

# ACT

The magazine for the c

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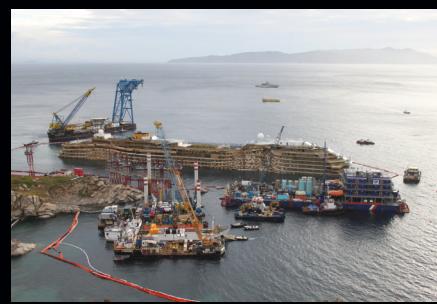
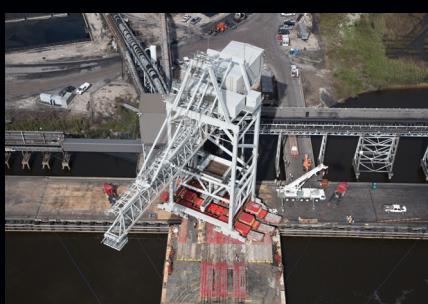


Will synthetic  
rope replace  
wire rope?

Interview:  
**DICA's**  
**Kris**  
**Koberg**

2014  
**SC&RA**  
Job of the  
Year Awards

# Brilliant!



Official domestic  
magazine of  
the SC&RA



REGIONAL REPORT  
Canada  
p38

Named CEO of DICA earlier this year, Kris Koberg leads with compassion and know how. D.Ann Shiffler reports.

# Steady force

In the late 1980s there was a growing awareness that outrigger pads should be the foundation of outrigger-enabled equipment, such as cranes, to assure proper load distribution. Back then, most outrigger pads were constructed of wood and cable reels. While early outrigger pads were on the right path, industry leaders were concerned that they didn't hit the mark when it came to certain ground conditions, ease of use, weight, ergonomic safety and lifespan. In other words, there was a need for a better mousetrap.

In 1988, Dick and Carolyn Koberg founded DICA, which initially represented several manufacturing companies supplying fiberglass utility bodies, aerial buckets, small excavating equipment and electrical inverters for gas, electric and telecom utilities. (The name DICA was created from the first two letters of Dick and Carolyn's first names.) During this time, the Kobergs began pursuing the answer to a question posed to them several years earlier: Can you

**Launched at ConExpo 2014 in March, DICA's new FiberMax mats reduce transportation costs and provide the engineered performance that is needed for higher capacity cranes and low soil-bearing capacity conditions.**

build me a better outrigger pad?

DICA began developing an engineered outrigger pad that would ensure proper load distribution on a range of ground conditions and provide unbreakable strength. The company delivered its first outrigger pads in 1988. It's most successful product is the Safety Tech outrigger pads, which "put the company on the map."

"Today our Made in the USA product line includes Safety Tech® outrigger pads as well as FiberMax outrigger pads, crane pads and crane mats," said Kris Koberg, DICA CEO. "With 50-plus standard models in our line, we're able to fit equipment ranging from less than 1 ton up to 1,000 tons or more."

The family business has also grown to include Kris and his two brothers Kerry and Kevin.

Kris Koberg joined the family business after graduating college in 1991. But then he moved on to "pursue other experiences and opportunities." In 2010, he rejoined the family team as vice president, overseeing all operations. He was named CEO earlier in 2014.

At ConExpo in March, DICA launched its latest product offering, FiberMax outrigger mats. The reception to the new product line has been strong, Koberg said. ACT caught up with him to find out more.

## WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF A FAMILY BUSINESS THAT KEEPS YOU ENGAGED?

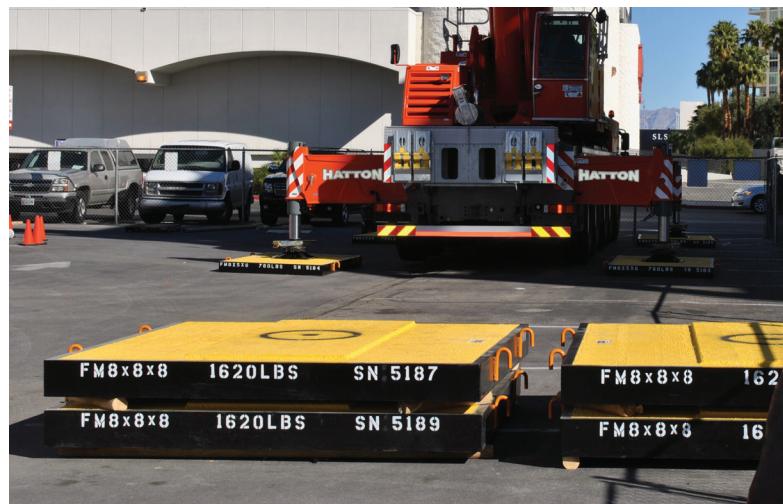
It is engaging to have a common mission to see the work that was started by your parents continue on and flourish for future generations. My responsibility in terms of our family dynamics is to do everything I can to prevent the business from driving family members apart. It's also rewarding to strive together for successes that make your parents proud.

## IS IT EVER DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH YOUR BROTHERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS?

Yes. The good news is that we are all wired differently. The bad news is that we are all wired differently. We try to address issues that arise openly and

honestly, which will always be a work in progress. >

**DICA CEO  
Kris Koberg  
runs the family  
business founded by his  
father and mother, Dick  
and Carolyn Koberg.**





Currently, we are working together through a study called The Ascent of a Leader (by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol and Ken McElrath) that is assisting us in gaining a deeper understanding of what character-centered leadership is and what steps we can take to engage in it. Some of the early benefits are simply gaining a deeper understanding of each other, while also developing better communication skills. We have come a long way from highly competitive boys playing tackle football in the family room to having to learn how to respect each other, trust each other and run a business together. As you might imagine, this is a constant learning process, but one we are committed to.

#### **AT CONEXPO, DICA LAUNCHED FIBERMAX MATS. WHAT DISTINGUISHES THIS PRODUCT?**

The FiberMax product is made up of three distinct lines or "duty's" that each serve different types of equipment. The Heavy Duty line performs very similar to our Heavy Duty Safety Tech line. It is a different material with different properties that some customers may prefer to our Safety Tech engineered thermoplastic material. The Super Duty line provides a nice option for equipment and soil combinations that requires an extra rigid

base between 9-16 square feet. The Mega Duty line, available in standard thicknesses from 4-10 inches allows us to fit every crane currently manufactured. This product can be constructed to be strong and rigid like steel at 50 percent of the weight and will not rot, delaminate, rust or break down like wood or steel. It is an engineered material where the material properties are not affected by the elements or prolonged use. Designing mat solutions for low soil bearing capacities and high loads is no longer a problem.

#### **HOW DID THIS TECHNOLOGY EVOLVE? WHAT HAS BEEN THE RECEPTION?**

The technology was first developed for building pedestrian and vehicle bridge systems as a lightweight, long-term replacement to heavy steel structures and rotting wood structures. The reception has been overwhelming. We believe that the industry has been hoping for a product like this, one that would significantly reduce transportation costs and provide the engineered performance that is needed for higher capacity cranes and low soil bearing capacity conditions.

#### **WILL THE FIBERMAX PRODUCTS EVENTUALLY REPLACE OTHER PRODUCT LINES?**

**The technology behind DICA's FiberMax outrigger pads was first developed for building pedestrian and vehicle bridge systems as a lightweight, long-term replacement to heavy steel structures and rotting wood structures.**

No, the FiberMax line is a beautiful extension of our existing Safety Tech line. There is a small amount of overlap that offers our customers options, but the materials and design differences flow together extremely well.

#### **HOW DO YOU SEE THE GENERAL CRANE MARKET PICTURE FOR 2014 AND BEYOND?**

We see the market as very positive in 2014 and beyond, both domestically and in many areas around the globe. Assuming government political battles and international disputes trend lower, we believe the industry will continue to stabilize, and will begin growing at a better rate. The construction industry is a major driver of employment, but more importantly, the companies that make up the industry create stable, dependable good-paying jobs and career opportunities.

#### **WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY?**

Outstanding people, who care deeply and who are committed to each other. The industry is driven by ideas, innovation and execution. Exciting developments happen daily. Construction and manufacturing are the backbone of great economies. This is where things are built.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY?**

Our Uncle Leo, who ran a successful GM dealership for decades, used the principle that "People do business with people they like" as a cornerstone of his success. My dad, and DICA founder Dick Koberg, has always been focused on making sure we have a "win-win-win" philosophy in whatever we're doing. Both of those ideas are central to what we do at DICA every day. In addition to those, I believe culture and communication are the cornerstones to long-term success. Ideas are easy – execution is hard. Our greatest power is our power to choose. To be successful, we must use it wisely.

#### **WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU AREN'T AT WORK?**

I have a wonderful wife and we like to travel and visit with friends when we are not traveling to kids' activities. Our three children are heavily involved in golf, baseball, basketball, softball and music. Every once in a while, I love to get out to the golf course myself.



**The DICA team at ConExpo included (front row, from left) Kris Koberg, CEO; Dick Koberg, president and founder; Joshua Ford, fitting consultant; Kerry Koberg, global sales director; (back row, from left) Andy Loff, engineer; Kevin Kabler, fitting consultant; David Boon, sales engineer; and Kevin Koberg, marketing director.**



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## **FiberMax** CRANE MATS

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