

Featured in this issue:

R.L. DUNCAN CONSTRUCTION

A long history of accomplishment for this Kansas City-area site-development firm

See article inside...



President Russ Duncan (left) and Founder Thurman Duncan



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Phil McCoy



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Dear Equipment User:

As you might expect, we believe Komatsu equipment is top-of-the-line. Some might argue there are comparable machines within certain models, but top-to-bottom and across-the-board, you're going to be hard-pressed to come up with a more solid lineup — and in specific machines, you're not even going to be able to come close to the performance you get from Komatsu. All we want is a chance to prove to you the difference Komatsu and RoadBuilders Machinery and Supply Co., Inc. can make in your business.

If you're in the market for a new machine, we ask you not to buy until you've thoroughly investigated your options. Spec the machine out — then try it out. In many cases, the Komatsu advantage will be apparent.

In other ways, the Komatsu advantage may be less apparent, but make no mistake, Komatsu is doing things no other manufacturer is doing. For example, you may not yet be using a remote equipment monitoring and management system, but it's definitely the wave of the future. With Komatsu, the KOMTRAX system is factory-installed as standard equipment on virtually all new machines, and there are no communications charges for the first five years. Compare that with other top brands that charge you for the system and the installation, then charge you a monthly communication fee. Consider Komatsu's totally free system versus the competitors' cost of thousands of dollars per machine. That's a prime example of the Komatsu advantage.

At RoadBuilders, we'll be happy to show you other things we and Komatsu are doing to make your equipment owning and operating experience a pleasant one. Feel free to give us a call, or stop by at any time. We look forward to the opportunity to prove we can and will do whatever it takes to earn your business.

Sincerely,
ROADBUILDERS MACHINERY
& SUPPLY CO., INC.

Phil McCoy
President



The RoadBuilders'

EDGE

A publication for and about customers of RoadBuilders Machinery and Supply Co.

IN THIS ISSUE

R.L. DUNCAN CONSTRUCTION

This Kansas City-area site-development firm has a long history of accomplishments.

GUEST OPINION

As Democrats take control of both legislative houses, there are bound to be changes that will affect the construction and equipment industries. Christian Klein, VP of Government Affairs for AED, provides his insights.

MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS

With Spanish becoming more prevalent on many work sites, employers need to know how to bridge the language barrier. Here are some ideas on keeping a bilingual workplace safe and productive.

EQUIPMENT DESIGN BENEFITS

Find out why Komatsu motor graders' visibility, blade geometry and ease of operation set them apart.

UTILITY MACHINES

Learn more about Komatsu compact excavators and how feedback from contractors helped improve this popular product line.

PRODUCT SUPPORT

Read how Komatsu Customer Support Programs can extend equipment life and save you money.

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RELIABLE EQUIPMENT
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A SALUTE TO A CUSTOMER

R.L. DUNCAN CONSTRUCTION

A long history of accomplishment for this Kansas City-area site-development firm



Thurman Duncan,
Founder

Thurman Duncan has been a mainstay on the Kansas City-area construction scene for the better part of 40 years. He started Duncan Excavating with a partner in the late 1960s, sold it, then turned around and started R.L. Duncan Construction with his son, Russ, in 1985.

“There are a handful of contractors in this town who’ve been around forever,” said Russ Duncan. “They do quality work at a fair price and they take pride in what they do. As a result, they have the respect of developers, general contractors and their peers. Dad is one of those guys.”

“Certainly, there are other good contractors in Kansas City, but most haven’t been around as long as we have,” claimed Thurman. “Unfortunately, there are also some companies that are here one year and gone the next. I’m definitely proud that we’ve been doing the same thing in the same place for all these years. It tells us we’re doing something right.”

R.L. Duncan, based in DeSoto, Kan., has actually been doing plenty of things right for many years. When the company started, it was

just Thurman, his wife, Lois, and their son, Russ, who then was 18 years old and just out of high school. Late last year, Russ became President of R.L. Duncan, and his sister, Paula Rhodes, who took over office duties from Lois several years before, became Secretary/Treasurer. Thurman now serves as Vice President.

“This was always my plan — to turn the business over to my children at some point,” revealed Thurman. “I’m very pleased that we were recently able to do that.”

Commercial site-work specialists

Today, R.L. Duncan employs about 40 people. The company works throughout the greater Kansas City area, primarily doing commercial site work and street jobs.

“We used to specialize in the dirt work — excavating, filling, grading, that kind of thing,” recalled Russ. “But a couple of years ago, we also started doing pipe work. Now, we more or less do everything ourselves because that’s the way the owners and general contractors want it done. They want to deal with one person rather than several, and that’s fine with us. If subs need to be hired, we’ll take care of it for them.”

R.L. Duncan has been involved in helping to build numerous high-profile projects in the region in recent years. Among them: the Cerner Corporation Data Base Center in North Kansas City; Shawnee Mission Hospital; Wal-Mart stores in Gardner and Springfield; Park Place Retail Center in Leawood; a widening of Woodland Road in Olathe; and numerous schools throughout the region.

“We bid a large number of jobs and some jobs we get primarily because the owner or general contractor is comfortable working with



Russ Duncan,
President

Based in DeSoto, Kan., R.L. Duncan Construction offers site-development services, including pipe work, throughout the Kansas City metro area.





This R.L. Duncan operator uses a Komatsu D65 dozer to spread fill dirt at a jobsite near Kansas City.

us," said Thurman. "I think what we bring to the table for them is the security of knowing we'll do the job right the first time. We don't like to go back on a job. First of all, there's no money in doing that. But equally important to us, it means we didn't provide what the customer wanted. Our goal is to give our customer what he wants, every time. And we want to be able to drive by these projects years later and be proud of what we did."

Valued employees

That kind of attitude is perhaps not unusual for company owners. What's special about R.L. Duncan, is that all the employees feel the same way.

"I think that's what separates us from some others in this business," observed Russ. "We don't have much turnover. We have outstanding employees and many of them have been here a long time — 10, 20, 30 years — such as Operators Steve Cayce and Bruce Lefman. They know how we work and they feel the same way we do. When we hire somebody new, the experienced hands teach them how we do things, and frankly, if our existing employees don't think a new person has the right stuff — they tell us, and we let that person go. We want our employees to share our values and our work ethic and fortunately, almost all of them do."

In addition to family members and other long-term employees, Estimator Marc Herrman and Superintendents Martin Wisniewski and Rusty Shorten are key personnel at R.L. Duncan.

Reliable equipment

To do the quality of work that the company is known for, R.L. Duncan turns largely to RoadBuilders Machinery & Supply for Komatsu and other equipment.

"I think we bought the first Komatsu excavator RoadBuilders ever sold," reflected Thurman. "It was a PC200LC-3. I liked the



R.L. Duncan has owned numerous Komatsu excavators through the years, including this PC400LC-7 at work on a site job in DeSoto. "We think Komatsu excavators are the best in the business," said President Russ Duncan. "We got the PC400 for deep sewer work and large dirt jobs and it's been extremely productive for us."



R.L. Duncan has a large fleet of dump trucks to haul material onto or off of jobsites as necessary.

way it looked, liked the way it sat and liked the way the levers worked. We demo'd it and just loved the machine. We ran it to about 22,000 hours. The way that machine ran sold us on Komatsu track hoes."

Today, R.L. Duncan has four Komatsu excavators (PC400LC-7, PC300LC-7, PC220LC-6 and a PC35), two Komatsu dozers (D65 and D32) and a new Komatsu WA200-5 wheel loader.

"We like Komatsu equipment," affirmed Russ. "The excavators are the best in the business. We got the PC400 for sewer work and large dirt jobs. It's great for loading our dump trailers. As for the compact excavator, we've only had it a few months, but it's been incredibly handy for getting into tight spaces. We also bought a little NPK hammer for it, which adds to its versatility.



Paula Rhodes,
Secretary/
Treasurer and
Office Manager

Continued . . .



"Can-do" attitude infuses R.L. Duncan

... continued

"The wheel loader's been great and the dozers have been really good too," he added. "The D65, for example, is not only a highly productive and reliable machine, it's also got great visibility and it's comfortable. I really enjoy running it."

Mutual respect

R.L. Duncan also has a Bomag recycler and many used machines from RoadBuilders as well.

"RoadBuilders has been really good to us through the years," acknowledged Thurman.



(L-R) Thurman Duncan, Paula Rhodes and Russ Duncan say they enjoy working with RoadBuilders Machinery & Supply and Sales Representative Randy Frank.

R.L. Duncan's fleet of Komatsu equipment includes this WA200-5 wheel loader and PC300LC-7 hydraulic excavator. "We have a long history with Komatsu and RoadBuilders," said company Founder Thurman Duncan. "I appreciate the service and the way everybody at RoadBuilders treats us."



"They give us fair prices and provide outstanding service. We're not just a number with them. They treat us the way we try to treat our customers — with respect. I believe they've built their business the same way we have — with integrity, pride and hard work."

"My dad can call Gerry Buser (Senior VP/COO), or I can call Randy Frank (District Sales Manager), and we know they're going to make it happen," added Russ. "In fact, we make almost all our deals with RoadBuilders over the phone. There's a lot of trust on both sides, and it's been earned. When we do business with RoadBuilders, I can tell by the way they treat us that they want us to come back again and again. And we do."

Optimistic attitude

Both Russ and Thurman say they're optimistic about the future for R.L. Duncan Construction.

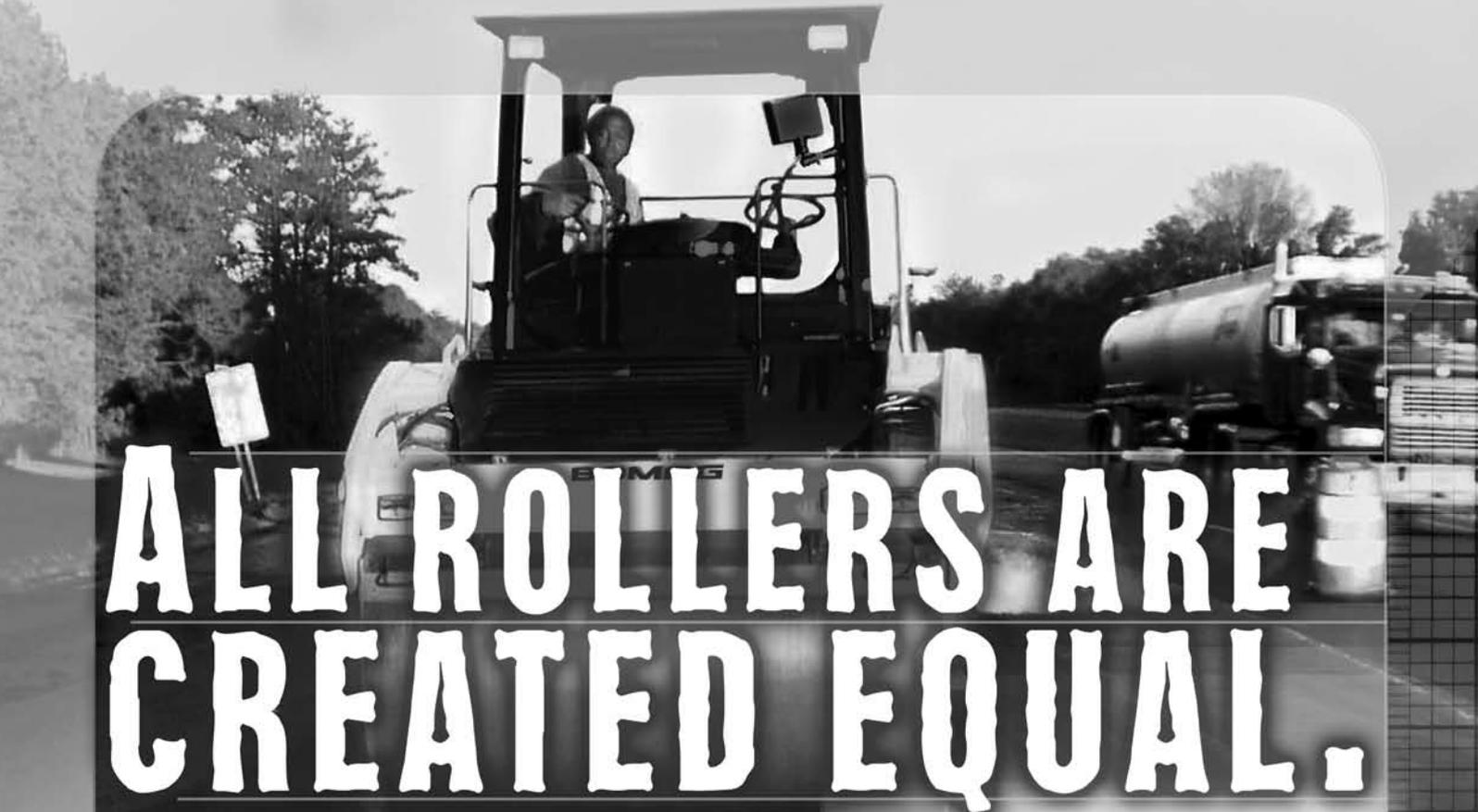
"I think we've done things the right way and have a good reputation," Thurman summarized. "Our goal is to continue to grow gradually, a little bit every year, and I think we can do that. Certainly, there are cycles in this industry, but we do a good job of staying on top of them."

"Things are a little sluggish right now, but there's still a fair amount of work in and around Kansas City," added Russ, who spends much of his time in the field overseeing jobs, while Thurman helps out doing takeoffs. "I don't foresee us going off in new directions anytime soon. We'll stick with what we know, which is moving dirt, grading pad sites and putting in pipe."

R.L. Duncan will also stick with Thurman's "can-do" attitude.

"This is America and I believe you can do anything you make up your mind to do," Thurman insisted. "I don't have much formal education, but through hard work, common sense and a determination to get the job done for my customers, I've done pretty well."

"In fact, I don't have to work anymore. The kids can run things just fine. I don't come in every day because I have to; I come in because I want to. I love this industry and I love what I'm doing and I'd be a little lost without it." ■



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NEW CONGRESS

What does the Democratic takeover mean for the construction industry?



Christian A. Klein

*This Guest Opinion, which first appeared in the newsletter, **Washington Insights**, was prepared by Christian Klein, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Associated Equipment Distributors. Mr. Klein can be contacted at cklein@potomac-law.com.*

With Democrats in control of both the House and Senate for the next two years, there are bound to be some changes coming out of Washington that will impact the construction and equipment industries. Here is some of what we think might happen.

Our association (Associated Equipment Distributors or AED) has long been recognized as a leading advocate for increased highway, airport and water infrastructure investment. Generally, Democrats have been more willing than Republicans across-the-board to support infrastructure programs and the user-fee increases necessary to pay for them. Democratic control of Congress may present an opportunity for an honest debate on crafting a new user-fee structure to pay

for the highway system and to develop a consistent funding mechanism for water infrastructure, among other things.

Additionally, Democrats have generally supported capital investment incentives such as the depreciation bonus. If there is a drop-off in business investment in the next two years, we may find Democratic support for accelerated depreciation.

However, one of AED's biggest issues, the death tax, doesn't face a bright future under the new regime. Democrats have by-and-large opposed efforts to permanently repeal the death tax. While it is possible that Democrats will accept scaled-back death-tax relief to take the issue off the table for the 2008 elections, this is highly speculative. Other industry-specific tax priorities are not generally as partisan and will likely depend on the desire of lawmakers to delve into broader tax and budget issues.

Watching the "Blue Dogs"

There is much speculation about the role the "Blue Dog" Democrats will play in the new Congress. Blue Dogs generally support pro-growth tax and regulatory policy, limited government, fiscal responsibility and infrastructure investment. During the last two years, AED has worked aggressively to build relationships with members of the Blue Dog coalition.

We're hopeful that given the relatively slim Democratic margin of control on Capitol Hill, Blue Dogs will be able to temper the Democratic agenda and remind their colleagues in leadership that policies that hurt America's family businesses ultimately wind up hurting the people those companies employ. ■

Associated Equipment Distributors says Democratic control of Capitol Hill might mean some good and some bad for the construction industry.





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MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

Can becoming a bilingual employer help you boost productivity without sacrificing safety?

Much of the information for this article comes from a seminar presented at CONEXPO 2005 by J.R. Gonzales, a former President of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Gonzales is also President of JRG Communications in Austin, Texas.

It's no secret that the United States is facing a labor shortage in the construction industry. Estimates show that in the next five years, the country as a whole will be short 8 million to 10 million workers, with construction being one of the hardest-hit industries. So where do employers turn to find the necessary manpower to keep up?

For many, it means hiring and training non-native workers, with the largest percentage coming from Spanish-speaking countries such as Mexico. Hispanic workers already make up as much as 25 percent of the country's construction work force with that number expected to rise to 47 percent by 2010.

With the rise in Hispanic workers comes an increase in language barriers that must be overcome in order to maintain productive and safe jobsites. OSHA standards require employers to train employees in all safety aspects on the job, no matter what language they speak. Employers also must make sure employees comprehend the training.

The standards were put in place to protect all workers, but the language barrier faced by Hispanic workers often hinders understanding of safe practices on the jobsite. That lack of understanding is seen as one of the major reasons Hispanic injuries and deaths on construction sites have risen as the population of Spanish-speaking workers grows.

Statistics show that Hispanic workers account for nearly 20 percent of all work-related deaths in the U.S., the largest number of fatalities among ethnic groups. A language barrier is often the cause, as workers don't understand the task assigned to them or the risks associated with it. They are unlikely to ask questions or point out unsafe practices for fear of losing jobs. Many workers also come from countries where safety is not a priority and don't realize the emphasis the U.S. places on protecting workers.

Overcoming the language barrier

There are several ways to overcome the language barrier that will benefit both the employer who speaks little or no Spanish and Hispanic workers who speak little or no English. It's hard to say which method is best. Each company must decide what will work best as it prepares for a diverse work force.

Hispanic workers make up as much as 25 percent of the United States work force with that number expected to rise to 47 percent by 2010.



“A key component in any business is good communication,” said J.R. Gonzales, a former President of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and President of JRG Communications, Inc. in Austin, Texas, during a session at CONEXPO in 2005. “Lack of communication leads to poor productivity and unsafe practices. It’s important that companies find a way to bridge the language barrier. The growing number of Hispanics in the work force is a trend that will continue upward.”

“The work force in the United States is growing more diverse, with Spanish as the primary language spoken among non-native workers,” he continued. “Employers should look at it as a challenge and step up to meet it head-on.”

Gonzales added that there are a number of ways to meet the challenge that require little financial outlay. Such an investment is especially economical because of the increased productivity that will result from workers who can communicate effectively with each other.

Seminars and conferences specifically tailored to the construction industry are available that will teach common words and phrases used on a construction site. These might be an initial step to consider for both English and Hispanic employees as they begin to work together. Such training can be a first step in learning a new language in order to eventually run a bilingual company.

Learning new language is beneficial

Many companies have arranged for Hispanic workers to take English classes taught by bilingual instructors. Classes are often offered at local community colleges and universities, as well as through community outreach programs. The courses are usually offered at night, leaving the worker free to be on the job during the day.

In conjunction, some companies are having their English-speaking staff take Spanish classes at the same time. This has proven



Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Safety Tips

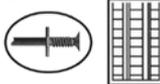
Working safely in trenches

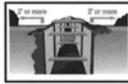


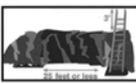
Do **NOT** enter an unprotected trench!

Each employee in a trench shall be protected from a cave-in by an adequate protective system.

Some of the protective systems for trenches are:

- Sloped for stability; or 
- Cut to create stepped benched grades; or 
- Supported by a system made with posts, beams, shores or planking and hydraulic jacks; or 
- Supported by a trench box to protect workers in a trench. 

Additionally, excavated or other materials must be at least 2 feet back from the edge of a trench; and 

A safe means of egress shall be provided within 25 feet of workers in a trench. 

For more complete information:



Occupational Safety and Health Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA
TTY (877) 889-5627

OSHA 3243-08R-05



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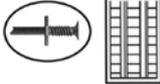
Trabajando de manera segura en una trinchera

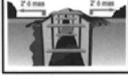


¡NO entre en una trinchera que careza de protección!

Todo empleado en una trinchera tiene que ser protegido de un derrumbe por un sistema de protección adecuado.

Algunos de los sistemas de protección para trincheras son:

- Inclinar para estabilidad, o 
- Cortar para crear pasos o niveles escalonados, o 
- Sostener por un sistema formado de postes, vigas, puntales o tablas con gatos hidráulicos, o 
- Sostener por una caja de zanja que proteja a los trabajadores en la trinchera. 

Además, los materiales excavados u otros materiales tienen que colocarse a un mínimo de 2 pies de la orilla de la trinchera y 

Un medio seguro de salida tiene que ser colocado en una trinchera a un máximo de 25 pies de los trabajadores. 

Para información más completa:



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www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA
TTY (877) 889-5627

OSHA 3243-08R-05

There are a number of useful resources available from a variety of sources, including OSHA’s Web site (www.OSHA.gov), where you can download and print materials, such as this trench safety card, which offers information in English on one side and Spanish on the other.

especially useful for supervisors and foremen who oversee Hispanic workers. It aids in communicating safety issues and ensures the worker understands his or her assigned tasks.

Some classes are designed to bring English and Hispanic workers together to learn both languages at the same time. Often, one or more interpreters are in the room, along with the instructor to help enhance students’ understanding. Some courses also offer students headsets that translate the instructor’s words into English or Spanish. The advantage of having a combined class is that workers don’t feel isolated and everybody gets the same information.

Continued . . .

Resources help employers educate workers

... continued

Useful materials

Other resources, including video presentations and publications in Spanish, augment language classes. Many can be obtained at little or no cost through organizations such as OSHA, the Associated General Contractors (AGC), the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) and NUCA (National Utility Contractors Association). Equipment manufacturers often provide materials in a variety of languages explaining how to use their equipment.

NUCA has bilingual safety instructors and consultants available to teach such practices as excavation safety and provide competent-person training and confined-entry-space training. OSHA has a Spanish-language Web page containing items such as posters, safety and health bulletins and other materials published in Spanish.

OSHA's Training Institute operates a number of education centers throughout the United States that offer Spanish-language safety-training courses. It also works with groups, such as the Hispanic American Construction Industries Association, to provide safety and health training.

Bilingual workplaces are becoming increasingly more common throughout the United States. There are numerous ways to ensure productivity and safety on all jobsites, despite a language barrier.



There are numerous Internet sites that supply online information in English and Spanish, and Web-based courses can be taken in a multitude of languages. Publications and safety materials, such as English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English dictionaries, are available online as well.

On-site practices can boost productivity

There are ways to help assimilate Hispanic employees into the work force that will minimize communication barriers on the jobsite. Once workers have been thoroughly trained and have a basic understanding of work and safety practices, it's best to assign tasks that appropriately fit their skills.

A best-case scenario is one where you have bilingual workers, who you can place in a group with English-only and Spanish-only workers. The bilingual employee can work as an interpreter, ensuring good communication between workers who only speak one language. As these employees work side-by-side, their skills at communicating with each other should improve. As mentioned before, helping workers become bilingual can pay big dividends in the long run.

If you don't have bilingual workers, group employees by their native language. In this way, each can communicate in his own language, lessening the chance of communication breakdowns between workers who don't understand each other. Supervisors should be bilingual in order to communicate effectively with each group of workers.

Always part of our culture

As more and more immigrant workers become part of the construction landscape, meeting the challenge of a diverse work force now will help ensure a safe and productive jobsite in the future.

"The number of employers and jobsites with non-English-speaking workers is constantly growing," Gonzales said. "Hispanics have always been part of the work force and will continue to be." ■

EQUIPMENT DESIGN BENEFITS

TOP GRADES

Visibility, blade geometry and ease of operation help set Komatsu motor graders apart

When it comes to operating heavy construction equipment, proficiency does not happen overnight. According to many industry experts, that fact applies to motor graders more than any other machine.

While wheel loaders and dozers use essentially one control stick to manage all functions of the machine, motor graders have more than a dozen different controls to monitor while moving at different speeds in forward and reverse.

“That’s why, for many contractors and many government entities, getting a good blade man is so important,” said Jenkins Davis, Director of Sales & Marketing Development for Komatsu America. “Many times, they will cater to grader operators because they’re so valuable. It’s very hard to replace somebody who’s a good blade man, due to the operational skills it takes to do the job.”

Direct drive and torque converter

With skilled operators in such demand, it makes sense to reduce the complexity of motor grader operation. Davis said the unique dual transmission of Komatsu motor graders helps do just that. At the flip of a switch, operators can go from Mode One, which is the direct-drive transmission, to Mode Two, which utilizes Komatsu’s unique torque-converter transmission. The top four gears in Mode Two offer automatic shifting, making the machine easier to manage.

“It just simplifies the whole operating process,” Davis described. “The best comparison I could make would be the difference of going from a stick shift to an automatic transmission in a car. Using a clutch and shifting in a car is somewhat similar to Mode One, which is the direct-drive concept. Mode Two, which is a torque converter, is similar to a regular power-shift car. It’s easier

to operate and that’s especially beneficial for younger and less-experienced operators.”

The current dual-transmission line of Komatsu motor graders has been out for several years now and, according to Davis, is tested and proven. “We were very successful with our previous line of motor graders,” Davis noted, “but as we looked at the evolution of the product, we believed some major design changes would make the product even better. That’s really what led to the development of our current line of graders.”

Other Komatsu advantages

In addition to easier operation, Davis said Komatsu graders feature an advanced hydraulic system, excellent visibility and superior blade geometry, all of which combine to provide improved power and performance at a jobsite.

The hydraulics help maximize speed and responsiveness. A closed-center system of valves allows fluid to flow to each individual implement, providing outstanding operator “feel” and unmatched implement control.



Jenkins Davis,
Director of Sales
& Marketing
Development,
Komatsu America
Corp.

Continued . . .

The GD555-3, with a 140- to160-variable-horsepower engine, is Komatsu’s smallest motor grader.



Grader design features help boost productivity

... continued

“Operators want an instantaneous response from the blade when they hit that lever,” Davis explained. “We think the hydraulics on our machine are superior to anything else on the market.”

The operator’s ability to clearly see the work underway is essential in grade work, too, and

the visibility of Komatsu graders sets them apart from competitors. The large front glass helps provide an unobstructed view of the moldboard and front tires. In addition, angled front and rear glass prevents dust buildup.

“The visibility to the blade is crucial,” concurred Bob Lessner, Product Manager, Motor Graders for Komatsu America. “That’s the working end of the machine and our visibility is probably equal to or better than any other manufacturer in the market today.”

Blade geometry is also an important design advantage of Komatsu motor graders. The unique blade-suspension system improves reach and allows a wide working range, including true 90-degree bank sloping.

Another design feature is parts commonality. “Many parts used in our excavators, wheel loaders and dozers are incorporated into Komatsu motor graders, so parts are readily available and technicians are knowledgeable about the product,” Davis pointed out. “That’s a tremendous benefit if a part needs to be replaced.”

Here’s another benefit of Komatsu motor graders: the GD655-3 and the GD675-3 machines are now equipped with a Tier 3 engine, which offers greater horsepower and improved fuel efficiency.

“We increased engine horsepower slightly by 10 horsepower,” Lessner said of the GD655. “It now has 180 to 200 horsepower with the Tier 3 engine. The other changes we made are in the cab. We have an electronic hand throttle now, whereas before it was a lever, so it’s more user-friendly.”

Operating options

Governmental work, including road maintenance and repair jobs, ditching and slope work, makes up 50 percent of motor grader sales in some areas of the country. “We have a motor grader to fit any job,” confirmed Davis. “Komatsu is very committed to the North American market and the motor graders are a big part of our product line, along with dozers, excavators and wheel loaders. We want to do everything we can to promote this product line because we think we’ve got something very special here.” ■

Brief specs on Komatsu Motor Graders

Model	Operating weight	Output	Overall Length
GD555-3 (Tier 2)	30,950 lbs.	140-160 hp	30’10”
GD655-3 (Tier 3)	33,069 lbs.	180-200 hp	32’4”
GD675-3 (Tier 3)	34,855 lbs.	180-200 hp	32’4”



Bob Lessner, Product Manager, Motor Graders, Komatsu America Corp. (left) stands in front of a Komatsu GD555-3 motor grader with Komatsu Motor Grader Consultant Jim Terrell.

The GD655 is slightly larger than the GD555 and is the biggest seller in Komatsu’s grader line. The GD655 and the GD675 are now available with a Tier 3 engine.





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UTILITY MACHINES

WORKING A NEW ANGLE

How feedback from contractors helped improve these popular compact excavators

In the 21st century, compact excavators are what skid steer loaders were in the late 20th century: highly maneuverable and versatile tools for the construction and landscape trades.

As is typically the case when a new piece of machinery is introduced into the market, contractors provide manufacturers with feedback that makes the machines more user friendly and productive. Komatsu relies heavily on customer feedback to engineer machines that meet the ever-expanding requirements of its customers. The Komatsu compact excavator line is no exception.

The market for compact excavators has grown more than 250 percent since 2002, and has exceeded the market for backhoe loaders. Part of the increase is due to economics, but a big part of the growth for these powerful products is the recognition by contractors that compact excavators are for real; they're productive, flexible and can do jobs and go places that larger machines can't.

A vast assortment of features

Komatsu compact excavators continue to advance by introducing features that contractors appreciate. To meet the wide range of customer requirements, Komatsu offers 10 models ranging from the 1,960-pound PC09 to the nearly 18,000-pound PC78MR. Features include:

- Pilot proportional joystick controls and load-sensing hydraulics that make operation smooth and effortless;
- Control-pattern changer that allows either backhoe or excavator operators to use the operating pattern they're most comfortable with;
- Boom offset that permits machines to work in very tight spaces;

- Three track options that allow customers to choose what's right for their business — standard rubber tracks, optional steel tracks for work in abrasive conditions, or optional Komatsu Road-Liner tracks that are ideal for work on pavement;
- A four-way, power-angle backfill blade option on PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 models that improves flexibility and backfilling productivity;
- A standard thumb-mounting bracket on the dipper arm (available in early 2007) that allows installation of a hydraulic thumb attachment without the need to weld on the arm;
- A significantly expanded range of attachments through a cooperation with Werk-Brau, a major manufacturer of excavator and backhoe attachments, will also be available in 2007.

With everything they have to offer, there's another reason to check out the lineup of Komatsu compact excavators. Now is the time to take advantage of Komatsu's zero-percent retail finance plans. ■



In 2006, Komatsu introduced the four-way, power-angle blade option on its PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 compact excavators to improve flexibility and backfilling productivity. This year will see the introduction of a standard thumb-mounting bracket on the dipper arm, as well as an expanded range of attachments.



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PRODUCT SUPPORT

CUSTOMER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Proactive product support can extend equipment life and save you money

If you're looking to get the most out of your equipment for the longest time, you might want to consider Komatsu Customer Support Programs (CSP). Komatsu distributors offer cost-effective CSPs to cover a full range of maintenance services, all designed to improve equipment productivity and reliability.

CSPs include Komatsu Oil & Wear Analysis (KOWA), which uses independent labs to test oil for wear metals and contaminants; PM-PRO, which is a planned maintenance program in which a distributor technician comes to your jobsite to perform all routine maintenance procedures including oil sampling; and Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI), which consist of a walk-around inspection and diagnostic tests to measure engine speed and hydraulic pressure to ensure your machine is working up to its capabilities.

Also offered is a repair and maintenance (R&M) program that uses machine histories and a proactive "before failure" approach to changing out parts and components. With an R&M agreement, you can schedule and budget all repair and maintenance items in advance.

Komatsu's Track Management System (TMS) helps you get the most out of your undercarriage. This CSP manages undercarriage wear to help you maximize usage and avoid costly downtime.

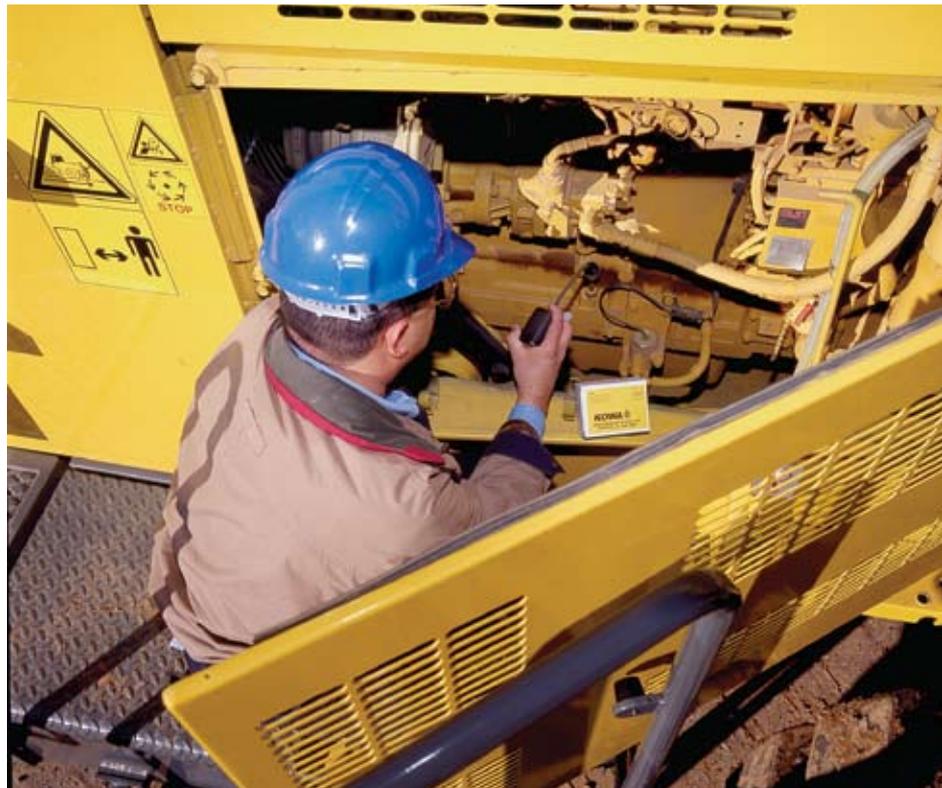
Also available is Komatsu ADVANTAGE Extended Coverage, which is a warranty that will take over when your initial new-machine warranty expires. It allows you to choose from full-machine or powertrain coverage, and select from among a number of options for the time period, hours and deductible.

Lower O&O costs

All Komatsu CSPs are designed to help you lower your owning and operating costs, improve equipment uptime and provide the longest productive life for your Komatsu machines. They also improve the resale value of your equipment by providing proof that the machine has been well maintained.

Feel free to talk to our service manager or a product support representative to learn more about Komatsu Customer Support Programs and how they can help you benefit your operation. ■

Oil sampling through the Komatsu Oil & Wear Analysis (KOWA) Customer Support Program is one of the best ways to reduce unexpected and costly equipment downtime and repairs.





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FIELD NOTES

QUARRY DAYS

Large machines take the spotlight at Komatsu proving grounds in Cartersville, Ga.

More than 200 equipment users from across the U.S. and Canada got an up close and personal look at numerous Komatsu machines designed for quarry, large construction and small mining applications at Komatsu Quarry Days late last year. The Quarry Days show was the first event to be held at Komatsu's new proving-ground site located at the Komatsu Training Center in Cartersville, Ga.

Similar to the former Komatsu Field Days, the manufacturer will now stage Quarry Days and similar shows in the future in order to provide equipment users with the opportunity to talk to product managers and field test the equipment. The difference from Field Days is that, rather than have machines of all sizes at the same show, Komatsu will now host smaller events that focus on a particular size class of equipment. Generally speaking, quarry machines range from the large end of the construction class of equipment to small mining-class machines.

Machines at Quarry Days consisted of dozers, (D85EX-15, D155AX-6, D275AX-5 and the new Tier 2-compliant D475A-5), excavators (PC400LC-7, PC600LC-8, PC800LC-8 and the new PC2000-8), wheel loaders (WA430-6, WA500-6 and WA600-6), rigid-frame trucks (HD605-7 and HD785-7), the HM400-2 articulated dump truck and the GD655-3 motor grader.

Complete lineup

Among the new machines at Quarry Days were the PC800LC-8 and PC2000-8, which replace the PC750 and the PC1800 in the Komatsu excavator lineup. Also new is the WA430-6 wheel loader, which replaces the WA400. Dozers at the show ranged from 264 horsepower to 890 horsepower.

"We believe our quarry-size group of machines is the most complete lineup in the industry and includes a number of units we consider to be unique and unrivaled products," said Komatsu Vice President of Product Marketing Erik Wilde. "We were pleased with the opportunity Quarry Days gave us to show these outstanding products to current and potential customers in a real-world environment." ■



This 100-ton HD785 haul truck breaks the ribbon at the grand opening of the new Komatsu demonstration site, which hosted its inaugural event, Quarry Days, late last year.



The new D275A-3 dozer with a Tier 3 engine was one of four Komatsu dozers at the Quarry Days event.



The new WA600-6 wheel loader, which improves productivity while dramatically lowering fuel consumption, is a significant upgrade from the previous model.



The new PC800LC-8 has more horsepower and greater stability than the PC750 it replaces.

PRODUCTIVITY POINTERS

THE KOMTRAX ADVANTAGE

How Komatsu's wireless equipment-monitoring system can help you improve productivity



Ken Calvert,
Director of IT Support



Chris Wasik,
Manager of Service
Support Programs

For more information on how KOMTRAX can work for you, contact our service department today.

By using all the capabilities of KOMTRAX, machine owners can improve field productivity and improve profitability.

Chances are you've heard of KOMTRAX, Komatsu's wireless system that allows you to monitor your equipment from your office computer or laptop. You may know it provides basic information, such as where a machine is and how many hours are on it, which is useful if a machine is stolen, and for service and maintenance. What you may not realize is that the new version of KOMTRAX can also be an extremely useful tool in improving your field productivity.

"Customers who use the full-range of KOMTRAX services have a distinct advantage over those who don't. It's really that simple," said Ken Calvert, Komatsu Director of IT Support. "How? By providing details on asset utilization. How many of your machines are actually working at any given time? Do you need more machines, or could you get by with fewer? Is a machine working or idling? Is it being run in Power mode or Economy mode; and if it's full power, is that really necessary or

is it a waste of fuel? These are all money matters that directly impact a contractor's bottom line."

"Of course, KOMTRAX is also still a valuable tool for scheduled maintenance and helping implement a repair-before-failure program for major components," added Chris Wasik, Manager of Service Support Programs for Komatsu. "But we believe KOMTRAX's operational information will help a contractor improve efficiencies, availability and profit."

The KOMTRAX difference

Komatsu is so convinced that wireless equipment monitoring is a true difference maker for equipment users that it's taken unprecedented steps to make the system available, affordable and user-friendly. These steps include:

- Factory installing KOMTRAX as standard equipment on almost every new Komatsu machine, and making it totally free for five years (top competitors charge more than \$2,000 for the hardware and installation, then also charge a monthly communication fee);
- Having a team of Komatsu and distributor personnel dedicated solely to monitoring KOMTRAX, and communicating with customers to help them keep costs and downtime to a minimum;
- Making the information easy to use and understand, including, in the not-too-distant-future, communicating KOMTRAX info to customers via e-mail.

"Right now, thousands of KOMTRAX-equipped machines are out in the field, but only a small percentage of customers actually use the data," observed Calvert. "We want to increase that number because we're convinced Komatsu customers who use KOMTRAX properly will be more productive and more profitable." ■



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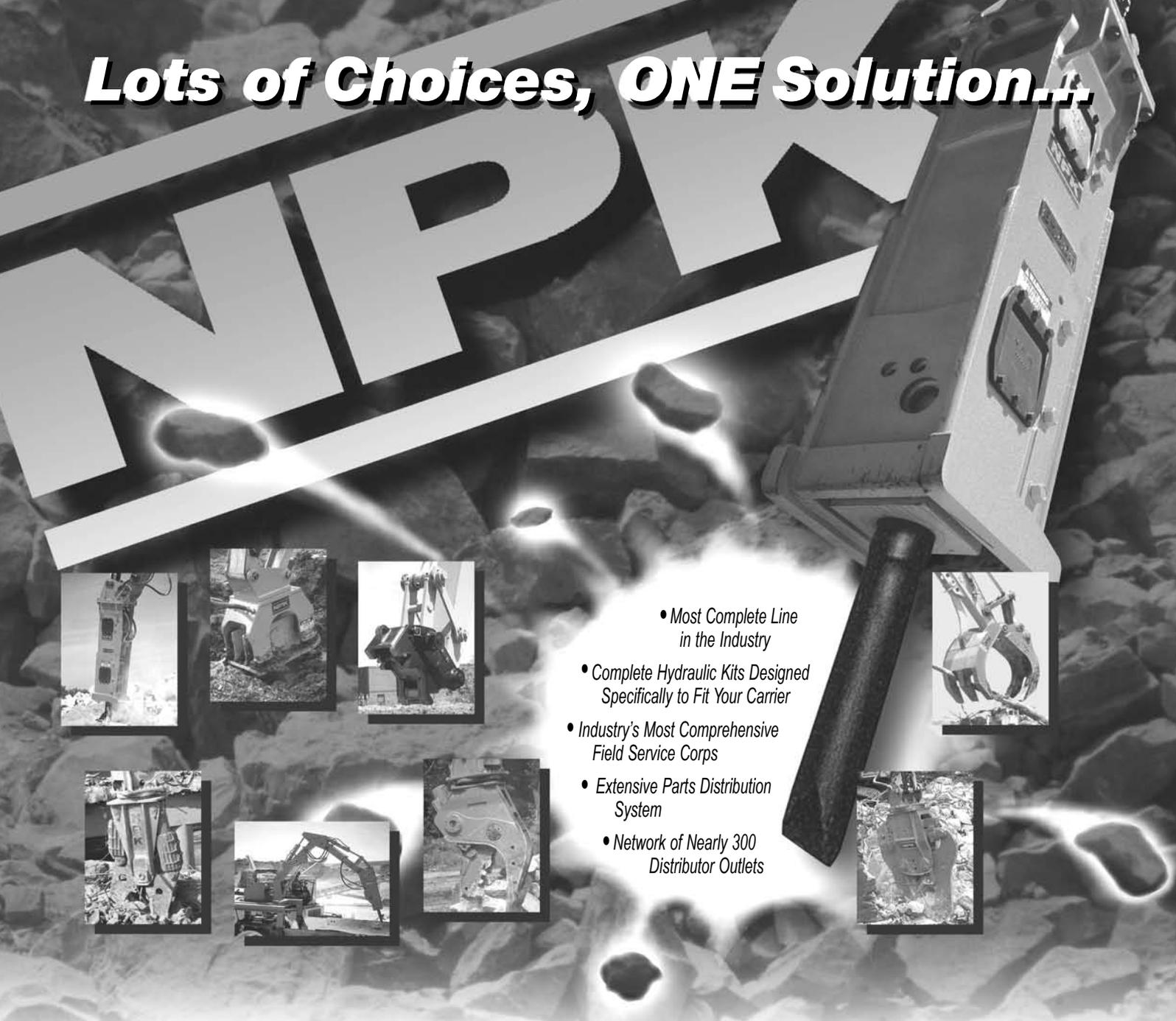
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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Serving customers better is the goal of V.P./General Manager of Construction Division

QUESTION: As someone relatively new to Komatsu, what are your initial thoughts on what the company does best?

ANSWER: As one of my former bosses used to say, "Product is King," and one of the things I've learned is that Komatsu products are excellent. We make very high-quality, technologically advanced equipment that's productive and reliable. We believe our products provide the best value in the industry when you take into account the performance, the uptime, the longevity and what you'll get in resale or trade-in.

QUESTION: At the other end of the spectrum, where does Komatsu need to improve?

ANSWER: The biggest thing is product support. Certainly, that's not unique to Komatsu. Probably every equipment manufacturer and every equipment dealer in the country would say they want to improve product support because that's where you create customer loyalty. From what people tell me, Komatsu has improved in that area in recent years. I believe we're doing a good job supporting our product now, but we're still not as good as we want to be or need to be. Our goal is continuous improvement that results in ever greater customer satisfaction.

QUESTION: What steps is Komatsu taking to improve the level of support?

ANSWER: The Komatsu Training and Demonstration Center in Cartersville, Ga., is a good example of a step we've taken to improve the quality of service we provide. It's a state-of-the-art facility that offers training for distributors' technicians, their in-house trainers and their customers. On the parts side of the

Continued . . .



Greg Hewitt,
V.P./General Manager Construction Division,
Komatsu America Corp.

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.

A native of Knoxville, Tenn., Greg Hewitt graduated from the University of Tennessee with a business degree, then joined the Maytag Company. Unlike the Maytag repairman of TV commercial fame, Greg was never the loneliest guy in the world while at Maytag. He spent 17 years there, where he earned an MBA and held a variety of increasingly important jobs. He left Maytag in 2004 to join Textron, a large multi-industry company, as Executive Vice President of the Jacobsen (professional mowers) Division.

Last November, Greg was recruited by Komatsu America Corp. to become V.P. and General Manager of the Construction Division. It's a new position in which Hewitt oversees all activities associated with planning, operations, selling and servicing Komatsu's construction-size equipment line, which consists of D31 to D275 dozers; PC120 to PC1250 excavators; WA150 to WA700 wheel loaders; GD555 to GD675 motor graders; articulated trucks; and rigid trucks less than 715 hp.

"Even though I had never worked in heavy equipment manufacturing, I knew Komatsu was a great company and that this was a great opportunity," said Hewitt. "Having been here for a while now, I'm even more excited about the prospects. One of Komatsu's strengths is a product that, in my opinion, across-the-board, is equal or superior to anything else out there. Our goal is to build on that strength to deliver an unprecedented level of satisfaction to customers."

Hewitt is married with two daughters, ages 8 and 12. "My work days can be fairly long. When I'm away from the job, I enjoy investing time with family, staying in shape, reading and traveling."

Komatsu to introduce new, small dozer line

... continued

support equation, we continue to open Regional Parts Depots to ensure that our distributors can get same-day or early next-morning delivery of virtually any part. We now have a fill rate in the high 90th percentile, which we'll put up against anybody in the world.

QUESTION: Product-wise, what should Komatsu customers be excited about this year?

Komatsu's focus on product support places an emphasis on training. The company's state-of-the-art Training and Demonstration Center in Cartersville, Ga., provides training for distributors' technicians and in-house trainers as well as customers.



To augment its larger dozer line, which includes machines such as this D155AX, Komatsu plans to introduce a new line of small dozers in 2007.

With a wide range of equipment from large mining machines to compact utility equipment, Komatsu produces high-quality, technologically advanced equipment that's productive and reliable. "We believe it's the best value in the industry," stated Greg Hewitt, V.P./General Manager Construction Division, Komatsu America Corp.



ANSWER: Our big launch in 2007 is a new, small dozer line (machines roughly in the 75- to 125-horsepower range). We believe our current Komstat dozers are excellent — highly productive and reliable — and that the new models will be best-in-class by a large margin.

QUESTION: If you had one-on-one time with a contractor who's trying to choose between a Komatsu machine and another leading brand, what would you tell him to convince him to buy Komatsu?

ANSWER: I would just give him the facts. Fact number one: if production is important, examine horsepower, digging speed, capacity, fuel efficiency, reliability — all of those things. Shop and compare. In most cases, we're going to come out on top. Fact number two: do some research on resale value. Due in part to our commitment to R&D and engineering, our machines last a long time and hold their value better than the competition. Fact number three: look at the big picture. We're a \$16 billion global company. With Komatsu and our distributors, you get the kind of cradle-to-grave total support that only the largest of companies can provide.

Lastly, I'd tell him to look for the best value. If he studies the machine owning and operating costs, we feel confident that Komatsu will be the choice more times than not.

QUESTION: What is Komatsu expecting from the construction economy this year?

ANSWER: We're fairly positive about the construction market. As everybody knows, housing is down, but everything else is holding its own. The overall industry forecast is for about a mid- to high-single-digit decrease in the total number of units sold this year. On the face of it, that doesn't sound great, but when you consider we're coming off a couple of all-time-record years, it's really not bad at all.

And frankly, at Komatsu, we think there's a potential for us to grow our business even in a slightly slower market. In the overheated environment we've been in, some manufacturers did well largely because they had inventory available. Now, with inventory more plentiful, customers will probably do more shopping around looking for the best value. We welcome that environment as an opportunity to prove our worth to an equipment user. ■

LONG HOURS AND SAFETY

New study indicates working overtime is not a major health or safety issue

There has long been a perception that working more than 40 hours per week adversely affects the health and safety of workers. There were even some research studies indicating that was the case. But now, a new study shows the connection between working overtime and experiencing safety and health problems might be overstated.

The study, published recently in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, found that people who work very long hours do indeed have an increased likelihood of health and safety problems — however, it also found that other factors, such as previous health problems, actually have a much stronger effect on overall worker health, safety and productivity.

“Our results challenge the assumption that each hour of work above 40 hours steadily increases health and safety risks and reduces productivity,” said Allen Harris Jr., Ph.D., lead author of the report. “In fact, no adverse effects were found until the 60-hour-per-week mark.”

Even when workers reached the 60-hour-per-week mark, Allen noted that “the effects were limited to an increased risk of workers’ compensation episodes for hourly female employees with a history of workers’ comp episodes, and to an increased risk of new musculoskeletal diagnoses for older workers.” People not in those categories did not show any added risk.

More emphasis on prior health

The study was based on a sample of nearly 2,800 people who work at a heavy manufacturing company. Presumably, the results are also applicable for other industries, including construction, where long hours are often the norm.

According to the researchers, moderate overtime (48-59 hours per week) had no bearing on employee health and safety, regardless of their job or demographic characteristics.

“Although work hours are a factor, they should be considered alongside previous health and other factors that comprise the larger context within which employee health, productivity and safety outcomes are determined,” said William Bunn, M.D., co-author of the report. “On both the research and policy fronts, more emphasis needs to be focused on prior health and other antecedents to the number of hours worked that better predict employee safety, lost productivity and future health.” ■

It has long been speculated that working long hours, which is not unusual in the construction industry, might negatively impact the health and safety of workers.

However, a recent study by Allan Harris Jr., Ph.D., and William Bunn, M.D., indicates that may not be the case.

Today’s advanced equipment, such as this Komatsu excavator, is specifically designed for operator safety and comfort, which also makes construction safer.



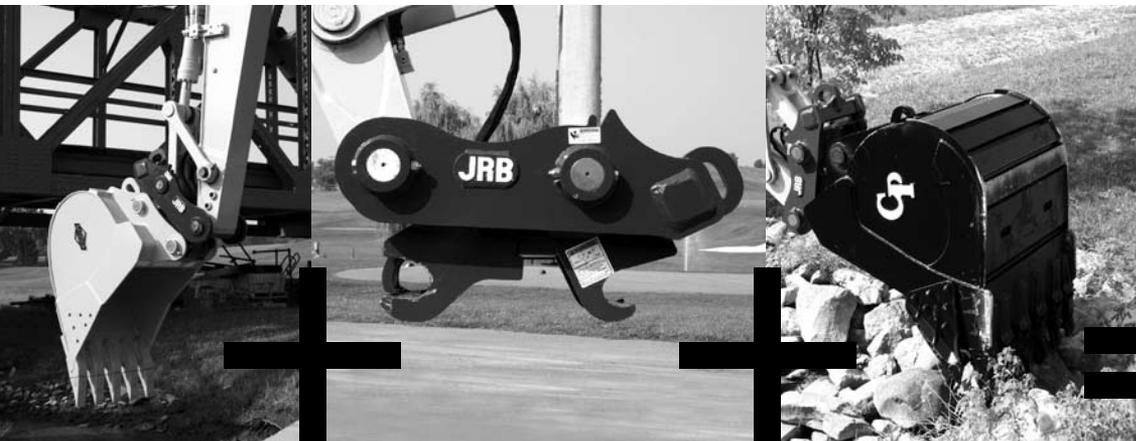
New alert for "gray market" machines

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a new "gray market" enforcement alert, according to Associated Equipment Distributors. Gray market machines are imported from other countries and may not meet U.S. emissions or safety standards.

Under the Clean Air Act, the manufacture or importation of any nonroad engine is prohibited, unless the EPA certifies it and the engine displays the required EPA emissions label.

In the late 1990s, a gray market enforcement program was established by EPA and the Customs Service to combat a flood of illegal equipment imports. The latest alert is the first such action since that time. It is in response to a recent increase in imports of smaller equipment from Asia with illegal engines.

Imported equipment with engines that fail to meet EPA requirements is subject to seizure and exportation. The importers of such illegal equipment or engines can be fined as much as \$32,500 per engine. ■



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To learn more about Komatsu ReMarketing's Distributor Certified Used Equipment, contact your local Komatsu Distributor or go to our Web site at www.equipmentcentral.com and click on "used equipment."



DISTRIBUTOR CERTIFIED

QUALITY USED EQUIPMENT

How Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines have helped this utility contractor grow



Since starting an underground utility company in Fort Myers, Fla., about ten years ago, Jim Murphy has seen the firm grow from a handful of people to about 60 today. Certainly, some of that growth is attributable to a Gulf Coast economy that boomed during that period, but equally important is the quality of work that J.P. Murphy, Inc. is known for doing.

“Our philosophy is to get the work done fast and give the customer top quality for the dollar,” said Murphy. “Whether

Jim Murphy, Owner and Founder of J.P. Murphy, Inc., owns more than a dozen Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines, including numerous WA320 wheel loaders. “With Komatsu Distributor Certified Used equipment, we get high-quality used equipment that’s been inspected and certified, and we know our Komatsu distributor is going to back it up.”



Among J.P. Murphy’s Distributor Certified Used machines is this PC600LC-6, which is the company’s mainline utility machine.



it’s commercial work, residential work or municipal work, we believe in providing value for the developer or municipality that hires us.”

A perfect fit

As his company has grown, so has his equipment fleet, most of which consists of Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines.

“We probably have at least 15 Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines,” reported Murphy, whose fleet includes half a dozen Komatsu WA320 wheel loaders, numerous Komatsu excavators ranging up to a PC600, and a couple of small dozers. “I’ve always preferred to buy slightly used equipment to let somebody else pay for the initial depreciation, so the Komatsu Distributor Certified used program was a perfect fit for us. We get high-quality used equipment that’s been inspected and certified, and because of that, we know our Komatsu distributor is going to back it up.

“The other thing that’s important to me is the Distributor Certified pieces we buy tend to be very good, low-hour machines, so they qualify for extended warranties and special rates from Komatsu Financial,” he added. “The low interest rates make an affordable machine even more affordable, and as a result, I’ve gotten some very good deals.”

Murphy says most of the Komatsu Distributor Certified machines he owns were less than a year old and had fewer than 3,000 hours when he bought them. “I believe in buying good machines, maintaining them well, and holding on to them for the long term. With these Komatsu Distributor Certified pieces, I expect to get five to eight years out of them, at least.” ■



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