 NEWS RELEASE

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**Manitowoc MLC165s bring opportunity for barge-shipping of wind turbine towers**

* *Two Manitowoc MLC165s were instrumental in enabling two companies to ship wind turbine towers on a barge across Lake Michigan.*
* *The low groundbearing pressure of the crawler cranes meant the companies could perform dual pick-and-carries on the job site without the need for ground preparation.*
* *The smooth crawling action of the cranes gave operators precise control in maneuvering the cranes near the lake’s shore.*

Cicero, Illinois-based Broadwind Energy, an industrial manufacturer of components for energy and infrastructure markets, had been looking for a chance to ship its wind turbine towers across the Great Lakes for a number of years. The company’s plant in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, has direct access to a deep-water port and had sought an opportunity to load its steel towers onto barges to be shipped by the Great Lakes.

When a customer placed an order for Broadwind towers in mid-2016 to be delivered to a wind farm located in Ohio, Broadwind had the chance to put its barge shipping plans into action.

“Transporting wind tower sections on a barge had been a long term goal at Broadwind,” explained Matt Boor, OEM Project Manager at Broadwind Towers, Inc. “We were granted this opportunity and we had to work quickly to devise a plan for how to lift steel tower sections onto the barge. We immediately began brainstorming in a lot of after-hours sessions with Trans-Link Services, our transportation and logistics partner, to come up with a plan for efficiently loading the towers onto a barge without damaging them.”

Trans-Link, based in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, developed a plan with Broadwind that would have two crawler cranes lift the tower sections from either side in a dual tandem lift, and then crawl them toward the sea wall to be placed on the barge. The key to success for the project, as Troy Flentje, owner of Trans-Link, explained, would be finding crawler cranes with low groundbearing pressure and a smooth crawling mechanism.

“I had the Manitowoc MLC165 in mind as we were planning the project because I knew that these cranes would have the low groundbearing pressure we needed,” he said. “With two of these cranes we were able to crawl the towers toward the barge without using mats or other ground preparations. It has also kept our options open for moving the cranes around the site for other applications.”

The plan worked well, as the two companies saw success straight away. The first dual lift took approximately 20 minutes, and subsequent lifts were completed with increasing speed. Over the course of the project, Trans-Link and Broadwind will ship 138 separate wind tower sections, each of them loaded onto a barge using the two 182 USt capacity MLC165s. The heaviest loads will have the two cranes lifting 70 USt in tandem, each using their 275 ft boom.

“One option would have been to use a spreader bar and a much larger crane, but I wanted to use two crawler cranes so we could have more maneuverability on the site. Also the 30 USt to 70 USt sections measured up to 90 ft long, so we couldn’t ‘belly lift’ them without damage,” Flentje explained.

The project is expected to be completed in September. When finished, it will not only mark the first time the two companies shipped wind tower sections by barge together, it will mark the 14th year of their partnership. Of course, the first time the two companies barge-shipped wind tower sections together will always be one of the highlights. The first lifts even inspired local news coverage for the two companies on broadcast networks.

“Using the MLC165s to tandem pick these loads has been fantastic,” Flentje said. “I thought that crawling the cranes together with the loads on the hooks would be the biggest challenge, but the crawler action has been so smooth and precise that it has been a relatively easy process.”

Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Hayden-Murphy Equipment was also a key company on the project, renting the two cranes to Trans-Link. Hayden-Murphy has been in business for more than 50 years and is a major supplier of construction equipment to the Midwest, including several of Manitowoc’s crane brands. Said Bob Krause, sales representative at Hayden-Murphy: “The two Manitowoc MLC165 crawler cranes with short boom configurations were the perfect fit for this project and customer.”

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