

Geared for SUCCESS

One of the continent's foremost stevedore and marine terminal operators, Gulf Stream Marine is making a name for itself in the specialized field of wind turbine transportation. PES caught up with company founder, Jan Rietdijk...



PES: Welcome to PES magazine. Firstly, can you give us a basic overview of Gulf Stream Marine (GSM) as a company and how it operates with regards to the wind energy industry in the US?

Jan Rietdijk: GSM first came across wind turbines in the late 90s when some of the general cargo liner services from Europe that we handled started bringing them into the Port of Houston for ultimate delivery into the Mid-West and California. At that time we were totally unprepared for the movement of these blades and tower sections, but because of the relatively small numbers involved that was not of great concern.

The handling of wind turbine components requires a custom approach involving specialized equipment and unique skill sets. Due to their size and being relatively fragile, it takes expertise and commitment to safely handle these individual components to ensure that no damage is done.

If any of this equipment at that time had to be moved further into the terminals (because of a lack of space shipside) we hired the trucks that were used to move them inland to accomplish this.

As the volume increased for us by 2004-2005 we found that this was too expensive and we acquired our own trailers.

All of our trailers and spreader bars, etc., that we use are built at our own fabrication shop to our specifications that we have gathered over the years of moving this equipment.

PES: What particular challenges do the turbines present – and what expertise/equipment do you employ to meet these challenges?

JR: One of the biggest challenges that we face with these wind turbine components is space! Particularly during these economically depressed times, a number of these windmill projects have been put on hold because of the lack of financing. Consequently the ports are having to keep a lot of this equipment in storage.

PES: The wind industry is growing at an astounding rate – what measures are you putting in place to ensure that your company capitalises upon this?

JR: To ensure that we remain part of the growth of this wind industry, while running out of space because of storage requirements, we are constantly talking

to the ports about making additional space available for the incoming components.

Both the ports of Corpus Christi and Freeport are very receptive and have stabilized considerable additional acreage to attract both existing and new customers.

We have also been in consultation with the Port of Brownsville to add to their existing stabilized storage yards, in anticipation of the possibility of attracting some of the overflow and new business.

PES: And how important is this facet of your business to your total operation?

JR: The wind business is very important to Gulf Stream as a whole. We operate seven terminals in four ports along the Texas Gulf coast. Wind components pass through five of those terminals.

At Corpus Christi and Freeport, the wind business is 90 per cent of our volume that we handle at those ports.

In Houston, we operate Industrial Terminal for Intermarine and the wind business accounts for approximately 20 per cent of the volume passing through that terminal.

In addition, we have space that we utilize at Greensport terminal and the port of Houston's Woodhouse terminal as overflow space on an 'as-needed' basis to discharge and store wind components.

In the past year, the wind business passing through Woodhouse terminal has been about 40 per cent of the volume that has passed through the terminal.

So as you can see, we are well positioned in the Gulf area to receive this cargo and we foresee that in the future, as the volume of imported components decreases, we will be in a good position to receive and load out onto ships these components as the US starts to become an exporter.

It is also anticipated that these windmill towers will be placed offshore in the Gulf of Mexico along the Texas coast, in which case, our terminals in Freeport, Corpus Christi and Brownsville will be well-positioned to receive the components and service the vessels that will be assembling the towers in the Gulf of Mexico.



History

In 1990 Dave Wharton and Jan Rietdijk founded Gulf Stream Marine. A lot has changed since these two men brought their vision of unparalleled customer service to the stevedoring industry. Gulf Stream Marine is now one of the largest privately owned stevedore companies in the Gulf Coast area. In addition, expansion into the Brownsville area established Gulf Stream Marine in this NAFTA port. In its relatively short history, Gulf Stream has become one of the most highly respected stevedore and terminal operators in Texas ports by providing its customers with productive and damage-free handling of all bulk, breakbulk and containerised commodities.

The company specializes in the handling of heavy-lift, project, and wind equipment cargoes and is the industry leader in this regard in the region. The company maintains its own handling machinery and equipment and continues to make new acquisitions in order to maintain self-sufficiency.

The foremost contributing factors to the company's success are the basic ideals on which it was founded – quality customer service and employee participation at all levels. The firm's primary goal is to build enduring and equitable relationships with its customers and their products. To illustrate the extent to which the founders believed in active employee participation, Gulf Stream Marine is now owned wholly by its executive officers and senior management.

Mission

Gulf Stream Marine, Inc. will always endeavor to establish the highest standards of service for Stevedoring and Marine Terminal Operators. It is the company's goal to build enduring and equitable relationships with its customers, vendors and employees within a safe and ethical working environment. More importantly, Gulf Stream Marine understands the foundation is the customer – protecting customers' cargo and securing their interests is why the company is in this business in the first place.

Maintaining progressive customer service necessitates a well-trained and flexible workforce operating in a safe work

environment. Gulf Stream Marine cultivates employee pride and skill by directly employing and training all of its employees. Safe handling of customers' cargo and employee safety are highest priorities. The labor force is well trained, flexible and highly-motivated and are employed and compensated directly by Gulf Stream Marine, Inc.

Gulf Stream Marine is committed to staying ahead of today's rapidly expanding technology. The company's policy will always be to develop and implement the most efficient software and hardware available in the industry, keeping customers ahead of the competition by providing them with the latest technology available for tracking cargo.

Stevedore and terminal operations

Stevedore Operations at Gulf Stream Marine meet the needs of today's industry. And Gulf Stream Marine terminal operations are oriented to all modes of transport and cargo preparation:

- Container, bulk and break bulk vessels
- Barges
- Rail
- Truck
- Hazardous materials handling
- Mark, band, sort and bundle

Furthermore, Gulf Stream Marine easily meets customer fabrication and off-schedule job requirements:

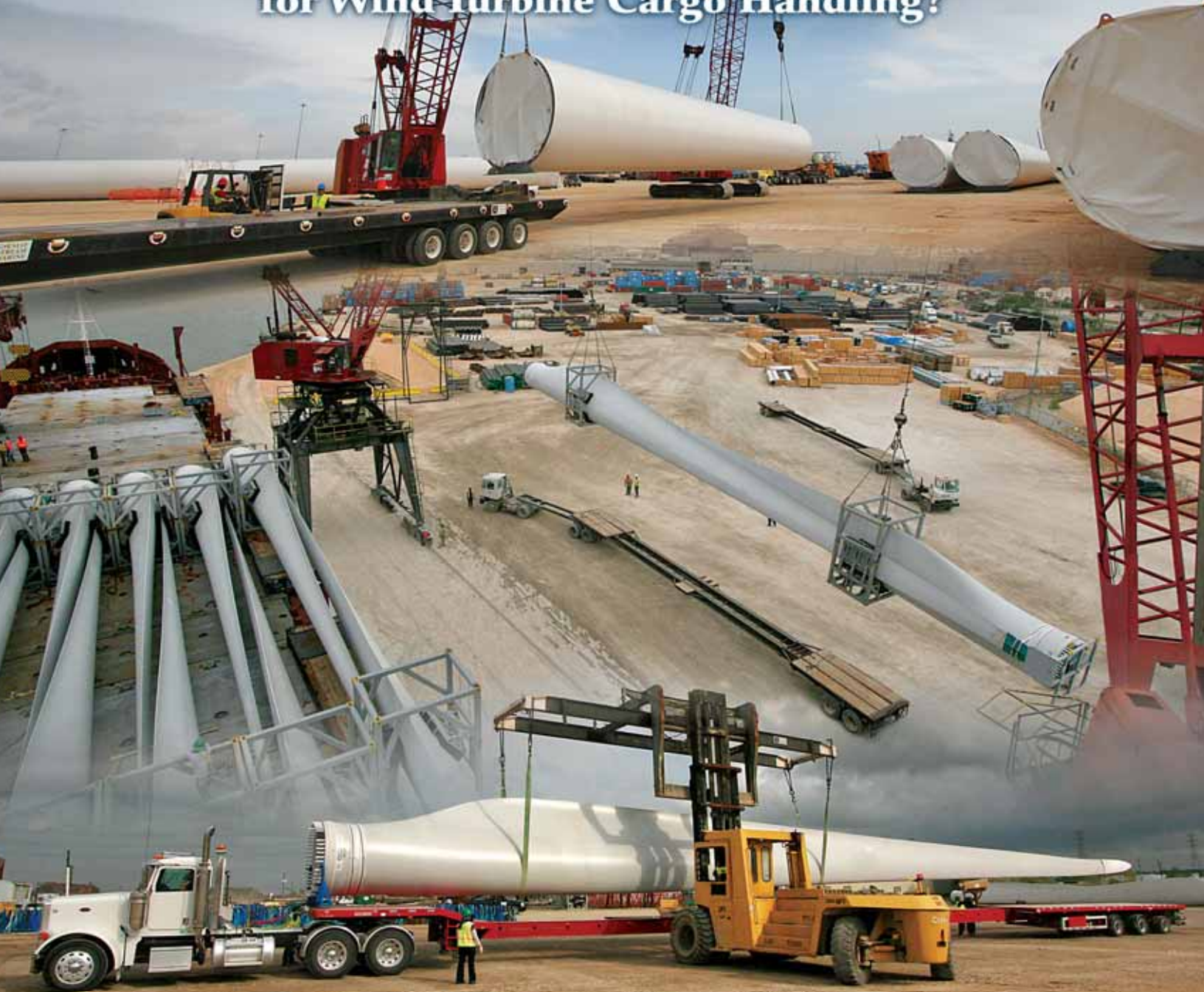
- On-site machine shops and company engineers
- Customer lift gear
- High-capacity ground transport
- Seven day-a-week, 24 hour, labor availability

A very extensive list of professional references can be provided upon request. ▀

For more information, visit: www.gulfstreammarine.com

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for Wind Turbine Cargo Handling?



Stevedoring companies are like cargo shipments – no two are the same. Gulf Stream Marine is recognized as a worldwide leader in its field, with more than 750 employees managing port operations in Houston, Freeport, Corpus Christi and Brownsville. Our company

specializes in handling a variety of unique cargo shipments, including wind turbine components. We offer flexibility, affordability and a highly-trained non-union staff – all hallmarks of Gulf Stream Marine and the partnership it has provided for almost 20 years.



GULF STREAM MARINE
Wind Turbine Cargo Handling

Stevedoring & Marine Terminal Operations since 1990



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