

## WINTER IS APPROACHING, ARE YOU PREPARED?

If you are like me, when winter rolls around you dream of lounging in your cozy easy chair, rooting for your team as you munch on your favorite snack. The smell and the warmth of the fireplace fills the air. You think, this is how the season is supposed to be spent. In reality, the crackling of the fire fades away and is replaced by Dan's voice yelling, "Quit day dreaming and get back to work!"

All joking aside though, a lot of us have projects that last through the winter and we find ourselves driving to the jobsite before the sun comes up and leaving after the sun has set. Winter bombards us with many hazardous conditions such as snow, sleet, ice, and low visibility. Below are a few tips to keep you safe this winter:

Dress for the weather, wear layers. Bring a spare set of gloves with you to the jobsite. I will keep some hardhat liners with me if you would like to try one out.

Before the season begins, check your tires for the proper tread and inflation.

Make sure there is plenty of window washer fluid in the reservoir and keep at least a half tank of gas in your vehicle at all times.

If the forecast is not looking good, contact your supervisor to see if it is worth coming in.

Lastly, you hear this all the time but please slow down if the roads are getting slick.



The project is replacing the westbound I-80 bridge over the RR yard with a wider, 3300' long bridge, a 1200' long ramp, and our portion...a 3675' x 32' flyover ramp bridge going from I-80 to southbound I-29.

We're also taking a bigger management role in this project with Mark Leusink as the overall Project Manager for the Tri-venture team. Work will start in January and the whole thing must be done by June, 2018.

Robert Cramer

## MAINTAINING OUR FUTURE

So you are on a piece of equipment, running it like it's a tank and your only mission is to find its weak spot when, BANG...mission accomplished! Now what? You try to fix it yourself but it's a task that needs a little more attention; it's something that requires the help of the shop. So, you get Mike on the phone, "Hey, that excavator you sent me, it's no good, I need another."

The guys in the shop are responsible for maintaining various types of equipment. Have you ever wondered how many pieces they are responsible for? Or how the shop has become so large? Every time I set foot in the shop, I am amazed at the tools and knowhow the guys have. I'm pretty sure they can fix anything. I might just try to sneak one past them and slap one of those Cramer magnets to the side of my truck and see if they can fix my heat, who knows, it might work.

If you didn't already know, Cramer's yard started as a small amount of wood and rebar stored at a farmhouse on 5 acres we owned on the NE side of Des Moines. There was no need to store equipment since we just moved it from jobsite to jobsite. Then, in the early 70's we bought three and a half acres on NE 44th Ave in Des Moines. It was a vacant lot, so we quickly built a 30'x80' Morton building. The office was located at another location around 38th and Douglas. Around that time, we had around 20 pieces of equipment. Most of the maintenance was done at the jobsite and major repairs were hired out.

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## BIG NEWS

We're pleased to announce that our team was awarded the largest contract in Iowa DOT history! The Hawkins-United-Cramer Tri-venture was the low bidder on the next phase of the Council Bluffs Interstate System (CBIS) with a bid of \$103,536,891. The next bidder was about \$105,800,000 or 2% higher.

## MAINTAINING OUR FUTURE

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Around 1975 and 1976 we started doing overlays and buying more equipment such as air compressors, finish machines, buggies, and skid loaders. In the late 70's, we built our own steel building that would house a 5,000 sf shop and 1,500 sf office. The shop had four bays, 50' long. This is also around the time we started buying tools like a bandsaw and drill press.

The 3.5 acres filled up fast. We were able to buy a lot across the street in the 1980's where we tore down an old house so we would have additional storage space. It was a pretty tight squeeze to get a crane in the shop. The door was only a few inches larger than the tracks. Most of the time, the larger equipment was worked on outside. In the off season, we even started parking straight trucks on Don Cramer's land because of the lack of space.

Through the years, we purchased more tools and equipment as needed. Then, in 2007 we moved to our current location which is about 20 acres. The new shop is larger,



long enough to drive in a semi and trailer and has doors up to 20' wide. The floor is heated and a 10-ton overhead crane is mounted inside! The yard is big enough to handle our material and equipment.

We now have over 300 pieces of equipment to take care of. We have drivers constantly driving equipment back and forth from the jobsite to the shop for maintenance and then back out to another jobsite. We make service calls to jobsites for inspections and repairs.

When you're out working on a bridge, it's easy to forget about how much maintenance and repairs the shop crew takes care of. Do your best to get issues reported. If you're an operator, tell your supervisor if something needs fixed. For supervisors, be sure issues are making it into your weekly paperwork. This will help the shop with scheduling and prioritizing. Without seeing it directly, the shop is keeping us safe while we work in the field. Thanks for the hard work and effort!

### Congratulations!

Mike and Allison Van Iten have been blessed with a Boy! Archer Lewis Van Iten was born on 10/2/15 weighing in at 9lbs 10 oz.



Brett and Emily Hanna are happy to announce the arrival of Dorothy Elizabeth Hanna! Born on 10/28/15 weighing 7lbs 13oz.



### WHERE ARE THEY WORKING?

Work is slowing down as crews complete jobs for the season. Jack finished his season in Davenport where we had five crews successfully achieve early completion incentives overlaying I-74 over the Mississippi. Ben and Scott C. finished working off barges to complete repairs to the I-74 Bridge. They headed west to help in Cedar Rapids where Larry, Dave, and Anthony are building the IA 100 Bridge over the Cedar River and railroad. Doug also made his way over to this job after finishing the Edgewood Rd Bridge over IA 100 in Cedar Rapids.

Tim finished repair work at IA 316 over the Des Moines River in Runnells and, before that, he completed a beam replacement on I-80. Brad and Tanner just completed approaches and repair jobs south of Des Moines. Kelly recently finished a number of repairs around Polk County and before that, he replaced a beam on Oralabor Rd in Ankeny over I-80.

Jeff and Chase are getting close to finishing work on the I-29/US275 interchange in Council Bluffs. Jake C. just finished repairing joints on a couple of different bridges in NE and is now helping in Council Bluffs. Jake B. has finished repairing a bridge in Bruno, NE.

The southbound deck has been poured on I-29 in Sioux City. This work is being completed by Nels, Mike, Scott D., Chad, and Ryan.