

Ultrafab's double-walled design for its gas-separation equipment allows for the storage of liquid within the tanks.



Ultrafab Industries Ltd.

Innovative oil and natural-gas products for an international client base

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
ROCKY VIEW, AB

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
MANUFACTURING
FOR THE OIL AND
NATURAL-GAS
INDUSTRIES

EMPLOYEES:
40

WHEN INNOVATION AND EXPERIENCE meet, the result often is a company like Ultrafab Industries Ltd., a competitive and successful world leader in its industry. At the helm is president Len McKeary, who applies his 35 years of building, manufacturing, and inventing experience to Ultrafab's products, greatly benefiting the company's international client base. Although Ultrafab caters to both the oil and natural-gas industries, most of its equipment is used in the production output of gas wells. It holds a list of clients that span the globe. "A good lot of our product is sold in Canada, but we are also selling in the United States—Alaska, California, and Montana—as well as the Middle East," McKeary notes.

In 1996, Alberta passed a regulation stating that all liquid produced from gas wells had to be contained in a double-walled tank. Ultrafab immediately start-

ed manufacturing these tanks. McKeary explains, "Almost all gas wells produce liquid and gas; the gas has to be separated from the liquid in order to measure it." Ultrafab's double-walled design allows for the storage of liquid within the tanks. As a result, tank separators represent the vast majority of the company's products. "We were also the first company to attach the separator and tank onto just one skid," he adds.

But Ultrafab is perhaps most recognized as being a world leader in sour-gas treatment. McKeary explains, "Sour gas means that the gas contains hydrogen sulphide, which is poisonous—it has to be taken out of the natural-gas pipeline. We manufacture equipment that does that; it takes out the sour gas and cleans the gas."

McKeary's long and extensive experience in the industry gives Ultrafab an

advantage. He spent several years designing and building oil and gas facilities for smaller companies. These facilities incorporated steam-assisted gravity drains, which are used in processing heavy oil. He also designed and built a very successful test plant for Black Rock Resources in Cold Lake, Alberta. "I personally have spent many years in the field designing and building the facilities," he says. "Then I would train the operators in how to operate them."

Ultrafab's competitive edge is a result of the extensive time and effort that the company invests to ensure that its clients receive the exact services, products, and results that they need. "We do a lot of research ourselves, and our office even has two engineers, two technicians, and a PhD chemist on staff," McKeary says. "Most fabricating companies do not have that kind of talent or expertise. They just build what

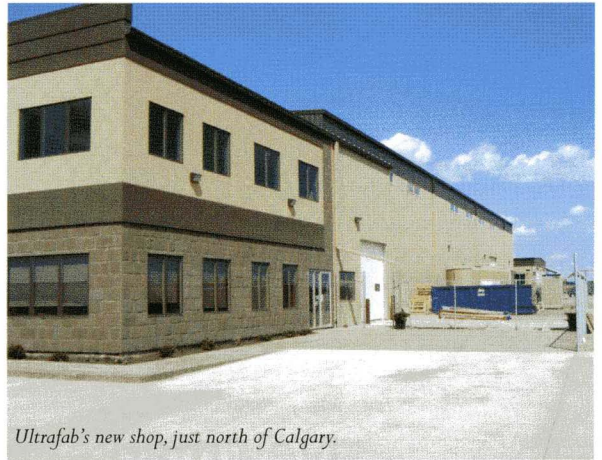
“Most fabricating companies do not have our level of talent or expertise. They just build what the oil companies tell them to build.” *Len McKeary, President*

the oil companies tell them to build. We, on the other hand, actually help the oil companies design exactly what they need. We can tell them what kind of equipment they need and then design it specifically for them.”

In December 2008, Ultrafab moved into a new manufacturing shop to better meet consumer demand and continue giving its clients the right products. “Consequently, we can handle much more capacity here, and we’ve been able to increase our output considerably more than what we were ever able to do before,” McKeary says, add-

ing that higher quantities do not mean that quality will be compromised. “We’ve always maintained that we will not build an inferior product. We just will not do it. Even if a company wants a cheaper product, they’ll have to go somewhere else and get it because that’s not what we build.”

Despite the slowdown in the oil industry, McKeary remains optimistic about Ultrafab’s future. “We’re doing fine, and we just want to stay steady,” he says. “But we will expand when the economy turns around. We are in the position to do that.” *CEQ*



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**ROTTLER THE CUTTING
EDGE**

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