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35
YEARS

Dirt Dynamics, LLC

Read how tackling challenges and working efficiently spell success for Fargo firm



Mike Stock,
Owner

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL EQUIPMENT



Jon Shilling

Passing
knowledge
through
technology



Dear Valued Customer:

As the trend of historically low unemployment continues, General Equipment & Supplies is proud to be working toward a solution to fill the need for industry-trained heavy equipment service technicians and parts professionals. Working in partnership with North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) and the Department of Labor, we offer apprenticeship programs that combine on-the-job training, mentoring and traditional classroom studies. If you know a young person with an interest in either of these careers, please contact your local branch or NDSCS to learn more.

Komatsu is committed to bringing efficiency to the industry as well. It's helping to make new dozer operators as productive as possible, as quickly as possible with its new Proactive Dozing Control logic that interprets data and makes decisions that mirror seasoned operators. Read more about how this intuitive technology can deliver productivity gains within 6 percent of an experienced operator on select Komatsu dozers.

In this issue you can also learn how local entrepreneur Mike Stock has grown Fargo-based, Dirt Dynamics. Stock relies on a fleet of Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators as well as wheel loaders to handle a variety of site-development projects.

I also encourage you to check out the CONEXPO-CON/AGG preview that provides some insight into what you will find at the triennial event that will be held in Las Vegas in March. In conjunction with the show, General Equipment will host a customer event at Lagasse's Stadium in The Palazzo on Wednesday, March 11. I hope you can join us there.

If you are in the Fargo area, check out the progress of our new parts warehouse. It's been fun to see our equipment at work on the site as one of our customers is handling the construction. As always, if there's anything we can do for you, please call or stop by one of our branch locations, or contact your General Equipment & Supplies sales representative.

Sincerely,

Jon Shilling,
President & CEO

DOWN to EARTH

www.GeneralDownToEarth.com

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Find out how one Texas county is finishing roadway jobs faster and at lower costs with its GD655-6 motor graders.

Published by Construction Publications, Inc. for



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DIRT DYNAMICS, LLC

Tackling challenges and working efficiently spell success for Fargo firm



Mike Stock,
Owner

Mike Stock grew up on a farm in Mahanomen, Minn., and got his start in the construction industry by installing septic tanks and drain fields. While he enjoyed it, he wanted something more. That's why he packed up and moved west to Fargo in 2003.

"I was from a small town, and I knew there just wasn't enough there to satisfy my appetite," said Stock. "I felt that if I wanted to grow, I had to go where the people were and there was more demand. So, I came to Fargo."

At just 22 years old, Stock opened Dirt Dynamics, LLC with a backhoe and a lot of ambition. The one thing he needed was experience. His first job set the tone for his new venture, although not for its overwhelming success.

"I bid \$300 to install a culvert, and it took me three days to do it," bemoaned Stock. "I lost on that one. The important thing was that I didn't give up. Even though I knew it wasn't

going well, I never thought, 'This isn't for me.' Perseverance is important, and I fully believe that if you aren't making mistakes and challenging yourself, you aren't getting any better."

That mindset has successfully guided Stock and his company through its first two decades. Today, Dirt Dynamics offers a variety of site-development services. The farm kid from Minnesota has matured into a respected contractor in the region. Stock says it's a testament to his crew that the business has grown.

"I've been lucky to have very loyal employees," noted Stock. "We have good people working here; it's the only reason we've succeeded. The way the industry is today, it's pretty easy to get a raise from a competitor. Fortunately, we have people who choose to stay and fight for Dirt Dynamics. Having 140 employees like that is what sets us apart."

A Dirt Dynamics operator uses a Komatsu intelligent Machine Control D51PXi dozer to grade a roadway at the Eagle Ridge development in Fargo.





▶ VIDEO

Using a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control PC360LCi excavator, a Dirt Dynamics operator digs a trench to install sewer pipe at a 30-unit residential jobsite in Moorhead, Minn. "There's no guesswork with the excavators," said Owner Mike Stock. "We dig right down to grade, place the bedding, tamp it, check it and it's ready for the pipe. We can go so much faster, and we aren't always stopping to check the grade; the machine does it for us."



Varied offerings

The company focuses on projects in and around the Fargo-Moorhead area. Dirt Dynamics typically has dozens of active jobs on a given day, ranging from a \$2,500 driveway to a \$1 million residential development. Although it offers a variety of services, Stock says his firm has found a niche with pipe installation.

"We've handled utilities for about 15 years, and we've developed a good reputation with customers," he said. "We are invited privately to bid on jobs, and we routinely earn repeat business because our pipe crews are really good at what they do."

Dirt Dynamics has expanded its portfolio to offer a diverse range of services.

"If I think something can be profitable, I'll go for it," shared Stock. "For example, we have a concrete division located in Fargo."

Working smarter

In addition to tackling almost any job that comes his way, Stock strives to operate in the most efficient manner possible. To accomplish that, he turns to General Equipment &

Supplies, Inc., and Sales Rep Ryan Muehler for Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators with integrated GPS technology and semi-automation.

"The only way to be competitive is to use *intelligent* Machine Control equipment," declared Stock. "Now, I don't have to wait for surveyors, use a blueprint, get out to check grade or worry about overcutting."

Stock was a believer in the technology as soon as it hit the market, and his faith in it continues to be renewed.

"We are consistently grading within a tenth of a foot of grade with both the dozers and excavators," stated Stock. "In addition, we are about 30 percent faster compared to using traditional machines."

Continued . . .



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General Equipment's service is 'above and beyond'

... continued

Dirt Dynamics' Komatsu fleet includes two D51PXi dozers, a D61PXi, as well as a variety of other dozers, wheel loaders and excavators. Stock deploys the dozers for mass grading, while the excavators have found a home with the pipe crews.

"There's no guesswork with the excavators," said Stock. "We dig right down to grade, place the bedding, tamp it, check it and it's ready for the pipe. We can go so much faster, and we aren't always stopping to check the grade; the machine does it for us."

"Almost every sewer/water job has a curb stop," added Stock. "With the intelligent machine, we swing the bucket to that spot, and we know exactly where it is. That's a big deal. There's no second guessing. It saves time and material and allows the concrete crews coming in after us to work faster, too."

Trusted partner

Having reliable equipment is a necessity in the construction industry. Coupling that equipment with a trusted distributor is equally important. Fortunately, Stock has found both in Komatsu and General Equipment.

"Komatsu equipment performs great, and I continue to go with it because of the service I receive from General Equipment," said Stock. "It doesn't matter if it's Friday night at 9:00, if I need something, I know General will come through."

"In addition, Ryan routinely goes above and beyond, and I don't just mean in terms of sales

and service," Stock continued. "One time, he jumped in with a crew and floated concrete because we were a person short. He was doing manual labor! That's the definition of going the extra mile."

Stock also notes that services like KOMTRAX, Komatsu's remote machine-monitoring system, and Komatsu CARE, which provides complimentary service for the first three years or 2,000 hours of machine operation, add a lot of value to his equipment purchases.

"I use KOMTRAX as a training tool for our operators. If I see that we have a machine idling for a lot of hours, I can show the crew how we can be more efficient. Komatsu CARE is helpful as well. We have mechanics; however, knowing that General is handling those new machines for the first couple of years takes a lot off of their plates. It's great."

Looking ahead

Stock admits that he is a man of few hobbies or interests outside of work. Dirt Dynamics is his passion, so it makes sense that he doesn't intend to slow down anytime soon.

"My wife doesn't really like it, but it's the truth," he joked. "I just love working; days of the week don't matter to me. I like to be at a jobsite. It's my addiction, I guess."

When he does pry himself away, it is for an annual vacation to Arizona when things slow down in the winter. ■

Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control pieces, like this D51PXi dozer and PC360LCi excavator, are a staple in Dirt Dynamics' fleet. "The only way to be competitive is to use *intelligent* Machine Control equipment," said Owner Mike Stock. "We are consistently grading within a tenth of a foot of grade with both the dozers and excavators. In addition, we are about 30 percent faster compared to using traditional machines."



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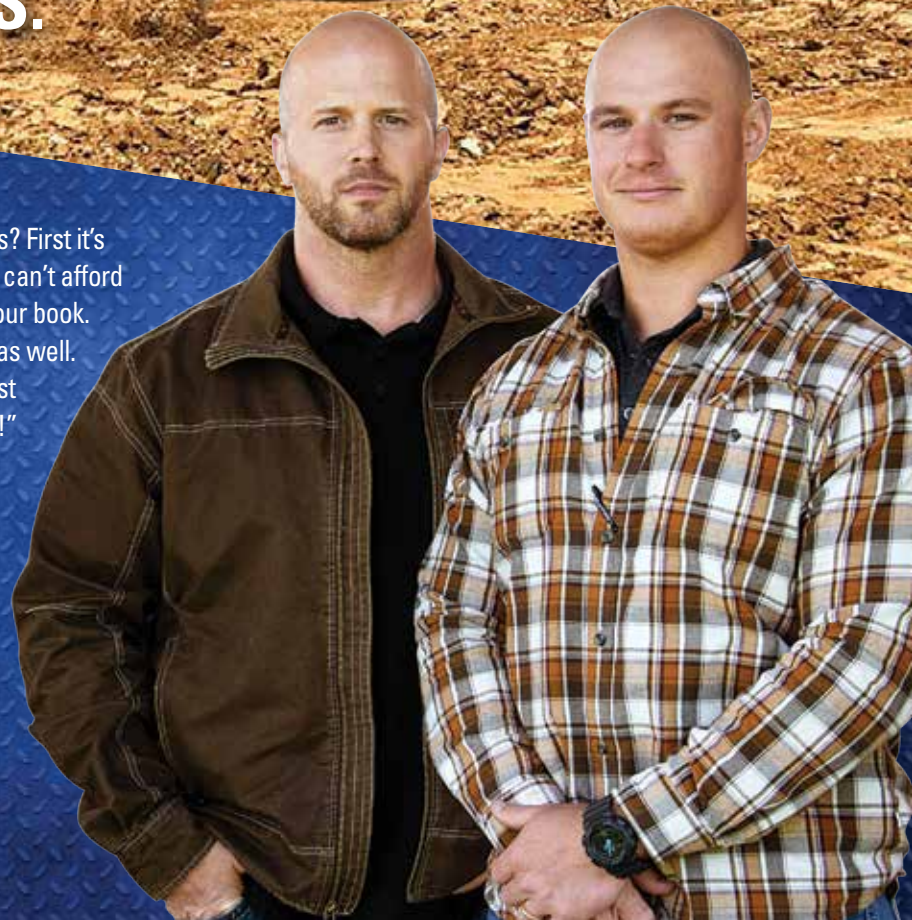
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KOMATSU DEMO DAYS

Machine demos, Proactive Dozing Control headline customer event

Komatsu welcomed more than 300 customers to its recent Demo Days at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia, providing attendees the chance to operate equipment, speak with product experts and learn about the latest advancements in construction technology.

“It’s fun to see and run all of the new equipment to get a great feel for what the technology is truly doing,” said Rachel Contracting Operations Manager Robbie Koopmeiners. “To be front and center with the newest and greatest technology is something that can’t be replaced.”

Headlining the new machinery and technology on display was Komatsu’s Proactive Dozing Control logic, available on the D51i-24 and D61i-24. The event also included a sneak preview of the WA475-10 wheel loader, which is scheduled for release in the next few months.

Full itinerary

“We featured our *intelligent* Machine Control dozers with Proactive Dozing Control,” said Komatsu District Manager Isaac Rollor. “We debuted this technology in the spring, and a lot of customers were ready to get into the dozers and get first-hand experience with how it really works.”

The three-day event featured 25 machines ranging from utility equipment to mining and aggregate pieces, including the full lineup of *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators. The morning sessions focused on machine walk-arounds with product experts, followed by equipment demonstrations. Each afternoon, customers were free to operate equipment. They could also take part in two machine competitions and visit the “Machine of the Future” display where they were encouraged to provide feedback about what

they would like to see incorporated into future equipment and technology.

“We design Demo Days as a highly interactive experience,” said Rollor. “With machine demos and Komatsu experts, plus games, booths and other information, we want customers to get all of their questions answered before they leave. It’s our goal to provide the best experience possible.”

Customers agreed that Komatsu accomplished its mission.

“I’m blown away at the hospitality Komatsu provided,” said War Paint Enterprises Owner Brock Parker. “You have the opportunity to see and run everything. Plus, you get to talk to the people who designed these machines and learn a lot about the equipment. I would definitely recommend coming to Demo Days.” ■



Isaac Rollor,
Komatsu District
Manager



Connor (left) and Mitch Egge, Egge Construction enjoy Demo Days.

(L-R) Mitch Strehlow, General Equipment & Supplies; Ben Naastad, Naastad Brothers, Inc.; Wayne Slinger, General Equipment & Supplies; and Peter Naastad, Naastad Brothers, Inc.



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'LARGEST HEAVY METAL SHOW'

CONEXPO-CON/AGG returns to Las Vegas with record number of exhibitors, exhibit space

The "World's Largest Heavy Metal Show in 2020" is right around the corner with the return of CONEXPO-CON/AGG to the Las Vegas Convention Center and beyond, March 10-14. Presented every three years, it is North America's biggest trade show and features the latest in equipment and innovation from every key construction-related sector.

In total, a record-setting 2,800 exhibitors are expected to converge on 2.6-million square feet of exhibit space. The show's footprint has changed with the Gold Lot under

construction, making it unavailable. Instead, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will use the Las Vegas Festival Grounds, located on the Las Vegas Strip adjacent to the Circus Circus hotel. The grounds will contain lifting (aerial and cranes), earthmoving, hauling and underground construction equipment, among other things.

"This show is shaping up as one of the best ever; attendees and exhibitors will not be disappointed," said Mary Erholtz, CONEXPO-CON/AGG Chair. "AEM (Associated Equipment Manufacturers,

Continued . . .



Gearing up for 'best possible experience'

... continued

the show's lead sponsor) and our show committees of industry leaders are working hard to deliver an outstanding event focused on the latest innovations, technologies and best practices to succeed in our changing world."

'Smart city' display

Similar to 2017, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will emphasize technology. The Tech Experience

returns and focuses on three areas that impact the industry: modern mobility; sustainability and sustainable building; and smart cities, according to Al Cevero, Senior Vice President Construction, Mining & Utility at AEM.

Cevero and other members of the show planning team recently unveiled a 10 x 22-foot "smart city" replica scheduled for display. It demonstrates how a smart city, through sensors and analytics "will be able to transform information into digestible data, providing knowledge for the city to work smarter," according to show organizers.

The smart city replica will showcase several scenarios, including various city grids and how a city responds to heat, wind and storms; connectivity, including 5G sensors, telematics and the internet of things (IoT); and the impacts of construction such as the jobsite of the future within the city and how equipment will communicate.

"The main goals of the Tech Experience are to drive awareness and adoption of new technologies and innovations, engage and attract the next generation of attendees and position the show as a thought leader," said Cevero. "Our plan is to demonstrate how the three areas will transform the contractor's business of the future."

Multitude of education sessions, tracks

More than 150 educational sessions are scheduled throughout the week to highlight the latest topics and industry trends. They are grouped into tracks for ease in finding areas of interest. Tracks include aggregates; asphalt; earthmoving and site development; equipment management and maintenance; business best practices; how to attract, engage and retain talent; safety; and technology solutions.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG will be co-located with the International Fluid Power Expo, and new for 2020 is the opportunity to mix and match education sessions offered through both shows. Attendees can register for educational sessions as well as the show itself through the CONEXPO-CON/AGG website at www.conexpoconagg.com. ■



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North America's largest trade show, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will feature the latest in equipment and innovation from every key construction-related sector. It is slated for March 10-14, 2020, in Las Vegas.



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PROACTIVE DOZING CONTROL

New intuitive technology uses real-time data collection to mimic actions of experienced operators

Construction companies continue to face a growing shortage of operators. Whether they retire or leave for other opportunities, firms often struggle to find new personnel with the skills and knowledge to replace them.

Komatsu aims to help bring newer operators up to speed faster with the intuitive technology of its Proactive Dozing Control logic. The GPS-grading system is designed to collect and interpret data and make decisions that mimic those of seasoned professionals. The system is available on four dozers: D51EXi-24, D51PXi-24, D61EXi-24 and D61PXi-24.

“Like an experienced operator, Proactive Dozing Control logic understands what the terrain around the machine looks like and decides on the appropriate action such as

whether to cut and carry material, spread or fill that material or whether it should be finish grading,” explained Derek Morris, Product Marketing Manager, *intelligent Machine Control*. “The system provides the real-time position of the dozer on the jobsite to create a highly accurate elevation for it to drive the blade to the precise grade needed.”

Improving productivity

Proactive Dozing Control logic can be used from first pass to last to perform auto-stripping, auto-spreading, high production dozing and finish grading. Morris stated that it gives operators the ability to use dozers to their full capacity, leading to increased utilization, better return on investment and greater production.

Continued . . .



Derek Morris,
Product Marketing
Manager,
*intelligent Machine
Control*

▶ VIDEO



Proactive Dozing Control logic understands what the terrain around the machine looks like and decides whether to cut and carry material, spread or fill with it or whether it should finish grade, just like an experienced operator. The integrated GPS grade control system works from first pass to last to perform everything from auto-stripping to final grading.

'Entirely new level of efficiency'

... continued

Morris added that owning and operating costs are also lowered because wear and tear on the machine is reduced with automated operation, including minimized track slippage during operation, which lengthens undercarriage life.

"Proactive Dozing Control logic opens up a world of application possibilities for machine control technology," said Morris. "Traditionally, GPS machine control focused on finish grading, which meant that operators only used the technology approximately 10 to 20 percent of the time. Proactive Dozing Control logic is a game-changer because the

integrated system now lets operators use automation any time."

A difference in data

Morris emphasized that Proactive Dozing Control logic collects real-time data from the tracks, a significant difference from traditional blade-mounted aftermarket systems.

"Conventional systems only understand the position of the blade and capture data at the cutting edge, so when an operator backs up and raises the blade, he or she could potentially be capturing false data," said Morris. "Because our data is collected at the tracks, that's not an issue.

"We took the data that was always naturally available and provided it directly to the machine, making it highly intelligent and giving the dozer awareness of the terrain around it," Morris continued. "The result is an intuitive technology that delivers productivity gains of within 6 percent of an experienced operator.

"By using the tracks, we have created machine control that is far more advanced, offering an entirely new level of efficiency," he added. "Whether you are an experienced operator or someone new to the job, Proactive Dozing Control logic enables precision work every time, making operation easier and more productive." ■

With Proactive Dozing Control logic, data is collected at the tracks and provided to the machine, making it highly intelligent and giving the dozer awareness of the surrounding terrain.

"The result is an intuitive technology that delivers productivity gains of within 6 percent of an experienced operator," said Derek Morris, Product Marketing Manager, *intelligent* Machine Control.



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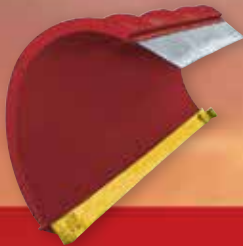
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NEW SPECIALTY DOZER

Machine minimizes ground disturbance while providing high production on sensitive jobsites

Equipment users often balance the need to minimize ground disturbance while maintaining high production. That can be especially challenging for larger tracked equipment. Komatsu's new D155AX-8 LGP (low ground pressure) dozer strikes the right balance.

"The D155AX-8 LGP's newly designed eight-roller undercarriage distributes weight and provides optimum balance and traction while reducing ground pressure," said Komatsu Product Manager Chuck Murawski. "Previously, there were few machines with those attributes in this size class. Now, the D155AX-8 LGP is ideal for mining and reclamation operations, especially mine-site applications such as leach-pond cleanup, tailing, settling and drainage-pond work, as well as liner installations."

Murawski illustrated that despite a heavier operating weight than a standard model, the D155AX-8 LGP's longer and wider tracks maintain the lowest-in-class ground pressure of 7.7 psi. The ground contact area is increased by 72 percent, improving flotation in soft conditions and reducing ground pressure by up to 47 percent. The D155AX-8 LGP has a 12-percent wider track gauge and 9-percent longer track on ground than a standard D155AX-8.

Fewer passes to move more

"The D155AX-8 LGP is excellent for applications that require low ground pressure and can be especially useful for energy and pipeline work, as well as mining," said Murawski. "When equipped with 38-inch extreme service shoes, angle blade and towing winch, it has a higher operating weight compared to competitors. That increases usable drawbar pull when using a powerful towing winch."

Murawski added that the dozer can be equipped with either a 12.9-yard semi-u blade or a 9.6-yard angle blade. Optional rear attachments include a counterweight with rigid drawbar, hydraulic winch, long drawbar and a multi-shank variable pitch ripper.

"The D155AX-8 LGP can move large amounts of material, while the wider cutting edge reduces the number of passes needed when grading," said Murawski. "For applications that don't require an angle blade, the higher-capacity semi-u with dual tilt and pitch hydraulics is a great choice. For sandy soil applications, an abrasion-resistant spec with rotating bushing undercarriage is available." ■



Chuck Murawski, Komatsu Product Manager

Brief Specs for Komatsu's D155AX-8 LGP Dozer

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Ground Pressure
D155AX-8 LGP	354 hp	92,800-100,000 lb	7.7 psi

The new D155AX-8 LGP's eight-roller undercarriage provides excellent traction and optimum balance while reducing ground pressure, said Komatsu Product Manager Chuck Murawski.





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HEAVY-DUTY DIRT MOVER

D65PXi-18 dozer checks all the right boxes, boosts productivity



Jeff Peterson,
President

James Peterson Sons, Inc., wanted to boost its productivity for a recent 200-acre site development project. To accomplish that, it required a dozer that could handle the varying job tasks while also moving serious quantities of dirt.

“We needed a machine that could push; cut and fill; place topsoil; shape slopes on ponds; and move a lot of dirt,” said President Jeff Peterson. “The D65PXi checked those boxes.”



Tim Peterson,
Vice President

When the dozer arrived in late 2018, it was the first Komatsu D65PXi-18 sold in the state of Wisconsin.

“We wanted a model that could do some heavy-duty pushing, and the D65PXi has delivered,” said Vice President Tim Peterson. “We can move about 6,000 yards of material per day with it.”



James Peterson Sons, Inc., Operator Jay ‘Snarf’ Kleist uses a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D65PXi-18 dozer to grade a jobsite. “The GPS is an amazing tool that works great,” said Kleist. “The D65PXi is pretty smooth.”

▶ VIDEO

To hit those high production numbers, James Peterson Sons required every bit of the D65PXi’s 220-horsepower Tier 4 Final engine and 24.4-ton operating weight. More importantly, it needed that muscle in the correct package. That’s why the company selected the PX model, which features wider tracks and a six-way blade.

“We’re in soft ground all of the time, so the float is very important,” explained Operator Jay ‘Snarf’ Kleist. “Being able to get 36-inch grousers on a dozer with a six-way blade wasn’t an option with the competition. That was a deal-breaker.”

Added value

In addition to the size of the D65PXi-18, James Peterson Sons desired the added production that Komatsu’s *intelligent* Machine Control technology offered.

“We replaced a competitive machine with the D65PXi, and we’ve seen production gains,” Jeff said. “It’s balanced, powerful, saves on fuel, the GPS system works great and the operators love running it.”

The D65PXi-18 also delivers productivity beyond the traditional measures of material moved, gas and time.

“There are so many benefits,” said Jeff. “We no longer need a person dedicated to checking grade. The machine keeps track of where we are. We can download information and know what volumes are being moved. It also allows us to change grades easily. Customers expect this technology on their jobsites. We couldn’t do grading on this scale without a GPS dozer.” ■





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PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

Motor graders enable Texas county to finish jobs faster at lower costs



Wesley Link,
Crew Foreman



Jay Clement,
Operator

If a road is located within Montague County, Texas, it's likely maintained by county employees. For nearly 220 miles of roadway, they handle everything from grading to ditch cleaning. About 10 percent of that roadway is pavement; the rest is gravel, which takes nearly constant maintenance to keep them in good condition.

Montague County Precinct 2 began using two Komatsu GD655-6 motor graders in 2018 to spread rock on roads and shoulders as well as to clean ditches. The GD655 has the longest wheelbase in its size class for fine grading. Additionally, it has a 25-degree articulation to allow the grader to maintain a tight turning radius of 24 feet, 3 inches.

"The visibility is better than the competitive graders that we replaced," said Crew Foreman Wesley Link. "You have a full view of the blade when feathering rock or cutting into ditches, so we're more productive. You can get the job done in fewer passes."

Eliminating stall outs

Link added that the GD655's dual-mode transmission makes a significant difference too,

because it delivers high ground speeds and tractive effort, while providing superior control at low speed, with the anti-stall features of a torque-converter transmission.

"Even at lower rpm, you get the full functionality and quickness of the hydraulic system," explained Link. "That gives us better fuel economy and when working at lower speeds, the grader keeps moving without stalling. With the competitive brand, we had to throttle up to get the hydraulics to work, and at idle the motor would, or almost would, stall out."

Operator Jay Clement shared that he values the relatively high road speeds of the 218-horsepower graders, which allow him to move from the maintenance yard to the project site faster. The GD655 has eight forward and four reverse gears and a top speed of 28 miles per hour.

"We drive them to and from wherever we are working, so having a machine that can get there faster means we can get to the job and finish it quicker than before," said Clement. "They are also comfortable with plenty of room in the cab." ■

Montague County Precinct 2 maintains gravel roads with its Komatsu GD655-6 motor graders. "Even at lower rpm you get the full functionality and quickness of the hydraulic system," said Crew Foreman Wesley Link.



▶ VIDEO

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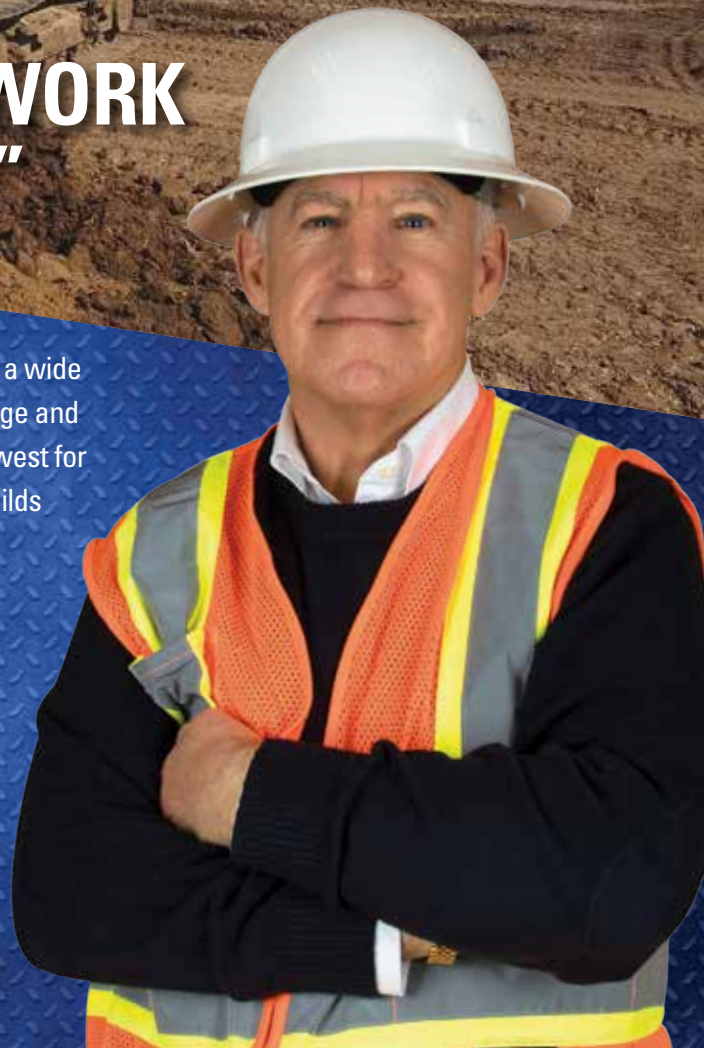
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IMPROVING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Director of Parts Marketing Chris Wasik shares programs for minimizing downtime, operating costs

QUESTION: What does Komatsu offer beyond Komatsu CARE, which covers routine scheduled maintenance?

ANSWER: To help maintain peak performance and minimize downtime, we recently introduced Genuine Care to extend the benefits of Komatsu CARE, where services are completed by certified technicians using Komatsu genuine parts, filters and fluids. Customers can sign up with their distributors for customized solutions that best match their needs. That may be performing services on the same schedule as Komatsu CARE, or perhaps they prefer to have major services done every 1,000 hours. Options are definitely available. Genuine Care gives customers peace of mind knowing that services are done on time and on location with the right parts.

QUESTION: What other new programs can assist customers?

ANSWER: Recently, we launched the MyKomatsu website application that ties together machine telematics, manuals and online parts ordering. Customers can access information about their machines from any computer or mobile device. The web app allows owners to monitor their fleets and find the items necessary to maintain them. Parts can be selected from the parts book and dropped into a shopping cart. The order is then sent to a Komatsu distributor for quick fulfillment. MyKomatsu brings together initiatives such as KOMTRAX and eParts into a single location.

QUESTION: Does Komatsu still maintain its other support initiatives?

ANSWER: Absolutely. Many remain popular because they have been proven to save

Continued . . .



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

Chris Wasik,
Komatsu Director of
Parts Marketing

Earlier this year, Chris Wasik received a 20-year service award from Komatsu and shared why he has stayed with the company so long.

“It’s the people I work with,” explained Wasik. “We genuinely want each other to succeed. We all know, too, that our success is directly tied to our customers’ success, so we are working toward a common goal to deliver the best equipment and support in the industry.”

The northern Illinois native said he noticed this culture from the minute he joined Komatsu in 1999 to work on the initiative that eventually led to Komatsu’s KOMTRAX telematics system.

In 2015, Wasik became Director of Parts Marketing, where he oversees programs to promote undercarriage, filters, batteries, reman products, kitting and more.

Wasik married his wife, Denise, the same year he joined Komatsu. The couple has a 14-year-old son, and Wasik enjoys coaching his son’s baseball team and camping.

Most parts can be delivered within 24 hours

... continued

customers time as well as keep down their owning and operating costs. For instance, overhaul programs for older machines offer scaled discounts, depending on how many components are rebuilt or replaced. That can be tied in with our Firm Future Order program, which enables machine owners to order major components several months in advance of their planned replacement. This

locks in pricing at the time of the order and guarantees that genuine Komatsu parts are on-hand when the customer is ready to have the work completed.

QUESTION: There are many aftermarket sources for parts. Why should owners choose genuine Komatsu parts?

ANSWER: Machines today are built to more exacting standards and operate under higher pressures and temperatures than ever before. Using parts that are not specifically engineered for a machine could result in performance loss, early wear and premature failure. In the end, it will cost more to use cheaper aftermarket parts.

Komatsu genuine parts come with a minimum 12-month warranty, which is exceptional in our industry. Customers are also getting the support of Komatsu and its distributor network. If a part fails, no matter where the customer is located, we have trained personnel who can repair it quickly. And, with nine regional parts depots and a master parts distribution center that is located close to a major FedEx hub, most parts can be delivered within 24 hours to any region of the United States or Canada.

We also collaborate with our distributors on inventory management. This ensures that the right parts (based on machine population in their territory and other factors) are available when customers need them. ■



Komatsu works with its distributors on inventory management (based on machine population and other factors) to ensure that parts are available when needed.

Chris Wasik, Komatsu Director of Parts Marketing, says genuine Komatsu parts should always be the first choice for service and repairs.

“Using parts that are not specifically engineered for a machine could result in performance loss, early wear and premature failure. In the end, it will cost more to use the cheaper aftermarket part.”





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ABOVE-AVERAGE WAGES

Amid growing labor shortage, construction earnings continue to rise



Stephen E. Sandherr,
AGC Chief
Executive Officer

Average hourly earnings in construction recently hit \$30.73 per hour, surpassing other private-sector industries by 10 percent, according to an analysis of governmental data by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). According to AGC, the figure reflects a 3.2-percent year-over-year increase and is a measure of all wages and salaries.

The organization announced the data in July after figures showed a jump in construction employment of 21,000 jobs, compared to the previous month, and by 224,000 during the prior 12 months. Association officials noted that companies are increasing pay to attract new hires in an ever-tighter labor market.

“Construction firms continue to go to great lengths to recruit and retain workers during one of the tightest labor markets many of

them have ever experienced,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, AGC’s Chief Executive Officer. “Making matters worse, relatively few school districts offer the kind of career and technical education programs that encourage students to explore careers in high-paying fields like construction.”

Little to no experience required

Sandherr noted that the unemployment rate for jobseekers who last worked in construction declined to 4 percent from 4.7 percent in June 2018, and the number of such workers decreased in the last year from 466,000 to 390,000. Additional government data showed the number of job openings in construction, last reported for May, totaled 360,000, the highest May total in the 10-year history of that category.

Association officials pointed out that in addition to rising pay and other benefits, many firms have increased their investments in training as they recruit workers with little or no prior experience in construction. According to AGC, federal officials could help attract more people into high-paying construction careers by boosting funding for career and technical education programs in schools and enacting immigration reform that allows more people with construction skills to legally enter the country.

“The nation’s education system continues to produce too many over-qualified baristas and not enough qualified bricklayers and other craft, construction professionals,” said Sandherr. “As a result of these educational imbalances, too many young adults are struggling to pay off college debts while many construction firms are struggling to fill job positions that pay well and don’t require costly degrees.” ■

Average construction earnings recently topped \$30 per hour, surpassing other private-sector industries by 10 percent, according to an analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America. Organization officials noted that firms continue to increase pay as they attract new hires in an ever-tighter labor market.



MORE INDUSTRY NEWS

ASCE earns commendation for including stormwater in next report card

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Environmental & Water Resources Institute added a stormwater chapter to its 2021 Infrastructure Report Card. This is the first time that drainage structures and facilities will be graded by the organization, which issues the report every four years. In its most recent report in 2017, the United States' overall infrastructure condition earned a grade of D⁺.

Adding stormwater to the report drew praise from the Water Environment Federation (WEF), which conducted an analysis earlier

this year that showed an estimated annual funding gap of \$7.5 billion in that sector.

"The inclusion of stormwater to ASCE's report card will provide a much-deserved boost in visibility for infrastructure that is vital to communities across the country," said WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill in a recent Concrete News article. "We hope that adding stormwater to the report card will result in more resources and focus directed to this essential part of our infrastructure and subsequent improvements in water quality." ■

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Brian (left) and Thomas Cronin / Prosperity Construction / Jackson, MS



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EQUIPMENT BUYING MADE EASIER

Here's what Komatsu's Sourcewell certification means to purchasers

If you work for a municipality, not-for-profit or government agency, money and time are often tight. When it comes to purchasing new equipment, you need to know you're getting high quality, backed by good service. One of the easiest ways to do that is to join a cooperative purchasing agency such as Sourcewell. Membership is free, and there are no minimum contract requirements.

Among the largest government cooperative agencies in North America, Sourcewell (formerly the National Joint Powers Alliance) represents more than 50,000 member organizations that have access to hundreds of competitively solicited contracts covering a variety of products, solutions and services. With Sourcewell, the procurement process is simplified.

Ready-to-use contracts

Following an extensive evaluation, Sourcewell recently awarded Komatsu America a four-year contract to provide

members with access to more than 50 heavy-construction-equipment products, as well as Komatsu's technology, service and solutions. Komatsu's distribution network, which includes 34 dealers with collectively more than 200 branches across North America, will provide support to Sourcewell members.

"It stands to reason that if a well-respected agency, such as Sourcewell, thoroughly vets a manufacturer and selects it as a trusted heavy-equipment provider for governmental entities, then it meets the criteria for high-quality machines and world-class service," said Doug Morris, Director, Sales and Marketing, Komatsu America. "That should that give members and nonmembers alike confidence to source equipment solutions from a Komatsu distributor."

To learn more about Komatsu's contract with Sourcewell, visit komatsuamerica.com/sourcewell-cooperative-purchasing. ■



Doug Morris,
Director, Sales
and Marketing,
Komatsu America



Sourcewell, one of the largest governmental cooperative agencies in North America, recently awarded Komatsu America a four-year national cooperative contract for heavy-construction equipment and related accessories, attachments and supplies.

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