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# DOWN TO EARTH

A publication for and about General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. customers • 2006 No. 2

Featured in this issue:

## FARDEN CONSTRUCTION, INC.

A long list of services helps this Maxbass-based company thrive for nearly 70 years

See article inside...



(L-R) Co-owner/Vice President Todd Farden, President Kenny Farden, Secretary/Treasurer Russ Farden and Co-owner/Vice President Steve Farden



Featured in this issue:

## K&H ELECTRIC

Find out how his experience has helped this Linton-based utility contractor remain on the cutting edge

See article inside...



Operations Manager Mylo Kramer (left) and President Michael Kramer



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# GENERAL

## used equipment specials



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# DOWN TO EARTH

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## A SALUTE TO A **GENERAL** CUSTOMER

# K&H ELECTRIC

## Experience helps Linton-based utility contractor remain on the cutting edge



Mylo Kramer,  
Operations Manager

For more than 50 years, K&H Electric has been putting in the lines necessary for residents in North and South Dakota to enjoy the conveniences of modern home life. Founded in Linton, N.D., in 1948, the business continues to thrive, thanks to two generations of Kramers, who make up the “K” portion of the company name.

At 80 years of age, Michael Kramer remains active in the business. Michael continues as the company’s President, while his sons Mylo and Bob serve as Operations Managers for the underground utility company that runs lines for electric, telephone, water, sewer, cable and fiber optics. The company also does water well repair and offers snow plowing services in the winter months.

“We’ve continued to progress over the years into doing more lines,” explained Mylo. “When the company was founded, Dad did electrical wiring as the rural electric cooperatives

brought in power. As the trend went to more underground work, the company progressed into doing that work, adding additional services along the way.”

K&H Electric continues to do both private residential work and projects for rural electric and telephone cooperatives and other independent companies throughout North and South Dakota, putting in several hundred miles of lines every year. Most projects are directional-bored or plowed-in with the two Komatsu D85P-21 crawler tractors the company has.

“Dad started the company because he saw a good opportunity at the time, and we tend to think the same way about directional boring,” said Mylo. “It’s become commonplace, with more towns using it as the number of underground lines increase. The chance for hitting another line is minimized.”

Whether it’s open-cut or boring, K&H crews generally handle all aspects of a project, from opening the trench or boring pit to cleanup. “We prefer to do everything, because that way we can control the entire operation,” said Mylo. “We run all the primary lines and most of the secondary ones. Occasionally we sub out the secondary lines that go to houses, but for the most part, we do those as well.”

### Highly skilled staff

About half of K&H Electric’s work is negotiated with customers who have come to trust the company’s highly experienced staff of 17. A majority of employees have been with K&H long-term, including Foremen Tom Olhauser, Darren Tviesto and Todd McCarthy. Mylo’s wife Kathy is the company Secretary, taking over those duties from his mother Maggie, who kept the books for many years.

K&H Electric recently purchased a new Komatsu D61PX-15 dozer that Operations Manager Mylo Kramer plans to use for a variety of applications. The company also owns two D85PX-6 dozers.







Operations Manager Mylo Kramer (left) and President Michael Kramer stand near K&H Electric's Komatsu PC35MR-2 compact hydraulic excavator. The company also runs three PC15MRX-1 excavators. "The compact excavators have been a huge addition for us," commented Mylo. "Their versatility is second-to-none."

"The experience of our staff really pays off," acknowledged Mylo. "They're dedicated and loyal to the company. We have very little turnover, with almost all of our guys coming back in the spring after we shut down for the winter. I believe that's a major factor in our success, because they all know what it takes to get the job done right."

## Reliable equipment

Another major factor, according to Mylo, is reliable equipment such as the Komatsu hydraulic excavators and dozers K&H purchased from General Equipment & Supplies' Bismarck branch through Territory Manager Justin Stewart. Recent additions include a 155-horsepower D61PX-15 dozer and three compact excavators (three PC15MRX-1s and a PC35MR-2).

"This can be a very competitive business, so we're always looking for ways to increase productivity," Mylo commented. "The compact excavators have been a huge addition for us. The versatility they offer is second-to-none. We're able to get them in places, such as between garages and houses, that we could never get into with a larger excavator. The benefit is less hand digging on those jobs. They also have low ground pressure, which allows us to work in wet conditions, and they're fast and easy to control so there's less fatigue. There's no way we'd ever give them up."

For larger jobs, K&H uses its new Komatsu dozer, in addition to two D85P-21 models, for laying utility lines, backfilling trenches and grading operations. These machines are set up with dozer blades, cable plows and winches. "They do excellent work," said Mylo. "These will out-do the narrow-track machines because they are well-balanced with good traction and



K&H Electric uses a specially equipped Komatsu D85PX-6 dozer to put optical cable in a trench near Conde, S.D.



Mylo Kramer (right), Operations Manager for K&H Electric, works with General Equipment & Supplies Territory Manager Justin Stewart.

low ground pressure, so we can work them under almost any conditions. The long frame and weight of the machines make for a good set-up."

Because K&H Electric often works in rural areas, the company handles service on the machines, using General for repairs and parts as needed. "Justin and the staff at General do a great job of taking care of our parts and service needs," said Mylo. "One thing we really like is that they will make sure we have parts right away, no matter how far from the store we are. It's not like we can always run to General to get what we need. They bring it to us."

## Continued quality

Fifty years of experience have taught the Kramers that to survive in business you have to remain on the cutting edge without giving up the personal touch. "It's important for us to make sure we're up-to-date on the latest technology and the trends in our industry," Mylo pointed out. "It's helped us to survive and grow into new areas, such as directional drilling. I believe we'll be doing quite a bit more of that in the future, and that's why we went into that side of the business.

"But no matter what, the best thing we can do is continue to give our customers the high-quality work they expect," he added. "It's what we've built our business on and it's what's going to keep the company strong long-term." ■



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## A SALUTE TO A **GENERAL** CUSTOMER

# FARDEN CONSTRUCTION, INC.

## A long list of services helps this Maxbass-based company thrive for nearly 70 years

For Farden Construction, Inc., the list of services seems never ending. Founded as a house-moving company by Ole Farden in the late 1930s, the Maxbass-based company has continued to diversify. Over the years, three generations of Fardens have led the company.

Today, the company is led by Co-Owners and Vice Presidents Steve and Todd Farden. Their father Kenny serves as President and their uncle Russ is the Secretary/Treasurer.

"Adding services has been a huge part of our longevity," noted Todd Farden. "We do everything from fix small water leaks for private residences to municipal sewer and water-main projects to large oil field pipelines. That diversification saw us through some rough times and kept the business going.

"Grandpa started out moving houses from farms into town," he continued. "Those houses needed footings, so setting up a ready-mix plant and producing concrete was next on the list. Then Russ bought a backhoe and began digging basements and putting in utility lines. Eventually we moved into site construction for oil fields when oil was discovered in the 1950s. We're still doing all those services, in addition to relatively new areas such as moving drilling rigs and producing aggregate materials for ourselves and a variety of customers in the area. We even do snow removal in the oil fields during the winter."

Farden Construction's office and main shop are located in Maxbass, and it has shops in Westhope, Newburg, Glenburn and a yard in Mohall.

Farden employs nearly 35 people, many of whom have been with the company two decades or more. The Fardens said that experience is a major factor in their success.

"Our employees are second-to-none," Steve emphasized. "They're the reason we've stayed in business this long. They know how to go about getting a job done right and they're dedicated to making sure it is. Because of them we have built a good reputation and customers continue to call us back."

### Crushing comes to the forefront

Farden Construction began crushing operations in 1988 as a sideline aimed at helping the business remain active during the up-and-down cycles of the oil field industry, which had become a large part of the company's business. The Fardens crushed about 50,000 tons of material its first year, but expects to crush 10 times that amount this year. The company owns five pits and leases another 20 to 25 a year to find the materials necessary to make the numerous products it produces.

"Most of what we make is Class 5 and Class 13 materials, with a large volume of our

*Continued . . .*

Maxbass-based Farden Construction is led by the third generation of the business in Co-owners/Vice Presidents Todd (left) and Steve Farden (right). Their father Kenny (middle left) is the President and their uncle Russ is the Secretary/Treasurer. Kenny and Russ added services such as a concrete ready-mix plant and backhoe services to the company, which was founded by their father Ole as a house-moving business in the 1930s.



# Reliable equipment meets the challenge

... continued

materials going to a local paving contractor," Steve said. "We make a lot of hot-mix materials for them, as well as quite a bit of 3/4-inch crushed gravel for township roads. We also make sand and a variety of other products. Our list is fairly extensive. We use quite a bit of material ourselves in our well-site construction."

"In addition to that, we've done some recycling," Todd added. "For instance, last

winter we did a project for an oil company where we recycled concrete from an old compressor station site that was no longer in use. They ripped up the materials, we sized it and crushed it into a useable product for them."

## Equipment meets the challenge

To make its products, Farden Construction relies on several pieces of crushing equipment purchased from General Equipment and Supplies through Minot Branch Manager and Territory Manager Dave Solper. Farden Construction runs a Cedarapids 45-inch cone crusher with a 6-foot by 20-foot screen and a Cedarapids 45-inch closed-circuit plant with a 5-foot by 14-foot screen. It also runs a Fabtech 5-foot by 16-foot screen plant.

"We've been running Cedarapids crushing equipment for quite some time," said Todd. "What we really like is that it runs and runs and runs, and we never have any trouble with it. That's quite a testament to its longevity, because we bought those machines used through General, so they already had some hours on them."

"But we felt comfortable buying them because we knew General would stand behind them if anything went wrong," he continued. "One of the major factors in buying equipment is dealer support and service. General has always done a tremendous job for us in terms of getting to us quickly for service and having the parts we need available or to us the next day."

## Future looking good

The Fardens say adding more services is a possibility in the future, but for now they're focused on maintaining what three generations have built to this point. "We have about as many services as we can handle," said Steve. "We're content with the business staying where it's at for a while. That doesn't mean we're not going to work hard. We still have a reputation to maintain."

"Things look fairly solid for the near future," Todd added. "The oil industry is expanding in North Dakota, so that means there will be new construction for quite some time. We'll continue to focus our efforts on new site construction, which means we'll have to crush materials for use on those sites as well. It all goes hand-in-hand." ■

General Equipment's Minot Branch Manager and Territory Manager Dave Solper (left) meets with Co-owner/Vice President Todd Farden at a crushing operation near Glenburn. "One of the major factors in buying equipment is dealer support and service," said Todd. "General has always done a tremendous job for us."



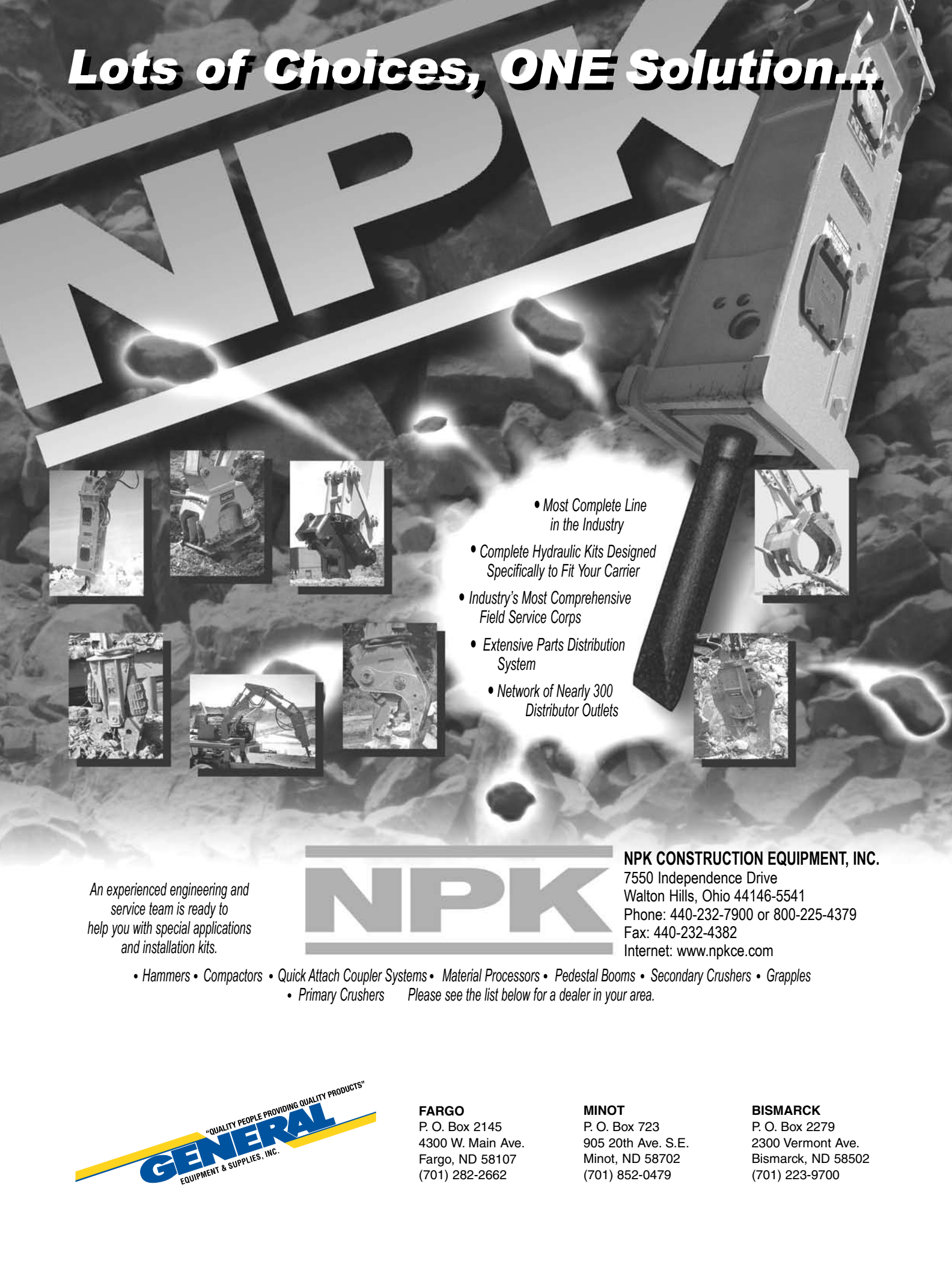
One of Farden Construction's primary pieces of crushing equipment is this Cedarapids 45-inch cone crusher.

Farden Construction uses this Cedarapids 45-inch closed-circuit crushing plant to produce aggregate materials at a pit near Glenburn. "We've been running Cedarapids crushing equipment for quite some time," said Co-owner/Vice President Todd Farden. "What we really like is that it runs and runs and runs, and we never have any trouble with it."





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# CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

## Analyst says growth trend remains strong throughout the U.S.



Andy Fanter is an analyst with Cyclost-Intercast, a sales forecasting firm that works with more than 65 equipment distributors and manufacturers throughout the U.S.

Road building will be one of the lynchpins of this year's construction economy with spending expected to be up by about 14 percent.

The year 2006 is certainly looking to be another excellent year in the construction business. Despite many critics, the housing market continues to show strength. For the year, we should have about 2.2 million permits and two percent growth in housing. Some overheated regions will almost certainly see a slowdown, but even if there were a dramatic downturn in those areas, it would not have a major effect on the construction economy. It would not even significantly ease the shortage of machines or building materials in other areas of the U.S.

Rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast are finally getting under way. While New Orleans got much of the attention with 200,000 damaged or destroyed homes, the entire area east of New Orleans to the Florida Panhandle had over two million homes damaged or destroyed. What this means to contractors around the U.S. is that labor, machines and materials will be heading to the southeast parts of the U.S. in greater

quantities. This will put a strain on an already overburdened supply market.

The highway bill has been passed and actual construction on some projects will begin in the latter half of 2006 and throughout 2007. You will need to plan for material costs and availability carefully. Concrete remains in very short supply. With reconstruction in the South, rebar will also be in short supply. Energy costs continue to climb and this will affect the price of material transportation, machine fuel costs and the cost of plastics. Machines remain in short supply. On the average, I would expect highway spending to be up around 14 percent or more.

The growth in aggregate production in response to highway and nonresidential growth will be around 5 percent. The limiting factors in aggregates are the difficult permitting process and the lack of large equipment available to quarries. Quarry and mining work around the world is booming and manufacturers have been able to produce machines, but are still having difficulty with tire availability. Contractors should take exceptional care of their tires at this point of the economy. A damaged tire could take several days or longer to replace.

Nonresidential construction is continuing to boom. The majority of this growth is from box retail construction — in response to the growing housing market. Tax collections for states have been good for the past two years. There will be growth in the governmental construction market police substations, fire stations and sewer transfer stations. Expect nonresidential growth to be 15 percent or more in 2006.

In summary, there's a lot of work going on this year, but to ensure that you're able to make money doing that work, you'll need to plan well and be smart. ■







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## NEW PRODUCTS

# DASH-8 EXCAVATORS

## Komatsu's newest generation of PC200 and PC220 excavators raises the bar on efficiency and productivity



**Peter Robson,**  
 Product Manager,  
 Hydraulic Excavators

As a contractor who prides himself on doing quality work quickly, you're probably always looking for more from your equipment. More power. More speed. More reliability.

Komatsu's new Dash-8 hydraulic excavators, including the popular PC200 and PC220 size classes, deliver on all those counts, while at the same time providing significantly improved fuel efficiency.

Like all new Komatsu excavators, both the PC200LC-8 and PC220LC-8 feature the new ecot3 engine, which significantly reduces emissions as well as improves fuel efficiency by about 10 percent. A quick-return arm circuit that improves cycle times boosts productivity.



"In highly competitive size classes like the PC200 and PC220 (roughly 23 to 27 tons), we'd gone about as far as we could go in terms of weight and horsepower — the old 'bigger is better' mentality," said Peter Robson, Komatsu Product Manager for Hydraulic Excavators. "Don't get me wrong — the PC200LC-8 and PC220LC-8 are more productive than the Dash-7 models, primarily because of improved cycle times and other hydraulic improvements that give outstanding performance. But the efficiencies we've built into these new machines are at least as important as those performance enhancements."

Those efficiencies include using significantly less fuel (about 10 percent less) and putting out significantly fewer emissions than the Dash-7s. Combine that with impressive upgrades in information technology and operator comfort and you get a machine that delivers the ultimate for a contractor — high productivity and low-cost operation.

### **New engine/new monitor**

The PC220LC-8 has 168 flywheel horsepower, the same as the PC220LC-7. The PC200LC-8 has 148 horsepower, up from 143 horsepower. Both units are powered by the newly developed, low-emission Komatsu SAA6D107E-1 engine that significantly reduces NOx emissions, which EPA Tier 3 regulations require.

Productivity enhancements include a new, quick-return circuit, which allows the arm to go out and return faster, improving cycle times.

Both units have five working modes. In addition to Power, Economy, Breaker and Lifting, there's also a new Attachment mode.



An operator simply presses a button to get the proper flow he needs for the work he's going to do. The modes, along with most other machine functions, are selected through a new seven-inch color monitor.

"The monitor is one of the biggest improvements in the new Dash-8 models," indicated Robson. "You match your machine to the job application through the monitor. You pick up maintenance codes and troubleshooting functions on the monitor. You control AC through the monitor. It's an impressive system that's very user-friendly."

### Fuel-efficient operation

Yet another advancement on the monitor is an "eco-gauge," which serves as a guide to efficient operation. It provides the operator with instant feedback regarding the load he's putting on the machine and how that impacts fuel consumption. It also alerts the operator if he's idling for too long, which is another way fuel is wasted.

"We think the high cost of fuel is here to stay, so equipment owners will be looking for ways to cut back on fuel usage," predicted Robson. "The PC200LC-8 and PC220LC-8 are both about 10 percent more fuel efficient in Power mode. With the information the machine provides, the operator will be able to try some different things to further lower fuel consumption."

Both machines also come wired with the latest Komtrax technology. Komtrax is a wireless equipment monitoring system that can send detailed machine operating information back to the home office and/or to your Komatsu distributor. Komtrax information includes machine location, service meter readings, cautions, abnormality codes, load frequency and much more — all of which can be invaluable in helping you to reduce downtime and lower your owning and operating costs.

In addition to being Komtrax-ready, the PC220LC-8 and PC200LC-8 come with Komatsu's EMMS (Equipment Management Monitoring System), which stores trouble data,



Both the PC220LC-8 and PC200LC-8 have five working modes, including a new attachment mode. The units also feature a large, new color monitor with an "eco-gauge" to further improve fuel efficiency.

### Brief Specs on the PC200LC-8 and PC220LC-8

Model	Output	Operating weight	Bucket capacity
PC200LC-8	148 hp	46,080 - 47,260 lbs.	.66-1.57 cu. yd.
PC220LC-8	168 hp	54,309 - 54,926 lbs.	.76-1.85 cu. yd.

displays abnormalities and notifies an operator when it's time to change oil and filters.

### Comfort and safety

In addition to the new, large monitor, an operator will immediately notice and appreciate cab comfort features that include a high-back seat and an arm rest that moves with the console so the pilot control joystick is always where he wants and expects it to be.

Komatsu also designed the new cab with pipe-structured framework to improve operator protection in the event of a tip or rollover. Vibration inside the cab, and noise — both inside and out — has significantly decreased.

"Komatsu has always challenged themselves to set an industry standard with each new hydraulic excavator series introduction," said Robson. "From the legendary Dash-3 version of the 1980s right up through the Dash-7, we've led rather than followed. That's a trend we're confident we're continuing with the new Dash-8s." ■

*For more information on how the Komatsu PC200LC-8 or PC220LC-8 can improve your operation, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location.*





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## PRODUCT INNOVATION

# NEW WHEEL LOADERS

## Increased production and lower fuel consumption are hallmarks of new Komatsu Dash-6 models

Equipment users are always looking for ways to boost production and/or reduce operating costs. Komatsu kept those goals in mind in designing its new Dash-6 wheel loader line. Currently available are the WA500-6 and WA600-6 wheel loaders, both of which are significantly larger and more powerful than the Dash-3 versions they replace in the Komatsu lineup. Both are also considerably more fuel-efficient than their predecessors.

The WA500-6 and WA600-6 are powered by Komatsu's new ecot3, Tier 3-compliant engine, which not only lowers emissions, but also decreases fuel consumption, and does so without sacrificing power. A Dual Mode Engine Power Select System lets the operator adjust the machine's performance by using either the "E Mode" for maximum fuel efficiency in general loading, or "P Mode" for powerful output in hard digging or hill-climbing applications.

"The most notable difference users will see in our new wheel loaders compared to previous models is a decrease in fuel consumption, with an increase in productivity being a close second," said Rob Warden, Product Manager, Wheel Loaders. "We've designed these machines to be highly efficient so users can get more work done in less time, while using less high-priced fuel. The result is more money in the pocket of the user."

Both loaders are suitable for a variety of functions, according to Warden. "The WA500-6 works well in sand-and-gravel operations, and as a loading machine for highway trucks. The WA600-6 is a significant upgrade from its predecessor and is ideal for small quarry applications. It will load a 70-ton haul truck, such as our Komatsu HD605, in five passes."

### New components minimize waste

Standard on the loaders is a newly designed variable displacement piston pump that combines with Komatsu's Closed-center Load Sensing System (CLSS) to deliver only the necessary amount of flow needed for hydraulic function. The new design prevents wasted hydraulic flow, which in turn provides better fuel economy.

"Our previous series used gear pumps, which always provided maximum flow," Warden explained. "The machine used what it needed and the rest was returned to the tank. The variable piston pump is an on-demand system, so it only delivers what is required. As a result, it



**Rob Warden,**  
 Product Manager,  
 Wheel Loaders

*Continued . . .*

### Brief specs on WA500-6 and WA600-6

Model	Output	Operating weight	Bucket capacity
WA500-6	332 hp	74,010 lbs.	7.3 cu. yd.
WA600-6	502 hp	118,385 lbs.	8.4 cu. yd.

Komatsu's new WA600-6 has major changes from its predecessor, offering increased horsepower and operating weight, and a larger dump clearance. "It's ideal for small quarry applications," said Rob Warden, Product Manager, Wheel Loaders. "It will load a 70-ton haul truck, such as our Komatsu HD605, in five passes."



# New loaders' performance markedly improved

... continued

*For more information on the WA500-6 or WA600-6, call your sales representative or our nearest branch location.*

**Komatsu's new line of wheel loaders, including the WA500-6, was designed for maximum production and fuel economy. Komatsu's ecot3, Tier 3-compliant engines decrease emissions and fuel consumption without sacrificing power. Large-capacity lock-up torque converters provide production efficiency, reduced cycle times and optimum fuel savings.**

uses less power and burns less fuel. Users could see up to a 15 percent reduction in fuel use."

Komatsu further enhanced fuel economy with its newly designed drive train featuring a large-capacity, lock-up torque converter that provides production efficiency, reduced cycle times and optimum fuel savings in load-and-carry or hill-climbing operations.

"These features — variable piston pumps and large-capacity torque converters — will become standard across the Komatsu wheel loader line over time," Warden noted. "Our aim is to standardize our line as much as possible so a customer with multiple machines on the same jobsite can go from one machine to another and not miss a beat."

## Increased production

Several new features contribute to better production, according to Warden. For example, both machines have stronger loader frames and components, which extend machine life and lower repair and maintenance costs. Both units are also larger, have more horsepower and greater bucket capacity than their Dash-3 counterparts.

The WA500 went from 315 horsepower in the Dash-3 model to 332 horsepower in the new Dash-6 version. The machine's operating weight of 74,010 pounds is a jump of almost 10 percent.

"The WA500-6 is almost completely new compared to the Dash-3 model," Warden pointed out. "Not only is it larger with more horsepower, but we also added a larger torque converter to better match the engine. That provides more rim

pull, which allows the machine to climb virtually any ramp with the bucket loaded."

The WA600 underwent even more radical changes. Output increased from 450 horsepower in the Dash-3 model to 502 horsepower in the new WA600-6. Operating weight increased from less than 100,000 pounds to 118,385 pounds.

"The WA600-6 has major changes from its predecessor," Warden asserted. "It features a much larger dump clearance, going from 11'7" to 13'1", so it loads large trucks more easily. It comes standard with the long boom, but customers have the option of putting a short boom on the machine if they use it mostly for load-and-carry operations or charging a hopper."

Everyone knows a comfortable operator is a productive operator. So, operators will certainly appreciate the new Advanced Joystick Steering System (AJSS) in the new WA600-6 loader. It's a low-effort system in which the operator controls direction and gear-shifting functions with just the wrist and thumb. Users will also enjoy a roomier cab that provides up to 15 percent more space and 11 percent better visibility than previous models.

## Raising the bar

The specs of the WA500-6 and WA600-6 speak for themselves — they generate markedly improved performance.

"Everyone who's used the WA500-6 and WA600-6 loaders has raved about the quickness, power and speed they offer," confirmed Warden. "We've done our own in-house studies, which show a remarkable improvement in production efficiency of 25 percent to 30 percent over the previous, Dash-3 generation of wheel loaders. As those numbers suggest, we definitely believe we've significantly raised the bar with the release of the Dash-6 models."

The WA500-6 and WA600-6 are the first Dash-6 units available to customers. Komatsu is in the process of releasing the rest of its Tier 3 mid-size wheel loaders, which will include the WA380, WA430, WA450 and WA480-6. The balance of the wheel loader product line is currently undergoing design changes to meet new emission standards. The new HST line of smaller wheel loaders being upgraded will be available in 2007. ■







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## FIELD NOTES

# KOMATSU FIELD DAYS

## Las Vegas event gives equipment users the opportunity to operate full range of new products from manufacturer

The opportunity to operate a full range of new Komatsu products — combined with the excitement of Las Vegas — made the recent Komatsu Field Days event a memorable trip for many equipment users throughout North America.

Accompanied by their Komatsu distributors, more than 2,000 customers attended one of the 12 sessions from February 27 through March 23.

This year's event, held for the second time in Las Vegas, included accommodations at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. Komatsu held a welcome reception at the hotel on the first night of each session. The following day, customers were transported to a quarry site where they had the opportunity to operate 45 Komatsu machines, including a host of new and upgraded models. The full range of construction and utility equipment encompassed hydraulic excavators, wheel loaders, dozers, motor graders, trucks, backhoe loaders, skid steer loaders, mobile crushers and a crawler carrier.

"What makes Field Days great is the chance for customers to operate our new products in a real-world working environment. It exposes them to all the advanced products, technology and services we offer," said Les Scott, Manager, Komatsu Working Gear Group. "Customers tell me the experience is very worthwhile."

### Next generation of products

This year, Komatsu used Field Days to introduce many new products, such as six new excavator models, including the 180,000-pound-plus PC800LC-8, a new model that replaces the PC750LC-7. Komatsu also introduced its new series of Dash-6 wheel loaders, including the WA600-6, WA500-6 and WA380-6; the first new Dash-2 articulated dump truck, the HM300-2; the

new D155AX-6 SIGMA dozer; the new WB146-5 backhoe loader and many more new products.

"We enjoy showing customers our equipment capabilities through hands-on operation. It shows them how a particular product might fit into their operations back home," noted Scott. "We also hope they take home this message: if we can produce large machines such as our 1.5-million-pound PC8000 mining shovel, then we can certainly build smaller size-class machines that can operate in their businesses." ■



Les Scott, Manager,  
Komatsu Working  
Gear Group



Field Days participants watched machine demonstrations and features/benefits presentations from this shaded grandstand at the demo site.

Komatsu Field Days showcased a full range of equipment, including the new PC800LC-8 excavator (foreground) and articulated and rigid-frame trucks (at left), which participants could operate.





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## PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT

# NEW, ADVANCED KOMTRAX™

## Upgraded wireless equipment monitoring system is now standard on most new KOMATSU Tier 3 machines

Would you like to know the exact location of each machine in your equipment fleet? Would you like to know precisely how each piece of equipment is being used? And would you like to get that information when you need it?

Now, you can get that kind of information, and much more, with Komatsu's new, next-generation KOMTRAX wireless equipment monitoring system. KOMTRAX uses satellite technology to relay vital machine information back to the office computer or laptop of the owner or equipment manager, as well as to the local Komatsu distributor, if the customer authorizes it.

Komatsu first introduced KOMTRAX several years ago as an option buyers could have installed on Komatsu equipment. That first generation provided three basic pieces of information — machine location; service meter readings; and daily hours of operation.

In comparison, the new KOMTRAX is standard equipment on almost all new Komatsu machines and reports on all aspects of machine operation. In addition to location, meter readings and daily operation, available information from the new, advanced KOMTRAX includes: \*

- Cautions,
- Error codes,
- Load frequencies,
- Notification of maintenance,
- Average hourly fuel consumption,
- Fuel level and water temperature readings,
- Geofencing and engine lock (theft prevention),
- Monthly and annual reports.

\* Features are dependent on machine model.

### Next best thing to being there

For an owner or equipment manager, KOMTRAX is like being right inside the cab with the operator.

"You no longer have to wonder where a machine is or what it's doing," said Ken Calvert, Director, KOMTRAX Support Group, Komatsu America Corp. "You no longer have to wonder how an operator is operating or whether a machine is making you money. With KOMTRAX, you know what's going on, any time of the day or night."

In an age where information is power, KOMTRAX is one of the most powerful tools an equipment user can ever have.

"KOMTRAX helps an owner be proactive with his business," said Calvert. "He can make decisions based on accurate, up-to-date information from a system that's easy to use. Bottom line, it's going to help business owners or managers reduce downtime, lower operating costs and manage a fleet more efficiently."



Ken Calvert, Director, KOMTRAX Support Group, Komatsu America Corp.

Continued . . .



Detailed, easy-to-use machine information is right at your fingertips, anytime of the day or night, with the new KOMTRAX wireless equipment monitoring system.

# New KOMTRAX cuts costs and downtime

... continued



Komatsu is installing its new, advanced KOMTRAX system on nearly all new machines with Tier 3 engines. The new wireless equipment monitoring system is a powerful tool that helps users reduce operating costs and downtime.

In addition to all the ways KOMTRAX can benefit a company by keeping equipment up and running, it also maintains a complete and accurate record of a machine's life history, which can significantly increase the trade-in or resale value of the unit.

KOMTRAX can be installed in any piece of equipment using a 12V or 24V electrical system, including service trucks and utility machines. Additionally, KOMTRAX is available as a retrofit for older machines or non-Komatsu equipment.

While KOMTRAX is standard-equipped on most new Komatsu machines starting this year, please contact your local authorized Komatsu distributor to begin receiving the information. ■

## How one large, successful company uses KOMTRAX



**Jim Shaw,**  
Hall-Irwin  
Equipment Manager

The new, next-generation KOMTRAX system is just now getting into the hands of customers. But many large Komatsu users are already familiar with KOMTRAX. Those who have installed the original system on much of their fleet are sold on its benefits.

"We started using KOMTRAX in 2004," said Jim Shaw, Equipment Manager for Hall-Irwin Corporation, one of Colorado's largest and most-respected full-service contracting firms. "Today we have it on 44 machines, which constitutes about 70 percent of our Komatsu fleet."

Hall-Irwin uses KOMTRAX to check service meters and schedule preventive maintenance; to locate equipment on large jobsites and monitor machine movement; and to chart daily hours of operation to help manage the fleet for maximum utilization.

"We've found KOMTRAX to be an excellent fleet management tool," asserted Shaw. "We run numerous weekly KOMTRAX reports that help us make educated short-term and long-term decisions about our fleet — for example, what machines we need and where we need them. Also, the PM servicing aspect is very beneficial. It helps ensure all our PMs are done at the correct hour reading, which in turn helps us reduce downtime, lower repair costs and maximize the working life of our machines."

### Theft prevention

In addition to operational benefits, Shaw says KOMTRAX helps prevent equipment theft — and in the event that a machine is stolen, helps in the retrieval process. He knows this firsthand.

"We recently had a skid steer stolen from a jobsite on a Saturday night. We didn't work Sunday, then got rained out on Monday and Tuesday, so we didn't discover the theft until Wednesday. Police told us the fact that the machine was equipped with KOMTRAX was instrumental in helping them track it down and bust a theft ring. We're happy about that, but the best thing for us was, because of KOMTRAX, we had that skid steer back on the job on Friday."

### Additional benefits with new KOMTRAX

Shaw says Hall-Irwin is looking forward to using the upgraded KOMTRAX system that's now available.

"The additional information such as error codes, capacities and operating temperatures will be invaluable to our maintenance staff. We also share KOMTRAX information with our Komatsu distributor, and the machine operating information they receive will certainly help them help us when it comes to parts availability, troubleshooting and making emergency repairs more quickly."



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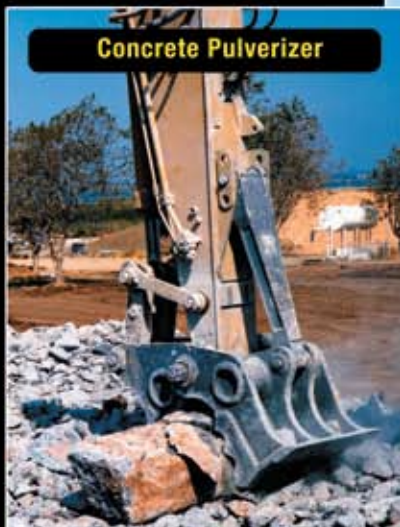
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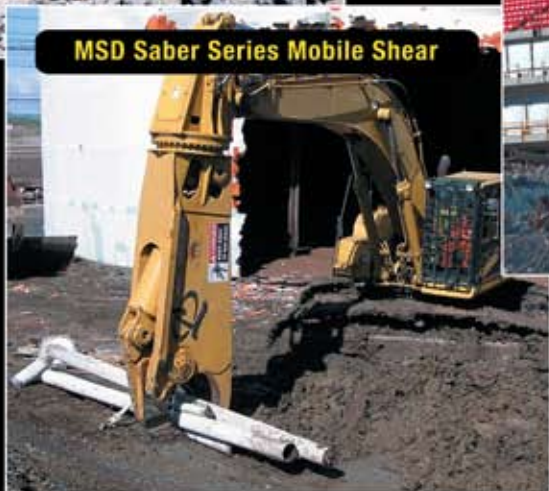
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## KOMATSU & YOU

# NEW ENGINES/NEW MODELS

## New Komatsu machines are more efficient and more reliable says Director of Product Marketing



**Erik Wilde,**  
 Director of Product Marketing

*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.*

A San Francisco Bay-area native, Erik Wilde once harbored hopes of a career in basketball. He was good enough to play college ball at Boise State University until a serious knee injury ended his playing days and dashed any hope of a professional career.

Upon graduation with a degree in business management, Wilde took a job as operations manager at an Idaho ski resort. He learned about electric systems while handling all the service and maintenance associated with the ski lifts, and used that knowledge to get a job with Komatsu in 1997 as a Warranty Coordinator. He quickly moved into a position as an Assistant Service Engineer for large (mining) bulldozers.

Wilde stayed with the Komatsu mining division for almost four years, serving in various product support capacities, before moving to the construction division as Product Manager of hydraulic excavators in 2001. To expand his marketing knowledge he attended Keller Graduate School of Management and completed his MBA in Marketing in November of 2003. Nine months later, he became Manager of Product Marketing, and recently was promoted to Director of Product Marketing. As Director, he oversees the efforts of all construction division product managers, and directs advertising, promotional activities and trade shows for all three divisions (construction, mining and utility).

"We believe Komatsu makes superior products that are, for the most part, across-the-board faster, more productive, more precise and more reliable than competitive products," said Wilde. "My job is to help our product managers and our distributors get that message out to equipment users so they'll at least try Komatsu to learn first-hand what it has to offer."

The knee injury he suffered years ago still keeps Wilde off the basketball court for the most part — but with three children age five and under, he doesn't have much time for hoops anymore anyway.

**QUESTION:** With the introduction of many machines with Tier 3 engines this year, is 2006 one of the busiest years in recent Komatsu history in terms of new product launches?

**ANSWER:** Yes. All machines between 175 and 750 horsepower, which make up a large chunk of our lineup, are required to meet Tier 3 emissions levels in 2006. That means they all must now be built with our new Komatsu ecot 3 engines, which will reduce emissions to below mandated levels.

At Komatsu, we've actually included more machines than required, such as the PC200 excavator, because there was no reason not to. Those machines are on the same platform as larger models, which we had to change. With the new engine, they are a significant improvement over the previous generation.

**QUESTION:** Did Komatsu do more than just replace engines to meet the Tier 3 requirements?

**ANSWER:** Yes, in most cases, we did much more. That's why we have so many model changes this year. The new Dash-8 series of hydraulic excavators and the new Dash-6 series of wheel loaders are examples. If all we had done was put in the new Tier 3 engine, we wouldn't have called them new models.

**QUESTION:** What kind of changes did Komatsu make?

**ANSWER:** It depends on the machine. Generally speaking, the mid-size Dash-8 excavators are about 10 percent more fuel-efficient than the Dash-7s. Beyond that, there are things like a new industry-leading innovative cab design that protects the operator where risk of tip or rollover exists, as well as a new, full-color monitor with a seven-inch screen that operators will absolutely love. When it

comes to switching attachments, we've made it much more user friendly. An operator can actually change hydraulic flow and settings for up to four pre-programmed attachments with the touch of a few buttons, without bringing in a mechanic.

In the case of the WA600-6, it's basically a brand-new wheel loader. Fuel efficiency is up to 15 percent better and the cab is all new and much larger. The machine is also much more powerful and can handle a larger bucket, which combined with the improved fuel efficiency, dramatically lowers a producer's cost per ton.

**QUESTION: Some equipment users believe that in this day and age, all equipment is good and there's really not much difference between one brand and another. Is that true?**

**ANSWER:** As a manufacturer, certainly we believe there are differences, many of which you can discover by comparing specs. Which lifts the most? Which reaches the farthest? Things like that. Other differences you can discover in a demo — which machine is faster, smoother, more precise or more comfortable? Other significant differences such as reliability, longevity and resale value become evident over time.

Of course, at Komatsu, we believe we offer the best combination of all these factors throughout our product line. Reliability, productivity, comfort and value — those are the qualities we build into each and every machine.

**QUESTION: In your opinion, what are Komatsu strengths compared to the competition?**

**ANSWER:** Number one is reliability. That's what we hang our hat on. If a Komatsu unit is properly maintained with a good preventive maintenance program that emphasizes repair before failure, we believe our units will outperform any other manufacturer's. That means emergency downtime will be minimal and machine longevity will be at the outer limits.

Our other major strength is that we're usually a step ahead of the competition, technologically. A big reason for that is our heavy investment



All new Dash-6 Komatsu wheel loaders, like the WA600-6 shown here, as well as all new Dash-8 excavators feature the new ecot3, Tier 3-compliant engine, which lowers both emissions and fuel consumption.



Among a host of new Komatsu products this year is the HM300-2 articulated truck. The unit features a significantly reinforced front bumper and engine guard as well as a new transmission guard. The new ecot3 engine boosts horsepower and low-end torque, which helps make the new truck about 11 percent more productive than its predecessor.

into research and development. Also, because we make every type of equipment and compete in every size class, we're often able to share and integrate our technological advancements across product lines. For example, we're now incorporating our excavator piston-pump hydraulic technology, which has long been an industry leader, into our wheel loaders to produce a smoother, more efficient machine.

**QUESTION: What do you foresee happening down the road in regard to equipment?**

**ANSWER:** I don't know that there's any new technology on the horizon that's going to revolutionize the industry in the near future. But at Komatsu, I can assure you, we're going to continue to make improvements to increase reliability, productivity and efficiency, and in that way, give our customers an edge over their competitors. ■



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# Construction materials costs are on the rise

Construction materials costs are outpacing overall consumer and producer prices by a wide margin. The government's February report showed that while the overall producer price index (PPI) fell 1.4 percent in the month, the PPI for construction materials and components rose 0.3 percent.

Based on a strong outlook for construction, Associated General Contractors Chief Economist Ken Simonson says the trend of construction materials prices rising faster than the overall rates of consumer or producer prices is likely to continue throughout the year.

"The rate of increase for construction materials and components prices could be closer to the 10.1 percent rate of 2004 than the 6.1 percent rate

of 2005," said Simonson. "Once again, however, prices are likely to vary greatly by type of material and project."

Simonson noted that oil and natural gas prices have fallen sharply from their post-hurricane highs, but also pointed out that production from the Gulf of Mexico is still down by more than 15 percent, keeping supplies tight. "It appears that diesel for 2006 as a whole will be up 10 percent to 30 percent from 2005, with wide month-to-month variation," he said.

Beyond the higher cost of diesel fuel itself, the cost of other energy and energy-affected materials is also likely to rise, according to Simonson. These include asphalt, construction plastics, paints and coatings, insulation and brick. ■



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# NEW DEMONSTRATION SITE

## Customers will soon come to Komatsu Training Center in Georgia to try out new machines

Komatsu is in the process of developing a large tract of land next to its training center in Cartersville, Ga., to serve as a demonstration/training site for new equipment and as a permanent site for its popular Field Days event.

“The main advantage to having our own, large demonstration site is that we’ll be able to host Field-Days-like events numerous times a year, rather than just during a one-month period in the spring,” said Ed Warner, Manager Demonstration Site. “We’ll also have a full slate of new equipment on site at all times, so distributors and their customers will be able to come to check out specific machines whenever they want to.”

Currently under construction, the site will consist of an 11- to 12-acre flat arena, a viewing area with a grandstand and a haul road in excess of 2,700 feet with up to 10-percent grades for truck testing.

### Groups of products to be featured

With the new demonstration area, Komatsu intends to focus on key products and/or groups of products that appeal to particular segments of the construction industry.

“For example, rather than Field Days, which showcases a broad representation of machines from compact excavators and backhoe loaders up to mining dozers and large haul trucks, we could have Quarry Days, where we feature quarry machines, or NUCA Days, where we feature utility equipment,” said Warner. “It will be more industry- and product-specific. In that way it will be even more useful to equipment users.”

Added benefits include the training center, which has classrooms, and a theater area right next to the demonstration grounds; nearby hotels; and Komatsu’s Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation, which is within easy driving distance (about 75 miles).

“We’re really looking forward to opening the demo area,” said Warner. “Field Days was a great event. But this is going to be even more useful, convenient and cost-effective for us and for our customers.”

Komatsu expects the demonstration site to be finished late this summer, with the first planned events beginning in October. ■



**Ed Warner, Manager,  
 Demonstration Site**



The new Komatsu equipment demonstration site will be located immediately adjacent to the Komatsu Training Center in Cartersville, Ga.

Now under construction, the 11- to 12-acre demo site is expected to be finished by late summer.



## DISTRIBUTOR CERTIFIED USED EQUIPMENT

# VALUE IN USED MACHINES

## Komatsu ReMarketing aids distributors in their efforts to meet customers' equipment needs



**Gary Beal,**  
 V.P., Used Equipment

Gary Beal knows the used equipment business about as well as anybody. He owned a used equipment business for a number of years and has headed up the used equipment departments of a number of distributorships. Today, he's Vice President of Used Equipment at a large Komatsu distributorship in the Southwest.

"The key to used equipment is that it provides value to the buyer," said Beal. "That means we have to acquire used equipment at a fair price, sell it at a fair price, and stand behind it. It's really that simple. The important thing is to do that consistently, which is how you earn a reputation as a trustworthy supplier of used equipment."

As a used equipment man, Beal says working for a Komatsu distributor is a major plus because it means having the backing of Komatsu ReMarketing. "A rule of thumb is that there are three used machines sold for every new machine. That means we need to be constantly replenishing our supply. Komatsu ReMarketing is a major source of equipment for us. In addition, Komatsu ReMarketing and Director Lee Haak have been very helpful in working with us to realign our inventory and get our used equipment program on track. I've worked for another manufacturer and their used equipment program is very primitive by comparison."

Beyond being a source for equipment, Beal says Komatsu ReMarketing is also a source for parts, components and special attachments. "Basically, ReMarketing has fostered an excellent working relationship among Komatsu distributorships across the country. One way they've done that is by establishing a ReMarketing e-mail system. If we're looking for a particular machine, a part or something special — we can send out an e-mail and often find exactly what we need. For example, I recently located a long arm for a PC600 excavator from another distributor through our ReMarketing e-mail system."

### Everybody's a customer

When it comes to used equipment, Beal says everybody's a customer.

"From the young guy just starting out, to the large, established company that needs a specialty piece for a specific job, virtually everyone is in the market for an excellent used machine at a great price. Everybody in the construction industry has equipment needs — and in used equipment, we have the solutions."

For equipment users, the advantage of buying a Komatsu Distributor Certified used machine is that it's been inspected and rated according to specific criteria. Because it's known to be a high-quality unit, it often qualifies for special financing and a warranty.

Beal says the reason Komatsu distributors are able to do that is because Komatsu makes such high-quality equipment to begin with. "Komatsu machines are durable and reliable and because of that, those of us in the used equipment business have plenty of confidence when we put a Komatsu Distributor Certified used machine in the marketplace for a second life." ■



*For more information on Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines, contact your sales representative or our used equipment department.*

**Komatsu Distributor Certified used equipment often qualifies for special low financing and an extended warranty.**

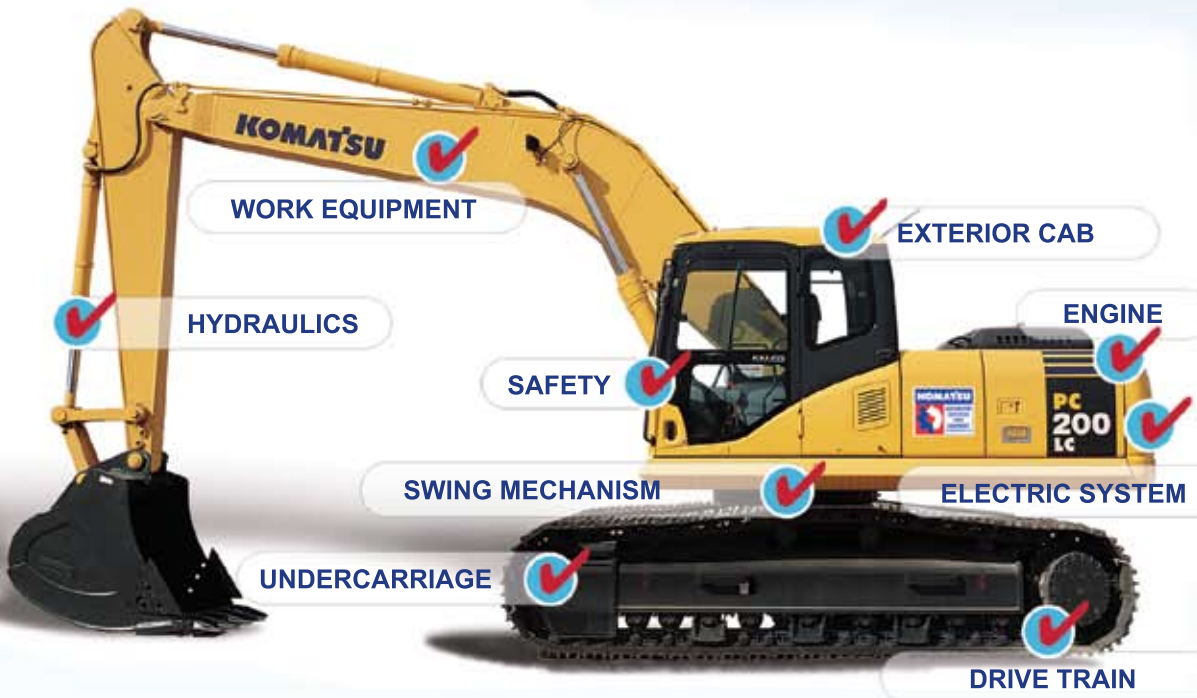






# KOMATSU DISTRIBUTOR CERTIFIED USED EQUIPMENT

## The next best thing to new.



*If it can be measured,*  
***we measure it!***

Whether you're looking for a high-quality machine that will become part of your fleet, or for a machine that will get you through the busy season, Komatsu Distributor Certified Used Equipment is your best alternative to buying new.

If it can be measured, we measure it! Specially trained Komatsu Distributor Certified evaluators check, measure and diagnose virtually every aspect of the machine. Once the machine meets Komatsu's high performance standards, your local distributor can tailor the machine for your site-specific needs. And to add to your peace of mind, most Komatsu Distributor Certified Used Equipment is eligible for special financing and warranty.

Purchasing Komatsu Distributor Certified Used Equipment makes sound business sense. You'll receive good value for your money and a reliable and productive machine that will get the job done for years to come — we guarantee it!

**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."**



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