

Shared long-term vision brings a customized LLT tunnel system to Advantage Linen

LAVATEC
Laundry Technology Inc.



Advantage Linen's custom new tunnel system from Lavatec Laundry Technology, Inc. includes eight chambers with center transfer, and a conveyor system that feeds two large capacity TT 745 dryers.

Surrounded by world-famous horse racing farms, Advantage Linen in Lexington, Kentucky decided to bet on a thoroughbred of its own when it came time to modernize its commercial laundry operation.

“We were originally looking at keeping our older tunnel and replacing just the dryers and press,” said Johnny Wills, Advantage Linen’s Vice President of Operations. “We thought it would be cost-prohibitive to change the entire system. But a hodgepodge of equipment connecting one manufacturer’s tunnel to another’s press to another’s dryer would lead to the same kind of inefficiencies we were trying to eliminate. So we decided to get a quote on a tunnel, too.”

Ultimately, Advantage Linen’s custom-designed, eight-chamber LT-Series tunnel washer, extraction press, conveyor system and two TT-745 dryers were the result of a mutual respect for long-term planning shared by both Advantage and their ultimate choice for the new equipment: Lavatec Laundry Technology.

“When you’re writing big checks you have to feel good about it,” said Advantage Linen owner and CEO John Van Nagell III. “When we bought our tunnel we wanted to partner with someone who shared our long-term vision and planning. As we narrowed our

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Mark Thrasher, LLT President

choice down to two manufacturers, we literally spent a day with each discussing everything.”

Van Nagell said the discussions served as a turning point in LLT’s favor.

“For me the clincher was sitting down with LLT President Mark Thrasher and Regional Sales Manager Jim Stiles. We discovered that we had the same goals and visions. Sensing Mark’s and LLT’s long-term commitment to our business - that it just wasn’t a quick sale to them - led us to invest in something that would take us to the next level.

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ADVANTAGE LINEN INC





See Advantage Linen's installation by clicking the image or visiting www.lltusa.com/customers.php

"All of a sudden we were not talking about buying a standard tunnel," continued Van Nagell, "Instead of a cookie cutter approach, we're talking about LLT customizing this tunnel and building it from scratch in Germany for our exact needs."

"I've been in this industry for 25 years," said Wills. "We're a small to medium-sized operation, and for them to think enough of us to have the president of the company come down here for a meeting, that pushed us over the edge. While most tunnels are built for lighter soiled items, we were going to get one built specifically for the medium to heavy soiled linens that we handle. And it was going to be a system that could not only accommodate our needs now, but be able to grow with us far down the road."

Founded in 1995, the Advantage Linen operation employs 30 people and normally runs one shift, five days a week while operating from a 20,000 square-foot facility. As to those medium to heavy soiled linens that Wills referred to, they consist of tablecloths, napkins, chef coats and aprons from a variety of major hotels, restaurants, food and beverage, medical and industrial accounts within a 60-mile radius of downtown Lexington.

The workload increases significantly when Keeneland Race Course runs every April and October, and when University of Kentucky fans pour into town for football, basketball and other events on campus.

"With the new LLT tunnel we can control the water in every chamber. We have drains in every chamber. We can even control the temperature in seven of the eight chambers. That's pretty unique," said Wills. "We're now using less water than we were with our previous tunnel, and we're washing more efficiently

as far as poundage per hour. That's an important asset when you're pushing through 85,000 pounds a week. It's also a fairly simple tunnel to maintain."

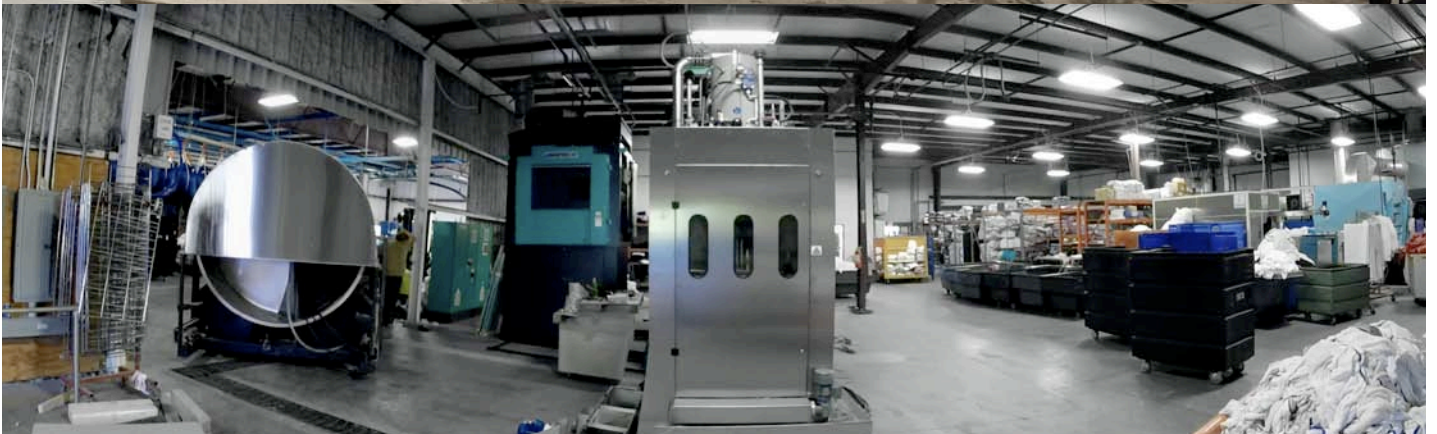
Wills said the benefits on the drying side are adding up with significant time and energy savings.

"Our drying is now 60 percent more efficient. We've gone from three dryers to the two TT 745s, and loads that were taking 30 minutes to dry are now being completed in just 21 minutes. And the self-controlled lint filters have been a real blessing as far as reducing maintenance is concerned."

"We try," said LLT President Mark Thrasher, "to approach every customer like Advantage Linen. To meet their needs for long-term value, there is no simple off-the-shelf solution. We put in the extra effort to analyze their operation and goals. Doing so allows us to propose, design and engineer the right system that will best deliver the lowest cost of ownership over a lifetime of use. A system that's simple to operate and maintain, durable and capable of adapting to expansion demands down the road. That's what sets Lavatec Laundry Technology apart."

"We could have found a cheaper tunnel," remarked Van Nagell, "but we don't want to sit back and be a follower. We're doing everything we can to stay on the cutting edge. Our success has come from listening to what our customers need, and evolving our company to meet those needs.

"That's what I liked about Mark Thrasher's visit. We're eventually going to outgrow our plant and Mark's long-term vision, combined with ours, means that LLT can take us to the next level. It's a wonderful partnership."



To learn more or see the LLT tunnel system installation visit LLTusa.com or click here.

About Lavatec Laundry Technology, Inc.

Delivering dependable commercial laundry equipment engineered for higher returns throughout their lifecycles has always been the Lavatec Laundry Technology (LLT) mission statement. A rarity among manufacturers of continuous tunnel washers, Lavatec LT offers center transfer, bottom transfer and double-drum construction options, plus a full range of readily integrated, end-to-end laundry system components: washer extractors, extraction presses, centrifuges, dryers, conveyor systems, pickers, feeders, ironers and folders. Simple design, durable construction, user-friendly operation and low maintenance are hallmarks of Lavatec LT machines. A global leader with equipment in laundry operations throughout Europe, the Far East, South and North America, in the United States alone, over 6,000 Load Warriors are in place. For additional information, visit www.LLTusa.com.

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