

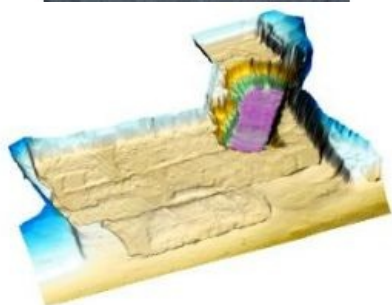
CHRIS RANSOME & ASSOCIATES, INC. (CRA, INC.)

Surveying the Coast



Based out of Houston, Texas, USA, CRA is the specialist hydrographic survey company on the Gulf Coast. As a provider of hydrographic surveying solutions, CRA specialises in using the latest automated data acquisition systems and offering other technical marine-based services such as sediment sampling, hazard surveys and underwater inspections.

In 1987, a team of five experienced land and offshore surveyors who had spent several years working in the oil industry came together to form a company to provide survey services to the Gulf Coast civil engineering sector. Leading the venture was former ex-president of Wimpol, Inc. and Aquanav, Inc., Chris Ransome. CRA was put in business by a subsidiary of Boskalis, the world's largest dredging contractor. Using computer-based radio positioning systems, CRA developed a solid position in the dredging market. CRA has expanded into many different types of surveys, adding geophysical techniques such as side-scan sonar and sub-bottom profiling.



Providing the Most Cost-effective Service using the Latest Technology

A Global Perspective Since CRA was founded, their mission statement has not changed. The three elements contributing to the company's success has always been service, price and technology. The eleven employee firm consists of three departments: administration, marketing and operations. "Internally, CRA has a fun, dynamic culture. We thrive on working on projects that are out of the ordinary and require us to help clients decide which data, acquired by which technology is most appropriate for their needs," said Chris Ransome, president. In twenty-five years of business, CRA has completed over 2,300 jobs, including post-Hurricane Rita and Ike work.

CRA works with marine dock owners, civil engineering firms, pipeline companies, dredging and construction contractors and port authorities. Many marine-related projects along the coast and inland waterways require hydrographic surveying, and with the Port of Houston being one of the busiest ports in the United States, there are a lot of opportunities. The majority of CRA's regular work is on the Texas and Louisiana coast, however, they have tackled many jobs throughout the lower 48 states and internationally in the Bahamas, Venezuela and the Caribbean. With four survey vessels, CRA has the capability to work in most rivers, lakes, bays, and channels, as well as nearshore coastal areas. In upcoming years, CRA plans to expand geographically towards the country's central inland market and diversify their services even further. "CRA wants to be the on and underwater data collection experts for all engineering solutions, measuring any environmental parameters that our clients may require," said Chris Ransome.

Preparing for the Future

The hydrographic survey industry is fast paced. To be successful, you have to keep up with the constant change in technology and techniques. Several years ago, multi-beam systems came into the picture, and being more sophisticated and complex than single beam systems, caused problems for surveyors who did not understand how to use them properly. Since that time, more survey companies have adapted to the methodology, taking surveying to a whole new level.

Activity in the oil and gas industry is starting to show a substantial increase. One of the challenges is the continual drop in cost of equipment needed to perform survey work. This trend is causing the hydrographic survey business to become more competitive as some small engineering and land surveying companies are now offering this service. Existing primary providers will have to improve their service by not only providing ever more sophisticated technology and solutions, but also with a higher standard of safety procedures and increased insurance.

The improving economic outlook is such that there will be a larger demand for water investigations. Coastal areas may be impacted by future rises in sea level. This, and other ecological impacts, will lead to increased surveying requirements in all marine environments, including more scientific studies and research. CRA plans to be on the forefront of developments in this industry for many years to come.

