
Cranemasters Weighs In with Insightful Solutions

AdvanSix's Hopewell, VA plant moves tons of chemical intermediates every day. A broken scale stopped operations in their tracks. They needed a faster, smarter solution to get operations moving again. They needed Cranemasters.

CRANEMASTERS

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CHALLENGE:

AdvanSix Faced a Large Scale Business Interruption

At the AdvanSix Hopewell plant, an underground leak from the adjacent water company property saturated and eroded soil beneath the rail car scale. The concrete slab, sensors, and load cells crumbled, leaving the scale uncertified for legal-for-trade weighing.

Without a NTEP-approved scale, AdvanSix could not:

- Accurately calculate shipping charges
- Verify outbound shipment weights
- Meet regulatory and safety requirements

The business impact was severe. **Without a functioning scale, AdvanSix risked losing up to \$2 million in revenue per day.**

A direct replacement at the existing location would require removing the broken foundation, reconstructing the site, and installing new rail—a six-to seven-week process. AdvanSix needed a faster, smarter solution to get operations moving again. They needed Cranemasters.

“AdvanSix isn’t a scale company or a rail track company. Cranemasters coordinated everything with Apple Valley, our scale company, and with CSX and Norfolk Southern. They’re truly plug-and-play. They simplify your life, act as a liaison, and deliver without micromanagement, incidents, or hiccups.”

— AdvanSix

ADVANSIX

AdvanSix, Inc., is a major manufacturer and supplier of chemicals with four plants in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Its Hopewell, VA, plant, with 26 miles of railroad track, is one of the world’s largest single-site producers of caprolactam, satisfying approximately eight percent of the global demand. It’s also the world’s largest single-site producer of ammonium sulfate fertilizers and a manufacturer of other chemical intermediates.

Cranemasters Has Been Serving AdvanSix for 20 years

With 26 miles of rail tracks to be maintained, AdvanSix has Cranemasters conduct monthly track inspections to ensure track safety and efficiency. But there’s nothing routine about maintenance at the chemical plant, which was initially built after World War I. Cranemasters is regularly onsite, working through a punch list of prioritized projects. Cranemasters also participates in transitional capital projects and is available 24/7/365 in the event of an emergency or immediate need.

As a result, Cranemasters is highly familiar with the plant, its operations, and traffic flow.



AdvanSix Hopewell, VA Plant

CRANEMASTERS' SOLUTION: Engineering Expertise Over Quick Fixes

A Smarter Approach

When Cranemasters arrived, we didn't just start demolition. Our engineers assessed the core issues: water flow, ground elevation, and railcar movement efficiency. Rebuilding in the same spot would leave AdvanSix vulnerable to the same risks.

Instead, we recommended relocating the scale to dry, elevated ground, avoiding water threats, and eliminating the time-consuming demo of the old damaged foundation before a new scale could be installed. This choice minimized downtime, prevented recurrence, and created an opportunity to improve rail car flow through the yard.

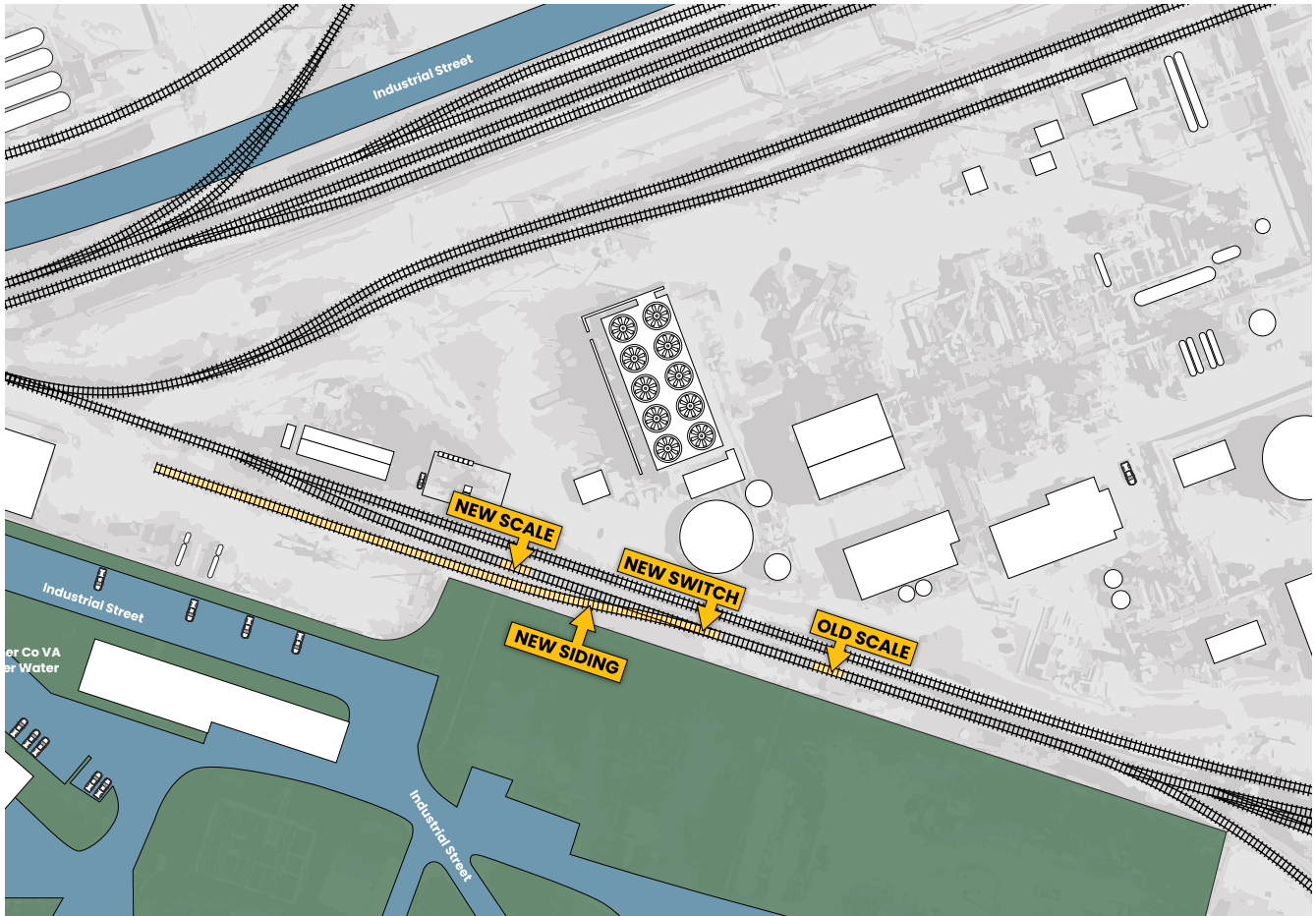
That's what we mean by Cranemasters Strategic Systems Operation™.

Technical Precision in Site Selection

Drawing on years of experience with rail scale installations, Cranemasters already knew the exact requirements:

- 150 feet minimum distance from a switch
- 300 feet of level track before and 150 feet after the scale
- Stable ground, never at a low point in the rail

Because we were already familiar with AdvanSix's rail yard, we identified the ideal site immediately—saving time and cost by avoiding ground sampling and yard mapping.



Building for Accuracy and Compliance

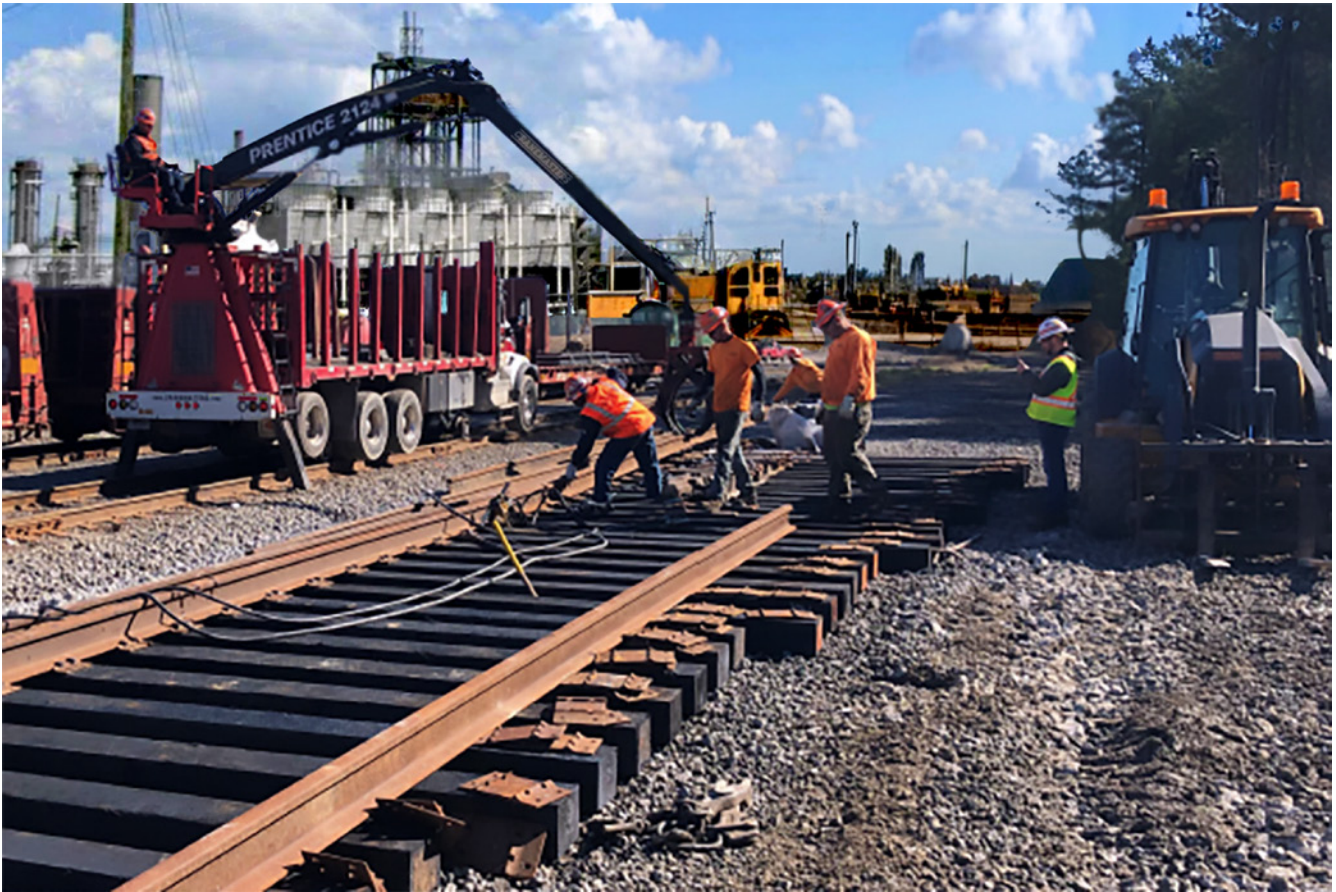
Apple Valley Scale installed the scale itself, but they relied on Cranemasters to manage all critical ground and track work to meet certification standards. We delivered:

- 600 feet of new 115 RE track, raised on new cross ties, plates, and spikes
- A reconditioned and level foundation to exacting specifications
- A new switch stand and switch points branching to the scale track
- Precision alignment of track-to-scale connections

Because weigh-in-motion scales are sensitive to even a quarter-inch bump, Cranemasters worked hand-in-hand with Apple Valley to ensure the system was perfectly level, compliant, and certifiable.

“When our scale crumbled, Cranemasters said, ‘Here’s the short-term fix, and here’s the permanent solution.’ Three weeks later, we were back to full operation. That’s the kind of partner they are.”

— **AdvanSix**



Cranemasters wasn't looking at making the most money—or billing for the most work hours. Cranemasters was looking out for AdvanSix. They said, 'I understand what you're asking for, Christian, and we can remove your old scale and do the other work, if that's what you want. But it boils down to your plant needing to weigh rail cars. Installing a scale at this other location will be the fastest and the most cost-effective way to weigh rail cars. It'll save all the labor and time of removing the old scale and be more efficient in the long run. As it turned out, it's the perfect location, saving us time every day.

**Christian Beale**

Rail Logistics Manager
(former)
AdvanSix

Temporary Relief During Construction

Understanding the urgency, we also devised a short-term fix. By re-purposing and rerouting rail, Cranemasters reactivated a secondary in-motion scale that had been inaccessible due to the original damage. This allowed AdvanSix to continue weighing cars while permanent work was underway.

Crew Power and Coordination

To stay on schedule, Cranemasters deployed two eight-man crews working 12-hour shifts around the clock. We coordinated seamlessly with:

- Apple Valley Scale (installation partner)
- CSX and Norfolk Southern (daily rail movements in and out of the plant)
- AdvanSix track operations

Our role extended beyond construction—we acted as a project manager and liaison, simplifying a complex multi-party operation.

RESULTS:

A Long-Term, Value-Add Solution

- **Faster Timeline** – From ground-breaking to certified scale in just three weeks (not including planning), far faster than a traditional replacement.
- **Cost Savings** – Avoided costly demolition and foundation removal at the old site.
- **Operational Continuity** – A temporary reroute enabled weighing to continue during construction, protecting millions in daily revenue.
- **Efficiency Gains** – The new location allows all three yard tracks to feed directly into the scale with a straight approach, eliminating inefficient back-and-forth maneuvers and saving significant time every day.
- **Built for the Future** – Elevated, stable ground prevents recurrence of water-related damage, ensuring long-term reliability.

In the end, Cranemasters delivered not just a replacement scale, but a smarter, more resilient solution—protecting AdvanSix’s operations, saving millions in potential losses, and improving efficiency for the long term.

CRANEMASTERS[®]
RAILROAD EMERGENCY AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

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Cranemasters is a full-service railroad contractor uniquely equipped to work with all Class I, regional, and short-line railroads, and rail-connected private industrial siding operations. Since its inception, the company has charted a steady course of growth and innovation, offering expert railroad construction and emergency services. The company’s success is rooted in a steadfast commitment to excellence, encapsulated in a “no shortcuts” philosophy that permeates throughout its talented and experienced employees. Cranemasters is the industry’s leading manufacturer of purpose-built railroad heavy-lift equipment and developer of safe and efficient processes for the industry’s toughest challenges.