

Whether the project is a complex revision of a roadway or an upgrade of a parking lot, Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC looks at each job from an engineering and architectural perspective to ensure the best possible outcome.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR SUCCESS

Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC Creates a Path for Personal, Business Growth

by Marge O'Connor

Rick Alessio built a successful pavement company with a philosophy that a good reputation is better than wealth, an approach formed by his 30-plus years of business and faith-based experiences.

When Rick started *Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC* in 2008, oil prices were at an all-time high. "In the first year, we had to overcome tremendous financial distress because asphalt indexes went up and we felt that morally we had to do some work with our partner companies at a loss," says Rick, who now is the company's Chief Operating Officer and CEO.

Crossroads is based in Nutley, New Jersey, and provides asphalt, concrete, maintenance and related pavement

work for industrial, commercial and residential businesses throughout New Jersey. The company has built a reputation for providing personal service, quality workmanship and quick response time. Its project sizes range from \$10,000 to \$2 million. Last year, it grossed just under \$10 million.

BLENDING FAITH AND BUSINESS

Rick's background is a crossroads of experiences. From 1974 to 1976, he attended Northeastern Bible College in Essex Fells, New Jersey, which now is part of King's College in New York City. After that, he took a leadership role in direct sales franchises for home products, such as cookware. In 1982, he transferred his business skills to the construction industry. Simultaneously, he was involved with The Gideons International, an association of Christian

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**Rick Alessio, Chief Operating Office and CEO,
Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC**

professional men and their wives dedicated to sharing God’s message around the world. He developed relationships with churches, did a lot of inspirational public speaking and volunteered for community service. He served 22 years on the Gideons’ state cabinet in various capacities, including president.

Through Gideons, he worked with successful businessmen in various fields. That helped mold his views about business and guided him through the start of Crossroads Pavement Maintenance. For Rick, 2008 was also a personal crossroads when his 25-year role with his former employer in the construction industry came to an end. But he stayed positive and moved forward.

“By God’s grace we were able to be profitable enough to overcome the initial financial challenges,” Rick says. “I started Crossroads by working with two fellows who had other complementary companies—Mike Cifelli of Cifelli & Son General Construction Inc., and Peter Franco, who had a wealth of business experience in construction and property management. Mike specializes in all types of concrete work, masonry and drainage. His company had a number of road crews that allowed us to get into that

work right away. Now he does most of the concrete and we do the asphalt paving, and we help each other with other construction resources,” Rick adds.

Peter is involved with charities and organizations and serves as a trustee for many of them. He also has extensive knowledge of commercial and residential businesses and is more of an adviser for Crossroads. “Peter deals a lot with legal matters and has a great business mind. What he offers these other businesses he also brings to us, and that is immeasurable. His family has been in New Jersey for a long time and is well respected. This family approach is an added value,” Rick says.

Peter’s son, Andrew, joined Crossroads Pavement Maintenance almost eight years ago. “Andrew has been an asset to our company. He is in the field making things happen and works directly with our engineers and with facility managers, who now trust him as much as they do me,” Rick adds.

HONESTY, INTEGRITY ARE STANDARD

After the struggles of the first year, the company turned a corner. “In the

second year, everything I lost was restored back to me, and we overcame our first year’s losses,” Rick says. “The integrity we showed in our relationships with engineers and businesspeople made a big difference. They responded by giving us more work and we pressed ahead to increase business each year,” he continues. “We always paid our bills, yet we never had a line of credit. We paid our suppliers and contractors whether we, as owners of our



Rick Alessio, left, COO and CEO of Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC, built the company with a philosophy that reputation is better than wealth. That philosophy is shared by Crossroads staff, suppliers and other companies with whom they work, including Josh Braen, of Braen Stone Industries, second from left; Andrew Franco, field manager for Crossroads; and Michael Cifelli, far right, head of Cifelli & Son General Construction Inc.



Rick Alessio, COO and CEO of Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC, enjoys being out in the field whenever he can. He considers it part of his commitment to customers and his employees.

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Rick Alessio

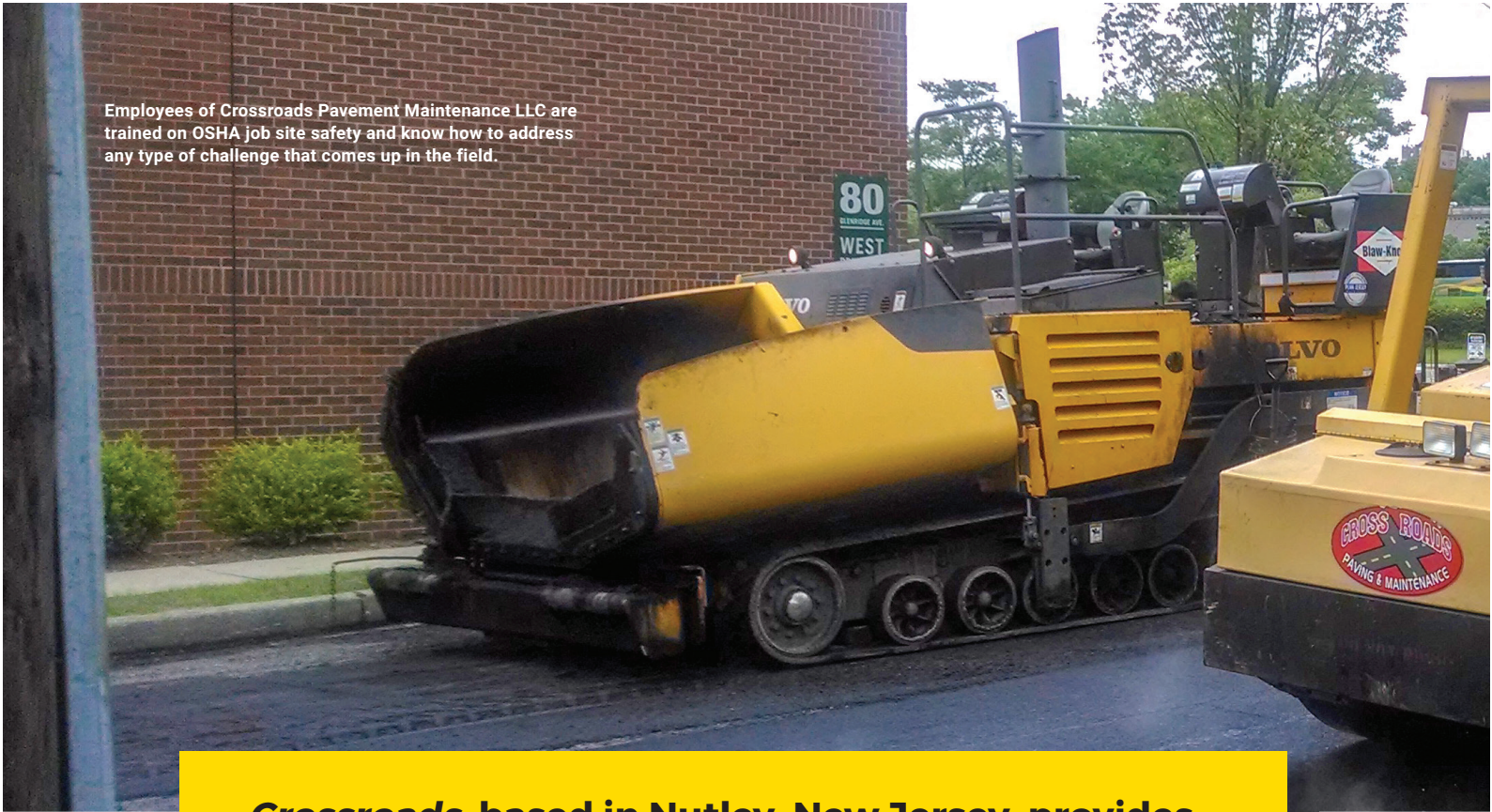
separate companies, got paid or not. That’s how we kept our strong relationships with customers and suppliers,” he adds.

The business was built primarily through word of mouth and an aggressive bidding process. “We bid a lot of work and started bidding bigger projects as we gained the ability to do more,” Rick says. Although the company is focused on paving, it also will go down other paths to serve clients. “Paving is our role, but if we are asked to do other work where we don’t have experience, we bring in other contractors who we trust to do the work,” he adds.

This attention to customer service includes answering phones 24/7 and a mindset of always meeting clients’ needs. “We try to give our customers the best direction to save them time and money, and we offer free design and layout as needed,” Rick says. “We look at it from an engineering and architectural perspective and bring up a lot of issues customers may not recognize, especially about drainage and grading.”

Rick believes his commitment to integrity and honesty sets his company apart from others. “We set high standards for our services, and our employees share the same values of giving the customer what they’re paying for. For example, when we do work for clients, we may install substantially more than the estimated material if deemed necessary. This action instills a great deal of trust in us.”

The company’s 20 employees come from various backgrounds and related trades. “This mix of talents



Employees of Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC are trained on OSHA job site safety and know how to address any type of challenge that comes up in the field.

Crossroads, based in Nutley, New Jersey, provides asphalt, concrete, maintenance and related pavement work for industrial, commercial and residential businesses throughout New Jersey.

makes it possible to address different challenges that come up in the field. We train our staff well on OSHA job site safety, and give them the resources they need, including having a full-time certified asphalt technologist on staff," Rick adds.

The company's work also gained statewide recognition in 2014 when it received the Award of Excellence from the New Jersey Asphalt Pavement Association. "Usually larger companies get this award," Rick notes. "We submitted an application for a project we had done in Essex County for intersection improvements that was in the '1,000 to 5,000 tons' category. We redid the milling and the paving. We were thrilled to get the award."

SHARING GIFTS WITH OTHERS

Giving back to the community is part of Crossroads' approach. The company continually provides physical and financial services to different organizations. "If there is a church with a need that doesn't have the money, we'll pave their parking lot at cost to help them," Rick says. A most memorable situation took place at Jericho Road, a ministry that serves homeless men through a church in Patterson, New Jersey. The program teaches the men to give back to society and offers them housing, a food pantry and job training. "We volunteered our labor and equipment with our supplier Janet Braen of Braen Stone Industries, located

in Haledon, New Jersey, to install pavement on an outdoor basketball court for the church," Rick says. "On opening day, about 60 children came to play. At halftime of each game, the men from Jericho Road came to share their stories to help the kids stay on track. It was a very powerful situation. One lady who came with her son was so impressed, she volunteered to get involved with the ministry."

If there are other special needs, such as flood or hurricane relief or teaching young people to serve in ministry, Crossroads steps up to help. "We helped fund programs for Touch the World, another youth ministry that both Janet Braen and Peter Franco



Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC gained statewide recognition for its work to improve this intersection in Essex County, New Jersey when it received the New Jersey Asphalt Pavement Association's Award of Excellence.



are involved with," Rick says. "It sends kids to different areas or countries to help rebuild housing and work on community projects. It's run like a boot camp where no cell phones are allowed. Once they experience it, the kids love it and come back each year to work on projects."

The work that Crossroads has done shows that a business that puts reputation above wealth can be successful, serve clients and help people in the community find a better path in life. The company knows how to lay down a solid foundation. 🐼

Marge O'Connor is a Chicago-based freelance writer serving the international AEC community.



Father and son duo—Peter Franco (left) and Andrew Franco—are a key part of the growth and success of Crossroads Pavement Maintenance LLC. Peter has extensive experience with commercial and residential businesses and is an advisor to Crossroads. Andrew manages field activities for the company.