

Almex USA to Supply Complete Greenfield Casthouse to Kobe Steel Group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Buena Park, California, USA - March 2017 - Almex USA Inc. has announced its selection as the technology and equipment provider for a U.S. subsidiary of the Kobe Steel Group. The new greenfield facility, presently under construction in Bowling Green, Kentucky, will be owned and operated by Kobelco Aluminum Products & Extrusions Inc. (KPEX). Addressing the growing use of aluminum in the automotive industries, KPEX will manufacture high strength automotive alloy extrusions for bumper beams and car frames. Almex's expertise in 2xxx and 7xxx series aerospace D.C. casting technology was said to be a key determining factor in the selection of the "Furnace to Finish™" supplier's portfolio. As new generations of aluminum alloys are developed for aerospace and defense applications, today's materials continue to find growing demand in automotive and commercial applications. The Kobe Steel Group has a longstanding history of being a leading player in the aluminum industry and the establishment of KPEX marks its second major plant to be constructed in the Bowling Green area.

Almex has been awarded a contract for an automatic-tilt reverberatory melting furnace with close integration to the new Almex D.C. casting line. The medium-diameter billet casting station will be outfitted with Almex's patented LARS® degassing and purification system and CASTRIGHTII® control and automation package. The integrated supply assures that the Almex Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System, or SCADA, will provide the highest levels of quality assurance and automated product traceability. Peripheral systems from Almex include MOLDEX™-based metal transfer launders, FILTRES™ ceramic foam filtration, and Almex's complete plant water management system for assuring casting success. A travelling-type batch homogenization furnace, also with SCADA, is included within the turnkey scope to provide an end-to-end product and process warranty.

The new facility has targeted first metal production in early 2018 for which detailed engineering and equipment manufacture are ongoing. To guarantee end-product quality and seamless startup, the Almex team will deliver KPEX personnel with comprehensive training and technology support throughout the plant's startup phase.

About Kobelco Aluminum Products & Extrusions

Kobelco Aluminum Products & Extrusions, or KPEX, is a recently established company in the United States targeted to support the North American automotive sector with high strength aluminum bumpers and car frame materials made from extruded products. The establishment of KPEX will enable Kobe Steel to manufacture and supply the same high-quality aluminum extrusions and fabricated products available in Japan in the North American market. Through innovative weight-saving proposals, Kobe Steel aims to gain the trust of automakers in North America. KPEX will also contribute to strengthening Kobe Steel's overall supply network, which covers Japan and the United States.

About Almex USA

Almex USA is the leading supplier of commercial and aerospace aluminum billet and slab casting technology and equipment. The company's products include LARS[®] degassing systems, MEGA[™] DC casting machines, billet/ingot casting systems, and CASTRIGHT II[™] automated process control. Almex is also engaged in equipment and process research involving new capabilities and green technology for efficient recycling of aluminum alloys and has supported the aluminum industry since 1995, earning itself the "Excellence in Exports" Award from the United States Department of Commerce. Trade and Service Marks of Almex USA Inc. are property of the company registered and protected in the United States and other countries.

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