

Product news: Cragin offers hand soap from Kutol

Customers tired of refilling their bathroom hand-soap dispensers will certainly appreciate a new product line at Cragin Industrial Supply.

Kutol Products Co.'s Clean Shape™ Skin Care Disposable Dispensing System keeps germs at bay without the constant replenishment required by traditional containers.

The commercial skin-care line combines convenience and hygiene in 3.8-ounce disposable containers that have all the style of premium fixtures, says Tom Wirostek, vice president of sales for the Cincinnati-based company. And unlike most disposable packages, Clean Shape's plastic bottles won't tip over when they are pumped.

The sealed, nonrefillable bottles also eliminate the worry of cross-contamination that is possible with traditional refillable containers.

The line meets Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in that bottles can be pumped with one hand

using less than 5 pounds of pressure.

The Clean Shape line includes lotion soap, food industry hand soap, instant hand sanitizer, hand and body lotion, shampoo, enriched lotion soap and antibacterial soap.



The Clean Shape line includes products such as antibacterial soap and shampoo.

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Cragin proves to be industry leader

Cragin Industrial Supply hasn't moved far from its original location as a corner hardware store, but it's come miles in terms of solid growth — and there are no plans to slow down.

Through the hard work and dedication of its employees, the fourth-generation family owned business has evolved from a neighborhood store into a successful supplier of commercial, industrial and institutional products from more than 6,000 manufacturers.

"The neighborhood has grown, and our business has grown along with it," says Chris Szafranec, Cragin's manager. "The community has been good to us, and we appreciate everyone's support over the years."

Cragin Hardware opened in 1927 in the primarily industrial section of Chicago known as the near northwest side. Established as a neighborhood hardware store, Cragin soon built its business around the industrial and commercial customers in the area.

The business thrived, thanks to the area's factories and do-it-yourselfers who were regulars at the store.

Cragin Hardware's loyal clientele and hard-working employees allowed the business to weather the ups and downs of the economy for years. In time, though, the neighborhood began to change. Manufacturers closed or

moved to the suburbs and walk-in business tumbled. The company also struggled to compete against big-box home improvement centers such as Home Depot and Menards.

"It's difficult for a small family business to stand its ground against large chain stores," Chris says. "We had to develop an aggressive and smart strategy to ensure our survival."

ONE STOP SHOP

That's when Cragin evolved from the corner hardware store into a serious rival of the larger players by becoming a comprehensive single source for products and services that keep facilities and people operating productively — at a much lower cost.

Cragin's strength also lies in its ability to source and supply hard-to-find and unique items. The business expanded by tapping into new markets such as hospitals, schools, construction companies and building maintenance firms.

Cragin also launched a Web site and began investing in technologies that streamlined operations, including new computers, a new phone system, digital copiers and scanner.

But when the company moved into its current quarters at 2021 N. Laramie Blvd., just around the corner



*The Szafranec family
Standing, from left, are Bob, Chris and Jack.
Seated are Florence and Chester.*

from the original hardware store, it moved more than an inventory and new technology.

TREATING CUSTOMERS RIGHT

Cragin made its mark by selling quality hardware at affordable prices and by providing personalized service — practices that haven't changed today and won't change tomorrow.

The business will continue to grow by adding new product lines, an expanded and professionally trained outside sales force and new customers, Chris says. But no matter how big it becomes, she adds, Cragin will always provide the personal attention and expertise that customers have relied on for more than 70 years.

"We're a people-to-people solution," she says. "People don't want to talk to a computer — they want to talk to us."

Cragin goes to bat for Automatic Spring Coiling

When quick action really counted for Automatic Spring Coiling, Cragin was there to deliver the goods.

Automatic Spring Coiling, which



Mike Rowland

makes springs for the automotive industry, turned to Cragin for help on Jan. 18 when an oven wiper blade broke. The 10-foot-long blade distributes coolant over the springs as they come out of the oven. An aluminum channel inside the blade had broken, making the blade useless.

The failure forced the Chicago-based business to shut down the oven until a replacement part could be found. Mike Rowland, purchasing agent for Automatic Spring Coiling, took the blade to Cragin, which had a part in stock that was nearly identical. Rowland was able to machine the channel to fit his blade and get the oven operating again.

“If it hadn’t been for Cragin, I probably would have taken that oven down for a week,” Rowland says. “Because of their excellent response, I was able to get it up and running again in about four hours. This kept me from having to source the job out or make the part from raw aluminum myself.”

Automatic Spring Coiling has relied on Cragin for nine years. Rowland says Cragin’s customer service is second to none.

“They give the kind of personal attention that has really left the industry,” he says. “When I need customer assistance, I want someone to be there for me immediately — not two days later.”

Service distinguishes Cragin from other distributors

Unlike most of Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp.’s distributors, Cragin Industrial Supply is involved in the service and repair of the company’s products.

That personal attention is what separates Cragin from the competition, says Brian Pope, district sales manager for Milwaukee Electric Tool.

Cragin’s service saves customers the drive to Milwaukee’s service center in Niles, Ill. Customers need only drop their tools at Cragin, then Cragin handles the rest. When the tools are repaired, customers pick them up at Cragin.

“This saves Cragin’s customers a lot of time and trouble,” Pope says. “Most distributors don’t want to get involved in servicing equipment.”

Cragin has cultivated such an

excellent working relationship with Milwaukee that the industrial supply firm’s employees are experts in Milwaukee’s product line, Pope says.

“By working so closely with us, they know Milwaukee Electric Tool very well, and they know how to work with us to get our products to the customer,” Pope says.

Cragin began carrying Milwaukee products in 1994, and now has the company’s complete line, which includes more than 400 tools and 2,500 accessories.

“If there’s a tool we make, then Cragin has it,” Pope says. “They’ve really become a one-stop shop for our products.”

Cragin’s most popular Milwaukee product is the Thunderbolt rotary ham-

mer, which contractors use to drill large holes in concrete.

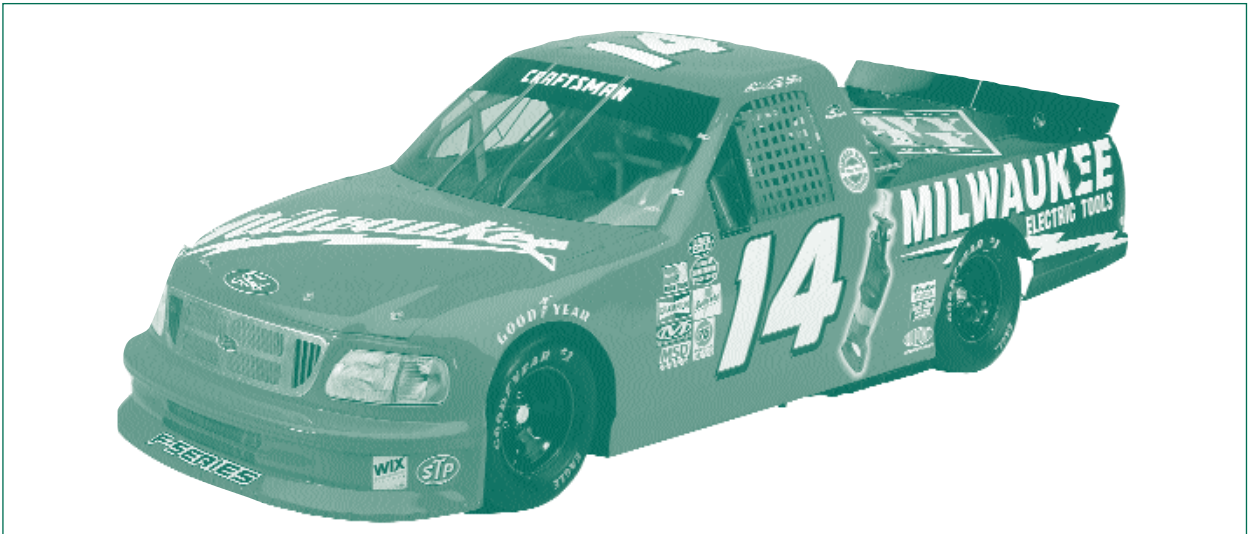
Milwaukee Electric Tool was founded in 1924 and is based in Brookfield, Wis.



Brian Pope

**“If We Don’t Have It —
You Don’t Need It”**

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Milwaukee Electric Tool's #14 race truck will be among the many attractions at Cragin's "Tool Show."

See you at the tool show!

You're invited to Cragin Industrial Supply's semi-annual "Tool Show" from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, March 31 and Saturday, April 1.

Sponsored in conjunction with Milwaukee Electric Tool, the two-day event features product demonstrations and special pricing on Milwaukee power tools and accessories.

With every Milwaukee Tool purchase, you will receive a "Sammy Sawzall" T-shirt or a Milwaukee Racing Team hat. A special added attraction on Saturday is an appearance by the Milwaukee #14 race truck, hot from its

appearance at Daytona.

Demonstrations of Motorola's new Spirit two-way radio, Kutol Products Co.'s Clean Shape™ Skin Care Disposable Dispensing System and Elk River's line of body harnesses will be given.

The WGN Fan Van will be on site to add to the excitement. Customers can enjoy lunch, check out new products, take advantage of special show pricing and register for special ticket giveaways.

Call 773/237-4170 for more information.

