

Hands On

Full-time Sales Associate Manages Equipment Needs on California's Busiest Expressway

United Rentals recently stepped up its game on the \$1.4 billion SR 91 Freeway Expansion Project in southern California, choosing to directly manage the mega-project's high equipment volume by manning the site with a full-time sales associate. More than \$6.4 million in rentals have been needed at the site, peaking at more than 500 pieces of equipment.

Once completed in April, the project will have extended SR 91's tolled express lanes between the Orange County/Riverside County lines and Interstate 15 near Los Angeles, as well as added lanes and improved five interchanges. Atkinson/Walsh, A Joint Venture, is the project's contractor.

Soon after landing the equipment contract, it became apparent that the project required additional "hands on" attention. "This is one of the heaviest traveled freeways in the country," says UR District Manager Mark Volkoff. "Needless to say, we ran into some challenges. There was so much activity that the sales rep couldn't keep up, so we decided to assign a sales associate specifically for this job." Project delays due to equipment breakdowns are not an option at the site, since hefty fines are imposed if temporary lane closures don't re-open on schedule.

Physically located in the project's job trailer, UR sales associate Roger Lazaro directly assists the dispatcher with ordering equipment, coordinating drivers and ensuring service technicians are dispatched efficiently.

Additionally, UR's lead sales rep, Dave Mercado, conducts weekly calls with all UR divisions to discuss and resolve issues. This has subsequently led to other divisions renting on the site, including UR's Power HVAC Division and Trench Division.



Additionally, by using UR's Total Control product the joint venture has more efficiently managed equipment, scheduled pickups and call offs and maximized equipment utilization.

The innovative product has also provided technicians, drivers and the dispatcher with greater visibility into equipment locations, a common challenge on projects where bridges and on/off ramps are frequently being demolished and relocated.

Although his first time to use Total Control, Tim Karle, Atkinson's equipment superintendent, is quickly becoming the product's biggest fan. "Due to a project delay, we had to build 32 bridges in 40 months," Karle says. "Subsequently, we had to ramp up our equipment needs faster than expected. Instead of 25 forklifts, we had 45 to 50. Instead of just 20 light plants, we ended up having almost 80. We were renting everything that UR could give us. We even started renting pickups from them.

"Through it all, UR remained dedicated to the project and did everything they could do to help us out," he adds. "UR is just a top-class company."

UR's Volkoff says Total Control also saved the day in a rather unconventional way. "After a United Rentals welder was stolen off the site, the GPS on the welder helped the police locate it in the thief's garage, and enabled Atkinson to recover the welder, thereby leading to an arrest."

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