BENNETT

MAKING MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM

One Truckload at a Time

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What Lies Beneath the Artistry



The Mercedes-Benz Stadium was constructed with 27,000 tons of steel.

Most would agree that the new 2 million-square-foot Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta is not just any stadium. Expected to become an iconic building in the years ahead, the new home of the Atlanta Falcons NFL football team is considered an architectural wonder with its "first of its kind" retractable roof, 360-degree walkways around the building, and floor to ceiling windows that offer views of the city skyline.

While most will marvel at the external beauty and artistry, the real wonder lies in the story of its construction, including how 27,000 tons of steel was shipped to a 20-acre laydown yard in Atlanta. How the steel was assembled and transported through dense city streets to the project site a few miles away. How each piece was delivered to the stadium one truckload at a time and lifted by cranes off the trailers and as high as 30 stories to be connected to the piece that had come before it, to eventually form the foundation that would make this breath-taking structure come to life.



The Real Wonder

The far less visible, but just as significant, story is about the more than two years of managing the painstaking details of loading and securing every piece of steel, from bolts to box-trusses, whether in the hot summer heat or the freezing cold of winter. The 24/7 coordination of shipments in and out of the yard, or from the multiple fabrication shops where the steel was welded and painted. Or into the final jobsite upon request, at any time of day, often with lead times that were counted in minutes and hours rather than days.

Bennett made 2,500 transports from the laydown yard to the project site, each one through the tight twists and turns, and often heavily trafficked streets of downtown Atlanta.

Scope of Project

A team of project managers and drivers from Bennett Motor Express, LLC, Bennett International Transport, LLC and Bennett International Logistics, LLC ("Bennett"), backed by a long list of committed cross-divisional operations managers, worked together to make this project a success. They partnered with six clients on the job from February 2015 to July 2017 and coordinated 4,000+ loads from 15 locations to 22 destinations safely, on time, and without serious incident.

Pieces of steel arrive at the laydown yard after being treated at fabrication shops.





The Mercedes-Benz Stadium under construction.

This story shares how Bennett transported nearly all of the steel that forms the stadium, including the structural steel and the façade panels that cover the outside. This includes the pieces that form the pedestrian bridge and the four sections of the monolithic 41.5-foot-tall stainless steel falcon statue that now towers over visitors as they arrive at the stadium entrance.

Bennett Selected to Transport Structural Steel

Bennett first became involved when it was selected to provide the transport of structural steel and related construction materials to and from various locations in the United States, including the stadium site in Atlanta. The role was awarded to Bennett by The Canam Group, a contractor engaged in the structural steel design-build aspect of the project.

When Bennett first heard of the project, they knew that they could help meet the project's Equal Business Opportunity goals. Because Bennett is a Certified Woman Business Enterprise recognized by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), its logistics services are valuable to a wide range of contractors and scopes of work. Bennett Motor Express, LLC, as a nationwide flatbed and heavy-haul motor carrier, along with Bennett International Logistics, LLC – the company that managed the stadium transportation services – are all certified and registered as Women-Owned Businesses because Marcia Taylor founded Bennett in 1974 with her late husband and leads the company as its CEO.

"We began attending the meetings with the city of Atlanta and the Atlanta Falcons development group to get connected and learn who was manufacturing all of the components for the stadium," says Charles Phillips, president of Bennett International Logistics. "We learned that the Canam Group from Canada was providing the structural steel, and they needed to meet the WBE requirement. We were able to demonstrate to them that we had the expertise, capacity and project management capabilities to manage the thousands of loads of steel through the fabrication and assembly processes and eventually to the final destination."



A box truss that has been assembled in the laydown yard is lifted by a crane onto a Bennett trailer.

From Steel to Falcon Statue, and Everything in Between

Bennett started the project as a subcontractor for Canam, but eventually was selected to transport materials for other clients involved in the stadium's construction as well. Over the nearly two and a half years of the project, Bennett also hauled:

- The steel façade panels that cover the building for Crown Corr,
- The four parts of a pedestrian bridge for Big R Bridge,
- Safety equipment for Derr and Isbell Construction,
- Cranes and crane parts for Buckner Heavylift Cranes, and
- The four pieces of the 73,000-pound stainless steel Falcon statue for the Hungarian artist who created it, Miklos Gabor Szoze.

> **"Our team was responsible for tracking and tracing every load and providing Canam with a daily report."**
>
> **Charles Phillips**
> President,
> Bennett International Logistics

"In the United States, and more specifically in the state of Georgia, there are few providers that can bring our high level of expertise with worldwide logistics, flatbed and heavy haul trucking assets, coupled with proven experience managing the demands of complex projects," says Charles. "What we ended up accomplishing far exceeded the original scope and dynamics we originally sought to achieve. That's because our core competency is providing full comprehensive supply chain solutions to our clients."



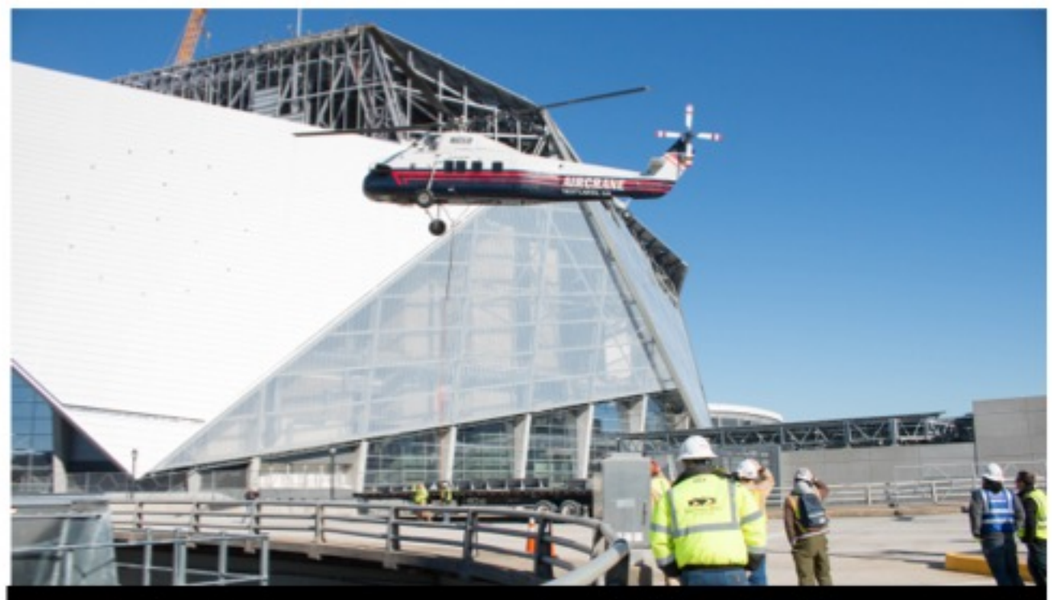
Bennett transported the four parts of the 73,000-pound stainless steel falcon statue.

Mobilizing International, Heavy Haul & Specialized Trucking Capacities

Bennett International Logistics also provided third-party logistics (3PL) and consulting support during the front-end of the project, drawing from its unique cornucopia of specialties across its international, heavy haul and specialized trucking affiliated companies.



A dedicated team of drivers hauled most of the 2,500 loads from the laydown yard to the project site.



A helicopter lifts a piece of steel off a Bennett flatbed for transport to the roof.



A box truss is lifted onto a flatbed. Hundreds of trusses were welded together to support the roof of the stadium.

Team of Experts

A team of experts from Bennett International Logistics, Bennett International Transport and Bennett Motor Express partnered with Canam to determine the logistics of moving thousands of loads to and from fabrication shops throughout the United States and Canada and then transporting the assembled pieces from the laydown yard for the short but complex distance to the stadium.

Leading that effort was Bennett's business development manager- Kyle Wilckens, who later managed the transportation services from the laydown yard with the help of his brother, Dylan Wilckens. Between them, they managed the yard, maintained equipment, and dispatched the roughly 2,500 loads that were transported from the yard directly to the job site. Kyle's job also included coordinating Bennett's divisions and departments to work as a team on initiatives and rallying leaders to leverage their regulatory relationships.



Drivers plan logistics for the next load.

Logistics Planning & Consulting



A Bennett driver backs into the stadium with a box truss that will be lifted to the roof by a crane.

Summarizing the planning process, Kyle explains: "We had to do a lot of work with the Georgia Department of Transportation on route planning to be able to advise Canam on how large they could manufacture their steel pieces. We also played a strong role in selecting the laydown yard for its proximity to the job site and because we determined that there was a feasible shipping route between the property and the job site. By advising them on what was possible and what was not possible, Canam would be able to determine how much manpower to have on site, how many cranes they needed, and the transportable sizes of the steel pieces."



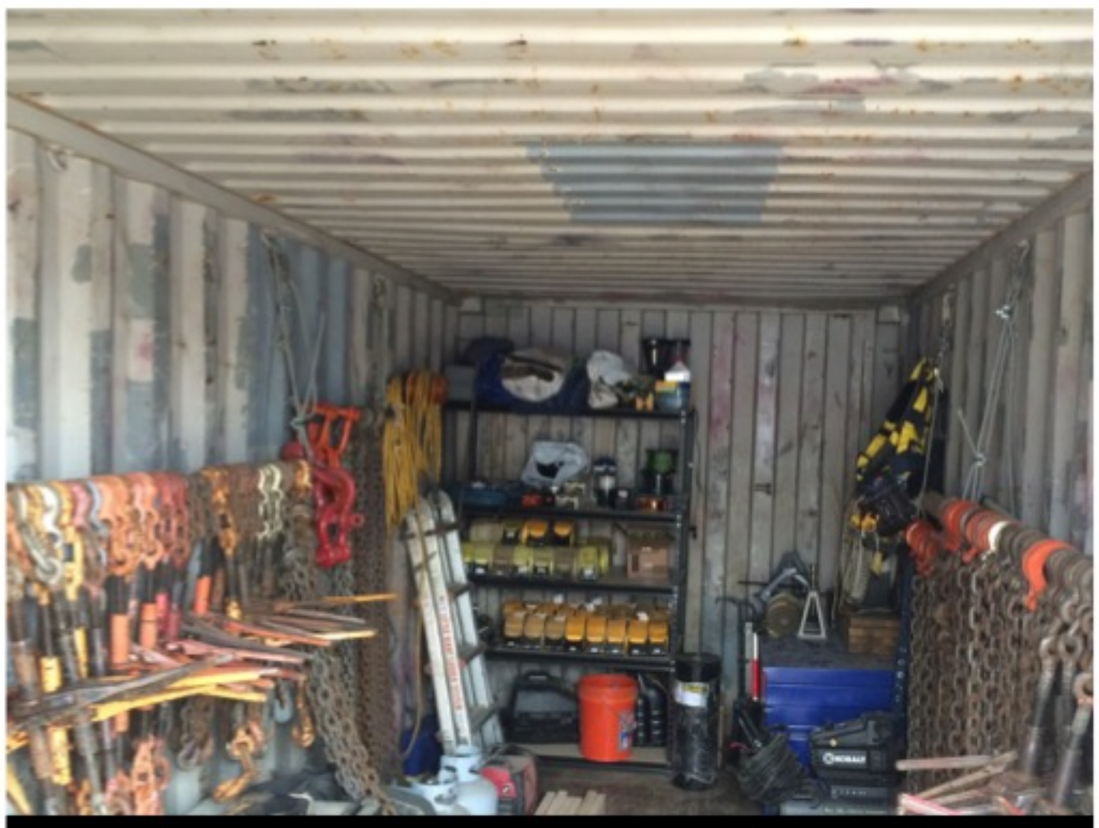
Pilot cars surround an over-dimensional load on the way to the project site.

Setting Up the Job Site

Before transportation services could begin, Kyle had to set up a job site. He coordinated three ocean containers to use as a mobile dispatch office, a gear container for hooks, straps and binders, and a driver's lounge with a coffee station, table and chairs. To provide air conditioning during the summer and heat during the winter, he located a 13,000-kilowatt diesel generator.

Home Away from Home

This work space would be their home away from home for the next couple of years, for Bennett would need to be available round the clock for the duration of the project to manage the quick turnarounds. For this reason, it was important to have a mini-dispatch operation on site to document each load properly for efficiency and safety purposes. Kyle and his brother took over the dispatch role for the loads dispatched from the laydown yard. They helped drivers secure their loads and checked them for safety and DOT compliance.



Project managers set up a gear shack to hold securement tools.



Ocean vessels were used to create a gear shack, drivers lounge and mobile dispatch office.

Constantly Ready for Emergencies

Additionally, Kyle and Dylan maintained a fleet of 40 leased trailers at a time, making sure lights, brakes and tires were working. This fleet was kept to ensure that Bennett could meet any request. Bennett had to be ready as if everything was in emergency status. Bennett and its drivers could be called upon in the middle of the night to send out a load to the job site at any time.



Bennett selected a 20-acre site a few miles from the stadium for the laydown yard.

Overcoming Monumental Challenges

A number of obstacles presented challenges to being able to sustain a steady flow of loads, stay on a schedule, and maintain efficiency. These included:

- Obtaining permits for multiple loads that could be requested at any time
- Finding escorts and police on demand
- Ensuring safety standards are met
- Juggling multiple loads simultaneously

Bennett's exclusive combination of resources, expertise and industry relationships proved beneficial in devising solutions that enabled Bennett to successfully transport thousands of loads with an excellent safety record.

"The Team Did a Great Job"

Canam's construction manager John Ingerson says that he was impressed with Bennett's ability to take a challenge and run with it. "We originally pushed the envelope by asking Bennett to haul steel that was much larger and over-dimensional than they had planned," he says. "They were able to take that request and make it happen, even though it wasn't part of the original planning."





Bennett successfully transported more than 200 over-dimensional loads as part of this project.

> John continues: "A lot of our loads were over-dimensional with a tricky center of gravity. The Bennett team put a lot of thought into how the loads were secured. There were never any incidents with regards to traffic control or the loads themselves. I have nothing but respect for the Bennett team, and was very happy with their overall safety and efficiency. The team did a great job."

Bennett's Regulatory Relationships Help with Permits



The DOT issued a non-driver specific permit that could be used for all loads within a specific size window.

Obtaining permits for any heavy haul transport is always a challenge, and depending on the complexity, can take days or even weeks. That's why Bennett prioritizes building relationships with permit specialists throughout the states via memberships in key trade associations, attending conferences, sitting on committees and boards and leading transportation initiatives.

As a result of these regulatory relationships, Bennett was able to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation to determine a way to overcome the time constraints involved with getting permits for the over-dimensional loads they would be hauling through downtown Atlanta. The DOT was willing to reprogram their software to be able to provide and track the loads for non-driver-specific permits that were good for one year and that encompassed all sizes within a window of 16.6 feet wide, 16.6 feet tall and 105 feet in length.

"Anything that fit into that window we could haul without asking, and that's something you don't see too often," comments Kyle. "Because of the contacts Bennett's heavy haul department has made through our involvement with transportation associations and initiatives, we were able to make that happen, which enabled us to ship loads much faster, legally, and without any delays."

Getting Escorts and Police on Demand



A team of officers provided 24/7 availability throughout the project.

Another cause for concern was that the state of Georgia requires that heavy haul loads going through Atlanta require two private escorts and two police officers. It would be challenging to line that up a-la-cart on demand, as the normal process is to make a request through the Georgia State Patrol. That process could take days, and Bennett needed escorts and police who could be there within a few hours or minutes sometimes.

Bennett was able to create a relationship with Lt. Jim Jodge of the Atlanta Police Department Motors Division, and he lined up six to eight police officers with motorcycles who were on call just for Bennett. "I'd call Lt. Hodge on his cell phone and he'd send them over to help us," Kyle says. "They really knew downtown Atlanta, and helped immensely to keep us out of trouble, making sure there were no traffic accidents or pedestrian injuries."

Safety is Priority One

Living up to Bennett's Safety is Priority One brand, Bennett pulled in even more police and escorts than were required by the state to ensure the safety of the public and public property during the tricky maneuvering of the over-dimensional loads through the city. Almost half of the loads required police and escort cars.

In many cases, Bennett doubled the number of required police and escorts at their own expense so there could be two of each in the front and back. About 25% of the loads required pilot cars with poles and bucket trucks to ensure the over-height load did not hit wires. Those transports could include as many as 13 vehicles: four escorts, four police, Bennett's truck, three bucket trucks and a chase truck with extra equipment.

"Safety was always our number one concern," Kyle says. "Our goal was to exceed safety standards to ensure no injuries and no cargo claims, and we succeeded. We didn't want to be seen as just another trucking company that hauls steel. We wanted to demonstrate excellence in all of the aspects that go into successfully managing a complex project from start to finish, and safety is the most important part of that success."



A member of the driving team uses a pole to lift a wire during a transport of an over-dimensional load.

SAFETY IS PRIORITY ONE
BENNETT

"Our goal was to exceed safety standards to ensure no injuries and no cargo claims, and we succeeded."

Kyle Wilckens
Project Director



Bennett drivers arrive at a fabrication shop with raw steel.

Juggling Multiple Loads Simultaneously

While a handful of drivers focused on the 2,500 transports from the laydown yard to the job site, there was a need to be able to manage multiple loads from the Port of Savannah to fabrication shops and between the shops. Most of the steel had to be taken from shop to shop throughout the Southeast. As the project progressed, the fabrication shops started to become full, and Bennett had to coordinate loads to shops all over the country and back again.

Sometimes, multiple loads would need to be picked up and loaded and dropped off at the same time, which required drivers on demand and an ample supply of trailers that were geared up and ready to use. To solve this problem, Bennett leased 72 trailers at five different locations, and always had 40 trailers operating at one time, while the rest were out for service and maintenance.

Bennett's owner operators would be tapped first to pick up loads on demand, but if an owner operator was not available, Bennett leveraged its freight brokerage services, tapping broker carriers to step in to fill the gap. "Having brokerage services allowed us to provide capacity on demand," Kyle says. "Our brokerage helped us supplement demand spikes during the job so that capacity was never an issue for us."

Keeping Track of Every Single Piece of Steel

As part of the 3PL services, Bennett kept track of every piece of steel for clients. Project manager Tracy Norton and the logistics operations team, working from Bennett's headquarters in McDonough, GA, entered every load for the field moves and always knew where each truck was in the process so they could provide that information to clients as needed.

Tracy served as the client's primary point of contact when they needed visibility as to where their loads were at any point during the process. "Our team was responsible for tracking and tracing every load and providing Canam with a daily report," she says. "We also provided Canam with master invoices versus sending them an individual invoice for each move."

Tracy and the logistics operations team managed and dispatched all of the loads of steel from the fabrication shops to the laydown yard. They coordinated the trailer pools at the fabrication shops as well as the laydown yard so loads could move on short notice.



> **"Our team was responsible for tracking and tracing every load and providing Canam with a daily report."**
>
> **Tracy Norton**
> Project Manager

Bennett knew where every piece of steel was in the process as part of providing 3pl services.

Dedicated Pool of Bennett Drivers

By developing a dedicated pool of Bennett drivers who became very familiar with the project, Bennett was able to call on them in a moment's notice and take care of the customer. "These drivers formed a relationship with some of the fab shop shipping personnel and became very familiar with the product," Tracy says. "They grew familiar with the challenges of moving these very large, oversized and sometimes non-symmetrical beams. Their expertise in hauling these beams made a difficult task seem effortless."

Managing the loads to and from the fabrication shops was no easy task either. "Canam would sometimes tender a significant number of loads simultaneously," Tracy says. "We would have only a couple of days to pick up and deliver several over-dimensional loads from the fabrication shops to the stadium or holding yard. Having multiple trailers available for loading at each fab shop location helped in meeting their needs."



Drivers enjoy a meal together at the laydown yard.

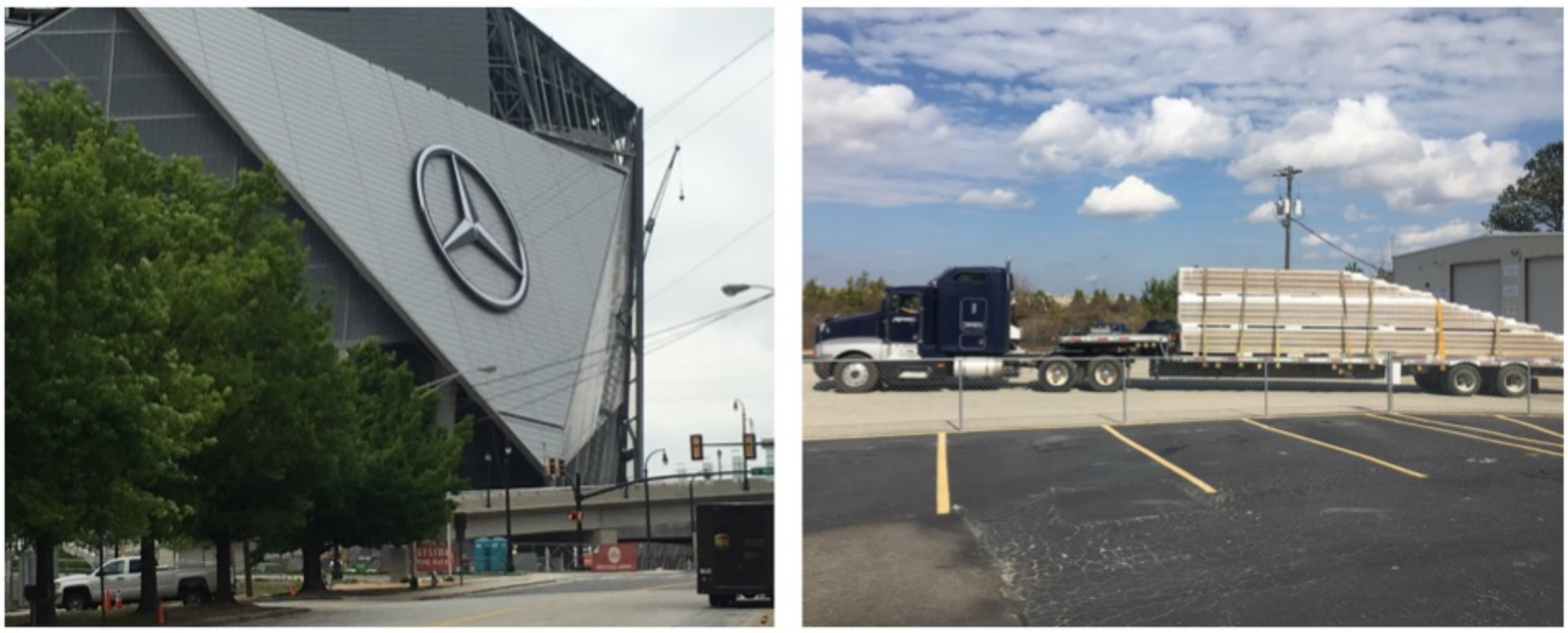
Bennett on Demand for Other Stadium Transportation Projects

Canam was Bennett's primary client, but as the stadium project progressed, Bennett took on additional transportation projects. Bennett also hauled the roof panels, four pieces of the pedestrian bridge that connects the parking lot with the stadium and the falcon statue. Bennett also moved cranes around on the stadium site and back and forth from the job site and the laydown yard, as well as safety equipment.

Coordinating the Fragile Roof Panels

Bennett not only hauled nearly all of the structural steel from Canam, but also coordinated the shipping and storage of the façade panels that cover the outside of the stadium. The panels were originally shipped from Arkansas to Bennett's yard in McDonough. Bennett's team would coordinate the loads into and out of the McDonough yard, sometimes directly to the stadium site.

Bennett had to store the panels a certain way to avoid damage. "This was a challenge in that we have most of our yard space set up for owner operators and current local customers," says Kyle. "We redid a portion of our yard to create a storage space on the side of the property where we could properly store and care for the panels, which were thin and could easily be damaged. We had to separate the panels with lumber to ensure air flow and slope them so the rain would run off. We were able to store and deliver all of these panels with no damage."



Bennett managed the transportation of the roof panels that cover the Mercedes-Benz stadium.

Transporting the Giant Falcon Statue



Bennett delivers the head, body and tail piece of the falcon statue to the stadium for set-up.



Hungarian artist Miklos Gabor Szoze selected Bennett to coordinate the transportation of the stainless steel dinosaur-sized falcon bird he created for the Atlanta Falcons. The pieces of the dismantled 41.5-foot bird statue with a 65-foot wingspan were shipped to the laydown yard in shipping containers. Szoze and his team of about 20 people assembled and rebuilt the bird at the laydown yard. The bird was built and transported to the stadium in four sections – the head, body and tail (pictured above); the base of the statue, which included the giant football clutched by the bird; and the two wings (pictured left). Bennett transported each piece separately to the stadium, where the artist completed the construction.

Bennett Can Take on Any Size Project

"This has been a great logistics project that demonstrates Bennett has the means and services to take on any size project," comments Bennett Logistics President Charles Philips. "We have managed multiple government projects simultaneously, including relocating seven U.S. Department of Defense Units at the same time, which is like taking on seven football stadiums. We are looking forward to replicating this outstanding performance for the next client who needs help with this type of complex project."



Project managers who led the initiative that included hundreds of people across Bennett included, from left, Kyle Wilckens, Tracy Norton and Dylan Wilckens.

About Bennett

McDonough-Ga.-based Bennett International Group is a woman-owned, Women's Enterprise Business Council (WBENC)-certified, diversified transportation and logistics company. Through its eight affiliated operating companies, Bennett International Group delivers integrated transportation and supply chain management solutions worldwide.

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