

## PROFILE

# Ontario crane contractor finds good things in small packages

## Fleet of mini-cranes creates big opportunities

JEFFREY CARTER

**M**ini-cranes are proving to be a good fit for the Latta brothers at Up & Down Lifting Solutions in Ontario.

The growing company recently purchased four mini-cranes — an SPX 312, an SPX 424, an SPX 1275, and an SPK60 — manufactured by the Jekko Group. They were delivered to the Up & Down Lifting Solutions location near Ayr in southwestern Ontario through Mississauga-based Strongco Corporation, a Canadian distributor for Jekko.

Jimmy Latta said the little cranes fit into tight spaces, like the inside of shopping malls or industrial buildings, and are adept at handling large sheets of glass. That spells opportunity for Latta and Up & Down.

"We had a few others already in our fleet," Latta said. "They're all manufactured in Italy. They're good solid machines. We've had them for about five years."

With its location just outside of Kitchener, it's a relatively short drive to the Toronto area where Latta estimates his company and its 12 employees spend about 80 per cent of their time. However, the company has also deployed cranes to Western Canada and the East Coast.

"We provide alternative lift solutions and that helps get us in the door," Latta said. Photo courtesy of Up & Down Lifting Solutions



Glass installation is safer and more efficient with this Jekko SPD360 and its specialized attachments.

### One can do the work of five

Glass installation, for example, can require a crew of five or six to manipulate the sheets. Using a mini-crane is far more efficient.

"Now one guy can do the work of five or six with the push of a few buttons. And it's a lot safer," Latta said.

Latta said Up & Down has worked inside the Eaton Centre in Toronto and many other locations, indoor and outdoor, especially in maintenance. Many of the cranes fold up tightly enough to enable access through double doors intended for pedestrian traffic.

According to Jekko literature, the little SPX312 has boom just shy of 25 feet and can lift up to 2,640 pounds. Like other Jekko units, it's tracked. Folded up, it's just two-and-a-half feet wide and just over five feet long.

The SPX 424 is a new model with about double the lift capacity, a similar profile when folded, and has a reach from 8.5 feet

Jeffrey Carter Photo



Owner Jimmy Latta says his southwestern Ontario business specializes in getting small cranes into tight places.

to almost 28 feet.

The SPX 1275 with its 58-foot boom can lift up to 16,500 pounds and, while bigger, it also folds down to get into small spaces.

The SPX 60, another new design, is the big boy of the Up & Down purchases. With a total weight of 33,000 pounds, it can lift up to 13,225 pounds and, with a manual extension, can reach to nearly 90 feet.

### Cranes all in the family

Jimmy Latta works with his younger brother, Jeff. Their mother, Liz Latta, manages the office work.

Their father Gary owned and operated Latta Crane Services, a company he sold to Mammoet, a Netherlands-based multinational that he now works for.

"We've been in business for about 12 years now. We grew up with it," Jimmy Latta said.

"Mammoet and dad were into large mobile cranes and we're in the specialty market, compact, limited-access machines," he added.

Along with their crane fleet, the Latta brothers specialize in access mats. The interlocking mats are used to create temporary roadways providing access for heavy equipment.

In Southern Ontario, the mats are often used to cross farmland to reach locations where wind turbines are being built. **GHC**

Photo courtesy of Up &amp; Down Lifting Solutions



Despite its relatively small size, this Jekko SPX 1270 has a long reach. Up & Down puts the crane through its paces at the former Gooderham and Worts Distillery, now a shopping and commercial district in Toronto.

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