

**custom**  
Automated Traffic  
Control



**New Life  
for  
Steel**

**The metal recycling  
industry enjoys benefits of the  
Toughest Truck Scale on Earth**



Ken Barnhouse trusts the SURVIVOR OTR to deliver accurate and consistent weights.

WHEN STATE REGULATIONS CHANGED TO PROHIBIT SPLIT-WEIGHING ON LEGAL FOR TRADE TRUCK SCALES, AND WITH A GROWING VOLUME OF SCALE TRAFFIC, ALTER METAL RECYCLING IN EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN, FOUND THEMSELVES IN NEED OF A NEW SOLUTION. They could no longer weigh trucks on an axle-by-axle basis and provide the sum as the truck's total weight (split-weighing). While their existing pit-mounted mechanical truck scale could accommodate most vehicles, the business was expanding, and the increasing frequency of large commercial clients arriving in fully loaded semi-trucks demanded a longer scale.

Ken Barnhouse has been in the metal recycling business since 1997. Over that time, he has seen many changes in this evolving business, primarily in the equipment. Some of those changes increased efficiency and throughput, while others proved too unreliable to provide sustained advantages. But when Alter Metal Recycling chose an 80-foot SURVIVOR® OTR truck scale to replace its mechanical predecessor, it made Ken's life easier.

He was working for a metal recycling business in Washington State at the time, and when he took the job as facility manager at Alter's Eau Claire location, he was pleasantly surprised with the new equipment. "We had just installed Rice Lake OTRs at the Washington State plant," Ken remembers. "The ease of installation was one of the great selling points, and it works as it should all the time. There is very little maintenance and it interfaces very well with our software. We couldn't ask for anything more."



After a truck passes the radiation test, it is weighed and proceeds to the yard.

SURVIVOR OTRs are not only a favorite of Ken's, but they have become a good solution for many Alter Metal Recycling facilities. The 45 regional locations of this privately held recycling company (one of the largest in America) are turning red with Rice Lake. "As the old scales complete their life span or new state regulations demand an update, we're moving to SURVIVORS," Ken explains. "Rice Lake is easy to work with and the product quality is excellent. It's a proven solution. Accuracy and durability are very important in our business," he adds. "I need to be able to tell someone that this is the weight and be confident when saying so. The equipment needs to be consistent, and the OTR is just that. In the three years we've had the scale, I haven't had to replace a load cell

but I do appreciate the easy access to load cell pockets. That will make any future maintenance quick and easy."

As a truck approaches the OTR, its contents are automatically scanned for potential radioactive material that could make it into the scrap stream. Seemingly harmless items such as vintage Cub Scout compasses and glow-in-the-dark watches are often identified and although they don't pose any issues for safety or the environment, it does show how sensitive the detection equipment is. If the load passes the radiation test, the weight is captured by the office's database software. A LaserLight® remote display mounted on either end of the scale (one for entering the facility and one for exiting) shows the driver their live weight. The metal is then offloaded in the yard, and a date with the 4,000 horsepower shredder awaits.

Scrap travels up the conveyor to the shredder where it is pulverized by 400-pound hammers mounted to an 80-inch diameter rotor.

*Continued on page 26*



## New Life for Steel

Continued from page 25

As it passes through the shredder, the scrap is sized per consumer specifications. The machine looks like a medieval torture device. Each hammer strike creates a sea of echoes between the mountains of scrap metal in the 26-acre yard.

The now-shredded autos, post-consumer goods (refrigerators, washers, swing sets, etc.) and a host of other input materials are sent through a magnetic separation system to prepare the steel and then move on to a variety of sophisticated separation equipment to remove other metals such as copper, aluminum and stainless steel.

Running at a breakneck pace, the shredder can process 100 tons per hour and fills 80 rail cars per month (each rail car passes over Rice Lake load cells) in addition to outgoing truck loads. Once sorting and separating is complete, the steel leaves the

facility, destined for re-use in the construction or manufacturing industries.

In addition to steel, Alter processes copper, aluminum, titanium and other exotic metals. The company is constantly expanding and looking for growth opportunities, both domestically and internationally.



The shredder can process 4,000 tons of scrap in a 40-hour work week.

“Everywhere I go,” says Ken, “I see more and more SURVIVOR scales. More than anything else. People know that Rice Lake means quality. Alter enjoys a solid business relationship with Rice Lake and working together provides us and our customers with accurate, consistent weights that are at the core of our business.” ■

## Just a Little Slice

Continued from page 23

we started paying more attention to this. This is another example of a regulated industry being supportive of weights and measures enforcement, because some pawn stores, competing against these fly-by-night operations, actually ran articles in their association magazines informing the gold-buying community about the regulations that apply.”

With each state’s willingness to enforce NTEP and require it for commercial weighing applications, not only are consumers protected, but scale manufacturers and dealers are as well. “NTEP certification gives a dealer something that they can point to, that they’re selling equipment the regulatory authority will approve. The uniformity of requirements from state to state is a great benefit to dealers. We even have a model regulation for the registration of service persons, which gives the state something to look at when they’re creating licensing and registration programs for service agents, so that the standards are similar from state to state.”

“We need to be aware that by providing a level playing field for businesses, we receive the benefit of lower prices as well. If the competition is fair, then the prices are going to be lower and we’re getting what we pay for. If the competition is unfair, we’re either getting cheated on quantity in our purchases or cheated on price. But we don’t think about that.”

Of course, laws and regulations mean nothing without the proper enforcement. “Based on the studies we’ve done, the national average is about 70 cents per year, per resident to have a strong weights and measures enforcement program out there. We go to the gas station and fill up, run to the supermarket and buy our packaged meat and cereal and milk, and just assume we’re getting what

we pay for. But in that one day, driving to the store and making those two stops, we could’ve lost more than what we would’ve spent in a whole year for regulatory enforcement.”

As prices rise and fall in certain markets, the importance of regulation ebbs and flows in the public eye. “I hope that we can reach a point where weights and measures is more of an everyday thing that we’re all thinking about, and we can appreciate what those regulatory people out there do for us.”

In the meantime it’s business as usual for the members of NCWM. There is important work to be done. For now the cheese tray remains intact, but rest assured that each slice...is exactly the same size. ■

“Based on the studies we’ve done, the national average is about 70 cents per year, per resident to have a strong weights and measures enforcement program out there.”

Don Onwiler, Executive Director of NCWM