

DOWN TO EARTH

A publication for and about General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. customers • 2009 No. 1

Featured in this issue:

SIBSON GRAVEL

Customer service is key for this third-generation gravel/custom-crushing operation



KOMATSU

President Clair
Sibson (left) and
Part-owner
Josh Sibson



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SIBSON GRAVEL

Customer service is key for this third-generation gravel/custom-crushing operation



Clair Sibson,
President



Josh Sibson,
Part-owner

Quality products and reliable service are primary reasons for the growth and success of Sibson Gravel, but the third-generation family business had a rather unexpected origin that evolved from farming to hauling gravel to custom crushing. Sibson Gravel's founder, Vern Sibson, originally intended to farm when he moved his family in 1957 to a farm just south of Beardsley, Minn. But it didn't take long for him to discover that the property, which sits near the North/South Continental Divide on the South Dakota/Minnesota border, had a more valuable use.

"A couple of local guys who needed rock would come in and pay 10 cents a yard to haul out gravel," recalled Vern's son Clair. "After a while, Dad decided he might just as well haul the rock himself to make a little extra money. Well, the gravel operation just kept growing and eventually Dad decided to quit farming altogether and go haul gravel full time. That was in 1959 and was the beginning of Sibson Gravel."

Clair bought Sibson Gravel from his dad in 1988 and today, he and his son Josh own the business. Clair still does hauling from the pit on the old farmstead, mostly within about a 40-mile radius of Beardsley. But Josh, who handles crushing operations, not only

crushes at the Sibson Gravel pit, he also does a substantial amount of custom crushing for other companies.

"We started custom crushing when I joined dad full time in 1999," Josh explained. "It's like custom combining but it's crushing. We supply the equipment and the labor, but we work in somebody else's pit. We prefer to work close to home but will travel up to 200 miles or so for a good job."

Repeat customers

Sibson Gravel's customers include farmers, contractors, municipalities and counties in and around Beardsley. "Our hauling business is probably about 50-50," said Clair. "About half of it is for private customers, half for public works. On the custom crushing side, the vast majority of it is for private companies."

"A lot of our custom crushing work is for paving contractors," said Josh. "They'll locate a pit near a job and call on us to come in and crush for them to provide fill material. It's all about productivity — getting in and getting the job done for the customer."

Sibson Gravel has a number of good customers who regularly call the company when they have a job in western Minnesota, northeastern South Dakota or southeastern North Dakota.

"I believe the reason we have repeat customers is because of the service we provide," explained Josh. "We show up when we say we'll show up, produce what we say we'll produce, and in general, do whatever we say we're going to do. They know they can count on us to provide the material they want, when they want it. We also work to leave the gravel pits in good shape. We treat them like

In addition to hauling gravel out of its own pit near Beardsley, Minn., Sibson Gravel also does custom crushing. Here, the company's crushing spread is set up to do a job near Ortonville.



they are our own because we hope to end up working them again sometime."

"Service is also the crux of our gravel-hauling operation," added Clair. "Our goal is to give people a quality product at a fair price with no hassles. Our gravel isn't suitable for asphalt or concrete but it's a very good Class 5 product which is great for base material."

Family business

Sibson Gravel is very much a family business. Not only is it third-generation, but Clair's brother worked there for a time, as did Josh's brother. Clair's wife, Ann, is also a key to the operation as she takes care of the books and helps out loading trucks as needed.

"She's a good wheel loader operator," noted Clair. "Like any family business, we all pitch in and do whatever needs to be done to keep things running smoothly."

In addition to family members, Jason Grooters and Dustin Tatro work with Josh on the crushing side and Kenny Zenk is a full-time truck driver who works with Clair hauling gravel from the family pit.

"Being able to count on your employees is a crucial aspect of a successful business," said Josh. "Jason and Kenny have been with us for eight years now. They understand how we do things and what we're about. I spend most of my time with them on a job, but I know I can trust them to handle things when I'm not around."

Quality equipment

Sibson Gravel turns to General Equipment & Supplies in Fargo, N.D., for most of its heavy equipment needs, including crushers and mobile equipment, which consist primarily of Komatsu units.

"We bought a low-hour, used WA500-6, to feed our crushing spread and it's a great machine," said Josh. "It's an animal. It has plenty of power, but the best thing is the way it handles for its size. It's really smooth and responsive. Fuel economy is very good too. We've been very pleased with the WA500-6."

"We also have an old Komatsu wheel loader that we bought used many years ago and a PC300 track hoe that's more than 15 years



Sibson Gravel Operator Jason Grooters uses a Komatsu WA500-6 to feed the crusher at Sibson's custom-crushing job in Ortonville. "The WA500 is very smooth, powerful and comfortable to run," said Grooters. "We've been pleased with the performance of the WA500-6," added Josh Sibson. "For its size, it's highly maneuverable and fuel economy is outstanding."



old. They both still run very well," he added. "Other than regular maintenance, which we do ourselves, we've had very few issues with those older machines. That kind of reliability is one thing we really like about Komatsu. It's a big reason why we went with Komatsu again when we bought the WA500."

Another reason the Sibsons like their new loader is that it came equipped with KOMTRAX, Komatsu's remote machine-monitoring system. The system tracks regular maintenance schedules and operating functions and reports error codes and warnings to both the Sibsons and General Equipment.

For crushing equipment, Sibson Gravel has a 3042 Cedarapids jaw plant and 54-inch Cedarapids Roller Cone Classic with a screen.

The Sibsons have had good experiences with Cedarapids equipment, going back to the early 1970s when Clair's father bought a Cedarapids crusher that was on the job until 1999. As their crushing business expanded, Clair and Josh needed more volume and kept adding pieces to their crushing spread, including the cone crusher, which they bought used from General Equipment in 2003. "The roller bearings cut down a lot on friction and heat. It's got more horsepower for faster crushing, too," Josh reported.

"Crushers, screens, feed hoppers, stacking conveyors — we get all that from General Equipment," said Josh. "We like the product, and we especially like working with General Equipment and our Sales Rep, John Gromatka."

Continued . . .

Sibson Gravel partners with General Equipment

... continued

Dealer support

Sibson Gravel had bought crushing parts from General Equipment for a number of years, but the relationship really took off when Gromatka offered to let the company demo a Komatsu wheel loader.

"When Clair called in 2000 and said he was looking to upgrade to a larger loader, I thought the Komatsu WA450 would be the best fit," recalled Gromatka. "So, I brought one for them to try out and it worked perfectly in their operation. It's been a pleasure to work with Sibson Gravel and help them with their equipment needs as their operation has grown."

"The way General Equipment treated us, compared to another dealer we had called, there was no comparison," said Clair. "We've been loyal to General Equipment ever since."

"We try to do most of our own service work," said Josh. "The great thing about General Equipment is that they're willing to help us,

even if it's not going to make them money at that particular time. For example, I've called their service guys at 8 o'clock on a Sunday night. They answer the phone and they'll try to talk me through any problem I'm having so I can make the repair myself, which saves us a lot of money. I really appreciate that. They're always available and they help us out any way they can."

"General Equipment has served us well through the years," added Clair. "We feel fortunate to have a quality company like that nearby that will work with us as a partner in our business."

Maintaining quality, reliability

While many construction-related companies have struggled in 2009, Sibson Gravel has flourished. "I can't explain why precisely, but this is the busiest year we've ever had," said Clair. "That's on both the hauling and crushing sides. In our area, we don't necessarily follow the rest of the country. If the farm economy is good, farmers spend money and we tend to do pretty well. That's been the case this year."

As for the future, Clair is looking to begin turning the business over to Josh. But Josh says don't look for any big changes in Sibson Gravel.

"I'm not interested in getting much bigger than we are right now. I estimate we have about 30 years of gravel reserves if we stay near our present rate and that would take me pretty deep into my career. On the crushing side, we've doubled our annual volume since 2001 and are now at more than half a million tons. We can't go much higher without adding another crushing spread and that's something I don't think I want to do.

"Even if we could get the work to support another crusher, it would mean adding more people," he noted. "We're very fussy about who we hire. Our name is on the business and I'm not going to do anything to harm the reputation my dad and grandpa have built through the years. Quality and reliability are what Sibson Gravel is all about. Providing the service that keeps our customers happy has always been our focus. We don't have to be the biggest. We just want to be the best." ■

General Equipment Sales Representative John Gromatka (right) works closely with (L-R) Josh, Clair and Ann Sibson, all of whom are involved day-to-day in the running of the family business. "We feel fortunate to have a quality company like General Equipment nearby," said President Clair Sibson. "They work with us like they're a partner in our business rather than just a supplier."



Sibson Gravel uses this Komatsu PC300 to loosen material in pits to make it easier for a loader to scoop and feed the crusher.





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URGENT ACTION NEEDED

ARTBA economist says passing a new surface transportation bill equals second stimulus



William Buechner,
VP for Economics
and Research

A recent article on the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) Web site says delaying passage of a new, six-year federal surface transportation program investment bill could derail the entire stimulus effort to use infrastructure investment to create new jobs.

That's according to ARTBA Vice President for Economics and Research William R. Buechner, Ph.D., the nation's leading transportation construction industry economist. He addressed the issue at a media briefing in Washington where he said stimulus investment will be undercut without near-term action on the federal highway/transit bill. Buechner also said that inaction could have unintended consequences for the economy.

"We learned the hard way over the period 2001 through 2005 that uncertainty about long-term federal investment in state and local highway and transit programs, combined with a national recession and state budget problems, leads to an overall stagnated transportation construction market. Absent congressional action on a long-term surface transportation investment bill this year, the conditions

are again lined up to kill job growth in the construction sector and related industries."

The current surface transportation program authorization, SAFETEA-LU, expired on Sept. 30. Buechner says the June 2009 "Fiscal Survey of the States," conducted by the National Governors Association and the National Association of State Budget Officers, documents the funding problems now facing state transportation departments nationwide. The survey found nearly half of the states have already, or plan to, cut back on their own funding for transportation programs this year or next.

"The only bright spot in the in the transportation construction market this year is the additional federal funding made available to the states and local governments through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," Buechner says. "Unfortunately, due to state budget challenges, the stimulus funds are allowing some states to simply maintain their 2008 activity level. In other states, stimulus dollars, at best, are serving to make overall state transportation program cuts less severe."

Buechner said a multiyear investment is essential now. The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee has proposed legislation that would authorize a \$500 billion federal investment in roads, bridges, transit systems and high-speed rail during the next six years. Buechner says more than a half million jobs would be supported annually with such a plan.

"If Congress is looking for a second stimulus, they need look no further than the highway/transit/high-speed rail program authorization. There is no other bill under development or consideration in the Congress that would stimulate anywhere near the same job growth." ■

ARTBA's William Buechner said delaying a new surface transportation bill could derail the economic stimulus' effort to use infrastructure investment to create new jobs.



PUSHING THE ACCELERATOR

Construction industry groups urge Congress to speed up passage of new highway bill

Recent reports pointing to motor vehicle crashes and the cost of congestion on the nation's highways underscore what many see as the need for a significant and critical investment in a new surface transportation bill. And proponents of a new bill want it soon, as the current highway funding mechanism expired Sept. 30.

A new highway safety report shows that poor road conditions are the single most lethal contributing factor to motor vehicle crashes, contributing to more than 22,000 highway fatalities each year. That equates to about 53 percent of all deaths on roadways, outnumbering speeding, alcohol or nonuse of seatbelts. According to the study, these crashes cost the country more than \$200 billion each year.

A second study said the cost of congestion topped \$87 billion in 2007, but dropped last year due in part to the recession. The study showed the total amount of wasted fuel was more than 2.6 billion gallons and wasted time totaled 4.2 billion hours. A report from researchers who conducted the study said they expect congestion to increase as the economy rebounds.

Construction industry groups are pointing to the studies as well as other data to push for new comprehensive legislation to replace the current surface transportation bill known as SAFETEA-LU. Passed in 2005, SAFETEA-LU provided more than \$240 billion dollars and was tied to the Highway Trust Fund, which doles out money for transportation projects.

Funding in SAFETEA-LU ran out before its four-year term, and Congress had to pass emergency measures to inject nearly \$15 billion

over the past year to keep the Highway Trust Fund afloat. The last such measure was passed in August, at about the same time the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee proposed a reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU that would invest \$500 billion over the next six years for roads, transit and high-speed rail.

Sooner, rather than later

No action has been taken on the proposed legislation, titled The Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 (STAA). Instead, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood called for an extension of SAFETEA-LU of up to 18 months, with funding during the interim coming from the current gas tax and a transfer

Continued . . .

Construction industry groups want a significant investment in highway construction. U.S. Reps. James Oberstar and John Mica introduced a six-year highway bill, but it has yet to be acted on.



New highway bill would create jobs

... continued

of money from the general fund into the Highway Trust Fund.

The idea behind the extension is to give representatives time to hammer out a bill that would address not only how much money the legislation would need, but how to pay for it as more fuel-efficient cars and public transportation have already and will continue to reduce tax revenues.

Construction industry organizations are pushing for a new bill sooner. So is Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., who along with colleague John Mica, R-Fla., introduced the six-year STAA reauthorization legislation.

"In the past, during these periods of multiple short-term extensions of programs, state departments of transportation have slowed investment because of the uncertainty regarding the long-term projects until enactment of the reauthorization act," said Oberstar. "In this time of severe economic recession, the effects of any slowed investment could offset much of the benefits of the increased transportation investment provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)."

Under the ARRA, also known as the stimulus plan, \$27.5 billion was included for highways and bridges as part of an overall \$80 billion infrastructure package. Further legislation this year through the omnibus appropriations bill added another \$40 billion for highway construction in fiscal 2009. These monies are in addition to funds transferred as part of any extension of SAFETEA-LU.

Organization calls for long-term infusion

While all these funding mechanisms will help continue construction projects in the near term, proponents say a long-term view is necessary. Nearly all agree that updating the nation's surface roads and other infrastructure must be accelerated and longlasting.

The National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, a congressional group, recently said that due to underfunding, "Our surface transportation system has deteriorated to such a degree that our safety, economic competitiveness and quality of life are at risk." It says an infrastructure funding gap between what's available and what's needed will be nearly \$400 billion between 2010 and 2015 and will grow to more than \$2 trillion by 2035 unless dramatic steps are taken to find significant sources of revenue to update infrastructure.

Industry organizations agree a long-term view is critical, not only to updating infrastructure, but to the people who will put it in place. "A six-year bill gives you the projected funding level a contractor needs to justify investments," said Brian Deery, Senior Director of the Highway and Transportation Building Division of the Associated General Contractors (AGC) in a recent Fleet Owner magazine article. "When you realize the least-expensive piece of equipment a highway contractor buys is around \$100,000, with some costing more than \$1 million, you need a stable outlook for business in order to pay for all of that."

Economic analysts seem to agree that a massive infusion of money into surface transportation and other infrastructure will pay huge dividends. According to Mark Zandi, Chief Economist at Moody's Economy.com, every dollar of infrastructure spending returns between \$1.50 and \$1.75 while creating jobs. Ken Simonson, Chief Economist at AGC is also calling for a bigger investment in highways and other infrastructure.

"These bills will deliver both short- and long-term benefits to the American public, while providing desperately needed jobs for construction workers in every state," said Simonson. ■

The most recent federal highway bill, SAFETEA-LU expired Sept. 30, and discussion of a new bill has been tabled. Construction industry groups are calling for a new bill soon.



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PURPOSE-BUILT MACHINES

Komatsu's waste-handling equipment provides efficient production in tough applications

You already know Komatsu is a leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment. But what you may not know is that Komatsu also makes similar equipment for the waste industry that's designed to be productive and efficient while standing up to the rigors of handling trash, scrap and recycling materials.

Like their construction and mining brethren, waste-specific wheel loaders and dozers feature unique hydraulics, powertrains, frames and components engineered by Komatsu. They're designed to work together for higher production and greater reliability in landfills, transfer stations, scrap yards and other tough applications.

Even in demanding environments, operators remain highly productive. That's because Komatsu waste-handling machines have spacious operator work platforms with controls designed for ease of operation, even in rough conditions. Pressurized, low-noise and low-vibration ROPS/FOPS cabs keep the operator comfortable for better productivity throughout the day. Operator comfort is aided with a two-tier air-filtration system that cleans incoming and recirculated air to keep dust out.

Specifically made for waste transfer stations, Komatsu waste-handling wheel loaders feature guarding for the front frame, powertrain bottom, boom and cylinder hoses, and axle seals.

Because waste machines work in high-dust and high-debris applications, Komatsu beefed them up with additional guarding and other specific features to withstand the elements. All purpose-built loaders and dozers come with rugged guarding to protect components and the machine.

"Being productive and efficient in waste-handling applications is just as important as it is in construction and mining," said Mike Gidaspow, Product Manager Wheel Loaders. "That's why all of Komatsu's purpose-built machines come with features that stand up to the rigors of working in such conditions. Komatsu builds special standard features into its waste-handling loaders, such as fans that automatically reverse direction at a set interval to help keep coolers clean. This interval can be changed, or the operator can push a switch to reverse the fan, overriding the timer."

Komatsu powertrains help keep loader operating costs low

Komatsu's waste-handling wheel loaders were made specifically for waste transfer stations. To protect critical components, each machine — WA250-6, WA320-6, WA380-6, WA430-6 and WA470-6 — has guarding for the front frame, powertrain bottom, boom and cylinder hoses, and axle seals. Additional guarding protects headlights and taillights, the center hinge and the windshield.

On the WA380-6, WA430-6 and WA470-6, operators can select from two working modes: E mode for maximum fuel efficiency in general loading or P mode for maximum power in hard digging or hill climbing. A choice of two buckets, loading or pushing, to match the appropriate application is available as well. Each is made with high-strength steel, a spill guard that allows





excellent visibility and a visual bucket-level indicator. Both accept Komatsu standard bolt-on cutting edges and skid shoes.

“The WA250-6 and WA320-6 waste handlers have several features that further reduce owning and operating costs, specifically hydrostatic transmissions (HST) and variable traction control,” noted Gidaspow. “HST allows high tractive effort for quick travel response and aggressive drive into the pile, while the full auto shift eliminates manual gear shifting and kick-down. Operators can control tractive effort to facilitate operation in soft and slippery conditions and eliminate excessive bucket penetration and reduce tire slippage during stockpiling and loading.”

Dozers offer powerful push

Lockup torque converters and autoshift transmissions are part of the Komatsu landfill dozer package (D65EX-15SL, D85EX-15SL, D155AX-6SL and D275AX-5SL), which increases efficiency and saves fuel, according to Les Scott, Product Manager Dozers.

“That directly affects owning and operating costs, but only if the dozers can stand up to the challenge of constantly pushing materials that could potentially get into the machine and cause major damage,” said Scott.

“That’s why our landfill dozers are specially equipped with a chassis-seal package that closes gaps around the chassis where material could enter the engine compartment. We also have final-drive, pivot-shaft and idler-seal guards to help prevent debris from entering the oil-seal areas.”

Komatsu protects exposed components with features such as trapezoidal track-shoe holes that minimize debris packing for extended track component life; front and rear striker bars that prevent debris from riding up the tracks and damaging fenders or the chassis; and an engine bottom guard with electric winch to simplify cleaning of the engine compartment.

Each dozer has a powerful engine to push mass amounts of material with the large-capacity blades equipped with trash racks. A landfill counterweight provides additional balance and stability. Scott noted that with a few modifications, landfill dozers could be adapted to work in wood chipping or other high-airborne-debris applications.

“The combination of the trash rack and additional counterweight keeps the tractor’s center of gravity in the optimum location for pushing trash,” explained Scott. “Operators appreciate that balance and how easy the dozers are to operate. They also like the visibility the machine offers, especially the area around the blade, because they can see the work area without straining.”

Keeping maintenance on track

Komatsu engineered its waste machines for reduced maintenance downtime as well. Dozers and loaders have quick-opening doors that allow easy ground-level access to service points, including the radiator and fan for cleaning.

“All our machines come standard with KOMTRAX, so should a major issue arise, the

Lockup torque converters and autoshift transmissions in Komatsu’s landfill dozers increase efficiency and save fuel. The dozers also come with additional guarding and other features that prevent debris from affecting performance.

Continued . . .

Unique Komatsu features make the difference

... continued

operator will see it immediately and can take corrective actions,” observed Scott, who noted that KOMTRAX will send an email alert to both the user and the distributor. “That helps reduce potential downtime, and KOMTRAX also

helps users better manage their machinery with information such as hours, machine utilization and maintenance schedules among other items. That’s just as beneficial in waste applications as it is in construction and mining.” ■

Komatsu introduces its Dash-8, purpose-built excavator for waste handling

Dusty, dirty environments create special challenges for heavy equipment, so building a machine to withstand such rigors while still being productive and efficient can be a tall order. Komatsu met the challenge head-on when it crafted its first excavator built specifically for handling waste materials, the PC200LC-8 Waste Spec Arrangement.

“The PC200LC-8 Waste Spec Arrangement fills out our PC200 lineup,” said Product Manager Armando Najera. “We worked extensively with customers in that market to build a machine that will give them better production and lower their owning and operating costs by increasing maintenance intervals so the focus is on getting the job done, not servicing the machine.

“Komatsu focused on a longer radiator clean-out interval,” Najera emphasized. “As an example, depending on the airborne debris levels, a normal machine would need a radiator cleanout every couple of hours compared to a couple of days for the Waste Spec. Service intervals are extended too, so the machine’s uptime is higher. That equates to lower owning and operating costs.”

The PC200LC-8 Waste Spec Arrangement also includes several ways to keep dust and debris from becoming a limiting factor to production. An engine precleaner on the outside of the machine cleans the air before it reaches the filter. A screening package that includes a perforated side door and top screens increases cooling airflow to the radiator while minimizing the size of the airborne materials entering the engine compartment. The perforated hood area reduces air velocity passing through the screens to reduce debris sticking.

Komatsu further made sure the engine stays cool by adding a cooler package with side-by-side, wide-core coolers — radiator, hydraulic oil and charge air — to



Komatsu’s new PC200LC-8 Waste Spec Arrangement is built for the rigors of waste handling in transfer stations, landfills and construction and demolition debris applications. Features such as wide core coolers keep the machine temperature down for better production even in the most severe environments.

help keep air flowing. Combined with the screen package and a faster fan speed, the wide-core coolers keep the temperature in the normal operating range.

“Just like our standard, Heavy-Duty and Thumb Spec models, the Waste Spec has an efficient Tier 3 engine that’s powerful, yet reduces emissions and is fuel-efficient,” said Najera. “It also has a spacious cab that, thanks to the advanced levels of filtration, stays clean and comfortable. That makes a difference, whether the PC200LC-8 Waste Spec Arrangement is working in a traditional open-air landfill, inside in a waste transfer station where it can be very dusty and hot, or in a construction and demolition debris application. It has the goods to handle any of those situations and more.” ■



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NEW PRODUCTS

POWERFUL NEW DOZER

New Komatsu D375A-6 has most horsepower in small mining dozer class

With the introduction of the new D375A-6, Komatsu has the most powerful machine in the small mining dozer class. Why is that important? Because it's what mining customers wanted from the dozer.

"About three years ago, we started conducting extensive face-to-face surveys and interviews with mining customers throughout North America," explained Rich Smith, Komatsu Product Manager-Mechanical Drive Equipment. "We went to all types of mines from Canada, Wyoming and Utah to Kentucky, West Virginia, Alabama and Texas — wherever companies were using dozers in the 70- to 80-ton class. We wanted to know what operators, equipment managers and

others thought of our D375A-5, and what they would do to improve it."

Komatsu learned dozer users liked the D375A-5 for its reliability, durability and comfort — but they wanted more power and productivity. So Komatsu designers and engineers went back to the drawing board and came up with the new D375A-6, which has 14 percent more horsepower than the previous model (610 horsepower compared to 525 horsepower in the Dash-5 version),

Continued . . .

Brief Specs on Komatsu D375A-6 Dozer

Model	Net hp	Operating Weight	Blade Capacity
D375A-6	610 hp	157,940 lbs.	28.8 cu. yd.
D375A-5	525 hp	148,382 lbs.	28.8 cu. yd.



Rich Smith,
Komatsu Product
Manager



Jackie Haney,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager



For more information on the new D375A-6 — and to see video of the machine in action — go to www.videocpi.com

At the request of customers throughout North America, Komatsu designed and built the new D375A-6 with more horsepower than both the previous Komatsu model and the top competitive machine in the small mining dozer class.



D375A-6 delivers power and versatility

... continued

and 5 percent more horsepower than its top competitor.

"It's a bigger, stronger, more powerful machine — period," said Smith. "In addition to the horsepower boost, its operating weight is almost 158,000 pounds, about 6 percent heavier than the D375A-5. We also gave it new hydraulics, based on the same system that's in Komatsu's world-renowned hydraulic excavators, to reduce parasitic horsepower loss. We also changed the blade profile to improve digging, carrying capacity and dozing efficiency. The end result is a machine that's not only more powerful, but also more productive."

Mining specs and more

Beyond the power boost, new hydraulics and a more productive blade profile, the new D375A-6 has a number of other standard features that improve machine performance.

In addition to having 14 percent more horsepower, the new D375A-6 offers excellent visibility and numerous mining specs as standard features, all of which contribute to substantially greater productivity.



These include:

- A large (seven-inch), multifunction LCD color monitor with self-diagnostic functions;
- VHMS, Komatsu's Vehicle Health Monitoring System for remote machine condition and operation evaluation;
- Numerous mining specs — from high-mounted headlights and centralized grease points to fast fuel fill and a maintenance service center;
- An automatic engine and lockup torque converter for excellent fuel efficiency.

"We have both power and economy work modes on the D375A-6, along with an eco-gauge on the monitor which lets the operator know when the machine is working in the most fuel-efficient manner," pointed out Product Marketing Manager Jackie Haney. "For example, in a slot-dozing application or something similar, the operator will use the full power (P) mode. Even in P mode, the D375A-6 uses 3 percent less fuel than the top competitor. But in a lighter application, the operator can drop down to the economy (E) mode, which will use 8 percent less fuel than the other brand. With the high cost of fuel, the eco-gauge is a tool that can help save owners a lot of money."

Not only is the D375A-6 more powerful and more fuel-efficient than its top competitor, Komatsu says when pushing a load, it also has faster travel speeds and faster cycle times, which mean greater production.

"With all it brings to the table, we believe the D375A-6 is the most versatile mining dozer in the marketplace, capable of almost limitless applications, and in many ways is the future of the mining dozer," said Smith. "We hope anybody who's in the market for this size of dozer will try the D375A-6 and discover the Komatsu difference for themselves."

For more information on how the D375A-6 can improve your operating performance in mining, quarry or heavy construction applications, call your sales representative or our nearest branch location. You can also go to www.videocpi to see video of the dozer in action. ■





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PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT

NEW WA150-6 WHEEL LOADER

Improvements to 98-hp loader provide better productivity with increased fuel economy



Mike Gidaspow,
Product Manager,
Wheel Loaders

If good things come in small packages, the new Komatsu WA150-6 wheel loader is proof that adage is true. Featuring increased loading power, performance, efficiency and operator comfort, the 98-horsepower loader is ideal for utility, construction and agricultural applications, among others.

According to Mike Gidaspow, Komatsu Product Manager, Wheel Loaders, the WA150-6 has more horsepower than its predecessor, while offering better fuel economy and lower emissions.

In addition to the efficient, Tier 3-compliant engine, the WA150-6 incorporates a hydrostatic transmission (HST) that allocates only as much power as is needed for a given application while responding smoothly and quickly to varying job conditions. It automatically adjusts tractive effort so the operator gets quick travel response as well as aggressive drive into the pile.

For more information about the WA150-6 wheel loader, contact your sales representative or your nearest branch location, or visit www.komatsuamerica.com.

Brief Specs on Komatsu WA150-6 Wheel Loader

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Bucket Capacity	Breakout Force
WA150-6	98 hp	17,262-17,450 lbs.	1.7-2.2 cu.yd.	14,400-17,600 lbs.

Komatsu's new WA150-6 offers benefits such as more horsepower, better productivity and increased fuel efficiency compared to its predecessor.



The variable traction control function reduces tractive effort, virtually eliminating excessive bucket penetration and controlling tire slippage in wet and soft ground conditions. An S mode traction setting provides optimum driving force for operation on slippery surfaces, including snow removal on snow-covered surfaces. Having control over the loader's tractive effort helps the operator to be more productive and reduces tire wear.

"Komatsu gave the WA150-6 many of the standard upgrades it added to its other smaller construction wheel loaders — the WA200-6, WA250-6 and WA320-6," said Mike Gidaspow, Product Manager, Wheel Loaders. "It's an excellent fit for anyone needing a little more horsepower than our largest utility loaders. Similar to our other Dash-6 loaders, the WA150-6 is versatile, agile and offers efficiency without sacrificing power or production."

The operator also can easily see and control the load from the newly designed low-noise and low-vibration cab that has a wide pillarless windshield and a low-effort multifunction mono lever Pressure Proportion Control (PPC) system. The PPC system has a forward, neutral and reverse control switch for smooth and easy directional changes.

Lower maintenance costs

"Like all other new wheel loaders, the WA150-6 comes with the latest KOMTRAX technology that provides vital information such as fuel consumption, operating hours, working hours and alerts to help owners stay on top of maintenance schedules for maximum reliability and availability," said Gidaspow. "All these new features will help lower owning and operating costs and put more money in the owner's pocket." ■

UTILITY PRODUCTS

“A GOOD FIT”

New Komatsu WA50-6 utility wheel loader offers big production features in small package

There are times when smaller is better. That's the case with Komatsu's new WA50-6 wheel loader, which offers powerful versatility with a minimal footprint. It allows operators to work in tight quarters, such as small construction and landscaping projects where space is at a premium.

The WA50-6 also provides the production needed in open areas, such as backfilling a trench or stockpiling and loading materials in a small quarry, landscaping yard or other applications.

“Any contractor looking for a wheel loader that offers versatility in a variety of settings will find the WA50-6 a good fit,” said Robert Beesley, Product Manager for Komatsu Utility Marketing Division. “Like all Komatsu products, it offers the benefits of high production with an efficient engine that helps lower the user's cost per yard.”

Features include three-mode traction control that lets the operator choose the best one to fit the application. The P mode provides maximum rimpull for grading and excavating applications, while the N mode is for normal/moderate loading and carrying. The S mode virtually eliminates wheel slip for better performance in mud, snow and other soft or slick conditions.

To maximize productivity, the WA50-6 has an electric auto-leveler for the bucket and a floor-mounted inching pedal that allows operators to ease their way to a truck or trench. Rear-axle oscillation and a wraparound counterweight provide excellent stability and grading performance.

“Komatsu designed the WA50-6 for excellent operator visibility,” noted Beesley. “The ‘Delta Boom’ loader design gives him a clear view of the work area, so even in tight quarters he can see obstructions and more easily avoid them.”

A valuable tool

In addition to a better view, operators have a large walk-through work platform with an adjustable suspension seat. The WA50-6 has a standard two-post ROPS/FOPS canopy and offers an optional pillarless cab with front and rear glass.

“Like other new Komatsu products, it comes standard with KOMTRAX, so owners, operators and maintenance personnel can stay on top of scheduled maintenance and performance trends,” said Beesley. “That, along with other productive features makes the WA50-6 a valuable tool for anyone who needs a small loader that can do a variety of jobs efficiently.” ■

Komatsu's WA50-6 fits a variety of applications, including landscaping, small construction projects and small quarries.



Robert Beesley,
Product Manager

Brief Specs on Komatsu WA50-6

Model
WA50-6

Net Horsepower
38.6 hp

Operating Weight
8,100-8,430 lbs.

Bucket Capacity
0.78 cu. yds.





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A BALANCING ACT

Komatsu VP of Parts says Komatsu is committed to efficiently supporting new and older machines

QUESTION: What is Komatsu currently doing to ensure parts availability?

ANSWER: Several things, most notably working closely with our distributors and customers to know what machines are in the field and what needs to be on the shelves to support them. In the past several years, we've upped our parts presence in North America by building eight regional parts depots to complement our main hub in Ripley, Tenn. They're strategically located to get parts to our distributor shelves quickly and efficiently. We have dedicated and continuous nightly trucking routes between Ripley, our regional parts depots and our distributor locations. The system helps us have a nearly 99-percent fill rate on next-day delivery on most parts and emergency orders. Plus, our distributors always have common wear parts and filters in stock, with additional parts on hand based on the number of machines and models they have in their area.

Another way we're ensuring the right parts are in the right place is by working with our KOMTRAX remote machining-monitoring team. Nearly all new Komatsu machines have KOMTRAX as standard equipment, and that allows us to monitor those machines' hours and service intervals. It's given us valuable data that we can use to schedule shipments and have necessary parts to distributor locations ahead of time, often without them ever having to contact us. So, if customers want to do service work themselves, all they have to do is contact the branch or stop in and pick those parts up. It's very efficient.

QUESTION: How else is technology playing a role in parts?

ANSWER: With KOMTRAX, our monitoring team knows if an error code pops up on

Continued . . .



Frank Pagura,
Vice President of Parts

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.

Frank Pagura has been Vice President of Parts at Komatsu since December 2005, after serving as Parts Planning and Coordination Manager, a position he took when he first joined Komatsu in 2004.

He grew up in Yonkers, N.Y., graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and was an active-duty officer in the Navy for six years. Following his time in the service, Pagura worked for an offshore drilling equipment manufacturer. He was a manager in parts purchasing and parts planning with the company.

Pagura says putting an inventory of parts together to support the varied lines of Komatsu equipment available is a balancing act.

"On one hand, because Komatsu equipment is built to last, there are numerous older machines in the marketplace. On the other, Komatsu is always developing and designing new lines of equipment. On the parts side, we have to be able to support both. We do that by working closely with research and development, our distributors and our customers to ensure we have the parts necessary to fulfill customer needs efficiently."

Pagura does a balancing act with his time as well, devoting time outside of work to his family, which includes wife, Trina, and their daughters Aimee and Abigail.

Komatsu parts — an investment in quality

... continued

a machine right away — often before the user even knows about it — and alerts the distributor. The distributor's service department can then dispatch a technician to the site where the machine is located. Because we know the error code, the distributor can tell the technician what to look for, and if parts

are needed, the technician can swing into the nearest branch and pick up the part if he doesn't already have it. That avoids having to go to the machine and diagnose it first before possibly returning to get parts to make the repair.

Most technicians already carry a laptop computer to use for diagnostics. Now, we're loading them with valuable information regarding repairs, including the parts manuals for all Komatsu machines. If something comes up in the field, the technician can look up the machine model on the computer. If parts are needed, he can check availability at the distributor, regional depot and main hub at Ripley, and order genuine OEM parts.

QUESTION: Why use genuine Komatsu OEM parts?

ANSWER: The customer has made a significant investment in his equipment, and doesn't want to jeopardize that. Komatsu machines are engineered to the highest quality with components made specifically for our machinery. While customers may be able to find less-expensive "gray-market" parts, they run the risk of those not fitting or performing properly in Komatsu equipment. While they may save a little money up front, it could cost them more in the long run in downtime and money due to a catastrophic failure. Using properly installed OEM components that are warranted by Komatsu gives users peace of mind in knowing they've further invested in Komatsu quality.

QUESTION: What are you doing from the parts side to prepare for future machinery needs?

ANSWER: While having new machinery is exciting, it would be far less appealing to the customer if the support for it wasn't in place. That's why from the beginning of development on all new Komatsu machinery, the parts division is involved. No machinery goes onto the market without us having the necessary components in place to back it up. The challenge is to not only stock up for new models, but also to continue to keep a supply on hand to support the numerous older Komatsu machines that continue to run well into the thousands of hours. It's a balancing act, but one we've become very adept at. ■



Using the KOMTRAX remote machine-monitoring system, Komatsu is able to track new machines in the field and take a proactive approach to ensuring parts are on distributor shelves when customers need them to make repairs and do routine services.



Each of Komatsu's eight regional parts depots carries a vast inventory of common wear parts and filters, as well as other parts to fulfill emergency orders. That's helped Komatsu have a nearly 99-percent fill rate on next-day orders.

Eight regional parts depots, such as this one in Las Vegas, are strategically located throughout North America to ensure parts get to Komatsu distributors and customers efficiently.



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SAFETY ECONOMICS

Ten-year data shows “collaborative approach” significantly lowers incident numbers

Recent data shows America’s construction industry is safer than ever, highlighted by a 47-percent drop in fatality rates nationwide since 1998. At that time, a federal construction safety program focusing on a “collaborative safety approach” was put in place.

Known as Collaborative Safety Management, the collaborative approach is designed to make *everyone* responsible for jobsite safety, with construction workers watching out for and addressing safety violations. It replaced old thinking, which had federal and state safety inspectors searching for violations.

Data used in the analysis came from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and reflected OSHA total case incidence rates for the construction industry; OSHA days away from work (lost workday) incidence rates for the construction industry; total number of fatalities for the construction industry; total construction spending; construction fatality rate per \$1 billion invested in construction; annual average employment for the construction industry; and construction fatality rate per 100,000 workers.

At an event to release the data, Associated General Contractors (AGC) representatives noted there were 1.7 fatalities for every billion dollars invested in construction in 1998. Today, that number is .9, a 47-percent drop. Relative to the size of the construction work force, the fatality rate dropped from 12.9 to 9.6 per 100,000 construction workers from 2000 to 2008, a 25-percent decline.

Dramatic safety improvement

Further analysis showed a 38-percent drop in recordable safety incidents. “The

collaborative safety approach represented a significant shift in federal oversight when it was first introduced,” said the AGC. “The approach creates incentives for companies to find and fix safety problems before incidents occur, while maintaining strong penalties for companies that let safety problems lag until someone is hurt.”

According to the AGC, while the value and size of the construction market grew significantly during the time data was collected, the number of construction fatalities declined from 1,171 in 1998 to less than 1,000 eight years later, a 17-percent drop. Additionally, the construction safety incidence rate fell from 8.8 per 100 to 5.4, while the rate of injured construction workers missing work declined 42 percent from 3.3 per 100 to 1.9. ■

A collaborative safety approach makes everyone responsible for jobsite safety, with construction workers watching out for and addressing safety violations.



E-Verify now a requirement for federal contractors

Contractors and subcontractors working on federal projects are now required to certify the employment eligibility of their workers through the Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify System. The system checks immigration status of current and prospective employees.

E-Verify is an automated system where employers enter I-9 information that's checked against government database records to verify employment eligibility. Contractors have 30 days from federal contract award date to enroll

in the program and verify employment status of their workers and new hires. Free to use, businesses can log in at www.everify.com.

Opposed by several business groups, E-Verify was mandated under President George W. Bush last year, but the requirement was delayed as courts studied its legality. A U.S. district court upheld the system.

E-Verify applies only to federal contractors, but legislation has been proposed to expand it to all employers. ■

First renewable-energy projects awarded under stimulus act

Grants totaling nearly \$503 million were awarded to companies developing renewable-energy projects. The grants, designed to double the country's renewable energy production in the coming years, are the first from about \$3 billion set aside under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Companies developing renewable energy facilities that use biomass, solar and wind, among others, were awarded grants that will go toward the production of about 840 megawatts of electricity, a 3-percent increase in U.S. renewable energy.

"These grants will help America's businesses launch clean-energy projects, putting

Americans back to work in good construction and manufacturing jobs," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu in a recent Reuters article.

Twelve projects received grants as the first round of payments went out, and the Obama administration hopes the numbers will climb as it set a goal of doubling U.S. renewable energy production over the next three years.

"This renewable energy program will spur the manufacture and development of clean energy in urban and rural America, allowing us to protect the environment, create good jobs and revitalize our nation's economy," said Treasury Secretary Timothy Geitner in the Reuters article. ■

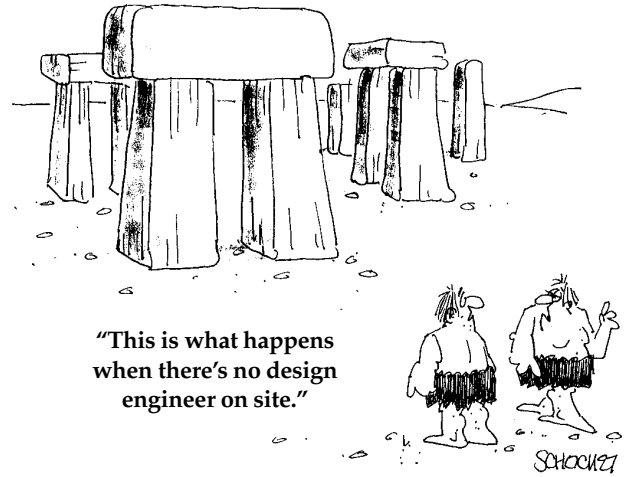
Web site highlights construction career opportunities for service members

A new Web site called Good to Go (www.areyoug2g.com) has been set up by the construction industry group Helmets to Hardhats to help military service members prepare for reentry into civilian life. Among the Web site's highlights are career opportunities in the construction field that veterans may be interested in.

Service members can use customizable checklists covering such items as employment, housing and goal setting for the future.

Additional information is available with an emphasis on steps military personnel can take to make the transition from military life smoother, as well as information for family members as they prepare for a returning vet. ■

On the light side



"Do you do business forecasts?"

Did you know...

- Pound for pound, the silk that is produced by spiders is stronger than steel.
- The United States is the top producer of cheese in the world, with Wisconsin and California leading the states in production.
- Ninety-nine percent of pumpkins sold in the United States are for the sole purpose of decoration.
- It takes 12 honeybees to make one teaspoon of honey.
- Thirty to 40 gallons of sugar maple sap must be boiled down to make just one gallon of maple syrup.
- Istanbul, Turkey is the only city in the world located on two continents.
- It takes approximately 12 years for Jupiter to orbit the sun.
- A person uses approximately fifty-seven sheets of toilet paper each day.
- The only king without a moustache in a deck of cards is the king of hearts.
- There is enough concrete in the Hoover Dam to pave a two lane highway from San Francisco to New York.

Brain Teasers

Unscramble the letters to reveal some common construction-related words. Answers are on the right side of this page.

1. CHARULDISY _____
2. THOPRESIWF _____
3. STINOTCRUCON _____
4. DURELIB _____
5. RONRCOTACST _____
6. KARTC _____

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We want to know what's on your mind — and we want to share your thoughts with other industry professionals. VOICES gives you the opportunity to ask questions and comment on issues of interest regarding the construction industry, Komatsu equipment, articles you've seen in this magazine or other topics. VOICES will answer your questions, respond to your comments and address the issues you care about. We encourage you to join the conversation. You can do that by e-mailing your questions and comments to DownToEarthEditor@constpub.com



*Please send us
your questions
& comments...*

Here are the types of questions and comments we hope to receive:

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTION: We've gained some jobs under the economic stimulus package, which means we'll soon be starting some equipment that's been sitting idle. Are there any special considerations?

ANSWER: A thorough inspection before startup is highly recommended. One of the service technicians from General Equipment & Supplies can do it for you. They are thoroughly trained to inspect machinery and spot potential issues that can often be overlooked. In the long run, that can save you from a breakdown that could cost you much more in downtime. Before starting, ensure all fluids are filled and appropriate for your environment. For example, in winter, you may need special fluids designed for colder temperatures than you would in the spring or summer. Check connections and systems such as the undercarriage for wear. If there are issues, make sure they're resolved before putting the machine on the job.

QUESTION: I'm in the market for new equipment. What's the best way to compare Komatsu with the competition?

ANSWER: A simple way is to visit www.komatsuamerica.com. There you can click on our Competitive Comparison link, a new feature to Komatsu's Web site as of this

past summer, and see Komatsu machine information side-by-side with the competition. You'll find information such as horsepower, operating weight, bucket capacity and a whole host of other features. But don't go just by the charts. Visit the nearest General location and learn about the machines first hand. Once you take in all the information, you'll see why we believe Komatsu is the best value in construction, utility, mining, and other types of specialty equipment.

COMMENTS & REPLIES

COMMENT: Thanks for the article in the last issue about putting together a winning bid. I picked up some helpful tips and have already used them successfully.

REPLY: We're glad to hear that. Many projects have been funded through the stimulus plan, and more are scheduled throughout the next year as the plan ramps up. Many of the projects have come in below engineers' estimates, and with the savings, additional projects will be funded. That means more opportunities to apply the tips. And we hope there are even more opportunities in the near future with passage of highway and infrastructure legislation. Those projects will benefit the industry and the overall economy while repairing and upgrading vital infrastructure. ■

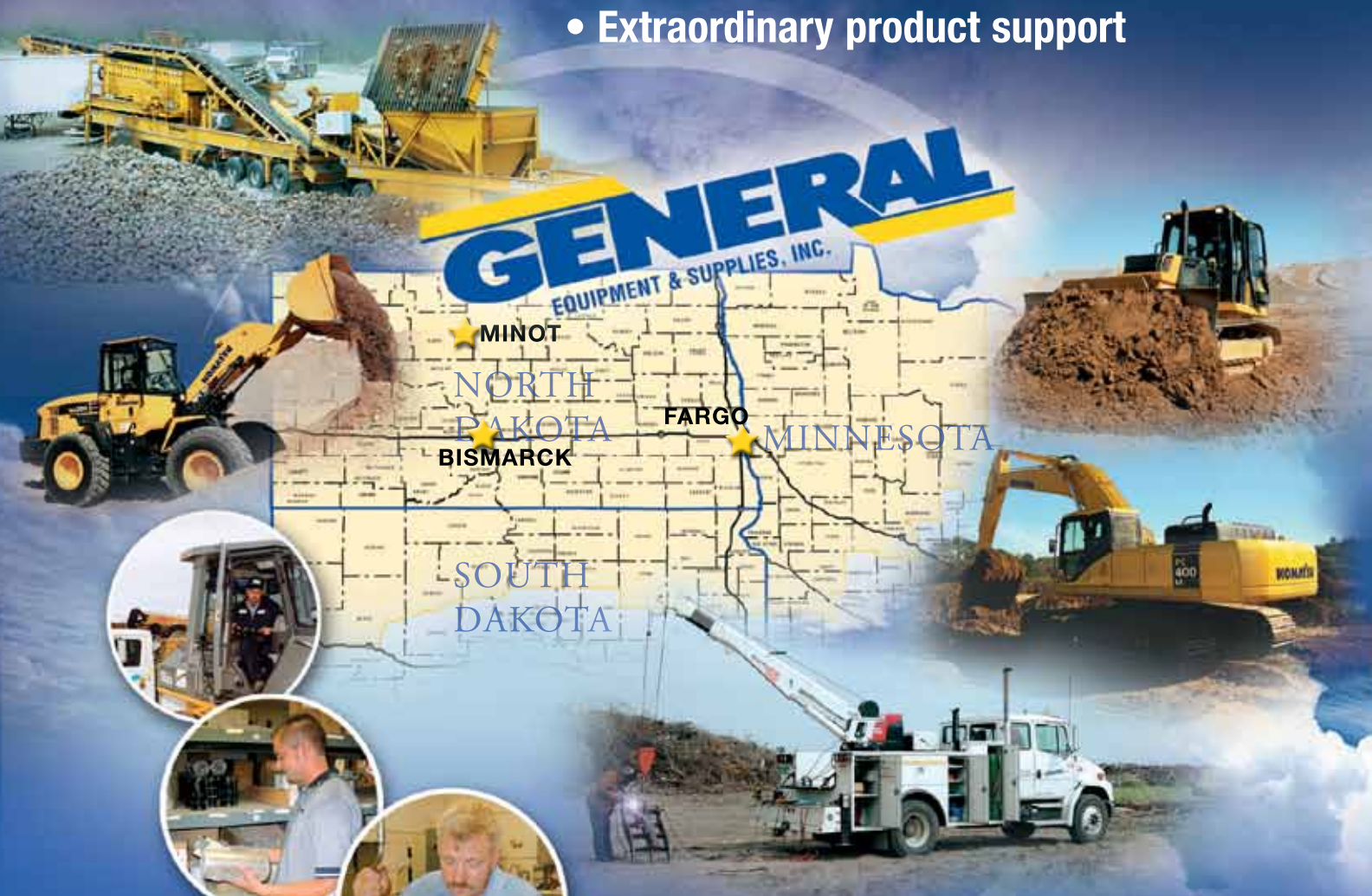
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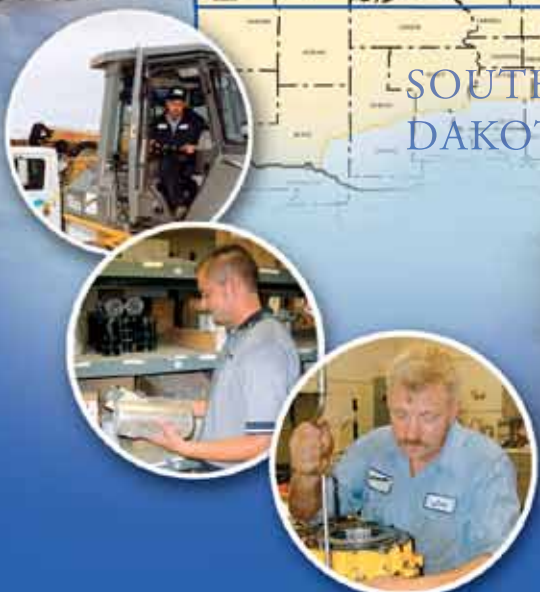
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