

Not Treading Water

Dredge America Remains Successful Through its Professionalism and Reputation.

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Dredge America prides itself on its professionalism as well as its ability to perform projects across the United States.

“The main thing that distinguishes us is our professionalism, which we feel is way above and beyond anyone else in our profession across the board,” President Dan McDougal says.

“We have new and very well maintained equipment, and our crew is very clean-cut, well-dressed and courteous to our clients,” he adds.

Company Capabilities

Dredge America specializes in dredging jobs in inland lakes, including in industrial facilities and mining sites. The company is able to travel to areas where larger companies that work in coastal areas or major ports cannot. “We work basically where large dredges can’t get to,” McDougal says. “All of our equipment can be placed on a truck.”

The company has worked in 28 states as well as Puerto Rico. In addition to its headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, Dredge America also maintains an office location in Stuart, Florida. Dredge America is marking its 20th anniversary.

“We’re unique in that we’ll travel anywhere, even though we’re a small company,” he adds. “We’ll travel where the work is.”

The company’s services remain in demand despite national economic conditions. “I guess we’ve been fortunate in that the recession hasn’t affected us at all, primarily because we’ve been doing this for 20 years and have a reputation established,” McDougal says.

McDougal credits strong word of mouth from past clients for much of Dredge America’s success. Clients include federal entities such as the U.S. Coast Guard, Navy and Air Force; state, county and municipal governments and private entities including marinas and homeowners’ associations.

“We stay small intentionally,” he adds. “We’re more focused on being the best, not the biggest.”

Project Range

Recent projects include a \$5.2 million dredging of one million cubic yards of Mission Lake in Horton, Kansas. The project started in November and concluded in August. A three-month lake freeze last winter meant the project needed to be staggered, McDougal says.

Mission Lake is located in the heart of Horton and is a key natural resource in the Kansas region. The publically funded project came about because of the lake's deterioration, which made recreation and other activities difficult for residents and reduced its water quality.

"This is very special, because it's a small community that voted for a \$4 million bond issue and secured state matching funds," he adds. "For this small community to pass a bond issue during the recession is very special and goes against what the rest of the country is doing right now."

Horton residents were welcoming to Dredge America crews, and regularly watched as crews worked in the lake. "The hospitality they've shown for our crews is America at its finest," McDougal says. "Anything we asked for, people in the community assisted us with."

Another recent project was dredging a Florida Keys Community College Dive Lagoon. The 40-foot deep lagoon is used for training by dive teams, rescue operations and government agencies from across the country, McDougal says.

The scope of the \$678,000 project was the removal of sediment from the bottom of the lagoon, which was discoloring the entire pond as a result of being kicked up by divers. Crews needed to pump the sediment into bags placed in the college's parking lot, which were then transported. The bags were cut open and the material was hauled off-site to be mixed with sand, which was used as fill for a new housing development.

Service Focused

Dredge America works hard to meet clients' needs throughout a project, from planning and securing permits to final delivery.

"We're very focused on the client getting more than what they expect," McDougal says. "We want the client to be able to not worry about a thing. We want to deliver what they want in the end."

The company's staff is trained and equipped in the latest technology and methods, which help Dredge meet its goals. One recent innovation is the company's increased use of GPS technology during its projects, allowing it to more accurately gauge depths and locations within bodies of water.

“GPS technology has helped us and the customer to quantify what has been accomplished on a daily basis,” McDougal says. “What we do is out of sight and out of mind because it’s underwater. In the past, we’ve had to poke around and take measurements manually, now we can do it very accurately.”

Dredge America takes pride in the programs it is able to offer to staff such as contests and incentive programs for performance. In addition, the company provides field workers with upgraded accommodations such as rental houses. It has established a culture of respect and integrity. “We’re fanatical about treating other people the way you want to be treated,” McDougal says. “We’re like a family here – if you don’t share these values, you don’t work here.”