

JANUARY 2020



Tractor Times



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dan Stracener

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Dear Valued Customer:

Charles Dickens once wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Although that may be a bit of an exaggeration in relation to the current state of construction, it does seem somewhat fitting. During the past several years, the industry has enjoyed significant gains across nearly every market sector, and unemployment is low.

On the flip side is the continuing struggle to find construction workers, specifically equipment operators. Industry groups have taken steps to recruit and retain new people to fill the numerous open positions. As people retire or otherwise leave the industry, they take a wealth of knowledge with them.

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

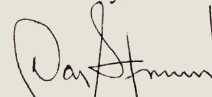
Speaking of dozers, if you are in need of a large, low-ground-pressure machine, Komatsu's new D155AX-8 LGP is a great fit. It's especially good for applications such as energy and pipeline work. Find out more inside.

There are a couple of interesting case studies in this issue of your TEC Tractor Times magazine. One focuses on how a contractor gets jobs done faster and more efficiently with an *intelligent* Machine Control dozer. The second, takes a look at a governmental entity that's seeing similar results with a Komatsu GD655 motor grader.

Finally, I encourage you to check out the CONEXPO-CON/AGG preview that provides some insight into what you will find at the triennial event that will be held in Las Vegas in March. We've included a location map to help you find your way around. I hope you can make it to the "World's Largest Heavy Metal Show" in 2020.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please call or stop by one of our branch locations, or contact your TEC sales representative.

Sincerely,



Dan Stracener
President



Tractor Times

TEC1943.com

IN THIS ISSUE

YELLOWHAMMER ENERGY SOLUTIONS, LLC pg. 4

Providing energy and reclaiming abandoned coal mines are the focus for this young Alabama firm. Read the details inside.

CONCRETE ENTERPRISES LLC pg. 8

See how the new owners of this growing Georgia company strive to serve customers in an environmentally responsible manner.

INDUSTRY EXTRAVAGANZA pg. 13

CONEXPO-CON/AGG returns to Las Vegas in March with a record number of exhibitors. Read more inside.

DESIGN INNOVATION pg. 17

Understand Proactive Dozing Control technology, which uses real-time data for more precise grading from first to last pass.

CASE STUDIES pg. 20 & 22

See why a contractor is reporting improved productivity beyond traditional measures, thanks to its D65PXi-18 dozer.

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

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT pg. 25

Learn what makes Komatsu's D155AX-8 LGP dozer well-suited for applications that require low ground pressure.

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YELLOWHAMMER ENERGY SOLUTIONS, LLC

Alabama company provides energy, mine reclamation



Jason Rudakas,
President and
Co-owner



Brian Lewis,
Vice President and
Co-owner

Brian Lewis and Jason Rudakas teamed up to establish Yellowhammer Energy Solutions in September 2014 after working together for several years at Birmingham Coal and Coke Company. For Lewis, working in the coal industry runs generations deep in his family.

"My dad and uncle moved here in '77 to mine and broker coal for their dad," said Lewis. "So, I grew up around the business. They eventually owned Birmingham Coal and Coke before it was purchased by a Canadian company in 2011.

"I'd seen out-of-state companies buy local businesses and then layoff people. Jason and I wanted something in our back pocket in case that happened to us," continued Lewis. "We worked for the company until it filed for bankruptcy. Once that happened, we bought

several assets from the bankruptcy sale to start Yellowhammer."

Based in Birmingham, Yellowhammer is a member of the Alabama Coal Co-op and works with several other coal-mining operations throughout the state to provide resources for Alabama Power Company.

"There's a lot of industry here that needs the coal we produce," noted Rudakas. "We're a mid-level producer in this market. We sell every ton that we mine; there's no excess material."

Increased efficiency

Yellowhammer originally operated out of Posey Mill mine before transitioning to their current location at Slate Creek in Walker County in 2016. Typically, the firm produces 12,000-13,000 tons of coal per month and

A Yellowhammer Energy Solutions operator moves coal using a Komatsu HD325 haul truck at the company's Slate Creek mine in Walker County, Ala.





Operator Jonathon Hicks uses a Komatsu PC1250LC-11 to load coal into the bed of a Komatsu HD465 haul truck at Yellowhammer's Slate Creek mining site. "The 1250 is the best machine that I've been on," said Hicks. "It's light so that I can move around in bad material or soft ground, and it's quick and powerful enough where I can get the job done."



brokers an additional 4,000-5,000 tons. To reach its current production levels, it traded in several older pieces of equipment and added a Komatsu PC1250LC-11 excavator as well as multiple Komatsu HD325 and HD465 haul trucks.

"We were originally running a PC1800 with more than 30,000 hours, and a PC1250 with around 16,000 hours that resulted in more downtime than we liked," explained Lewis. "We were probably around 50 employees and running two, nine-hour shifts, six days a week. And, we shipped an average of 28 loads a day.

"After adding the new 1250 and the trucks, we run five days a week with one ten-hour shift," continued Lewis. "We're at 35 employees and are still producing about 24 loads a day. Our production levels have stayed about the same; however, our efficiency has almost doubled."

Before purchasing the new equipment, Lewis and Rudakas compared multiple brands and decided to stay with Komatsu.

"Our mechanics are familiar with the excavator and our operators enjoy running the machine," said Rudakas. "We debated buying an excavator with a larger bucket but realized we could get the same efficiency from the PC1250. We wanted quicker cycle times to fill up and get the next truck in without having the excavator wait. The 1250 fits in perfectly with our goals."

The machine's versatility makes it an asset, according to veteran operator Jonathon Hicks.

"The 1250 is the best machine that I've been on," said Hicks. "It's light so that I can move around in bad material or soft ground, and it's quick and powerful enough where I can get the job done. It's more nimble and agile than some of the bigger machines."

Reclaiming abandoned mines

Before starting their own business, Lewis and Rudakas were involved with reclamation projects at various mining sites. They continue to make reclamation of nonoperational mines a part of their services.

Continued . . .

'TEC is always there if we need anything'

... continued

"Our previous employer was one of the largest reclamation contractors in Alabama," offered Rudakas. "Some of the people who worked there are now with Yellowhammer and are experienced with those types of jobs. This makes us very confident and comfortable bidding reclamation work for bonding companies, the state or the surface mining commission."

Yellowhammer, named after the state bird, is capable of taking a mine in any condition and returning it to a natural mold that blends in with local geography.

"We can take a project from A to Z," said Rudakas. "We worked on one abandoned mine that was left with a highwall and piles of spoil everywhere. We regraded the highwall to a natural contour; cleaned up the ponds and made sure they would discharge naturally; and then added topsoil and vegetation. It's nearly impossible to tell a mine was there at one time."

"Our goal is to leave an area better than when we started," added Lewis. "The projects that our employees did 20 years ago, now look just like typical forests, and some may have been harvested and replanted since the reclamation."

At its Slate Creek operation, Yellowhammer reclaims the land as soon as it finishes mining an area.

"It's much different than what some people think about as far as West Virginia mining or other types of mining where mountaintops are removed," explained Rudakas. "With surface mining, we're reclaiming as we go. We know what the surface looked like before we started, so the land will be returned to approximately the original contour."

TEC delivers

When upgrading its fleet, Yellowhammer turned to Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Robert Boehme to find the right machines. It also utilizes TEC for maintenance on its equipment.

"When running a coal operation, it's as much equipment maintenance as anything," noted Lewis. "If our machines are down, we're sinking. Jason is really heads up with that side of things and has been knocking it out of the park."

"Ben (Osborn, TEC Product Support Sales Rep) and the service department are also on top of everything," added Rudakas. "We rely on them heavily at times, and TEC is always there if we need anything."

Branching out to aggregates

A major part of Yellowhammers' success is due to its ability to identify new areas with energy resources. Expanding beyond coal mining into the aggregate industry will be a key focus as the company continues to grow.

"We've been looking at quarries for a few years," said Rudakas. "It's about the reserves. With a coal mine, you probably have reserves of three, five or maybe six years of surface mining. In comparison, a rock quarry is a smaller area with reserves for 30 to 100 years." ■

(L-R) Vice President Brian Lewis and President Jason Rudakas call on Tractor & Equipment Company and Sales Rep Robert Boehme for their equipment and service needs.



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CONCRETE ENTERPRISES LLC

Expanding Albany, Ga., company offers wide array of services while focusing on environmental responsibility



(L-R) Concrete Enterprises Co-owner Jason Wiggins, Truck Driver Dannie Jones and Co-owner Luke Bryan meet at the company's Albany, Ga., facility. Wiggins and Bryan are childhood friends and purchased the business in 2015.

Country music singer and songwriter Luke Bryan and entrepreneur Jason Wiggins have been good friends since they were four years old. When Bryan's music career took off after releasing the hit single "All My Friends Say" and moving to Nashville, he remained close with Wiggins, who found success working in real estate in their hometown of Leesburg, Ga. The lifelong friends spent nearly a decade investing in smaller ventures together before deciding to purchase Concrete Enterprises in 2015.

"Of course, we knew nothing about concrete when we bought the company," joked Wiggins. "I had experience with heavy equipment, but it was tractors and combines rather than mixing trucks, excavators and crushers. Concrete Enterprises was the right fit because we wanted to invest in a company

A Concrete Enterprises operator moves demolition material into a Kleemann MOBIREX MR 110 Zi EVO 2 mobile impact crusher with a Komatsu PC360LC excavator. The company also deploys a Kleemann KW80 radial stacking conveyor to sort screened material. "The people at TEC were fantastic in keeping us going," stated Co-owner Jason Wiggins. "We started out renting the equipment to get a good feel for it on what was kind of a handshake deal. It worked out well because they sold us an excavator, a crusher and a stacker, as well as a dozer."

► VIDEO





At its facility in Moultrie, Ga., a Concrete Enterprises operator uses a Komatsu PC360LC excavator to load a Kleemann MOBIREX MR 110 Zi EVO 2 mobile impact crusher. "We wanted an excavator to pair with the crusher for maximum efficiency, and Scott (Burson, TEC Sales Rep) suggested the PC360," noted Co-owner Jason Wiggins.

with a good name that had been around a while. The idea was to either grow and sell one day, or I could pass it on to my son."

The business, headquartered in Albany, Ga., has more than tripled in size from 33 employees in 2015 and now has locations throughout Georgia and the Florida Panhandle. It has also added multiple divisions, including ready-mix concrete; mobile crushing; sand distribution; trucking; roll-off containers; C&D; porta-toilets; and custom brick, block, stone and wood sales. Wiggins notes that hiring the right people has been the key to the firm's success.

"Early on, we were very fortunate to retain some of the people who had been with the company for 40-plus years, which helped keep the business going steady," said Wiggins. "From there, we hired the best people from the fields that we were interested in and let them run with it. We've grown 100 percent through our employees; Luke and I have had very little to do with that."

Thinking green

When young entrepreneurs enter a market, they often bring fresh concepts that challenge the status quo. For Wiggins and Bryan, that means finding ways to be environmentally responsible, yet profitable in the crushing business.

"We're a newer and unknown entity in the industry with some ideas that can help the environment through the recycling part of the business and add to our bottom line at the same time," stated Wiggins. "It's cool that we're using equipment to crush something that would primarily go into a landfill and, instead, produce material that's reusable. As an added effect, the process also conserves the amount of granite, limestone, sand and other natural resources that we're pulling out of the earth."

Although he says he's far from a politician, Wiggins envisions the creation of sustainability laws that could benefit the industry as well as the public.

"The first step is educating people about what we're doing and that this material would otherwise sit in a landfill for hundreds or thousands of years and never go away," explained Wiggins. "It's expensive to recycle, so we'd like to see a tax incentive that could expand the number of people who want to create reusable material. The process could help conserve landfill space, while limiting potential long-term environmental effects."

To meet the increasing demand for its crushing services, Concrete Enterprises employs a mobile fleet that can travel to jobsites throughout its territory.

"We'll go nearly anywhere as long as the job is sizable enough to run our equipment

Continued . . .

'The service from TEC has been fantastic'

... continued

efficiently," offered Wiggins. "We worked with a farmer who took nearly 6,000 tons of rock out of his fields through the years, and we turned it into a very good base for him. We'll also crush and buy back material from anyone who wants it removed for environmental or aesthetic purposes."

When it comes to pouring concrete, there's no project too big or too small for Concrete Enterprises.

"A dog kennel means just as much to us as pouring 5,000 yards," noted Wiggins. "We need to be pretty versatile in this geography. We're probably the only company that can handle the smallest to the largest jobs. One of our bigger projects included building a platform to hold an elaborate boiler system for Proctor & Gamble. We also go to the Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany almost weekly to pour concrete for its facilities and are also working on a 3,000-acre solar-panel field."

TEC, Kleemann the right fit

Machine durability and limited downtime were two of the most important factors for Concrete Enterprises when it looked for new crushing and screening equipment. After

testing the market to find the best fit, Wiggins decided to partner with Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Scott Burson for the company's equipment needs.

"We were running into problems with metal and foreign objects from demo piles causing our previous screening equipment to lose belts and such," said Wiggins. "Scott brought us a Kleemann screen as well as an 80-foot stacker so that we could learn more about it. We wanted an excavator to pair with the crusher for maximum efficiency, and Scott suggested the PC360."

Concrete Enterprises rented the Kleemann MOBIREX MR 110 Zi EVO 2 mobile impact crusher, Kleemann KW80 conveyor, Komatsu D61PX dozer and Komatsu PC360LC excavator for a jobsite where crews screened 125,000 tons of demolition material during a two-month span. During this time, Wiggins knew the equipment was the right fit.

"The people at TEC were fantastic in keeping us going," stated Wiggins. "We started by renting the equipment to get a good feel for it on what was kind of a handshake deal. It worked out well because we bought everything."

The company relies on TEC to service the equipment and keep it running efficiently.

"Things can happen to any equipment; however, the way it's handled makes the biggest difference," explained Wiggins. "We appreciate all the help we get from our distributor, and we will support them going forward. The service from TEC has been fantastic."

Serving the area with further diversification

Finding new ways to generate business remains the long-term goal for Concrete Enterprises. It plans to introduce additional services and continue expanding those it currently offers.

"Our business has grown a lot faster than we ever dreamed, and we look toward continued expansion," said Wiggins. "We plan to diversify to be a one-stop-shop to play a key role in future projects in our area." ■

Concrete Enterprises Co-owner Jason Wiggins (right) works closely with TEC and Sales Rep Scott Burson for a variety of equipment to run his company's quickly growing mobile crushing and screening business.



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INDUSTRY EXTRAVAGANZA

'LARGEST HEAVY METAL SHOW'

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

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

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

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

"This show is shaping up as one of the best ever; attendees and exhibitors will not be disappointed," said Mary Erholtz,

Continued . . .



Gearing up for 'best possible experience'

... continued



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CONEXPO-CON/AGG Chair. "AEM (Associated Equipment Manufacturers, the show's lead sponsor) and our show committees of industry leaders are working hard to deliver an outstanding event focused on the latest innovations, technologies and best practices to succeed in our changing world."

'Smart city' display

Similar to 2017, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will emphasize technology. The Tech Experience returns and focuses on three areas that impact the industry: modern mobility; sustainability and sustainable building; and smart cities, according to Al Cevero, Senior Vice President Construction, Mining & Utility at AEM.

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

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

the future within the city and how equipment will communicate.

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

Multitude of education sessions, tracks

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

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

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



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PROACTIVE DOZING CONTROL

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

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

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

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

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

Improving productivity

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

Continued . . .



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

▶ VIDEO



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

'Entirely new level of efficiency'

... continued

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

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

integrated system now lets operators use automation any time."

A difference in data

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

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

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

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

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

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





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HEAVY-DUTY DIRT MOVER

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



Jeff Peterson,
President



Tim Peterson,
Vice President



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Added value

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

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

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

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

► VIDEO



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PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

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



Wesley Link,
Crew Foreman



Jay Clement,
Operator

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

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

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

Eliminating stall outs

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

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

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

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

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

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



▶ VIDEO

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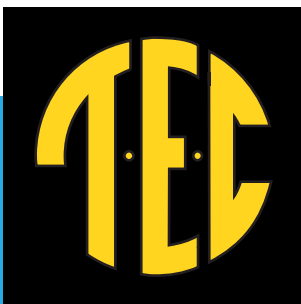


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NEW SPECIALTY DOZER

Machine minimizes ground disturbance while providing high production on sensitive jobsites

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

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

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

Fewer passes to move more

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

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

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



Chuck Murawski,
Komatsu Product
Manager

Brief Specs for Komatsu's D155AX-8 LGP Dozer

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

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





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IMPROVING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

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

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

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

QUESTION: What other new programs can assist customers?

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

QUESTION: Does Komatsu still maintain its other support initiatives?

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

Continued . . .



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

Chris Wasik,
Komatsu Director of
Parts Marketing

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

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

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

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

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

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



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ABOVE-AVERAGE WAGES

Amid growing labor shortage, construction earnings continue to rise



Stephen E. Sandherr,
AGC Chief
Executive Officer

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

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

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

them have ever experienced,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, AGC’s Chief Executive Officer.

“Making matters worse, relatively few school districts offer the kind of career and technical education programs that encourage students to explore careers in high-paying fields like construction.”

Little to no experience required

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

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

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

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



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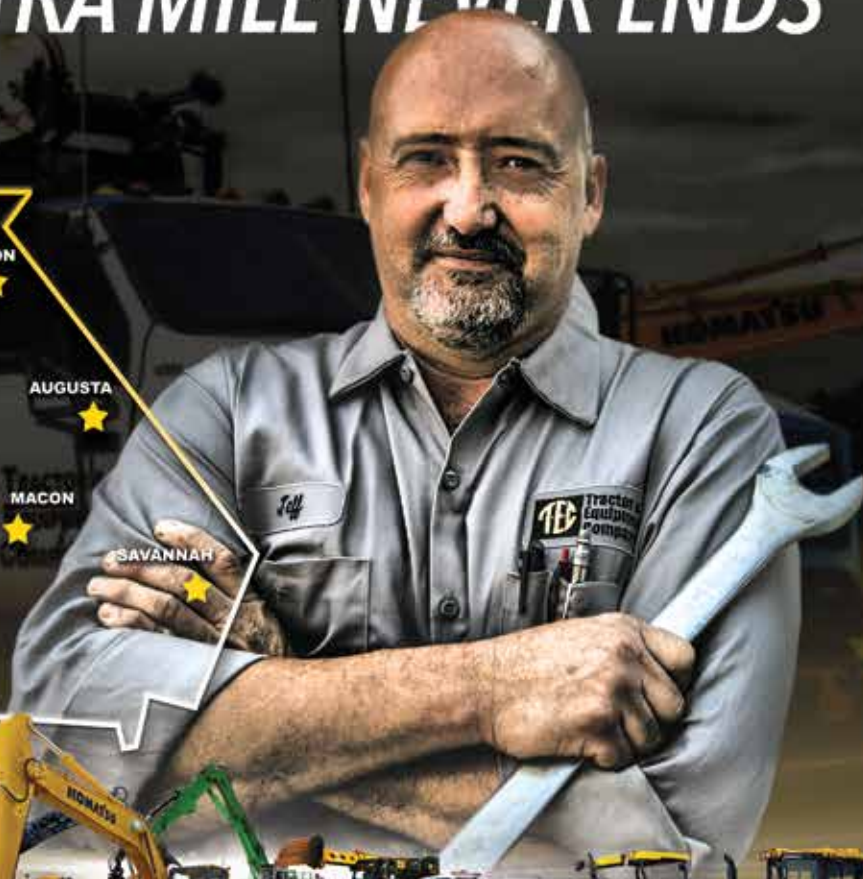
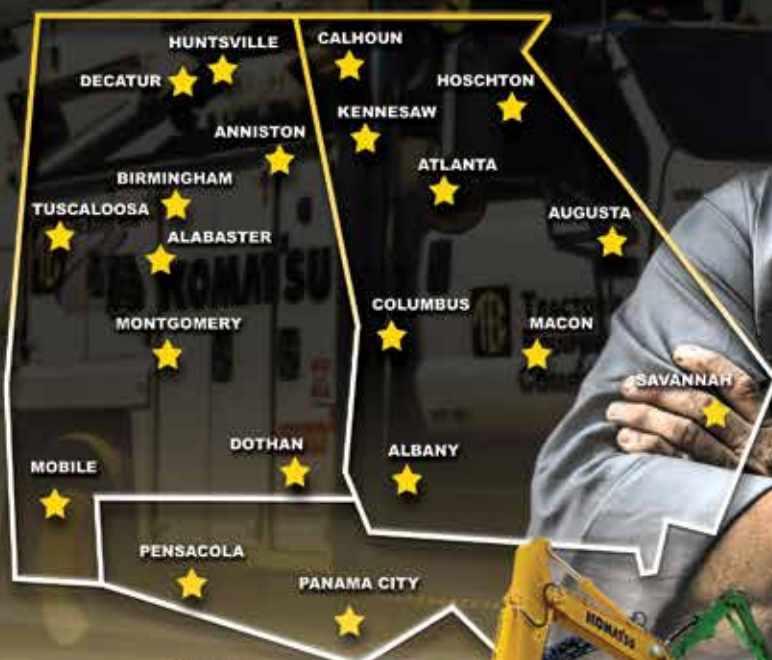


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