

## SAFETY By Chuck Van Vliet

Looking back on the year, 2002, gives cause for some soul searching and reflection. Did we have fewer MIOSHA citations because we incurred fewer inspections, no the number of inspections per year has remained relatively constant. Actually, we had several MIOSHA inspections where the inspector found no safety violations. Unfortunately, MIOSHA fines are not a thing of the past; we continue to get cited for “stupid” mistakes made by Kent Companies’ employees. Hard to believe isn’t it? Well here is an example:

2 employees riding in the basket of an aerial boom lift without tying off	\$1,000.00
2 employees climbing from the basket of an aerial boom lift to a beam 60 feet above the ground without tying off	\$1,000.00
2 employees walking on a steel beam 60 feet above the ground without fall protection	\$1,000.00
2 employees telling a MIOSHA inspector that they had never received any training for fall protection	+ \$1,000.00
Cost of the “STUPIDITY FACTOR”	\$4,000.00

An interesting aside to the above is that both employees were wearing safety harnesses, both employees had licenses indicating that they had training in the safe operation of aerial boom lifts, both employees had watched the Kent Companies’ new employee orientation video that deals with fall protection and both employees had signed toolbox talks discussing fall protection. These employees are currently laid off and if I have my way they will not come back to work at Kent Companies.

This fall we had an employee fall 28 feet onto a hard gravel surface and spent over 3 months in the hospital and re-hab center. He is still not been released to return to work. He was very fortunate, it could have been a lot worse, add another 32 feet to that fall and we would all have had an afternoon off to attend the funeral of a fellow Kent Companies’ employee.

Safety is not something that we practice when it is convenient or if we think someone is watching. To develop safe work habits we have to practice safe procedures every minute we are on the job.

Several times in the past we have had an employee injured on the job and not been able to reach his spouse or next of kin, because the necessary information is not in their personnel files. To alleviate this problem, in the near future, you will be receiving a personal data questionnaire in your pay envelope. It is imperative that you complete this questionnaire and return it to Julie Howe immediately.

## YARD By Chris Fennema

Happy New Year from the Yard and Shop staff. While it may be a new year, the same old challenges remain. For the Yard and Shop we continue to work at supporting field activities, maintenance of equipment, supplying materials, and upkeep of the Yard and Shop areas. I find myself acting like a broken record each time I sit down to write an article for Finishing Touch. I have to keep reminding people that the Yard is not your bedroom at your parent’s house and your mother is not on my payroll. So don’t drop things where it is convenient, and clean up after yourself when you do something in the yard. Thanks.

If you’ve been to the Yard lately you can’t help but notice our expanded Yard area. (Thanks, Ken in Excavating.) The goal is to permanently put our shoring material, Curb and Gutter equipment, and trailers in this area. This will free up more room in the existing Yard area for the Steel guys and the crane booms they like to pack up and send back. (One of these days I’ll get to see the new crane that goes with all of the stick we’ve had to unload and load.) We’ve added some more racking in the lean-to and put a roof over the gas shack (Thanks, Rodney and Red.) Little by little, the Yard is moving towards better organization. Your help in taking care of what’s already organized can help cut down on the costs of cleaning up and restacking materials.

The final thing I’d like to touch on in this article is tool and equipment security. Since last April, we’ve experienced the theft of a Sul-lair air compressor, three 4’ power trowels, one 3’ power trowel, an Amida light-tower, Hilti TE-75, and a small equipment trailer. A person doesn’t have to be an accountant to know that’s a lot of money. While an argument could be made that some theft is always present, each of us can do our part to limit the losses we as a company experience due to theft. Chains and locks are available for the asking, hitch locks are here. Don’t think that it’s somebody else’s job to make sure the equipment gets put away or locked up. Just like job site safety, theft deterrence is everyone’s job. Don’t be afraid to make suggestions, new ideas are always welcome. A good rule of thumb is, if it’s got a motor on it, it has to be locked up at the end of the day. Thanks for your help in this. Hope everyone has a safe winter. Spring is always just around the corner.



# The Finishing Touch

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## Aldi’s Michigan Distribution Center

ALDI is an International discount retailer, specializing in an assortment of private label, high quality products. Their product line includes more than 700 of the most needed, most often used products for the average home. Aldi’s sells them at the lowest price – their unique way of operating makes it virtually impossible for competitors to match their combined price and quality. Limited assortment allows the customer the best overall value – you are not required to buy oversized or large packages to get the lowest price.

The Aldi’s distribution center we are working on is approximately a half million square feet of floor space. It consists of 18,000 SF office, 60,000 SF freezer – a very large cooler, three out buildings, tons of dock doors and about a half million SF of 9” paving outside. We started the foundations on this job in May with a very tough schedule. Bovis Lend Lease is the construction manager and their goal was to have the building enclosed and half of the paving done by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Keep in mind this is the largest job that the Lansing Division has ever been involved with.

We hit the ground running and never looked back. At times we had four different crews working all over. We started pouring exterior paving two weeks ahead of schedule and finished all of the exterior in December. A large quantity of concrete was poured on this job. Foundations and interior floors took over 3,000 yards of concrete, and the exterior concrete, paving, curbs, and walks came out to more than 13,000 yards of concrete. The 9” paving required 7 truckloads of wire, and the exterior concrete used up 34 drums of cure. This job showed what Kent Companies was all about. The teamwork that was displayed on this job was outstanding. Thanks to our support group – ALL DIVISIONS involved and to each and everyone that



Pouring foundation walls.



Paving pour.



Building elevation.



Aerial view of the Aldi’s building & site.



Prepping for the dock slabs.



Pouring footings.

