

# IT'S A BORING LIFE



## IOWA TRENCHLESS ORIGIN

Iowa Trenchless, a full-service boring and tunneling company located in Panora, Iowa, reached a corporate milestone in 2022, successfully reaching 20 years in business. The first generation, family-owned company offers services nationwide that include auger boring, rock boring, pilot tube boring, microtunneling, pipe ramming, pipe jacking, pipe bursting, railroad crossing, bore pit/shaft design, and construction. Iowa Trenchless takes the most pride in their people – the key to the company's success.

Owner and President, Jason Clark began his career in Trenchless Technology as a student at Iowa State University, where he labored for a contractor microtunneling to perform underground utility work on campus. After participating in this project, Clark was hooked, and, seeing a future as a contractor, began to plan his path in the industry. Upon graduating from Iowa State, instead of moving on to an office/business job, Clark began working on larger trenchless projects and with bigger roles at Midwest Mole, and later Michels Corporation. Though he enjoyed the work, Clark's path would lead back to his entrepreneurial roots, and back home to Iowa. This led to Jason and Shari founding their own company, Iowa Trenchless, in 2002, with the support of his parents, Randy and Linda Clark. The father and son laid out a business plan, borrowed enough money to start, and bought just enough equipment to successfully complete the company's first contract.

The company started small, with Jason and wife, Shari, living in Ames, Iowa, where they had to park their equipment at a friend's construction yard, because there was no room at their house. As their family grew, so did the company, and Jason and Shari moved to Panora in 2003, to be close to grandparents, family, and friends. Jason held many roles, as lead estimator, superintendent, and foreman, truck driver and equipment operator. Shari did her part by managing the finances, calling customers, and sending out proposals, all while watching their two children, Ashley and Wyatt.

Most prominently, the company's personnel and equipment stable stepped into a healthy cycle of growth. With successful completion of each year, and each project, the company's portfolio of more qualified personnel, and the newest equipment expanded. Each new piece of boring and tunneling equipment expanded the company's capabilities. This led to new projects, followed by more new equipment, that allowed contracting for even tougher, and even bigger projects. Iowa Trenchless bought its own equipment yard and built its first shop in 2005. Since then, they have expanded multiple times, adding more property, numerous shops, and a comfortable construction office. The company currently has personnel with over 150 years experience, as well as auger boring and tunneling equipment to tackle nearly any size tunneling job, in almost any conditions.

Through several great work experiences, and along his career path, Clark built relationships with other contractors, who have provided a foundation for the company's growth, and constructive leadership role models, as well as many lifelong friendships. When pressed for the secret sauce to the company's success, Clark is quick to give the credit to the people he's worked with over the years – his contractor relationships and industry contacts. But even more important, he says, are the people who built this company – the loyal and dedicated long-term employees that have become like family to Clark, and to the community.



## Morty the Mascot

In years past Iowa Trenchless has been featured in many construction journals and magazines for our trenchless knowledge. In just the last year we have been featured in North American Society for Trenchless Technology (NASTT for short) Midwest Journal of Trenchless Technology, NUCA Business Journal, and NUCA of Iowa From the Trenches. We pride ourselves on prioritizing safety and efficiency.

Along our journey we became friends with Morty the Sewer Rat. Morty is the mascot for NASTT. He is auctioned off every year at the NUCA No Dig show where his proceeds are donated to NASTT for funding of safety training in numerous high schools and collegiate programs! Morty has brought friendly competition and comradery in the construction community, and we are lucky to host him this year. He's had a wonderful time: a new hardhat – complete with an Iowa Trenchless sticker, an Iowa Trenchless banner, Timberland Pro safety boots and a different crew to travel with here and there. He's enjoyed overseeing the jobsite safety and advancing trenchless technology!



## Spotlight On: Randy Siemers

In our first official “employee spotlight,” it’s our privilege to introduce Randy Siemers, Superintendent at Iowa Trenchless. Randy has been working with Iowa Trenchless for almost 15 years, having met owner Jason Clark while they were both working on separate tunneling jobs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

While Randy and Jason’s history began earlier in their careers, Randy’s relationship with Iowa Trenchless began when Randy hired Jason and Iowa Trenchless to complete some Auger Bores on a project in Wisconsin. The work went well, and the two trenchless guys developed a friendship and a healthy mutual respect. In 2008, Randy came to Iowa, to help Jason with an Iowa Trenchless tunneling project in Iowa City. They made a good pair, and Randy stayed with Iowa Trenchless to eventually become Tunneling Superintendent. Randy has been actively involved in the training and development of many of Iowa Trenchless’ current supervisors and crew and has been a key contributor to the company’s growth and success, with several key company leaders crediting Randy for their knowledge and dedication to the industry.

Along the way, Randy’s “favorite job” has been every tunnel he’s worked on – but especially when he was operating the Akkerman 720 TBM, which he affectionately calls the “Cadillac” of tunneling machines. He specifically mentions the Iowa Trenchless tunnel project in Sioux City, Iowa, completed in 2020. This was a very challenging project and required long-term teamwork and determination on Randy’s crew. Janesville, Wisconsin was another job Randy remembers fondly, as a good long job, and uncommonly close to home for him; he was even able to entertain the guys on his crew at his home in East Troy, WI. Randy’s less favorite projects have been the installations implementing more traditional, old-school trenchless methods with steering heads and water levels. He finds more enjoyment in tunnels and now projects employing GBM technology. Some of Randy’s favorite memories with Iowa Trenchless are the adventures with friends from Iowa Trenchless on the company’s trip to Con-Expo in Las Vegas, also a successful tunnel project in Omaha, NE that included an oversized slide rail launch shaft, numerous tunnels, and outstanding teamwork throughout.

When pushed to share just one more story, Randy modestly credits his team with a unique problem-solving achievement, employed to



## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Randy Siemers



complete a challenging 96" RCP tunnel project in St. Louis, Missouri, where his crew ran into a huge mass of loose concrete chunks throughout a very significant portion of the tunnel's length. Most of the Tunnel Boring Machine's face was blocked by these loose concrete chunks, making progress almost impossible. Through resourcefulness and creativity, Randy's team began injecting the open space between the loose concrete chunks with quick-curing foam through long steel brake line tubing, fabricated on-site by the crew, turning the un-tunnelable mass of loose chunks into something the TBM could digest without losing ground – getting the tunnel done and turning the tough project into another win.

When asked about his experiences with Randy, Senior Foreman, Brandon Derry commented, "You can always count on Randy to give his 100% best and make sure each job meets his expectations, or that it gets done perfectly.. it means the same for Randy."

Randy grew up in Wisconsin, working with his brothers on the family farm, and at the same time, grew up in the Trenchless Industry working with his father and family in the family business, "Wisconsin Road Crossing". Randy and his wife, Connie, were married in 1978 and have four children – Jenny, Tiffany, Mike, and Stephanie. Together they have six granddaughters and six grandsons.

Randy's priorities include spending time with his family, and meticulously developing the perfect techniques to smoke BBQ meats – low and slow – with scientific precision and record-keeping regimens, and feeding his friends and family, who enjoy Randy's hobbies as much as he does. He's also a regular hunter, in his hunting camp in northern Wisconsin, processing his own meat from his harvest for the ultimate slow-food delicacy. If you're ever in the area, make sure to call ahead and try to get in on the goods.

Randy's advice to new blood, on entering the Trenchless Industry is to: Work Hard; Pay Attention; Think Ahead. Work Safe – Watch Out for Each Other. Watch everything, Work as a team, and remember – "the tunnel has to come first."

Asked about his time with Randy, Jason Clark, owner of Iowa Trenchless says, "Randy is the very best TBM guy I've ever worked with. We made a great team, and we were on the same page 99% of the time. Randy is definitely one of the best men I have ever known. His contributions to Iowa Trenchless are immeasurable, and his teachings are as big as his accomplishments."



# IOWA TRENCHLESS IS AWARDED NUCA TOP JOB OF THE YEAR

## PROJECT NAME:

Lower Conner Creek Interceptor

## PROJECT OWNER:

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas

## LOCATION:

Kansas City, Kansas

## CONTRACTORS:

Rodriguez Mechanical Contractors (prime); Iowa Trenchless and Midwest Mole (Trenchless subcontractors)

## SUPPLIERS:

Akkerman Inc., Barbco Inc., Michael Byrne Mfg., Northwest Pipe/Permalok, Hobas Pipe

## ENGINEERING:

George Butler Associates



## LOWER CONNER CREEK INTERCEPTOR

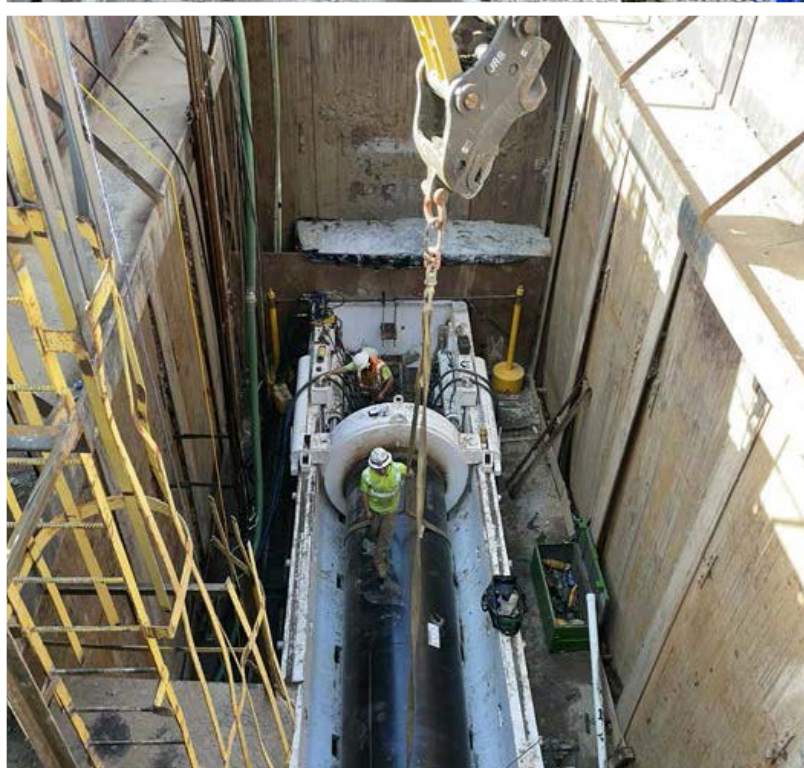
Completed in summer 2021, the Lower Connor Creek Interceptor project involved trenchless construction of sanitary sewer gravity and force main totaling 2,600 LF, including: 640 LF of soft ground TBM pipe jacking with steel casing; 1,300 LF rock tunneling with ribs and board; and multiple pilot-tube guided auger bores with steel casing totaling 640 LF.

Despite the design anticipating a soft ground tunnel, additional geotech discovered a bedrock knoll between the start and ending points of the soft ground Tunnel, ultimately

requiring realignment and lengthening of the tunnel – from 570 ft to 640 ft. The tunnel was completed with an Akkerman 480 TBM with a closed-face cutterhead, Permalok steel casing and pushed with a 1,200-ton hydraulic jacking frame. Tunnel production rates as high as 60 ft per shift were achieved, and averaged 35 ft per shift overall.

The rock tunnel was installed by partners Midwest Mole of Greenfield, IN in interbedded limestone and shale bedrock, and completed utilizing a custom-built 66-in. TBM that was heavily modified to optimize penetration rates in the solid rock. Midwest Mole utilized steel ring beam and wood





lagging as the tunnel liner, with sets built behind the TBM and then expanded. The decision to select this segmented tunnel lining approach significantly reduced the jacking forces required for the 1,300-ft crossing, as well as aiding in steering the TBM since it is advanced off the installed liner immediately behind.

Other trenchless methods used for the project included 24- and 30-in. steel casings installed utilizing an Akkerman 240A guided boring machine (GBM) and Michael Byrne and Barbco auger boring machines (ABM) to complete the trio of trenchless technologies, crossing a local highway and Class 1 railroad track.

Effective communication and collaboration by the Prime, Iowa Trenchless & Midwest Mole, the Engineer and Owner helped overcome challenges and make the project a success.

Citizens of the region rely on the infrastructure system to function flawlessly, while government officials and planning and zoning officers count on infrastructure to support future growth and quality of life. Without the team's collaborative effort and solutions to complete the trenchless facets of the project, this project would have been significantly delayed, had a greater impact to the daily activities of the community, and would have cost the regional government and taxpayers many times the realized expenses.



# Midwest Vac Professionals

is a sister company of Iowa Trenchless. They were founded in 2017 and have grown into a busy company that has a wide range of services available. We've recently expanded our fleet with the addition of 3 new VACALL trucks.

## AVAILABLE SERVICES:

- CCTV Inspection (PACP)
- Segment Testing (Leak Detection)
- Smoke Testing
- Dye Testing
- VACALL Cleaning
- Hydro-Excavation
- Manhole Inspection (MACP)
- Point Repairs
- Root Cutting
- Cleaning Tanks/ Catch Basins
- Lateral Launch Inspections

## NEW CONSTRUCTION:

- Segment Test (Leak Detection)
- Sanitary Sewer Lateral Inspection
- Clean Sanitary & Storm Drain (All Sizes)
- Hydro Excavation/Pot Holing
- Utility Locates/One Calls

## MUNICIPALITIES & ENGINEERS:

- CCTV Inspection w/ PACP Coding
  - DVD / MPEG Burning Capabilities
  - On Site Reports & DVD / MPEG's
- Smoke Testing
- Dye Testing
- Cleaning & Televising
  - Sanitary Sewer (All Sizes)
  - Storm Sewer (All Sizes)
  - Siphons (All Sizes)
  - Lift Stations & Wet Wells
  - Root & Grease Removal
  - Intruding Tap Removal
  - Industrial & Commercial Cleaning



# COMPANY ANNIVERSARIES

We would like to spotlight our employees who have dedicated many years to Iowa Trenchless' and Midwest Vac Professionals' safety, continued education, and training new employees:

## IOWA TRENCHLESS:

Rick Siemers – 18

Brandon Derry – 17

Brad Derry – 15

Randy Siemers – 14

Jeremy Steeve – 12

Jason Klein – 12

Melissa Jensen – 11

Darrell Morris – 9

Chris McClellan – 8

Jon Kile – 8

Kayla Miller – 7

Kyle Spoon – 6

Tony Curry – 5

Alex Lovig – 5

## MIDWEST VAC PROFESSIONALS

Bud Durnan – 6

Chris McLellan – 5

Zach Long – 5

## Working in Hot Environments

OSHA Regulation: General Duty Clause  
Section 5(a)(1)

Exposure to extreme heat can result in illness and injury. Working in a hot environment can cause heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rash. In addition, heat increases the risk of injury for workers because of sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. Burns also can occur when a worker comes in contact with a hot surface or steam.

### Ben's Story:

Ben had been outside for several hours in extremely hot temperatures laying brick. He began to feel nauseated, his head ached, and he was sweating heavily. His supervisor noticed Ben was working much slower than usual and asked him how he felt. When he heard the symptoms, he called 911, took Ben to the shade, gave him a cool drink, and wetted him with cool water and ice.

**Have you or someone you know ever experienced a heat-related illness on the job? If so, what happened?**

**What can you do to help avoid heat-related illnesses?**

### Remember this:

Your employers should train you on heat hazards and their plan to prevent heat-related illnesses.

Take frequent breaks in the shade or in air conditioning.

Drink plenty of water – stay hydrated.

During moderate work in the heat for less than 2 hours, you should drink 1 cup (8 ounces) of water every 15– 20 minutes. If you will be sweating for several hours, you will need sports drinks. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugar. Recognize the Signs of Heat Illnesses

### Signs of heat stroke include:

- confusion
- high body temperature
- slurred speech
- hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- seizures
- unconsciousness

### Signs of heat exhaustion include

- headache
- thirst
- nausea
- weakness
- dizziness
- irritability
- heavy sweating
- high body temperature
- low urine output

If a Co-Worker Has Signs of Heat Exhaustion Call 911. Get the worker to shade and cool them down by removing clothing, wetting with cool water and ice, and fanning. Encourage frequent sips of water.



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## Iowa Trenchless: On the Calendar

March 9-10: Companywide Safety Training

April 30: Iowa Cubs Company Outing

June 19-23: Trench Safety Stand Down 2023

July 4: Parade & Festival

August 4-6: Panorama Days Parade & Outing

