



Robinson Custom Enclosures A Turnkey Solution.

When Utica Energy began production on its new ethanol plant near Oshkosh, Wis. in June 2003, its utility service supplier, Madison-based Alliant Energy, recommended a reliable backup power supply system.

Alliant Energy purchased two Caterpillar 3512B 1500 kW generator sets from FABCO Power Systems. Although FABCO – a provider of permanent and portable generator set installations headquartered in Menominee Falls – could also supply enclosures for the generators, Alliant was interested in custom enclosures that were more substantial than the factory standard. FABCO knew just what Alliant was looking for.

“Robinson Enclosures is the number one highest quality we have found for packagers, and they’re located here in Wisconsin,” said Kevin Kunz, load management account manager for FABCO. “Robinson has been a well-kept secret, but we’re now using them on a regular basis. They offer a value-added package.”

Based in Green Bay, Robinson Custom Enclosures specializes in turnkey products, such as enclosures, containers, tanks and trailers, for the power generation industry. Created in 1996 as a division of the custom sheet metal fabricator Robinson Metal Inc., Robinson Custom Enclosures employs its parent company’s extensive fabricating knowledge and expertise to manufacture top-of-the-line enclosures. Due to tremendous growth, the companies expanded into an impressive, state-of-the-art facility in 2000, and their client base continues to grow throughout North and South America.

“We try to get consultants up there to see their facility, and it sells itself,” Kunz added. “They’re a good partner to work with.”

While many companies can provide a standard generator enclosure, nothing about Robinson’s approach to its products could be termed cookie-cutter. Whether



designing and manufacturing sound attenuated units or weather-protective drop-overs, Robinson invites customer involvement in the design process and tailors all its enclosures to customers’ specific needs.

Robinson worked with Alliant Energy and FABCO to design and manufacture two walk-in, sound-attenuated enclosures for the ethanol plant’s backup generators. The identical enclosures are heated and can be interiorly illuminated.

“FABCO came to us with this application, and we designed the enclosures that met the customer’s needs,” said Dave Oshefsky, national sales manager for Robinson Custom Enclosures.

Robinson’s in-house design team started from scratch when developing the plans for the enclosures. They reviewed the site, and worked with FABCO’s initial design specifications. Essential information Robinson needed for the project was the amount of run-time the standby power units would be expected to provide, at what



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From the second we begin your project through delivery and start-up, Robinson Custom Enclosures has you covered. Not only can we design, construct and load test your package, we offer warranties – some as long as 10 years. No one else can protect your investment quite the way we do.



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Robinson also has the capabilities to manufacture high volume production units ranging from 35kw - 2mw.

sound level the enclosures needed to be attenuated, and what the serviceability expectations would be for the enclosures. Robinson's enclosures are designed to allow a technician to walk into a heated, well-lit space that provides plenty of room for tools or other equipment that would be necessary to service the generators. "Our serviceability and versatility are why people go with us," said Oshefsky. "We're used to dealing with change, and we do our best to turn around any customer changes right away. There are other companies out there who are not – cannot be – as flexible with customers as we are."

Oshefsky added that Robinson provides its customers with a range of warranty options, from one- to 10-years, which is fairly unusual. To his knowledge, no other company in the industry extends its warranties beyond five years. Other characteristics that set Robinson apart are its engineering and electrical capabilities; the company can install, system test and load test at its facility.

"Not a lot of companies can do that because they don't have the equipment, expertise or facilities," Oshefsky said. He estimated that only six other custom enclosure companies in North America have this capability.

An additional benefit of choosing a custom-enclosure to house a generator is accessibility. According to Oshefsky, in the past, generators were often placed at



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the location, and then freestanding buildings were constructed as enclosures around the equipment. The entrance doors to these buildings were regular-sized doors, which often made it impossible to reach or replace the generator or its parts if the generator failed, or if the company's needs expanded or decreased. Typically, the building would have to be partially torn down or destroyed in order to make the necessary adjustments.

Today's custom-built enclosures eliminate such costly and time-consuming procedures. The top and sides of Robinson's enclosures can be removed easily, allowing for necessary access to the generator.

"It's as simple as unhooking the wires and redoing the enclosure as needed," added Oshefsky.

Kunz agrees: "The advantage with using Robinson is that even though they make customized enclosures, their panels are standard sized, so they can recreate a panel five years down the road if it becomes damaged.

"They have tight tolerances with their finishes. For example, a truck backed into an enclosure out at Rutgers University, and Robinson was able to match the paint and build a new panel. There's very little field adapting. It all comes down to consistency."

An additional benefit Kunz said FABCO finds when using Robinson for the manufacture of enclosures like the ones developed for the Utica Energy plant is Robinson's willingness to meet its customers time-sensitive needs.

"Everything happened right on schedule – what was promised was delivered," Kunz said. "Robinson provides a fairly quick turnaround; for a customization, they're better than average. They'll do whatever it takes to deliver on time."

While a project similar to Utica Energy might take a year from the specification process through the testing stages to the final implementation of the enclosure, such jobs can usually be fast-tracked for completion in less than nine months.

"The best thing about this job is that it went as smoothly as possible," said Oshefsky. "Alliant and FABCO got us involved on the front end, which is a great way to avoid changes and adjustments."

Alliant Energy's senior sales engineer Nick Cizauskas agreed: "This particular project went very smoothly. From the timeliness of delivery, to the coordination and appearance, everything worked smoothly."



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Cizauskas added that Alliant has worked with Robinson in the past, and will continue the relationship based on the quality and affordability of Robinson's products.

"We recognize that the quality of their craftsmanship, materials and support is far beyond what any of their competitors could offer," Cizauskas said. "Robinson offers a high quality product, number one, and a competitive price. That is their biggest strength, along with their ability to customize products to meet the needs of their customers."

Kunz attributes much of the project's smooth transition from conception all the way through implementation to Robinson's professional staff.

"They provide very well done drawings, which helps expedite the information flow with the installation crew, so that everything goes smoothly," said Kunz. "Their engineering process is great – they have an open door policy, allowing us to go in there and look at our project at any time."

"They provide a high-end, very high quality product that has great value for the dollar. I would offer them a last look at almost any project, to see how much enclosure can I get from them for the same price because I think I'm going to get that much better product."

