

# DOWN TO EARTH

November 2005 • A publication for and about General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. customers • 2005 No. 4

Featured in this issue:

## WEISZ & SONS INC.

Diversity and solid reputation are keys to success for this Bismarck-based family business

See article inside...



Don Weisz,  
Vice President

Featured in this issue:

## ZIRCON CONSTRUCTION, INC.

Gordon Schoonover builds on experience to make this North Dakota crushing operation successful

See article inside...



Gordon Schoonover,  
President



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# DOWN TO EARTH

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Published by Construction Publications, Inc. for

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# ZIRCON CONSTRUCTION, INC.

## Gordon Schoonover builds on experience to make North Dakota crushing operation successful



Gordon Schoonover,  
President

When Gordon Schoonover bought out his family's North Dakota crushing operations in 2003, he changed the name to Zircon Construction, Inc. But he didn't change the philosophy he learned in nearly 30 years of working with his father, his uncle and his brothers.

"I believe in giving customers good, quality work at a fair price," commented Schoonover, who began working with his family in 1975. "I also believe in being on time and getting a job finished when I say I'm going to. That, along with my experience, is what's made Zircon successful and why we have quite a few businesses that call us when they need crushing done."

Based in Bismarck, Zircon Construction does custom crushing mainly in the state of North Dakota and occasionally in Minnesota. Its specialty is recycling concrete and asphalt, as well as crushing aggregate for hot mix and base materials. Its main product is 1-1/2-inch material used as base for paving. Most of its work comes from contractors that have removed pavement as part of new construction and want it crushed for reuse. Zircon mobilizes its equipment at a designated site and crushes materials to whatever specifications are needed.

"That's the majority of our work," Schoonover explained. "When I was in the family business, my focus was on recycling, so it seemed natural to focus my business toward that area. I did take on one gravel spread, too. I bid on contract work, such as recycling on the Interstates, and I do a lot of private work for individual contractors who need crushing done. We also do jobs for contractors where we go in and strip a site, get materials out, crush it and do the reclamation work, but our main focus is on recycling material. It's worked out very well."

### Dedicated employees

Schoonover estimated that Zircon crushes nearly a million tons of material per year, a figure that's been consistent since the company started. The average job is nearly 100,000 tons and the company has two or three projects going at any one time. Zircon runs a single shift for much of the construction season, but switches to double shifts as demand heightens.

"It really depends on the work load," Schoonover said. "If we have a heavy work load, sometimes we'll run up to 20 hours a day. It depends on the demand and how many spreads we need to have going. The reason we're able to keep up with demand is because I have such a good group of employees."

Key among Zircon's 15 employees are Superintendent Darrell Miller, Lead Operators Jay Braunagel, Bob Brindle, Jim Loeb and Jim Doyle. LeRoy Feist services and repairs equipment and Bernie McMahon is the Safety Director

"I consider everyone vital to our success," Schoonover emphasized. "Many of our people worked with me in the family business and stayed on when I bought the operations here, so they have valuable experience that pays off when we do a job. They're dedicated to making sure we meet our customers' needs."

### Equipment meets demand

Customers' needs vary, so Zircon has a variety of equipment from General Equipment & Supplies to meet its job demands. Schoonover works closely with the staff at General's Bismarck branch, especially Territory Manager Justin Stewart. Zircon recently purchased a new 425-horsepower Lippmann 4248LP closed-circuit impactor plant with a 62'x10' double-deck screen and 36-inch permanent magnet. The company



Darrell Miller,  
Superintendent



Bernie McMahon,  
Safety Director

also owns a 35,800-pound Lippmann 5165LS secondary impact crusher that features a 76'x20' triple-deck screen and a 300-horsepower electric motor. Zircon also has Cedarapids crushers (a 54-inch cone plant and an 1800VSI) and Superior stacking equipment, all purchased from General.

"Most people will come in and take a month or two to crush, but we're set up to crush the same amount of material in less time," Schoonover remarked. "We take pride in the work we do and that's reflected in the equipment we have. We believe in quality machinery because that's our bread and butter. We only have a certain amount of time to get our work done, so we can't afford downtime.

"Our Lippmann crusher has done a tremendous job for us," he added. "We've had no problems with it, and we've had no major issues with our Cedarapids equipment. Cedarapids has been around forever and those machines run and run and run."

Zircon handles the routine maintenance on the machines, and pulls them in for upgrades and repainting during the winter months. For major service work and parts, Schoonover turns to General Equipment. "I've been very pleased with the way General has responded to my needs," Schoonover said. "If we need parts they either have them on hand or can get them overnight, so we're not waiting for something we need to have right away. They understand I can't afford to have a machine down. One of the reasons we've stayed with equipment from General over the years is the good service Justin and the people at General give us."

"I appreciate working with Gordon and the fine people at Zircon," General's Territory Manager Justin Stewart said. "He's always been very honest with me about his needs and what we can do to better serve him. He does a lot of research and is very knowledgeable about equipment, so that makes it very easy to work with him on getting exactly what he's looking for."

### More recycling ahead

Gordon Schoonover's knowledge and experience in the crushing business has paid off. When the recycling boom of the 1990s hit,



Gordon Schoonover and his crews at Zircon count on productive and reliable crushing and screening equipment from General Equipment. This new 425-horsepower Lippmann 4248LP closed-circuit impactor plant has a 62'x10' double-deck screen and a 36-inch permanent magnet. Crews were recently using the plant in Mapleton, N.D., to recycle concrete and asphalt from a demolition job for use as road base and backfill material.



Gordon Schoonover of Zircon (left) and Justin Stewart of General Equipment are pictured in front of Zircon's Cedarapids VSI 1800 cone crusher.

he capitalized on it, first in his family's business, then with Zircon. It's something he sees becoming even more prominent in the future.

"I think mining for aggregate is going to slow down; it has already slowed because there are fewer resources available," Schoonover commented. "That's why there has been such a boom in recycling. It makes good sense to reuse materials, so I see an increase in that side of the crushing business."

But an increase in recycling doesn't necessarily equal an increase in the size of Zircon, according to Schoonover. "I don't think we'll get much bigger. I'm very hands-on and believe in being able to be on the job as much as possible. Increasing the size of the business would cut down on how much time I can spend on the job. Bigger isn't necessarily better. My customers and employees appreciate that I'm on the job, and I think that personal touch is important." ■



LeRoy Feist,  
Service Technician

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# WEISZ & SONS INC.

## Diversity, solid reputation are keys to success for Bismarck-based family business

For nearly three decades Weisz & Sons Inc. has meant quality work in North Dakota. Based in Bismarck, the two-generation family business prides itself on being recognized as one of the premier contracting companies in the state.

"I think we have a good reputation in the business," Don Weisz said. "You really can't be in the contracting business without a good name. Those that don't have a good name will eventually be out of business because what goes around comes around. You have to be fair and honest with your customers and we've always strived to do that."

Weisz & Sons was formed in 1977 when Bernie Weisz started his own general contracting company. It was the same year his son Don, now the company's vice president, graduated from high school and went to work with him. Don handles project management and estimating, while Bernie oversees the company's operation. Two of Bernie's other sons, Dwight and Dave, are field superintendents.

"We're truly a family business," Don explained. "Dad is the hub of the wheel. He coordinates the jobs and oversees the office, then between the two of us we oversee the men and schedules. Dwight and Dave are working superintendents, and they have a lot of experience so that's a big advantage for Weisz & Sons."

That means every one of them is involved in making sure Weisz & Sons continues to meet its customers' needs, which are very diverse. The majority of the company's work involves excavation and underground utility projects in and around the city of Bismarck and western North Dakota. Weisz and Sons handles everything from road building to work on water treatment plants to demolition. It takes

on commercial work, as well as municipal work and Department of Transportation projects. The company generally has about five projects going at once.

### Variety of projects

"I think much of our success comes from our diverse capabilities," Don commented. "Because we do a variety of projects, we're able to stay busy, where others who only do one thing tend to run out of work after a while. We handle different types of projects, and we're willing to take a risk to take on a project that others might not want to do."

Weisz & Sons recently completed one such project for the Department of Transportation, constructing a poured-in-place box culvert. The company moved nearly 100,000 yards of dirt and poured about 1,000 yards of concrete. Weisz & Sons also completed a project for Mercer County that involved realigning a roadway and setting two double-barrel box culverts. That job required moving almost 50,000 yards of dirt, building a temporary bypass and removing an existing bridge.

Those projects are typical for Weisz & Sons, but the company also takes on large water

*Continued . . .*



**Don Weisz,**  
Vice President

Weisz & Sons founder Bernie Weisz (right) works with his sons David (left), Dwight (center) and Don (pictured above).



# Topnotch employees, equipment meet job challenges

... continued

and sewer projects such as the one recently completed where crews ran close to 8,000 feet of water line from the city of Bismarck to the water treatment plant in Lincoln. The company also completed a water main project for the city of Bismarck, putting in more than 2,000 feet of new line and tying it into existing lines.

## Experienced staff

Weisz & Sons relies on an experienced group of employees to make sure projects are done to its customers' satisfaction. Many of the staff have been with the company a decade or more, including Operator Bud Carlson and Foremen Paul Kuel, Casey Leingang and Erv Fisher.

"We've built up an excellent core group of employees," Don acknowledged. "We've been about as diverse as a company can get on jobs, but our employees handle the challenges very well. Their experience and loyalty to us pay off in the end."

Weisz & Sons crews put the company's Komatsu PC220LC-6 excavator to work at the 14th Street extension project in Bismarck. The job includes putting in 2,000 feet of water and sewer lines.



Longtime Operator Bud Carlson uses Weisz & Sons' Komatsu PC300LC-5 excavator to put in water and sewer lines for developments on the 14th Street extension in Bismarck. "I like the power and dependability of the Komatsu PC300," Carlson commented.



## Fast, reliable equipment

Efficient equipment is another major component in Weisz & Sons' success. To meet its often demanding challenges, the company relies on equipment that includes Komatsu excavators (a PC220LC-6 and two PC300s) and a D68P dozer. Weisz & Sons purchased the PC220 last spring from General Equipment & Supplies' Bismarck branch.

"We needed to replace another excavator and it was just the right size," Don said. "Compared to our other machines, it's been more efficient on fuel. General hooked up auxiliary hydraulics and equipped it with a quick-attach bucket so we can go from excavation to demolition work quickly. We rented a hammer from General to do demo work and we've had a plate compactor on it for driving sheet piling. It's very versatile.

"We bought Komatsu because it has a great reputation for reliability and speed," he added. "We purchased our first one, a PC300LC-3, used. It had 9,000 hours on it and now it has 17,000. It's still going strong, and doesn't give us any trouble. The PC300s really fit the kind of work we're doing because of their size and speed."


Weisz & Sons works with Bismarck Territory Manager Justin Stewart to find the right equipment to fit its needs. The contractor also works with General Equipment & Supplies for non-routine maintenance. "Justin and General are very easy to work with," Don remarked. "You can call them whenever you need something and they respond quickly. They're available right away. We rely on their expertise."

## Satisfied customers

For Weisz & Sons, maintaining its already rock-solid reputation is a priority. That means continuing to provide its customers with quality jobs done right and on time. It also means pursuing diverse projects.

"We've been very diverse in what we do, and we'll continue to look for a variety of jobs," Don said. "That doesn't mean we'll take on a job just so we have work. We pride ourselves on being able to do things well and that comes with having a lot of experience at what we do. In the end it means a better job, which in turn means a satisfied owner. That's the ultimate goal." ■





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# MAXIMIZING YOUR BOTTOM LINE

## A 10-step process that can help your construction company be more profitable

“There’s a four-letter word that best describes owning a construction company,” says George Hedley, a business-building expert and professional speaker who also owns and manages a \$75-million construction and development company. “The word is risk. In a business with all the variables of construction, you may never be able to totally eliminate risk, but there certainly are ways to minimize it.”

In order to help contractors do just that, Hedley has developed a 10-step program

Because of all the variables involved in construction, there’s probably always going to be a certain amount of financial risk on each and every job you do. But careful planning and attention to detail can help you minimize the likelihood of a money-losing job.



aimed at maximizing profits, which he presented at a seminar during CONEXPO 2005.

### 1. How much profit?

The first step, he says, is to determine how much profit you think you should make.

“The industry average is 2 percent to 3 percent net profit before tax,” he said. “Is that really enough for you to be successful? Probably not, because with all the risk and variables, the fact is, 65 percent of construction companies don’t make any profit, which is why there’s a high failure rate in the industry.

“One way to look at the situation is to ask, ‘If I were investing in a construction company, what kind of a return on my investment would I want?’ The answer is probably at least 15 percent, so that can be a starting point. Personally, my priority is to make a 30 percent minimum return on equity, and I shoot for a specific dollar amount of profit on each job and for the year as a whole.”

### 2. Set clear targets & goals

“Once you’ve determined how much profit you need and want, set clear targets with specific deadlines to help achieve it. You must have a plan and you must always be making progress toward it. If you aim at nothing in particular, you’ll hit it every time. It would be like playing golf without a green or a hole, or playing a football game without keeping score.

“It’s important to be specific and to be able to measure your progress. I use the initials SWAT.COM to keep me on track. My goals are Specific, Written, Attainable, Time-dependent, Clear and Challenging, On-purpose and On-target, and Measurable.”



One of the most important aspects of construction company profitability, especially for companies with large equipment fleets, is to know your cost of doing business. The true cost of any machine, of course, is much higher than the purchase price. It includes interest, insurance, maintenance and repairs, and fuel. Likewise, your employees cost you significantly more than their hourly wage rate. Accurately determining and tracking your true cost of doing business is a crucial aspect of ensuring profitability.

### 3. Use formula to always make a profit

“Whether you measure annual profit as a ‘Return on Overhead’ or a ‘Return on Equity,’ it’s either a 12-step or 13-step formula, but they both will get you to the same place. It basically involves projecting expenses, inserting your return goals, factoring in projected profit and overhead — then determining the volume you need to reach those goals.

“From your company history, you probably have an ‘average job size,’ so you know about how many jobs you’re going to have to do. You probably also know your bid-to-hit ratio, so you know about how many jobs you’re going to have to bid, and you should keep track monthly to make sure you’re staying on track to meet your goals.”

### 4. Know, track, measure and control costs

“It’s amazing to me, but 70 percent of contractors don’t know their fixed cost of doing business. Without that information, it’s a wonder any of them make money. For example, if you’re just figuring the base pay of your employees, you’re probably going

to be underestimating the true cost by 30 percent to 50 percent. Similarly, the cost of your equipment and trucks must include not only the purchase price, but also the interest you’re paying plus insurance, maintenance and gas. It’s important to assign an hourly cost to both your personnel and your equipment in order to determine what your bid should be.

“Keep your overhead low and track everything. And when you assign an hourly rate to a crew member, make sure they’re earning it relative to your best employees, your ‘A’ players. If they’re not — if they’re ‘C’ players — get rid of them and make room for somebody who is or might become an ‘A’ player for you.”

*Continued . . .*

*The information for this article came from a CONEXPO seminar presented by George Hedley. Mr. Hedley owns his own construction company, and as the founder and owner of Hardhat Presentations, is also a nationally known motivational speaker who specializes in providing profit-building information to construction-related groups. For more information, contact Mr. Hedley at 1-800-851-8553 or visit [www.hardhatpresentations.com](http://www.hardhatpresentations.com).*



# Ten steps to profitability

... continued

## 5. Charge the right markup

“The amount of markup you factor into a job for both overhead and profit should reflect the amount of risk you’re taking to do the job. The higher the risk, the larger the markup. To calculate the right markup for your company, start by figuring the return you want on your equity and overhead. I recommend a 15 percent to 25 percent return on equity and a 25 percent to 50 percent return on your overhead costs. Add this profit amount to your overhead budget. This is the total overhead and profit you want to make. Using that amount as a goal, you then can calculate your markup rate based on your anticipated volume.”

## 6. Install operational systems

“Operational systems are essentially formalized company standards and guidelines that keep everybody on your team on the same page. By installing systems, you’re able to produce the same results every time, like a fast-food restaurant or a top hotel line. Customers always know what they’re going to get from you; they like that consistency and because of it, they become repeat customers.”

## 7. Open your books & share the wealth

“By opening your books to your employees, you’re not only showing them respect, you’re

also showing them exactly what it takes to make a profit and why it’s important that each person does his job. Incentive bonuses should be part of the ‘open book’ policy when the company has done particularly well on a job — or for a month or quarter or year.”

## 8. Sell more to make more

“Know your customers. Visit with them face-to-face. Focus on your most profitable customers. Target them and others like them, then go about making them repeat customers. Point out things that differentiate you from your competitors and exploit your expertise.”

## 9. Do what customers value

“Value is what something is worth. Money is a measure of value. To make lots of money, do what your customers value highly. Basically, all customers want first-class quality, top service and the lowest price. It’s very hard to give them all three. Quality and service are what you should always strive to provide because those are the things you can control, whereas low price depends on what others decide to bid. Look for opportunities to do things that set you apart from the competition and add value in the customer’s eyes. In that way, make the low price a matter of comparing apples to oranges.”

## 10. Continuously innovate & improve

“I advocate cutting or controlling costs throughout every aspect of your business except marketing and new technology. That’s because effective marketing will increase your business and new technology will help you cut your overhead costs. Yes, there’s an initial outlay for the marketing and the technology, but the payback is typically many times greater than the cost.

“If you’re not going forward in the construction industry, chances are you’re going backward; and with the pace of change today, it doesn’t take long to be left behind. It’s always better to be early rather than late to the party when you’re talking about technology. Anything you can do that puts you a step ahead of your competition, even if it’s for a short period of time, could result in getting a new customer that might become a customer for life.” ■

Business-building expert George Hedley strongly advocates adopting and embracing new technology as a way to streamline your operation and cut overhead. “Of course, there’s an initial outlay, but the payback is typically many times greater than the cost.”





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# “WORKING GEAR” MACHINES

## By utilizing excavator core technology, Komatsu develops industry-specific equipment

Hydraulic excavators are primarily digging machines. Of course, you can lift with them, do demolition work and some other tasks — but for the most part, the excavator is for going underground. In recent years, however, core excavator technology has also been applied to many different above-grade applications.

“By utilizing the core technology found in Komatsu hydraulic excavators, we’ve been able to develop many specialized, purpose-built machines,” said Mike Murphy, the excavator specialist for the Komatsu Working Gear group. Working Gear was formed several years ago to enable Komatsu, with the help of allied suppliers, to meet the needs of specific industries that require customized equipment. They include material and scrap handling, logging and waste transfer stations.

“In some cases, we essentially start with a blank sheet of paper in developing these purpose-built machines,” said Murphy. “In many ways they may resemble hydraulic excavators, and their roots certainly lie in the proven world-wide componentry expertise of Komatsu excavators. But make no mistake, Working Gear machines are not excavators. They’ve been extensively modified at the factory level to increase productivity, reliability and longevity in specific applications.”

### Material-handling series

Komatsu material handlers serve as good examples of how purpose-built Working Gear machines borrow from — but also differ significantly from — traditional hydraulic excavators.

Komatsu offers six material-handling models, ranging from the PC270LC-7 up through the PC1250LC-7. The units, which are

primarily used for barge loading/unloading or scrap processing, include the popular PC300-, PC400-, PC600- and PC750-model sizes.

The Komatsu material-handling series features elevated cabs (78-inch, manual-tilt

*Continued . . .*

**Brief specs on Komatsu Material Handlers**

Model	Output	Operating Weight	Reach (standard)
PC270LC-7	174 hp	70,000 lbs.	46 ft.
PC300HD-7	242 hp	89,960 lbs.	46 or 48 ft.
PC400LC-7	330 hp	118,211 lbs.	54 or 55 ft.
PC600LC-7	385 hp	144,014 lbs.	55 or 60 ft.
PC750LC-7	454 hp	203,700 lbs.	55 or 62 ft.
PC1250LC-7	651 hp	259,474 lbs.	62 or 70 ft.

All Komatsu material handlers, including the PC300HD-7 shown here in a scrap application, feature elevated cabs for better visibility, and reinforced front attachments to handle the stress of swinging heavy loads.



# Customized Working Gear machines

... continued

*For more information on Komatsu Working Gear machines, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location today.*

cab risers with platform and hand rails) as standard equipment. "Up and out" risers are available as an option for improved visibility in barge work. Other changes to the standard excavator are stronger structural components to better stand up to the specialized nature of the work; front window guards for increased safety; and widened carbody and additional counterweights for better stability.

Komatsu also equips all models with hydraulic generators and electrical cables to power and operate large magnets; centralized lube plumbing and lube points; plumbing for grapple operation; and a hydraulic control package to open, close and rotate grapple with control handles and switches in the cab.

## Allied suppliers

Komatsu material-handling machine fronts are designed specifically to handle the stress and strain of swinging heavy loads above grade. The units are outfitted with either a two-piece or three-piece Young Corporation front attachment with underslung hydraulic cylinders. Attachment options include shears,

magnets, grapples, orange-peel grapples and clamshell buckets.

"Young Corporation is definitely a leader in its field, as is Pierce-Pacific, another primary Working Gear affiliate whose specialty is forestry applications," Murphy noted. "In looking for Working Gear partners, we seek out companies that have expertise beyond our own, who can add significant benefits for our customers. Both Young and Pierce-Pacific certainly do that."

Because of the partnerships, Komatsu material handlers can be as personalized as a customer wants and needs a machine to be.

"Very often, we or one of our partners — or both of us together — will visit a customer's jobsite to see the operational layout and take measurements," explained Murphy. "After doing that, we're able to make very specific recommendations as to what size of material handler he needs and how it should be configured to meet his production requirements. If a standard machine is not the best fit, we'll customize it to accomplish what needs to be done."

For example, Murphy notes that Komatsu's normal "up and out" cab riser option is eight feet up and four feet out. "But if a customer needs to go out six feet for optimal visibility and productivity, then that's what we'll do. We'll custom make it. That's not at all unusual for us. In fact, we do it all the time."

## Best of both worlds

Like the basic Komatsu excavator, Working Gear products, including the material-handler series, feature Komatsu's patented HydraMind™ hydraulic system, which ensures smooth, powerful, efficient operation.

"If you like Komatsu excavators for their durability, their reliability, their performance features and their technological sophistication, you're going to find the same characteristics in our material handlers and all our other Working Gear machines," said Murphy. "All we're doing is taking the existing product's strengths and adding value to it in order to give customers an industry-specific equipment solution. We think it gives them the best of both worlds." ■

Komatsu material handlers like this PC1250LC-7 are often customized for a specific jobsite. "If our standard machine is not the perfect fit for a particular operation, then we'll custom-make a machine," says Komatsu Working Gear excavator specialist Mike Murphy. "It's not unusual. We do it all the time."





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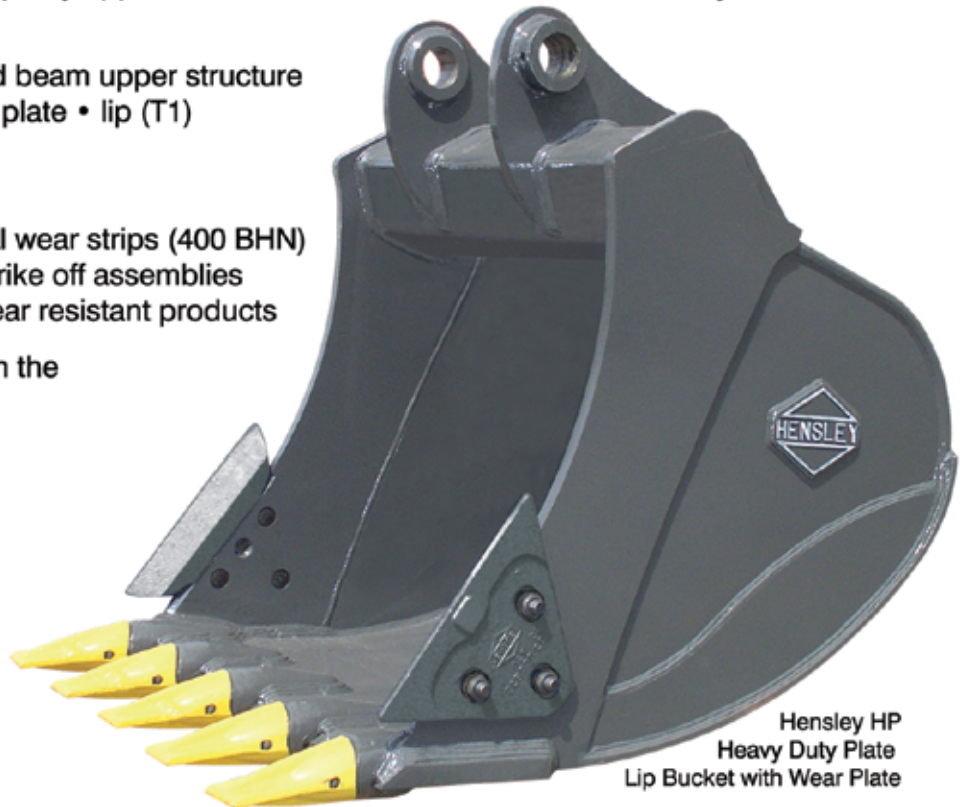
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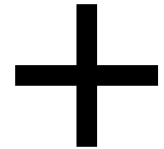
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## NEW PRODUCT

# NEW PARALLEL TOOL CARRIER

## Komatsu introduces its largest parallel-lift wheel loader

Komatsu's Dash-5 line of unique, electronically controlled, hydrostatic wheel loaders now includes a 166-horsepower parallel tool carrier. The new WA320PT-5 joins the WA200PT-5 and WA250PT-5 in the Komatsu tool carrier lineup.

"It's the next size up for customers who want and need a little more production than they can get from the smaller machines," said Komatsu Wheel Loader Product Marketing Manager Mike Gidaspow. "The WA320PT-5 is about 25 percent larger than the WA250PT-5 and is ideal for large construction and sewer jobs, as well as for use in government, waste and agricultural markets."

The primary benefit of parallel lift that you get with a toolcarrier is that the forks stay level throughout the boom's arc, which lessens the likelihood of dumping or spilling a load and improves safety. The trade-off is a little less breakout force than a traditional wheel loader with Z-bar linkage.

The WA320PT-5's standard hydraulically actuated quick coupler makes changing attachments easy for maximum versatility.

### Hydrostatic transmission

Komatsu is the only wheel loader manufacturer that uses a hydrostatic transmission (HST) in machines as large as the WA320PT-5. HST allocates only as much power as is needed in a given application for maximum efficiency. A one-pump, two-motor system also improves efficiency while providing high tractive effort. When decelerating, HST acts as a dynamic brake on the mechanical drive system and can even hold the loader in position on most workable slopes.

Hydraulic cycle times to raise, dump and lower a 3.5-cubic-yard, loaded bucket on the

WA320PT-5 is 11.4 seconds. The unit has a top travel speed of 23.6 mph.

As with all Komatsu wheel loaders and parallel tool carriers, the WA320PT-5 comes standard with the manufacturer's Equipment Management Monitoring System for advanced maintenance, repair and diagnostics. In addition, the cab is 5 percent larger than previous models, providing more leg room and storage space for the operator. ■

*For more information on the WA320PT-5, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location.*

### Brief Specs on the WA320PT-5

Output	Operating weight	Bucket capacity	Breakout force
166 hp	32,161-33,968 lbs.	3.5 cu. yd.	27,225 lbs.

The WA320PT-5, which features a hydrostatic transmission for maximum jobsite efficiency, is Komatsu's largest parallel lift loader.



## PRODUCT IMPROVEMENTS

# TURBOCHARGED "COMPACTS"

## Komatsu PC35 and PC50 excavators are now available with more horsepower

For more information on Komatsu compact hydraulic excavators, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location.

Komatsu considers its compact hydraulic excavators in the 8,000-pound (PC35MR-2) and 11,000-pound (PC50MR-2) classes to be "unique and unrivaled" products.

One of the prime areas of differentiation from competitive units is a ROPS and top guard that provide unmatched operator safety. The machines also offer more foot space and a large reclining seat so operators can work comfortably for a longer period of time. Additionally, easy access to components simplifies maintenance, while a high-strength, X-track frame deters mud and debris buildup.

Now, the standard machines are also available with a turbo engine as an option. The turbo option will boost horsepower in the PC35MR-2 from 29.1 hp to 34.1 hp and will increase output in the PC50MR-2 from 39.4 hp to 43.8 hp.

The turbo version of both the PC35 and PC50 boosts output from the standard machines by about 17 percent in the PC35 and about 13 percent in the PC50.

**Brief Specs PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 (Turbo Version)**

Model	Output	Operating Weight	Bucket
PC35MR-2 Turbo	34.1 hp	8,245 lbs.	14-25 inches
PC50MR-2 Turbo	43.8 hp	11,010 lbs.	12-25 inches

"The turbo option was developed specifically as a high-altitude machine, to compensate for the thin air, but we expect contractors all over will want the extra horsepower," said Mike Conley, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager for compact hydraulic excavators.

### Rapid growth

The compact hydraulic excavator market has grown rapidly in recent years. In 2004 alone, the compact excavator market grew 40 percent to about 22,000 units.

"General contractors, landscapers, electricians, plumbers — they're all seeing the benefits of owning a compact excavator and skid steer loader instead of, or in addition to, the traditional backhoe loader," noted Conley. "The main advantage is they're getting two machines for about the price of one, which enables them to work multiple jobsites and to be more productive.

"The other advantage is the compact excavator's ability to work in confined spaces. Many jobsites today are cramped and crowded," Conley observed. "With its tight-tail-swing design, the Komatsu MR-2 series of compact hydraulic excavators can work productively in much smaller spaces than a backhoe can."

As opposed to some competitive models, Komatsu designs and manufactures its own compact excavators. "Komatsu has passed its expertise in full-size hydraulic excavators onto the compacts," Conley pointed out. "We invite anybody who hasn't tried one yet to do so. We think they'll be surprised at how productive the machines are." ■





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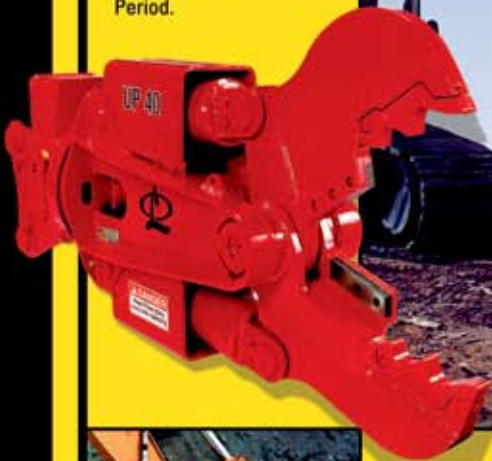
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# “UNIQUE AND UNRIVALED”

## Komatsu expands efforts to produce demonstrably superior equipment

**QUESTION:** In 2004, Komatsu announced what it called a “unique and unrivaled” product strategy. Please bring us up to date on that effort.

**ANSWER:** When we talk about a machine as “unique and unrivaled,” it’s much more than a marketing strategy. A Komatsu “unique and unrivaled” machine is demonstrably better than any competitive model and we can prove it by spec and by performance. It may be better because of markedly superior performance or production features. It may be better because it uses significantly less fuel. It may be better because it’s much roomier and more comfortable. It may be better because of all those things.

**QUESTION:** Which Komatsu machines fit into that category right now?

**ANSWER:** We have a number of “unique and unrivaled” products already on the market. These include our PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 tight-tail-swing compact hydraulic excavators; the PC400LC-7 hydraulic excavator; the D475A-5 bulldozer; the BR380JG mobile crusher; and our entire line of Dash-5 wheel loaders with hydrostatic transmissions.

**QUESTION:** Are there more “unique and unrivaled” products about to be introduced?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Many will be coming onto the market in 2006 with the new Komatsu “ecot3” engines. Now, not all of our machines with the new engines will be “unique and unrivaled,” but a fair number of them will be. We have about 160 base machines. Eventually, we expect about 25 percent of them, or about 40 to 50 machines, to be in that “unique and unrivaled” category.

*Continued . . .*



*This is one of a series of articles based on interviews with key people at Komatsu discussing the company's commitment to its customers in the construction and mining industries — and their visions for the future.*

**John Koetz, Vice President, Product Marketing and Planning, Komatsu America Corp.**

As vice president of product marketing and planning for Komatsu America Corp., John Koetz is responsible for construction equipment machine marketing strategies and planning future products.

A licensed professional engineer, Koetz earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois and a master's degree in engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. He also holds an MBA degree from Loyola University in Chicago.

Before joining what was then known as Komatsu Mining Systems in 2001 as product manager of crawler dozers and motor graders, Koetz was the program manager for large tractors with CNH Global and also had served as deputy product manager for construction/material handling equipment as a major in the U.S. Army.

When he's not on the job, Koetz says his favorite thing to do is spend time with his family. “I know that sounds like a pat answer, but it's true. We work some long hours and I travel a lot for work as well, so when I get some time at home, I really enjoy going to my boys' soccer and basketball games and things like that. My wife and I are also very active in our church.”

# "Unique and unrivaled" program expands

... continued



Advanced monitors incorporating satellite technology will benefit Komatsu equipment users in the future by providing more precise maintenance and repair information.

The new Komatsu "ecot3" engine, which will begin appearing in new models in 2006, is designed not only to reduce emissions, but also to improve fuel economy and performance.

The Komatsu Dash-5 series of hydrostatic wheel loaders is an example of the company's "unique and unrivaled" product strategy, which is a concentrated effort to produce specific machines that are significantly different from, and better than, the competition.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned the Komatsu "ecot3" engines. How do those fit into the Komatsu "unique and unrivaled" product strategy?

**ANSWER:** All manufacturers have to meet Tier 3 air quality standards, but they are not all doing it the same way. We believe our Tier 3-compliant "ecot3" engines will not only lower emissions, but will also provide improved machine performance and fuel economy. We're not convinced other manufacturers will be as successful as Komatsu will be in meeting the emissions requirements,



Komatsu is now manufacturing articulated trucks in Chattanooga, Tenn., in addition to Japan to improve responsiveness to North American contractors.



and at the same time making a more productive and cost-effective machine.

**QUESTION:** What part does technology play in Komatsu's product development efforts?

**ANSWER:** It plays a large part. We invest a tremendous amount of money each year on research and development (R & D) and consider ourselves a technological leader in the industry. But for Komatsu, technology is not about bells and whistles — it's about nuts and bolts. All our product planning and R & D goes back to the needs of our customers and finding ways to help them be more productive, more efficient and more profitable.

**QUESTION:** One problem that's surfaced in the last year or two is equipment availability. What is Komatsu doing to try to improve the supply side?

**ANSWER:** Market demand over the past couple of years has been unprecedented. At Komatsu, we've increased both our machine and component production capacity to improve the supply side.

For example, one product that's been in great demand, especially in North America, is the articulated truck. Because of that, we've added production at our Chattanooga plant for our artic to shorten lead time and provide additional manufacturing flexibility.

**QUESTION:** What's the next big thing in construction/mining equipment?

**ANSWER:** Many of the changes and improvements are going to be the result of advances in information technology. A decade ago, there wasn't anything like today's monitoring, diagnostic and locating systems. That type of equipment, whether it's our state-of-the-art VHMS or Komtrax II, is already standard on many Komatsu models, and in the not-too-distant future, will likely be standard on all construction equipment models.

What that will do is help everybody lower their owning and operating costs by ensuring that maintenance is done as scheduled, and by speeding up troubleshooting so that repairs can be made more quickly. Side benefits will include greater machine reliability and longevity and resale values. ■



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# STRETCHING YOUR FUEL DOLLAR

## These tips can help you conserve fuel and control your equipment operating costs

As an equipment user, you've probably always been concerned about fuel efficiency. But now, with the price of diesel at a record high, chances are you're more concerned than ever before, and you're likely looking for ways to reduce your fuel bill.

With its Tier-3-compliant engines due to be introduced within the next few months, Komatsu has made fuel efficiency a top priority. But beyond the machines themselves, there are things you and your operators can do to further stretch your fuel dollar. Here are some fuel-saving tips from Komatsu Ltd. (The figures used apply to a 20-ton hydraulic excavator, but similar savings can be gained in any size class and any type of machine).

**1. Avoid idling.** By turning the machine off rather than idling when you're not producing, you can save more than five gallons a month (based on one hour of idle time per day).

**2. Avoid relieving pressure.** Pulling the control lever continuously to try to lift a

too-heavy load doesn't move the machine, it simply relieves oil pressure. If you can maintain smooth digging, you can save more than 18 gallons a month.

**3. Lower engine speed.** By dialing back by 10 percent, you can reduce fuel consumption by 12 percent (you do lose about 7 percent in productivity, but the net gain in fuel efficiency is still 6 percent).

**4. Eliminate unnecessary/inefficient movement.** For example, in truck loading, reducing swing angle from 90 degrees to 30 degrees will improve fuel efficiency by 3 percent. Shortening cycle times through improved excavation techniques can provide as much as 8 percent better fuel efficiency.

**5. Reduce your travel speed.** Slowing down 10 percent may improve fuel efficiency by up to 8 percent.

**6. Perform regular maintenance.** A smooth-running machine maximizes fuel efficiency.

For wheel loaders and dozers, similar common-sense operating initiatives can help you save a lot of money on fuel. The biggest factors include reducing engine speed and travel speed whenever possible; preventing tire or track slippage; in V-cycle loading, making sure you're in the position that lets you do the work with the least amount of travel and the shortest cycle times; and preplanning to minimize the number of passes you have to make.

If you can implement these fuel-saving techniques, the higher fuel cost may actually be advantageous for you because your operating costs will be much less than competitors who continue to operate as they did when fuel was \$1 a gallon. ■

Reducing fuel consumption will be increasingly important as the price of diesel fuel escalates. Komatsu recommends reducing engine speed and travel speed where possible, and being efficient in your movements on a jobsite by proper positioning and preplanning to minimize the number of cycles or passes.



# USING “epartscentral”

## Komatsu customers like the convenience of ordering replacement parts online

Producing between 7 million and 10 million tons of limestone annually, Material Service Corporation's Thornton Quarry near Chicago is one of the largest quarry operations in the country. To keep its large fleet of Komatsu equipment up and running, the quarry not only has a staff of mechanics, but also a two-person parts department.

“Equipment availability (machine uptime) is crucial in our industry to maintain productivity, and when we need to make a repair or just do routine maintenance, we don't want to be waiting around for a replacement part to arrive,” said Jay Morriss, one of the parts specialists at Thornton. “That's why we have our own parts storeroom and keep an inventory of around 4,000 consumable wear parts.”

When it comes to keeping the storeroom adequately stocked, as well as placing emergency parts orders, Morriss usually just goes to his computer and makes the transaction online at Komatsu's epartscentral.

“What I like best about Komatsu's epartscentral is that it makes everything a little quicker,” said Morriss. “It gives me updated, real-time parts availability and pricing. I also like that it lets me specify the delivery location, which helps get the part to its final destination a little faster and with more certainty. Another plus is that it generates a confirmation e-mail, so if a question should ever arise regarding an order, I have the information right at my fingertips. About the only time we call our Komatsu distributor's parts department is when we need a major component or we have a question.”

### User-friendly and convenient

To order Komatsu parts online at epartscentral, you must first register at mykomatsu.com, which you can reach by clicking on the parts section at komatsuamerica.com. Register each machine individually with model and serial number to ensure that you'll have access to the correct online parts book. Before you can start ordering, your Komatsu distributor will contact you to verify your information and ensure that everything is ready to go.

“It's a user-friendly process that benefits all Komatsu customers as much as it benefits companies like Material Service Corp.,” said Rainer Krautwald of Komatsu Parts Marketing. “For many customers, the beauty of online parts ordering is convenience. It's open 24/7 so you can place the order any time of the day or night, any day of the week, and know that you're going to be able to get next-day pickup or delivery.” ■



Jay Morriss,  
Parts Department,  
Thornton Quarry

*For more information on online parts ordering, contact our parts department today.*

**By ordering parts online through Komatsu's epartscentral, customers get updated, real-time availability and pricing, as well as 24/7 system access.**



# NEW HIGHWAY LAW

## Congress, President agree on funding program

It's called SAFETEA-LU, which stands for Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users. It's a mouthful of acronym, but one of the most important pieces of legislation in many years for the construction industry in general, and road builders in particular.

SAFETEA-LU is the new highway law, passed by Congress and signed by the President, which authorizes more than \$286 billion in transportation-related spending. It was an arduous reauthorization process that lasted more than three years and required an unprecedented 12 extensions of TEA-21, the predecessor highway law.

Of the total \$286 billion, \$228 billion is reserved for highways, \$52 billion for transit and about \$6 billion for highway safety. In addition to the \$286 billion, the bill includes \$9 billion in extra highway contract authority that can be used after 2009. By FY 2009, highway spending will increase from a guaranteed \$34 billion this year to more than \$41 billion.

Under new allocation formulas, by FY 2008, every state will receive at least 92 cents back for each gas tax dollar it sends to Washington. The new law also guarantees every state will receive at least 19 percent more in highway funds over the six years of SAFETEA-LU than they did under TEA-21. ■

# KOMATSU HELPS KATRINA VICTIMS

## \$750,000 pledged to Hurricane relief efforts

Komatsu America Corp. announced that Komatsu Group is providing a \$500,000 cash donation to the American Red Cross to assist those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Komatsu will also provide an additional \$250,000 by matching dollar-for-dollar all contributions to the American Red Cross made by its U.S. employees, which number more than 33,000.

In conjunction with other Komatsu distributors in North America, Komatsu will continue to assess how best to assist in the relief efforts, including redirecting equipment from around the globe.

"We extend our heartfelt concern and condolences to the people and families who have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina,"

said David Grzelak, Chairman and CEO, Komatsu America Corp. "On behalf of our employees and business partners, we are pleased to contribute to the American Red Cross to provide aid and to help rebuild the lives and communities devastated by this disaster."

To support its customers who are cleaning up from the devastating storm and are challenged by the scarcity of fuel and water in the Gulf region, all Komatsu machines bound for the region will be supplied with full tanks of fuel and drinking water supplies. The company will also assist customers located in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina by offering deferred credit and payment options. ■

# ON THE LIGHT SIDE

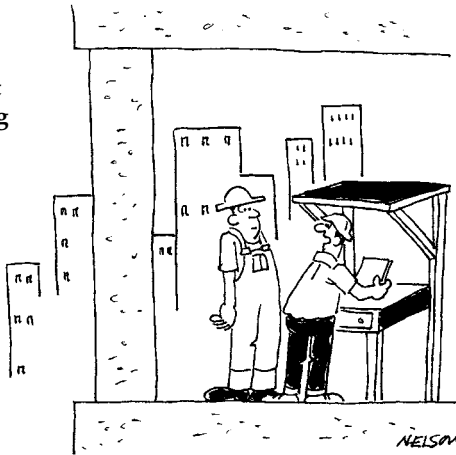


"I have to have it on if I'm going to stay for lunch... It's tuned to bring in the noise from my job site so I know what's going on."

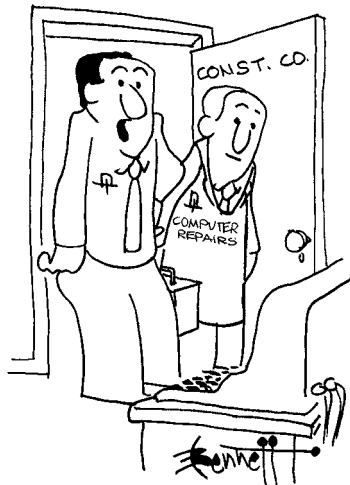
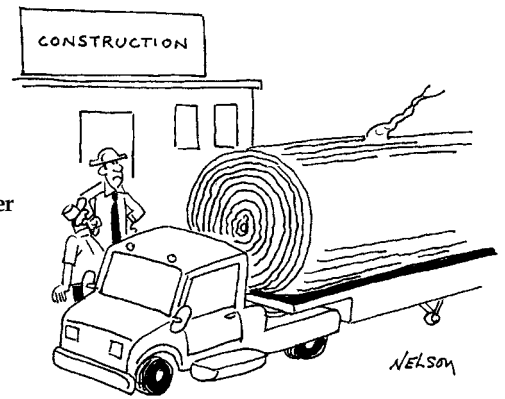


"I always check the final grade with my 'special tool.'"

"They wanted us to skip the 13th floor. And now they don't know if the building is one floor too high or one floor too short."



"So that's why we got such a good price buying lumber 'in bulk!'"



"It's a 'personal computer' but it needs a more business-like attitude."

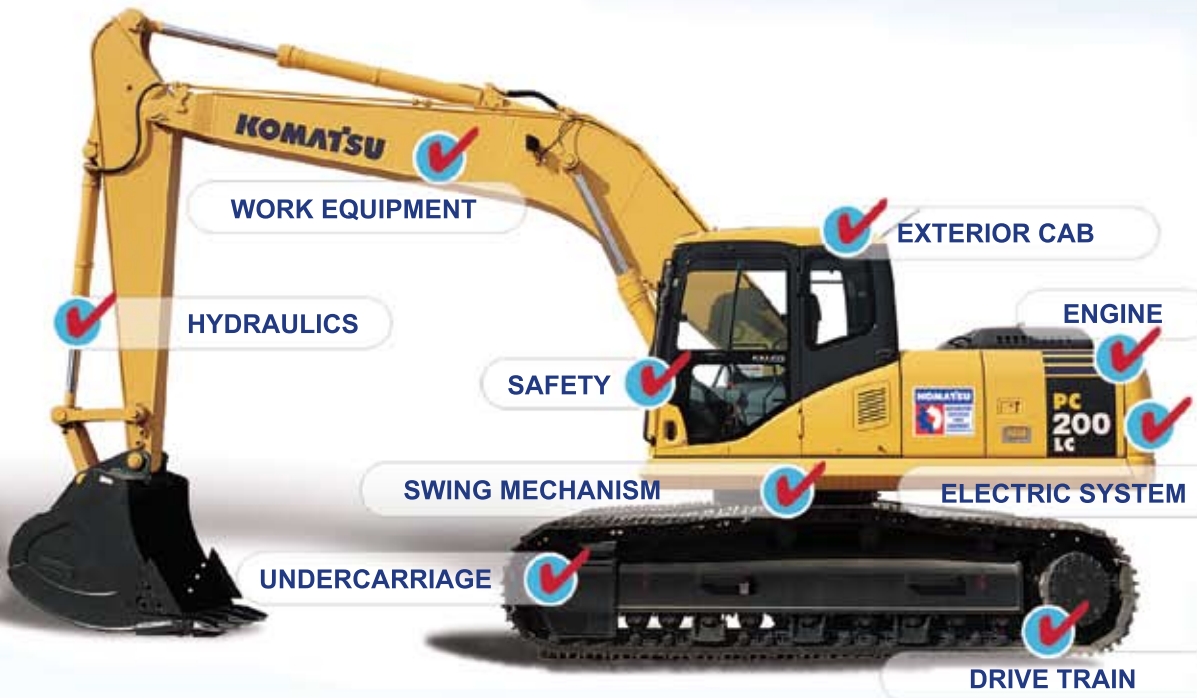


"They're playing our song!"



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**To learn more about Komatsu ReMarketing's Distributor Certified Used Equipment, contact your local Komatsu Distributor or go to our Web site at [www.equipmentcentral.com](http://www.equipmentcentral.com) and click on "used equipment."**



## DISTRIBUTOR CERTIFIED USED EQUIPMENT

# CONFIDENCE IN HIS EQUIPMENT

## Distributor Certified Used excavator helps one-man operation boost productivity

Lance Alspaugh owns and operates Alspaugh Family Farms, a small Ohio land-clearing company that specializes in tree and stump removal. The company also grinds wood and sells it as mulch, and does small excavation jobs including pond building.

A few months ago, with his workload increasing, Alspaugh began looking for a larger excavator to complement a Komatsu PC120 he's had for many years. "The PC120 was a good machine and still is, but I needed more capacity."

Specifically, Alspaugh wanted a larger machine that would be both productive and reliable, but wouldn't cost him an arm and a leg. "I'm basically a one-man operation and I like it that way," he said. "But even if you're small, and maybe especially if you're small, you need equipment you can count on. I didn't need a brand-new machine, but I did need something that would work for me every day."

Alspaugh turned to his Komatsu dealer, who recommended a 2001 Komatsu Distributor Certified Used PC200LC-6 hydraulic excavator with about 4,500 hours on it.

"It was big enough to give me the added production I was looking for," said Alspaugh. "But the best thing about it from my perspective was that, even though it was used, I knew it had been thoroughly inspected by my Komatsu dealer and that any needed repairs had been made. I was able to look at the inspection report myself and could see that the machine was in good operating condition."

### Dealer support

Beyond the inspection, Alspaugh says the "Distributor Certified" seal gave him

additional peace of mind. "To buy a machine at auction or online or from somebody you don't know well — that's risky, and it's a risk I didn't want to take. With the Komatsu Distributor Certified program, I knew exactly what I was getting. Equally important, if any issue does come up, I know my Komatsu dealer is going to back it up and be there for me."

Alspaugh also cited very favorable finance rates which made the unit even more affordable. "I think Komatsu Distributor Certified machines probably represent the best value in used equipment in the country," said Alspaugh. "You may be able to find something cheaper, but when it comes to knowing what you're getting and paying a fair and appropriate amount based on real information and trust, I don't think you can beat it." ■

Lance Alspaugh of Alspaugh Family Farms recently bought this Komatsu Distributor Certified Used PC200LC-6. "I like the fact that it's been thoroughly inspected by someone I trust, my Komatsu dealer," said Alspaugh. "In my mind, the inspection considerably reduces the risk of buying a used machine."



*For more information on Komatsu Distributor Certified Used machines, talk to your sales representative or call or visit our nearest branch location.*



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