



Modern Machinery Company

# Fast and Efficient the Safan Electric Press Brake Makes Forming Easier at Rough Brothers



## Interview with:

Jeff Wagner, Supervisor  
Ronnie Brown, Production Assistant

*Rough Brothers was started in 1932 by the original Rough Brothers mostly doing maintenance and greenhouse construction locally and regionally and is now owned and operated by Richard Reilly. Rough Brothers currently has 150 employees with plants in North Carolina, California, and China with future expansion into Brazil and the Middle East over the next 3-4 years. Rough Brothers recently purchased a Safan Electric Brake for their Cincinnati production facility.*

## What do you manufacture here?

*Ronnie:* We manufacture aluminum and steel structures, mostly greenhouses and solar structures. We also do work for retail stores, commercial growers, conservatories,

the botanical gardens in Washington DC and huge solar farms for energy providers.

## Why did you look at the electric brake?

*Ronnie:* With the Electric press brake it was the energy consumption. Recently with the focus on energy consumption, everyone wants to use less energy, especially in manufacturing, but if you are in the business of green energy it makes sense to go down that path yourself.

## What are the biggest advantages you have noticed with the electric brake?

*Ronnie:* The biggest feature with the Safan was the no foot pedal operation and the ergonomics of the machine. We don't want our operators to be overly fatigued after 8 hours.

*Jeff:* It's intuitive, it eliminates a step, you don't have to step on the foot pedal.

You stick the part in and the machine cycles.

## How has the electric brake helped you the most?

*Ronnie:* It is definitely easier to set up and get running. Would you agree Jeff?

*Jeff:* Yes I would. You pull up your program, put your tools in and get going.

*Ronnie:* And like Jeff mentioned the control is just more intuitive and straightforward, less training involved to get an operator up to speed and just load a tool in and start making parts.

## How have the light curtains affected your performance with the brake?

*Ronnie:* The light curtain set up is really non-existent on the Safan. They

are hidden away, your operators don't have to worry about them. You can't damage them or hit them easily, you don't have to move them or block them out. That is all done while building the program. Which reduces the set up time dramatically compared to other press brakes. The set up with the light curtain has been hugely beneficial.

**What differences do you see with the electric brake vs a hydraulic brake?**

*Ronnie:* The set up is faster, the cycle time is faster and it improves production at every angle you look at it.

**Has the Safan Electric Brake increased your production?**

*Ronnie:* There is definitely an increase in the production, if I had to make an educated guess, and this is just out of a few parts because we have thousands of part numbers we run, I would say somewhere between 10-20 percent increase per shift. Some may be higher, but mostly in that 10-20 percent range.

**How do you like the software, is it easy work with?**

*Jeff:* Yes, there is a learning curve because it is different, but that's it, it's just different, so that took me a second to learn a new way, but it's easy to learn.

*Ronnie:* The programming of the machine simply involves entering your leg length. You don't have to deal with the complexity of building a profile. You just tell it step one, this dimension is an inch and a half long and it's 90 degrees. Now, I'm simplifying that a little, but it's almost that simple. Compared to other controls, you have 8 steps or dialog boxes of information you have to populate before you can start running

a part.

**Have you noticed a difference with your maintenance?**

*Ronnie:* There is definitely less maintenance involved, it's pretty much 8 grease fittings and blow out an air filter once a week. There is no hydraulic motor so there are no seals or fluid to replace. Everything about the maintenance is less with electric. With the Safan it's two electric motors and a belt and that's compared to how many hydraulic fittings, seals, hoses, pump, motor, etc on a hydraulic brake? While

we haven't had the Safan long enough to do any extensive maintenance, it's easy to see that it is going to be less, it already is less, even on a weekly basis. But even on a yearly or biyearly basis I foresee as being less invasive and the machine will be down for less time just based on my experience of

maintaining equipment over the last 15 years.

**What impresses you the most about the Safan electric brake?**

*Jeff:* It's simplicity and it's speed.

*Ronnie:* I have to admit I was a little hesitant because my whole experience has been with hydraulic brakes. Would it have the tonnage? Would it have the grunt behind it to form what we needed to form? We are so used to having hydraulic pressure for whatever we needed to form. Now we are looking at belt fed by two motors, how fast and accurate is that going to be really? I was pleasantly surprised, it cycles faster, forms more accurate and has much better repeatability than a hydraulic brake. That all surprised me. That has been the most impressive thing, the accuracy, repeatability, and the speed of the ram. That has really impressed me. It has exceeded my expectations.

*"...it cycles faster, forms more accurate and has much better repeatability than a hydraulic brake."*



An Operator at Rough Brothers forming two brackets at once on the Safan Electric Brake without using the foot pedal.

**Contact Modern Machinery**

1-800-589-1444

ModernMachineryCompany.com

Watch A Video of the Safan Electric Press Brake in Operation at Rough Brothers **CLICK HERE**

**Contact Rough Brothers**

Bill Lee  
Vice President of Production Planning

Phone: 1-513-242-0310