



NEW MILLENNIUM
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CASE STUDY #6

Derailed Job Back on Track (Literally)

Steve Hubbard thought he had heard every possible excuse for late delivery during his 17 years at Steel Specialties, a Maryland-based steel fabrication and erection company.

"I've heard that the truck broke down, the tire got a flat or the sub-hauler came in and we loaded everything on the trailer, but the trailer never shows up," says Hubbard. Nothing could prepare him for the phone call from Chesapeake Steel salesman Ron Henninger, who had negotiated a joist delivery deal between New Millennium's Salem, Virginia plant and Steel Specialties. That's when Hubbard heard the truck carrying all of his steel joists had been hit by a train.



Delivery On Time Despite Load Being Hit By Train

"You never expect to hear that your load has been hit by a train," Hubbard says. "I was shocked. It was just unbelievable."

"He didn't believe me at first," Henninger adds, "because it is a hard thing to believe. Then he wanted to know what we were planning on doing."

New Millennium's Traffic Manager Don Zimmerman says it's the first he's heard of anything like that in the 34 years he's been at the plant.

The accident happened around noon on January 9. Two loads were being sent from Salem to Gambrills, Maryland for Steel Specialties' Kaufman Park building project. The first load had already left, and the second truck was starting to cross a pair of train tracks next to New Millennium's plant when the gates came down.

"I was having lunch and I heard this loud explosion," Zimmerman says. "I went to the window. I saw that the truck had

already crossed the tracks but I couldn't see the other side. All I could see was that the train was stopped."

Zimmerman ran outside and immediately assessed the situation. "The truck had gone over the first set of tracks, and apparently the gates came down while he was in between the two," continued Zimmerman. "There's about 20 yards between one track and the other, so he stopped. He could have continued on, but for whatever reason he didn't. The

back end of the truck was on the tracks, so the train hit the trailer on his back end. Luckily nobody was injured. The trailer was still attached to the truck, but it was turned at 90 degrees. There were joists thrown everywhere. It was a mess."

Cleanup began immediately. By 2 p.m. Zimmerman pulled a team together together – Production Manager Van Johnson, Nightshift Supervisor Lyle Key, and Design Supervisor Bill Neikirk – to see how quickly the joists could be re-made. It was decided the job could be redone and delivered on time, if they worked all night. Neikirk created new details of the joists, and the nightshift crew reproduced the joists in a matter of hours. The next morning, the joists were loaded and driven 270 miles from Salem to arrive at 12:05 p.m., as scheduled, in Gambrills, Maryland.

"I thought I had heard all the stories," jokes Steel Specialties' Steel Erection Forman Will Smith about the train accident. "I was impressed that New Millennium did such a quick turnaround. They kept me right on schedule."

Hubbard says if New Millennium had not been able to re-make and deliver the joists on time, his job site would have been kept at a stand still. "The whole company did an amazing job by getting it made that night and delivered the next day," Hubbard says. "I was just tickled pink. I was very surprised and very appreciative that they made everything happen that quickly. It was excellent turnaround time, especially considering the incident. We didn't miss a beat at all on the job site."



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