



## Member Spotlight

### Cooper Trench Safety

Canada's Cooper Equipment Rentals has been on an amazing growth streak the last 10 years after longtime industry veteran Doug Dougherty, partnered with Darrel Cooper to begin the building of one of Canada's largest independent rental businesses. That in and of itself would make a great story, but the growth has also seen a spur of activity in the specialty rental businesses owned by Cooper. The Cooper Trench Safety story is rooted in the family history of equipment rental when Doug's son Cameron (Cam) approached the management team with the idea for a Trench Safety specialty division within Cooper's growing cadre of specialty rental businesses.

Cam points out that one of the keys for Cooper Trench Safety's success is the business can be run autonomously from the main equipment rental business but takes advantage of the synergy within each market to build upon the existing customer base. The businesses all run independently, and they try to have no infrastructure overlap. Cam modestly says he is not sure what his title is, but he oversees the divisions now four locations, with the help of his operations partner Paul Gaspar. The two have set a course of slow steady growth, and adding to their existing three Eastern Canada locations, the opening of their first branch in Western Canada in Edmonton sets the tone for what is to come.

Cooper Trench Safety has a mix of the standard transactional equipment many NAXSA members are familiar with, like trench shields, aluminum modular boxes, hydraulic shoring, steel crossing plates, and many ancillary items that let them be full service to the utility contracting industry. Cooper Trench Safety formed an early partnership with Efficiency Production as the original supplier of equipment to the business as the division got off the ground. Cam now admits the need for more sophisticated engineered solutions like beam and plate, sheet and frame, and slide rail systems has lately been a driver to growth. Cam went on to say that this business has been augmented with the ongoing engineering help of NAXSA member D.H. Charles, for any of these site-specific engineered systems.

The growth out west has also fostered some new supplier relationships. The addition of the Ground Works Safety Systems product line has been a great addition Dougherty went on to point out, "as we began to talk with people in the oil fields and refineries, we found the Ground Works product had been specified for its safety approach to assembly and disassembly, and a relationship was formed to add these product lines to our newest branch location." Dougherty went on to say the configuration of this product also lends itself to some of the Bore Pit peculiarities we were facing in our existing Ontario market, and has been a great addition to our fleet in our existing stores.

While we all know that equipment is important, Dougherty points out that their culture across all the Cooper business entities is what has been a driver for their success. An entrepreneurial spirit with an understanding to always put the customer #1 has paid huge dividends. The mantra is always put the customer's needs first! Cam went on to say we might even error on the side of "too much

infrastructure,” but a little extra fleet or delivery capacity never hurts when it comes to taking care of the customer.

Cooper Trench Safety has a lot of runway left to grow in the Canadian market. It can also be easily said that having members like Cooper Trench Safety helps NAXSA live up to its name, the North American Excavation Shoring Association.