

JOB 2 DRS Power Technologies Weighs as They Build

BOB DUMAS, COMMERCIAL SCALE & BALANCE CO., INC., Agawam, Mass., has devised a weight-based time and trouble saver for DRS Power Technologies, a customer sent Bob's way by Peter Baker, district manager for IDG Northeast Region.

DRS Power Technologies, in Fitchburg, Mass., manufactures portable power units. These aren't the portable generators we pack in a camper. These are jet engine turbine generators housed inside 10 foot by 44 foot enclosures. A typical unit tips the scales at approximately 100,000 pounds; one recently topped out

at 280,000 pounds. We learn that, hidden somewhere in the Nevada desert, 24 of these units stand ready to reboot Las Vegas in the event the famous lights should dim.

The portable power units are built in a vast space once used to build Seawolf attack submarine components; until the Cold War ended and the proposed fleet of 29 was downsized to three. DRS ships these power units to destinations as far as Addis Ababa, a city that rises over 9,800 feet in the Ethiopian mountains. Each of these units has to be weighed to ensure even distribution of the weight before shipping.

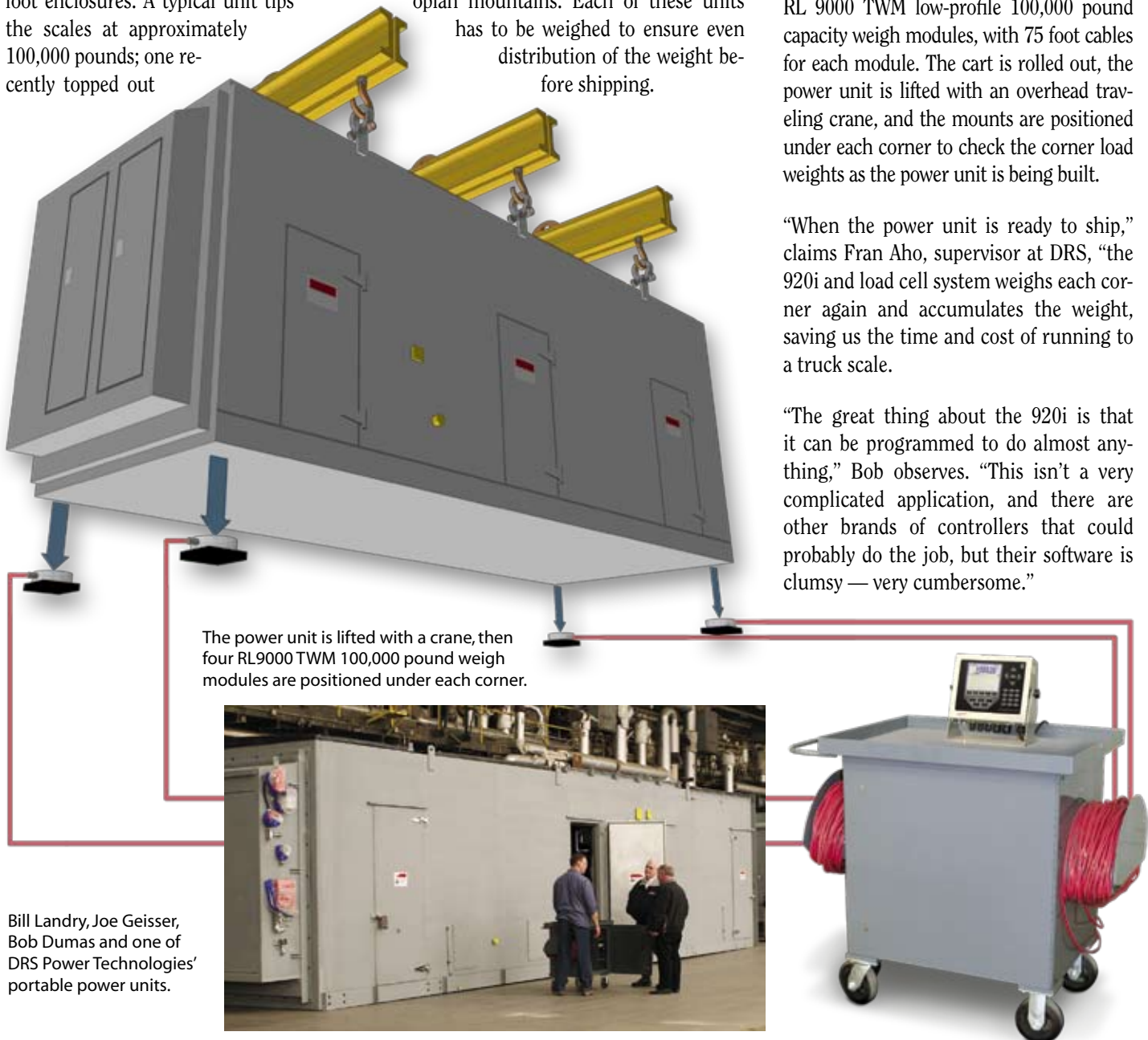


Bob Dumas, Commercial Scale & Balance, and Bill Landry, technician for DRS Power Technologies.

Bob designed a custom portable cabinet that stores and transports a 920i® and a set of four RL 9000 TWM low-profile 100,000 pound capacity weigh modules, with 75 foot cables for each module. The cart is rolled out, the power unit is lifted with an overhead traveling crane, and the mounts are positioned under each corner to check the corner load weights as the power unit is being built.

"When the power unit is ready to ship," claims Fran Aho, supervisor at DRS, "the 920i and load cell system weighs each corner again and accumulates the weight, saving us the time and cost of running to a truck scale.

"The great thing about the 920i is that it can be programmed to do almost anything," Bob observes. "This isn't a very complicated application, and there are other brands of controllers that could probably do the job, but their software is clumsy — very cumbersome."



The power unit is lifted with a crane, then four RL9000 TWM 100,000 pound weigh modules are positioned under each corner.



Bill Landry, Joe Geisser, Bob Dumas and one of DRS Power Technologies' portable power units.

