

# HSS: DESIGNS FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY



*Retrofitted Marathon Service Station*

# APPEARANCE, STRENGTH, EASE OF MAINTENANCE MAKE HSS MARATHON'S CHOICE TO CONVERT NEARLY 600 STATIONS



## HSS Provides Sign Support Columns That Are Sturdy, Attractive

When the downstream assets of Marathon Oil Company were combined with Ashland Inc. to form Marathon Ashland Petroleum LLP in 1998, one of the most pressing issues the new company faced was to present a single, unified image to the public.

Marathon Ashland, at the time, had about 2,900 Marathon stations in a dozen midwestern states. It also had about 600 Ashland stations in southern Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky.

“Maintaining both brands was an option,” says Edward S. Markel, Marathon Brand Manager. “But it would have been expensive to maintain separate advertising programs and

inventories of signage and printed materials. And we would have missed the chance to achieve savings, synergies and superior customer service by putting the Marathon organization’s size, brand equity and substantially larger credit card program to work.”

## Chose to Phase Out Ashland Name Gradually

The solution, reached in conjunction with Ashland wholesalers, was a gradual phase-out of the Ashland brand and the conversion of most of its stations to the Marathon brand. Steel Hollow Structural Sections (HSS) have played a significant role in the re-imaging program.

So far, the program has converted nearly 400 Ashland stations to the Marathon brand and “look.” Roughly another 150 have yet to be converted, and some small stations have been closed.





Conversion of an Ashland station involves a complete repainting to replace their background red color with Marathon's white. New signs display the red-white-and-blue Marathon logo, and canopies bear horizontal blue striping.

HSS is used in the stations' signs—most of which are twin-post "goal post" type. About 650 tons of HSS have been used for sign support columns since the conversion program began. In some cases, HSS has been also used for the canopy support columns.

Station signs are large, either 10' or 14' in width. The smaller sign is supported by two 6" square HSS posts with 1/4" wall thickness and 20 feet in height. The larger requires two 8" x 6" rectangular

HSS posts with 3/8" walls and 25 feet in height. Signs advertising fuel prices and a reader board for messages of local interest are connected to the posts below the distinctive Marathon logo.

### **Appearance Helps in Permitting Process**

The clean, attractive appearance of HSS is a major factor in its use by Marathon, according to Senior Engineer David A. Clemans. "Zoning and permitting are very important issues for us in the construction of new stations. So we want our sign structures to have a pleasing look that will help stations be well received in their communities."

Clemans says that the HSS columns are

easy to paint and to maintain and have no sharp edges. Their high strength-to-weight ratio provides maximum resistance to wind loads with minimal column size.

Based in Findlay, Ohio, Marathon Ashland is the nation's fourth largest refiner, with a 935,000 barrel-per-day capacity. Its retail marketing system comprises about 5,400 locations in 21 states, more than half of which market the Marathon brand. A wholly-owned subsidiary, Speedway SuperAmerica, is the nation's second largest company owned-and-operated gasoline and convenience store chain.