

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE LEADS TO AN

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT



What do you call it when a mason contractor in the 1970s gets fed up with his scaffolding choices and invents his own? If you were Justin Breithaupt, a Louisiana mason contractor at the time, you'd call it Non-Stop Scaffolding.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF NON-STOP SCAFFOLD, INC.



ABOVE:
Welding VIP scaffold base.

ABOVE TOP:
Non-Stop welders are certified in-house by a professional welding engineer.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Justin Breithaupt, Jr. and Sr., owners of Non-Stop Scaffolding, Inc.

The Beginning of a Legacy

NON-STOP BEGAN in 1975 and has become an industry leader in adjustable scaffolding – also called climbing, elevating or tower scaffolding. A visit with Breithaupt, now 76, shows a man who has built elevating scaffolding for more than 30 years now, and who is just as passionate about masonry and job efficiency as he was 50 years ago. Breithaupt's philosophy has permeated every aspect of the way Non-Stop does business.

"I've laid brick all my life," he said. "My father was a life-long mason contractor, and I worked for him many weekends and every summer, as far back as I can remember; so did my three brothers. So, it was only natural that I would go into the business after college."

In the early '50s, the residential construction industry was at its height and contractors had all the work they wanted and more. Breithaupt recalled, "Looking back now, I realize we had it pretty good."

Ten years later, as his business grew, Breithaupt switched to commercial work. "That was a whole different ball game," he said. "A lot more paperwork, long waits for your money, ornery job superintendents, a lot more headaches – but better money if you could wait for it."

"We were making money, but I was spread as thin as could be. If I were going to make more money, it would have to be on the work I had, not by taking on more. I had to cut costs."



Non-Stop uses computerized saws for exact cuts on raw materials.



Even tower rollers are precision machined for long life.

At that time in the '60s, rough terrain forklifts first appeared, and Breithaupt saw right away that one of these machines could easily replace two laborers. The money saved was instant profit.

“That experience taught me the most valuable lesson I ever learned as a mason contractor: In any given job, the labor number is huge compared to the profit number – almost five or 10 times higher. If you reduce your labor a little, like 20 percent, you will double or triple your profit. Now, you can’t do the job with fewer men, so you have to do it faster, by putting in more units in a day. You get paid the bid price either way, so if you do a 100-day job in 80 days, 20 days of payroll for the whole crew goes in your pocket.”

Shortly thereafter, tower scaffolding was introduced and it provided Breithaupt with another opportunity to increase his profits.

“It saved me a lot of money – my production went way up,” he said. “The problem was my men hated it and said they wouldn’t work on it again. The good part was that it showed me exactly what I wanted in my next tower scaffolding, because I knew I would never be without it again.”

From Contractor to Inventor

AFTER A FEW YEARS of experimenting, Breithaupt had exactly what he wanted. “All the scaffolding I saw and tried were made for long, straight walls, but that wasn’t even a third of my work,” he explained. “I made my first Non-Stop to set up on cut-up

Shipping Non-Stop out to a mason contractor.



“OSHA was just being formed as Non-Stop was gaining a foothold. Mason contractors were learning the hard way what OSHA standards were and how severe the fines could be.”

Justin Breithaupt Jr.

work, radius walls and saw-tooth configurations just as fast as it does on straight walls. I designed seven-foot-wide modules that you place in the inside corners first and then work your way out. It's so easy for the laborers to understand.”

During the next few years, Breithaupt improved Non-Stop with the help of professional structural and welding engineers. “I hated buying poor quality equipment, so the first thing I did was build it so my men couldn't tear it up. The next thing I did was ‘design out’ all of the small parts to do away with trips to the hardware store. Then we put a lifetime warranty on it to show our customers we were serious.”

It was inevitable that other contractors would see Breithaupt's new scaffolding and want it for their own businesses. By 1979, Breithaupt was committed to the scaffolding business full-time and built his last masonry job.

Assisting the Industry

JUSTIN BREITHAUPT JR. has been with the company since the beginning. When asked how the industry has changed over the years, he said, “OSHA was just being formed as Non-Stop was gaining a foothold. Mason contractors were learning the hard way what OSHA standards were and how severe the fines could



CNC machining produces the highest accuracy parts.

be. A real problem we had was that there were no standards specifically for tower scaffolding.”

Without clear-cut standards, OSHA compliance officers were picking and choosing pieces of other standards to apply to tower scaffolding – many times erroneously, resulting in high fines, and sometimes causing hazardous situations. The younger Breithaupt joined a group of Scaffolding, Shoring and Forming Institute members and helped to write the first ANSI standards for tower scaffolding.

“Since there are now ANSI standards for tower scaffolding, everyone is on the same page,” he said. “Now it's a matter of getting the word out to the general contractors' safety people and to OSHA inspectors on the job. The new standards are enforced by OSHA under its ‘general duty’ clause.”

To assist mason contractors on the job site, Non-Stop has set up an OSHA Help Line. If an OSHA official or a general contractor's safety inspector arrives on the job site and has a question that the contractor cannot readily answer, the contractor can call Non-Stop on his or her cell phone, right then and there, and hand it to the safety inspector. Non-Stop takes over and reviews exactly what the standards are and where they can be found.

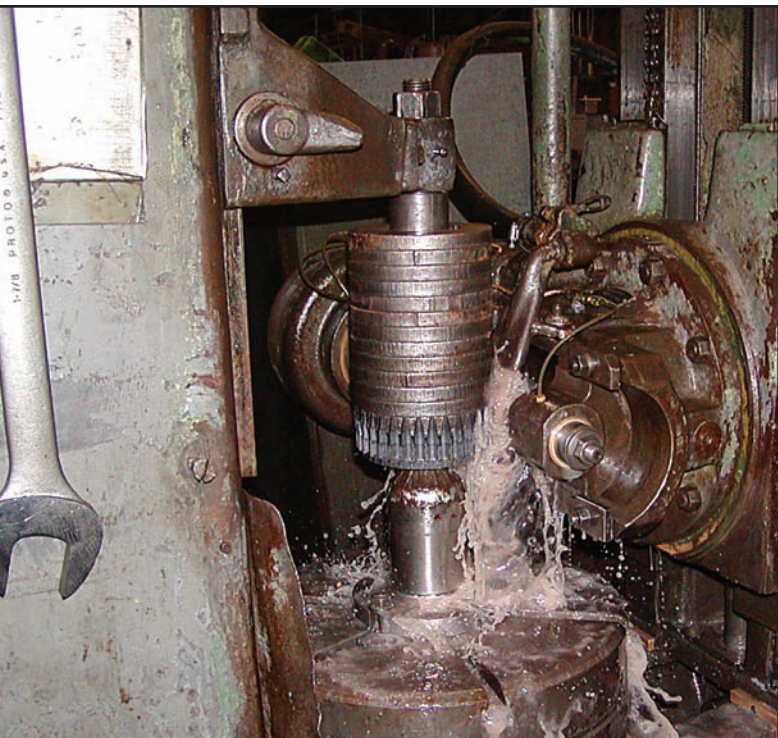
“We want the contractor to have the safest, most productive scaffolding he can get,” the younger Breithaupt said.

“Another way we help our customers with safety is with our layout service,” he added. “They send us a copy of their plans, we lay out the correct way to erect the scaffolding for that job, and send them back.”

Quality #1

NON-STOP MOVED to a bigger facility in 1989 to keep up with the demand from mason contractors. It's equipped with the latest CNC machining centers, computerized band saws and gear cutters. Surprisingly, they make every part of the scaffolding themselves, giving them the highest control over product quality.

“It's all geared toward making the best possible product we can,” said the elder Breithaupt. “Sure, that makes for good sales, but I like going home knowing we sent a fellow contractor a zero-defect scaffolding that will make him more money and last him for 30-plus years.”



Non-Stop makes all their own gears for their winches in-house.