

High Brand Awareness

Promoting its HIGHSL panel-flat product, this Lancaster, Pa., service center is using an aggressive branding strategy to distinguish its steel from competitors' commodities.

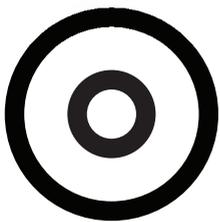
▶ The HIGHSL processing line comprises a Bradbury eDrive roller leveler, a Bradbury heavy-gauge roller leveler, and a Red Bud Industries stretcher leveler.



▶ HIGHSL processing begins with uncoiling and feeding material through a straightener into the roller levelers. Initial leveling by Bradbury roller levelers removes the majority of stresses, preparing the material for the Red Bud stretcher leveler.



◀ The Bradbury eDrive roller leveler prevents bunching, increasing plunge of the entry rolls to obtain maximum yield of the material for more stretch and deeper penetration.



One of the biggest challenges for service centers selling steel is differentiating their product. If everyone basically offers the same commodity, the contest becomes a matter of outsourcing the competition and, too often, outpricing them. High Steel Service Center LLC in Lancaster, Pa., is determined to break that cycle by offering the market a product that is truly different.

Established in 1978, High Steel Service Center is a processor and distributor of carbon steel flat-rolled and general line products, stainless flat-rolled and aluminum flat-

rolled products to customers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey and New York. The company recently invested \$10 million in a new coil processing line that combines two Bradbury roller levelers with a stretcher leveler from Red Bud Industries to produce what the company claims is the flattest steel sheet in the industry. High Steel Service Center executives are so confident in their product that they have applied for a trademark and are marketing it under the brand name: "HIGHSL: Panel-Flat that Stays Flat." The company says it is the only service center in its geographic footprint with this combination of



Panel-Flat that Stays Flat

▼ After roller leveling, material moves through an accumulation pit into the Red Bud stretcher leveler.



► Red Bud Industries' stretcher leveler technology precisely grasps the sheet or plate, up to one-half-inch thick, and stretches it past the material's yield point, removing all internal stresses.



▼ A computer-controlled digital positioning system ensures reduced set-up time and precise control of the combined leveler operations.



leveling technology.

“HIGH SL branding differentiates us from our competition. It supports a strategy of offering a unique value-added process to our customers.” says Jim Cunningham, vice president of sales and marketing. “When customers call and ask for HIGH SL, they know they will get a product that allows their equipment to cost-effectively accomplish its task.”

“High Steel Service Center offers a unique competitive advantage to its customers by eliminating their number one challenge: problems relating to flatness and stress removal. At the same time, the company improves its customers' product quality, increasing their manufacturing throughput and help-

► Flat stress-free sheet and plate is packaged with branded wrapping for shipping, assuring customers of the flattest material available.



ing to reduce their operating costs,” says Rick Bennett, High Steel Service Center president.

The proliferation of high-tech cutting equipment in the marketplace has created a need for flatter steel sheet. Coiled steel retains shape memory and, even after conventional lev-

At a Glance

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Key Personnel: Rick Bennett, president; Jim Cunningham, vice president, sales and marketing

Facilities: Lancaster, Pa., warehouse and processing center, 200,000 square feet, 150,000 tons capacity

Services: Stretcher leveling, e-Drive roller leveling, roller leveling, multi-cut precision blanking, slitting, shearing, sawing. Equipment from Red Bud Industries, Bradbury.

Markets: Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, New York.

Products:

HIGHSL – Panel-Flat that Stays Flat

Hot-Rolled, Hot-Rolled Pickled & Oiled, Structural Quality, High Strength Low Alloy, Galvanized, Galvannealed, Aluminized, Cold-Rolled

Flat-Rolled

Hot-Rolled, Hot-Rolled Pickled & Oiled, Structural Quality, High Strength Low Alloy, Galvanized Galvannealed, Aluminized, Cold-Rolled, Prepainted Steel, Aluminum, Stainless Steel

General Line

Bars, Shapes, Tubing, Sheared Plate, Stock Size Plate, Hot-Rolled Sheet, Cold-Rolled Sheet, Coated Sheet, Prepainted Steel, Aluminum Sheet, Stainless Steel Sheet

eling, cut parts can bow and twist from internal stresses that remain in the metal. “This is a very big problem for fabricators running high-speed equipment, such as laser, plasma, and waterjet cutters. It slows down their operations and can damage the equipment,” Cunningham notes.

To achieve the flattest steel possible, High Steel Service Center equipped its line with two Bradbury roller levelers. One, a heavy-gauge roller leveler, handles ¼-inch through ½-inch material up to 72 inches wide. The second, a lighter-gauge leveler, features Bradbury’s new e-Drive technology for lighter-gauge coils from 16 gauge to ¼-inch up to 72 inches wide.

Conventional levelers use one drive to power all the rolls. Bradbury’s e-Drive uses two drives, the first controlling the entry rolls and the second controlling the exit rolls. Bradbury research into standard roller leveler design revealed that as the material was being forced through the leveler rolls from the front, it was actually “bunching up” internally, reducing the stretching process. By splitting the gearbox into two independent drives, the exit rolls now concentrate more on pulling the material out of the leveler, making it more effective, the company says.

Taking the process a step further, High Steel Service Center opted to include a stretcher leveler from Red Bud Industries in the line. After the metal passes through one of the Bradbury roller levelers, it moves into the stretcher where it is gripped and stretched at enormous forces. By stretching

HIGHSL products are delivered by High Steel Service Center-branded trucks.



100 percent of the material beyond its yield point, stretcher leveling relieves all the internal stresses and leaves the material truly flat. “The stretcher at the end gives us the capability to offer to our customer base a product that is second to none,” Bennett says.

Fabricators have long considered coping with bad steel just an unavoidable part of doing business. That’s why they should be receptive to the HIGHSL brand, Cunningham says. “There is a greater awareness among fabricators today that they do not have to live with the quality issues of the past. HIGHSL offers a uniqueness that allows them to improve their efficiencies, their throughput and ability to produce a higher-quality product.”

“Customers have confirmed that this is the flattest material they have ever received, both before and after laser processing. Most importantly, they have confirmed that it absolutely reduces their operating costs,” Bennett adds.

Another important component of High Steel Service Center’s brand strategy is to become a master distributor of HIGHSL. “One of our goals is to sell to other service centers that would like to sell our branded product to their customer base. That is part of why the branded product is so important

to us,” Cunningham says.

The new line has an annual capacity of about 120,000 tons. The company plans to run the line continuously to produce product for its own floor, as well as for the inventories of other distributors.

Green philosophy

High Steel Service Center is one of a large group of companies still privately held by the High family, with other holdings in construction, fabrication, real estate, hotels, and other industrial markets. They all put a high value on sustainability and environmental stewardship, “with a triple bottom line approach that addresses people, planet, and profit,” says Cunningham. Producing totally flat steel dovetails nicely with that philosophy as it helps customers reduce scrap and waste.

The company also has installed energy efficient lighting, recycles skids and packaging, and manages its truck fleet to avoid backhauling empty, among other green practices. “We believe it’s just the right thing to do, and it gives High a competitive advantage. We strive to build trustworthy relationships and be transparent and forthright in everything we do,” Cunningham says. ■



Panel-Flat that Stays Flat



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