

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Hot and heavy

**Need to lift several thousand pounds of molten aluminum?
No problem for these rugged and reliable forklifts.**

FORKLIFTS ARE CATEGORIZED AS “INDUSTRIAL trucks.” But let’s face it. The forklifts that work in a nice clean warehouse do not need to be nearly as tough as vehicles that toil in an industrial foundry. Picking up thousands of pounds of aluminum while working in tight spaces around furnaces that reach a blistering 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit requires very rugged forklifts. That’s why managers at Madison-Kipp Corporation chose the forklifts with the industry’s best warranty, UniCarriers, for their heavy lifting.

Founded in 1898, Madison-Kipp operates three foundries in and around Madison, Wisconsin—including one in the suburb of Sun Prairie. The company produces light-weight aluminum die castings, precision machined components, and system subassemblies for manufacturers of automobiles, motorcycles, lawn and garden equipment, recreational vehicles, and other industrial goods. Its products include transmission housings, oil pan covers, and a variety of engine components.

Eleven UniCarriers trucks work at the Sun Prairie facility. It’s a harsh environment for any forklift. It can be hot and dusty, and the factory floor is uneven. The three-shift operation requires forklifts to work continuously. They must be dependable and rugged enough to perform the operation’s many lifts of heavy aluminum materials and work-in-process while still providing drivers with comfort that lasts their entire shift.

Madison-Kipp tried several brands of forklifts before choosing UniCarriers as its sole supplier.

“We don’t always have a perfect environment for the trucks to be in, but they handle it extremely well,” says Scott McNeil, manufacturing support manager at Madison-Kipp. “The normal day-to-day, wear and tear use—these machines just eat it up.”

VERSATILE WORKHORSES

A range of UniCarriers forklifts perform transporting and lifting tasks at the Sun Prairie facility. Smaller, 3,000-pound-capacity units unload solid

aluminum pieces weighing up to 1,800 pounds from inbound supply trucks. Several 7,000-pound UniCarriers Platinum II vehicles load the raw aluminum as well as large bins filled with scrap aluminum left over from processing into the open doors of hot furnaces.

“Because we are trying to keep the furnaces’ doors closed as much as possible, [the vehicle] has to be a heavy enough piece of equipment to load that all in one shot,” explains McNeil.

The furnaces melt the aluminum into liquid form that is next transferred into large ladles. Nomad forklifts equipped with rotator attachments then pick up the ladles to take them to holding furnaces and casting

machines. Upon arrival, the lift trucks hoist the heavy ladles up to the top of large holding furnaces. The loads are rotated so that the ladles can pour the liquid aluminum into top receiving ports for holding until it’s fed to the casting process.

The facility also has a machining area. Several 5,000-pound-capacity forklifts take products to and from the various work cells. And finally, 3,000-pound-capacity vehicles load finished goods onto outbound trucks at the facility’s shipping docks.



A TRUSTED PARTNER

Madison-Kipp works with its local UniCarriers dealer, Capital Equipment & Handling, to lease its fleet of forklifts, which now number 31 units across the three plants.

“We have a 24-hour-a-day operation here. So, the trucks build up their use time very quickly,” notes McNeil. “Working with our representative, Paul Croissant, we’ve established that three to four years is a fair use of these trucks to be able to say we want to turn around and freshen up our fleet. And it has worked out well for us.”

McNeil adds that Capital Equipment & Handling also performs maintenance and repairs on the fleet vehicles. “They do a great job of servicing, and it keeps us in operation,” he says. “We’ve looked at a number of brand names. For different reasons, whether it is cost or efficiency of operation of the equipment, UniCarriers has become our choice. They are just very solid pieces of equipment for us.”

To see a video of the UniCarriers forklifts in action at Madison-Kipp’s facility in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, go to dcvtv.com and click on the Velocity Video on Channel 2. For information on UniCarriers, please visit www.unicarriersamericas.com.