

On The Rails

Rail Support Services News and Insights from Cranemasters

Summer and Fall Risk Mitigation

- **When Heat, Heavy Cars, and Aging Track Converge**

The greatest operations threat may not be a derailment or a heat kink.

- **Cranemasters Keeps the Line Open**

A minor incident or a major service interruption often depends on an effective response.

- **Case Study: 2 Diamonds in One Day**

Cranemasters replaced one 2x2 double-double diamond and one 2x3 triple-double diamond during a single curfew.

- **Innovation: Ideas Start in the Field**

We look at the problems our customers face every day and engineer better ways to solve them.

- **A Conversation with Cranemasters President and Co-Founder**

His thoughts on leadership, safety, innovation, and staying on track.

CRANEMASTERS

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The 1-Side • 1-End™ approach in action as Cranemasters rerails a car just a few feet from a warehouse building.

Regional, Short Line, and Industrial Track Operations

Reduce Delays and Raise Safety

Regional railroads and industrial rail operations face constant pressure to keep traffic moving, control costs, and maintain safe, reliable infrastructure. Cranemasters helps meet those challenges with engineered solutions and purpose-built equipment for derailment recovery, track repair and construction, load adjustment and transfer, railcar maintenance, bridge span replacement, and complex track structure installation.

Our **1-Side • 1-End™** innovative equipment and **Strategic Systems Operations™** are designed to improve safety, increase efficiency, and minimize operational disruptions. From routine maintenance projects to emergency response, put Cranemasters' experienced crews, purpose-built equipment, and practical engineering expertise to work to keep your rail operations on track.

CRANEMASTERS®
RAILROAD EMERGENCY AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

800-624-0543 info@cranemasters.com www.cranemasters.com

Cranemasters Railroad Services:

- Emergency Derailment
- Track Construction & Repair
- Railcar Maintenance & Repair
- Design & Manufacturing
- Load Adjustment & Transfer
- Natural Disaster Response
- Heavy Equipment Recovery
- Complex Track Panel Installation
- Bridge Span Replacement

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.

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RISK MITIGATION

When Heat, Heavy Cars, and Aging Track Converge

Summer 2026

For regional railroads, the greatest threat during the summer and fall may not be a derailment, a track buckling, or a bridge restriction. It may be the chain reaction that follows.

Risks

Railroads have always dealt with infrastructure challenges. Heat causes rail expansion. Heavy axle loads accelerate wear. Aging bridges require maintenance. Deferred capital projects eventually come due. None of these realities is new. What is changing is how quickly a localized infrastructure issue can cascade into a service problem that affects customers, operations, and revenue.

The most successful railroads increasingly view infrastructure reliability as a business-risk management strategy rather than simply a maintenance responsibility.

Consider a common summer scenario. A stretch of track develops elevated compressive stress during extreme heat. To reduce the risk of thermal buckling, the railroad imposes a slow order. The slow order adds transit time, affects crew utilization, disrupts switching schedules, and reduces network fluidity. A delay that begins with a few thousand feet of track can eventually affect customer loading schedules, equipment availability, and downstream deliveries.

Researchers studying the impact of extreme heat on rail infrastructure have found that high temperatures can lead to track buckling, speed restrictions, operational delays, and increased maintenance costs.

“Extreme heat has been responsible for an average of 50 derailments annually over the past four decades in the United States.

(Jones, M. & Patel, R., 2021)

As temperatures continue to rise, railroads are expected to face increasing pressure to improve infrastructure resilience and operational reliability

Heat is only one piece of the equation.

Across North America, many regional railroads and industrial track owners are handling heavier freight traffic than their infrastructure was originally designed to accommodate. Increased car weights place greater demands on rail, ties, ballast, crossings, and bridge structures. While well-maintained infrastructure can safely accommodate these loads, deterioration accelerates when maintenance is deferred or when assets approach the end of their service lives.

The industry's response is telling. According to Progressive Railroading's 2026 Maintenance-of-Way Spending Report, many regional and short-line railroads are increasing infrastructure investments, with significant emphasis on continuous welded rail installation, rail replacement, tie programs, and other reliability-focused improvements. Genesee & Wyoming alone increased its infrastructure



investment budget from \$453 million in 2025 to \$568 million in 2026, citing expanded continuous welded rail programs among its priorities.

That investment reflects an important reality: railroads are not merely maintaining assets. **They are protecting service reliability.**

Industrial tracks often illustrate this principle most clearly

A customer-owned track may represent only a few thousand feet of track, but it frequently serves as the railroad's direct connection to a shipper's operation. A failed turnout, a deteriorated crossing, a drainage issue, or a localized derailment can prevent railcars from being loaded or unloaded. What appears to

be a minor infrastructure issue quickly becomes a production problem, an inventory problem, and ultimately a customer relationship problem.

Bridge Issues

Bridge infrastructure creates similar vulnerabilities. Many railroad bridges continue to provide decades of reliable service, but aging structures require ongoing inspection, maintenance, and rehabilitation to support current traffic demands. Weight restrictions, deferred repairs, or unexpected structural issues can limit operational flexibility and create bottlenecks during periods of peak demand.

The lesson is straightforward: disruptions rarely remain isolated

Infrastructure specialists note that extreme heat can trigger cascading consequences that extend beyond track performance. Track defects, signal issues, speed restrictions, and infrastructure failures can cause delays that ripple through the network, affecting customers far from the original problem.

For shippers, the consequences are tangible. Delayed raw materials can interrupt production schedules. Missed switches can delay outbound shipments. Reduced service reliability can increase trucking costs and inventory requirements. In competitive markets, service disruptions can even influence future transportation decisions.

The stakes extend beyond repair costs

Reliability has become a competitive differentiator. Customers increasingly evaluate transportation providers based not only on rates, but also on

consistency, responsiveness, and operational predictability. Infrastructure performance directly influences each of those measures.

Focus on Resilience

That's why the strongest regional and industrial track operations are focusing on resilience. They are investing in track inspections, tie replacement programs, bridge assessments, drainage improvements, track evaluations, and strategic rehabilitation projects before failures occur. They recognize that preventing disruptions is almost always less expensive than recovering from them.

The summer and fall operating season will continue to test railroad infrastructure. Heat, weather, traffic demands, and aging assets are realities every railroad must manage.

The railroads that perform best will not necessarily be the ones with the newest infrastructure. They will be the ones who understand how small infrastructure problems become business problems and who act before the cascade begins.



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RISK MITIGATION

From Emergency Response to Track Rehab

Cranemasters Helps Keep Your Lines Open

Summer 2026

Heat-related track issues, aging infrastructure, severe weather, equipment failures, and derailments remain unavoidable realities of rail operations. The difference between a minor incident and a major service interruption often comes down to one factor: how quickly and effectively the railroad can respond.

That’s where Cranemasters has built its reputation.

For nearly four decades, Cranemasters has supported Class I railroads, short lines, and industrial rail operations with specialized railroad services designed to restore operations safely, efficiently, and with minimal disruption. The company’s capabilities extend far beyond derailment response, encompassing track construction and rehabilitation, bridge span replacement, railcar maintenance, load transfers, natural disaster recovery, and heavy equipment recovery.

When a derailment occurs, time becomes critical. Every hour a track remains blocked can affect customers, train crews, terminal operations, and connecting carriers. Cranemasters maintains 24/7/365 emergency response capabilities, enabling

rapid mobilization to assess conditions, develop recovery plans, and restore service as quickly as possible.

Response times to reach incident locations vary, of course, but as an example, Cranemasters arrived on site within 60 minutes of ETA 92% of the time for a national customer in 2025.

1-Side • 1-End™

The company’s purpose-built equipment is a key differentiator. Cranemasters designs and manufactures many of the specialized machines used in its operations. Our 200 RS Super-Duty Crane is capable of lifting and carrying railcars and locomotives from a single side of the track, reducing the operational footprint required during recovery operations and helping preserve traffic flow on adjacent tracks whenever conditions permit.

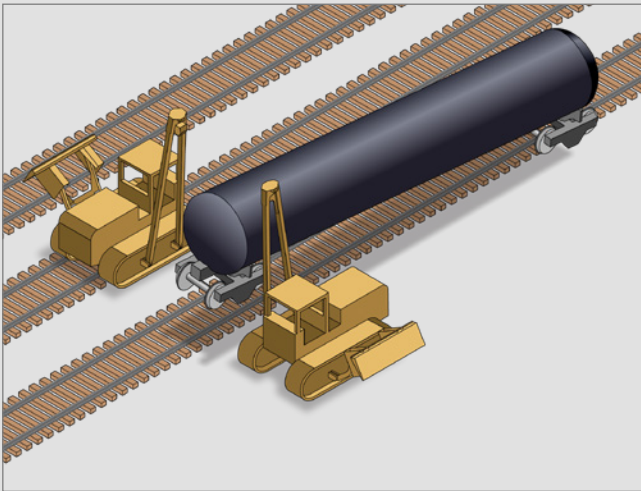


What Does 1-Side • 1-End™ Technology Do for You?

Cranemasters engineers cranes specifically for our crews' railroad operations, including track construction, maintenance, repairs, rerailing loaded railcars, and on-site traction motor replacements. Engineered for the unique demands of the rail industry, these machines excel with today's heavier cars and engines in challenging terrain, confined workspaces, and complex lifting situations. They can safely lift railcars and locomotives from a single side or end—tasks that often require two side booms, more personnel, and more equipment, and in some cases cannot be accomplished with side booms at all.

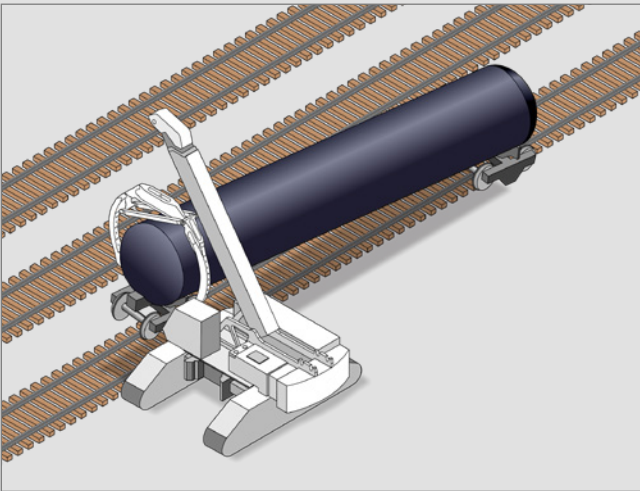
With an operating footprint comparable to that of a single-side boom, the Cranemasters 200 RS delivers greater efficiency, versatility, and safety for railroad applications. It's purpose-built for rail work rather than adapted from trenching and pipe-laying equipment.

The Cranemasters 200 RS Super-Duty Crane enables crews to complete jobs more efficiently with fewer delays and less disruption to adjacent track traffic.



Repurposed Side-Boom

Intent: Trenching and laying concrete pipe
Lift Style: Rigid
Requires two-sided lifting for rail cars



Cranemasters 200 RS Super-Duty Crane

Intent: Designed for railroad work
Lift Style: Continuous 360° rotation
Single-side pick and carry

Strategic Systems Operation™

Operational Recovery

However, clearing the wreck site is often only the first step. Derailments frequently leave damaged track, compromised ballast, broken switches, and structural concerns that must be addressed before normal operations can resume. Cranemasters provides track inspection, cross-tie replacement, switch timber replacement, track rehabilitation, surfacing, tamping, alignment correction, and other maintenance services designed to return infrastructure to safe operating condition.

Cranemasters also performs track panel installation and complex track structure work. These capabilities can significantly reduce restoration timelines when damaged sections of track must be replaced quickly. By combining derailment recovery with track reconstruction expertise, Cranemasters can help customers transition from emergency response to operational recovery using a coordinated approach.

Bridge Infrastructure

Bridge infrastructure represents another area where rapid execution can make a substantial difference. Cranemasters offers bridge span replacement services for emergency repairs, infrastructure upgrades, and modernization projects. The company notes that bridge replacement projects often involve extensive coordination, specialized lifting operations, structural support systems, debris management, and installation of replacement components while minimizing operational disruptions.

Natural disasters

Natural disasters create additional challenges. Flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and other events can leave railroads facing damaged infrastructure, blocked rights-of-way, and inaccessible equipment. Cranemasters provides disaster response services, including debris removal, infrastructure repair, site cleanup, and heavy equipment recovery—helping railroads restore service and reduce damage to cars and freight after major events.

Cranemasters' capabilities also extend to on-site railcar repair, load adjustment, and load transfer operations. These services can be particularly valuable when equipment needs to be returned to service quickly or when customer freight must continue moving without undue delays.

What Does Cranemasters Strategic Systems Operation Approach Mean to You?

- **Jobsite Evaluation & Consultative Action Plan**
Systematic assessment of damage, terrain, weather, and site conditions and formation of optimal solutions
- **Engineering Projects Support**
- **Enhanced Onsite Safety Planning**
Proactive identification of risks before work begins
- **Reduced Regulatory Risk**
Experienced and knowledgeable consideration of federal, state, county, and local requirements
- **Minimized Financial and Operational Impact**
Strategic decisions that account for the interests of railroads, car owners, and load stakeholders

Industry organizations and supplier directories consistently identify Cranemasters as a recognized provider of derailment recovery, track construction and maintenance, bridge repair, railcar relocation, and specialized lifting services. That reputation has been built on a simple objective: help railroads keep moving.

For regional railroads and industrial track owners facing increasingly complex infrastructure challenges, the goal is not merely recovering from disruptions. The goal is to reduce incidents that delay operations, restore operations quickly and safely when accidents happen, and minimize business impact.

Whether the challenges are preventative interventions, derailment, a damaged bridge,

a failed crossing, a storm event, or a major rehabilitation project, maintaining continuity requires experienced people, purpose-built equipment, and proven execution.

Keeping the line open is ultimately what matters most. Cranemasters has built its business around helping railroads do exactly that.

More than a tactical contractor, Cranemasters is a STRATEGIC PARTNER.



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CASE STUDY

Planning. Preparation. Precision.

Summer 2026



Cranemasters was called on by three railroads to replace one 2x2 double-double diamond and one 2x3 triple-double diamond during a single curfew.

Challenge

Replace Two Diamond Crossings During One Outage

Diamond crossings, where two or more rail lines intersect, are high-stress areas requiring intensive maintenance. Each passing train exerts immense pressure on frog sections, guard rails, and track structures, accelerating wear and increasing the risk of misalignment.

Norfolk Southern (NS) identified the need to replace a heavily fatigued diamond outside Hammond, IN. Water infiltration beneath the track posed a risk of ballast erosion. When CSX and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad (IHB) learned of the project, they coordinated with NS and Cranemasters to also replace a second diamond seven miles away. The joint objective was to complete both replacements during a single outage, thereby eliminating the cost and disruption associated with multiple shutdowns.

Cranemasters’ Solution:

Planning. Preparation. Precision.

Cranemasters managed planning, preparation, and execution with no margin for error. The outage window required speed plus absolute precision once Cranemasters removed the existing diamonds.

Pre-staging & Test Picks

Crews set up equipment in advance, identifying and testing lift points to ensure each prefabricated diamond could be raised evenly without stress or twisting.

Engineering Precision

2x3 Diamond (50 ft x 50 ft): Two Cranemasters 200 RS cranes lifted the structure via a 50-foot spreader beam and eight pick points, supported by excavators for stability.



Hammond Diamonds Job

Client Information

- Railroads: Norfolk Southern, CSX, Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad
- Location: Hammond, Indiana
- Structures Replaced: One 2x2 double-double diamond and one 2x3 triple-double diamond

Cranemasters Divisions Involved

- Heavy Lifting & Rigging
- Railroad Services
- Track Construction
- Engineering & Planning
- Logistics & Transportation

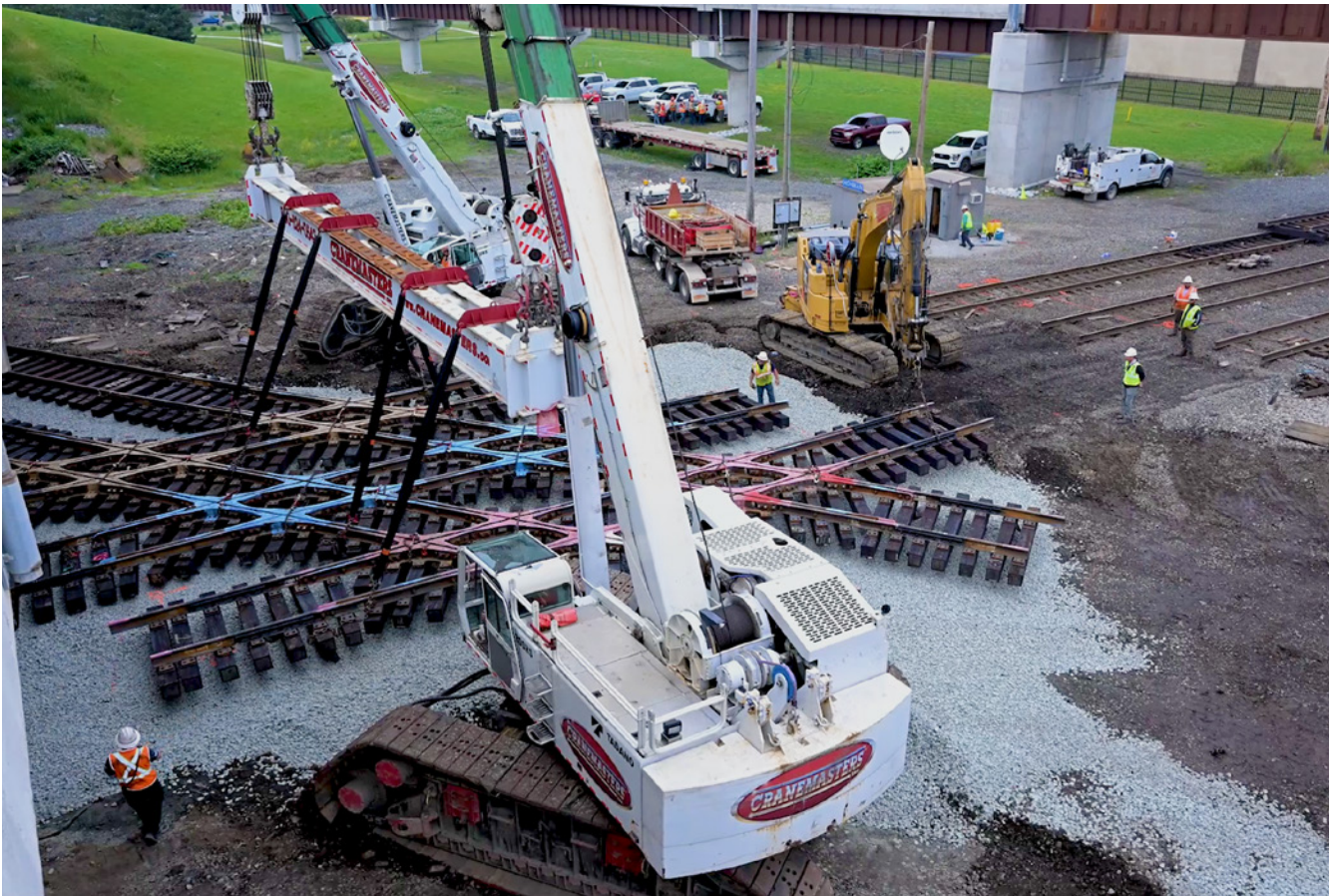
Major Equipment Deployed

2x2 Diamond

- Two Cranemasters 200 RS cranes
- One 335 CAT excavator
- One side boom
- One 50-ft 100-ton spreader beam

2x3 Diamond

- Two Cranemasters 200 RS cranes
- Two 335 CAT excavators
- Two side booms
- Two 40-ft 40-ton spreader beams
- Two 20-ft 20-ton spreader beams



2x2 Diamond (67 ft x 67 ft, 220,000 lbs): Two Cranemasters 200 RS cranes with spreader beams managed primary lifting. Excavators and side booms stabilized the legs, with a total of 20 pick points, ensuring level and damage-free handling.

Implementation

After track grading and ballast preparation, Cranemasters lifted both diamonds, walked them into place, and installed them within specifications, all within the outage window. Crews completed final grading and rail bolting while Cranemasters safely dismantled and demobilized equipment.

RESULT:

Two Crossings Replaced in a Single Outage

Two crossings were replaced in a single outage, eliminating the need for multiple shutdowns.

Seamless coordination between NS, CSX, IHB, and the five Cranemasters divisions ensured safety and efficiency. Both installations were completed within scheduled windows, without incident or delay.

Rail service was restored on schedule, with reinforced infrastructure in place to withstand high traffic demands.

Innovation Driven by Real-World Challenges

Summer 2026

As Cranemasters continues to grow, so does its commitment to engineering innovation and developing practical solutions for the railroad industry. That focus is being strengthened under the leadership of Allen Miotke, Vice President of Engineering & Innovation.

For Miotke, innovation begins with understanding the customer's challenge. Rather than starting with a solution, Cranemasters first works to understand how a task is being performed today, where inefficiencies exist, and what obstacles customers face in the field. From there, the engineering team moves through a structured process of research, development, prototyping, testing, and fabrication to create purpose-built solutions that deliver real value.

That customer-centered approach has become a hallmark of Cranemasters. Whether developing specialized equipment, refining existing products, or exploring entirely new concepts, the goal remains the same: solve problems that matter to customers.

One example is the company's next-generation crawler crane, currently under development. Drawing on years of operational experience and direct input from customers and field personnel, the new crane is engineered to deliver greater lifting capacity, improved maneuverability even

in tight spaces, enhanced stability with a unique articulating track suspension, rapid deployment, and significantly faster ground speed. Every aspect of the crawler crane's functionality has been guided by customer needs and the operating conditions they face.

What makes Cranemasters unique is its ability to take an idea from concept to completion under one roof. Engineering, fabrication, manufacturing, and operations work together to rapidly evaluate new ideas, build prototypes, test solutions, and put proven innovations into service. This collaborative approach helps shorten development timelines while ensuring products are practical, reliable, and ready to perform in the field.

Looking ahead, Miotke's focus is on expanding Cranemasters' engineering capabilities, strengthening customer engagement, and bringing new products to market that help railroads operate more safely and efficiently. By spending time



Allen Miotke
VP Engineering and Innovation
Cranemasters

"At our core, we're about innovation.

If there's a better way to do something, we're willing to invest the research and development effort to make it happen."

—Allen Miotke, VP Engineering and Innovation, Cranemasters

in the field, working alongside customers, and observing challenges firsthand, he hopes to identify opportunities where Cranemasters can deliver the next generation of innovative solutions.

As the company continues to invest in engineering talent, research and development, and advanced fabrication capabilities, Cranemasters remains

committed to what it does best: transforming ideas into practical solutions that address some of the railroad industry's most complex challenges. That commitment to innovation, combined with a deep understanding of customer needs, continues to drive the development of technologies and services that help keep the rail industry moving forward.



Barry Isringhausen, President and Co-Founder, Cranemasters

A Conversation with Barry Isringhausen

Summer 2026

We sat down with Barry Isringhausen, President and Co-Founder of Cranemasters, for a candid conversation about leadership, safety, innovation, and what it takes to keep railroads moving when the stakes are high.

NEWSLETTER: Cranemasters has become one of the most respected names in railroad recovery, maintenance, and specialized lifting. To what do you owe that success?

THE PRESIDENT: The simple answer is our people.

It's easy to look at the equipment first because it's impressive, but equipment doesn't solve problems on its own. Success comes from skilled people making good decisions, working together, and keeping safety at the center of everything they do.

From the beginning, we've tried to build a culture where everyone understands that what we do matters. Railroads move the products people depend on every day. When a customer calls us, it's usually because they have a serious problem affecting their operations, customers, and revenue. Our responsibility is to help them solve that problem safely and efficiently.

The credit belongs to the men and women who show up prepared, stay focused, and take pride in their work.

NEWSLETTER: You've always emphasized safety. Why has that remained such a core value?

THE PRESIDENT: Because nothing is more important.

No project, no deadline, and no piece of equipment is more important than sending people home safely at the end of the day.

Safety isn't a plaque you hang on the wall. It's how you plan the work. It's how you train people. It's how you inspect equipment. It's how you make decisions when conditions change.

In our business, we're often called when situations are complicated. Derailments, damaged bridges, weather events, heavy lifts—those environments can become dangerous very quickly if people rush or make assumptions.

We've learned that the safest approach is the right approach. When you understand the risks, you generally perform the work better, faster, and with fewer surprises.

NEWSLETTER: Cranemasters has developed several purpose-built innovations over the years. Why invest so heavily in specialized equipment?

THE PRESIDENT: Because the proper tool changes everything.

Asking people to perform difficult work with inadequate equipment creates unnecessary risk.

That’s why we’ve invested in innovations like our 1-Side•1-End™ super-duty recovery cranes, the Tank Car Saver, and other specialized equipment designed specifically for railroad applications.

Our goal isn’t simply to lift something heavier or move something faster. It’s to reduce exposure, improve control, and create safer working conditions.

When people have equipment designed for the actual challenges they’re facing, they can perform their jobs more safely and more efficiently. That’s better for our employees and our customers.

NEWSLETTER: Many operations are concerned about summer and fall risks in 2026. What should every track manager be doing right now?

THE PRESIDENT: I’d start with three things.

First, know where your vulnerabilities are.

Every railroad has locations that deserve extra attention. It might be a bridge, a siding, a crossing, drainage issues, aging rail, or a section of track that’s experienced problems in the past. Summer heat and heavy traffic have a way of exposing weaknesses.

Second, don’t postpone maintenance that you already know needs to be done.

Preventive maintenance almost always costs less than emergency repairs. Once an issue affects operations, the costs multiply quickly. Now you’re dealing with service disruptions, customer impacts, equipment delays, and sometimes safety concerns.

Third, think beyond the asset itself.

Don’t just ask what happens if something breaks. Ask what happens to your customers if it breaks. That’s the question that really matters.

A slow order, a failed turnout, or a localized derailment may seem like a small problem, but those issues can quickly affect production schedules, shipments, and customer relationships.

The strongest railroads understand the business consequences of infrastructure decisions.



NEWSLETTER: You’ve often talked about looking at the entire situation before beginning a job. What do you mean by that?

THE PRESIDENT: The challenge is engineering the right solution. That comes from experience, seeing the big picture, and coordinating with private and public stakeholders... before you start slinging 100 ton plus railcars around.

Before we begin any project, we want to understand the complete picture. What are the risks? What are the consequences? What does success look like for the customer? What could change during the work?

At Cranemasters, we use what we call Strategic Systems Operation™ thinking. We look beyond the immediate task and evaluate the entire operating environment.

That approach helps us make better decisions because we’re not just solving today’s problem. We’re helping customers avoid tomorrow’s problems as well.

NEWSLETTER: What advice would you give a young person considering a career in railroading?

THE PRESIDENT: It’s a great industry if you’re willing to learn and work hard.

Railroads have a rich history and continue to serve as the backbone of the economy. The industry offers opportunities in operations, engineering, maintenance, safety, technology, logistics, and management. It’s one of the few industries where you can start on the ground floor and earn your way to increased responsibility.

My advice is simple: stay curious, stay humble, and never stop learning.

The people who succeed are usually the ones who ask questions, pay attention to experienced mentors, and understand that every job matters.

Most importantly, remember that railroading is a team sport. Nobody succeeds alone.

NEWSLETTER: What do you want customers and employees to remember about Cranemasters?

THE PRESIDENT: I want them to know we care.

We care about safety. We care about our people. We care about doing quality work. We care about helping customers succeed.

My brother and I have done just about any work we’d ever ask our folks to do. We know the long days, the grime, sweat, and freezing fingers. We lived through it all together, and we still have all our fingers and toes.

The work that inspires innovation. How many times do people think, “There has got to be a better way,” but then they forget about it? We don’t. We find the better, safer ways to handle railroad work. When one of our folks comes to us with an idea, we listen. Our engineers will see if it’s doable. And before long, that new tool, or piece of equipment, or process is getting tested and refined.

That kind of cooperation and reliance on each other permeates every division, every department, every job. We call it One Cranemasters.



Sure, the equipment matters. The experience matters. The capabilities matter. But at the end of the day, people trust people.

Our goal has always been to be the company that customers can count on when the work is difficult, the stakes are high, and failure is not an option.

That’s something our employees should be proud of because they earn that reputation every day.

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Cranemasters Railroad Emergency and Construction Services

Full rail support services with innovative purpose-built equipment and experienced crews ready to deliver safe and efficient solutions:

- Qualified for Class 1 and short line railroad, and industrial siding FRA inspections
- Emergency Derailment
- Bridge Span Replacement
- Complex Track Installation & Repair Switches and Retarders
- Innovative Design
- Crane Manufacturing & Rebuild
- Natural Disaster
- Heavy Equipment Recovery
- Load Adjustment & Transfer
- Railcar & Locomotive Maintenance & Repair

Cranemasters Operations Centers Nationwide

As a working team of rail services professionals, our available inventory of equipment and crews from our locations can be mobilized 24/7/365.

