

# Carbide Industries LLC

*A leader in calcium carbide production and technology*

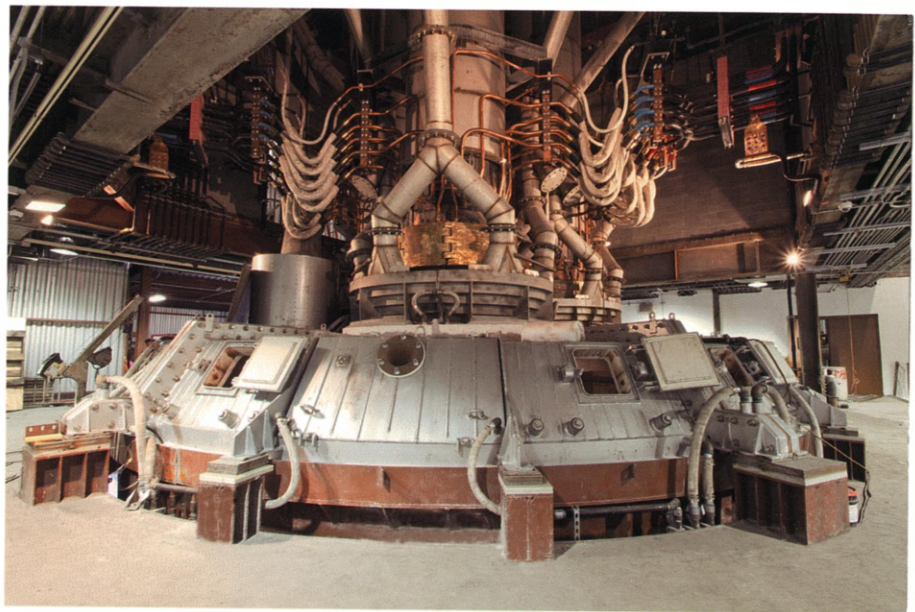
**W**hile Carbide Industries LLC is a new company, the manufacturing of calcium carbide is not new to the industrial gases industry. When a national defense project in early 1941 transformed Louisville, Kentucky, into a major production site for synthetic rubber, a systematic support effort soon was underway for the necessary components. Toward that cause, National Carbide Company announced that it would construct a plant in southwest Louisville to make calcium carbide and its derivative, acetylene gas, an essential component for the production of synthetic rubber. The process for manufacturing calcium carbide required large quantities of electrical energy. Energy support was provided by the local utility, Louisville Gas & Electric Company, who at the same time announced that it would build a large electrical generating station along the Ohio River in the same area. DuPont was first to announce that it would build a plant nearby to produce the company's own formulation of synthetic rubber called neoprene. This announcement was followed by two more: B.F. Goodrich and National Synthetic Rubber Company would also build synthetic rubber plants. The industrial area would quickly become known, as it is today, as "Rubbertown." Rubbertown in 1941 would soon prove to be critical to the nation with the advent of war.

At the outbreak of WWII, the demand for synthetic rubber rose rapidly as Japanese expansion in the Far East had virtually cut off supplies of natural rubber. The federal government quickly initiated a plan to acquire these plants and expand their production capabilities. At the end of the war, these plants were leased back to their original owners.

National Carbide soon became a

division of the Air Reduction Company, which in 1951 had constructed a calcium carbide and acetylene plant in Calvert City, Kentucky. Eventually, in 1956, Air Reduction Company became better known by the acronym AIRCO. During that period, acetylene from calcium carbide was produced at both plants to serve the chemical industry, while the manufacturing of calcium carbide served the industrial gas industry for its production of acetylene used in oxy-

America. Metallurgical applications associated with the production of iron and steel began to demand significant quantities. BOC continued its ownership until 1989, when it decided to spin off its calcium carbide division along with one other operating division. These divisions were sold to a group of private investors and managers, and the new company was named The Carbide/Graphite Group Inc. In 2002, the assets of the calcium carbide busi-



A top-side view of the Louisville calcium carbide furnace.

acetylene cutting and welding.

As time passed, new technology changed the production process for synthetic rubber. The advent of petrochemical-based processes became the predominant route and acetylene sales to the chemical industry began to drop. However, calcium carbide sales to the industrial gas industry continued at a steady pace.

In the late 1970s, AIRCO was purchased by the British Oxygen Company (BOC), which had its headquarters in England. Soon after, new emerging markets for calcium carbide made their debut in North

ness were acquired by a new group of private investors and incorporated under the name Carbide Industries LLC. The Louisville and Calvert City operations today employ over 130 employees.

Calcium carbide is presently used in a diverse range of basic industries, and it remains the core product manufactured by Carbide Industries in Louisville. Carbide Industries is North America's leader in calcium carbide production and technology, and has become the primary choice for customers who demand service and consistency.