

A SALUTE TO AN RMS CUSTOMER

ECO-TECH CONSTRUCTION, LLC

Exceptional service leads to growth for multifaceted Des Moines contractor

President Doug Jones believes the reason Eco-Tech Construction, LLC has experienced success and growth throughout the years can be summed up in two words: service and value.

“They’re the most important aspects of our business,” said Jones, who’s been part of the multifaceted Eco-Tech team for nearly 35 years. “If we’re not serving the customer, someone else will. There are many companies out there that do work similar to us. What makes a company stand out is the level of customer satisfaction it provides. Focusing on and providing exceptional service ensures we’re at the top of many people’s list of contractors.”

Although Eco-Tech’s parent firm was founded in 1935, Eco-Tech was incorporated in the mid-1970s and has grown steadily since then. Jones heads up Eco-Tech along with CEO Steve Gillotti and Vice Presidents Jim Mackey and Dustin Jones. One of several companies under the Grimes-based Gillotti Holdings umbrella, Eco-Tech specializes in heavy

highway, underground, concrete and asphalt paving, foundations, floors and grading. Eco-Tech works in about a 50-mile radius of Des Moines, what Jones calls “The Golden Circle.”

“As time has gone on, we’ve added to our list of services to meet customer needs,” Jones noted. “The company started primarily as a paving contractor, and that’s still a specialty. But we’ve added services so we can become a more well-rounded company. It’s been a progression of growth based on service. There aren’t many companies out there that can provide a full list like we do. We believe that sets us apart.”

Extensive list of services

With its extensive list of services, Eco-Tech offers full site packages for private and commercial clients. The company has four paving crews; a dozen utility crews that install storm and sanitary sewer, water and subdrains; four grading crews; three footing crews; a floor crew; and several set-up and support crews.

“We also break our services out and do grading-only or paving-only jobs, for example,” explained Jones. “But it’s our and our customers’ preference that we provide a complete package. That way they’re not dealing with multiple contractors. It allows us to set the schedule and make sure we meet our customers’ deadlines.”

Meeting deadlines and producing quality work have helped Eco-Tech develop a long list of repeat customers in the private and commercial markets, with a good deal of that work negotiated. The company also does a substantial amount of hard-bid state and municipal work.

“It’s a real mix for us,” Jones pointed out. “In addition to providing good service, one thing that’s helped the company maintain its success is the ability to read and adjust to the



President Doug Jones (left) and CEO Steve Gillotti guide Eco-Tech Construction, LLC.



Jim Mackey,
Vice President



Dustin Jones,
Vice President



Eco-Tech occasionally rents equipment from RMS, including this Komatsu GD655 it used for grading on a paving project near Saylorville Lake.

marketplace. Being able to do both private and governmental work is a real advantage because if one area becomes slow, we can focus our attention somewhere else."

Experienced employees

Knowing and reacting to the market has fueled growth for Eco-Tech, especially in the past five years, according to Jones. "We've grown by about 100 employees in that amount of time. Some of it is due to the growth of Des Moines and more plentiful projects. We've had to expand to meet our customers' needs. They have bigger projects and they want them done sooner, so it takes more people and larger crews to do that."

Eco-Tech's payroll has swelled to more than 300 employees, many of whom have been with the company 10 years or more. The company believes in promoting from within, so much of its supervisory personnel have moved up the ranks, including Jones' sons Dustin, who leads the Contract Department, and Troy, who is the General Superintendent.

"We're proud that we have a very low turnover rate," said the elder Jones. "That's due in large part because we treat our employees well by offering competitive wages and an excellent benefits package. We do that to retain them because we know the more experience they have with us, the better the company is going to be in the long run.

"They also know we value their safety as our top priority," he continued. "That always comes first, followed by quality and production. In the past few years we've added a safety and employment officer, along with two individuals who do daily site inspections of our facilities and construction sites. We believe if we work in an unsafe manner, we're not going to be in business long."



Eco-Tech uses several Komatsu excavators, such as this 96,712-pound PC400LC-7, for utility installation, concrete removals and mass excavation. The company also has four PC200LC-7 models. "We've found that they will outperform the competition in the same size class," said President Doug Jones. "The PC400 has been especially good for concrete removal and digging ponds. We've found them to be excellent machines."



Eco-Tech relies on Komatsu wheel loaders in its paving operations, including this WA250 used to load a hopper at the company's new asphalt plant in Grimes.

Efficient equipment pays dividends

Part of Eco-Tech's daily inspections include a thorough going-over of the company's equipment to ensure it's in proper working order. The company does exhaustive evaluation when purchasing new machinery and works hard to maintain it so it stays productive.

"We're somewhat unusual in the construction business in that we analyze things to death," Jones admitted. "We look at all kinds of scenarios and factors in the buying process such as production, service life, maintenance costs and payback. We're looking for quality machinery that offers high productivity with low operating costs."

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Eco-Tech plans for continued growth

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Eco-Tech has found those attributes in several Komatsu machines it has purchased from Road Machinery & Supplies' Des Moines branch with the help of veteran Sales Representative Bob Newman. Among its fleet are one PC400LC-7 and four PC200LC-7 excavators. Eco-Tech equipped them with quick couplers for easy attachment changes, such as when they employ one of the four NPK plate compactors the company uses.

"We use the excavators primarily for utility work, but we also dig ponds and do removals with them," Jones said. "We've found that they will outperform the competition in the same size class. The PC400 has been especially good for concrete removal and digging ponds. We've found them to be excellent machines."

For backfilling trenches and grading operations, Eco-Tech uses two Komatsu D21PX dozers. The company also employs a Komatsu WB140-2 backhoe loader for several

applications, and relies on three Komatsu wheel loaders for a variety of tasks. "We've found them all to be very effective machines," Jones reported. "We've been buying used wheel loaders for quite some time because we're using them in the paving operations and as a loading machine in our asphalt plant. We believe buying used is the best value for us, and we've seen that because of the quality of the Komatsu machines. In most cases, the used equipment performs just as well as new. That keeps our operating costs down."

In addition to Komatsu machinery, Eco-Tech turns to RMS for the machinery it uses in its paving operations, including five Gomaco pavers, a Gomaco GT3200 curb and gutter machine and two Gomaco 9000 trimmers. The company also uses several Ingersoll Rand compactors. All machinery is maintained by Eco-Tech's maintenance team, with occasional help from RMS.

"We've been a longtime customer of RMS on the paving side because they carry quality equipment," Jones acknowledged. "But what it really boils down to is the service and support they provide. They handle warranty work and are very responsive to our needs. We've developed a good relationship with Bob and RMS."

Expansion now and in the future

Jones expects that relationship to continue well into the future as Eco-Tech poises itself for continued growth and possible expansion beyond the Des Moines area. The company recently threw its hat into the asphalt-paving arena, setting up a new plant near its company headquarters in Grimes.

"It's part of a natural progression in the list of services we want to be able to provide our customers," Jones explained. "It made sense to take this opportunity, so we pulled in a couple of our guys who had asphalt experience and began the process. We believe it's going to make us that much stronger."

"Beyond that, we've done strategic planning for the next several years and are looking for ways to take Eco-Tech and our other Gillotti companies into new markets. We're always planning ahead." ■

Paving has long been a specialty of Eco-Tech.

For the bulk of its equipment needs, the company turns to RMS for items such as this Gomaco GP300 paving machine.



Eco-Tech President Doug Jones (right) meets with RMS Sales Representative Bob Newman at Eco-Tech's headquarters in Grimes, Iowa. "They are very responsive to our needs," Jones said of RMS. "We've developed a good relationship with Bob and RMS."

