

Pala Interstate LLC

Customer Success Story

**Autodesk® Inventor® Engineer-to-Order
(formerly Autodesk Intent™)**

Autodesk Consulting

With Autodesk Consulting, Autodesk Intent software was easy to learn. They trained us early on, and we were able to take over very quickly. We took it over from there, but we can always call them if we need them.

—Stephen Dearman
Engineering CAD Manager
Pala Interstate LLC

Accelerating design efficiency.

Pala Interstate uses Autodesk® software and services to design and build more storage tanks, faster.

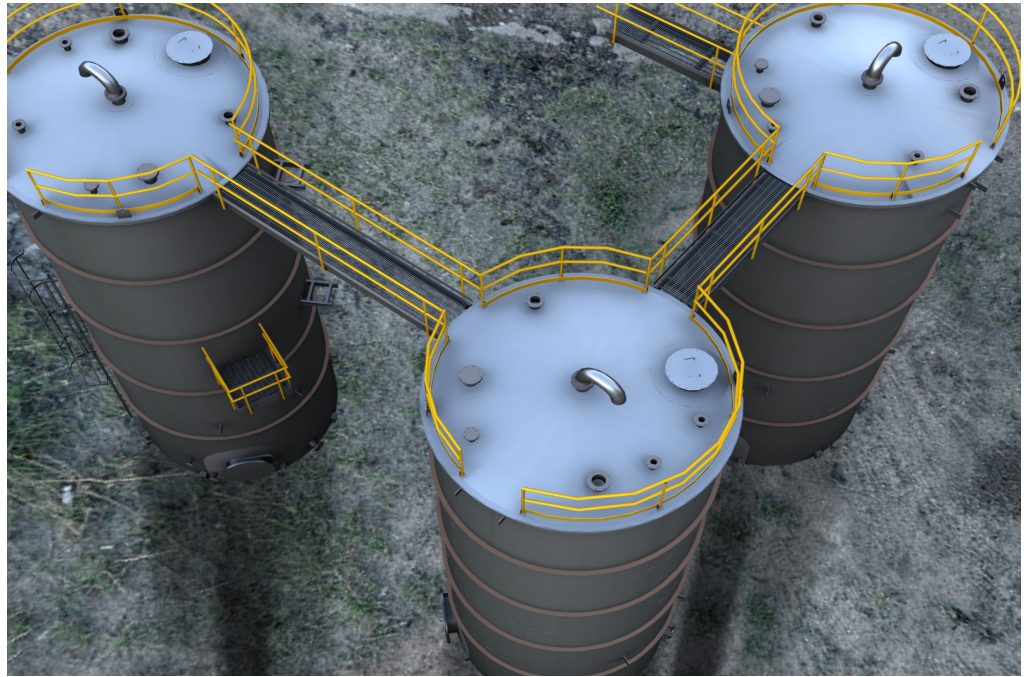


Image courtesy of Pala Interstate LLC.

Project Summary

Based in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana, Pala Interstate LLC has been serving the industrial construction business community with distinction ever since it opened its doors in 1973. While the company specializes in multiple facets of industrial construction—including general contracting, building, and fabrication for the oil and gas, petrochemical, food processing, pulp and paper, and consumer products industries—recent years have seen significant increases in Pala's design, construction, maintenance, and repair of field-erected storage tanks. Pala's customers include such heavyweights as Exxon Mobile, Chevron, and Shell, among others.

As demand for its services has grown, Pala's tank design team found that its 2D software pipeline was taking too long to get each job done. With more customers and more work, Pala had to find a way to do more, faster, and with fewer resources. Looking for a new way of working, Pala contacted Vector Graphics, an Autodesk Authorized Reseller serving the Gulf Coast.

After carefully studying Pala's needs, the Vector team recommended Autodesk® Intent™ software to help accelerate design efficiency and improve quoting accuracy through "smart" design and

business automation tools. Since doing more in less time is how Pala rises above its competitors, the company is very pleased that, with help from Autodesk Intent software, an eight-hour design job can now be completed in three hours, while new tanks can now be created in a couple of days instead of a week.

The Challenge

Since Stephen Dearman, engineering CAD manager, started with the company 19 years ago, he has seen his side of the business—the design, maintenance, and repair of storage tanks—grow from a small fraction of Pala's business to nearly half of it. As the company and the department have grown, so have their needs.

"We've grown so much that we needed new ways of making sure we maintained our standards and information," says Dearman. "I'd used AutoLISP® tools to create spreadsheets and streamline processes, but we needed a 3D solution that would help automate our drafting and documentation. More than that, we needed a solution with an open architecture that we could customize and adjust to the needs of each specific tank project."

Using Autodesk Intent software, Pala now completes eight-hour tank design jobs in three hours.

With as many as 15 people working on his team, Dearman knew that finding a new solution acceptable to everybody would not be easy.

At that point, Autodesk Authorized Reseller Vector Graphics interviewed each of the team members about their individual needs. The results of the Vector study pointed to Autodesk Intent software.

The Solution

In addition to Autodesk Intent software, Pala took advantage of Autodesk Consulting services, particularly for the development of a custom automation solution, together with Autodesk® Subscription and training.

“The best thing about Intent is that it isn’t a black box,” says Dearman. “Autodesk Consulting helped install it, but we were able to adjust it in powerful ways to make it serve us better. Most of our engineers have little or no experience with programming, but they understand Intent. That can’t be said for Fortran, Visual Basic, or any other alternative. With Intent, design automation is viable and can be easily maintained from within our organization. Without Intent, that wouldn’t be possible. No matter what else happens, we have to be able to modify and adjust our solution, ourselves. That is exactly what Autodesk Intent helps us do.”

As an example, Dearman points to the recent creation of pontoons used to support a floating roof for one of the company’s tanks.

“We used to build everything in the field, just cutting out parts and putting them together,” he explains. “With Intent, I was able to precisely design the pontoons for fabrication in a shop. This way, we are able to control our consistency and quality standards, whether it’s for cut sheets or details. Before Intent, we had to watch out

for inconsistencies and human error throughout the process, which can really slow you down.”

Saving time is crucial in helping Pala stand out from the competition. Dearman estimates that, with help from Autodesk Intent, what was previously an eight-hour design job can now be completed in three hours, and the creation of new tanks can be reduced from one week to two days.

The Result

Since the adoption of Autodesk Intent software, and with the help of Autodesk Consulting, Pala has seen its tank repair and design business continue to grow both in numbers and complexity. “Every tank is different and has its own specific challenges,” says Dearman. “That’s why the open architecture of Autodesk Intent is so crucial to us. Intent helps my team focus on the most important parts of the design or repair job, and it helps everybody keep from making errors. With Autodesk Consulting, Autodesk Intent was easy to learn. They trained us early on, and we were able to take over very quickly. We took it over from there, but we can always call them if we need them.”

To learn more about Autodesk Consulting, visit, www.autodesk.com/consulting.



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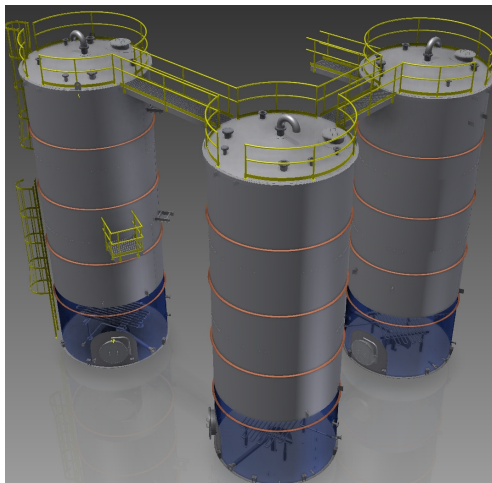


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