

Texoma Manufacturing founder adopts 'git-er-done' philosophy

BY JIM STAFFORD
 For The Oklahoman

DURANT — Scott Crain paused as he walked across the vast manufacturing floor at Durant's Texoma Manufacturing LLC, stopping to pick up a small metal part from a shelf.

Crain held up the custom part manufactured specifically for the Caterpillar Inc. plant located just across the Red River in Denison, Texas, and explained the "git-er-done" philosophy of the company he founded in 2010.

"Caterpillar is one of our largest customers, and they are a very diverse manufacturer," Crain said. "We have over 2,000 part numbers we are the sole source for. And out of those 2,000 part numbers, on a weekly basis they come up with one or two of them that they need yesterday."

When the industrial giant located 20 miles south in Denison calls, the Durant company scrambles to fill the order.

"We can service their very demanding needs,



Scott Crain

first of all, logistically because of proximity," Crain said. "And then, because we care. That's our motto, big enough to serve and small enough to care."

Texoma Mfg. produces a diverse range of fabricated steel products from 83,000 square feet of manufacturing space in the heart of Durant. It is known for its refuse tanks, as well as trash compactors that are shipped nationwide, frac tanks, goose-neck hitches, safe rooms, storm shelters and custom fabricated products.

Behind Crain as he spoke, some of the company's 75 employees were busy welding, bending and hoisting large pieces of steel that were taking shape into one of those products.



Roll-off hoists are installed for use with waste containers at Texoma Mfg. (PHOTO PROVIDED)

Texoma Mfg. is the third manufacturing company the 54-year-old Durant native has owned, including one known as Crain Manufacturing that he operated for 14 years before selling it.

In addition to Texoma Mfg., Crain's businesses also include American Billboard, R&R Signs and a new addition to the growing business empire, a video production company called Slingshot17 Productions.

Crain describes himself as a "survivor" of

the 1980s who jumped into sales and business management right after graduation from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1984.

"I found out I'm able to look at stuff and figure things out," he said. "I've never been formally trained. I majored in fraternity in college."

Texoma Mfg. originally operated as a custom steel fabricator, but moved into trailer, refuse and oil-field industries as Crain identified the demands.

Along the way, Crain

established a relationship with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance that has brought the company engineering and marketing services over the years.

"We are very fortunate to have an organization like the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance to help manufacturers in Oklahoma," he said. "We've participated in several programs they offer to help small manufacturers."

Texoma Mfg. maintains a tiny sales force, depending largely on word of mouth and the internet to bring it new business, Crain said.

Kay Watson, the Ardmore-based OMA Manufacturing Extension Agent for southeastern Oklahoma, describes Crain as the primary driver of new business to the company.

"He is really an innovative, do-it guy," Watson said. "Scott knows everybody. He knows all of his customers, gets out there with them and I would say he primarily brings in the customers. He's really a dynamic guy."

With energy prices

slowly rising over the past few months, Crain anticipates that industry driving more business to Texoma Mfg.

"With oil prices tending to rise right now, we've got some new products that we recently got patented for the oil-field industry," he said. "We plan on breaking that out early this year."

Texoma Mfg's location along the Red River in southeast Oklahoma has been no deterrent to business growth, Crain said. The massive north Texas market lies just to the south. Oklahoma City is close enough to be accessible.

And the company's largest customer is only 20 minutes away in Denison.

"Caterpillar calls us all the time," he said. "They always need something like, today. We can laser cut the parts, powder coat them and get it delivered to them."

Git-er-done.

Jim Stafford writes about Oklahoma innovation and research and development topics on behalf of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology (OCAST).