

CRUZ CONSTRUCTION CORP. AND CRUZ CONTRACTORS LLC COMPLETE SIXTY YEARS IN CONSTRUCTION

Firms Had As Their Origins Cruz Construction Co., A Sole Proprietship Founded By Evaristo Cruz, Sr. In 1951.

Throughout its six decades, Cruz Construction developed from a company that performed improvements for house builders such as William Levitt on Long Island, New York to a public works contractor performing road improvements, bridge construction, pipeline installation, and all sorts of other infrastructure projects. It participated in building the Boston, Massachusetts Subway by constructing what is known as the Orange Line section. And it reconstructed the J.F. Kennedy Boulevard in Union City by raising its elevation over Route 495. Both phases of that project were completed ahead of schedule, thus earning for Cruz Construction a \$1 Million performance bonus.



Pictured at the Cruz offices are Dominic Pillari, chief project manager/estimator, seated, and from the left are Jose "Joe" Salgado, P.E., project manager/estimator, Antonio "Tony" Cardoso, manager-field operations and Francesco "Franco" Cangialosi, project manager/estimator.

Cruz Construction eventually progressed into using microtunneling equipment to install pipelines without the need to open-cut trenches. It was one of the first contractors in the northeast United States to utilize such technology. While it performed much of its microtunneling work on Staten Island, New York, Cruz also installed two pipelines using that method under the river bed of the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. Each of the two runs totaled 632 feet in length and were 110 feet below grade.

From its beginnings as a public works contractor in the 1960s, Cruz not only performed work in its native New Jersey, but also throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, North Carolina, and Connecticut and the rest of the New England States going as far north as Concord, New Hampshire. Besides the above projects, it also performed the well-known water intake and discharge structure project at the Round Valley Reservoir and constructed a major water treatment plant at the Manasquan Reservoir, both in New Jersey. It performed numerous projects on Staten Island and Queens, New York, for the Department of Design and Construction. And it also performed contracts for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, notably the reconstruction of the Pompton Lakes Dam on the Ramapo River in Oakland, New Jersey. Most recently it completed the installation of 66,000 ft. of a 24 inch water main for

the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority in Poughkeepsie, New York.

During the early years that Evaristo Cruz, Sr. operated the business, he spearheaded the eventual successful effort to have declared unconstitutional a New Jersey law that made it illegal to



Pictured from the left with Cruz's controller Michael Raimondi are Sue Cole, payroll manager, Maria G. "Jean" Clemente, office manager, and Maria Santo, accounts payable supervisor.

employ non-US citizens on public works projects. His argument was simple: If a legal resident is required to pay taxes that are used to pay for public projects, why should he not be able to work in the performance of those same projects? The NJ Supreme Court agreed with all of Evaristo Cruz, Sr's arguments and in 1965 ruled unanimously that the law was unconstitutional. The workplace on public works projects was never the same after that. In recognition of Evaristo Cruz, Sr.'s contributions to the industry, he was inducted in the New Jersey Construction Industry Hall of Fame in 1997.



Pictured together from the left in the firm's engineering and estimating "thinkroom" are Kenneth "Ken" Gilbertson, engineering assistant, seated, Dominic Pillari, Lisa Gulino, administrative assistant, Andrew Kitchen, estimator/project manager, Jose "Joe" Salgado, P.E. and Francesco "Franco" Cangialosi.

Ownership control of Cruz Construction went from Evaristo Cruz, Sr. and his sons Eddie, Licinio “Lee” and Evaristo, Jr. (Evarett) and his nephew Evaristo G. Cruz (Risto) to present ownership in the hands of Lee and his sister Maria G. Clemente (Jean), who joined him as a stockholder at the time of the passing of Evaristo Cruz, Sr. in 1997.

Cruz Construction Corp. was not only successful in its own right, but it was where some of today’s more successful construction companies got started, e.g., Juan Gutierrez (Northeast Remsco Construction) worked for Cruz before going out and forming his



Pictured at the firm’s equipment maintenance facility in Newark are equipment maintenance manager Augusto “Augie” Castanheira, seated, and his assistant Michael Cardoso.

own company; as did Eddie and Risto (E.E. Cruz & Company and Cruz Enterprises, LLC) and Evarett (JRCruz Corp.) Also, Andre Ameer, one of the owners of EIC Associates, worked for Cruz for several years after graduating from NJIT.

Cruz Contractors LLC was the brainchild of Lee Cruz in 2006 as he contemplated retirement. Since he had no one to take over the family business, and didn’t want for it to be forgotten, he thought the best option was to give the opportunity to some of his key employees to form a new company which would take the legacy and tradition of Cruz Construction forward. At that time he spoke with Antonio “Tony” Cardoso, a trusted and long-time (he started working for Cruz in 1976) employee about the potential for doing



Field operations key personnel Manuel O. Octavio “dos Santos” and Jose Rodrigues, utilities specialist/foreman, Daniel “Danny” Figueiredo, superintendent/field engineer, and Eugenio “Eugene” Afonso, carpenter superintendent are pictured at the firm’s Hunter’s Point South Project in Queens, New York.

just that and creating an “exit plan”. Tony spoke with other co-workers, who represented a cross-section of the company in terms of skills and expertise, and with a positive response from nine of them, Cruz Contractors LLC was born, with Lee and Jean also included as partners.

Cruz Contractors LLC started its operations by bidding for work similar in nature to that performed by Cruz Construction. It won contracts in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware and New York. The East Boston Branch Interceptor Relief Sewer microtunnel job performed in Boston, Massachusetts for Barletta – Heavy Division’s contract with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority was the subject of a recent feature article in the industry’s magazine “TBM”.

The new company has also constructed a bulkhead and installed concrete caps at Newark, New Jersey’s Joseph P. Minish Waterfront Park for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, various combined sewer outfall netting facilities in Kearny, New Jersey, and a microtunnel installation under the Northeast Corridor Railroad in Linden, New Jersey. It was also performing subcontractor work at JFK Airport Runway 13R for Tutor Perini Corp. Cruz Contractors LLC is in the final stages of completing the Millburn Avenue Bridge in Millburn (Essex County), New Jersey and is about to start construction of a major rehabilitation of a four block section of Hunter’s Point South, Queens, New York. The company is also continuing work at part of the MTA-LIRR East Side Access Project in Queens, New York, comprising thirteen microtunnel railroad crossings. It was also recently the low bidder on a major microtunnel project in Baltimore, Maryland.



Cruz’s “microtunneling team” including Antonio “Tony” Alves, microtunnel specialist, Eduardo Gomes, microtunnel technician and Augusto “Augie” Castanheira are pictured in front of some of the firm’s microtunneling equipment.

The members of LLC are:

- Licinio “Lee” Cruz – Manager
- Maria G. Clemente – Office Manager
- Antonio Cardoso – Manager – Field Operations / Estimator
- Eugenio Afonso – Carpenter Superintendent
- Augusto Castanheira – Manager – Maintenance Facilities/ Equipment
- Antonio Alves – Microtunnel Specialist / Superintendent
- Daniel Figueiredo – Superintendent / Field Engineer
- Francesco Cangialosi – Estimator / Project Manager
- Jose Salgado, P.E. – Project Manager / Estimator
- Jose Rodrigues – Utilities Specialist / Foreman
- Eduardo Gomes – Equipment Maintenance / Microtunnel Technician
- Manuel O. dos Santos – Utilities Specialist / Foreman

They meet monthly and make collective decisions for their company.

Although not a partner in Cruz Contractors LLC, Dominic Pillari, who is responsible for the daily inside management of the company, has been instrumental in its overall success. Mike Raimondi, the company's controller, oversees its finances and prequalification requirements.

During the past five (5) years, Lee Cruz has systematically sold back to the company a portion of his interest in the new company – with the goal being to fully divest himself of all ownership interests no later than 12/31/16. Although Cruz Construction is still administratively “wrapping up” some loose ends with its own contracts, the focus of all members has been growing Cruz Contractors LLC.

Cruz Contractors LLC has created a “niche” for itself as a microtunnel contractor in the construction industry and is recognized as one of the top microtunnel contractors in the Northeastern United States. In fact, some of its work has been obtained as a subcontractor for general contractors who need a specialty contractor such as Cruz Contractors to perform the microtunnel portion of its contract. Cruz Contractors has been happy to oblige.

By diversifying its markets and focusing on bidding for challenging projects, Cruz Contractors, although a relatively young company, has already emerged as a major player in the heavy construction industry. One of its big benefits is the unique talents and expertise the partners bring to the successful completion of its projects. You can be sure to see more of this in the future.