

THE BUSINESS BUILDER

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Reconstructing A Business, Not Just A Building

by Scott Truehl, Executive Vice President

As every business owner knows, the enemies of structures are many: fire, water, wind, pests and age. But, one of the worst is fire.

Our client, Sanimax, discovered that on September 11, 2014. That's when employees of the Deforest, Wisconsin company returned to the plant to find firefighters still on-site. It had been a long night and fire crews from several municipalities were still tending to a major electrical fire that tore through the building that housed the majority of the company's grease recycling operations.

The fire ignited near a light fixture in the building's ceiling and quickly engulfed the entire roof structure. The fire burned hot enough to melt parts of the roof as well as the building's structural steel. Unfortunately, this building housed the bulk of the recycling tanks and the heart of the operations for Sanimax, which collects and refines cooking oil and grease at the plant.

While our crews were well aware the plant had suffered a major fire (it was big news across Wisconsin), our company didn't become involved until Sanimax received a call from its insurer, FM Global. Friede had worked with FM Global a year before, after a fire damaged the Seats Inc. plant in Richland Center. You can read about that story on our blog at: www.friede.com/seats-fire-restoration-friede-associates. That project's positive outcome led FM Global to recommend us to Sanimax, and soon an initial meeting on-site was arranged.



The interior of the structure illustrates the complexity of this facility with its extensive plumbing and tank storage. Work was completed in phases to allow for minimal disruption of operations.

Attacking the fire damage required a priorities list.

First on the list? A clean-up to accommodate at least partial operation of the plant. Temporary repairs to the roof structure—prior to winter when the added weight of snow could be dangerous—would also be necessary. Since the damaged building was attached to another building that housed the main intake area for the grease and oil recycling, it was determined that some repairs to that building would be necessary. The fire had damaged the ceiling of that building and the connecting wall between the structures.

While our crews helped with the clean-up, the Sanimax project team considered improvements that might be undertaken during reconstruction. The installation of a fire sprinkler system would be needed. The plant would also benefit

from larger storage tanks. The need for a better floor drainage system was another recommended improvement, though it would require the complete removal and replacement of the floor. The project scope grew as more information became available about the extent of the fire damage. Ultimately, it became clear that an entirely new structure would be needed to replace the fire-damaged building.

Friede and Sanimax worked closely with the architects and engineers at Ramaker & Associates, as well as Butler Manufacturing, to engineer and design a new structure. In the span of just a few months, plans for the rebuild were in place. The construction would be phased-in, so Sanimax could keep some of its operations going throughout the building process.

Unfortunately, projects like this are never easy. The fire insurance claim needed

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to be finalized. There were meetings with city officials to secure approval for a non-conforming use within an industrially zoned property. There was a demolition phase, followed by preparation of 36 massive tanks to be installed into the new structure. Then in December of 2015, construction was completed, allowing Sanimax to resume full operations—just 15 months after the devastating fire.

Friede and Sanimax developed a great working relationship. And, we worked closely with FM Global, which relied on our project team to not only document what had existed at the plant prior to the fire, but also what improvements

were necessary due to building code changes since the original facility was first constructed. FM Global also relied on us to accurately track expenses—both those covered by the insurer as well as upgrade costs requested by Sanimax.

Fires are devastating. But we are glad we could help Sanimax recover from the trauma and help minimize the impact on the company while we worked

to get them up and running again. We are also proud that Friede & Associates was awarded a 2016 Gold Award from Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) of Wisconsin for the Sanimax project.

If you have a project that might be a little (or a lot) challenging, give us a call. After all, anybody can build a box, but at Friede &

Associates, We Do Weird Well!™

See more photos of this project at: www.friede.com/sanimax-fire-restoration-friede-associates



Lodi Veterinary Hospital Project Nearing Completion

This renovation and expansion for one of the area's largest and most successful veterinary hospitals is nearing completion. The project includes a multi-staged construction schedule that will allow for uninterrupted operation of the clinic and companion care services throughout the construction process. What for more details on this exciting project!



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