

SSAB's modernized blast furnaces reduce annual costs by SEK 200 million

SSAB's blast furnace in Luleå, Sweden is now turning out premium quality steel crude iron after undergoing full modernization lasting more than three months. The blast furnaces in Raahe, Finland were modernized as recently as 2011 and an investment in a pulverized coal injection system has now been completed there. This investment will reduce annual costs by around SEK 200 million from 2016 onwards. SSAB's blast furnaces are now world class, which in turn enables world-leading steel products.

"It makes me very proud to say that we now have world-class crude iron production facilities, says Olavi Huhtala, Head of SSAB Europe. Earlier, too, our blast furnaces ranked among the world's most carbon-dioxide efficient. This summer's installations in both Luleå and Raahe will further improve both our cost efficiency and environmental footprint. The investments will enable our facilities to continue producing high-class steel for many years to come. This means that we can now continue to develop world-leading steel applications in close collaboration with customers.

After 15 years in constant operation, the Luleå blast furnace has undergone complete modernization and is set to continue production for another 15-20 years. In addition to replacing the hearth carbon refractories and furnace cooling staves, a new casthouse dedusting filter was fitted. This benefits the environment through less dust emissions, less noise and a better workplace environment. Also the two converters were renewed at the steel mill in Luleå, where the old coke plant quenching tower was also replaced, which again means less dust emissions into the surroundings.

Across the Gulf of Bothnia in Raahe, Finland a pulverized coal injection system has replaced an earlier heavy fuel oil injection system in the blast furnaces. This will result in more cost-effective steel production and lower raw material costs. Work under way on replacing the converters at the steel mill in Raahe will be completed next year.

The maintenance work and investments in Luleå involved over 600 people from companies across Europe who worked together with SSAB's employees. The blast furnaces in Raahe and Oxelösund supplied the company's rolling mills during the modernization process at Luleå. The smaller of the two blast furnaces in Oxelösund was idled in mid-October as the blast furnace in Luleå is up and running again.

SSAB's five blast furnaces in the Nordic region have a total capacity of around 6.4 million tonnes. One blast furnace is in Luleå and two in both Oxelösund and Raahe.

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