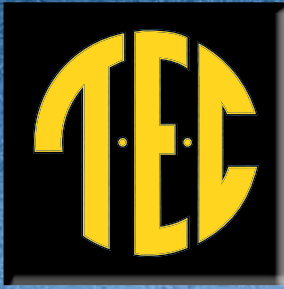


April 2021



Tractor Times



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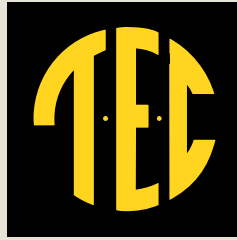
intelligent 2.0
MACHINE CONTROL

A Message from the President



Chad Stracener

**Looking
forward to
what's ahead**



Dear Valued Customer:

We hope your year is off to a good start. Like you, we were pleased to see the end of 2020. With renewed optimism, we look forward to better things in 2021 and beyond. Although there is still a bit of uncertainty in some markets, many experts are forecasting positive results.

There are always questions whenever the term 2.0, 3.0 or any other update is mentioned. Is this new version really an upgrade? Will it improve my operations and make us more productive? When it comes to Komatsu's intelligent Machine Control (iMC), the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Komatsu was the first to bring integrated GPS grade control to the market, and we are excited to show you how iMC 2.0 dozers and excavators build on the originals. Look inside this issue of your TEC Tractor Times magazine to learn more.

The first iMC 2.0 dozers, the D51i-24 and D61i-24, were recently recognized as top products; however, they were not the only Komatsu machines to earn that designation. Several standard and specialty products also made the list. Look for the article that highlights them and how they were designed and manufactured with input from customers like you.

Komatsu is also at the forefront of technology to make your overall operations more efficient. Its innovative Smart Construction suite of solutions helps your business improve operations across all steps of the construction process. They can digitally transform your job site and potentially make you more profitable. Read more about one solution, Smart Construction Remote, inside.

We thank you for your business and partnership. As always, if there's anything we can do for you, please call one of our branch locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chad Stracener'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Chad Stracener
President



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Griffin Grading & Concrete, LLC has increased business through focusing on Federal contracts and doing things 'the right way'



Andy Poe,
General Manager
and Vice President

In November 2019, Andy Poe took over as General Manager and Vice President of Griffin Grading & Concrete, LLC which is wholly owned by Griffin Lumber Company, a local family-owned sawmill. Based out of Cordele, Ga., the firm is a heavy civil construction company, with an emphasis on pipe laying, mass earth moving, culverts, concrete paving, structural concrete pouring, asphalt paving, clearing and underground utility installation. The company has rapidly grown under Poe's leadership, due in large part to his extensive knowledge of the construction industry.

"Growing up, my Dad owned his own commercial construction company. He taught me how to run tractors and finish concrete by the time I was 12 years old," recalled Poe. "After attending Georgia Southern University, I started my own construction company and would occasionally subcontract for Griffin. However, I was a small operator and the economic downturn in 2008 took a big toll on my company. In 2012, I stopped operations and joined Griffin as their concrete division manager.

"In the beginning, the company was about as small as you can imagine," added Poe. "We

started out with tearing down houses, some site work for a strip mall and doing whatever else was available. Since I've joined the company, we've grown from 20 employees to 68 and have increased our revenue from 1 million annually to 20 million-plus. We've also shifted our focus toward federal work, which doesn't fluctuate as much as other sectors when the economy turns south.

"We prefer to take on jobs that are between 1 million and 2.5 million dollars and are within a 200-mile radius of Cordele," continued Poe. "Ideally, we would like to self-perform everything for a given contract. We're very close to achieving that, which is important, because then we won't have to rely on other contractors' timelines to finish projects."

While Griffin continues to grow, Poe maintains that keeping a family-based mentality is the key to the firm's success. "Everyone here respects each other and does what's right – no questions asked. At the end of the day, this business is about relationships and taking care of our employees and our customers. As long as we continue not to cut any corners, we will build a long-lasting company."

Wide range of projects

How do you measure the success of a company? For Griffin Grading & Concrete, that comes down to quality of work and profitability on each job. Recently, the firm has taken on a wide range of projects that fit both categories.

"We completed the refueling station at Moody Air Force Base, then built several pads for hangars at Robins Air Force Base as well as performing their taxiway work," offered Poe. "We've also done a lot of grading work for schools, including self-performing the grading and concrete pouring for one of the largest schools in Georgia at the time. However, we're continuing to transition away from private work and seeking more Federal, GDOT and FDOT contracts.

"Specifically, I prefer taking on GDOT pedestrian improvement contracts where we redo or install six or seven miles of sidewalk throughout town," continued Poe. "We also have a knack for small, private airport work



Operator Chance Lee Clark moves dirt using a Komatsu WA320 wheel loader at Griffin Grading & Concrete's Perry-Houston County Airport apron expansion project. "The bucket has excellent power, and I can get a full load with it," said Clark. "The machine is easy to operate as well. The joystick puts all of the bucket controls at my fingertips."

► VIDEO





► VIDEO

Operators work together using a Komatsu D39PXi-24 dozer and a Komatsu PC360LCi-11 excavator to replace damaged storm drain at an airport. “(A) major factor in our decision to partner with TEC was the intelligent Machine Control (iMC) technology on the Komatsu dozers and excavators,” said General Manager and Vice President Andy Poe. “Komatsu’s integrated system is a step ahead of the other options available in the market. We’re using the intelligent machines in as many ways as possible to increase our production and cut down on the number of people that we need on the ground.”

and have completed three unique projects for local airports that ranged from taxiway work to drainage improvements. At the Perry-Houston County Airport in Perry, Ga., we’re completing an apron expansion in front of the hangars for the airport authority.”

Recently, the firm completed work on a steam turbine addition for a chip mill. It is also continuing to work on an expansion job for one of the largest potato chip factories in the United States, as well as completing work on a port expansion project in Savannah, Ga.

“We’re taking on the entire heavy civil package for the potato chip factory,” explained Poe. “That includes all storm drain, utilities, grading work, asphalt paving and concrete paving. We started the project a year ago and have several months of work remaining.”

Dealer support is key

When Poe took over as General Manager and Vice President of Griffin Grading & Concrete, he began looking for new equipment to keep pace with the company’s accelerated growth. Finding reliable equipment and a dealer that would support the machines was his priority. After demoing multiple brands, Poe partnered with

Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Scott Burson, to fill a majority of its equipment needs.

“The support we receive from TEC is amazing,” stated Poe. “Scott does an excellent job of taking care of us. I know that if I call him, I won’t have to make a follow-up call to anyone else. In the past, we’ve struggled with timely support from other dealers. TEC and its staff provide quick, reliable support that keeps our machines running.”

Poe continued, “Another major factor in our decision to partner with TEC was the intelligent Machine Control (iMC) technology on the Komatsu dozers and excavators. Komatsu’s integrated systems are a step ahead of the other options available in the market. We’re using the intelligent machines in as many ways as possible to increase our production and cut down on the number of people that we need on the ground. Skilled labor is increasingly difficult to find and the more technology we can use, the better off we are.”

The firm’s fleet of Komatsu iMC equipment includes two D39PXi-24 dozers, two D61PXi-24 dozers and a PC360LCi-11 excavator.



Discover more at
TECTractorTimes.com

Continued . . .

'We're reaching subgrade faster and more efficiently'

... continued



Griffin Grading & Concrete General Manager and Vice President Andy Poe (left) works closely with TEC and Sales Rep Scott Burson to fill a majority of its equipment needs. "The support we receive from TEC is amazing," said Poe. "Scott does an excellent job of taking care of us. I know that if I call him, I won't have to make a follow-up call to anyone else. In the past, we've struggled with timely support from other dealers. TEC and its staff provide quick, reliable support that keeps our machines running."

"We're able to create models for every job and reach subgrade faster and more efficiently," explained Poe. "Our overruns and our waste have decreased significantly since running with the intelligent machines. We've also started to explore laying pipe using the models created for the excavator. Moving forward, we envision that our commercial concrete and structural concrete divisions will utilize the GPS technology to dig foundations and avoid the costly painting, stringing and staking currently associated with our concrete projects."

Griffin Grading & Concrete's fleet of Komatsu equipment additionally includes a WA320 wheel loader, a PC360LC excavator, a PC210LC excavator and two HM300 articulated trucks. The firm also relies on TEC to support its Wirtgen Brand asphalt paving machines, Etnyre asphalt distributor and Superior Broom sweepers.

Expanding asphalt paving

In the spring of 2021, Griffin Grading & Concrete plans to increase its asphalt paving capabilities. It added several WIRTGEN Group machines during the fall of 2020 to prepare for the increased production.

"My decision to add WIRTGEN asphalt paving equipment to our fleet was largely based on the tremendous support we've received from TEC on the Komatsu machines," said Poe. "We don't have a desire to be a huge road paving contractor, but we want to be able to pave all of our own jobs. Now that we've added larger asphalt paving capabilities into our business model, we'll be able to self-perform almost any contract." ■

An operator uses a Komatsu PC360LCi-11 iMC excavator to replace storm drain at an airfield in Georgia.



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Hunter and Clint Shackelford
Shackelford Construction / Yazoo City, MS

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Successful companies know investing in training and retaining is essential even during the toughest of times



Rachel Burris,
Communications
Manager, NCCER

Historically, training is one of the things companies curtail during tough times. Although halting training may be fiscally understandable, it's short-sighted and hurts your program and the construction industry as a whole in the long run. This is the time to really focus on current projects and ensure people are working at their maximum capacity.

Proactive, successful companies have traditionally managed to maintain training through difficult times. It may not look the same and may be adapted, but progressive companies will not quit training. Why?

3 key reasons

1. The skills shortage won't disappear. Before COVID-19, the construction industry was already facing an estimated shortage of one

million skilled workers by 2023. In August 2019, the Associated General Contractors of America found that 80% of contractors were having difficulty finding qualified craft professionals.

Training and retaining our workforce must remain a priority or we'll be facing an even more extreme shortage after the crisis. ManpowerGroup reports that skilled craft professionals and construction laborers remain in the top 10 most difficult roles to fill.

2. Training increases productivity. Doing targeted, job site specific training helps get workers re-engaged and increases productivity. Concerns about job security and the industry are prevalent across the workforce – training helps combat those feelings of apprehension.

Continued training during this time also builds your sense of community in your workplace culture. The McKinsey Engineering Construction and Building Materials Practice points out that “balancing performance and health is critical at any point – and it's much more important in these turbulent times.”

3. It's strategic. To be an employer of choice in construction is all about training and retaining your workforce. Instead of “turning off the electricity to save on electricity when times get tough,” it an opportunity to be more strategic.

Companies have typically already invested significantly in establishing workforce development programs to recruit. During times when companies are not bringing new people in, trying to maintain the employees who you may have already invested in with a year or two of training is tactically important.

This momentary slump cannot affect the construction industry's vision of the future. As an essential business, the world needs construction. We remain the industry that builds America. ■

Editor's note: Rachel Burris is the Communications Manager at the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). This article is excerpted from a blog post and reprinted with permission from “Breaking Ground: The NCCER Blog” at blog.nccer.org.



Rachel Burris emphasizes that it's short-sighted to cut training during difficult times. “Proactive, successful companies have historically managed to maintain training through difficult times. It may not look the same and may be adapted, but progressive companies will not quit training,” said Burris, Communications Manager for National Center for Construction Education and Research.

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Construction industry forecasters predict rise in overall starts led by single-family housing, non-building segments

Uncertain? Cautiously optimistic? Upbeat? Construction forecasters are making their best predictions, with most seeing positive territory for overall starts in 2021 as well as significant gains for certain market segments.

Dodge Data & Analytics (Dodge) looks the most bullish, forecasting an overall 4% increase in starts. The Portland Cement Association (PCA) predicts a 0.6% rise. On the flip side, FMI Corp. estimates an 8.7% decline.

The Northeast region of the country will be the most robust, according to Dodge. Its forecast sees a 14% jump in 2021, followed by the South Atlantic at plus 5% and the South Central at 4%. It believes the Midwest will be flat, while the West will fall 3%.

The industry is coming off a rough year in 2020, particularly the first half when COVID-19 caused a deep drop in construction starts, according to Dodge Chief Economist Richard Branch in a press release announcing the organization's outlook. He said to expect bumps along the way.

"While the recovery is underway, the road to full recovery will be long and fraught with potential potholes," said Branch.

Low rates spur home building, ownership

Single-family housing was one bright market segment last year, increasing by 4% compared

to 2019. It also seems to be one area of broad agreement among forecasters. Dodge's outlook has it rising another 7% to \$254 billion, which would be its highest since 2007.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) appears to concur, forecasting a 3% increase this year followed by 2% more in 2022. PCA sees a 4% rise in total residential building.

"Overall, homebuilder confidence is at a data series high as sales have outpaced construction," said Robert Dietz, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist at NAHB in a recent *Engineering News-Record* article. "Housing demand is driven by historically low interest rates, demographic tailwinds and a desire for more space, which, in turn, is leading to construction gains in lower-density markets."

There are opposite indications for multifamily housing starts. Dodge has a positive outlook at plus 7%. However, FMI, which sees a decline for 2021 in single-family, also predicts a 16.7% decrease in multifamily homes, and NAHB sees a 15% drop.

Anirban Basu, Chief Economist of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), wrote in a December 2020 online article for *Construction Executive* that single-family housing has been and will continue to be a bright spot. Similar to others, he sees the ongoing decline in multifamily extending into 2021.

The picture is unclear when it comes to transportation spending, including roads and bridges. Dodge Data & Analytics sees a slight increase. The American Road & Transportation Builders Association, FMI Corp. and the Portland Cement Association predict negatives.





Construction industry forecasters agree that single-family housing will remain strong in 2021 spurred by low mortgage rates. Dodge Data & Analytics sees it increasing by 7% to \$254 billion, which would be its highest since 2007.

“Among the most buoyant segments at present is owner-occupied housing,” said Basu. “With more and more millennials coming of age, coupled with the high rate of people looking to social distance, take advantage of low mortgage rates and acquire enough space for a home office, housing demand has raced even higher during the pandemic. But that surging demand has crashed into a dearth of available, unsold inventory, resulting in rapidly rising home prices and the highest homebuilder confidence on record.”

Contradictory indications for nonresidential, transportation

Conflicting outlooks are also evident in the nonresidential sector, which includes offices, lodging and commercial properties, as well as warehouses, educational, health care and other institutional buildings. FMI, PCA and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) all see relatively sizable declines, while Dodge expects a 3% overall increase with the warehouse, health care and office buildings segments all up more than 5%.

Dodge’s optimism also remains for overall non-building construction with a 7% forecast gain. That market includes highways and bridges, environmental, public works and

electric utilities. It believes the latter category will be especially robust with a 35% increase after falling more than 40% in 2020. Dodge indicated that several natural gas export facilities and a large number of wind farms are expected to break ground this year.

It projects a slight increase for highways and bridges. The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) sees it differently. It estimates that highway construction will fall 4.4%, with a decline of almost 2% for bridges. FMI and PCA predict negatives as well.

These sectors could be affected by additional infrastructure funding. The most recent highway bill was set to expire in September 2020; however, Congress provided an additional year of funding as part of a short-term continuing resolution. Biden administration transportation advisor John D. Porcari said Congress is likely to seek an increase for core federal programs as well as others, such as BUILD grants awarded by the Department of Transportation.

“I think you need to kind of flood the zone with more (dollars) on the formula side, more on the competitive-grant side,” said Porcari during an annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. ■

Six machines named to magazine's list of best products deliver improvements driven by in-the-field customer conversations

What does a new intelligent dozer, two excavators of vastly different sizes, a specialty pipelayer and two mid-to-large-size wheel loaders have in common? For one, they were named among the Top 100 products by *Construction Equipment* magazine. More importantly, they were built with new efficiency and production features driven by customer input.

Among the prominent machines on the list are intelligent Machine Control 2.0 D51i-24 and D61i-24 dozers with integrated GPS technology that is proven to boost production by as much as 60%. They feature proactive dozing control that lets operators cut and strip like an experienced operator from first pass to last. (See related article on page 13 for additional features).

Large, small excavators

Earthmoving companies of all sizes appreciate a basic digging machine that's easily transported from job to job. They like it even better when the machine offers fast cycle times, deep digging capabilities and high production, such as the new PC130-11, according to Andrew Earing, Komatsu Senior Product Manager.

"Mobility is a real asset with the PC130-11," said Earing of the 28,660-pound excavator that digs

more than 17 feet deep. "When a contractor finishes one job, they can quickly load this excavator and be on the way to the next site. When they get there, it's a matter of minutes to unload and start digging. That increases production time."

He added that the PC130-11 is built with steel castings in the boom foot, boom nose and arm tip for exceptional durability. It is available with plus-one piping as an option, so you can run attachments for a wide range of applications and potentially boost profits.

The much larger 200-ton class PC2000-11 mining excavator is built for high-volume digging and can move up to 17.9 cubic yards of material in a single scoop.

"Customers told us they want better multifunction performance and productivity than the previous model and the competition," said Joe Sollitt, Komatsu Senior Product Manager, Mining Support Equipment. "With more available engine horsepower, we were able to increase pump absorption and re-engineer the engine-pump-control logic. In combination with a more efficient hydraulic system, the PC2000-11 can load out more material per shift."

Sollitt emphasized that Komatsu designed the 1,046-horsepower excavator for greater reliability and durability with thicker, stronger boom plates and castings that are highly resistant to bending and torsional stress. The center and track frame were strengthened, and it has larger diameter carrier rollers for extended service life. He added that a ground-level service center is standard, and the power module that service personnel grew to love was maintained.

Loaders prove more productive

Komatsu incorporated next-generation technology with considerable benefits to make its new WA475-10 wheel loader an ideal fit for quarry, waste, infrastructure, forestry and non-residential applications. Feedback received in the field guided improvements, which made it 30% more fuel efficient than its predecessor, leading to savings that can potentially make you more competitive and profitable.



Earthmoving companies of all sizes appreciate a basic digging machine that's easily transported from job to job. They like it even better when the machine offers fast cycle times, deep digging capabilities and high production, such as the new 28,660-pound PC130-11.

Continued . . .

New iMC 2.0 dozers increase production up to 60% with the ability to use automatics from grass-to-grade



Intelligent Machine Control 2.0 D51i-24 and D61i-24 dozers feature patent-pending proactive dozing control that automatically cuts and strips from existing terrain like an experienced operator – 100% of the time, from grass to grade. The dozers also have improved automation with patent-pending lift layer control, tilt steering control and quick surface creation.

Jon Jennings,
Komatsu Product Marketing Manager

When experienced operators retire, they take with them their knowledge about how to move dirt as productively and efficiently as possible. That could potentially slow down your operations. What if it could be faster for your new or less-experienced operators to become as productive as those who left? It's possible.

One of the key attributes of Komatsu's new intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 dozers is patent-pending proactive dozing control that automatically cuts and strips from existing terrain like an experienced operator – 100% of the time, from grass to grade. This technology increased production by as much as 60% compared to the first-generation dozers, according to Komatsu Product Marketing Manager Jon Jennings.

"The ability to use automatics from first pass to last, instead of just during the finish grading, significantly reduces the time it takes to reach target elevation," said Jennings. "Proactive dozing control logic decides the appropriate action, such as whether to cut and carry material, spread or fill that material or whether it should finish grade."

The system provides the real-time position of the dozers to the job site to create a highly accurate elevation for it to drive the blade to the precise grade needed. During operation, the dozers measure the terrain as they track and use the track-level data to plan the next pass.

New automation, satellite systems

Improved automation is also part of iMC 2.0, including patent-pending lift layer control, which automatically spreads

fill from existing terrain with the press of a button. Much like proactive dozing control, this feature tracks the terrain and uses the data to plan the next pass, which doubles production and achieves consistent layers for quality compaction.

Additional automation features include tilt steering control that automatically tilts the blade to maintain straight travel during rough dozing, reducing the need for operator steering input by 80%. Quick surface creation produces a temporary design surface with one press of a button without the need for a complex 3D model.

Other upgrades include a second GPS antenna, which Jennings noted will aid in side-slope work. The new machines also gain access to three additional satellite systems.

"The biggest advantage is greater overall accuracy," he said. "More satellite systems increase production through the ability to use GPS in places where it may have been a big challenge before, such as at the edge of a wooded area or close to buildings on an urban project."

In addition to the new D51i-24 and D61i-24 models recently touted by *Construction Equipment* magazine as top products, the D39i-24 and the highly anticipated D71i-24 that was introduced last year at CONEXPO will soon be available.

"We had numerous orders for these machines before they were available because customers realized how much the new dozers will increase their production," said Jennings. "We encourage anyone looking for the same in their business to contact their distributor for a demo, more information or to add one to their fleet." ■

New features improve cycle time

... continued

The WA475-10 has 18% greater horsepower but achieves increased fuel efficiency with its Komatsu hydraulic mechanical transmission. Contributing to better economy and productivity is the independent work equipment control that simplifies operation by separating the accelerator pedal from the speed of the work equipment.

To further boost productivity, the boom lift force was bolstered by 20% and breakout force increased by 8%. A new bucket design improves pile penetration and better retains material in load-and-carry applications.

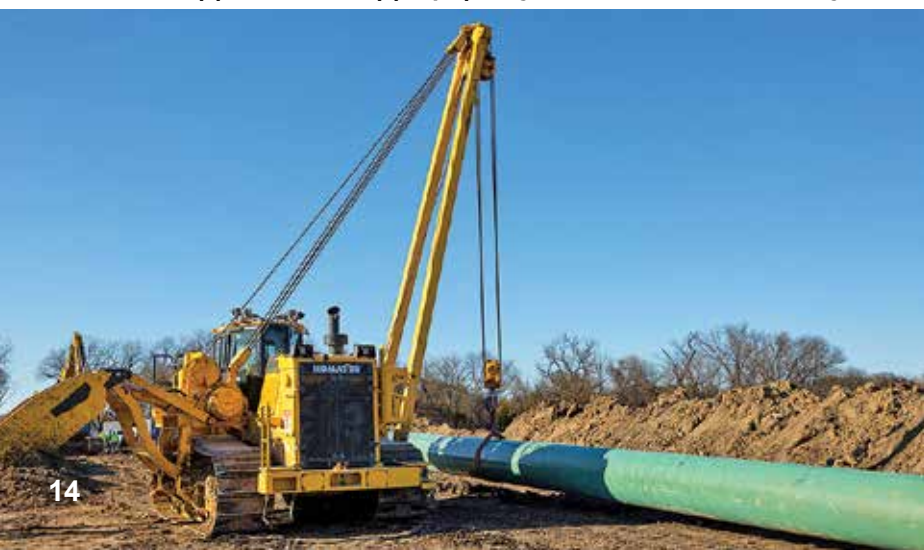
"Additional conversations with equipment users also led to an improved operating environment that includes an updated cab with floor-to-ceiling glass, ergonomically designed switch layouts and a fully adjustable five-axis console for enhanced operator comfort," noted Bruce Boebel, Komatsu Senior Product Manager.

The WA800-8 wheel loader also has a new bucket shape that incorporates an increased radius and floor inclination to make it easier to fill and retain material. The spill guard

Komatsu incorporated next-generation technology with considerable benefits to make its new WA475-10 wheel loader an ideal fit for quarry, waste, infrastructure, forestry and non-residential applications. It's 30% more fuel efficient, has 18% greater horsepower, 20% more boom lift force and a breakout force increase of 8% compared to its predecessor model.



The new D155CX-8 pipelayer has an oval design nine-roller track that features 12 feet, 10 inches of track on ground for stability. With a 170,000-pound lift capacity, the D155CX-8 can handle up to 36-inch steel pipe. It offers a K170 pipelayer package with a standard 24-foot boom length.



was adjusted to give operators improved visibility to the pile, and sweeper wings on either side protect the front tires. In larger quarry, aggregate and mining applications, the 254,700-pound machine is an ideal match for 60- to 100-ton trucks.

The loader features new, key automatic and semi-automatic systems that assist operators and contribute to productivity and efficiency. The three features can be used together or separately to automate the work phases when V-cycle loading, one of which is automatic dig to optimize bucket load. This actuates the bucket and lifting operations by sensing the pressure applied to the work equipment.

A semi-automatic approach raises the boom automatically when reversing out of the pile. The lift arms elevate until reaching the upper setting of the boom positioner, allowing the operator to focus on the travel path of the loader.

Semi-automatic dump raises the lift arms automatically and dumps the bucket with the push of a button. After dumping, it levels the bucket and returns the lift arms to the lower boom positioner setting; however, the lift arms will not lower until the bucket has cleared the truck.

"We also responded to customer requests by introducing a modulation clutch for optimal tractive effort and throttle lock that improves cycle times by maintaining high work-equipment performance and saving fuel with auto deceleration," said Komatsu Product Marketing Manager Robert Hussey.

New pipelayer designed for exceptional stability

Komatsu worked closely with pipeline companies to develop its new D155CX-8 pipelayer that has an oval design nine-roller track with 12 feet, 10 inches of track on ground for stability. It also features 32-inch track shoes.

Heavy final drive components are close to the ground, which lowers the center of gravity. The rollers are fixed suspension and don't oscillate like a dozer for greater ground contact.

With a 170,000-pound lift capacity, the D155CX-8 can handle up to 36-inch steel pipe. It has a K170 pipelayer package with a standard 24-foot boom length. An optional 28-foot boom is available.

"It's essential that we get feedback from the contractors who will ultimately use a pipelayer like our new D155CX-8," said Chuck Murawski, Product Manager, Dozers. "One item they recommended was a larger steering motor, so we incorporated one into the machine to give it better displacement and more torque." ■

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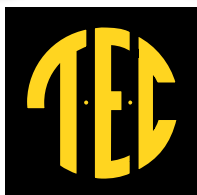


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New iMC 2.0 excavator delivers greater accuracy, comfort and versatility for increased productivity

What if you could dig basements, footings or utility trenches without worrying about overexcavating? How about using the same machine to accurately excavate slopes and finish grade ponds with limited movement? What if you could do it all with little or no need for a finish dozer, stakes or surveying?

According to Komatsu Senior Product Manager Andrew Earing, Komatsu's new intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 PC210LCi-11 excavator with integrated GPS lets you do all of those tasks and more. Earing noted that testing showed the latest-generation machine improves production by up to 33% and efficiency as much as 63% compared to conventional excavation and grading methods.

"The new iMC 2.0 PC210LCi-11 has added additional satellite systems improving satellite coverage and ability to work in more challenging areas such as near woods or on urban job sites," said Earing.

Bucket angle hold, new monitor

With iMC 2.0 comes bucket angle hold. When activated, it automatically holds the bucket to the design surface during arm-in operation.

"It's less fatiguing for operators, which makes them more productive throughout a shift," said Earing. "It also produces a better finish-grade surface, so there are multiple benefits."

Additional new features include a smaller, slimmer 10.4-inch monitor with more memory and faster processing speed. It has pinch-to-zoom and swipe functionality similar to a smartphone or tablet.

"Customers told us they wanted a more streamlined monitor," said Earing. "This is intuitive and easier to use, so there's decreased downtime navigating through it and more time producing."

Options up versatility

Earing added that users can boost efficiency further with optional features such as automatic tilt bucket control. Using an add-on inertial measuring unit, it allows machine control to manage the angle movement of a tilt bucket to dig and grade surfaces that are not perpendicular to the machine. Users provide their choice of bucket.

Continued . . .



Andrew Earing,
Komatsu Senior
Product Manager

A new feature of the latest-generation PC210LCi-11 intelligent Machine Control 2.0 excavator includes bucket angle hold. When activated, it automatically holds the bucket to the design surface during arm-in operation. "It's less fatiguing for operators, which makes them more productive throughout a shift," said Komatsu Senior Product Manager Andrew Earing. "It also produces a better finish-grade surface, so there are multiple benefits."



'Useful on projects with varying contours'

... continued

"While excavating a deep trench, you can slope the sides back without moving the excavator," explained Earing. "It's also useful on projects with varying contours, such as swales and ponds. Operators can sit in a fixed position and shape those transitions. Less movement saves time and wear and tear on the machine and the operator. We believe most contractors will want to take advantage of this.

"Another feature is optional pressure and flow control for plus-one piping," he continued. "This lets you fine-tune hydraulic pressure and flow on attachments such as hammers, vibratory compactors, processors and more for improved control and versatility."

Semi-automatic functions

The iMC 2.0 PC210LCi-11 maintains the main functions of the first-generation iMC excavators, including the ability to switch from manual to semi-automatic modes.

Among a host of standout features is an exclusive control function that goes beyond simple guidance to semi-automatically limit overexcavation and trace a target surface. Once the target elevation is reached, no matter

how hard an operator tries to move the joystick to lower the boom, the excavator won't allow it. This reduces wasted time and the need for expensive fill materials.

Productivity and efficiency features include:

- In semi-automatic mode the boom adjusts the bucket height to trace the target surface and minimizes the chance of digging too deep.
- Auto stop control halts the working equipment when the bucket edge reaches the design surface to reduce design surface damage.
- Minimum distance control regulates the bucket by automatically selecting the point on the bucket closest to the target surface.
- The facing angle compass shows the operator the facing angle in relation to the target surface, allowing the bucket edge to be accurately positioned square to the target surface.

"Existing and new technology in the iMC 2.0 excavators has proven to increase production and efficiency while reducing costs," said Earing. "We encourage anyone looking for those attributes to contact their distributor and test one for themselves." ■

The new intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 PC210LCi-11 maintains the semi-automatic features of the first-generation iMC excavators, including auto stop control, minimum distance control and a facing angle compass to limit overexcavation.



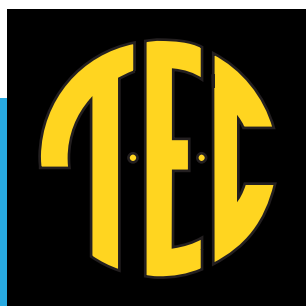
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Tracey Drechsel says new structure delivers better service as regional teams work together to be your one point of contact



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.

Tracey Drechsel,
Komatsu Business Director,
East Region

Tracey Drechsel's career with Komatsu began right out of college. The 1998 Austin Peay State University graduate started with Komatsu Financial and held various roles in operations, sales and marketing. She spent six years as the Finance Sales Manager, working at Komatsu's Newberry, S.C., plant before returning to the Chicago area. Along the way, she earned a master's degree from North Central College.

"As a kid, I never thought construction equipment would be my life. I wanted to be a marine biologist and swim with dolphins," shared Drechsel. "The gig with Flipper didn't work out, so here I am helping people dig holes and push dirt.

"The best part of the industry, and personally, the most rewarding, is the human interaction," she added. "I get to meet people from different backgrounds and find ways to make a difference in their lives. I have been very fortunate to wake up every day for 22 years and enjoy who I work for and who I work with; and I don't take that for granted."

In 2017, Drechsel was promoted to Director/Sales Marketing for the North Region of Komatsu's construction equipment division. In late 2020, she was named Business Director, East Region, which includes states from Michigan to Maine and down to Florida.

A two-sport athlete in college, basketball and softball, she enjoys staying active today. Drechsel likes to run, workout, boat, walk her dogs and travel. She also may be the only person in Chicago who cheers for both the Cubs and White Sox and dislikes deep-dish pizza.

QUESTION: Komatsu has made some structural changes with personnel taking on new roles, including those of regional business directors. What's the customer benefit?

ANSWER: As always, our focus is on helping customers find solutions by utilizing our dealer network, products, technology and, most importantly, our people who care at all levels. Speed to market and technical resolution is something we really focused on improving with this new structure. We empowered our people to make more decisions in the field to improve our response times to customers and distributors.

With this new concept, all business units within a region – parts, sales, finance, warranty, etc. – are now part of the same channel, whereas before it was more individualized. We've created small, focused regional teams with diverse skills to address the entire life cycle of customer needs. We are packaging our solutions as "Komatsu" and are aligned to act in the best interest of the customer.

QUESTION: How are members of each regional team working together?

ANSWER: Internally, we are leveraging each other's skill sets in more proactive ways to add value to our individual knowledge base as well as to our customer interactions. In the past, our collaboration had a tendency to be more reactive.

Now, we're meeting and talking on a consistent basis about what's happening within our region. Individuals and groups can bounce ideas off of each other; and we can discuss best practices in customer satisfaction as we share success stories and customer feedback.

Ultimately, it's a great opportunity to better serve our markets and moves us toward our goal of creating one point of contact that our customer value chain can trust and rely on.

QUESTION: Last year was certainly different from many perspectives. How did events

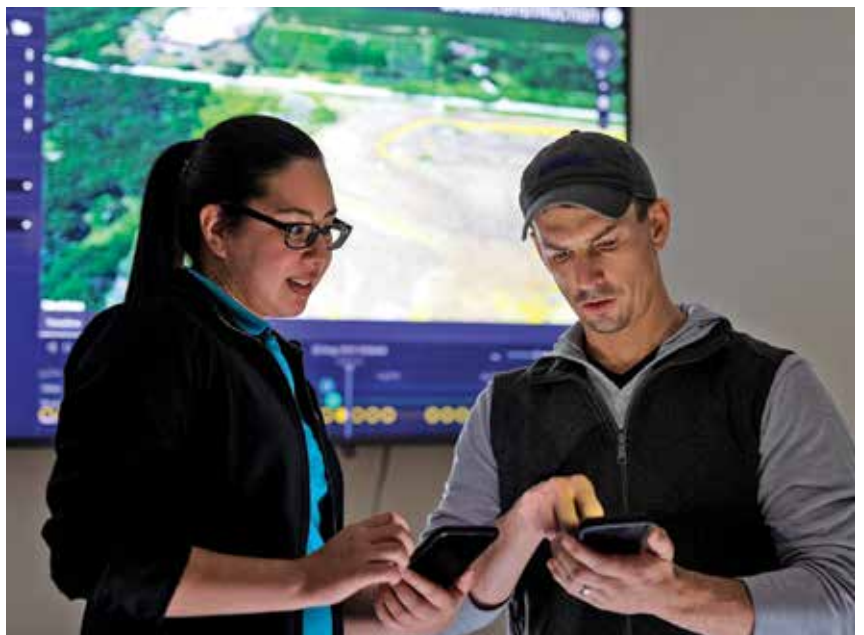


Komatsu's focus is on helping customers find solutions by utilizing its dealer network, products, technology and, most importantly, its people who care at all levels said Tracey Drechsel, Komatsu Business Director, East Region.

affect the construction markets and what do you see looking forward?

ANSWER: COVID-19 accelerated the acknowledgment and need for digital solutions in our industry. The pandemic provided a real-life example of the role technologies, such as online meetings and Smart Construction (the digital transformation of the job site), can play in keeping customers' businesses and projects on track. Those customers who were hesitant or skeptical about adopting GPS systems, intelligent machines and Smart Construction, now see the value in investing in those solutions.

Many are also utilizing our fleet management site, My Komatsu, more often. It enables them to remotely track production, idle time, fuel usage and other data with a tablet, smartphone or desktop computer. It allows them to reference manuals for their fleet, find the needed parts and purchase them quickly and easily. Again, it's actionable information they get without the need to be present at the job site. The complimentary service can save time and improve practices. ■

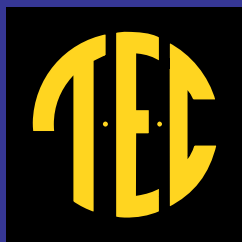


The use of Smart Construction solutions and My Komatsu for fleet management increased during the past year. "COVID-19 accelerated the acknowledgment and need for digital solutions in our industry," said Tracey Drechsel, Komatsu Business Director, East Region. "The pandemic provided a real-life example of the role technologies, such as online meetings and Smart Construction (the digital transformation of the job site), can play in keeping customers' businesses and projects on track."

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New solution saves time, expense by delivering design changes directly to machines, eliminating travel to job sites

If you manage construction projects, you know design changes come with the territory. You also realize that delays in updating plans could adversely affect production and your profits.

"It's critical to communicate new information as quickly as possible," stated Bryce Satterly, Komatsu Smart Construction Solutions Manager. "Technology is making that virtually instantaneous. Our Smart Construction Remote solution is a good example. It allows users to send design data to machines in the field and remotely support operators without traveling to the job site, reducing costly downtime."

Managers can log into target machines, pinpoint their location, view the machines' monitors and upload or download files at anytime from anywhere, according to Satterly. He added that updates can be transferred to multiple machines with one click.

Smart Construction Remote's software is compatible with Komatsu intelligent Machine

Control dozers and excavators as well as with select aftermarket grade control systems. It's one of several Smart Construction solutions created to help you more efficiently plan, schedule, manage, streamline costs and optimize processes remotely.

Distant troubleshooting capabilities

In addition to project design file updates, Smart Construction Remote provides distanced troubleshooting capabilities. Offsite personnel can view what operators are seeing in the field, and even operate the machine control monitor, through their connected devices.

"The operator, survey manager and others can communicate remotely in real time, and resolve issues faster," said Satterly.

"Not having to make that trip to either update a machine or troubleshoot it saves time and reduces fuel costs and emissions associated with driving to the site. Those are added benefits." ■



Bryce Satterly,
Komatsu Smart
Construction
Solutions Manager



Smart Construction Remote lets you log into target machines, pinpoint their location, view the machines' monitors and upload or download files at anytime from anywhere. Smart Construction Remote also provides distanced troubleshooting capabilities.

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Four technicians complete WIRTGEN Group's Master Technician certification program

In 2019, The WIRTGEN Group introduced its Master Technician certification program. Its purpose was to provide the highest level of training for technicians at heavy equipment dealerships working directly with WIRTGEN Group equipment. Recently, Charlie Gilbert, Cliff Boothe, Oscar Salvador and Troy Graham of Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) completed all of the required training and received their WIRTGEN Group Master Technician certification status.

"The four technicians that received certification have been working with WIRTGEN equipment for a long time and were able to take their knowledge depth to the next level through WIRTGEN's Master Technician program," said TEC Training Administrator John Holley. "Before receiving their Master Certification, they first completed a program that provided foundational knowledge of KLEEMANN, WIRTGEN, HAMM and VÖGELE machines. The Master Technician Certification goes beyond setting up and operating each machine; it gives technicians the tools to troubleshoot and diagnose technical issues.

"We now have four highly specialized technicians dedicated to servicing our customers with WIRTGEN Group equipment," added Holley. "This allows us to use WIRTGEN's technicians as a resource instead of a direct solution. Our technicians can diagnose and resolve problems quickly, increasing our customers' uptime and profitability."

The training program required a high level of dedication from each technician, including extended periods of time away from family.

"In addition to other requirements, each technician went through more than 300 hours of instructor-led training at the WIRTGEN Center for Training and Technology in Nashville, Tenn.," noted Holley. "We were able to expedite the process because each of the technicians entered the program based on their previous training and relevant experience. Typically, this would be a three-to-five-year program. However, all four of our technicians were able to complete it in under two years due to their dedication and product knowledge."

When the program was first announced, Troy Graham quickly completed the necessary training and was one of the first of two technicians in the United States to receive the Master Technician certification.

"Troy was the first TEC technician, and was tied for first in the country, to be awarded this elite recognition," said Holley. "To have completed the program so quickly is a testament to his previous training and his desire to provide the highest quality service to our customers. We are excited to have four technicians receive the certification and continue to provide the highest quality of service possible to our WIRTGEN Group customers." ■



TEC Hoschton, Ga., branch service technician Oscar Salvador receives his WIRTGEN Group Master Technician Certification.



Pensacola, Fla., TEC service technician Troy Graham (Right) is presented with his WIRTGEN Group Master Technician Certification. Graham tied for being one of the first of two technicians to complete the Master Certification training program.



A WIRTGEN Group Master Technician Certification is presented to Charlie Gilbert (Right) at TEC's Mobile, Ala., branch.



Cliff Boothe (Left) from TEC's Birmingham, Ala., branch receives his WIRTGEN Group Master Technician Certification.

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

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"It is essential to use one that's proven to perform under all circumstances," emphasized Dimitra Balafoutis, Komatsu Product Manager, Consumables. "We recommend using genuine Komatsu batteries in our machines because they are manufactured to stand up to challenging conditions such as extreme temperatures and high vibrations, which are common on our customers' job sites. They were designed and built to ensure durability and reduce downtime."

Balafoutis noted that Komatsu genuine batteries undergo more than 300 quality-control checks throughout the manufacturing process. With proper maintenance, they typically last three years or longer. Komatsu supports all batteries with its standard parts warranty, which is one or two years depending on part number.

"A wide range of 6- and 12-volt sizes are available," said Balafoutis. "Our distributors stock the most common ones, so they are easily available. If a less common type is needed, you can order it through your distributor or on the My Komatsu web

application (www.komatsuamerica.com/mykomatsu) and have it shipped to the distributor or your location."

Power your vehicles too

With Komatsu's all-makes program, customers can also order OEM batteries for their Komatsu equipment and its competitors through their local Komatsu branch, explained Balafoutis. This includes construction, agriculture, mining, forestry and forklift products.

"Those OEM options are available if customers want them; however, Komatsu genuine batteries work in most brands of machinery," Balafoutis pointed out. "Distributors can assist customers in determining the right fit for their needs."

She noted that Komatsu genuine batteries are ideal for cars, pickups or other vehicles.

"If you think they are great in your equipment, consider them for other uses," said Balafoutis. "They power class 1 through class 8 on-highway trucks, boats, recreation vehicles, power sports products such as four-wheelers, golf carts and more. Your Komatsu distributor can be a one-stop shop for all of your battery needs. They will even install them if you like." ■



Dimitra Balafoutis,
Komatsu Product
Manager,
Consumables



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Residential, commercial contractor sees sizable savings with intelligent Machine Control excavators



David Smith II,
Owner



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Like his father, David Smith II went straight to work after graduating from high school. At 17, he ran residential crews in the family business, which performed site work for developers on subdivisions as well as single lots for private homeowners.

"When the markets crashed in 2008, housing pretty much dried up," recalled Smith, who along with his father owns and operates what is now S3 Sitework. "Dad sent me to do a commercial job. He figured the project would take around six weeks, but I had it done in three. The experience of working in close quarters near houses was a big help because it's where I learned speed and efficiency."

That project spurred additional commercial work and also served as the catalyst for a move toward more automated excavating for the Smiths and S3 Sitework.

"I knew how to run a machine – period. Dad sent another guy to set and check grade and drive stakes," said Smith. "I was really good at wiping them out, which meant resetting. I thought it was inefficient and costly, so we bought a base and rover. Now, GPS technology plays a big role in our operations."

He added that S3 Sitework is saving time and money by using Komatsu intelligent Machine Control (iMC) PC360LCi-11 and PC490LCi-11 excavators. The Smiths put them in their

fleet about a year ago and appreciate the factory-integrated GPS grade control.

Flawless transitions

S3 Sitework builds models, uploads them to the machines and cuts to grade using the iMC excavators' semi-automatic features.

"They prevent overdigging. Once the teeth contact the set design grade, no matter how much you push the joysticks, the excavators will not let you go deeper," explained Smith. "That saves time and material expenses in subgrade preparation."

He noted a particular job where the excavators stood out. "On one subdivision we had to cut a road, house lots and bar ditches. The ditches had three-to-one slopes, so there were sizable transitions from the bottom of those to the pads and onto the street subgrade. Using the models, the operators and machines made the changes flawlessly without stakes. We only needed to check grade occasionally, and it was spot-on."

Smith said he knew the iMC excavators were the right machines for S3 Sitework from the first time he demonstrated a PC360LCi-11 on a channel cut.

"It had one-to-one slopes and had to be concrete lined. There was no way to cut that with a dozer," said Smith. "We dug the channel extremely fast with no overrun on the materials." ■

An S3 Sitework operator digs a ditch with a Komatsu intelligent Machine Control PC360LCi-11 excavator. The company also has a PC490LCi-11. "We don't need someone constantly checking grade or setting stakes because the machines know where they are in relation to the design elevation," said Owner David Smith II. "That saves us time and labor costs."

▶ VIDEO



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