ABB wins $2.5M drives order to futureproof Kanthal rolling mill

Comprehensive drive system and project management package for Swedish mill will boost performance, uptime and efficiency.

Kanthal - the largest supplier of steel within the global Kanthal Group - has selected ABB to supply and install a new drive system, including motor, frequency converter, transformer and controls for the company’s Hallstahammar blooming mill in an order worth USD $2.5 million. The assignment also includes mounting of a new 70-ton gearbox.

ABB will manage the project from end-to-end. This includes removal of an existing DC motor and drive system, in place since the 1950s, and installation of a modern AC design. The scope also covers all electrical and mechanical mounting, concrete work, commissioning and equipment testing. The new drive system will enhance performance and availability, with fewer unplanned stops and access to ABB’s service expertise and spare parts.

“Any interruption due to problems with the blooming mill can halt our entire production so this significant investment is crucial to minimize business risk for the future,” said Anders Björkroth, project manager, Kanthal. “Replacing the existing DC motor with the latest AC design ensures a reliable, efficient and stable platform for our rolling operations.”

Removal and replacement of the existing 60-ton ABB DC motor will take place over six weeks during summer 2021. The new ABB drive system will offer numerous benefits to Kanthal, including increased reliability, improved performance, built-in regulation of reactive power, immunity from network malfunctions and improved total efficiency of around 3.5 percent.

“ABB’s extensive field experience, and trusted solutions will help Kanthal guarantee the future of this mill,” said Björn Jonsson, Hub Business Line Manager, North Europe, Process Industries, ABB. “The fact that ABB has previously implemented similar overall commitments with heavy engine replacements in a short time means great security for the customer.”

Kanthal selected ABB’s solution following a feasibility study of three alternatives. With the chosen solution, Kanthal will benefit from existing contacts with local ABB service and experts, as well as easy access to spare parts.

Upgrading to ABB’s cutting-edge technology will be a major boost for operators, with a monitor in the operator’s cab showing system information to facilitate both driving and troubleshooting the blooming mill.
Caption: ABB motor with modern AC design
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