ASPHALT RECOVERY FROM DAMAGED TANK, NO HEAT

During an unexpected shut-down, a refinery put 100,000 BBLs of asphalt binder in a tank that did not have heating coils, but by the time the facility was able to restart, the product was no longer pumpable and the tank had been damaged by a separate incident. Further complicating the problem, the tank was uninsulated and only had a single inlet and outlet, with no other nozzles on the tank. The asphalt binder in both inlet and outlet piping was completely solidified. To summarize:

- Asphalt in a damaged tank with no heating coils and no insulation
- Plugged lines
- No good way to extract the product.

STAGE 1: PRODUCT VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Altiras pulled product samples and analyzed the samples and built a smallscale model of the storage tank to effectively evaluate various methods for removing the product. Following the R&D phase, Altiras made a turn-key proposal to the owner for the purchase of the product, with Altiras providing all the equipment, personnel, and expenses for getting the product flowable and out of the tank. The plan involved:

- Engineering design of tank and piping modifications
- Implementation of those modifications

This processing solution involved the combination of:

- A high flash cutter fluid to reduce viscosity.
- A viscosity reducing additive.
- A fired heating system complete with all piping, pumps, heat exchangers, valves, connections, hoses, and fittings.
- Supply of all equipment and materials.
- Supply of all operators.
- Ex-works Purchase of the product.
- Management of operations, logistics, and the entire process

Conclusion

Not only did the Altiras solution result in a significant net value recovery, but the owner also avoided excessive costs that would have incurred for removal and disposal of the asphalt as a waste. Further, the process left the tank completely intact, cleared, and ready for productive, ongoing use.

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