1900-2025
James CRAFT & Son Inc.
MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS
125th ANNIVERSARY

The CRAFTsman

Useful tips, news and information from James CRAFT & Son, Inc.

125TH ANNIVERSARY Celebration

Fall 2026



Our service department

We're Ready for Fall and Every Other Season

Keeping Customers Comfortable All Year Round

Too cold? Too hot? Something leaking? Call James CRAFT & Son. Our Service Team had a very busy summer keeping our customers' systems running. Now we're turning to fall. The team is completing maintenance inspections, attending factory training sessions, and getting buildings ready for the cold months ahead.

Our service technicians are on call 24/7/365. When a system goes down, we respond quickly and treat your equipment with care, so you get back to normal operations as soon as possible.

Owners, property managers, and facility directors rely on James CRAFT & Son to install, repair, and maintain the HVAC systems in their commercial and industrial buildings. We have enough of our signature red trucks on the road to offer same-day service, and our well-trained technicians are ready for whatever comes up.

Don't wait for the first cold snap to find out your system isn't ready. Call James CRAFT & Son today to schedule your fall maintenance inspection.



Our signature red trucks

James CRAFT & Son Inc.
MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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When leaves turn yellow and orange in the fall, where does that color come from?

Fall Trivia

1. How much did the heaviest pumpkin on record weigh?
a) 1,247 lbs
b) 2,102 lbs
c) 2,819 lbs
d) 3,410 lbs

2. Which state grows the most pumpkins in the U.S.?
a) Pennsylvania
b) California
c) Illinois
d) New Hampshire

3. When leaves turn yellow and orange in the fall, where does that color come from?
a) Frost damage to the leaf
b) Pigments that were in the leaf all summer, hidden by green chlorophyll
c) Minerals drawn up from the soil
d) Reflected sunlight at a lower angle

4. Candy corn was first sold in the 1880s under what name?
a) Harvest Kernels
b) Chicken Feed
c) Corn Cones
d) Autumn Drops

5. In Ireland, where the jack-o'-lantern tradition began, what vegetable was originally carved?
a) Potatoes
b) Pumpkins
c) Turnips
d) Cabbages

Answers: 1) c (grown by twin brothers Ian and Stuart Paton of the UK, weighed October 2025); 2) c (Illinois grows about a third of all U.S. pumpkins); 3) b (yellow and orange carotenoids are revealed as chlorophyll breaks down); 4) b; 5) c

The Romans' Secret Ingredient

Rome's Pantheon, dedicated in 128 A.D., still holds the record for the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome, and some Roman aqueducts still carry water today. Meanwhile, plenty of modern concrete structures start crumbling within a few decades. So what did the Romans know that we don't?

Researchers at MIT and Harvard think they've found the answer. For years, scientists credited the volcanic ash the Romans used in their mix. But the team, led by MIT professor Admir Masic, focused on something else: tiny white lumps of lime, called "lime clasts," found throughout Roman concrete.

Those lumps had long been dismissed as a sign of sloppy mixing. Instead, the researchers concluded they were the secret ingredient. The Romans appear to have used quicklime in a process called "hot mixing," which gives off intense heat. That process made the concrete set faster and left behind brittle, calcium-rich lime clasts.

Here's the clever part. When a small crack forms, it runs through those lime clasts. Water seeping into the crack reacts with the calcium and forms new calcium carbonate, which fills the gap before the crack can spread.

To test the theory, the team made hot-mixed concrete, cracked it on purpose, and ran water through it. Within two weeks, the cracks had sealed completely and the water stopped flowing. A sample made without quicklime never healed.

The researchers are now working to bring a modern version to market. Two-thousand-year-old job site know-how may help shape tomorrow's buildings.

Now You Know…

- The Hoover Dam was dedicated on September 30, 1935. It holds enough concrete to pave a road from San Francisco to New York City.
- The Harvest Moon is the full moon closest to the autumn equinox. Its bright light once let farmers keep harvesting after sunset.
- Botanically speaking, a pumpkin is a fruit, not a vegetable. It's a type of berry that grows from a flower.
- About 85% of the world's canned pumpkin is packed at a single plant in Morton, Illinois, which calls itself the "Pumpkin Capital of the World."

Fall Back Without Falling Behind

Daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 1, when clocks move back one hour. An extra hour of sleep sounds like a gift. But any clock change can throw off your body's internal rhythm, leaving you groggy, waking too early, or losing focus for several days.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has long argued that twice-a-year clock changes should be scrapped altogether. Until that happens, here's how to ease the transition:

- Shift gradually. Starting a few days ahead, move your bedtime and wake-up time by about 15 minutes each day so the change isn't a jolt.
- Get morning light. Sunlight early in the day is the strongest signal to reset your body clock. Step outside or open the blinds soon after you wake up.
- Keep your schedule steady. Don't treat the extra hour as a reason to sleep in on Sunday and stay up late Sunday night. Stick to your usual wake-up time.
- Watch the evening commute. Darkness will arrive an hour earlier in the day. Drivers, pedestrians, and anyone heading home from work should plan for lower visibility.
- Go easy on caffeine and screens. Cut back in the evening so your body can wind down on its new schedule.



Know Where to Tap

The boiler in a large factory quit one cold October morning. Production ground to a halt, and the owner called in expert after expert. None of them could get it running.

Finally, someone suggested an old mechanic who had been fixing boilers for 40 years. He arrived carrying a single small hammer.

He walked slowly around the boiler, listening and running his hand along the pipes. Then he reached into a tangle of valves, gave one spot a single sharp tap, and stepped back. The boiler rumbled to life.

A week later, the owner received an invoice for $1,000. "A thousand dollars?" he sputtered. "You were here five minutes and all you did was tap a pipe! Send me an itemized bill."

The new invoice arrived the next day:

Tapping pipe with hammer: $1.00
Knowing where to tap: $999.00

The owner paid it in full.

Adapted from a classic tale that's been told for more than a century.

SPEED BUMP **Dave Coverly**



The Pentagon Turns 85

Eighty-five years ago, crews broke ground on what would become one of the fastest large-scale builds in American history. Construction of the Pentagon began on September 11, 1941, and the building was dedicated on January 15, 1943, roughly 16 months later.

The War Department needed room fast. With World War II underway, its staff was scattered across dozens of buildings around Washington. Congress wanted one building that would house the entire department, stood no more than four stories tall, and used as little steel as possible, since steel was needed for the war effort.

The solution was a sprawling reinforced concrete structure. Builders dredged 680,000 tons of sand from the nearby Potomac River for the concrete. To save even more steel, they built concrete ramps between floors instead of installing elevators.



The pace was relentless. Crews worked three shifts, around the clock, and built the Pentagon one wedge at a time. Design work often ran just barely ahead of construction, and sometimes behind it. The first tenants moved into a finished section in the spring of 1942, while work continued on the rest.

The result is still one of the largest office buildings in the world, with about 6.5 million square feet of floor space and 17.5 miles of corridors. Each of its five sides is 921 feet long. Yet thanks to its ring-and-spoke layout, you can walk between any two points in the building in under 10 minutes.

Total cost: $83 million, or about $1.36 billion in today's dollars.

Why five sides? The first proposed site was an irregular, roughly five-sided plot. The site changed, but President Roosevelt liked the shape, and redesigning it would have cost time the country didn't have.

"Every leaf speaks bliss to me, fluttering from the autumn tree."

—Emily Brontë

A Message From the Crew of 1903

A painter chipping rust off one of Australia's oldest lighthouses got a surprise from a jobsite more than a century old.

While working on a conservation project at Tasmania's Cape Bruny Lighthouse, first lit in 1836, the painter spotted something wedged in a wall cavity of the lantern room. It was a sealed glass bottle, its cork stopper coated in bitumen.

Conservators from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery carefully cut through the seal and coaxed out an envelope holding a two-page letter. Thanks to that airtight bitumen, the paper came out in one piece.

The letter was dated January 29, 1903, and written by J.R. Meech, the Inspector of Lighthouses for the Hobart Marine Board. In it, he recorded that year's upgrades: a new staircase, floor, lantern room, and lens. He noted what the work cost, described the light's new flash pattern, and listed the names of everyone who worked on the project.

In other words, it was a 122-year-old project closeout report, complete with a crew roster. What would your company leave behind for the crew that renovates your building a century from now?

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Pictured L to R: Adam Hildebrand, Justin Bloss, Leon Goudy, Devon Goudy, Jim Kann, Jeff Hanna, Tory Anderson, Toby Trout, Ron Staley, Jose Mattei, Richard Toner, Jessica Craft, Matt Miller, Mahmoud Abdalla, and Tom Craft.

Our Valued Safety Committee

A safe working environment is vitally important, both for the welfare of our employees and the good of the company. For us, safety is not only a legal requirement, but a moral responsibility. We've had a certified safety committee since 2001, made up of representatives from all areas and departments within the company including our shops, warehouse, field, service department and office. The committee is responsible for identifying safety goals for the organization, planning our annual Safety Training Day and reviewing and implementing policies to ensure everyone's safety. In early September, our safety committee members completed their annual certification training. We are proud to recognize their dedication and hard work.