December 1, 2016

RE: RBI FlexCore Time and Grade

Since the introduction of the FlexCore (CK) inquiries concerning the current install base and years in service continue to come in from specifying engineers, installing contractors and end users. Below is one successful approach you can use when addressing inquiries pertaining to the install base and years in service for the CK product line.

RBI developed the FlexCore as a solution product designed to meet the needs of the modern commercial high efficiency boiler market, specifically for engineers that prefer stainless steel firetube heat exchangers and variable volume flow system designs.

Before we go any further we need to look at the history of this segment of the variable primary condensing boiler market.

The real push for variable primary condensing boilers came in the early 2000’s with the release of the Aerco Benchmark (stainless steel heat exchanger). This product sold without competition for several years until the release of the PK Mach (aluminum heat exchanger), Hydrotherm KN-Series (cast iron heat exchanger), Cleaver Brooks Clearfire (Stainless with Aluminum fireside baffles heat exchanger) and the Fulton Pulse (stainless steel/carbon steel heat exchanger).

Note that each competitor used different heat exchanger designs and materials of construction. Over the next several years, 2008-2012, stainless steel emerged as the material of choice in the market leading to a handful of additional manufacturers designing and manufacturing boilers designed to meet the specification of the original Aerco Benchmark, primarily Lochinvar, Fulton and RBI.

In 2013, the Lochinvar Crest and then in 2014 Fulton Endura, both stainless steel firetube condensing boilers were introduced as a result of the overall acceptance of stainless steel in this market segment and in direct response to the Aerco Benchmark.

RBI’s FlexCore was well into development alongside its competitors with the first official FlexCore installation occurring in 2014. To date RBI has manufactured and installed hundreds of FlexCore units and by all standards deem this product a huge success.

It is important to note that in 2014, Aerco redesigned the entire heat exchanger on the Benchmark, making them as much a new product as any other stainless steel firetube in the market.

One major advantage RBI had in designing the FlexCore is the relationship with the aforementioned KN-Series boiler. RBI and Hydrotherm are both subsidiaries of parent company Mestek, Inc. The relevance is the FlexCore is identical to the KN-Series boiler from a mechanical and operational stand point which accounts for over a decade of tried and true performance. The critical performance components including the state-of-the-art gas valve and blower system, pilot system, burner configuration and HeatNet control platform are all the same as the KN-Series boiler albeit customized specifically to the FlexCore product line. The only tangible differences are the heat exchanger material and design.
The KN-Series has been in service since 2004 and has an install base of over 16,000 units.

In addition to the proven track record on the mechanical and operational side it must be noted that the stainless steel heat exchanger in the FlexCore is produced by the leading manufacturer worldwide in this segment. AIC, not only manufactures the FlexCore heat exchanger but they also manufacture heat exchangers for several of our competitors including the Lochinvar Crest. In the highly competitive world of condensing boilers there is far less differentiation between the actual products than in years past.

RBI encourages and welcomes any opportunities to host a group of interested parties at our ISO9001 certified factory so they can see first-hand the production and quality control measures incorporated into every single unit. References are also available.

Please contact me directly with any questions or concerns or to set up a plant tour.

Thank you,

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