

# Union Tank Car's new manufacturing plant in Louisiana represents the latest in tank car manufacturing

BY MARY RUTH JOHNSEN

When Union Tank Car began building a new manufacturing plant in Alexandria, La., it had what some might consider an immodest goal — to construct the most advanced and automated tank car manufacturing facility in the world. Company officials believe it succeeded, and today, less than a year and a half after the first tank car was completed on June 2, 2006, the plant has reached its full production goal of 70 cars per week over two shifts.

“Depending on the type of tank car we’re building, we’re producing between ten and twelve miles of welds per week,” said Bill Casey, manager, Welding Engineering. “The seven-person welding department, which includes Casey, is responsible for the safety, quality, and efficiency of the welding operations,” he said. “The tank cars are built and the welds inspected according to the requirements of Association of American Railroads (AAR) M-1002, *Manual of Standards and Recommended Practices Specifications for Tank Cars*, and AWS D15.1, *Railroad Welding Specification — Cars and Locomotives*.

Among other duties, the welding department makes sure the plant’s welding operations meet the code requirements, it oversees welder training and qualification, and maintains welding procedure qualification records. Approximately 250 welders work at the plant, most of whom had no previous welding experience before joining the company (see boxed item).

## The Facility

UTLX Manufacturing, Inc., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Union Tank Car Co., Chicago, Ill. Union Tank Car examined about a dozen states as potential locales for what was to become UTLX Plant 08 before narrowing the choices to Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco led

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Fig. 1 — A crane picks up the cut-and-blasted steel plate and takes it to be formed into rings (far right).

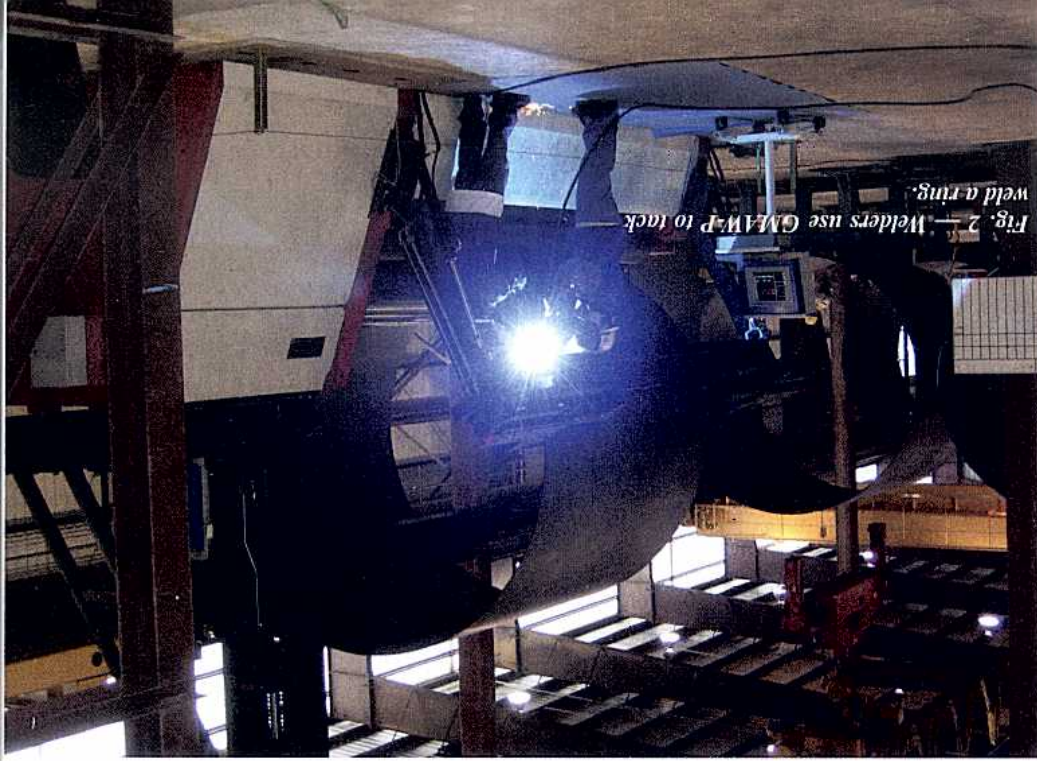


Fig. 2 — Welders use GMAW-P to tack weld a ring.