

The International Pipe Installers



McNolty Mechanical works on a fair amount of specialized equipment, including this high-temperature, 1,800-degree Fahrenheit BLEED AIR piping system for MDS Aero Support Corporation.

Through employee education and reputation-based partnerships, McNolty Mechanical has grown into a global pipe-assembly powerhouse

BY JENNIFER HOGELAND

AT A GLANCE

Location

Wendover, ON

Founded

2004

Employees

22

Specialties

Pressure-vessel and power- and process-piping assembly and installation

As a rookie for the Ottawa fire department, Landon McNolty began using his pressure-vessel and power-piping trade knowledge to supplement his income, and pretty quickly he could see that this side gig was where his real talents lied as his reputation began to precede him. “When you put a high quality product on the table and you service your clients thoroughly,” he says, “you’ve laid the foundation for a success.” In 2010, after six

years juggling both responsibilities, McNolty resigned from the fire service and dedicated himself full-time to his own business, McNolty Mechanical, where a three-pronged focus on quality, employee communication, and employee education has led to significant returns.

The company’s core competencies are still pressure vessels and power piping, but now it often tackles more technical, specialized projects, working in test facilities and power plants for the federal government and for companies such as Siemens Controls. “It’s quite a niche,” McNolty says. “Ultimately we end up swimming in a pond without a lot of fish in it.”

McNolty Mechanical is based in Canada, but it partners with many other Canadian companies that do business in the United States and overseas. “We are affiliated with companies that go into places like India, China, Russia, and France,” McNolty says. “We fabricate and build the parts and pieces that are then [quality assured and quality controlled] here in our facility and packaged up to be sent overseas for those facilities.” The aerospace industry is one of the prime markets that gives the firm a global reach.

McNolty suggests his business’s growth is relationship-based. His employees adhere to a business plan and set objectives every year, but he says they try to stage themselves with the quality that precedes them and that clients have come to know. “Our quality, with the work we do—and our efficiency—tends to make us leaders in our region,” he says. “Often, bigger firms from out of town will also call and want to partner with us.”



McNolty Mechanical uses plasma cutting equipment with automated rotation. It improves the accuracy and efficiency of the firm’s fabrication abilities in a competitive market.

Although rapid expansion is tempting because of his company’s popularity, McNolty is committed to controlled growth. “You can grow yourself right out of business,” he says. “For me, I felt it was critical to surround myself with real professional advice from legal, financial, and project managers as well as abide by our business model and business plan, making sure it fits within our capabilities range and our current setup and system.”

McNolty Mechanical’s primary business strategies revolve around planning, execution, and communication. During planning, the company lays out objectives and an approach that are simple and obtainable. During execution, its staff tracks measurable factors such as cost and time. And communication is always done both vertically and horizontally because sharing knowledge with the team ensures everyone is onboard. “From a conceptual perspective, everyone here, down to our apprentices, understands our common goals; they understand our objectives, philosophy, what we are trying to

achieve, and how we are going to achieve it,” McNolty says. “Most importantly, they understand how they fit into this big wheel that seems to be constantly turning.” In short, a vested interest in the overall success of the company exists in all employees because they understand their contributions are contingent on McNolty Mechanical’s success.

McNolty grew the business from grass roots, beginning with his own trade experience and an understanding of the nuts and bolts of business management. This has been a huge advantage in the company’s achievements to date, and it plays an important role as McNolty Mechanical looks toward the future. “I know the struggles and challenges of my staff,” McNolty says. “I’m able to talk their language and work through issues and keep a finger on the pulse of what’s going on. As far as what’s next, I think there is huge potential ahead, and we will continue with controlled growth in specific markets that make sense financially.” **ABQ**