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SEPTEMBER 2019

ROAD SIGNS

A PUBLICATION FOR AND ABOUT ROAD MACHINERY & SUPPLIES COMPANY CUSTOMERS

KEVITT EXCAVATING, LLC

Learn how thriving Twin Cities company proudly maintains family-business roots



Scott Kevitt,
President

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Mike Sill II

Dear Valued Customer:

While industry groups are actively recruiting new employees to fill skilled-labor positions, a shortage of such workers remains. One aspect of today's construction industry that many potential crew members may find attractive is the growing use of technology, especially when it comes to equipment.

Komatsu revolutionized integrated GPS technology and is now taking its *intelligent* Machine Control dozers to the next level with Proactive Dozing Control logic to mimic the actions of seasoned operators during rough-cut application. Now, these dozers truly deliver first-to-last-pass auto blade control and continuous data collection. We believe this is another giant leap in helping novice operators become skilled dozer hands faster. You can read more about how Komatsu has continued to improve its innovative technology in this issue of your RMS Road Signs magazine.

Komatsu also led the way in bringing integrated technology to excavators and has added another to the lineup with its new PC290LCi-11. It is well-suited for applications that require good stability and working range, and its size helps to avoid most transportation limits associated with larger-size-class excavators. Find out more inside.

This issue features two case studies, one shares the success story of a customer who relies on the *intelligent* Machine Control technology, while the second focuses on a waste-industry application. I think you will find both interesting as each provides insight into how Komatsu machinery offers greater accuracy, efficiency and productivity.

As always, if there's anything we can do for you, please call or stop by one of our branch locations.

Sincerely,
ROAD MACHINERY & SUPPLIES CO.

Mike Sill II
CEO



KOMATSU[®]

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KEVITT EXCAVATING, LLC

Thriving Twin Cities company proudly maintains family-business roots



*Scott Kevitt,
President*

Scott Kevitt grew up in Crystal, Minn., playing on construction equipment that was literally in his front yard. Not much has changed for the owner of Kevitt Excavating, LLC.

“We lived on four acres that doubled as our headquarters. When neighborhood kids came over, I’d fire up the big dozer and scare them all away,” laughed Scott.

Today, he is still starting up equipment in that same yard, but fortunately people don’t run away anymore. Quite the opposite, actually. For three generations, the Kevitt family has built a solid reputation in the Twin Cities – a distinction that the organization is proud of.

“We prefer to operate in the Cities,” noted Scott. “We focus on this area because we are from here. When a lot of people chased the oil boom in North Dakota [in the early 2000s],

we stuck around. We have good relationships with some of the large contractors, and they trust that we will do good work.”

That dedication has paid off for Kevitt Excavating. The company has more than 100 employees and offers underground utility installation, underground sheet pilings, shoring, demolition and dirt work.

“We’ve added a few services in the last 30 years, although we’ve grown a lot and do more of them,” explained Scott.

Through that expansion, Kevitt Excavating has maintained its family-business feel. It helps having the fourth generation involved. Scott’s daughter, Samantha, manages the company’s properties, and his son, Jared, is a Project Manager/Estimator. However, the multi-generational involvement isn’t limited to the Kevitt family as several employees also have children who joined the team.

“We consider ourselves as one of the smaller ‘big companies,’” said Scott. “We like the family atmosphere. That makes this a great place to work.”

Expanded offerings

The creation of SVK Developments, a sister business that handles residential developments from conception to sale, provides additional opportunities.

“To date, we’ve built 400 units,” said Scott. “We always take care of all aspects of the project. We find the land, perform the construction and see it through to the sale of the home.”

“SVK is the general, and Kevitt digs the basements, installs utilities and builds the



*Chris Vieau,
Vice President of HR,
Personnel and Safety*



Using a Komatsu intelligent Machine Control PC490LCi-11, a Kevitt Excavating operator digs the footings at the Minneapolis Public Services building.



A Kevitt Excavating operator uses a Komatsu PC490LC excavator to demo a building in Minneapolis. “Downtown there’s just less land,” noted Vice President of HR, Personnel and Safety Chris Vieau. “You work straight up and down. You can’t take the streets and sidewalks out. We have to be efficient.”

streets,” detailed Chief Financial Officer Rick Habisch. “When the construction is completed, SVK realtors sell or lease the units. It’s been a great thing for our company. We have complete control over the process, which is very nice.”

Staying downtown

While suburban residential developments have been a boon for Kevitt Excavating, urban construction accounts for a sizable amount of its work as well. Operating successfully in both environments is a hallmark of the company.

“Urban jobs present very different conditions,” stated Vice President of HR, Personnel and Safety Chris Vieau. “Downtown there’s just less land. You work straight up and down. You can’t take the streets and sidewalks out. We have to be efficient. We used to do only earthwork and demolition in the city, then we added soil retention and most recently, utility installation.”

“Soil retention has become technical and engineering-based,” added Scott. “That is an area where we’ve seen growth. Having the experience that we’ve gained through the years has served us well.”

Mirroring its strategy in residential construction, packaging a myriad of services for a general contractor has helped Kevitt Excavating flourish.

“Our customers appreciate being able to call us for several services on a single project,” said Chris. “We can do the demolition, pilings, earthwork and utilities. There’s no need to work with five companies as well as multiple schedules and crews. Customers know it’s going to be Kevitt there the entire time.”

Smart, efficient... billboards?

Whether the jobsite is rural or urban, Kevitt Excavating prides itself on efficiency. In order to accomplish that, they turn to Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control equipment from Road Machinery & Supplies Co. and Territory Manager Phil Major.

“We love the GPS technology, and we want to use it wherever we can,” shared Scott. “On large jobs or a small ones, it makes a big difference.”

Kevitt was an early adopter of GPS systems, especially on the excavators. It was one



Rick Habisch,
Chief Financial Officer



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Continued . . .



*Derek Craft,
Shop & Equipment
Manager*

of the first contractors in the area with a Komatsu PC490LCi-11 and has since added a PC360LCi-11.

“We save so much time with the integrated excavators,” commented Operations Manager Luke Masica. “Everything on the plans is uploaded to the machines so operators can easily switch between their offsets. Once we start digging footings with the i-machines, the concrete crews will never catch us.

“We’ve also found them to be very helpful when digging ponds,” Luke continued. “We can dig, load and grade simultaneously. We come in at the end with a smaller dozer to clean it up, and the grade is so close that a dozer with GPS isn’t necessary. Since we’ve been using the PC490LCi and PC360LCi, we’ve never had to come back and re-dig a project.”

Adding value to the integrated technology is the support RMS provides Kevitt Excavating, according to Scott.

“Our relationship with RMS has been fantastic,” said Scott. “The equipment is great, and that’s important; however, everything else that RMS and Komatsu bring to the table adds so much more value. Komatsu CARE is fabulous. Having a technician attending to the machine for the first 2,000 hours or three years certainly increases the value of the equipment. Also, the zero percent financing is nice.”

In addition to using Komatsu equipment to handle the workload, Scott also views his machines as advertising opportunities. Drive past a jobsite in the Twin Cities and one will quickly notice a Kevitt project.

“We put our name on the equipment so everyone can see it,” noted Scott. “The Komatsu machines make great billboards. They are up to the challenge and last in tough applications. We’re happy to show them off and promote that Komatsu is in our fleet.”

Building the future

Growth is a fairly good barometer for the health of a company. Scott knows this and understands that it must be done in a measured way to ensure future success.

“We have grown a lot, and most of that has been in the estimating and office staff,” he said. “That is one way the industry has changed. We need strong field and office staff. Fortunately we’ve been able to build a skilled group that is ready to lead us into the future.”

There has been one drawback to a larger staff, however.

“Whenever someone brings cookies or other goodies, they always seem to get scooped up before I can get to them,” joked Scott. “I can live with that, though.” 



(L-R) Kevitt Excavating President Scott Kevitt; Vice President of HR, Personnel and Safety Chris Vieau; and CFO Rick Habisch rely on RMS Territory Manager Phil Major for the company’s Komatsu equipment and service needs.



At a residential project in New Hope, Minn., a Kevitt Excavating operator uses a Komatsu intelligent Machine Control PC360LCi-11 excavator. “We save so much time with the intelligent excavators,” commented Operations Manager Luke Masica. “Everything on the plans is uploaded to the machines.”

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Marv Selge (with Noah & Justin) / Selge Construction, Inc. / Niles, MI

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BUILDING MOMENTUM

Iowa customer appreciation golf event continues to grow in fifth year

Nearly 60 Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) Iowa-based customers, employees and product representatives traded in busy jobsites for the manicured fairways at the Tournament Club of Iowa and the fifth annual RMS customer appreciation golf outing.

The event has grown in popularity since it began in 2014, a trend that mirrors the consistent upward trajectory of the construction industry in central Iowa.

“We’ve got a lot of good things going here,” said RMS Vice President, Southern Operations Joe Schmidlein. “We have had a great deal of success in Iowa, and we are committed to doing what it takes to continue to meet our customers’ needs. We recently closed on a new location for our Des Moines facility and are looking to do the same in Cedar Rapids. It’s an exciting time.”

With so much happening, RMS President Russell Sheaffer says that events like the golf outing are a great way to slow down and connect with customers in a low-pressure environment.

“We have the opportunity to relax and not talk business, just have some fun,” noted Sheaffer. “It’s

Continued . . .



Grant Corell of Corell Contractor tees off as several attendees watch.



Territory Manager Bob Newman presents Joel Jackson of Corell Contractor with his closest-to-the-pin prize.



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▶ VIDEO



Golfers load up their carts in preparation for the 2019 Road Machinery & Supplies Co., customer appreciation golf outing at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City. More than 60 customers, employees and product representatives took part.

(L-R) The foursome of RMS Territory Manager Brad Johnson, Dennis Kloke of Croell, Dan Streicher of Streicher Excavating and David Clark of Wicks Construction pose for a photo.



(L-R) Rognes Corporation's Cody Rognes, Jasper Construction's Dale Hadsall, NPK Construction's Joe Velasquez and Elder Corporation's Ryan Reed team up for the golf outing.



(L-R) SENNEBOGEN's Mike Myslicki coaxes his putt as Alter Metal Recycling's Jason Weiland, RMS Territory Manager Will Anderson and Western Engineering's Steve Epley watch.



(L-R) Corell Contractor's Joel Jackson putts as Warren Rognes of Rognes Corp., Dustin Jones of Alliance Construction Group and RMS Vice President, Southern Operations Joe Schmidlein look on.

a great investment in time and resources. RMS wouldn't be where it is without customers like these, so it's important that we recognize how important they are to us."

On the course, attendees enjoyed a picture-perfect day of golf. The team of Bill Gahan of Martin Marietta, Andy Denker of CTI, RMS CFO Troy Johnson and Ron Earl of Astec Industries won the event with a score of 61. Charlie Knudsen of CTI (longest putt and closest to the pin, hole 15), Joel Jackson of Corell Contractor (closest to the pin, hole 8), Johnson (longest drive, hole 17) and Denker (longest drive, hole 9) each won individual hole contests.

"This was probably the best weather we've had for the event," noted RMS Territory Manager Bob Newman. "It was a great time, and we're already looking forward to next year." 



(L-R) Mike Leinbaugh of GOMACO, Charlie Knudsen of CTI, RMS Territory Manager and Jason Crimmins of Jensen Builders get ready to tee off.



(L-R) Alex Vazquez of All Star Concrete, RMS Territory Manager Chad Hein, Raleigh Robbins of Team Excavating and Kyle Brudos of Scrap Processors shot 63 on the day and took second place.



(L-R) Bill Gahan of Martin Marietta, Andy Denker of CTI, RMS CFO Troy Johnson and Ron Earl of Astec Industries won the event with a score of 61.

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‘HIGHLIGHT OF THE SUMMER’

Two-day customer appreciation golf outing continues to draw big crowds in Minnesota

Four years ago, Road Machinery & Supplies Co., (RMS) hosted its inaugural customer appreciation golf outing for Minnesota customers at Cragun’s Resort on Gull Lake in Brainerd, Minn. From that point, the event has become a mainstay on attendees’ calendars. This year, RMS hosted nearly 80 customers, employees and product representatives.

“For me, it’s the highlight of the summer,” shared Bart Anderson of U.S. SiteWork. “I’ve been here all five years. RMS puts on a great event, and everyone just has fun. It’s a relaxing, free day.”

Customer outings are common in the summer; however, the RMS event offers an unmatched experience. The two days feature 36 holes of golf, a chipping and putting contest, hole prizes, welcome bags and lodging at the resort. This year also included a dinner cruise on Gull Lake aboard the North Star yacht.

Continued . . .



Vice President of Sales and Marketing Andy Schwandt announces the day’s winners and hands out prizes during the dinner cruise.



KPI-JCI’s Ryan Newman putts as (L-R) RMS Territory Manager Ethan Angell, Winona Mechanical Inc.’s Todd Danielson and Fischer Mining, LLC’s Nick Oster watch.



Attendees enjoy dinner and drinks on the North Star yacht.



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▶ VIDEO

Road Machinery & Supplies Co. hosted its fifth annual customer appreciation golf outing for Minnesota customers at Cragun’s Resort on Gull Lake in Brainerd, Minn. Nearly 80 customers, employees and product representatives attended the two-day event in August.



(L-R) Origination's Tom Lloyd and RMS Territory Manager Jeff Sisk pull for AMG Resources Corp.'s Keith Smith to sink his putt.

"It's a great time for people to take a break in the action and spend time with friends from the industry," said RMS CEO Mike Sill II. "It's a unique opportunity to get some good ideas and knowledge of what's going on in the field."

Mother Nature's cooperation helped make this year's event stand out. Golfers enjoyed sunny skies and temperatures in the upper-70s.

"We live in God's country," remarked Sill. "It's great to be able to take advantage of the great natural resource we have in a way that builds comradery."

The trio of Pete's Water & Sewer's Jason Rykal, RMS Technology Solutions Expert Chris Potter and RMS Product Support Sales Representative Brandon Beard won the first day's event with a 15-under-par score on Cragun's Dutch Legacy course. Nick Oster and Jared Penz had the longest drives, Tom Lloyd and Lee Meyer holed the longest putts and Rykal and Taylor Luke landed closest to the pin. Terry Tulek won the putting contest while Penz took chipping honors. The team of RMS Territory Manager Jeff Bistodeau, Thiemann Construction's Eric Iverson, Elcor Construction's David Adamson and McNeilus Recycling's Adam Noble won Friday's round on Bobby's Legacy course.

(L-R) The trio of Pete's Water & Sewer's Jason Rykal, RMS Technology Solutions Expert Chris Potter and RMS Product Support Sales Representative Brandon Beard won the first day's competition with a 15-under-par score.



"We judge the success of the event by the size of the smiles on our customers' faces," noted RMS Vice President of Sales and Marketing Andy Schwandt. "Customers plan their schedules around the event, although it's in the height of the construction season. They tell us it's the marquee event of the summer, and we're proud they view it that way." 

(L-R) AMG Resources Corp.'s Bobby Warrens, Roadtec's Paul Schratz, RMS Territory Manager Phil Major and FPI Paving Contractors, Inc.'s Anthony Koop wait their turn to tee off.



LS Marine's Taylor Luke attempts a long putt as (L-R) RMS Sales Manager Curt Giles, Rachel Contracting's Robbie Koopmeiners and NPK Construction Equipment's Claudio Calzado follow the ball's path.



(L-R) U.S. Sitework's Bart Anderson, J.R.'s Advanced Recyclers' Jeff Zeien and Casper Construction Inc.'s Terry Tulek follow RMS Territory Manager Shawn Mitchell's drive.



Komatsu District Sales Manager Justin Sailer bombs a drive as (L-R) MP Nexlevel's Dean Kent, RMS Territory Manager Tom Major and Carl Bolander & Sons' Norm Everson admire it.



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NEW LOCATION

Branch expansion in Bondurant planned to serve customers in growing Des Moines and central Iowa region

Road Machinery & Supplies Co. announced plans to build a new, state-of-the-art branch in Bondurant, Iowa. The facility will handle sales, service and parts operations for customers in the Des Moines area and much of central Iowa.

“We are excited about this expansion, which will allow us to better serve our customers in Des Moines and surrounding areas,” said RMS CEO Mike Sill II.

The 25,000-square-foot building will feature 10 service bays, including an oversized bay to accommodate large aggregate equipment as well as work space for the branch’s 35 employees. It will be situated on 14 acres

near the intersection of Franklin Road and U.S. Highway 65 and replace RMS’ existing Des Moines location on Sheridan Ave.

The move is in anticipation of the significant growth projected in the area in the coming years.

“This facility will provide the infrastructure necessary to achieve our business objectives while offering new and exciting opportunities for existing RMS employees,” said RMS President Russell Sheaffer.

Road Machinery & Supplies Co., Vice President Joe Schmidlein, who is responsible for Iowa operations, will oversee the project. 



Road Machinery & Supplies Co., will expand its Des Moines operations with a 25,000-square-foot facility located on 14 acres in Bondurant, Iowa.

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Komatsu revamps Demo Days to provide ultimate customer event

This spring, more than 300 customers, distributor representatives and industry professionals attended Komatsu’s Demo Days at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia where they experienced a newly tailored schedule for the event.

“We’ve been using this site for more individualized customer demonstrations, and we learned a lot from them,” said Komatsu Instructor and Developer Isaac Rollo. “We applied a good deal of the feedback we received from those interactions to enhance this group event. As a company, Komatsu is always looking to improve in all aspects, and that includes Demo Days.”

The new format significantly increased attendees’ time at the demo site. The morning session featured walk-arounds for 30 machines, including the full family of *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators, with Komatsu experts onhand to answer questions.

“After registration and a short safety meeting, we got customers up on the hill,” said Rollo, referring to the demo site location. “In the past, we held the morning session in our auditorium, but we want Demo Days to be as interactive as possible. We felt it was important to increase the amount of individualized time customers spent with our people and on the machines to achieve that goal.”

Food trucks, raffles and competitions

The morning ended with an *intelligent* Machine Control dozing demo, and then Atlanta-area food trucks provided lunch. The afternoon was reserved for machine operation.

“By the time customers go home, we want them to feel as confident with the Komatsu product as we are,” noted Rollo. “This new

setup provides more time for them to talk with Komatsu personnel, operate equipment and have all of their questions answered.”

In addition to machine demos, the gathering also featured raffle prizes; timed wheel loader and mini excavator challenges; and a factory tour of Komatsu’s Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation. Demo Days also included a “Help Build the Machine of the Future” area, which invited customers to share what they want to see from Komatsu in five, 10 and 15 years.



*Isaac Rollo,
Komatsu Instructor
and Developer*



▶ VIDEO

Komatsu Demo Days attendees had the opportunity to operate 30 machines, including the new GD655-7 grader and the full line of intelligent Machine Control equipment. The event also featured walk-arounds, competitions, a factory tour and other interactive sessions.



(L-R) Will Anderson and Jeff White, Road Machinery & Supplies Co.; John Berns and Patt McDowell, Dave Schmitt Construction; and Jonathan Tolomeo, Komatsu America inspect a D155PXi intelligent Machine Control dozer.



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RMSRoadSigns.com



(L-R) Robbie Koopmeiners and Kevin Klimmek of Rachel Contractors, Inc. meet with RMS Territory Manager Phil Major after a presentation at Demo Days in Cartersville, Ga.



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EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Construction companies adopting innovations; expert advises using a measured approach

During the past two decades, the development and acceptance of construction technology has made huge strides. GPS-based grade control is a perfect example. It has evolved from masts and cables on the outside of machines to integrated systems that can automatically raise and lower dozer blades. Today, companies are increasingly accessing information about their machinery via mobile platforms such as smartphones and tablets, using Wi-Fi or cellular networks.

Construction companies that fail to embrace these new strategies may fall behind those that do and could eventually be forced to

close. It's essential to adopt innovations in today's world, although firms should take a measured and realistic approach to implementation, says Damon Haber, Co-founder and Chief Revenue Officer at Record360, which helps businesses add the latest products to their operations.

"I was an operator before I became a tech guy, so I understand how it is affecting companies and individuals," Haber said. "Like equipment, devices and apps don't create outcomes; however, they can be valuable tools that help achieve them. Failures often happen when companies

*Editor's note:
Some information for this article was supplied by Damon Haber, Co-founder and Chief Revenue Officer at Record360.*

Continued . . .



Mobile technology continues to grow in the construction industry, and this is one area where caution is especially necessary, according to Damon Haber, Co-founder and Chief Revenue Officer at Record360. "Every major manufacturer has an app, and all are proven," said Haber. "So, it's not an issue of whether a construction company can use them; however, it must look at the technical considerations."

try to do too much or have no clear objectives as to why they want to implement certain solutions.”

Other obstacles to successful adoption include leaving key personnel out of the process and underestimating the impact of change. “Definitely take those factors into consideration prior to any final decisions,” advised Haber.

Mobile on the rise

Mobile solutions continue to grow in the construction industry, and this is one sector where caution is especially necessary, according to Haber. Technology can be used to track equipment for maintenance, order parts, locate machines and much more.

“Every major manufacturer has an app, and all are proven,” said Haber. “So, it’s not an issue of whether a construction company can use them; however, it must look at the technical considerations.”

Haber points to the devices themselves as a critical item for examination. “It’s important to consider the costs, as well as the features and benefits of each device. For instance, Apple and Android each have advantages and disadvantages.”



Best practices for adopting technology include starting small, setting measurable goals and outcomes as well as securing commitments from end users. “You can always get bigger,” said Damon Haber, Co-founder and Chief Revenue Officer at Record360. “You should also look at today’s modern solutions and see how they can flex to match desired business goals.”

Additional factors to weigh include using Wi-Fi or cellular networks, data costs, native versus web platforms, security encryption, level of support from your provider and provider integration capabilities.

“All are important to analyze, although they should not deter companies from using mobile options,” said Haber. “Embracing them could be a key aspect in attracting new talent. Today’s younger workforce is already very familiar with how to use mobile devices. Studies show that millennials use their smartphones up to 223 minutes per day.”

Best practices include starting small

There are some best practices for introducing technology, mobile or otherwise. Among them are starting small, setting measurable goals and outcomes in addition to securing commitments from end users.

“You can always get bigger,” Haber emphasized. “Before full implementation, it’s wise to do a pilot study and do it well. You should also look at today’s modern solutions and see how they can flex to match desired business goals.”

Best practices also include managing expectations, according to Haber. “Not everything needs to integrate or be perfect. There must be a clear vision for what success looks like.”

A more competitive future

Staying flexible and open to the latest advancements will remain vital to construction companies’ competitiveness and, ultimately, their survival. The future will continue to bring innovations that make jobsites more productive and efficient, if implemented with sound practices.

“We are on the cusp of major changes right now,” Haber stated. “5G for mobile is right around the corner, and it will be 100 times faster than 4G. Everything cellular will be affected, and we will be able to do things that were not possible before.”

“I also believe artificial intelligence, including machine learning, will gain more prominence, as will augmented reality,” he added.

“Companies should not be afraid of or intimidated by technology. They should view it as a means to enhance and improve their practices and increase competitiveness.” 



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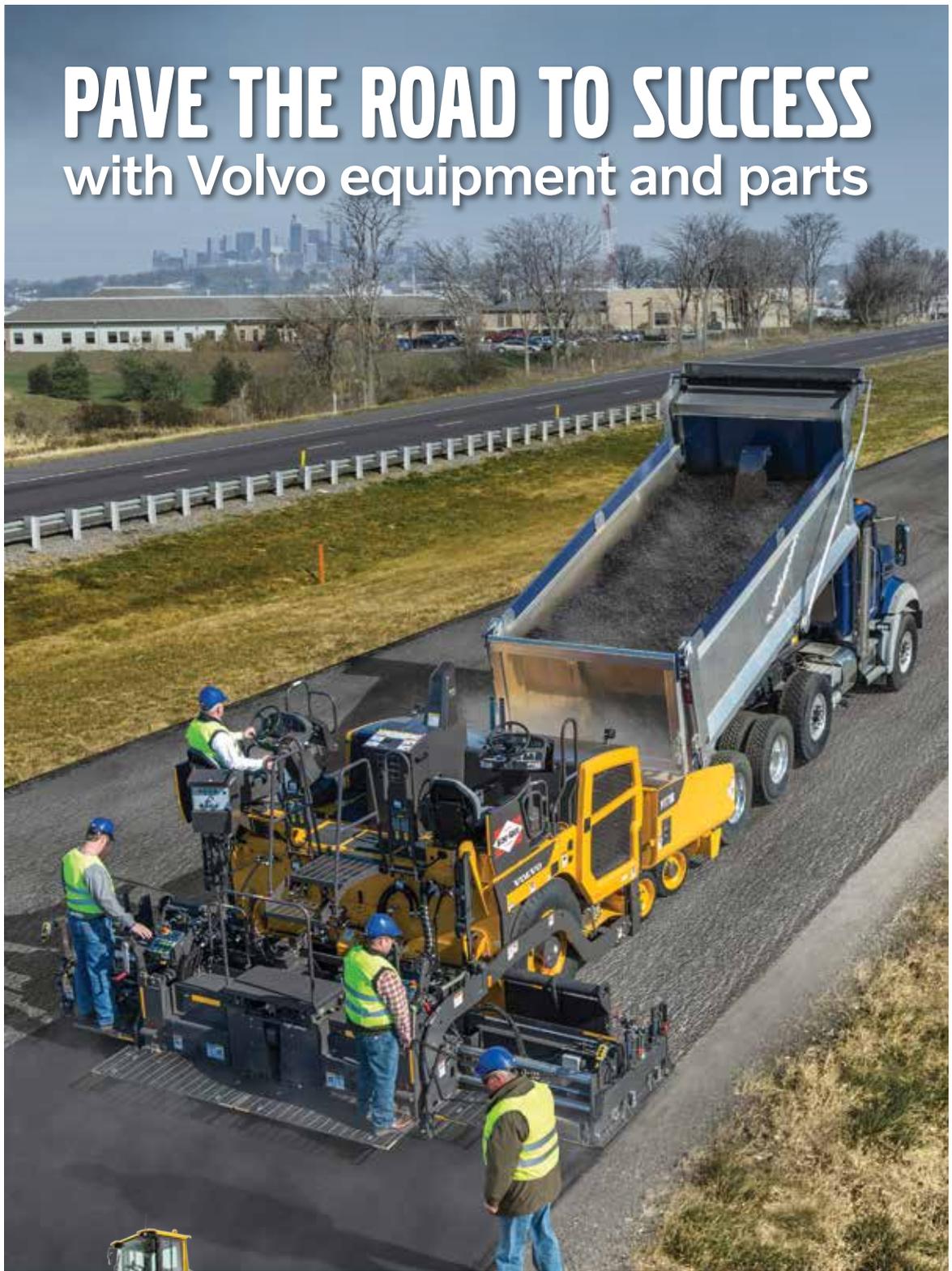
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OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

Drone use report: Most companies say benefits of the technology far outweigh the cost

Ninety-two percent of companies that use drones say the benefits of this innovation exceed the costs, according to the “State of Commercial Drone Use” report recently released by Blue Research, which contacted more than 1,700 medium and large businesses for its study. The findings noted that 10 percent of surveyed companies with revenues of more than \$50 million currently use drones.

For 88 percent of respondents that utilize the technology, return on investment was achieved in a year or less. About half said that taking drones away would negatively affect their bottom lines.

Construction is one of the prominent industries using drones, with a 35-percent adoption rate. Nine out of ten firms with drones reported that the devices allow them to capture more information, save time and increase efficiency. Seventy-five percent said drones increase worker safety, and 71 percent cited a competitive advantage as a benefit.

“One of the things we really struggled with was figuring out how companies are using drones. Much of the research focused on hobbyists, the military, etc.,” explained Mariah Scott, President of Skyward, which commissioned the study and prepared a subsequent webinar titled, “Drones in Big Business: The State of Drones at \$50M+.”

Majority handle it in-house

The report also found that less than 40 percent of companies hire outside help for their drone programs, including flights, data processing and data analysis. “Sixty-three percent are not outsourcing any of these activities,” shared Scott. “This number

was much higher than expected. It’s very encouraging news about the ability of large companies to incorporate new technology.”

Challenges to adopting a drone program included staying up to date on laws and regulations. Access to controlled airspace was another obstacle.

Two percent of respondents plan to start a drone program within a few months. Another 7 percent said they will begin using drones at some time in the future. 



Large companies that use drones are overwhelmingly positive about the technology, citing the ability to capture more information, save time and increase efficiency among the primary benefits, according to a recent study. Almost 90 percent of companies that use drones said they saw a return on investment within a year.

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NEW INTELLIGENT EXCAVATOR

PC290LCi-11 uses 3D design data to deliver first-to-last-pass accuracy

Komatsu augmented its *intelligent* Machine Control lineup with the addition of the new PC290LCi-11 that provides first-to-last-pass accuracy. Like its predecessors, the excavator features Komatsu’s unique sensor package – stroke-sensing hydraulic cylinders, an inertial measurement unit sensor and global navigation satellite system antennas – that utilizes 3D design data to accurately check its position against the target elevation and semi-automatically limit overexcavation.

“The PC290LCi-11 is perfect for applications where customers are looking for good stability and working range. It has a 30-ton-class undercarriage and an upper structure similar to our standard PC240LC model. This excavator also includes a 3.2-meter (10.49-foot) arm,” said Andrew Earing, Senior Product Manager, Tracked Equipment, noting that a 3.5-meter arm option will be available soon. “Its size helps to avoid most transportation limits associated with larger size-class excavators, making it a good fit for residential and utility work, as well as smaller nonresidential jobs.”

Users can load design data into the *intelligent* Machine Control box. It is displayed on a 12.1-inch monitor in a simple screen layout. A touch screen icon interface, instead of a multistep menu, simplifies operation.

The machine and design surface are shown in a realistic 3D format. The angle and magnification of the views can be changed, allowing the operator to select the best option, depending on working conditions.

Easily switch modes, offset functions

Operators can choose between manual and semi-automatic modes, as well as design offset functions using switches on the joysticks. The

semi-automatic mode features Auto Grade Assist. As the operator moves the arm, the boom adjusts the bucket height to trace the target surface and minimize the chance of digging too deep.

Additionally, the PC290LCi has Auto Stop Control that halts the working equipment when the bucket edge reaches the design surface, which reduces design surface damage. Minimum Distance Control regulates the bucket

Continued . . .



*Andrew Earing,
Senior Product
Manager, Tracked
Equipment*



Brief Specs on Komatsu’s PC290LCi-11 Excavator

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Bucket Capacity
PC290LCi-11	196 hp	70,702-72,091 lb	.76-2.13 cu yd

Komatsu’s new PC290LCi-11 offers good stability and working range with a 30-ton-class undercarriage and the upper structure of the standard PC240LC model as well as an arm that reaches past 10 feet.

by automatically selecting the point on the bucket closest to the target surface. Finally, the Facing Angle Compass shows the operator the facing angle relative to the target surface, allowing the bucket edge to be accurately positioned square to the target surface.

“Komatsu introduced *intelligent* Machine Control excavators four years ago with the PC210LCi, which is now in its second generation with the dash-11 model,” said Earing. “As we continued to expand our intelligent product line, we heard customers asking for a PC290LCi. With the introduction of this model, we are pleased to demonstrate our commitment to our customers.”

Covered by Komatsu CARE

The PC290LCi-11 has Komatsu’s KOMTRAX Level 5 technology that provides machine data such as fuel and diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) levels, Komatsu Diesel Particulate Filter (KDPF) regeneration status, machine location, cautions and maintenance alert information.

Whether rented, leased or purchased, the PC290LCi-11 is covered by Komatsu CARE, complimentary for the first three years or 2,000 hours. It includes scheduled factory maintenance, a 50-point inspection at each service interval and up to two complimentary KDPF exchanges and two DEF tank flushes in the first five years. 



Operators can choose between manual and semi-automatic modes, as well as design offset functions using switches on the joysticks. Features of the semi-automatic mode include Auto Grade Assist. As the operator moves the arm, the boom adjusts the bucket height to trace the target surface and minimize digging too deep.



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COMPLETING MORE JOBS FASTER

R.A. Alexander & Sons saves time, money with *intelligent* Machine Control equipment

Three years ago, Bill Jagoe, Owner of Jagoe Excavating, approached Mark Ballard, President of R.A. Alexander & Sons, about expanding the existing relationship between the two companies. The new collaboration helped both firms immediately by filling gaps for each. Together, the two businesses can now handle nearly any earthwork-related project.

Benefits for R.A. Alexander & Sons included the ability to offer utility-installation services and the opportunity to upgrade its equipment fleet. For the latter, Ballard contacted his local Komatsu distributor to discuss adding additional *intelligent* Machine Control equipment to complement the D51PXi dozer he purchased in 2015. Ultimately, Ballard acquired a second D51PXi in addition to a D61PXi dozer and a PC210LCi excavator. All feature factory-integrated grade control technology that makes operators even more effective from start to finish.

Advantages immediately apparent

“Augmenting our fleet with *intelligent* Machine Control pieces made us 40 to 50 percent faster, and we’re achieving accuracy within two-tenths of an inch,” stated Ballard. “Having a model that we can plug in and follow, speeds us up significantly. We save the most time on minor details associated with parking lots and streets. It’s also phenomenal on earthmoving projects with major grade changes. There’s no lost time with operators stopping to read plans or ask questions. Everything is on the in-cab monitor.”

Jagoe said the results were noticeable right away. “I was surprised there weren’t any stakes at the jobsite. However, I noticed that the machines never stopped moving, and they were finishing jobs sooner. The *intelligent*

Machine Control products save us money on things like surveying and material costs. Plus, we are able to do more projects because we can work so much faster.” 



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*Bill Jagoe,
Owner,
Jagoe Excavating*



*Mark Ballard,
President,
R.A. Alexander & Sons*



▶ VIDEO

An intelligent Machine Control PC210LCi excavator and a PD61PXi dozer enable R.A. Alexander & Sons to finish jobs sooner, allowing it to take on more projects. “Augmenting our fleet with intelligent Machine Control pieces made us 40 to 50 percent faster, and we’re achieving accuracy within two-tenths of an inch,” stated President Mark Ballard.

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

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EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS

Excavator fleet outfitted with waste packages helps recycling firm meet production goals

Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) is one of the largest waste and recycling companies in the Chicago area. In order to process the massive amount of waste material that comes through its seven locations, LRS requires equipment that is dependable, versatile and durable. It found a solution with a fleet of 15 Komatsu PC210LC excavators outfitted with Komatsu waste packages.

“Our PC210s run up to 20 hours a day – sometimes as many as 11 hours straight – which is vital to keeping us on schedule,” explained LRS Managing Partner Rich Golf. “We know that they are going to run every day.”

The company uses its PC210LC fleet to sort through piles of waste material, removing pieces that can hinder the performance of its production line.

“It is an instrumental tool,” shared Golf. “Operators can identify items that might be harmful to machines downstream like hoses, electrical cords, plastics or bulky items.”

Golf touts the versatility of the PC210LC for its ability to feed the operation, a task typically reserved for a large wheel loader.

“It takes up less space, uses less fuel and eliminates tire costs,” said Golf. “It does the job of a WA500 wheel loader, just more efficiently.”

Enhanced performance

To help the PC210s perform 20-hour work days in unforgiving conditions, LRS equips its excavators with Komatsu waste packages.

“Overheating can be a serious problem,” stated Golf. “However, the Komatsu package includes an enhanced cooling feature with wider fins and radiators that swing out. It improves access

to the area and allows us to blow them out quicker to keep everything cool.”

The waste package also includes an enhanced boom arm and stick as well as extra safety guarding around the cab. Golf credits the Komatsu waste package as one reason why LRS excavators work past the 15,000-hour mark – with some already at 25,000 hours. They also play a role in ensuring that those hours are completed safely.

“Komatsu has done a great job of creating waste packages that meet our needs,” noted Golf. “This helps make the machines more durable as well as safer for the operator. Safety has been our top priority from day one, and that has been important in our relationship with Komatsu.” 



*Rich Golf,
Managing Partner,
Lakeshore Recycling
Systems*



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A Lakeshore Recycling Systems operator uses a Komatsu PC210LC excavator equipped with a Komatsu waste package to manage a pile of material. “Komatsu has done a great job of creating waste packages that meet our needs,” noted Managing Partner Rich Golf. “This helps make the machines more durable as well as safer for the operator.”

GOING BEYOND THE SALE

VP – Marketing Communications says Komatsu helps customers gain knowledge to maximize production



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.

Evelyn Maki, Vice President – Marketing Communications

Originally from Brazil, Evelyn Maki went to college with a focus on building a career in tourism. While in school, she interned at a heavy equipment manufacturer, took a position there upon graduation and has been supporting the industry ever since.

“I have been involved with sales, data analysis, forecasting and dealer development,” said Maki. “I enjoyed those, but marketing is what I love. I really enjoy today’s modern practices and am always thinking about ways we can shape our industry from a marketing perspective.”

Maki moved to the United States when she was transferred to Wisconsin by her previous employer in the early 2000s. About eight years ago, she began working for P&H, then part of the Joy Global organization, now owned by Komatsu. Today, she is the Vice President – Marketing Communications for Komatsu. Maki oversees global marketing for Komatsu Mining, as well as for construction, forestry, forklift and industrial presses for North America.

“Komatsu is about more than manufacturing quality, dependable equipment; it’s focused on building relationships by taking care of customers from every standpoint: sales, service and support,” said Maki. “From a marketing perspective, that’s what we want to highlight because, at the end of the day, this is what creates customers for life.”

QUESTION: Komatsu is known as a “total solutions provider.” What does that entail?

ANSWER: It means we can take care of customers throughout their machinery’s life cycle. For instance, if a customer is looking for a machine with GPS-grading capabilities, Komatsu has several options including our integrated *intelligent* Machine Control dozers.

In addition, we, and our distributors, have expert personnel who can provide mapping services, jobsite setup, training, consultation and more. Most of our latest models come with Komatsu CARE, so scheduled maintenance is covered for the first three years or 2,000 hours. Programs are available to extend that, and we have other solutions to take care of maintenance and repairs.

QUESTION: What are the roots of Komatsu’s customer-focused approach?

ANSWER: Our approach stems from our origins and from listening to customers. Komatsu was started nearly 100 years ago by Meitaro Takeuchi. He saw that the copper mine in Komatsu City, Japan, was about to exhaust its resources and close. The city’s economy centered around that mine, so he started an equipment manufacturing company to provide new jobs and help people in his community develop new skills. That’s how Komatsu was created.

For nearly a century, we have expanded globally because we visit jobsites and mines around the world to talk with customers in order to better understand their needs and challenges. Knowledge gained from those conversations helps develop equipment and solutions to meet those needs and alleviates



Komatsu has a long history of dedication to developing solutions for people and their businesses, according to Evelyn Maki, Vice President – Marketing Communications. “Komatsu was started nearly 100 years ago by Meitaro Takeuchi,” said Maki. “He saw that the copper mine in Komatsu City, Japan, was about to exhaust its resources and close. The city’s economy centered around that mine, so he started an equipment manufacturing company to provide new jobs and help people in his community develop new skills.”

challenges so customers can concentrate on getting their jobs done more effectively and efficiently, backed by Komatsu.

QUESTION: How is Komatsu reaching customers to provide information about its equipment and support?

ANSWER: There are several avenues. From a global perspective, information is available on our websites, and that’s a good starting point for research. Customers can also gain information from our social media pages and video library on YouTube.

QUESTION: In addition to online resources, how can customers learn more about Komatsu equipment?

ANSWER: We encourage them to contact their distributor personnel. From a manufacturer marketing standpoint, we develop content that helps distributors and their representatives provide the most accurate, detailed information possible so that customers can make highly informed decisions. We serve as a support tool.

One way we do that is with events, such as Demo Days, where distributors can bring customers to our Cartersville Customer Center to operate machinery, and our experts provide insight into maximizing machine usage as well as other valuable content.



During Demo Days at the Cartersville Customer Center, Komatsu experts provide valuable insights about maximizing machine production and more.

Our distributors are excellent resources and can directly help customers with details about equipment and the programs to maintain it, such as Komatsu CARE for Tier 4 construction equipment. We encourage anyone seeking information to contact their distributor and/or sales representatives who have the knowledge to put them in the right machine for maximum production and efficiency. 

INTUITIVE TECHNOLOGY

Proactive Dozing Control logic interprets data, makes decisions to mirror seasoned operators



Derek Morris,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager



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When Komatsu unveiled its revolutionary *intelligent* Machine Control system in 2013, the integrated, mast- and cable-free, semi-automated GPS program promised increased production and precision grading. It delivered, and now Komatsu is taking the technology to another level with Proactive Dozing Control logic.

“The first iteration of *intelligent* Machine Control was a starting point,” explained Komatsu Product Marketing Manager Derek Morris. “Once that was accepted in the market and became a viable part of a construction site, we focused on how to make it better.”

To do that, Komatsu designed its Proactive Dozing Control system to more closely

resemble an experienced operator during initial rough-cut applications – a point when operators were not utilizing *intelligent* Machine Control.

“Traditionally, end users were only using automation to perform final grade,” noted Morris. “That happened because the system would work to get the blade to grade as soon as possible, creating aggressive cuts that could stall a machine. During that phase, experienced operators would typically cut and carry large but manageable loads, so they could move the material to other parts of a jobsite. We added this logic and practice.”

The result is an intuitive technology that delivers productivity gains of within 6 percent of an experienced operator.

“Proactive Dozing Control logic tracks, collects and interprets terrain data and then makes decisions based on that information,” said Morris. “It can now calculate when to cut and when to carry material, while also allowing the operator to provide input on where the blade should be based on existing ground. The new system enables the operator to use automatics in applications such as stripping topsoil or spreading fill.”

‘Grass to grade’

With Proactive Dozing Control logic, operators are able to use the technology at all times, boosting efficiency and productivity.

“Using machine control exclusively for fine grading meant it was utilized only 10 to 20 percent of the time,” said Morris. “Proactive Dozing Control logic gives Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control dozers grass-to-grade automatics, which delivers greater return on investment.”



▶ VIDEO

Available on new Komatsu D51i-24 and D61i-24 dozers, the latest version of *intelligent* Machine Control improves automation during rough-cut applications by more closely operating like an end user. “Proactive Dozing Control logic tracks, collects and interprets terrain data and then makes decisions based on that information,” said Komatsu Product Marketing Manager Derek Morris.

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WASTE EXPO DRAWS CROWDS

Solutions and support for rugged landfill operations showcased in Las Vegas

Companies from across the country gathered in Las Vegas for the 2019 Waste Expo to see the latest innovations for the waste management industry. Educational sessions and networking opportunities supported the exhibit area where customers met with manufacturers and inspected machines.

At the Komatsu America booth, attendees could visit with company representatives to learn about new solutions for the industry.

“We’re building strong relationships with our waste-market customers and developing the machines that meet their applications,” said Komatsu America Chairman and CEO Rod Schrader. “Then, in partnership with our dealers, we support them very effectively with local service and parts departments.”

Customer success

Waste industry professionals who utilize Komatsu products note the positive impact the equipment has made on their operations.

“We recently switched to Komatsu and, in the past year, have added more than a dozen machines, including excavators and wheel loaders,” said DTG Recycling Group COO Tom Vaughn. “The maintenance support has been fantastic.”

Andrew Springer with Sun Recycling in Beltsville, Md., relies on Komatsu equipment for the company’s roll-off dumpster hauling and C&D recycling operations.

“We run Komatsu wheel loaders and excavators exclusively,” noted Springer. “Our environment is very rough on machines, and they stand up to the test. The most critical piece has been the dealer support in getting the parts we need, when we need them.”

Komatsu featured two industry-specific machines, the D85PX-18 dozer outfitted with a

waste package and the WA380-8 wheel loader with waste-handling capabilities. Both offer solutions for landfill operations.

“The D85PX-18 dozer is fully equipped and ready to push trash,” noted Komatsu America Marketing Engineer Scott Ruderman. “It features an 18.4 cubic-yard blade with a trash rack to handle the lighter material and 30-inch track pads with clean-out holes for easier maintenance. The engine compartment is sealed, and the exterior hoses have been removed to prevent debris from contacting or damaging critical components.”

Komatsu designed the WA380-8 wheel loader to be ready for harsh applications as well.

“We fully protect the bottom of the machine using a front frame underground, powertrain guard, fuel tank guard and axle seal guards,” noted Ruderman. “Due to market demand, we’ve developed a guard that protects the fan cooling unit and rear grill from contact as well. The machine also has a corrugated screen outside of the intake system to prevent debris from entering the engine system.” 



*Rod Schrader,
Chairman and CEO,
Komatsu America*



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The 2019 Waste Expo featured the latest innovations in the waste management industry, including a fully guarded Komatsu WA380-8 wheel loader and D85PX-18 dozer outfitted with a waste package.

HIGH-HEAT PROTECTION

Specially formulated HO56-HE hydraulic oil helps solve oil degradation in hot environments



*Bruce Gosen,
Senior Product
Manager, Komatsu
Parts Marketing*

Using the proper fluids delivers bottom-line benefits, potentially increasing productivity and lowering operating costs. “Fluids designed to match the conditions you face offer the best protection, resulting in less downtime and extended equipment life,” said Bruce Gosen, Senior Product Manager, Komatsu Parts Marketing.

Gosen pointed out that Komatsu’s HO56-HE hydraulic oil is a good example. It is a zinc-based, anti-wear oil made from synthetic fluid, as opposed to traditional hydraulic fluids created from mineral oil. “This product is specially formulated to help solve oil degradation issues in hot environments,” explained Gosen. “It’s an ideal choice for equipment operating in desert regions or in high-temperature industrial facilities.”

Specific benefits of HO56-HE:

- It has outstanding cold-start performance and excellent resistance to oxidation at high temperatures.

- It is specially formulated to maintain viscosity range throughout the full life of the fluid.
- The fluid performs with greater efficiency to reduce fuel consumption and extend oil drain intervals.
- It prevents valves from sticking, resulting in less “reactive maintenance” downtime.

“HO56-HE is more energy-efficient, so it can reduce overall fuel costs compared to conventional anti-wear hydraulic fluids,” said Gosen. “HO56-HE has the potential to last longer too, reducing downtime for routine oil drains.

“It’s compatible with most machines, so many companies can consolidate multiple hydraulic oils across their fleets, simplifying ongoing maintenance, which can lead to greater savings,” Gosen added. “We encourage anyone needing a high-performance hydraulic oil to contact their distributor for HO56-HE.” 



Komatsu’s HO56-HE hydraulic oil is specially formulated to help solve issues of oil degradation in hot environments, making it an ideal choice for equipment operating in desert regions or in high-temperature industrial facilities.

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MIKE MAGERS

Technical Communicator serves as vital resource for RMS customers, technicians

Apple has Siri. Amazon has Alexa. Road Machinery & Supplies Co. has Mike, as in Technical Communicator Mike Magers.

“I guess that’s a fair comparison,” laughed Magers. “A lot of questions are filtered through me. I’m here to assist with anything that comes up; that’s the goal for this job.”

As Technical Communicator, Magers is a “lifeline” for RMS technicians as he helps them find answers to questions that may arise while they are in the field or in the shop. However, his assistance extends to a broad range of RMS’ business.

“I handle pretty much anything,” he said. “The most common is helping a technician diagnose a code or complete the basic troubleshooting techniques. However, I do work directly with customers as well. If they need to know what code their machine is giving them, I can do that and walk them through the steps to fix it.”

Wealth of information

While Magers may seem like a living, breathing Google search engine, he admits that he isn’t a diesel-covered savant.

“My computer is my most important tool,” he noted. “KOMTRAX is vital for my position with the Komatsu equipment, and we have product guides and databases on all of the product lines that we cover. It’s nice to be able to access those quickly, although a lot of my job is also knowing the right people to contact with questions. By no means do I sit here and rattle off the information from the top of my head.”

Magers’ position was created to help customers minimize downtime so they can get back to work. He is quick to share credit with his co-workers.

“Having a direct contact for customers and technicians streamlines the process,” explained Magers. “While I am the point of contact, others are involved in finding solutions. When I get a call, it’s my job to solve the issue. That might mean that I talk to a few people. This way, we simplify things for our customers.”

Each day is a new adventure for Magers. “I take all kinds of calls – anything from locating a machine to troubleshooting a repair. Customers really appreciate having a resource like this, and I encourage them to take advantage of it.”

Away from the job, Magers continues to serve others as a volunteer firefighter for West Metro Fire and Rescue, which covers the communities of Crystal and New Hope, Minn. 



Road Machinery & Supplies Co. Technical Communicator Mike Magers assists customers and technicians alike to minimize equipment downtime.

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