had a business overview, heard from several of the Industry Managers, discussed safety items and incidents, and talked about some improvement ideas. There was also a discussion devoted to drain practices and issues that have occurred recently.

One item that we discussed was the development of a new company website. The plan is to have an employee login area on the website where materials can be posted for employees only. Everyone has been asked for their ideas about what might be useful to have in this area. Some of the ideas mentioned so far include; a.) copies of procedures and instructions, b.) newsletters, c.) the phone list, d.) a discussion forum where anybody can comment (sort of like Facebook), e.) blank forms or electronic files (timesheets, expense reports, blue/yellow sheets), and e.) descriptions of customer processes. If you have any other ideas, please let me know.

As you know, Hotwork has had a couple of recent theft incidents from the back lot. We had a break recently in the pursuit of the criminals. Mike Blythe was home and got up early one morning. He put the coffee on and went out for the newspaper. When he looked across the street, this is what he saw.

Mike contacted Larry Drake who took the photos and got the police involved. The police move at their own pace but it appears that they will be making some arrests shortly. So far, there still has not been any sign of Nick Featherly's car.

Another item discussed at the Tech Meeting was the occurrence of castable refractory spalls (explosions). As you know, Hotwork was dragged into a law suit from an incident two years ago. Within the last couple weeks, there have been two new incidents on aluminum furnaces in one facility. The data all indicates that Hotwork was following the specified schedules and that we are not at fault. The major conclusions from the discussion were that; 1.) we have to be aware of the possibility of this occurring due to factors outside of our control, 2.) we need to position the recorder in a protected area, 3.) we need to be especially careful in the 500 to 750 degree range (where they seem to blow), and 4.) we need very good and accurate documentation to protect the company in the event of a lawsuit.

We also had a discussion about "mentoring" the inexperienced Technicians. It is very important that we bring the new folks along and increase their knowledge and skills. In order for this to happen, the

trainees have to ask questions, pitch in, work hard, and demonstrate a desire to learn. The senior Techs need to be willing to take the time to teach and to help bring the Trainees along. They also have to accept the responsibility of watching out for the new folks until they have demonstrated their knowledge and proficiency.

A newly hired Technician from Australia was able to attend the meeting. He will be in the US for about a month. Please welcome Kari Kothandapani to the Hotwork Team. Kari has some past experience with refractories and has previously worked for O-I in Australia and New Zealand.

I was recently informed that Walt Jennings has been cleared to return to work. I missed him when he was in the office recently but, from what I've heard, he's looking and feeling great. Welcome back Walt.

I'm sure that everyone has heard via the news/grapevine about the tragic incident at the PDVSA Amuay refinery. Hotwork has worked here many times and several of our Techs live nearby. The most recent news reports that I've seen are indicating that 48 people have died. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19393467

I'm keeping an eye on the weather right now. There is a hurricane about to make landfall near New Orleans (again). These storms have the potential to disrupt our travel plans and also to create emergencies requiring Hotwork assistance. As always, we will do our best to respond if needed.

Tom