

Crane business is booming in Texas and this company provides fast response, skilled workers, and safety to get the job done.

IN THE PAST DECADE, JUSTIN MOFFETT has seen significant changes in the wind energy market. From his home base in Sweetwater, Texas, Moffett says wind turbines dot the horizon in every direction. Row upon row of turbines that were once considered a nuisance to the local citizens are now just part of the landscape.

In this area of Texas where wind power generation leads the world in megawatts of operational energy, it's no wonder that Moffett and others like him have worked for years on turbines or in businesses supporting the wind industry.

Moffett recently joined Crane Service, Inc. after spending 10 years in turbine construction for major OEMs before helping to start another crane and service business in Texas. With a background in both construction and crane work, Moffett's job in territory sales for Texas and eastern Oklahoma is a good fit for him and the company.

"My job is basically to sell operated crane work or crane sales," he said. "Wind energy is everywhere out here. There is a lot of demand for crane rental and service. You go out and usually the customer knows exactly what they need and the weight of the turbine. I work with them to determine what size crane they need – whether they are erecting an 80-meter, 69-meter or 100-meter turbine – we figure out what is the best piece of equipment to fit their job."

"We have 440-ton crawlers, hydraulic truck cranes, a new 550-ton Grove GMK-7550 hydraulic crane and everything down to a 15-ton carry deck," he said. "We stay busy and our equipment is always coming and going. There's a lot of work here for cranes and crane service."

In addition to the equipment mentioned, the company has a fleet of boom trucks, forklifts, all-terrain cranes up to 130-tons, rough terrain, crawler and lattice boom units, in addition to a Link-Belt AT-3275 all terrain unit with a tip height of 350 feet and 156,500 pounds of counterweight. The Manitowoc

Model 16000 Crawler is a new addition to the fleet, according to Moffett. It has a lifting capacity of 440 tons and a 315-foot heavy lift boom with a luffing jib extension to 432 feet.

"We have smaller 25-ton cranes that we rent and the customer operates and the larger operated cranes are constantly moving and busy," he said.

While busy with lots of work and quick turnarounds, Moffett said safety is the most important factor with Crane Service and the industry as a whole.

"When I first started in the wind industry, it wasn't nearly as strict," he said. "There were processes and manuals, but not a lot of enforcement or guidelines. Now it's not left up to your imagination and that's a good thing."

Equipment is well maintained to manufacturer standards and inspected by third-party sources on a regular basis to ensure employees and customers and their jobsites are safe. This also applies to operator training, with each operator working and training on every piece of equipment and licensed to perform the work.

"Besides safety, a huge change is how everything looks now," he said. "I used to look out and see rolling hills and flat places. Now you see turbines -- 500 or more – and when people come to visit you take them out to see the wind farms. It's a unique experience for them. And it's especially beautiful at night.

The FAA lighting is situated on every second or third turbine and they are all linked together so when one blinks they all blink. That's really a sight to see, but it's also fun to watch a turbine going up or a crane being assembled or disassembled.

With so many turbines in Texas, Moffett says most customers are knowledgeable about the work involved and sites or farms are easy to reach with heavy equipment.

"We have some challenging situations where there are some tight spots when we are moving from one location to another, but the assembly and disassembly and the guys who do that work do a great job." ✨

