

Brian and Dave Marcason of Superior Crane on the job in New Jersey

Superior Crane & Rigging keeps its boom trucks working six days a week, year-round. **ACT** reports



Booming business

Dave Marcason of Superior Crane & Rigging in Norwood, NJ expects superior performance from his Altec boom trucks. Marcason and his son Brian serve a range of clients throughout the New York City/New Jersey area.

Superior's fleet consists of two 2007 38-ton heavy lift Altec boom trucks both mounted on a Peterbilt chassis and a 26-ton unit mounted on an International flatbed chassis.

"These are good machines, very powerful," says Marcason. "We work them very hard all over the New Jersey, New York City area."

The father-son duo spend their days performing a range of lifting jobs, including air conditioner lifts, steel beam lifts, wood truss lifts and performing tree work.

"Most of the things we do are not super heavy, but sometimes the lifts are high and can be complicated," says Marcason.

Marcason and his son purchased their cranes carefully, giving a lot of thought and consideration of the features they would need for the wide variety of applications required. Marcason took care to spec out the carrier as well as the crane.

"It's not only the crane that is important but also the carrier," he explains. "The two Peterbilts are big units, both with 475 hp Caterpillar engines. We've been very happy with these trucks. I think it's important to assure that the crane and the carrier are right for each other. You can't get all dressed up and wear your work shoes. Everything has to go together to make it a good setup. The truck is as important as the crane. You spend the extra money and put the crane on a good truck and you get your money back."

Marcason has owned five Altec boom trucks since starting the business in 2000.

Each time he upgrades a unit, he is able to recoup the investment. He says he owned a 2005 35-ton capacity Altec boom truck for which he paid \$227,000 new and then sold it for \$220,000 two years later.

While he says there is no such thing as a machine that doesn't need service or have an occasional problem, Marcason reports that he has a good track record with the Altec brand and the quality of the Altec service team. "Nothing is perfect but when we have a problem they will help get us back up quickly," he says.

Solid performance

Marcason says one of his units is operational by remote control, which he uses when he utilizes a man basket application.

"We use the remote control for the man basket when we do wireline work for Verizon or Sprint," he explains. "Otherwise



Performing tree work in Alpine Gardens, New Jersey

Replacing an air conditioner unit on a building in Manhattan



Lifting roof trusses on a project in New Jersey

we don't really operate the crane that way. I'd rather be in the chair for any other crane operation, particularly for the heavier lifting."

Marcason says his business plan has been simple but effective. "We do five to six lifts a day between my son and myself. We do a lot of tree work as well. These cranes are wonderful for tree work."

He never rents his units out bare, preferring the owner/operator role. "My son and I, we go out everyday, weather permitting. Recently we were in one day that they predicted an incredible snow storm. We cancelled all our jobs and there wasn't any snow. That's the first day we've been in in months."

Elliott introducing new track mounted crane and digger

In its 26-ton and 30-ton boom truck category, Elliott Equipment Company has developed a track-mounted crane and digger unit that can be seen at ConExpo Con/Agg 2008 in Las Vegas.

"This a new venture for us and a project of our Engineered Solutions Group," says Doug Twyford, vice president of sales and marketing for Elliott. "This group is a new initiative which we are evolving and it underscores Elliott Equipment's expertise at customization."

Twyford says the company has three units currently in production for clients. The machine is used for a variety of applications, including hole digging, foundation setting and the like. "Basically it is a full 30 ton crane and also can be utilized as a digging tool with a long radius, out to 44 feet," says Twyford. "We synthesized the standard Elliott boom truck and engineered all the equipment that goes with it so it can be mounted onto the two leading brands of track vehicles."

The track carriers include PowerTraxx and Camoplast.

The machine continues to be a fully operational crane that also can be used with a manbasket with a remote control.

When asked what they are calling the hybrid unit, Twyford says "we still call it by the crane capacity designation, the type of carrier doesn't really matter to Elliott's engineers."

A similar machine will be available for viewing at Elliott's stand (G-248) at ConExpo.



The fleet of Superior Cranes includes two 38 tonners and one 26 tonner, all Altec models

For the air conditioner business, Marcason says he uses the flatbed crane in order to transport the new and old units to and from the site. "It's good business being able to transport the air-conditioner unit," he says. "It's good for customer service."

Marcason has built the business around basic, routine lifting work. "We don't get any calls for anything too fancy. I've never been asked for any type of extra rigging or an extra winch."

The two 38-ton boom trucks have 127 feet of boom, and with one of them outfitted with a 31 foot jib for extra reach. The 26 ton unit has 103 foot boom with a 31 foot jib.

Solid investments

Marcason knows the lifting business in the New York City area like the back of his hand. He's been in the business for 41 years, working as an operator for other companies and finally choosing to open his own business.

"I worked for 33 years for a crane company and then I got smart and bought my own (cranes)," he says. "I've operated

mostly all the hydraulics and all the brands. I've operated the big Grove cranes, the Pettibones and P&Hs, but I've found these Altec brands to be the money makers. They have been solid investments. These are \$300,000 machines and there's more profit in them than the more expensive cranes."

Marketing his services has not been a problem, Marcason says. "We do some advertising and we are in the Yellow Pages," he says. "But most of our work is word of mouth and repeat business. Once they use us, they constantly use us. We are very friendly and we know what we are doing. When a customer likes you, they keep calling you."

Customers like Marcason are valued by Altec, says Dave Hill, director of marketing services for the Birmingham, AL based company. "Dave is a believer in not taking shortcuts on his equipment, both the cranes and the chassis. He has had a lot of success with these units and we see value in working with customers to see what they are facing day to day in the market."

Last fall Hill went out on a job with Marcason in New York City. "I knew these operators have stringent requirements to meet when working in New York City, but I didn't realize just how stringent and strict they are. I was surprised on the job that one of the city engineers came to the jobsite to approve the set up of the crane and the way the outriggers were positioned and to assure that the rigging was just right. They have many concerns to assure, making sure the outriggers won't penetrate the roadways through to gas lines and subway infrastructure."

Hill says his visit has spurred Altec to look closely at outrigger set up and stability concerns. "We're seeing more companies wanting to set up outriggers in tight areas," he says.

Altec has now developed outriggers that can be fully extended on one side and partially extended on the other side and still offer the stability needed for the lift. **act**

