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## Dallas/Fort Worth

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## NEWS

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### Diving in



Innovative Welding Service owner Andrew Saltsman applies what he learned welding underwater then to his work on land today.

**A**ndrew Saltsman just knew he was in trouble when two teachers kept glancing at him through the glass in his 11th grade classroom door.

But when he was finally called in front of the teachers, the nervous Saltsman was puzzled to hear one ask, "Have you ever thought about welding?"

The teacher, who taught industrial cooperative training, had taken notice of Saltsman, whose father was a welder. There was a welding job available that paid far more than the fast food joints his friends worked at, and if Saltsman wanted it, he could go to school half a day and work the other half.

Of course, Saltsman said yes to more money and less school.

What he wasn't counting on was getting hooked on the trade. Despite the fact that he learned to weld during a summer of record temperatures, post graduation brought more welding work in different shops.

A stint in the Marine Corps still wasn't pointing him in a certain direction career-wise. But that all changed when he walked into a welding class he had enrolled in to make up for his lack of formal training.

"Up on the bulletin board, there was a poster of a guy hanging under a pipe member welding underwater that said, 'You can be an underwater welder,'" Saltsman remembers. "And I thought, 'That's

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### Pork in the road



Hose-Tech's Bill Lesswing chose hose over hot dogs.

**D**on't misunderstand: **Bill Lesswing** has a passion for hoses. But, deep down, his heart belongs to hot dogs.

"My second goal in life is to get into restaurant ownership, but everyone tells me not to do that," says Lesswing, **Hose-Tech's** assistant chief operating officer.

"I'm from upstate New York originally. It would be an easy, single-item menu - hot dogs. To me, the key of a restaurant making it or breaking it is a very minimal menu so there's no waste. Sahlen's out of New York has natural casing, charcoal-cooked hot dogs. I make my own spicy hot sauce. The key is to use sweet relish and dill pickle to get a mixture of sweet and sour."

Lesswing almost got his chance as a restaurateur when he accepted a compensation package upon leaving his job as an airline mechanic in the 1990s. Instead, he invested in the on-site hose replacement business 10 years ago.

"Irving was our first location," Lesswing remembers. "Three years into it, we opened an industrial hose supply business in Fort Worth. We opened the Houston location two and a half years ago, and we opened in Austin last June. We started with three vans and now we have about 20 employees."

On Aug. 1, Lesswing will move his staff from the original store on East John Carpenter Freeway to a new building on

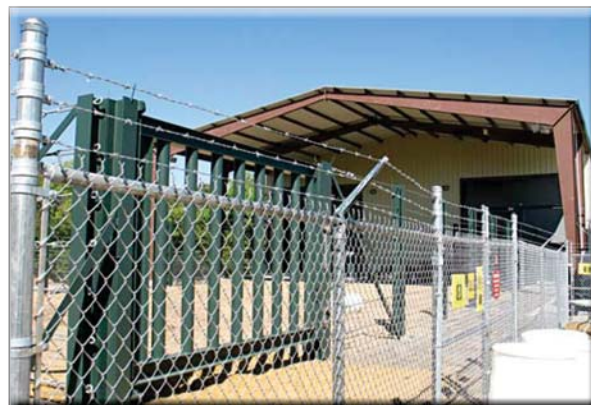
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## Gypsy board

**T**here was an elephant in the room, and everyone was talking about it.

The Dallas Zoo had finally found a new friend for their lone elephant Jenny, whose longtime companion, KeKe, had passed away last year. Gypsy, a sweet-natured 27-year-old female African elephant rumored to have been in a few movies, had been purchased from a private owner by the Dallas Zoological Society to become the zoo's newest star - and, it was hoped, a new friend for the older Jenny.

There was just one dilemma. All new animal arrivals to the zoo have a period of quarantine before their introduction. And while plans were under way to begin construction on the \$27 million, 11-acre Savannah exhibit for a herd of elephants, hoof stock, giraffes, wild dogs and a pride of lions, the zoo didn't have a facility to quarantine an animal as large as Gypsy.



The Dallas Zoo's new large mammal quarantine, constructed by MetalMan Design/Build Corporation, was inspired by a new animal arrival.

"The zoo came to us and said they would like to bring in a new elephant, but needed a new quarantine facility for it - and they needed it in six weeks," says project manager **Tamara Crooks**, president and general counsel of **MetalMan Design/Build Corporation**.

"The zoo couldn't commit to purchasing the elephant until they were confident a facility could be built in time," says MetalMan's Vice President and design-build manager **J.V. McLure**. "I told them to go ahead and make the arrangements - it would be ready."

And it was.

With a budget of only \$460,000, the team completed the design and construction of the large mammal quarantine in five weeks.

"It would typically be a nine-month project at least," says McLure. "I don't know how we did it; it's amazing! It was

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## Ah, the perks of construction

Some folks go their entire lives without catching a sunrise. For those of us who have to be on a jobsite at 5am, it's just part of the job.



Another cool thing is feeling sunshine on your shoulders – it makes you happy! "Being outside is the best part," says **Rusty Franklin** of **Lance Construction** in Haltom City. "I can't stand being cooped up!"



How 'bout those gosh-darn dress codes? Slacks? Ties? In construction, business casual takes on a whole new meaning.



What about, say, bad hair days? If you ever need a cap, all you have to do is go to one of the many parties that construction companies have – caps galore!



And speaking of parties, how many industries do you know of that have parties that actually benefit you? In construction, it's all about getting to know people, so parties such as the one where the **Firetrol** team had a table happen quite frequently. (Is that a cap on their table?



And how about the pride in a job well done?

"Just to know you're doing something for the community, and that you're creating something that will be around for years, that you can point out to your kids and say, 'I helped make that!' is a bonus," says **Christian Martinez** of **Northstar Electrical Service Co.** –va/mjm



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Heavy steel sections were included in the design to contain Gypsy the elephant in the facility. Photo by Cathy Burkey

seven days a week – long days. We called on everybody we knew to help out."

"It was so busy at that quarantine building that I think, at one time, we had 60 people working on it," says Crooks. "It was tight. But everyone was very cooperative."

To achieve the results needed within the allotted budget, MetalMan demolished and salvaged an existing warehouse on the zoo's grounds and re-erected it on the chosen site, converting it into a 7000-sf steel-and-concrete building.

Designed to be large enough to house giraffes as well – with an outdoor holding yard, automatic gates and elephant specialty products for training and restraint – the quarantine "is a very sophisticated and highly specialized facility," McLure says.

Besides the animal's comfort and acclimation needs, addressing public safety was also crucial.

"It takes a tremendous amount of steel to contain an elephant," says McLure. "We used heavy steel sections, and designed it based upon the impact of a 15,000-lb. animal at 7 mph."

The large mammal quarantine is not the first Dallas Zoo project the firm has undertaken. In partnership with the city of Dallas, MetalMan has built exhibits for the Dallas Zoo since 1994, when the design-build firm, which until that time had zero zoological building experience, won the competitive bid to construct the zoo's chimpanzee exhibit.

"The city of Dallas was more nervous than we were," McLure remembers of that first project. "They said, 'This is highly specialized work. Will you be able to do this? You only have experience doing post offices.' We asked them to give us a

chance, and they did. We've been here almost continuously ever since."

"Been here" is actually a literal statement. The core of the firm – Crooks, McLure and Vice President **Frank Argumaniz**, who also served as project superintendent – has, since its relationship with the zoo began, set up shop in a trailer located on zoo grounds.

"It works because when the zoo director needs something, he just comes to our trailer and the decision makers are right here," says Crooks, who estimates that 90 percent of the firm's work is with the city of Dallas' parks department, with 80 percent of that dedicated to work on the zoo. "We've worked on, and created exhibits for, almost every part of this zoo. I think we are one of the only zoological design-build contractors in the nation."

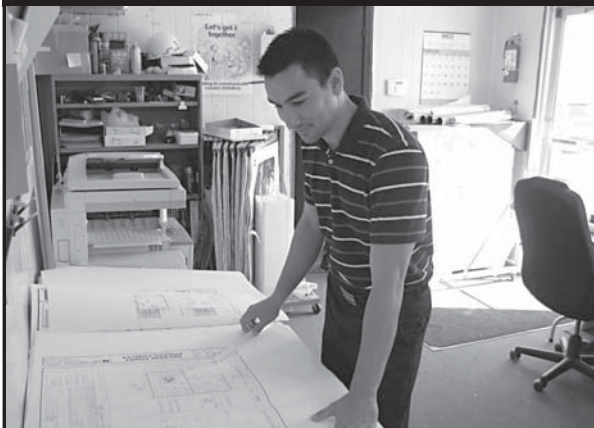
MetalMan's established relationship with their client helped Gypsy's transition to her new home go smoothly. When the zoo moved the elephant in on Mar. 31, the director of the Park and Recreation Department came by and thanked MetalMan for making the quarantine possible under such tight time and budget allowances.

"And we said, 'No, thank you,'" says Crooks. "It's very important to us that we give the city of Dallas credit for helping us become what we are. They're great partners to have. They understand the process and they truly want this to be the best zoo in the United States. That's our common goal." –mjm

Founded in 1994, MetalMan Design/Build Corporation, specializes in zoological design and construction. The firm is overseen by partners Tamara Crooks, J.V. McLure and Frank Argumaniz.

Construction News ON LOCATION

### What's the plan?



**Angel Bazan**, an estimator for **Bazan Roofing Inc.** in Haltom City, has big plans for his roofing client. –mjm



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