

KELLEY FANS PROVIDE A SURPRISING BENEFIT.

Company:

Stone Panels
Coppell, TX

Challenge:

Reduce the temperature and humidity to improve the production process and reduce drying time

Solution:

Kelley HVLS Fusion fan.

Industry:

Construction

Geography:

Coppell, TX

“And little did we know, they would end up providing a surprise benefit to our manufacturing process that would increase our capacity and reduce our lead time,”

Located in the heart of Coppell, Texas, just outside of Dallas, Stone Panels Incorporated manufactures one of a kind, light-weight stone veneer panels used in new construction and renovations across the globe. The individualized StoneLight® panels require an even more unique manufacturing process to prepare the stones for offices, homes, schools and other external facades.

With a long standing history spanning many decades and multiple continents, Stone Panels has recently relocated all of its operations and manufacturing to Texas. This 166,000 square foot facility is home to every step of their manufacturing process from receiving raw materials to shipping finished goods to customers around the world.

The design of the facility incorporates multiple areas and work stations each dedicated to a specific step in the manufacturing process. The facility does not have a centralized air-conditioning system and working in close quarters in a humid, and often times dusty facility can lead to uncomfortable employees and a drop in productivity. And with a product that generally has long lead times, any additional delays can be devastating to order processing and profitability.

“Our employees are such great assets and needed during every step of the manufacturing process to bring quality products to our customers,” said

Dewey Winker, Facilities Manager. “So keeping them cool, comfortable and productive is a top priority.” he added.

It was the need to keep employees cool that ultimately drove Stone Panels and Winker to look into installing HVLS fans throughout the facility to reduce the temperature and the humidity in the facility. So working with his local Kelley distributor, Miner North Texas, Winker opted to install six, 24’ Kelley FUSION HVLS fans. “They are really impressive with the amount of air they move to keep the facility cool.” he said. “And little did we know, they would end up providing a surprise benefit to our manufacturing process that would increase our capacity and reduce our lead time,” chuckled Winker.

The Kelley FUSION HVLS fan is designed to create a comfortable environment while maintaining an energy efficient facility. They are available in a large selection of sizes and power configurations that are suitable for a variety of environments. The light-weight, single piece anodized aluminum blades of these fans produce a massive column of air that flows down toward the floor and outward in all directions before it is pulled back vertically toward the blades to create what is known as a horizontal floor jet. It is this floor jet that produces the circulation that provides the benefits Kelley big fans have become known for over the years.

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By creating this slow moving breeze at 2 to 3 miles per hour, many facilities have reported a reduction in perceived temperature equivalent to 7 to 11 degrees Fahrenheit. “Without having a centralized cooling system available to employees, the mid-day heat of the Texas summers can really bring work to a halt.” Winker mentioned. “After we installed the fans, we have a much cooler and less humid work environment and we have seen lead times decrease as a result of employees’ comfort levels having improved so dramatically,” he said.

The sensation of coolness is not dependent on air temperature in Stone Panel’s case because there is no centralized cooling unit. Rather, the circulation causes the air to feel cooler than it actually is as the breeze passes over the skin, making workers more comfortable and therefore more productive. These fans also provide airflow throughout the warehouse and eliminate warm or cold air pockets for more consistent cooling and energy efficiency.

While employee safety, comfort and productivity are always top priorities at Stone Panels, so is an efficient manufacturing process. They use a state-of-the-art process involving multiple steps to cut the stones, polish and create the panels and then add a finish to seal them for protection from the elements. The drying time during the final step generally takes the longest at up to seven days for a completely cured product which accounts for the lengthy lead time on many products.

“We pride ourselves on providing our customers only the highest quality building products, and if that means a longer lead time, we don’t mind.” Winker mentioned. “After we put the fans in, we couldn’t believe the difference the downward air flow made to cut down cure times.” he added. The slow moving breeze created by the six Kelley FUSION fans has reduced the drying time from upwards of a full week, consistently down to two days.

The Kelley fans have been a great addition to Stone Panels Inc. in place of a centralized air-conditioning system to keep employees comfortable, and reducing work flow and drying time down to less than half of what it was. They have helped to regulate the facility’s temperature year-round from floor to ceiling preventing them from realizing extreme temperature changes either hot or cold as well as cutting days off the manufacturing process. Managing the internal temperature of the facility creates opportunities for not only energy savings, but increased capacity due to decreased lead time.



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Form#: KCS-SP-0313