

## **New chapter for HTA as it joins the WEC Group**



WEC Group, one of the UK's largest engineering and fabrication companies, has today completed a deal which sees the Coventry-based HTA Group join its growing family of businesses.

The multi-million pound partnership deal sees the Lancashire-headquartered WEC Group continue to dominate the UK's laser cutting and fabrication sector.

HTA, which has a 130-strong workforce and a £10 million annual turnover, joins WEC Group to create a business with 800 employees and a projected £75 million turnover.



HTA, founded in 1973, is one of the UK's largest subcontract manufacturers. It is a leading supplier of laser cut parts, sheet metal components and fabricated assemblies. Like its new parent group it has a strong track record of investment in technology.

HTA managing director Adam Thomas is working within the expanded business on a consultancy basis while his brother Philip remains a key member of the HTA staff.

Wayne Wild, commercial director of the family-owned WEC Group, said: "This is an exciting new chapter for HTA Group, its workforce and its present and future customers.

"HTA's partnership with WEC Group, announced today, will create a major new force in the UK's laser cutting and fabrication sector and allows both companies to offer more to our customers.

"Continuous investment in new technology and in our workforce has been the hallmark of the WEC Group's success and we're delighted to welcome HTA into our growing family. It's a really great fit for our business.

“As another family run company we’re aware of the name HTA has forged for itself and its reputation for high quality work, service and delivery. Our aim is to build on that.

“Both companies share the same values of continuous investment, commitment to training and a strong belief in customer care. That’s why we believe this new partnership is right for both businesses.

“The expanded group makes us one of the largest laser cutting and fabrication operations in the UK. It means we can offer more services and skills to our customers.”

Last year HTA Group, which carries out robotic and manual welding and fabrication at its 90,000 sq ft factory in Coventry, invested more than £2 million in automated laser profiling technology in an installation that was reported to be unparalleled in the country.



The equipment was made up of two 5kW TRUMPF TruLaser 5040 fiber laser cutting machines (4m by 2m format) with BrightLine fiber technology and SortMaster part sorting automation.

The new deal means that the expanded WEC Group will have 23 laser cutting machines working across all its operations, including two tube machines that will allow HTA to offer 3D laser cutting to its customers for the first time.

In the past 12 months, WEC Group has invested around £11 million in new machinery and workspace, including £7 million on a new 300,000 sq ft factory in South Yorkshire.

WEC’s robotic 7.2m x 640 tonne press also increases HTA’s current capacity and adds waterjet and plasma cutting to the Midlands operation. On top of that HTA adds CNC Punching to WEC Group’s overall capabilities and allows it to offer that function to its existing and future customer base.

Wayne said: “The coming together of both companies paves the way to future success – not only for our businesses but for our customers as well.

“In more than 35 years of trading we have always grown the business in a strategic and sustainable way. This deal continues that approach.

“We have continued to invest in the future, both in terms of technology and in training, with the only in-house welding and fabrication training academy of its kind in the country - ranked in the Top Three in the UK as an apprenticeship provider.”

Last February WEC Group funded a partnership deal to acquire the business and certain assets of MTL Group - now known as MTL Advanced - out of administration, saving 135 jobs in South Yorkshire.

It followed up that restructuring deal with major investment which has seen it create 55 new jobs and fund an £8 million investment plan to secure the long-term succession of the Rotherham company.

The HTA deal means WEC Group will now have around 800 staff working across nine sites in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Merseyside and the West Midlands.

Adam Thomas, managing director of HTA Group, is excited for the future and the opportunities that now exist.

He said: “The synergy with WEC Group is very strong and this deal makes both businesses much stronger entities. It really enhances our capabilities and capacity and that is a major advantage to all our customers.

“I would like to place on record my family’s thanks to the staff at HTA who, in more than 40 years, have provided a first class service to our loyal customer base.”

WEC Group has a 35-year track record in investment and job creation. The company, formed in 1979, has an extensive customer list across a wide range of industries including rail, automotive, nuclear, offshore oil and gas and aerospace, has also purchased a six-acre site at the Walker Business Park in Blackburn for future expansion.

Its manufacturing ranges from rail & CCTV structures, bus frames, and diving decompression chambers to street furniture and public art sculptures.

Steve Hartley, WEC Group founder and managing director, said: “We are delighted to welcome HTA Group and its workforce to WEC Group. This is a logical move for us and for HTA and we look forward to the future with growing confidence.”