

INSIDE TRACK



INSPIRING STORIES FOR UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

In this issue, we salute our customers who make sure we have food, shelter, and infrastructure. They've helped keep our world running while many of us have stayed at home to protect our most vulnerable. During these unprecedented times, we've all learned we're in this together. And together, we'll overcome. As one of our customers told us recently, "We have great employees, and everybody buys into the mentality of being a part of one big family." Or another: "I really celebrate how our whole team came together. Everyone has been doing their part, and no one complained. It's been amazing."

Recently we checked in with a few customers we profiled in past issues of *The* Dirt over the years. We wanted to see how they are adapting to a transformed world. In these pages, you'll find stories not unlike your own. Stories of the belief in human resilience and ingenuity. And of the conviction that we will come out stronger in the end. This shouldn't surprise us. Our customers have overcome tough challenges before. One company you'll read about, in fact, was founded during the Great Depression.

No matter how difficult the circumstances, these customers adapt and persevere. No matter what worrisome news another day brings, they put on a hard hat, head out into the world, and make a difference. With all of the uncertainty, these customers express gratitude and humility, as well as hope and optimism. Despite the darkness, brighter times are coming.

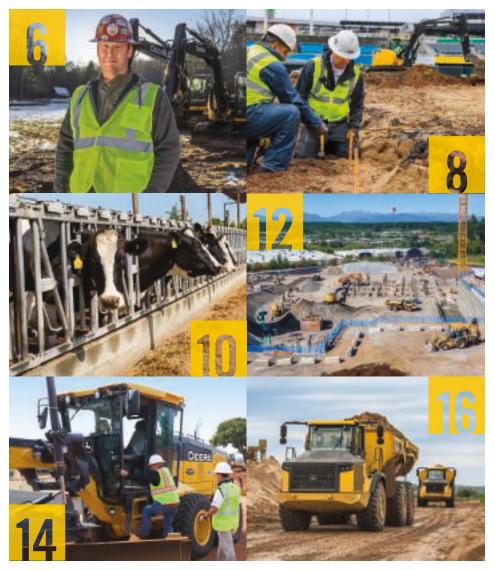
At John Deere, we will do our part to provide you with the tools and technology you need to forge ahead. And we will continue to stand behind you. Because as it turns out, keeping our distance has brought us closer together.

David F. Thorne

Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing Worldwide Construction & Forestry

and F. Thomas

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STRONGER TOGETHER

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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges for many companies. Find out how some resourceful customers are overcoming unique circumstances to keep their businesses running and help others in the process.

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pandemic. Pictured from left are Manager, Demonstration Sites Tim Hilton

and Product Applications Consultants Ben Pacha, Josh Pins, and Shad Wood.

Check out the video at: JohnDeere.com/TheDirt

Photography throughout this issue was taken prior to the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak in North America.



We recently checked in with customers we profiled in past issues and gathered their inspiring stories.

Our customers play an important part in helping to meet the world's increasing need for food, fuel, shelter, and infrastructure. They provide what helps keep the rest of the world working.

At the beginning of 2020, many of our customers were cautiously optimistic about a healthy economy and the coming year. Much changed in March when America hit the pause button. Many businesses closed their doors. Major sports were put on hold. Everyone came together in shared sacrifice for the common good.

While many of us stayed home to help protect our most vulnerable, many of our customers continued working and were considered essential businesses because they built shelter, provided key infrastructure, or supported farms, grocery stores, or other key businesses. To celebrate them, we recently reached out to a few customers we have profiled in past issues of The Dirt. We wanted to check in and see what they've been up to since we last visited. And we wanted to know how they've responded to a world transformed by the COVID-19 outbreak.

It turns out, keeping our distance has brought us closer together. These customers put their people and communities ahead of their bottom lines. They are grateful for having work and for the health of their employees and families. In a time of much uncertainty, they adapted and persevered. They overcame fear, rolled up their sleeves, and went to work. And they share optimism that we will all come out of this stronger.

We celebrate you and hope you enjoy these stories, which are probably not unlike your own. We're thankful to all of you unsung heroes for your dedication and the sacrifices you continue to make to keep the world running.









Surviving disaster is all in a day's work

Tim Ferris, owner of North Carolina's Defiant Marine, had been watching the socioeconomic structure of the world closely, just like always. With a large portion of his work being international, Ferris needs to keep an eye on what's happening everywhere, which is how he knew the rumblings of an overseas virus were going to be a global problem.

Even with everyone still learning about the lethality of COVID-19, travel bans and other key actions were very telling. As the threat of the virus was felt in the United States, Defiant Marine was involved with the largest salvage project in the nation's history. This involved recovering assets from the MV Golden Ray, a 656-footlong international car carrier that capsized in September of 2019.

"I cut to the chase with my crew and the Golden Ray folks: Safety is a must," Ferris says. "My priority was hearth and home, making sure my crew could be with their families. We all needed to make sure we could think and act safely while observing the situation."

Ferris and his crew headed home and found other ways to stay busy. In addition to the work John Deere





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Tim Ferris, owner, Defiant Marine, Inc.

equipment handles on Defiant Marine jobs, Ferris has been using some of that same machinery around his 288-acre ranch when he has some "off time." This includes an 85G Excavator, a 644K Loader, a 750C Crawler Dozer, a 333G Skid Steer, and a four-seat diesel 955 GatorTM. It hasn't all been cruising around in his heavy tools, though.

"The postmaster of my county reached out and asked if I could make some hand sanitizer at my distillery," says Ferris, whose Defiant Whisky has been around since 2013. "It set us behind our normal schedule, but I told them we'd make as much as they need. I didn't charge them anything — they brought over five-gallon buckets and just hauled it off as fast as we could make it."

Once restrictions loosened and the crew felt more comfortable with bigger jobs again, Defiant Marine found itself handling cleanup and repair duties aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious assault ship that suffered a recent explosion followed by five days of fires.

"I know it looks bleak out there, but there's going to be a beneficial evolution to all of this," says Ferris. "This situation is new for everyone. We're all outside our comfort zones, and even though it's scary, that's when the most growth happens. We'll all be better for it in the end."

Defiant Marine, Inc. is serviced by James River Equipment, Asheville, North Carolina.









BUSH SPORTS TURF

Crew has seen plenty of tough pitches, but the pandemic has thrown the ultimate curveball

When public health and safety officials put professional sports on hold, the coaches and players weren't the only ones left sitting at home. With no games to be played, there was no reason to rebuild the fields the games would be played on. Steve Bush and his crew at Bush Sports Turf were headed into another busy season of constructing, renovating, and fixing professional baseball and football fields all across the country. Then, they weren't.

"When business would slow down in the past, I'd just get in my truck and go meet new customers or visit with my old customers. It's impossible to do that now," Bush laments. "Checking in by email isn't the same. Meeting face to face and being able to connect that way is crucial."

With so much of his job consisting of planning and maintaining a schedule, Bush has been looking for control and peace where he can find it, spending more time with family and planting 30 acres of sunflowers this spring.

"My dad used to grow them. After he passed away this year, I wanted to do it as a tribute to him," he says. "We're on a major roadway and people keep stopping by to take pictures. They get out of their cars and are truly happy, finding that there's still good in the world."

As for work outside of those 30 magic acres of sunflowers, Bush has changed the way he and his crew do business. The versatility of their talent and powerful equipment has allowed them to stay busy with small grading



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projects they'd typically turn down during the busy sports season.

"We show up with a heavy-duty piece of machinery to grade a person's yard," says Bush. "It's overkill, but they get a greatlooking yard. Plus, the guy grading their yard graded Wrigley Field. People love that."

Bush has been able to keep his heavy-duty machinery fleet, which includes several John Deere compact models as well as larger machines including a 624K Loader, and the rest of his fleet up and at 'em thanks to some classic Deere dealer support. From preparing the facility for the Kansas City Chiefs as the NFL football team gets ready to start training, all the way to little high school football fields around lowa, Bush has been able to count on his dealer to step up with ordering and obtaining parts to keep operations moving.

"We're catching up on jobs that had gotten away from us. With nothing going on in the sports or concert worlds right now, 90 percent of our business is gone," says Bush, who also notes that he's kept everyone

working — and working safely — despite the hardship. "We're still in business, still working, still providing a livelihood for our employees. I get up every day and I'm grateful for that."

The pandemic reminds Bush of his struggles starting up in the grim 1980s, but he's picked up a few pointers from the games he's helped make happen. "It's not over 'til it's over. Sports will come back," he says. "We're looking ahead to next year. We don't know what it'll look like, but we're ready for it."

Bush Sports Turf is serviced by Martin Equipment, Rock Island, Illinois.







MF Rosa Dairy, a family-owned dairy in Hanford, California, was started by the grandfather of Noel Rosa in 1953 with 50 cows. Today the dairy milks 1,000 cows, producing 9,000 to 10,000 gallons a day. Eighty percent goes to Land O'Lakes™; the rest goes to the dairy's creamery, Rosa Brothers Milk Company®, to produce glass-bottled milk and premium high-butterfat-content ice cream.

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Family-owned dairy helps keep shelves stocked

The dairy began exploring the idea of opening a creamery in 2009 as a way to find a niche while stabilizing volatility long term. Rosa traveled the country, visiting dairies that were doing their own processing to get ideas. He found a great location, remodeled the building, and began production in 2012.

Rosa Brothers Milk Company's products are now distributed to 800 supermarkets, convenience stores, and specialty stores in California. The company uses its own fleet for distribution within a 100-mile radius of the dairy. The company also works with distributors in Los Angeles and San Francisco, along the coastline, and in the Central Coast region.

Since California's stay-at-home order went into effect on March 19

(gradual reopening was announced May 4), the dairy has seen a 20-percent increase in demand. "We saw a huge jump for the first week or two when everyone rushed the stores for milk," says Rosa, president of Rosa Brothers Milk Company and partner of MF Rosa Dairy. "When shelves were cleared out, the larger processors couldn't ramp up as quickly as we could. Stores and grocers were calling us to see if there was anything we could do. Our whole team worked overtime to fill those shelves as best we could."

Rosa is very proud of his team. "I really celebrate how our whole team came together. Everyone has been doing their part, and no one complained. It's been amazing."

WHAT'S REALLY GIVEN ME HOPE IS THAT ONCE PEOPLE STARTED TO COOK AND EAT AT HOME MORE, THEY REALLY SHOWED THEIR LOVE FOR DAIRY, BUYING ICE CREAM, BUTTER, CHEESE, AND MILK. THAT'S BEEN VERY COMFORTING TO US FOR SURE."

Noel Rosa, partner, MF Rosa Dairy



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ESSENTIAL WORK

LOCAL JOHN DEERE DEALER HELPS KEEP DAIRIES GOING

Since we last visited MF Rosa Dairy in 2016, the company added a few new John Deere machines, including a 624L Wheel Loader. Deere wheel loaders are used for everything around the dairy, from loading feed mixers to handling materials. The machines have been extremely reliable, which is essential in a dairy application where cows have to be fed at exactly the same time every day or they don't produce as much.

Rosa's local John Deere dealer, Papé Machinery, helps keep the machines up and running while keeping customers safe. "We're right in the heart of the Central Valley," says Joseph St. Angelo, territory manager. "I have 350 dairies in just my three counties alone. Dairies can't shut down because cows don't take a day off. When equipment goes down, we need to get parts to them and service the machines to keep milk production going."

To keep customers safely distanced, the dealership locked store doors and offered a will-call area where customers can pick up parts curbside. Sales personnel meet with customers virtually using videoconferencing and share electronic materials about products and services.

St. Angelo is grateful that Papé Machinery is able to help farmers, construction companies, and loggers work during these challenging times. "Several of our competitors have had to lay many people off. I'm fortunate that we are diverse and serving so many essential businesses, so we haven't needed to."

The stay-at-home order has given Rosa much time to reflect. "I'm saddened we're losing our ability to go to church and worship. That is really disheartening to me and has been my main challenge."

But Rosa is thankful to have family at home. "I have a college student back at home along with my high school senior who will be leaving us.

We've been spending a lot of time together as a family and that's been nice."

Rosa remains optimistic during these difficult times. "What's really given me hope is that once people started to cook and eat at home more, they really showed their love for dairy, buying ice

cream, butter, cheese, and milk. That's been very comforting to us for sure."

MF Rosa Dairy is serviced by Papé Machinery, Fowler, California.







For this Evergreen State construction company, the coronavirus learning curve was steep and immediate

"We were coming back from CONEXPO-CON/AGG® and knew COVID-19 was an issue in other parts of the world. We never thought we'd be in an affected area," says Justin Reynolds, vice president of construction and partner at Pivetta Brothers Construction Inc. in western Washington state.

But almost immediately after returning, Reynolds started to see the daily press conferences held by the governor. The Seattle area that Pivetta Brothers Construction calls home reported some of the first confirmed cases of the virus in the United States.

Information about what would all too soon become a pandemic was coming fast. Reactions would have to be swift, and Reynolds credits the entire construction industry for banding together to be stronger as a whole. He singles out the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) for being an especially crucial resource during this time.

"I'm so thankful I'm a NUCA member," says Reynolds. "They have a team of lawyers that very quickly got heavily involved with how to be safe through all of this. They organized a virtual meeting every day for about three weeks to brief us on COVID news and update operation procedures."

It wasn't just NUCA that kept things under control, though. "Our founder, Mark Pivetta, kept up great relationships," Reynolds noted. "People can survive a disaster like this by being in it together, and we're making sure we survive."

Situations like the governor's stay-at-home order (issued March 25 and extended through May 31) meant Pivetta Brothers Construction had to deal with issues like jobs being considered "essential" or "nonessential" and various other moving targets. A policy set in the morning could be outdated by the afternoon, leading to the start/ stop of projects and many work interruptions, no small blow for a company built on a foundation of big equipment and big confidence.

"We wanted to do the right thing from a business standpoint, but especially from a safety standpoint," Reynolds says. "Those daily virtual conferences were helpful as things changed so quickly, and we were able to figure out early that if



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we were going to do this thing, we needed to check temperatures of employees every day, implement safety structures, and figure out everyone's comfort level."

With time to look more deeply into the wide range of technology John Deere offers, Reynolds has been able to keep bids tighter and work more efficiently using the John Deere WorkSight™ suite of solutions. This is not only a big help during times of less work and more competition but also an advantage Pivetta Brothers Construction can benefit from going forward. "We've got a tighter understanding of what the field is doing at any given time," says Reynolds. "With about 125 employees broken up over 12 to 14 crews running all over the county, I know I can count on JDLink™

to make the work world a little smaller and more manageable."

Thankfully, the pace of the work world hasn't stopped for the company. It was deemed fully essential and hasn't missed a single job. Its residential work has predictably slowed, but commercial and private commercial bids are still coming in. Reynolds has no grand illusions about what it means to keep the jobs moving, however.

"Even though the beginning of the day looks a little different and we're still trucking on the work, we know that we're not out of the weeds on this thing yet," he says. "Everyone on the team has pooled resources and ideas to make sure this is being taken seriously and professionally. Those sorts of relationships are something Mark Pivetta made it a point to build. We've got a lot of hope just seeing people able to come to work knowing what we've already been through."

Pivetta Brothers Construction Inc. is serviced by Papé Machinery, Fife, Washington.

"OUR FOUNDER, MARK PIVETTA, KEPT UP GREAT RELATIONSHIPS. PEOPLE CAN SURVIVE A DISASTER LIKE THIS BY BEING IN IT TOGETHER, AND WE'RE MAKING SURE WE SURVIVE."

Justin Reynolds, vice president of construction and partner, Pivetta Brothers Construction Inc.







CIMARRON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY





Brothers Don and Tom Noble, owners of Cimarron Construction Company, Oklahoma City, have children now in college who grew up playing soccer together. Watching their children, the brothers saw firsthand how joining a team teaches valuable life skills while building character and self-worth.

Since 2012, the brothers have been heavily involved in the Fields

Brothers impact the lives of others

& Futures program, which has helped rebuild 32 of 44 athletic fields in the Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) district. Cimarron and other local contractors have donated time and resources to build new sports complexes at dramatically reduced costs. The program has encouraged students to join teams, which has demonstrably improved academic performance and graduation rates: 99 percent for athletes compared to 81 percent for nonathletes.

Don and Tom's father started Cimarron Construction Company in 1984. Since we last visited in 2017, the company has been busier than ever. Oklahoma City has seen an increase in construction projects for new development and private industry as well as a \$2-billion investment in public infrastructure.

When Oklahoma's stay-at-home order went into effect on April 16 (phased reopening began in early May), Cimarron was able to continue working as an essential business for providing critical water and sewer services. "We're blessed that we've actually seen an increase in the volume of work, as many municipalities wanted to complete infrastructure projects with less traffic on the roads," says Don. "So it has been a twofold process for us of keeping employees safe and promote social distancing while still completing projects."

Cimarron quickly adapted, asking any employee who could to work at home and replacing large meetings with smaller ones or videoconferences. It also limited the number of workers in each vehicle traveling to jobsites together and staggering start times for crews. "Before the pandemic, we would often mix crews together," says Tom. "We stopped doing that to limit exposure should someone contract the virus. A lot of the new normal is just paying close attention."

The pandemic has given many people, including the Nobles, a



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"IF THERE'S A GOOD THING THAT'S COME OUT OF THE PANDEMIC, IT'S THAT IT HAS SLOWED OUR HOME LIVES DOWN."

Tom Noble, co-owner, Cimarron Construction Company

break from the hustle-bustle and time to reflect. "We've been on the fly ever since our kids started doing sports," says Tom. "If there's a good thing that's come out of the pandemic, it's that it has slowed our home lives down. We've been able to spend quite a bit more time together. The kids are home. My wife is cooking. We have more family dinners together. It put my priorities into perspective quickly."

Creating a supportive work environment is a key reason for Cimarron's success and has helped the company navigate these challenging times. "We have great employees, and everybody buys into the mentality of being a part of one big family," says Don. "We're extremely fortunate. We love what we do, and we've been able to grow."

Cimarron's local John Deere dealership, CL Boyd, has become a part of its extended family. "They've been fantastic — unbelievable really," says Don. "You don't get that from everybody. It's a different culture, and the equipment is second to none."

CL Boyd has been able to make it through the crisis without compromising either the health of its employees or the long-term financial health of the company. "COVID-19 has created some unprecedented operating challenges, but we're doing everything within our control to keep our employees, customers, and their respective families safe," says Stephen Decker, senior vice president of operations at CL Boyd. "Protecting the physical and financial health of our employees is our highest priority, and it's very satisfying to business leaders like Tom, Don, and myself to be able to do so under such difficult circumstances."

Cimarron Construction Company is serviced by CL Boyd, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.









Highway contractor puts family first

hot-mix asphalt plants. The family also owns General Materials, Inc., a sand-and-gravel-mining business

Last year, the construction company produced more volume than in any other year in its 72-year history. At the start of 2020, the company began strategic planning, taking a close look at how it could run operations even more productively and efficiently. Then in March, the world changed.

"The pandemic changed everybody's focus about everything," says Jay Lemon, grandson of Haskell and Irene, and the current co-owner of Haskell Lemon Construction Co., with his partner and cousin, Ken Wert. "Our priorities suddenly shifted from rallying everybody to achieve even higher goals to doing everything we can to protect our peoples' health while honoring their wishes and supporting their families."

A core value since the company's founding has been to balance work with family. "We pride ourselves on being a close-knit company," says Lemon. "We're a family business, and the family part has become more important than the business side for a while. We feel very fortunate that our employees have stuck with us during this difficult time. Many have come up and thanked us, which is reassuring."

The company has worked hard to meet and exceed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC™) guidelines for protecting its people against COVID-19. "We've had great success keeping our employees healthy, but this deal is far from over and we're far from secure," says Lemon. "We need to continue to be vigilant."

CL Boyd Equipment, the company's local John Deere dealer, also works diligently to meet CDC guidelines by setting up its store's layout for social distancing and offering curbside pickup of parts and other options for staying in touch with customers such as videoconferencing.

Times were tough during the Great Depression. Haskell and Irene Lemon found what jobs they could around Oklahoma. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma in the mid-1930s, they traveled the state, working as equipment operators spreading gravel on county roads. This experience would eventually lead them to form their own paving company, Haskell Lemon Construction Co., in 1948. As the United States prospered after World War II, the company grew from a small asphalt business and gradingand-paving supplier into a diversified highway contractor. Today the company also operates five

"WE'RE A FAMILY BUSINESS, AND THE FAMILY PART HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE BUSINESS SIDE FOR A WHILE."

Jay Lemon, co-owner, Haskell Lemon Construction Co.





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Haskell Lemon became one of CL Boyd's Signature Customers when the initiative was launched in 2006, and the relationship between the two companies has grown stronger ever since. The dealership's Senior Vice President of Operations Stephen Decker is a close confidant of Lemon's. During lockdown, the two would often take long walks together on trails near Lemon's office. "We'd talk about the economy, politics, business, family and friends, golf, you name it," says Lemon. "It's been a great way to release stress." "Oklahoma City has a great trail system that passes really close to Jay's office," adds Decker. "Jay and I decided to spend our lunchtime hitting these trails to temporarily unplug from the stress COVID-19 had brought to both of our businesses. We'd walk between two to four miles almost daily and solved a lot of the world's problems in our time together (laughs). Those walks proved to be a healthy, fun, and productive outlet from the things we were dealing with in our respective businesses."

One of the ideas that arose from these walks was to use CL Boyd's shop to do extensive preventivemaintenance inspections on Haskell Lemon's fleet. With business slowing down for both companies, CL Boyd could leverage service techs with high levels of expertise to extensively inspect its equipment. "We were able to address some issues for his fleet that would have been harder to deal with during the heat of production," says Decker. "It was a win-win for both companies. We're very grateful for the opportunity because it helped us both get through some very difficult times."

And Lemon is grateful for CL Boyd's support and remains hopeful about the future. He reflects back to the era that his grandparents endured. "How many years did the Great Depression last? And World War II? That really puts things in perspective. I'm optimistic that when this health crisis has evolved and we've turned things around, things are going to take off in this country and the world. Every time we've had a major economic crisis in this country, we've always bounced back stronger and better than ever."

Haskell Lemon Construction Co. and General Materials, Inc. are serviced by CL Boyd Equipment, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.







As manufacturing companies produce essential products, transportation companies work hard to keep those products moving 24 hours a day during the pandemic. CSX Transportation plays a critical role in responding to the everevolving needs of the population through rail, intermodal, and railto-truck transload services. The Class I freight railroad serves 23 states, the District of Columbia, and two Canadian provinces, and serves a broad array of markets including energy, industrial, construction, agricultural, and consumer products.

CSX TRANSPORTATION

Keeping essential products moving

"CSX and our employees are proud to play a part in providing transportation of critical goods to consumers during this challenging COVID-19 pandemic," says Ricky Johnson, vice president of engineering. "CSX is also taking the proactive measures that best keep our more than 20,000 employees and operations protected during these unprecedented times."

CSX continues to invest heavily in infrastructure improvements and new technologies to keep freight moving safely and efficiently. The company's Bryan Park facility in Richmond, Virginia, manufactures John Deere-powered Maintenance of Way (MOW) equipment, including ballast regulators, tie handlers, brush cutters, and anchor applicators. "From an equipment perspective, our number-one goal

is to ensure equipment readiness for general track maintenance and rehabilitation," says Johnson. "Our goal is to make sure that equipment reliability remains exceptionally high for supporting operations of both scheduled and unscheduled maintenance."

As the pandemic spreads around the globe, so do acts of kindness. Through its Pride In Service program, CSX teamed up with Operation Gratitude to deliver jumbo care packages and handwritten letters from grateful Americans to police, fire departments, and hospital workers. CSX also partnered with The Conservation Fund to provide grants to nonprofit organizations that store and distribute fresh produce, meat, and dairy products to underserved communities.



Did you know one boxcar can carry enough pulpboard to create 131,000 BOXES?

CSX Transportation is working with manufacturers to keep pace with the spike in demand for containerboard as more people shop online and order food delivery.

