NEWS RELEASE

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**Manitowoc celebrates innovation at customer event in Germany**

Manitowoc invited German customers who are interested in the GMK5250L to its factory in Wilhelmshaven to see the latest Grove all-terrain cranes and to take a look around the manufacturer’s updated and expanded manufacturing plant. Over the course of three days, customers, dealers and press from across Germany attended the event.

Manitowoc took the opportunity to share with attendees its renewed focus on innovation, standardization and improved return on investment in its Grove GMK cranes. But equally, the company wanted to emphasize the recent investments at Wilhelmshaven that have made it one of the leading crane factories in the world.

Jens Ennen, senior vice president for all-terrain cranes at Manitowoc, said the company was committed to driving innovation in the industry.

“For several years we’ve been launching all-terrain cranes that have brought a new way of thinking to the crane market,” he said. “Whether it’s using single engines or bringing in hydrostatic drives, new turbo clutches or unparalleled telescopic booms, we’re introducing technologies customers can’t find elsewhere. We wanted to bring our German customers and partners to our factory to highlight our evolution as a company and to show how our ongoing development and innovation pipelines will deliver even better return on investment for them in future.”

**Innovation**

Attracting much attention at the event were the three new five-axle cranes launched earlier this year. These include the industry-leading 250 t capacity GMK5250L, which launched in April, and is the strongest and longest reaching five-axle crane on the market; the 200 t capacity GMK5200-1; and the 180 t capacity GMK5180-1. With the introduction of these latest models, Manitowoc now has the most complete offering of five-axle all-terrain cranes on the market.

One of the latest innovations from Grove was front and center at the event and a major talking point. The VIAB turbo retarder clutch that features on the GMK5250L, GMK5200-1 and GMK5180 brings new levels of operational ability to crane owners. Some customers at the event already had an appreciation of the VIAB turbo clutch as it features on the Actros SLT range of heavy duty trucks from Mercedes-Benz. However the new units from Grove are the first mobile cranes to feature the technology that offers wear-free starting and braking, delivering longer component life. In addition, its high torque levels mean cranes can start and brake more easily, even on steep inclines or when carrying their maximum counterweight. Overall fuel economy is improved, too.

Joining the three new units in a large display in the company’s factory yard were two of the crane industry’s biggest-selling cranes of recent years: the 300 t capacity GMK6300L and the 400 t capacity GMK6400. These cranes boast, respectively, the longest boom and strongest load chart in their class, and the popular six-axle units are firm favorites in rental fleets around the world. And it’s not just their class-leading ability that makes them a hit with users. Better fuel economy, easier transportation, smoother driving control and many other features set them apart and underline Manitowoc’s core commitment to innovation.

Among the products there was a surprise too, with an exclusive first glimpse of a new four-axle, 100 t capacity model, the GMK4100L-1, which will launch in 2016. More details on this machine will be released in due course.

**Standardization**

Alongside the product displays, Manitowoc invested much of the event program to highlighting other benefits of its Grove crane line, including the growing amount of standardization in the range. This aspect of crane design is strongly linked to return on investment and with the Grove all-terrain line it includes the use of common counterweight slabs and auxiliary hoists on all cranes from the GMK5180-1 to the GMK6300L.

But perhaps the most striking example of the benefits of standardization was seen in the demonstration of the new CCS control system that is being introduced on all new Grove cranes, having first appeared on the GMK3060. In fact CCS is being extended across Manitowoc Cranes’ entire product line, bringing a common operational platform to all new machines from the company. It also means there is a single software service to cover all CCS cranes, while maintenance and repair is easier as just 12 part numbers cover all control functions.

**Return on investment**

Bringing more innovation and standardization to crane design fits alongside Manitowoc’s goal to continuously improve return on investment for customers. This was another key point at the Wilhelmshaven event, and visitors learned how intelligent design translates to savings in set-up, transport and maintenance for cranes. They were also shown examples of how the improved performance from the latest generation of Grove cranes helps them tackle a wider variety of jobs.

One particular example is the GMK6400, which has many notable benefits, including one that is often overlooked - its unbeaten rigging time for its class. This means owners can get on and off job sites faster, allowing them to complete more projects in a day. Part of the reason for this is that the crane features a wide range of self-rigging components that are fast to install, such as the auxiliary hoist and the MegaWingLift capacity-enhancing attachment. Not only does this save time on site, it also eliminates the need for a support crane, saving cost. Also boosting return on investment is the single-engine design on the GMK6400 (which also features on the new five-axle cranes) that includes a Fuel Saver function which delivers greater fuel economy and saves engine hours, prolonging working life and strengthening resale value.

**Investments**

Aside from seeing demonstrations of Grove’s latest products and innovations, guests in Wilhelmshaven were also shown around the manufacturing plant. Here Manitowoc focused on recent investments and demonstrated how they translate to the industry-leading cranes that characterize the current product line.

One of the biggest single contributors to the unequalled performance of Grove’s current cranes is the factory’s laser-hybrid welding and cutting machine, and visitors were given an extensive look at this. The laser-hybrid welding and cutting machine forms a major part of the boom welding line and helps the company produce booms that are stronger and longer than competitors.

The laser-hybrid welding process joins the upper and lower shells of the boom through the use of a robot that delivers a higher level of precision. While higher strengths are achieved, this process significantly reduces the need for filler material – by up to 120 kg on a 60 m boom. Manitowoc is thought to be the only manufacturer using a laser-hybrid welding process in boom production.

The results are there for all to see: the GMK6400 is currently the strongest 60 m boom in its class; the GMK5250L has the strongest 70 m boom; and the GMK6300L has the strongest 80 m boom. Wilhelmshaven is Manitowoc’s Center of Excellence for boom manufacture and its expertise is shared throughout the Manitowoc Cranes organization.

The investments at Wilhelmshaven have also boosted its capacity, and visitors were informed that production of Grove’s three-axle GMK3060 has moved back to the German facility from Manitowoc’s plant at Niella Tanaro, Italy. Outside the factory itself, Manitowoc announced other investments, including the creation of a new Product Verification Center, which will offer the very highest levels of component testing. The company’s support network in Germany has been strengthened too with the addition of several Crane Care service technicians to support the growing Grove all-terrain crane population in the country. In addition, the company has launched a “Jump In” program, where internal production staff are trained to assist with field service issues for customers, delivering additional service and repair functionality when required.

“Germany has always been a stronghold for our company and we want to ensure we are doing all we can for our customers here,” Ennen said. “The German all-terrain crane market is the largest and most competitive in the world, and customers here are truly passionate about the business. Our company has never been more focused on customers and we must continue to surpass their expectations.”

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CONTACT

**Cristelle Lacourt** **Charlie Ebers**

Manitowoc SE10

T +33 472 182 018 T +44 207 923 5864

cristelle.lacourt@manitowoc.com charlie.ebers@se10.com

ABOUT THE MANITOWOC COMPANY, INC.
Founded in 1902, The Manitowoc Company, Inc. is a multi-industry, capital goods manufacturer with 92 manufacturing, distribution, and service facilities in 25 countries. The company is recognized globally as one of the premier innovators and providers of crawler cranes, tower cranes, and mobile cranes for the heavy construction industry. Manitowoc is also one of the world's leading innovators and manufacturers of commercial foodservice equipment, which includes 24 market-leading brands of hot- and cold-focused equipment. In addition, both segments are complemented by a slate of industry-leading product support services. In 2014, Manitowoc’s revenues totaled $3.9 billion, with approximately half of these revenues generated outside of the United States.

MANITOWOC CRANES

2401 South 30th Street - PO Box 70 - Manitowoc, WI 54221-0070

T +1 920 684 6621

[**www.manitowoccranes.com**](http://www.manitowoccranes.com)**­**