

DOWN to EARTH

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Pentagon Materials, Inc.
Minnesota firm makes a name
for itself by doing what's best
for customers

Easier to Fill

Automatic, semi-auto systems
in new wheel loader
assist operators during
V-cycle loading



A message from General Equipment



Jon Shilling

**We're here
in uncertain
times**



Dear Valued Customer:

Like most every industry, construction has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. No one knows for sure what tomorrow will bring in these uncertain times. One thing you can count on, however, is that we at General Equipment & Supplies will continue to offer around-the-clock sales and service support.

In this issue of your Down to Earth magazine, we salute Pentagon Materials, Inc. In just three years, this company opened five aggregate pits and produces material for a variety of applications including landscaping, concrete and asphalt. We were honored that Pentagon turned to General Equipment for KPI-JCI/Astec, Vale and Superior Industries equipment to meet their production needs.

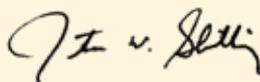
Another machine that can help with production is the new Komatsu WA800-8 wheel loader – made for big applications. The WA800-8 is a great loader for quarries, and with features like automatic dig, semi-auto approach and semi-auto dump, it can make operators more effective in V-cycle loading. See the details inside.

You can also read about Komatsu's smallest standard excavator, the PC130-11, which can be easily hauled on a tag trailer. Then check out the story about intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0, with Proactive Dozing Control that can make dozing up to 60 percent more productive than previous generation models.

Finally, be sure to check out the piece on the Dynapac CC1400 VI asphalt roller. With its 54-inch drum widths, this large roller offers fast, efficient compaction.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please contact us. We're always here to help.

Sincerely,



Jon Shilling,
President & CEO

DOWN to EARTH

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Pentagon Materials, Inc. quickly makes a name for itself by doing what's best for customers



Martin Preusser,
Co-owner and
President

Making customers happy by producing quality products in a timely manner is paramount to success in the aggregate industry. However, to accomplish this, bigger isn't always better. Pentagon Materials, Inc. Co-owner and President Martin Preusser experienced this first-hand.

"I worked for a large gravel business for 20-plus years that was purchased by a larger company before I left," he recalled. "The red tape and bureaucracy got to the point where it made even the smallest tasks difficult. That's when I knew it was time to go."

He wasn't alone; he teamed up with Jim Voda, Joe Holtmeier and Kevin Depuydt to form Pentagon Materials in 2017. Preusser runs the day-to-day operations of the company.

"We've known each other for years," said Preusser. "When I left my previous job, we all started talking and one thing led to another. That was the beginning of Pentagon Materials."

In this new venture, Preusser gained the flexibility he craved in order to serve customers according to his business philosophy.

"We can definitely cater to our customers," he added. "We can make a quick decision when an opportunity arises. We are able to make sure what is going out the door is exactly what the customer ordered for the job. And, if

we need to switch gears and help a customer by making a product on short notice, we can do that, too. We have the ability to change on the fly."

Preusser notes that Pentagon Materials' ability to meet customer demands comes from a group of employees who are as invested in the company as he is.

"We have great people all throughout our organization," he said. "With our size, we have the ability to handpick who works for us. Everyone here is talented, and they care. They are invested in us, and we are invested in them."

Preusser tips his hat to his customers, as well.

"We treat every customer the same, from the local person with a dump truck to the big road builders," he added. "Without customers, there is no Pentagon Materials. We have strict testing standards, and that allows us to produce the high-quality products that leave our pits."

Growth through acquisition

While the inflexibility of a large, corporate structure is what drove Preusser and his partners to form Pentagon Materials, that doesn't mean he is afraid of growth. Quite the opposite actually. After opening in 2017 with its Sack Pit in Janesville, Minn., and Friedrich's Pit in Rapidan, Pentagon Materials began expansion through acquisitions in the southern part of Minnesota.

Its first purchase was Prior Lake Aggregates in 2018, a year-round operation that furnishes concrete materials, asphalt aggregates and general-use road gravel. In 2019, the company added the Schultz Pit in Jordan and converted it to a full-time wash plant. In 2020, Pentagon Materials opened its new Maranda Pit in Belle Plaine, which produces predominantly asphalt-specific products.

That formula has worked.

In just three years, the company has grown to 17 employees and five pit locations. Pentagon Materials serves south central Minnesota customers in Belle Plaine, Jordan, New Prague, Shakopee, Prior Lake and Mankato.



This KPI-JCI/Astec 300 Kodiak cone crusher with a Terex screen helps power Pentagon Materials' new Maranda Pit in Belle Plaine, Minn.





General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. helped Pentagon Materials outfit its new Maranda Pit in Belle Paine, Minn., with a state-of-the-art spread in March. It features a KPI-JCI/Astec 300 Kodiak cone crusher, a closed-circuit 300-horsepower plant with a 6-by-20-foot triple-deck Terex screen; a Vale 4218 double-belt feeder; and a Superior Industries stacker conveyor.

Along with greater opportunities, its product line also allows Pentagon Materials to accommodate a wide array of applications.

“We’re very diversified,” explained Preusser. “We handle pretty much everything a general landscape user will need, plus we have concrete-grade aggregates and asphalt aggregates.”

Powered by General Equipment

Preusser knew that before his new business could have a clear plan and dedicated customer base, it would need equipment that could be relied on to perform every day. For that reason, he turned to General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. and Sales Rep Tom Hamm.

“I’ve known the people from General Equipment for years,” stated Preusser. “We’ve always had a lot of success with their products and support. We trust them.”

For that reason, General Equipment was enlisted to build the spreads for Pentagon Materials’ growing number of pits. For the new Maranda Pit, Preusser turned to Hamm and

General Equipment for a new crushing spread.

Fortunately, the equipment has worked much better than Preusser’s trip to look at the equipment.

“We flew to Bismarck (N.D.) in February and got stuck in a blizzard,” he laughed. “What was supposed to be a quick up-and-back trip turned into a whole day. Luckily, it all worked out.”

When the storm subsided, Pentagon Materials decided on a KPI-JCI/Astec 300 Kodiak cone crusher, a closed-circuit 300-horsepower plant with a 6-by-20-foot triple-deck screen; a Vale 4218 double-belt feeder; and a Superior Industries stacker conveyor.

“We looked around for equipment, and the option from General was the best,” said Preusser. “The equipment is great, but the important thing was General’s service behind it. Everyone there is great to work with.”

The spread was delivered in March and it has lived up to expectations.

Continued . . .



Discover more at
GeneralDowntoEarth.com

Pentagon Materials' future goals include diversification

... continued



Pentagon Materials' Co-owner and President Martin Preusser (right) relies on General Equipment & Supplies, Inc. and Sales Rep Tom Hamm to help build an equipment fleet and service it. "I've known the people from General Equipment for years," stated Preusser. "We've always had a lot of success with their products and support. We trust them."

"Right now, we're mainly making between half-inch minus and three-quarter-inch minus," detailed Preusser. "For what we're doing, we can average about 400 tons an hour all day. We're very happy with it."

Continued expansion

Sacrificing quality for quantity isn't in Preusser's nature. So, while he envisions more growth for Pentagon Materials in the near future, quality will remain the primary focus.

"The saying goes, 'either a company is growing or it is dying,' so we're always reaching for more," he shared. "I think we have the ability to continue to grow the number of employees and pits we have, while still maintaining the flexibility to meet the needs of our customers.

"The key to future success will be to keep producing quality products. You can not do that without great employees and the proper equipment; we have both of them!" he added. "If we maintain that, the future is bright." ■

Pentagon Materials' Vale 4218 double-belt feeder was added to the Maranda Pit's spread in March 2020.

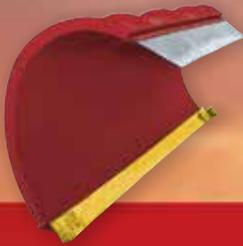


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Response and recovery plans are key to successfully weathering a variety of emergency situations



Troy Tepp
Director,
Safety Services,
Sentry Insurance

One of the main factors in successful project completion is preplanning. That's also a key element in responding to an emergency situation or crisis, according to Troy Tepp, Director, Safety Services with Sentry Insurance.

"Predicting when those events will occur is nearly impossible, and that's why it's essential to be prepared with response plans; thoughtful preplanning that addresses potential scenarios is vital," said Tepp, whose webinar for the Associated Equipment Distributors titled, "Developing Your Emergency Response & Recovery Plans – Before They're Needed" outlined what businesses need to focus on during a crisis. He suggests starting by establishing goals and priorities.

"The top priority within any emergency response plan must always be developing procedures that prioritize the protection of lives and the safety of your staff, customers and any other visitors to your facilities," said Tepp. "Keep in mind your procedures also need to account for employees outside of

Natural events, such as severe weather, happen across the United States. "These are the most likely risks firms face," said Troy Tepp, Director, Safety Services with Sentry Insurance. "Where you conduct business should be factored in. If you are a contractor who works across various regions, or all of the country, you must have every type of weather in your plan."

your fixed-based operations, such as field personnel, drivers and equipment operators."

Once life-safety priorities have been addressed, a focus on procedures to stabilize sites and protect buildings, premises and other key assets is the next step. Plans to protect sensitive records, monies kept on site and other assets should follow.

Primary risks

Tepp emphasized that risk assessment is fundamental to the preplanning and development process. He advises firms to take into account three primary risks, including natural events such as tornadoes, fires, severe storms, hurricanes, ice and snow and flooding. "These are the most likely risks firms face. Where you conduct business should be factored in. If you are a contractor who works across various regions, or all parts of the country, you must have every type of weather in your plan."

Additional risk considerations are human incidents such as medical injuries, robbery or even bomb threats, according to Tepp. The final type of risk is technological occurrences, such as data breaches.

Pre-incident planning and awareness is another important step. Items under consideration can include alarms, public-alert and surveillance systems; site communication capabilities; communication with remote staff; municipal agency support resources; staff expertise, skill development and special needs; and evacuation routes and shelter spaces.

Tepp used a tornado as an example of how to align risk assessment with planning and awareness. "If that is one of your foreseeable emergencies, begin to create a plan by identifying the alarms and alerts that identify these events," said Tepp. "Then, you develop action that mitigates the risk, such as designating a shelter or shelters. You will also want to clearly identify them as such with signage and train staff to know where shelters are located and that they should immediately proceed to the shelters if they hear the alarms. You also need to designate and train staff members to assist those with special needs. If



Response and recovery plans help ensure your business is well-prepared to handle risks and emergency situations. “Predicting when those events will occur is nearly impossible, and that’s why it’s essential to be prepared with response plans; thoughtful preplanning that addresses potential scenarios is vital,” said Troy Tepp, Director, Safety Services with Sentry Insurance.

personnel are off-site, have a communication plan to check on their safety and well-being.”

The example outlined above is part of the phase that Tepp calls Designing Your Response Procedures. Responses should be specific, define roles and responsibilities and activate an assigned response team.

“These procedures will be unique for each scenario – no response is likely to be identical for any two emergencies,” said Tepp. “Along with response procedures and staff responsibilities, document specific steps for notification, ongoing communication and your planned role for municipal emergency response services. These service providers can help in developing plans and are often willing to assist with annual training and drills. Monitoring staff performance and identifying areas to improve and modify may be part of assessing training and drills.”

To prepare effectively, a business-recovery plan is needed, according to Tepp, who said the plan should designate a preassigned business-recovery team. Other elements of the plan can be determining essential versus support staff, creating recovery operations, outlining IT needs, looking at communication

considerations, preparing daily progress updates and phased recovery, testing and training.

“Reporting the incident to your insurance carrier in a timely manner should be your first step (after an incident has occurred); the faster it’s reported, the quicker an investigation can occur, and reimbursements can be made. Your team will oversee a successful recovery by putting the plans in place that you developed to deal with emergency events.”

Covering COVID

In addition to his formal presentation, Tepp touched on how to respond to major unforeseen incidents, such as the COVID-19 crisis. He said that an addendum to plans already in place or a section devoted to infectious diseases is a good idea, with a caveat.

“This event really came out of nowhere, so most people had not addressed something like it,” said Tepp. “Businesses should consider having some personal protective equipment on hand such as masks, but not go overboard. It can be expensive, expiration dates come into play for items stored long term and having large numbers of such items is likely unnecessary in most cases.” ■

Editor’s Note: This article contains information from a webinar Troy Tepp of Sentry Insurance created for the Associated Equipment Distributors and from a conversation with Tepp. It is for information purposes only and provides insight for businesses in our industry.

Automatic, semi-auto systems in new wheel loader assist operators during V-cycle loading



Robert Hussey,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager



Discover more

Experienced operators know that V-cycle loading can be a challenging application that takes time to master. One way to speed up the learning curve is with machinery features that assist in automating the process, according to Robert Hussey, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager.

“Several factors are part of a successful loading cycle, including proper digging into the pile to get a full bucket, approaching the truck, dumping, backing up and turning,” said Hussey. “Helping new operators become proficient as quickly as possible is essential. We took that into account when designing our updated quarry, aggregate and mining loaders, including the new WA800-8.”

Hussey highlighted three key systems that contribute to productivity and efficiency, which can be used together or separately to automate the work phases when V-cycle loading haul trucks:

- **Automatic dig** optimizes bucket load, actuating the bucket tilt and lifting operations by sensing the pressure applied to the work equipment.
- **Semi-automatic approach** raises the boom automatically when reversing out of the pile. The lift arms elevate until reaching the upper setting of the boom positioner, allowing the operator to focus on the travel path of the loader.
- **Semi-automatic dump** automatically raises the lift arms and dumps the bucket with the push of a button. After dumping, it levels the bucket and returns the lift arms to the lower boom positioner setting; however, the lift arms will not lower until the bucket has cleared the truck.

New bucket design, customer-requested features

The WA800-8's bucket has a new shape that includes an increased radius and floor inclination that make it easier to fill and retain material. The spill guard was adjusted to give operators improved visibility to the pile, and sweeper wings on either side protect the front tires.

“We also responded to customer requests by introducing a modulation clutch for optimal tractive effort and throttle lock that improves cycle times by maintaining high work-equipment performance and saves fuel with auto-deceleration.” ■

Quick Specs on Komatsu's WA800-8 Quarry, Aggregate, Mining Wheel Loader

Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Bucket Capacity	Ideal Truck Match
854 hp	254,700 lb	15 cu yd	60- to 100-ton

With automatic dig, semi-automatic approach and semi-automatic dump systems, the WA800-8 assists operators in V-cycle loading. “Helping new operators become proficient more quickly is essential. We took that into account as we began designing our updated quarry, aggregate and mining loaders, including the new WA800-8,” said Robert Hussey, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager.



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

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New excavator offers fast cycle times, high productivity in machine designed for easy transport on tag trailer

Whether you're a contractor just starting out or an established firm running multiple pieces of equipment, a basic digging machine likely suits your operation. Easy transport from job to job is an added bonus.

"Not all projects involve moving massive amounts of dirt; for instance, agriculture applications such as field tile repair to light utility and municipality work," said Andrew Earing, Komatsu Product Manager. "With fast cycle times, a maximum digging depth of more than 17 feet and high productivity, the new PC130-11 is a good fit."

Earing added that the excavator is highly portable. Komatsu's smallest conventional tail swing can be moved with a tag trailer and still have capacity to spare for additional support equipment.

"Mobility is a real asset with the PC130-11," said Earing. "When a contractor finishes one job, they can quickly load this

excavator and be on the way to the next. When they get there, it's a matter of minutes to unload and start digging. That increases production time."

Ready for the challenge

Earing added that like all Komatsu equipment, the PC130-11 is built for the long haul, as well as for versatility.

"It has steel castings in the boom foot, boom nose and arm tip," he said. "That provides durability for years to come. Additionally, the excavator is available with plus-one piping as an option, so you can run attachments, such as a thumb or hammer, providing the capability to perform multiple applications and potentially boost profits." ■



Andrew Earing,
Komatsu Product
Manager

Brief Specs on Komatsu's PC130-11 Excavator

Model	Operating Weight	Horsepower	Bucket Capacity
PC130-11	28,660 lb	97.2 hp	0.76 cu yd

Komatsu's smallest conventional tail-swing excavator, the PC130-11 is a versatile digging machine for projects such as field tile installation, light utility and municipal work. It can be moved on a tag trailer with capacity to spare.



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intelligent Machine Control 2.0 increases dozer productivity with grass-to-grade automatics

Construction companies are always seeking ways to boost production. The combination of today's equipment and technology elevates the ability to do so like never before.

"Aftermarket GPS add-on systems started the trend toward automated grading, and we built on that with the first generation of our integrated intelligent Machine Control (iMC) dozers," said Derek Morris, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager, intelligent Machine Control. "Now, we're introducing the second generation with products that deliver iMC 2.0."

Morris describes iMC 2.0 as a suite of productivity features that utilize advanced machine technology to improve dozer production. It debuted at CONEXPO and was previewed on the D71PXi-24, Komatsu's newest and largest hydrostatic dozer to date. The D71 will be available later this year, and iMC 2.0 will be available on other dozers later this year as well.

One of the key attributes of iMC 2.0 is the previously introduced patent-pending proactive dozing control that automatically cuts and strips from existing terrain like an experienced operator, 100 percent of the time. During operation, the dozer measures the terrain it tracks and uses the track-level data to

plan the next pass, making it 60 percent more productive than previous-generation iMC models, according to Komatsu.

Improved automation

New features of iMC 2.0 include patent-pending lift layer control, which automatically spreads fill from existing terrain with one press of a button. Much like proactive dozing control, this option also tracks the terrain and uses that data to plan the next pass, which doubles production and achieves consistent layers for quality compaction.

Tilt steering control automatically tilts the blade to maintain straight travel during rough dozing, reducing the need for operator steering input by 80 percent.

Quick surface creation creates a temporary design surface with one press of the button. When combined with other iMC 2.0 functions, operators can begin stripping or spreading using automatic without waiting – or the need – for a complex 3D model.

"iMC 2.0 uses a new system architecture to deliver automatics from grass to grade," said Morris. "It really is the next evolution of iMC and further enhances operators' ability to increase production." ■



Derek Morris,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager,
intelligent Machine
Control

Komatsu introduced intelligent Machine Control 2.0 during CONEXPO and previewed the D71PXi-24, which features the second-generation technology. The system allows operators to run fully automatic from first-to-last pass with key features that boost productivity by up to 60 percent.



MyKomatsu web-based solution simplifies fleet management and e-commerce



Rizwan Mirza,
Komatsu Manager,
Telematics, Products
& Services Division



Tom Hergenreder,
Komatsu Marketing
Manager, Parts

Fleet management is essential to machine health, ensuring maximum uptime and, in turn, production. Keeping track of data across multiple jobsites and ordering maintenance items through various online platforms can make it a challenge.

“Quick access to critical information is vital,” said Rizwan Mirza, Komatsu Manager, Telematics, Products & Services Division. “Customers told us they wanted to be able to access their fleet data at any time, from a single site where it’s organized in a standard way. We responded with MyKomatsu, a complimentary web-based solution that integrates many legacy systems to deliver intelligence that assists customers in running their businesses.”

Actionable resources at your fingertips

MyKomatsu enables users to visualize and evaluate their assets with fleet-wide or equipment-specific information from any device and order Komatsu Genuine Parts.

“Combining parts ordering capabilities and telematics allows customers to monitor machine conditions and quickly order parts when needed,” said Tom Hergenreder, Komatsu Marketing Manager, Parts.

Hergenreder added that ordering parts is easy with checkout similar to that of online shopping sites. “Customers receive a tracking number to keep tabs on the order. With flexible shipping options, they can conveniently have their parts delivered virtually anywhere, including directly to their jobsites or have them waiting at their local distributor’s parts counter.”

Fleets can be viewed on a map or list and highlighted with quick statistics from the past day, week or month. “Starting from a fleet view, users can easily check the performance of their fleet or an individual machine,” Mirza explained.

“Working hours, fuel, idle time, working modes, CARE reports, standard and extended warranty details, recommended parts lists based on machine hours and more are available,” added Hergenreder.

“The parts recommendation feature makes it easier to quickly identify the maintenance items that are coming due for service, without the need for extensive searching.”

Customers can register for a complimentary account on the MyKomatsu website (MyKomatsu.komatsu). After inputting some details, a notice is sent to the local distributor who provides the customers with access. Once activated, users can begin to reap the benefits.

“We are working to add customers’ competitive machines to be able to track them, too,” said Mirza. “This really does simplify fleet management, marrying it with a simplified e-commerce. We are also working on a mobile app with the same features, which will be available in the near future for both Android and Apple devices.” ■



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Dynapac's CC1400 VI features wide, large-diameter drums for efficient compaction in range of conditions, applications

Dynapac extended its small asphalt roller range with the new 4.3-ton-class CC1400 VI that features 54-inch drum widths for fast and efficient compaction. The large diameter of the drums ensures material is not shoveled in front of the them, which could create transversal cracks.

"The CC1400 VI follows the same great concept as the previous generation VI rollers," said Vijaykumar Palanisamy, Director of Product Marketing & Communications. "They are robust, comfortable and modern machines with a unique design, including a cross-mounted engine, hood and sliding seat that provide excellent visibility over the drums and maximize operator control."

Palanisamy added that efficient eccentrics guarantee optimum performance in the vibration start-up process. "Dual frequencies and optional dual amplitudes provide high quality in different conditions and applications," he said.

Well-equipped

The mechanical adjustable off-set function of the front frame enables compacting work close to high curbs with less risk of damage. It also increases surface capacity in order to eliminate marks in the mat. A front-mounted single- or dual-edge presser and a rear-mounted chip spreader are optional features. Combi-versions of the CC1400C VI with four static rubber wheels at the rear are available as well.

"A pressurized sprinkler system facilitates smooth and reliable water flow for maximum uptime, and a water-level sensor alerts the operator when it is time for a refill," shared Palanisamy. "The three-stage filtration

system provides clean water and prevents clogged sprinkler nozzles."

Palanisamy said the spacious and vibration-dampened operator platform enables good comfort throughout long workdays. "Functions for turning the vibration on/off in the driving lever give the operator full control," he continued. "The modern instrument panel with keypad buttons and display are easy to use and enable the driver to operate the roller with precision. Options are available to further maximize comfort." ■



Vijaykumar Palanisamy,
Director of Product
Marketing &
Communications

Dynapac's new 4.3-ton-class CC1400 VI asphalt roller features 54-inch drum widths for fast and efficient compaction. The drums' large diameter ensures material is not shoveled in front of them, which could create transversal cracks.

**Brief Specs
for Dynapac's
CC1400C VI
Asphalt Roller**

Model
CC1400 VI

Horsepower
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Drum Width
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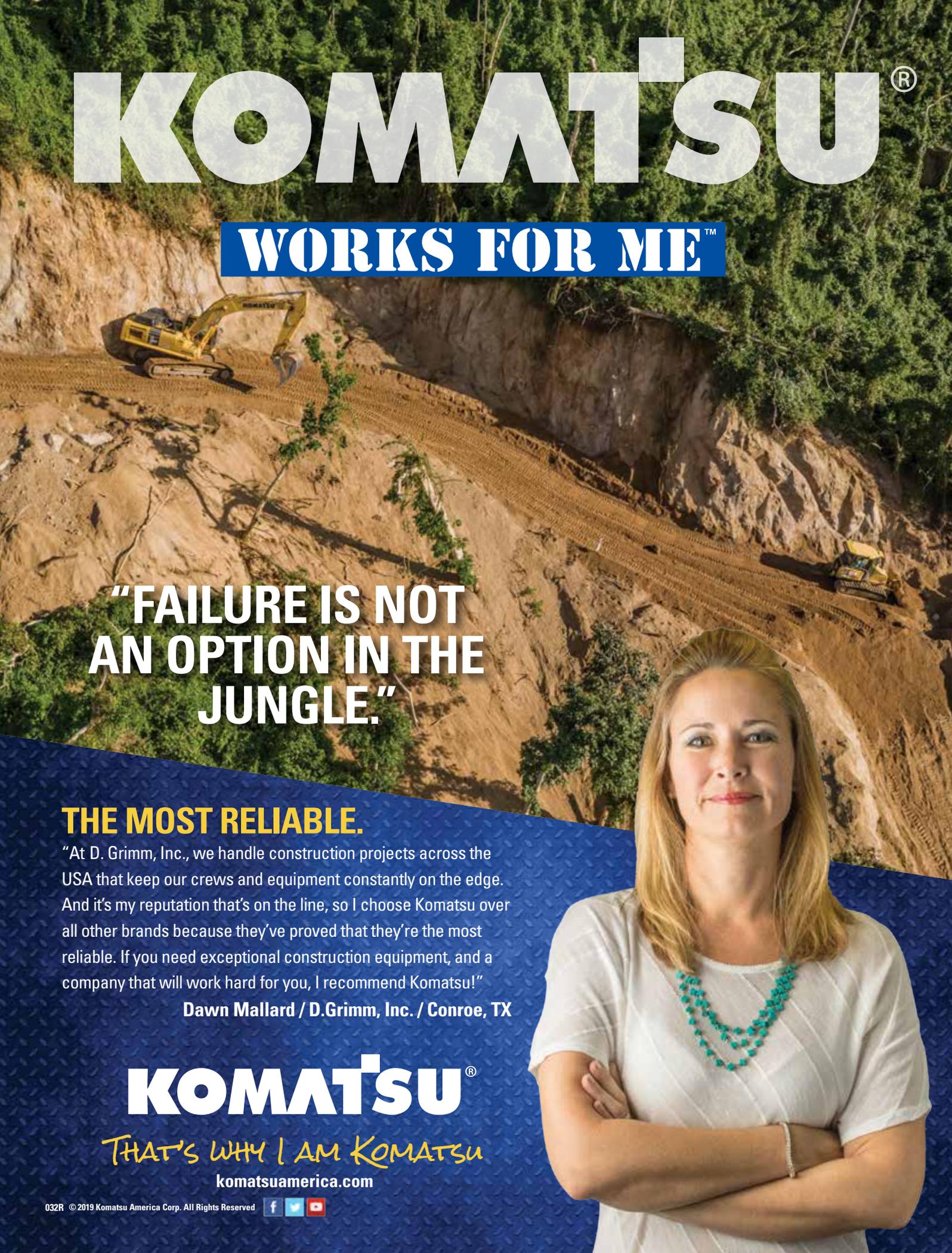
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Mike Gidaspow says that the features and technology in today's equipment are the result of connecting with customers

QUESTION: During the past few years, Komatsu has emphasized talking with customers in the field. Why is that so important?

ANSWER: Those visits with contractors and individuals give us tremendous perspective about what's happening in the industries we serve. What challenges are they facing? What are their pain points with equipment? We use that information and feedback to develop machines and support solutions that are designed to increase efficiency and production and, hopefully, make the end user more profitable.

QUESTION: That's surely been a challenge with COVID-19. How are you adapting?

ANSWER: Much like everyone else, we are doing a lot of remote video conferencing. There have been some growing pains, but also positives, such as the ability to "meet" and talk with more people each day. It's not the same as talking face-to-face, shaking hands and being on a jobsite – and we hope to be able to get back to that very soon – but it's a fair substitute.

At CONEXPO, we placed a strong emphasis on Smart Construction and its ability to increase efficiencies with technology. A big component of it is having fewer people on the jobsite and more people working remotely. That seems to have gained acceptance faster with the current situation. Customers have really embraced remote technology, such as KOMTRAX and intelligent Machine Control, to monitor and manage their machinery.

QUESTION: Do you see this as a long-term trend?

ANSWER: We were already seeing it to some degree, but it appears to have accelerated under the circumstances. Customers are asking what tools we have to help them better function in this situation, and we believe they will continue to do more and more going forward.

QUESTION: Will technology continue to play an ever-increasing role?

ANSWER: It certainly will, and the faster equipment users accept and implement

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.



Mike Gidaspow, Director, Sales and Marketing, U.S. Central and Canadian Regions

Mike Gidaspow said that when he joined Komatsu it fulfilled a childhood wish. He started with the company as a test engineer executing performance and stress testing of equipment.

"Growing up, I had visions of working for a car-review magazine and performance testing automobiles," said Gidaspow. "Construction equipment was pretty close, so it was a bit of a dream come true."

Komatsu was Gidaspow's second job after graduating from Illinois Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering. It has since led to a 20-year career with the company and an MBA from the University of Chicago. During that time, he has held several positions in design engineering, strategy, product marketing and sales.

In his current role as Director, Sales and Marketing, U.S. Central and Canadian Regions, Gidaspow works directly with Komatsu distributors to acquire equipment and assists them in helping their customers find the right machinery to fit their needs.

"There are new challenges and opportunities every day in this industry," Gidaspow stated. "When you work with an individual or a company to come up with solutions that make their business more efficient and potentially more profitable, that's a real win for everyone. And, the equipment is fun. That's what makes this career so enjoyable."

When he's not in the field with distributors and customers, Gidaspow enjoys spending time with his family traveling, biking and doing other outdoor activities. He and his wife, Julie, have two sons. ■

Technology is changing the landscape

... continued

it, the faster they will see the positives. Technology is transforming construction. It's giving companies the ability to get results in less time. Drone surveys provide actionable data that can be acted on much more quickly



Mike Gidaspow, Director, Sales and Marketing, U.S. Central and Canadian Regions, says technology will continue to play an ever-increasing role in construction machinery, including GPS grading systems, such as Komatsu's intelligent Machine Control.

than with traditional surveying methods. Remote file transfer to an intelligent machine delivers real-time information about changes to plans. That replaces driving to the jobsite. Those are just a couple of the numerous ways technology is changing the landscape.

QUESTION: Komatsu Chairman and CEO Rod Schrader serves on the board of the Associated Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) and you are on its I Make America committee. Why is this involvement important?

ANSWER: These groups are comprised of individuals and companies who advocate for common causes. For instance, AEM has all types of manufacturers, including our competitors, who want to bring awareness to issues such as increased infrastructure investment. We know we have a stronger voice, and, if we work together, we can hopefully get Congress to pass meaningful legislation that has a positive effect on the country, such as better roads, bridges and utility systems.

Another area we are supporting is increased investment in workforce development, so we can get the word out that manufacturing and construction are great, well-paying career choices. ■

In-the-field conversations provide Komatsu with first-hand feedback on what customers seek to make their operations more efficient and productive. "Those visits with contractors and individuals give us tremendous perspective about what's happening in the industries we serve," said Mike Gidaspow, Director, Sales and Marketing, U.S. Central and Canadian Regions. "We use that information and feedback to develop machines and support solutions that are designed to increase efficiency and production and, hopefully, make the end user more profitable."





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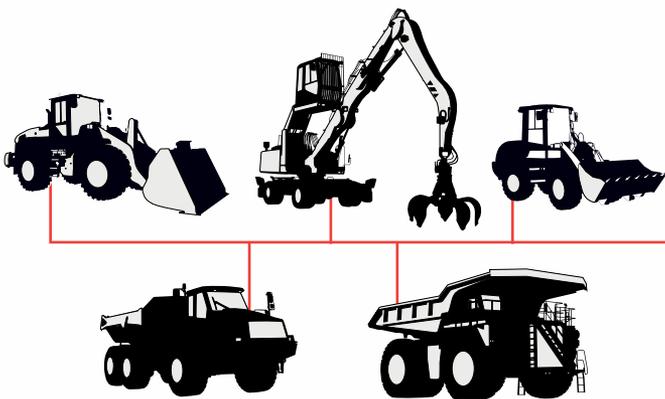


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Adding automatic lubrication system can sustain vital components' performance, longevity



Scott Ruderman,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager



Dan Varon,
Graco Market
Specialist

Proper greasing completed at recommended intervals is vital to the performance and longevity of components. Komatsu Product Marketing Manager Scott Ruderman emphasized that one way to stay on schedule is with an automatic lubrication system.

"Equipment has several grease points, and it takes time to manually hit them all," said Ruderman. "In some cases, those tasks are done multiple times a day. The chance of missing one can potentially be very costly. An automatic lubrication system eliminates that possibility by dispersing a metered amount of grease to each individual point at set intervals during operation."

Easy to use

Ruderman said systems from Komatsu-allied vendors, such as Graco, should be considered and are available for trucks, wheel loaders and excavators. They are pre-installed on new machines or come as a field-install kit for equipment already in the field. Working together, the two companies ensured that a Graco automatic lubrication system meets Komatsu's recommended grease intervals.

"Ideally, once it's set to Komatsu's recommendation, no additional adjustment is needed," said Dan Varon, Graco Market Specialist. "However, you can manually regulate the amount of grease. For example, if

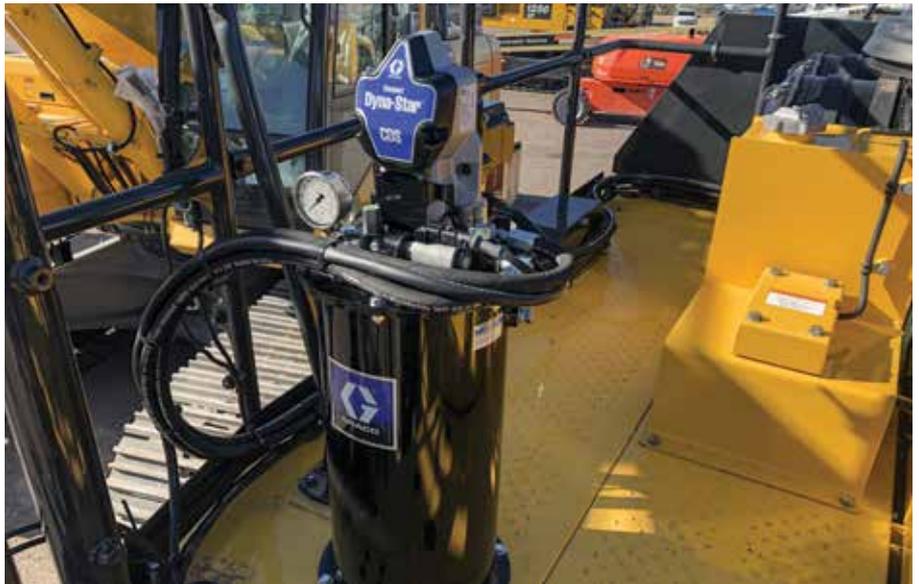
operators notice that they are raising the dump body more than usual, they can increase the interval for that individual point."

Varon added that newer Graco systems, such as the one used with a Komatsu HD605 haul truck, have enhanced features. Its GLC X controller and Auto Lube™ app are Bluetooth-enabled for remote condition monitoring and data logging. Information can be tracked via the smartphone app and exported to a common data file for maintenance records. Additional components include the new Compact Dyna-Star® pump that reduces weight, increases platform space and has continuous level monitoring.

Wheel loaders and excavators use a GLC™2200 controller to control the pump and monitor the level of grease and system performance. Working in conjunction with the controller is Graco's G3™ pump, featuring an 8-liter translucent reservoir with stir paddle and a low-level monitoring switch. The series progressive system feeds a set of divider valves to deliver the predetermined volume of grease to each point.

"Both systems have convenient ground-level ports for refilling the reservoir quickly without the need to climb on the machine," Ruderman noted. "Using auto lube is highly recommended for keeping vital parts moving and preventing premature failure." ■

Automatic lubricating systems for trucks, wheel loaders and excavators are pre-installed or come as field-install kits for equipment already in the field. The systems ensure greasing at recommended intervals to maximize component performance and longevity.



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AGC 'Culture of CARE' program designed to help firms create more welcoming workplace environments

A new Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) initiative is aimed at increasing diversity in the construction industry and making jobsites more inclusive. Called Culture of CARE (commit, attract, retain and empower), its purpose is to help firms offer a more welcoming workplace environment for staff, particularly those from varied demographic backgrounds.

"We are asking companies to take bold and visible steps toward creating a more diverse, safe, welcoming and inclusive construction industry," said Stephen E. Sandherr, AGC's Chief Executive Officer. "This new program will attract the kind of diverse staff that research shows help construction firms become more innovative, safe, effective and profitable."

Culture of CARE calls on construction firms to sign a pledge to create more welcoming and inclusive workplace cultures. After signing the pledge, AGC will work with them to provide training and suggested human resources practices designed to help them take action. Education materials are available from the program, including sample HR policies, toolbox talks, jobsite posters and hardhat stickers.

Those interested can sign the pledge at www.buildingculture.org. More information about the program, as well as other resources, are also available on the website.

Safety and financial benefits

Sandherr noted that Culture of CARE is based on a program first launched by the AGC of Washington Chapter in the Pacific Northwest. The national association's Diversity & Inclusion Council evaluated the state program and determined that it was a powerful tool to support the industry's efforts to become more diverse and inclusive. In addition to the CARE program, AGC of America has already released its Business Case for Diversity & Inclusion in the Construction Industry, which provides the economic, safety and productivity rationale for expanding construction diversity.

"Culture of CARE has the potential to support a broad expansion of the diversity of the construction industry," said Rita Brown, Chair of AGC's Diversity & Inclusion Council. "We want to provide the tools needed to recruit, retain and support people of all backgrounds." ■

The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) is focusing on increasing diversity in construction and making jobsites more inclusive through its Culture of CARE (commit, attract, retain and empower) initiative. "This new program will attract the kind of diverse staff that research shows help construction firms become more innovative, safe, effective and profitable," said Stephen E. Sandherr, AGC's Chief Executive Officer.



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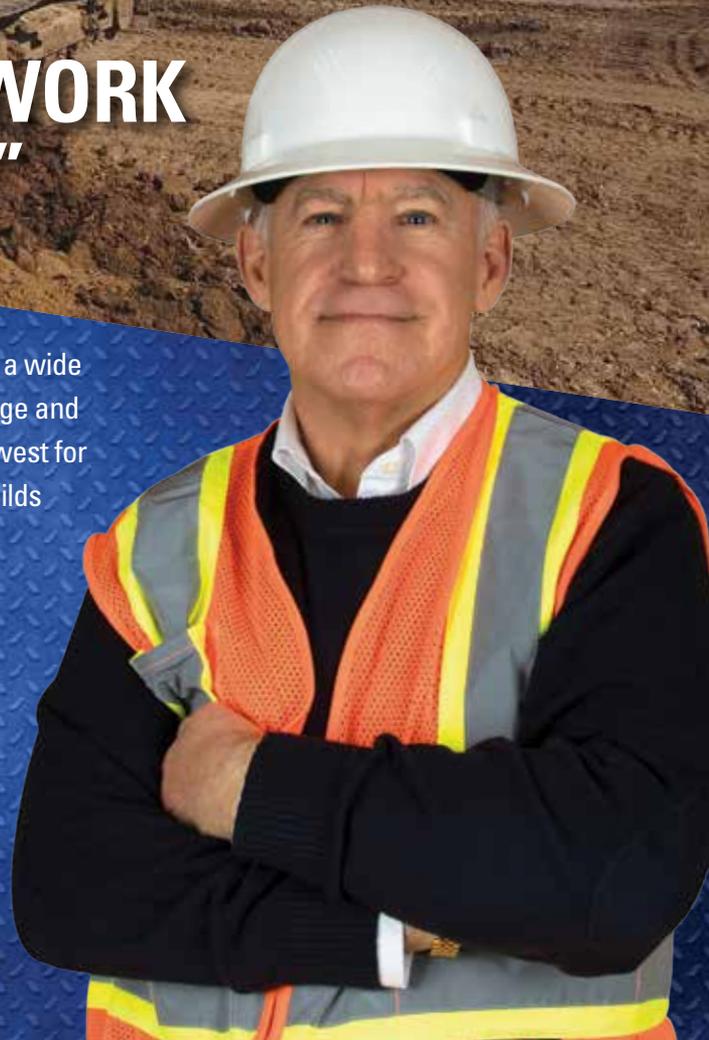
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Komatsu supports Feeding America as national partner in COVID-19 response efforts, donating funds to aid food banks



Rod Schrader,
Chairman and CEO,
Komatsu North America

More than 37 million Americans face hunger each year. Recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed millions more into food insecurity, Komatsu's North American business units partnered with Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, to donate up to \$250,000 to support the organization.

"The hunger crisis grew quickly in the face of COVID-19," said Rod Schrader, Chairman and CEO of Komatsu's North American operations. "We are honored to partner with Feeding America to support their work to rapidly scale to meet the rising needs of our communities."

In May, Feeding America predicted that its network of local food banks would need an additional \$1.4 billion during a six-month period to provide food assistance to people facing hunger – a 30-percent increase to the nonprofit organization's operating costs. The network of 200 food banks works with more than 60,000 soup kitchens, food pantries, churches and other community organizations to deliver food, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

"Feeding America is grateful to Komatsu and its employees for their generous support of our neighbors who face hunger during these uncertain times," said Lauren Bierdrion, Vice President of Corporate Partnerships at Feeding America. "Their donation will help food banks serve communities hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Matching employee donations

Komatsu America Corp., Komatsu Mining Corp., Modular Mining and Hensley Industries – all North America subsidiaries of Komatsu Ltd. – are joining together in the effort. The business units are donating \$150,000 and are providing a two-for-one match of employee donations up to \$50,000.

The companies are dedicating an additional \$100,000 to local organizations in the communities in which they operate throughout North America to support specific charitable efforts and needs in the areas of medical supplies and support, food insecurity and community funds. ■

Komatsu's North American business units partnered with Feeding America, donating up to \$250,000 to the organization's efforts to provide food assistance to those facing hunger. "We are honored to partner with Feeding America to support their work to rapidly scale to meet the rising needs of our communities," said Rod Schrader, Chairman and CEO of Komatsu's North American operations.



Five ways your construction business can address uncertainty during COVID-19, other crisis situations

Perhaps the hardest part of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the uncertainty – not knowing what will happen next. The rapid spread of the virus that resulted in essentially locking down the United States is unprecedented in our lifetimes, and the inability for even the experts to predict the human toll and economic outcome causes stress and fear for everyone.

Because none of us can control the outcome, you must try to manage those things you can. Following are some areas you have control over in your business:

1. How you communicate. Continual, honest communication with those on your payroll and your customers is essential. Share the facts about what's happening in the industry, the community and within your organization. Don't be brutally honest but don't sugarcoat things either. Be straightforward about what's going on, both good and bad. This will help limit confusion and gossip, as well as minimize any shocks when new information comes in.

2. The willingness to listen. It's within your power to encourage open dialogue. Allow workers to express their concerns, share their ideas or simply vent on occasion. Listen to what they have to say and address any problem areas as quickly as possible. Also be sure tailgate talks and safety discussions continue to take place – from a social distance, of course.

3. Showing compassion. Recognize that this is a difficult time for everyone, whether it's your employees or customers. Work with them to address specific challenges or concerns. Put the necessary precautions in place to ensure the safety of everyone entering your sites and ask them if they feel comfortable about the steps that are being taken. Allow for time off due to stress and especially illness, if needed.

4. Monitoring employees' mental states. Construction workers may not be on the frontlines of the crisis, but they are certainly close to it. The increased exposure on top of the job that already carries a certain level of risk can push some workers over the

brink. The industry already has the highest rate of suicide of any sector. Train staff to recognized signs of mental distress and suicidal tendencies.

5. Giving hope. While the coronavirus may seem like a never-ending bad news story, there is reason to be hopeful and there are some signs that we may pull out of this mess in the near future. Find the positive news stories where you can and pass them along. Reassure your employees and customers that you're in this for the long haul. Then make sure you are by staying informed about your company's position and managing costs that are within your control. ■

Editor's note: Becky Schultz has served as editor of Equipment Today magazine since 1998. This article was excerpted from a piece that appeared at ForConstructionPros.com. To read the article in its entirety, visit www.forconstructionpros.com/blog/21128525.



Becky Schultz,
Editor,
Equipment Today

Becky Schultz, Editor, Equipment Today, offers five things you can control during uncertain times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. They include how you communicate and listen, among others.



Travis Heseltine loves the daily variety, challenge that come with inside parts sales career

“I’m glad I found this job and made a career out of it.”

While some tasks are occasionally repeated, no two days are ever exactly the same for Travis Heseltine, who handles inside parts sales for a Komatsu distributor.

“It’s hard to believe such variety after 21 years in a parts department, but that’s a great advantage to this job,” emphasized Heseltine. “Sure, there are some jobs I do on a routine basis to keep things in proper working order; however, I never have that sense of ‘here we



Travis Heseltine (below) looks up a part on his distributor’s inventory. “I enjoy what I do, or I would not have stayed with it this long,” said Heseltine of inside sales. “The equipment industry is great, and parts are a critical piece of the puzzle. You can’t fix machines without them. I love the day-to-day activity and the interactions with co-workers and customers alike. I’m glad I found this job and made a career out of it.”

go again’ doing the same thing over and over, day after day.”

Working in a parts department has been the one constant in Heseltine’s life since he joined the distributor in 1999 after serving in the U.S. Army for five years. While in the service, he was a radio operator and worked with computers and automation.

“That training fit right into the current parts world, which has become increasingly automated, Heseltine pointed out. “When I started, parts books on CD were the big thing. Now, pretty much everything is online. Today, when a customer places an order by phone or online, we can find what they need in seconds after a few mouse clicks. I put the order together and send it to the warehouse for them to pull the part or parts to be ready for pick up, delivery or shipping.”

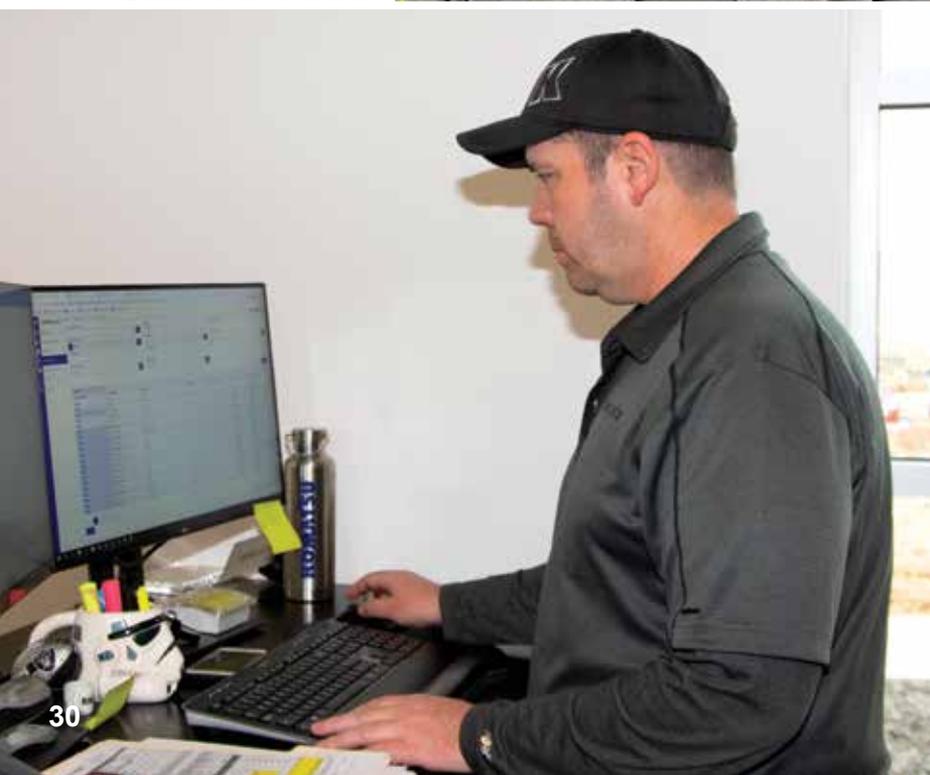
Priority on speed, affordability

Heseltine helps locate and secure parts for both internal use – which includes the distributor’s shop – and for external customers either through his company’s warehouse locations or directly from the inventories of Komatsu and other manufacturers.

“The sooner we can get machines back into production the better, and that’s why most common items are kept in stock, as well as a large inventory of replacement parts,” Heseltine explained. “If we don’t have something, in most instances, we can get it in fairly short order. I try for the fastest, most cost-effective means for the customer.”

Case-in-point involved a recent order from a mine for radiator coolers. Heseltine worked with a freight company to ensure delivery of the coolers to the customer within its specific timeframe.

“It was a challenge, but anytime you deliver for the customer and make them happy, it’s a good feeling,” said Heseltine. “I enjoy what I do, or I would not have stayed with it this long. The equipment industry is great, and parts are a critical piece of the puzzle. You can’t fix machines without them. I love the day-to-day activity and the interactions with co-workers and customers alike. I’m glad I found this job and made a career out of it.” ■



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