



■ Two views of the completed compressor installation that will host the first Ajax integral compressor with CE marking. The site is in Spain's Guadalquivir Valley in Andalucía, not far from the city of Seville.

CE MARKING FOR AJAX REOPENS EUROPEAN MARKET

Cameron's Compression Systems Commissions First Unit in Spain

By Phil Burnside

The abbreviation "CE" stands for *Conformité Européene*, or European Conformity. In simplest terms, when a product bears the CE mark, it is an indication that the manufacturer declares that the marked product complies with the requirements of all relevant European health, safety and environmental protection legislation defined by various official Product Directives. It is a "self-certification" in that it declares that the manufacturer has on file the documentation that will support its conformity.

While assembling the document package required for CE marking is second nature throughout the EU countries and at many global companies, it remains an intimidating and unfamiliar process for a North American compression packager for a number of reasons.

First, qualifying a product for CE marking is a detailed, time-consuming task that involves documenting that every component used in the assembly of a product bears its own CE mark and certifies in writing that it meets its own relevant Product Directives. That documentation must be gathered into what is known as a Technical Construction File (TCF) that needs to

be evaluated and endorsed by a "competent body." Most companies, when they begin their first CE marking efforts, choose an experienced consulting firm to guide them through the process of filling the TCF binder.

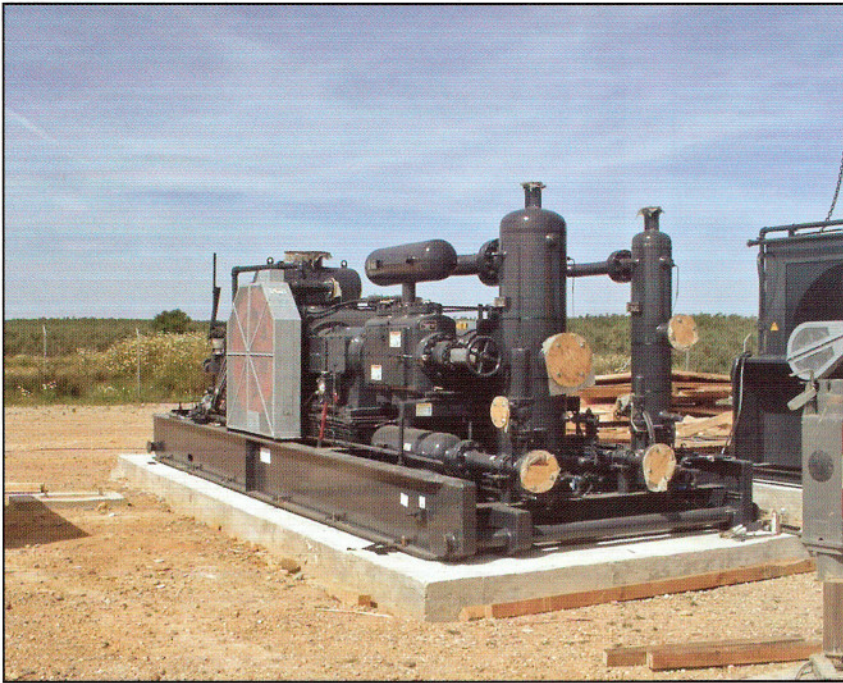
Second, that entire documentation gathering, assembly and review process must be repeated for every version of every product destined for use within the European market. It's true that the first certification exercise is always the most challenging — practice does help speed the process — and that some companies elect to proceed without the support of a consultant for subsequent certifications, but documenting even a minor variation on a product can still prove daunting.

Component manufacturers have already certified most of the individual components used on modern compressor packages. Items such as compressors, engines, motors, fuel systems, control systems and valves have all successfully navigated the process and obtained CE marking rights. Compression packages are another story. That's because simply assembling a collection of components with CE markings does not a qualified system create.

Instead, each distinct version of a packager's product must undergo the same arduous qualification process if it is intended for sale in Europe, even if the differences that make it unique may seem insignificant. And, while many North American packagers talk a good game of standardization, their individual units usually do vary enough to be considered unique. It's easy to understand why such packagers, for whom customization is the norm and "standard" doesn't mean exactly the same as it may in other businesses, have hesitated to bother even trying.

Despite those realities, on April 2, 2006, Cameron's Compression Systems shipped a CE-qualified Ajax model DPC-2802LE integral compressor to a customer in Spain, where it will be used for storage service in an area with numerous small gas reservoirs. The Ajax integral compressor family was a natural candidate for such an exercise, because it is "packaged" completely by a single firm and because, as a stable product family with a long track record, it is available in a predictable and manageable number of variations.

That first unit is rated 400 bhp (298 kW) and configured for one or two



■ Cameron's Compression Systems' first CE-qualified Ajax model DPC-2802LE integral compressor with CE marking is shown here on-site before installation of its sound-attenuating enclosure.

compression stages with one 7.5 in. (190.5 mm) and one 5.25 in. (133.25 mm) cylinders. Spectacle blind/full bore flanges were used to facilitate conversion from single- to two-stage operation. It is equipped with an Altronic DE 2500 control panel, which provides remote monitoring of operating parameters and automatic speed control. A combined gas and water cooler, driven by an electric motor, is located outside the sound-attenuating structure that houses the compressor.

That first compressor arrived on-site on May 1, and Compression Systems quickly shipped a second CE-marked unit — an Ajax DPC-2804LE. Rated 800 bhp (596 kW), it is configured for single-stage service with three 5.5 in. (139.7 mm) cylinders and an electric motor-driven cooler that is located outside the compressor enclosure. Petroleum Oil & Gas ordered two additional Ajax DPC-2804LE units in June 2006, according to Jesús García Calleja of Soljet Energía S.A. (Compression Systems' agent in Spain).

Chevron originally developed the area and installed four Ajax DPC 360, 600 and 800 units for production before the EU mark became mandatory. The field is located in the Guadalquivir Valley in Andalucía, Spain, not far from the city of Seville. According to Calleja, the current operator and customer is Petroleum Oil & Gas España, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Gas Natural Group.

Calleja said that the engineering firm of Diseprosa was responsible for

planning, installing and commissioning the unit with full support from his firm and Compression Systems' European personnel.

At Compression Systems' Houston, Texas, U.S.A., headquarters, the decision to commit to attaining CE marking rights for the Ajax product line made clear sense, according to Ed Roper, Compression Systems' vice president of new compressor sales. Obtaining it would reopen a large market with which the company had long been familiar but was barred from participating in by government policy. Removing the barrier that a lack of CE marking placed on the company's sales force understandably became a priority.

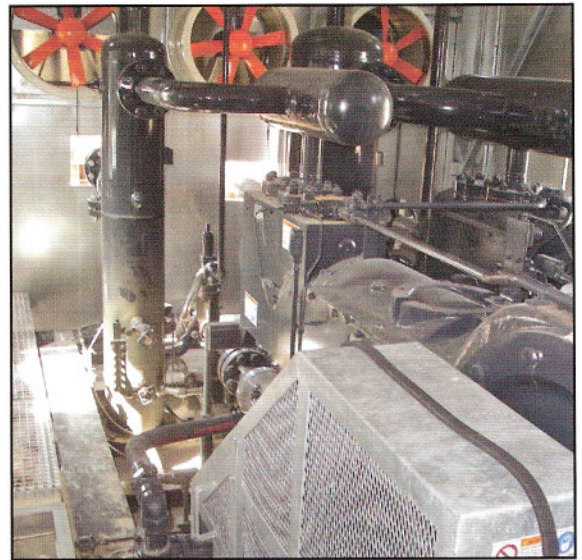
The process of researching the CE marking qualification process, gathering documentation for the TCF and receiving outside confirmation that it met all five of the European Product Directives that applied to it took about a calendar year. Bill Bicknell, Compression Systems' manager of package engineering, said that the process actually took about one management-level work month to complete. The main challenge, he said, was contacting each component

manufacturer and obtaining documentary confirmation that their products had qualified for CE marking. Meetings with consultants also took considerable time, he said, but with all Compression Systems learned during its initial outing, similar future exercises will be easier to complete.

According to Compression Systems' Roger Wachter, EU sales manager, the company has over 30 dealers and packagers in the region. He said that Compression Systems is a strong presence there, and dealers and packagers have been able to offer turnkey solutions as required, backed up by factory trained and certified representatives and service personnel. Cameron's Compression Systems maintains direct sales offices and aftermarket operations in Milan, Italy, and Liverpool, U.K., and employs about 40 people supporting its EU efforts.

Compression Systems' aftermarket sales and service personnel are located throughout the region in areas such as the U.K., Italy, France, Germany, Hungary, Greece and others. They include seasoned mechanics, most of which claim 20 years' or more experience.

"We have supported our European customers for approximately 45 years, and continue to provide parts, field service and technical assistance on Ajax equipment and our other reciprocating products, such as Cooper Bessemer, Superior, Enterprise and Penn," Wachter said. He said, too, that with CE marking now available on new machinery, Compression Systems looks forward to a renewed energy within the European Union. ■



■ An interior view of the compression end of the newly commissioned Ajax integral compressor with CE marking that represents the reopening of the European market to this venerable product from Cameron's Compression Systems.