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One of CRS's 300-ton cranes setting a 15,000-pound air handler at the Kaiser Permanente Venice Medical Offices.



CRANE RENTAL SERVICE INC.

Lifting-and-rigging company's focus on quality service and employee satisfaction results in corporate success

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

IN 1965, WILLIAM C. FOSTER SET OUT TO CREATE A family crane business that embodied his high ideals of customer service, quality, and work ethic. Today, Crane Rental Service Inc. (CRS) has not only successfully carried on Foster's dream and philosophy, but remains one of the most highly regarded crane-service providers in the western United States.

CRS primarily works with industrial- and mechanical-engineering companies—and a majority of its services involve moving heavy machinery, compressors, cooling towers, chiller units, and commercial air-conditioning units. "For example," says Jess Sturgeon, general manager, "from the little mom-and-pop stores that need smaller air handlers lifted on top of their buildings, to the huge 50,000–60,000-pound air handlers required for larger companies, we'll put all of those up for our clients." The company has also worked for private housing, and it offers its services for underground and rebar projects.

CRS always strives to deliver good service, Sturgeon continues, and he believes this makes the company not

only successful but highly competitive, as well. "I think that whatever company it is, service is what's most important," he says, "and that's the way CRS is."

Sturgeon recalls one of Foster's simple philosophies that he passed on to everyone at the company. "Our phone should never ring more than two or three times," he says. "Somebody should always pick it up, because if it rings more than two or three times, the people on the other end are not going to be happy."

CRS plans to continue providing high-quality service so that its customers remain happy and, in turn, continue recommending CRS to other companies. "That way, our customers also sell for us," Sturgeon says, "so not only do we have our sales force out selling, but our own customer base is out selling, as well."

He also believes that in these challenging economic times, service is more important than ever—and CRS does everything it possibly can to meet the goals and needs of its clients. "If we're bidding a job to a customer,

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
ORANGE, CA

EMPLOYEES:
60

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
CRANE LIFTING/
RIGGING FOR
MECHANICAL-
ENGINEERING
COMPANIES;
EXCAVATION,
HAULING, RE-
MODELING, AND
EQUIPMENT RENTAL



Any little thing that we can do to help our clients, that's what we try to do.

—*Jess Sturgeon, General Manager*



we often say to them, 'OK, we know you're probably hurting, too, so how can we better serve you? By either lowering the price or working with you on coming up with different ways to cut your costs.'" For example, if a job is going to last more than a day, instead of driving the crane back and forth, CRS can work with clients to leave the crane on the job site and have the operator report there to save travel each day. "Any little thing that we can do to help our clients," Sturgeon says, "that's what we try to do."

As a proud family business, CRS's employees have definitely been integral to the company's success. "It's very important that you have the right people from the top to the bottom, and I'm telling you that this company is absolutely the best company I've ever worked for in my life—all of the people here are simply the best," Sturgeon says.

With Foster at CRS's helm as CEO, his children are also an extremely strong leadership presence at the company: Cathy Greinke (daughter) is president; Greg Foster (son) is vice president; and Lori Hunter (daughter) is secretary/treasurer. Ultimately, CRS is the living epitome of Foster's vision and dream. "CRS was started by William C. Foster; he's my mentor, my boss, my friend—and he never ceases to amaze me," Sturgeon says. "He has so much knowledge for this business, and he's passed that onto his family."

Sturgeon adds that what truly makes CRS a family business is the fact that the people who work there feel like they are a part of the family. "What Bill [Foster] wanted to do, he has done, and anybody who works here simply says that this is the best place they've ever worked," Sturgeon says. "And I agree with that." ABQ

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