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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### Increased productivity and a broader product portfolio

#### **Zekelman Industries places orders with SMS group for modernization of ERW tube lines**

Atlas Tube, a company of Zekelman Industries, reiterates its trust in tube welding technology from SMS group ([www.sms-group.com](http://www.sms-group.com)).

Over the past two years, the company has placed several orders with SMS group aimed at expanding and enhancing the product spectrum of the 8 5/8-inch and 16-inch lines installed in Harrow, Canada, and the 16-inch line installed in Blytheville, U.S.A.

SMS group has now received several follow-up orders for the 16-inch tube welding line which was moved to Blytheville, Arkansas, in 2006 and which SMS had already extensively modernized and extended as part of that relocation.

The line is now going to be equipped with a completely new sizing section to expand the product spectrum and improve productivity. The use of URD<sup>®</sup> (Uniform Rigidity Design) stands in the sizing section will significantly shorten the size changing times in future.

Once the upgrading measures have been completed, the line will be able to roll structurals (round tubes with outside diameters up to 18 inches) as well as square and rectangular hollow sections. Hollow section sizes will range from 14 inches x 14 inches square to up to 18 inches x 10 inches rectangular. The maximum wall thickness will be 17.3 millimeters.

In order to optimize the cross-welding process, the welding equipment on the cross-welder will be replaced with the PERFECT arc<sup>®</sup> system developed and patented by SMS group. No transformers will be required here, the systems will be operated using IGBT (Insulated-Gate Bipolar Transistor) power electronics, with the welding current completely digitally controlled. As a result, the welding machines can attain an efficiency rate of over 90 percent. Compared to older welding techniques, energy savings are up to 30 percent, depending on the operating point. This will further improve process stability, particularly with heavy walls, and contribute to the increase in productivity.

The installation of an additional pinch roll/breakdown stand in the 8 5/8-inch ERW line in Harrow, Canada, will allow higher grades and greater wall thicknesses to be produced in the future. Furthermore, the additional stand will enable the existing product portfolio to be expanded.

Two newly developed inside scarfers have been supplied for the 16-inch line installed by SMS group in Harrow in 2000. These scarfers are a further optimization based on Zekelman Industries' and SMS group's experience of the original scarfers of proven SMS design. The inside scarfers, which are equipment crucial to the quality of the tubes, are now designed for the extended wall thickness range of up to 17.3 millimeters. The new scarfers are already in operation and have been performing very successfully.

With these modernization measures, Zekelman Industries is strengthening its leading position in the production of structurals in the North American market.

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The SMS group is a group of companies internationally active in plant construction and mechanical engineering for the steel and nonferrous metals industry. Its 14,000 employees generate sales of over EUR 3.3 bn.