



# Tractor Times

A publication for and about Tractor & Equipment Company customers

JANUARY 2016



## SIKES BROTHERS INC.

For this site and paving firm,  
a good reputation is worth  
more than money

Larry Sikes,  
Founder

David Sikes,  
Co-owner and  
President

Jeffery Sikes,  
Co-owner and  
Vice President



## LYLE FARMS, LLC.

Pecan farming is just one of many  
business interests for this  
southwestern Georgia  
entrepreneur

Wayne Lyle,  
Owner

**KOMATSU**®

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dan Stracener

**Determined to  
keep your  
expenses low**



Dear Valued Customer:

Komatsu introduced its first Tier 4 Final machine during CONEXPO-CON/AGG in early 2014. Since then, it has unveiled numerous new products that meet the governmental regulations for reducing emissions, and do so more efficiently and productively than ever before.

Komatsu continues to roll out Tier 4 Final products such as its new construction-sized D61-24 dozers and WA380-8 and WA470-8 wheel loaders. Added features and enhancements make these machines among the best in the industry for their size classes. You can read about these in this issue of your TEC Tractor Times magazine.

Komatsu's Tier 4 Final machines are also among the best in terms of owning and operating costs. Komatsu is determined to keep your expenses low, so when it began introducing Tier 4 equipment it upped the ante by providing complimentary scheduled maintenance through Komatsu CARE for the first three years or 2,000 hours. Our skilled technicians, here at TEC, perform the service at convenient times and locations to ensure your downtime is kept to a minimum.

We can also service your utility-sized equipment such as the PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5 tight-tail-swing excavators, which are also featured in this issue. These smaller machines meet the Tier 4 Final standards without the added selective catalytic reduction, diesel exhaust fluid and diesel particulate filter required on construction-sized and larger machines. These are not covered by Komatsu CARE, but we have maintenance programs available that can keep your costs low.

Whether you own brands we carry or competitive equipment, we can help ensure all your machines – new or old – remain productive and efficient. We would be happy to work with you on your entire fleet's maintenance and repair needs.

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

Sincerely,



Dan Stracener  
President



# Tractor Times

A publication for and about Tractor & Equipment Company customers

www.TECTractorTimes.com

JANUARY 2016

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**KOMATSU®**



# SIKES BROTHERS INC.

## For this site and paving firm, a good reputation is worth more than money



Larry Sikes,  
Founder



▶ VIDEO

David Sikes,  
Co-owner and  
President



Jeffery Sikes,  
Co-owner and  
Vice President

“No matter how bad it hurts, always do what’s right.” For Sikes Brothers Inc., a Metter, Georgia, site and paving contractor, those are words to live by – and a key aspect of the company’s philosophy. It’s a quote from Ricky Sikes, one of the brothers in the company name, who passed away a few years ago.

“We believe in giving more than we take,” said David Sikes, Ricky’s son, who is now Co-owner and President of Sikes Brothers. “In our business, ‘always do what’s right’ means be fair, honest and always true to your word. If we don’t do something right the first time, we redo it. That hurts, and sometimes it costs us a lot of money. But we believe it pays off in the end with a spotless reputation, repeat customers and excellent referrals.”

As an example, David points to a recent call he got from the owners of a prospective hotel who were looking to build in Dublin, Georgia.

“I didn’t know them at all. They had seen us on a job, asked around about us and requested a meeting. They said, ‘You carry a great reputation, and we want to work with you.’ That means everything to us. Our name is more important to us than money. I think our philosophy is ingrained in us, but we also put it on the back of our business cards to serve as a constant reminder.”

Sikes Brothers was formed in 1993, when Ricky joined up with his brother, Larry Sikes, who had started a small, driveway paving company four years earlier.

“Ricky’s specialty was management,” Larry recalled. “He had worked in the nuclear power industry for years and oversaw many large projects and thousands of employees. When he first joined me, it was on a part-time basis while he continued with his other job. In 1999, he came

onboard full time. He was the office guy, and I was the field guy.”

Larry has passed down his ownership shares to his son, Jeffery, and the two lead the field/operations side of the business. David calls Larry, “The James Brown of the paving industry – the hardest working man in it.” Larry’s title is Senior Vice President. Jeffery, who started with the company in 2001, is Co-owner and Vice President. David joined after finishing college in 2003. He does more of the inside work – estimating and management – but says he enjoys getting his hands dirty when he gets the opportunity.

“Both David and I have worked here since we were probably 14 years old,” said Jeffery. “I have a brother, Michael, who also works here as a roller operator. Over the years, we have expanded from being a small driveway paving company into a well-rounded site contracting firm that does earthwork and grading, in addition to asphalt paving.”

“We primarily do commercial sites, such as apartment complexes and large retail stores, within about 100-mile radius of Metter, which includes Savannah and Macon,” said David. “We also do some DOT and municipal street work, like deceleration lanes and intersection upgrades. Most of our jobs are a combination of earthwork and paving, but if a customer just wants one or the other, we’ll do that too. We also have a pit, so we can supply our own aggregate material for most jobs.”

### Employees are like family

Sikes Brothers grew consistently from the time Ricky joined Larry, right up until the Great Recession.

“Like everybody, our workload dwindled, and gross revenue dropped by about 40 percent from 2007 to 2010. Fortunately we had enough



▶ VIDEO

Sikes Brothers recently acquired this Wirtgen W 120 mill, shown here at a bank parking lot job in Statesville, Georgia. "We've wanted a mill for quite some time," said Co-owner and President David Sikes. "We've had it on some jobs already and have been very pleased with it."

paving work to keep us going," said David. "We got down to about 25 people on the payroll, due to attrition, but we're very proud of the fact that we didn't layoff anybody. It would have been easy to do, but we care deeply about our employees, and that would have been an absolute last resort. Since 2011, we've grown steadily. We're now back to 40 employees, and 2015 will be the largest gross-revenue year in our history."

Larry, David and Jeffery all credit their employees for much of the success Sikes Brothers has experienced. They singled out Project Manager/Estimator John Wickstrom for his efforts.

"John came on with us straight out of high school and worked here in an internship-type capacity while attending Georgia Southern, where he earned a degree in construction management," said Larry. "He's like part of the family and is everything we look for in an employee."

"We're an extremely close-knit company," said David. "We know all our employees by name. We also know their families. We care about them, and they care about us. It's important to us that they also care about one another, and they do. Our current average employee has been here 10-plus years. When we hire somebody, we like to think we're hiring them for life."

"Since we are planning for our employees to stay with us, we're very selective about who we hire," added Jeffery. "There has been a time or two when we've hired somebody, and after a few weeks, other employees will come to us and say, 'He doesn't really fit in with what we are.' We all want to be around people who share our values and our work ethic, and that's the team we have."



### Wirtgen, Komatsu and TEC

Sikes Brothers considers Tractor & Equipment Company to be part of its team as well. The company owns numerous Komatsu and Wirtgen Group products from TEC. The Komatsu fleet includes two PC220 excavators, two PC210 excavators, a D51PX dozer and a WA270 wheel loader. Sikes' Wirtgen Group machines are a Vögele 5102 (8-foot) paver, two Hamm rollers (HD 12 and HD 14 combination drum and wheels) and the most recent purchase, a Wirtgen W 120 mill.

"The mill was something my dad wanted us to get back in 2007," David recalled. "When the recession hit, we backed off. Recently, we booked three projects with a milling aspect to them, so we decided it was time to do it. We've had it on some jobs already and have been very pleased with it."

A Sikes Brothers operator uses the company's Komatsu PC210 at Plantation Airpark near Sylvania, Georgia, in Screven County. "We're big fans of Komatsu machines," said Founder Larry Sikes. "The excavators have a well-deserved reputation for excellence."

Continued . . .

# Sikes Brothers: 'blessed' and optimistic

... continued

"We also love the Vögele paver and Hamm rollers," added Jeffery. "With the paver, everything you need is on the computer screen and right at your fingertips. It's great in tight spaces, and most importantly, it lays a beautiful mat. As for the Hamm rollers, they're awesome. We can get the same compaction numbers with the HD 12 as we can with a competitive roller that's twice the size."

"We're big fans of the Komatsu products, too," said Larry. "The excavators have a well-deserved reputation for excellence, and we love our D51 dozer. It's unbelievable how good the visibility is to the blade. We have an aftermarket Topcon GPS system on it, and we're looking closely at acquiring one of the new Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control dozers with integrated GPS. We believe it would be the same great dozer as our D51, but with newer GPS technology and no masts or cables."

As much as they like the machines, David says Sikes Brothers' relationship with Tractor &

Equipment is the most important factor in the company's equipment-buying decisions.

"We have great friends throughout the organization, from our Sales Rep and Savannah Branch Manager Frank Dabbs to President Dan Stracener. All across Georgia and Alabama, we know the people at TEC. We trust them and we enjoy their company. They care about us the same way we care about our customers. They want us to be successful, and they've proven that to us many times in many ways.

"Here's how much we think of TEC," he added. "We have our Sikes Brothers logo on our machines. Tractor & Equipment also has its logo on the units. Our plan is to put the words 'partners with' between the two logos so it would read: 'Sikes Brothers partners with Tractor & Equipment Company.' I want people to ask me, 'What's going on? Did they buy you out or something?' And I'll say, 'No, they just treat us as though we're partners.' It'll be an opportunity for me to share with others what a real dealership is like. TEC is a match-made-in-heaven for Sikes Brothers Inc."

## "Blessed and optimistic"

Looking to the future, David says the family will have a decision to make regarding expansion.

"I think there's going to be an opportunity for us to grow. I'm confident the economy in this area is going to be very strong for at least the next three or four years. The question is, how much bigger do we want to be? We plan to maintain the personal touch. We know our customers like to see us face-to-face on our jobs, and that's a special thing. At our present size, we can do that, and it's something we don't want to lose."

"That said, there are things happening in Savannah, like the deepening of the port, that are going to be worth a lot of business," said Jeffery. "We'll have to talk it over, but I think we may have to grow to meet the needs of our customers."

"It will be up to Jeffery and David to make that decision," said Larry. "This company has far exceeded any expectations I had when I started it. I just wanted to be able to make a living. God has been very good to us and enabled us to do these things. We all feel as though we've been blessed and are optimistic about what the future holds for us." ■

(L-R) The Sikes Brothers team of Jeffery, David, Michael and Larry Sikes are big fans of Tractor & Equipment Company. "TEC cares about us. They want us to be successful, and they've proven that to us many times in many ways," said Co-owner and President David Sikes.



Sikes Brothers owns this Komatsu D51PX dozer. "It's unbelievable how good the visibility is to the blade," said Founder Larry Sikes.



# D61PXi-23



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## LYLE FARMS, LLC.

### Pecan farming is just one of many business interests for this southwestern Georgia entrepreneur



**▶ VIDEO**  
Wayne Lyle,  
Owner

Wayne Lyle has been an engineer, entrepreneur and a farmer. He's worked in the automotive industry in Detroit, built pipe plants in New Jersey and has owned his own precast/prestressed concrete business, one he named ConArt. The high-profile company did the outside skin for many well-known structures throughout the southeastern U.S., including the University of Alabama's Shelby Hall, Auburn's Lowder Hall, Phillip Morris' headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, and the parking deck at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport.

After selling ConArt, Lyle – who grew up on a Canadian farm north of Toronto – returned to his roots. He bought some land in southwestern Georgia's Sumter County and started Lyle Farms, LLC. Today, the 2,500-acre farm employs about 25 people and specializes in pecans. It also grows row crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat.

"When I left Canada, I swore I'd never go back to farming – but I guess it gets in your blood, because here I am," Lyle explained. "I started large-scale farming in 2009 with about

25,000 pecan trees. I needed to develop land, dig and transplant trees, so that's why I started buying construction equipment."

In addition to the farm, Lyle also has an agricultural supply/transportation business – Agricultural Material Group. It distributes lime, gypsum and aggregates from rail yards in Cobb and Cordele, Georgia.

You might think that those two businesses would be plenty for a guy who has reached retirement age, but earlier this year, Lyle also purchased a racetrack near Cordele in Crisp County. He renamed it Crisp Motorsports Park, Home of Watermelon Capital Speedway. The name is a reflection of Cordele's billing as "The Watermelon Capital of the World."

Wayne and his wife, Flo, are sole owners of all three ventures.

#### A labor of love

Of all the jobs that Lyle has held, he says there's one thing he is above all else – and it fits right in with his purchase of Crisp Motorsports Park.

"I'm a builder. I like to create things, including businesses. I'm a lot more interested in building something than I am in actually running or operating it. Although someday, I hope Crisp Motorsports Park might be something special. For me, a racing enthusiast, it's more a labor of love."

At age 69, Lyle still suits up and races Super Street Late Model cars.

"Everybody needs a hobby," he explains. "Some guys like golf. Some like tennis. Some like to boat. For me, it's racing. I own cars and race at this track, which has a great history but has fallen on some tough times. Interest in racing has declined in recent years here in Georgia, and I think that's unfortunate because it's a great sport and can be great family fun. I want to do my part to try to help give racing, and this track in particular, a

Lyle Farms is a pecan and row crop farming operation in southwestern Georgia, but owner Wayne Lyle also owns Crisp Motorsports Park, Home of Watermelon Capital Speedway, and is currently making improvements to the facility.





Owner Wayne Lyle has numerous Komatsu machines, including this PC400LC, at Crisp Motorsports Park to help with renovations such as a campground, new ticket office and restrooms.

boost. I think it will also be good for the entire community of Cordele.”

The track history that Lyle refers to includes some of the biggest names in the sport. NASCAR drivers Joey Logano and David Ragan, and 2014 NASCAR Xfinity Series champion Chase Elliott, all learned to drive at the four-tenths-of-a-mile, banked, D-shape oval track. NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champions Kyle Busch and Jeff Gordon have also raced at the track. Today, Watermelon Capital Speedway is the last asphalt track in Georgia, other than Atlanta Motor Speedway.

The 100-acre property located just off I-75 north of Cordele needed updating. Lyle and his Lyle Farms employees, many of whom share his interest in racing, have been addressing those needs by building a number of new structures, including a ticket office and restrooms. They are also cleaning up the area outside the track to build a campground, complete with RV hookups. Lyle’s intention is to stage other events such as RV shows, farm equipment shows and auto swap meets at the property.

The marquee event each year at the Crisp Motorsports Park is SpeedFest, a Champion Racing Association-sanctioned race that typically brings in a field of about 60 cars, including as many as a half-dozen NASCAR drivers. The 2016



The improvements at Crisp Motorsports Park near Cordele, Georgia, are a labor of love for Flo and Wayne Lyle. “I’m a racer and a race fan,” said Wayne. “This track has a great history, but interest in racing has declined in recent years. I want to do my part to help give racing, and this track in particular, a boost.”

SpeedFest is scheduled for the end of January, and Lyle hopes to have most – if not all – of the new facilities ready to go for it.

“We’re looking for better attendance and more sponsors,” said Lyle. “We want to make this place successful, not just for us, but for the betterment of the area and the sport.”

### **“Well-made” Komatsu machines**

To do the cleanup and building at the track and on the farm, Lyle relies primarily on a fleet of Komatsu machines from Tractor & Equipment Company’s Albany branch and VP/Regional Sales Manager Tony Daughtry. Lyle’s Komatsu machines include three wheel loaders (WA320,

*Continued . . .*

# Farming, track and more keep Wayne Lyle busy

... continued

WA380 and WA500), two dozers (D61 and D58), two excavators (PC400 and PC200) and an HM300 articulated dump truck.

"When I started farming here, I got a Komatsu D51 dozer," Lyle recalled. "I liked it, and I was happy with the service I received from Tony and Tractor & Equipment Company. We've just kept adding to the Komatsu fleet since then. I'm an engineer by education and by profession, so I appreciate a well-made machine. Komatsu products are definitely well-made."

Although he may not put as many hours on his equipment annually as a construction company does, Lyle says he wants the same thing out of his machines that a contractor does – productivity, reliability and longevity.

"My PC400 has in excess of 6,000 hours on it and still runs great. I traded my original D51 in for a D61, and it's been an outstanding machine. It's very maneuverable, nice to drive and extremely comfortable. Since I still do some

operating, comfort is important to me. I can sit in the D61 all day and do all the things I would do from my office. That's pretty much true of all my Komatsu pieces. The HM300 also has a very impressive cab.

"What I like best about all of our Komatsu machines is that I can take one to a job, turn the key and go to work," he added. "They're pretty much trouble-free. Nobody owns equipment because they want to work on it. They want it to work for them, and that's what our Komatsu machines do."

Lyle says he also appreciates the support he receives from TEC.

"TEC does a great job with the financing side of equipment purchasing, and the service we get from them has been very good. Their field technicians are knowledgeable and easy to work with. They have some young people who know the equipment, especially the electronics, which is big today. Tony has also been very responsive to our needs."

## Still building and creating

Lyle sometimes talks as though he's slowing down. For example, in discussing Lyle Farms he said, "I'm very happy being a pecan farmer, and really, I consider myself more of an overseer of farming." Regarding his plans for Crisp Motorsports Park, he said, "I don't know how many more things I'm going to build."

But Lyle's actions do not indicate he is ready to stop being a builder/creator anytime soon. He is, what he calls, a "small partner" in Cordele Intermodal Services, which is a rail-based connection to the Savannah port. He also acknowledges he is part of a group that is considering building a fertilizer plant in the region within the next year or so. "It will be a younger group than me, but I may be involved in the engineering work and some of the construction.

"I guess it comes down to the fact that retirement, as it's viewed by many people, doesn't really interest me," he added. "Both Flo and I feel good, and we like being involved. I think this area has a lot going for it. I think it's going to grow and become a hub in southwestern Georgia. We want to do what we can to help make that happen and be a part of it when it does." ■

(L-R) Flo and Wayne Lyle of Lyle Farms work closely with TEC VP and Regional Sales Manager Tony Daughtry on equipment matters. "TEC does a great job with financing, and the service we get from them has been very good," said Wayne.



Wayne Lyle uses this Komatsu D61 dozer to move dirt for construction of an RV park at Crisp Motorsports Park. "It's an outstanding machine," said Lyle. "It's very maneuverable, nice to drive and extremely comfortable."



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# TRANSPORTATION CAREERS

## Report shows highway construction among leading industries needing a larger number of new workers

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx emphasized the importance of addressing the expected growth of the transportation industry in a joint report released by the Departments of Transportation, Labor and Education. The report predicts that more than 400,000 openings were, are and will be created between 2012 and 2022. In addition to creating well-paying jobs for a number of workers within the industry, the report states that a thriving transportation industry can benefit other sectors and improve the quality of life for all Americans.

“Careers in the transportation industry can lift Americans into the middle class or help them stay there, and this report concludes that there will be more job opportunities in the near future,” said Foxx. “We want to fill all these new positions, so industry and government must increase recruitment and

help young people get the skills, training and apprenticeships they need to gain entry into these careers.”

The report, “Strengthening Skills Training and Career Pathways Across the Transportation Industry,” looked at six transportation industries: highway construction and maintenance, transit and ground passenger, trucking, rail, air and maritime. In total, the industry is projected to need an additional 417,000 workers during the 10-year period to accommodate its growth.

Highway construction and maintenance positions led the way – especially maintenance, which had about 141,000 openings. It was followed by labor, which will have to fill nearly 89,000 jobs. Large numbers are also needed in categories such as operating engineers and other construction equipment operators; heavy and tractor-trailer drivers; first-line supervisors of construction trades; and extraction workers. Rounding out the list were paving, surfacing and tamping operators at nearly 20,000; carpenters at more than 15,000; cement masons and concrete finishers at 12,875; and construction managers at 6,882.

The report “Strengthening Skills Training and Career Pathways Across the Transportation Industry,” looked at six transportation industries, including trucking and highway construction and maintenance. In total, transportation is projected to add 417,000 jobs between 2012 and 2022.



### Regional growth

The joint report examined several key areas of the transportation industry to collect data: current industry employment and worker distribution by age, sex, race and ethnicity; projected industry and occupational job openings based on net job growth and separations; job openings by career area; top occupations by sector, based on long-term projections; geographic “hot spots” for future transportation jobs; wages and education/work experience/training requirements for



high-demand transportation jobs; and annual job openings compared to educational program completions.

“Between 2012 and 2022, the average employment growth rate of 11 percent across transportation industries is similar to that of the entire country (10.8 percent) and of the infrastructure industry (11 percent) – which includes transportation, logistics, water, energy, telecommunications and public works,” according to the report. “Net transportation job growth will occur in all but two states. The fastest growth will occur on the West Coast, the Gulf Coast, the upper Mid-Atlantic, several Mountain States and the Midwest.”

It further states that much of the regional transportation job growth is driven by growth in the large metropolitan areas within those regions. The highest number of job openings in transportation, including all six industries, will likely be generated in New York City, Dallas, Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago.

### **Pathways to getting a job, moving up**

For every future central-services or construction job opening in the transportation industry, there will be an estimated two jobs in maintenance and 21 in operations. The jobs in greatest demand are semi-skilled and skilled jobs in operations and maintenance. Thirteen of the 20 most in-demand transportation jobs pay above the median wage and have strong benefits.

However, one major takeaway from the report was that there are too few workers to accommodate the industry’s growth, and many projected jobs will require education beyond high school. The report indicated that projected annual openings are 68 percent larger than the number of students who are completing related educational programs. It highlights a significant skills gap that must be addressed to meet the expected demand, according to the report.

“While a high school diploma and demonstration of math and language proficiency is sufficient to gain access to many entry-level jobs in transportation, training through some combination of career and technical education programs, apprenticeships or on-the-job learning, is required to attain mastery,” said the report. “In some transportation crafts, there is a need to earn post-secondary certificates or other industry-recognized credentials prior to entering work.”

The report identifies several pathway models, including career and technical education programs beginning in high school and continuing into post-secondary education and apprenticeship. Two other pathways mentioned were pre-apprenticeship programs for disadvantaged youth and adults, which would prepare an underrepresented population for entry into skilled positions, and significant training at the workplace to help people move from novice to skilled practitioners in their crafts. ■

**Highway construction and maintenance will have about 141,000 openings, according to the report “Strengthening Skills Training and Career Pathways Across the Transportation Industry.”**

**It was followed in the industry by labor, which will need to fill 89,000 jobs.**

**Large numbers are also needed in categories such as operating engineers and other construction equipment operators; heavy and tractor-trailer drivers; first-line supervisors of construction trades; and extraction workers.**

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# BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

## Promoting the positives of construction could help meet the challenge of finding future workers

Organizations pay a high price in productivity, opportunity and prosperity when they can't find workers to fill critical jobs. With a growing shortage of skilled craft professionals comes increased budgets and extended schedules. The greatest problem in filling these positions is finding qualified workers with both the technical and interpersonal skills to meet the needs of today's job market.

According to Manpower Group, a lack of available applicants is the most common reason why employers have difficulty filling jobs, and more than a third of employers acknowledge that this is a high-priority problem. In fact, for the fourth consecutive year, the skilled crafts have been the hardest jobs to fill globally.

Part of the reason for the skills gap is society's view of craft professions. Coached by parents, teachers and other adult authorities to seek the perceived security of a four-year degree, our younger generation lacks skills and understanding of craft training. In order to show young people the value of construction careers, the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) began a recruitment and image-enhancement initiative called Build Your Future, and declared October as Careers in Construction Month. Throughout the month, industry and education partner locally to host career events that introduce students to rewarding construction careers. This year, the NCCER created the "I BUILT THIS" video contest to give aspiring craft professionals and their instructors an opportunity to showcase their construction projects.

Another way in which industry and education have joined forces to close the skills gap is through NCCER's Construction Career Pathways initiative. Construction Career Pathways connects

industry and education to provide students with careers by highlighting best practices and providing practical resources to help educate and drive collaboration. Through this collaboration, career and technical education programs continually deliver industry-relevant construction craft training while providing students with job opportunities when they graduate. Students also receive the comprehensive training that is in demand by today's employers – such as technical skills, academic skills and employability skills – with an understanding of how these skills transfer directly to the real world.

The skills gap remains a very real threat to the productivity, opportunity and prosperity of our industry. Through the collaboration of organizations like NCCER and others, the construction industry is prepared to face these challenges. We must continue to introduce young people to the opportunities of valuable, rewarding and well-compensated employment in the crafts. It is up to all of us to make sure that these opportunities are promoted so we can create a sustainable pipeline of craft professionals for generations to come. ■



**Dan Belcher,**  
Director of Workforce  
Development,  
NCCER

*This article is reprinted with the permission from "Breaking Ground: The NCCER Blog" at [blog.nccer.org](http://blog.nccer.org). Dan Belcher is Director of Workforce Development for the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and his role includes informing and updating government, workforce industry and education sponsors about NCCER.*



**NCCER Director of Workforce Development Dan Belcher says organizations pay a high price in productivity, opportunity and prosperity when they can't find workers to fill critical jobs. "We must continue to introduce young people to the opportunities of valuable, rewarding and well-compensated employment in the crafts," said Belcher.**



Discover more

## HIGH SPEED DOZING

### “H mode” among enhancements in Komatsu’s new D61-24 dozers



Jonathan Tolomeo,  
Komatsu Product  
Marketing Manager,  
Crawler Dozers

Komatsu’s new D61-24 dozers features a new H mode (High engine idle speed) that helps maintain ground speed when heavy blade loads might otherwise slow down the machine. The setting allows the dozer to detect subtle changes in load, so it is suitable for power-intensive work.

When a manufacturer introduces a new machine, your expectation is that it will meet or exceed the production and efficiency of the model it replaced. Komatsu continues to exceed those expectations with innovative products such as its new Tier 4 Final D61-24 dozers. The new dozers feature improved blade response and durability, in addition to faster work equipment speed.

Komatsu added a new H mode (High engine idle speed) that helps maintain ground speed when heavy blade loads might otherwise slow down the machine. The setting allows the dozer to detect subtle changes in load, so it is suitable for power-intensive work. As with previous models, the D61EX-24 and D61PX-24 feature both E mode (Economy) and P mode (Power). E mode is for general dozing, while P mode provides powerful operation and maximum production in heavy-load and uphill work.

“The D61-24 is excellent for finish grading on projects such as infrastructure and highway construction; commercial and residential site prep; golf courses; and other applications,” said Jonathan Tolomeo, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager, Crawler Dozers. “Customers frequently comment how powerful and well-balanced the D61-24 dozer is, especially on steep slopes. It also has the horsepower and blade capacity for heavy dozing, if required. In fact, the D61-24 has the highest horsepower compared to competitive dozers in its size class.”

Finish grading operations are aided by the dual-mode foot pedal. When set to D mode (Decelerator), the pedal will slow down both the dozer’s travel speed and its engine speed. When set to Brake mode, the pedal slows only the travel speed. Engine and work equipment speed remains fast and responsive for maximum productivity.

“Giving operators the ability to match the machine to the application and working conditions continues to be a hallmark of Komatsu equipment,” said Tolomeo. “Operators can easily select the proper mode using the large LCD monitor in the cab.”

#### Improved visibility

Komatsu improved visibility to the sides and rear of the blade in its super-slant nose design D61-24 by moving the cab forward and by making it wider, taller and deeper. ROPS and FOPS certified, the cab provides superb sealing that helps reduce noise and vibration, and minimizes dust entry.

“We believe the D61-24 is a great all-purpose machine that fits well in a wide range of applications, and we encourage anyone looking for a productive dozer with low owning and operating costs to try one out,” said Tolomeo. ■

#### Quick Specs on Komatsu’s D61-24 Dozers

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Blade Capacity
D61EX-24	168 hp	40,830 lbs	4.41 cu yds
D61PX-24	168 hp	42,902 lbs	4.98 cu yds



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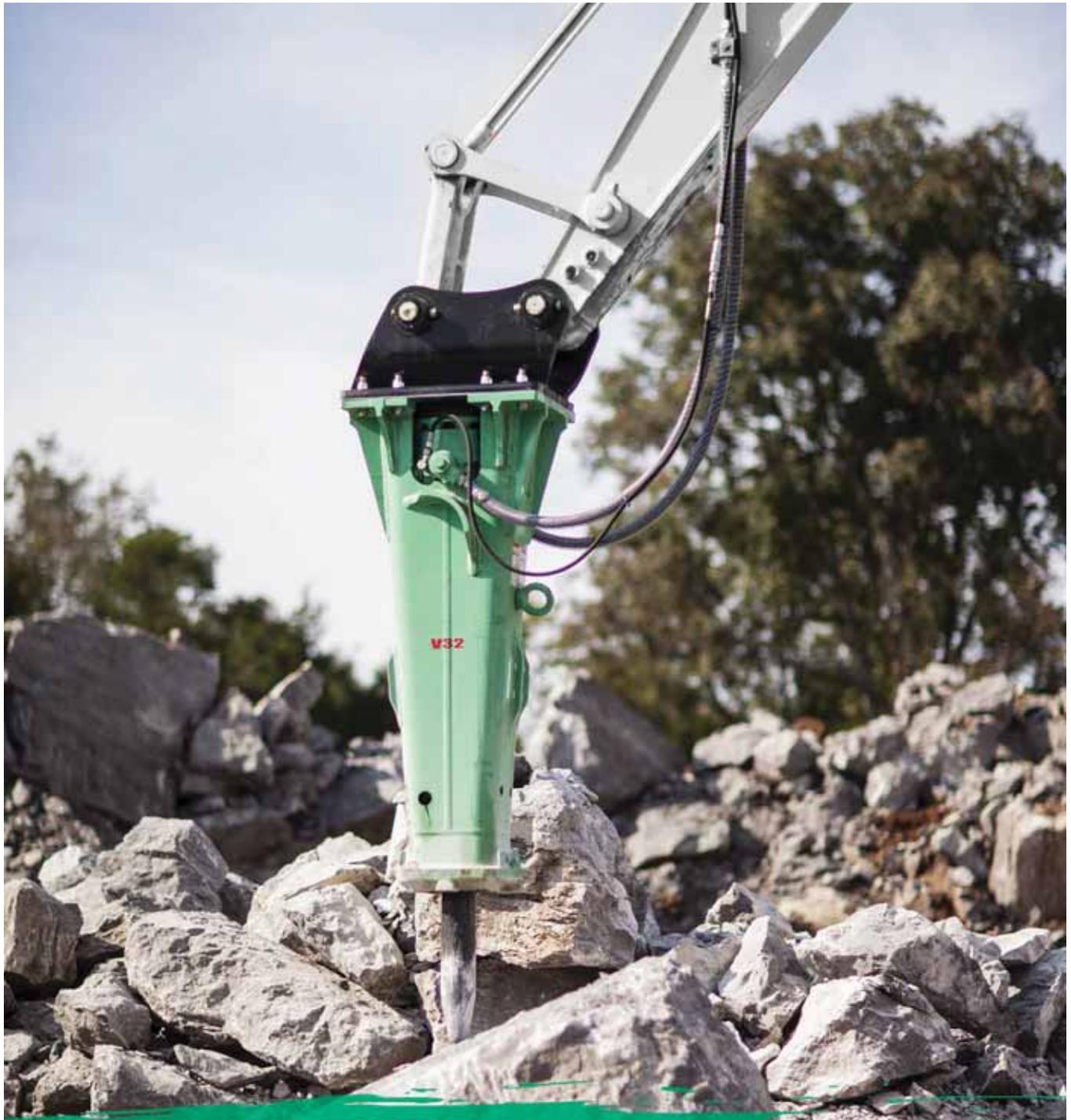
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# PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT



WA380-8



WA470-8

## MORE EFFICIENT MATERIAL MOVEMENT

### New Dash-8 construction/quarry loaders feature high breakout force, lower fuel consumption

Multiple machines for multiple tasks equates to higher owning and operating costs. That's why a wheel loader that can handle several applications on one jobsite is a great choice. Komatsu has numerous options to choose from, including new Tier 4 Final WA380-8 and WA470-8 models that feature high breakout force and enhancements that make them more efficient than their predecessors.

Komatsu Product Manager Rob McMahon says the WA470-8 is perfect for companies looking for a mid-sized construction/quarry loader. "The WA470-8 has an outstanding combination of stability, breakout power and tractive effort. Whether you're moving gravel, transporting pipe, charging hoppers or working with landscape or aggregate materials, it's the machine you want on your worksite. Available machine arrangements specifically adapted

for logging and waste-handling applications extend the machine's versatility.

"The wheelbase and overall width were not changed for the WA470-8, however the tip load ratings and speed of the boom-raise function was increased. This contributes to enhanced machine stability and faster cycle times," added McMahon. "Where operators and owners will particularly notice the difference is in efficiency. The WA470-8 features enhancements that reduce fuel usage as well as make the operating environment more comfortable, leading to reduced fatigue and greater production."

The WA380-8 is the smallest of Komatsu's construction/quarry loaders, but remains productive in a variety of applications.

*Continued . . .*



Rob McMahon,  
Komatsu Product  
Manager



Craig McGinnis,  
Komatsu Product  
Marketing Manager

#### Quick Specs on Komatsu's WA380-8 and WA470-8 Wheel Loaders

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Bucket Capacity
WA380-8	191 hp	40,523-40,929 lbs	3.5-4.3 cu yds
WA470-8	272 hp	53,352-55,579 lbs	5.0-5.75 cu yds

Both new wheel loaders feature Komatsu's SmartLoader Logic software combined with a lockup torque converter that activates in second, third and fourth gears. Together, the system provides optimal engine torque for improved acceleration, hill climbing, fuel savings and a higher top speed.



# Advancements make Dash-8s powerful and efficient

... continued

“With one of the highest breakout forces in its class and excellent balance, the WA380-8 is made for tough digging tasks,” said Craig McGinnis, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager. “It’s ideal for carrying pipe, sand and other aggregates; site cleanup and support; digging into piles; and backfilling.”

## SmartLoader Logic

Both new wheel loaders feature Komatsu’s SmartLoader Logic software combined with a lockup torque converter that activates in second, third and fourth gears. Together, the system provides optimal engine torque for improved acceleration, hill climbing, fuel savings and a higher top speed.

The Tier 4 Final engines on the Dash-8 models are variable-geometry turbocharged and aftercooled, and they use up to 6-percent-less fuel compared to the previous Tier 4 Interim models. The engines use an advanced electronic control system to manage air-flow rate, fuel injection, combustion parameters and after-treatment functions to optimize performance, reduce emissions and provide advanced diagnostic capability.

A Selective Catalyst Reduction assembly further reduces NOx emissions using diesel exhaust fluid (DEF). Komatsu designed the machines’ Diesel Particulate Filter (KDPF) and other after-treatment components in conjunction with the engine for efficiency and durability.

Komatsu’s new Dash-8 Tier 4 Final loaders offer the ability to perform multiple tasks with one machine, lowering owning and operating costs. Both the WA380-8 and the WA470-8 feature high breakout force and more efficient engines that lower fuel consumption.



## Enhanced operating environment

Several in-cab enhancements and features are built-in to the new Dash-8 models:

- Air-suspension, high-backed seat that softens machine vibrations for operator comfort;
- Seat-mounted electronic pilot control levers with F-N-R switch for operator convenience and reduced fatigue;
- KOMTRAX telematics system and monitor that provides key machine metrics such as KDPF status, DEF-level data and fuel consumption, as well as performance information collected and sorted by operator ID;
- Auto-Idle Shutdown to reduce idle time and save fuel;
- Auxiliary jack and two 12-volt ports;
- Seven-inch, full-color, high-resolution monitor with Ecology Guidance to support more efficient machine operation;
- Dedicated rearview monitor.

Komatsu also makes maintenance convenient with a swingout cooling fan that has wider fin spacing and a standard auto-reversing fan for easy cleaning. Gull-wing engine doors provide quick access for daily checks, and additional hinged panels at each side give fast access to regeneration components.

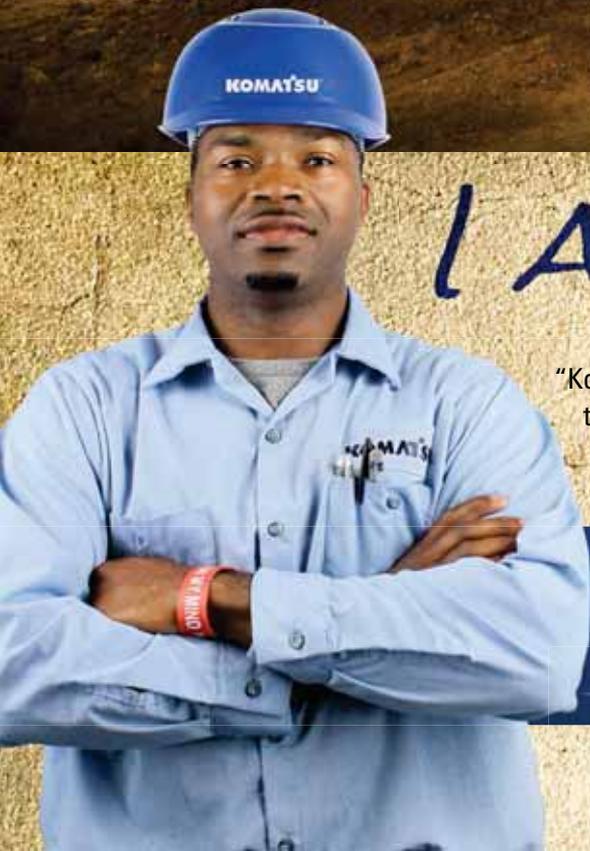
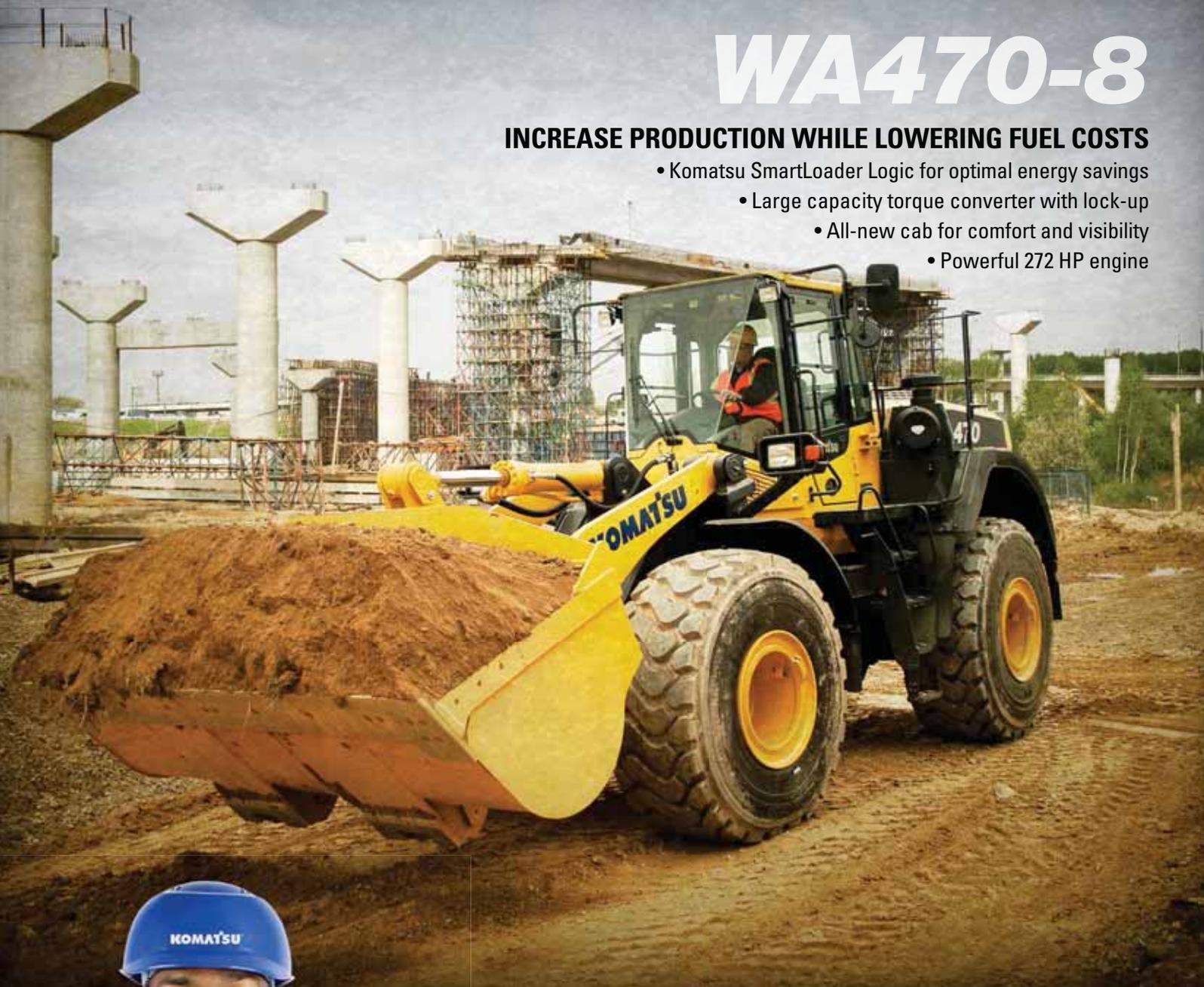
The Dash-8 loaders and all other Komatsu Tier 4 Final construction-sized machines – whether rented, leased or purchased – are covered by the Komatsu CARE program for the first three years or 2,000 hours. Komatsu CARE includes complimentary scheduled factory maintenance and a 50-point inspection at each service, up to two KDPF exchanges and up to two DEF tank flushes in the first five years.

“With specified labor, fluids and filters covered by Komatsu during this period, Komatsu CARE lowers ownership costs, raises resale value and improves uptime and availability,” said McGinnis. “We encourage anyone looking for solid, all-around wheel loaders with excellent performance in a variety of tasks to demonstrate these new machines and see the difference for themselves.” ■

# WA470-8

## INCREASE PRODUCTION WHILE LOWERING FUEL COSTS

- Komatsu SmartLoader Logic for optimal energy savings
- Large capacity torque converter with lock-up
- All-new cab for comfort and visibility
- Powerful 272 HP engine



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## LIMITING OVEREXCAVATION

### Site preparation company sees savings with Komatsu PC210LCi-10 *intelligent* Machine Control excavator

As its name implies, U.S. SiteWork is a company that provides turnkey site packages that involve everything from clearing and grubbing to curb and gutter and paving. Its projects generally involve moving large volumes of earth, either as part of mass excavation and grading, soil stabilization, utility installation, foundation digs or all of the above.

“We’re a full-service company with the experience and resources to take care of a wide range of customers,” said President/Project Manager Scott Kerzman. “We can breakout our services, or provide a comprehensive package. Our goal is outstanding customer service so that whenever we finish a project, the customer’s thought is, ‘Why would I call anyone else to do my work when U.S. SiteWork knocked out our job problem-free, on time, on budget, fairly and honestly.’”

From the first project on which U.S. SiteWork used the *intelligent* Machine Control PC210LCi-10 excavator, it saw time and material savings. “We used the PC210LCi-10 to dig foundations for a transformer station and large apartment complexes, and it worked perfectly,” said General Superintendent Rory Paggen.

In order to ensure that happens, U.S. SiteWork invests heavily in reliable, productive and efficient Komatsu equipment, including a new PC210LCi-10 excavator. The world’s first *intelligent* Machine Control hydraulic excavator can be used from rough-cut to finish grade with 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.

“We used the PC210LCi-10 to dig foundations for a transformer station and large apartment complexes, and it worked perfectly,” said General Superintendent Rory Paggen. “We definitely see the benefits of less time to reach final elevation and less material costs associated with overexcavation. Normally, on trenches with fairly steep slopes, we would dig with an excavator, then use a skid steer to smooth them out. With the intelligent excavator, we load the file with the plan, and it accurately puts it to target without the need for another machine. The savings are obvious.”

#### Integrated technology

As with Komatsu’s *intelligent* Machine Control dozers, which U.S. SiteWork also uses, the technology that drives the PC210LCi-10 is factory-integrated into the excavator.

“We’re proponents of GPS grading, and aftermarket systems are good, but Komatsu’s integrated technology is simply head-and-shoulders better,” said Paggen. “The fact that we can use it from start to finish lowers our per-yard costs and virtually eliminates staking. It reduces O&O expenses because we don’t have masts or cables to install and remove or get damaged.” ■





# PC210LCi-10

INTRODUCING THE FIRST AUTOMATED EXCAVATOR

- Auto stop improves speed and cycle times
- Auto grade assist allows precision tracking
- Depth protection prevents over-digging
- Easy touch screen controls



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JASON ANETSBERGER / KOMATSU ENGINEER

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005

# NEW PRODUCTS



PC45MR-5



PC55MR-5

## NEW COMPACT EXCAVATORS

### Komatsu adds to its Tier 4 Final lineup with the more efficient tight-tail-swing PC45MR-5, PC55MR-5 models



Desmond Jarvis,  
Komatsu Product  
Marketing Manager

Early last year, Komatsu kicked off its Tier 4 Final lineup with the tight-tail-swing PC88MR-10 excavator that bridged the gap between compact and construction-sized machines. Komatsu has introduced several larger machines since, but its latest offering includes two compact models – PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5 – that use less fuel with no loss of productivity compared to their predecessors.

Both excavators feature a tight-tail-swing radius, swing booms and convex doors that hug the machine, helping them when working in limited-space applications.

“The PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5 are designed for versatility, maneuverability, comfort and

low operating costs,” said Desmond Jarvis, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager. “For most confined-area jobsites with construction, utility, landscaping and similar applications, this is the right tool for the job.”

The excavators have 38-horsepower Tier 4 Final engines that use up to 5-percent-less fuel. The after-treatment system requires no diesel exhaust fluid. The Komatsu diesel particulate filter and other after-treatment components are also specifically designed to work in harmony with the engine for added efficiency and longer life.

#### Versatility for a wide range of applications

Komatsu made several features and improvements standard on the PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5, including enhanced working modes that allow operators to match engine speed and pump delivery to the application. New E mode (Economy) and auto-idle shutdown help save fuel and reduce machine wear. The 3.5-inch, high resolution LCD monitor with Ecology Guidance helps operators monitor machine performance to maximize fuel efficiency.

Standard auxiliary piping for attachments and thumb mount provisions on the arm provide job versatility in applications ranging from digging to demolition work. In all working environments, the high-strength, X-Track frame deters dirt and debris buildup, saving operators valuable machine cleanup time.

“These excavators allow operators to get in close without worrying about hitting something with the counterweight, and be confident that they can get the work done with high productivity,” said Jarvis. “They are a terrific fit for anyone who wants excellent production on even the most confined jobsite.” ■

Komatsu’s new PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5 feature a tight-tail-swing radius, swing booms and convex doors that hug the machine, helping them when working in limited-space applications, including construction, utility and landscaping, among others.

#### Quick Specs on Komatsu’s PC45MR-5 and PC55MR-5 Excavators

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Bucket Capacity
PC45MR-5	38 hp	10,737-11,001 lbs	0.07-0.21 cu yds
PC55MR-5	38 hp	11,354-11,618 lbs	0.07-0.24 cu yds



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## Ultralok Tooth System



## HDP Bucket



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## SAVINGS BY DESIGN

# REDUCED UNDERCARRIAGE COSTS

## Komatsu's PLUS offers up to twice the wear life, and is now available for D155AX-8 dozers

Since Komatsu introduced PLUS (Parallel Link Undercarriage System) several years ago, it has proven to extend the life of a dozer undercarriage. The revolutionary design limits wear and the need for pin and bushing turns. It also significantly reduces costly undercarriage repairs and replacements – generally 50 percent of per-hour operating costs over the life of a dozer.

Komatsu recently added PLUS as an option on the new D155AX-8 dozer, with 24-, 26- and 28-inch shoe widths available. Each is made with extreme service shoes for maximum wear life and durability to provide up to twice the life of a conventional undercarriage, lowering maintenance and repair costs by up to 40 percent in certain applications.

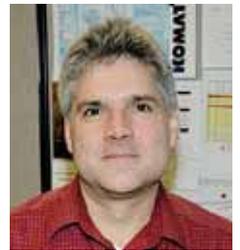
“Applications for PLUS range from high-impact, rocky ground conditions to low-impact, abrasive, sandy worksites,” said Chuck Murawski, Komatsu Product Manager, Dozers. “This has enabled PLUS to become standard equipment on other Komatsu models.”

### Eliminates pin, bushing turns

The PLUS undercarriage features a rotary design, so it's not necessary to turn the pin and bushings. It uses oil-lubricated bushings that rotate freely, unlike fixed bushings used on conventional undercarriage systems. Links have increased wear material and depth hardness, as well as a strutted design for extended life and added strength. All link assembly components can be field-replaced individually, as opposed to replacing an entire undercarriage system. Sprockets are segmented for simple replacement and designed to minimize material packing.

For added peace of mind, the PLUS assurance program covers leakage and breakage due to defects or workmanship for three years or 4,000 hours, whichever occurs first.

“Supplemental wear-life coverage is available through our local distributors,” said Murawski. “PLUS started as an option on some of our mid-sized dozers, but it quickly became standard because owners saw their undercarriage maintenance and repair costs significantly reduced. It's a great option on the larger D155, so we encourage users to talk with their distributors about putting PLUS on those dozers.” ■



Chuck Murawski,  
Komatsu Product  
Manager, Dozers



Komatsu's PLUS system eliminates pin and bushing turns, reducing undercarriage maintenance and repair costs. It is now an option for the D155AX-8 dozer.



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## GIVING YOU STRONG OPTIONS

### John Arapidis says rental, used equipment through Komatsu and its authorized distributors make sense

**QUESTION:** What does the Rental & Used Equipment group offer customers?

**ANSWER:** Komatsu and its distributors are committed to offering our customers the highest quality machinery in the marketplace, including rental and pre-owned equipment offered through Komatsu ReMarketing, which was combined with our rental operations in April 2013 as part of our overall circulation strategy. The Rental & Used Equipment group offers great alternatives to buying new. Between them are a variety of machines in the used category, such as late model units coming off rent. Many of the pre-owned machines are Distributor Certified Used, and numerous used Tier 4 machines are designated as Komatsu CARE Certified Equipment.

**QUESTION:** How is Komatsu CARE Certified Equipment different from Distributor Certified Used?

**ANSWER:** When Komatsu established ReMarketing, it set a new standard for certified used equipment with the Distributor Certified Used designation. Distributors continue to offer the standardized inspection, certification and technician training through the ReMarketing program for machines acquired through customer trade-in and lease returns. They also keep their rental fleet fresh by offering the latest-model machines – so as they add new models, old ones can be moved into their used market. This is especially true of Komatsu Tier 4 machines.

Komatsu CARE complimentary maintenance is standard on most new Tier 4 machines that are leased or purchased. That means specially trained distributor technicians perform a 50-point inspection every 500 hours for the first

*Continued ...*



**John Arapidis,**  
Vice President, Rental &  
Used Equipment

*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.*

John Arapidis considers himself a “28-year rookie” when it comes to his tenure with Komatsu America. “I say I’m still a rookie because, hopefully, I’m learning something new every day,” said Arapidis, Vice President, Rental & Used Equipment. “I’ve taken that approach since I joined the company in 1987.”

Arapidis joined Komatsu after graduating from Loyola University in Chicago. He has held several positions throughout Komatsu America, including working in finance, mining, rental, utility equipment and ReMarketing. While working at Komatsu, he earned an MBA from the Keller School of Management. Before moving into his current role, he was Director of Sales & Marketing, West Region, for new equipment. As Vice President, Rental & Used Equipment, Arapidis oversees a group that was formed in April 2013 and includes Komatsu ReMarketing.

“Each position involved, and involves, working closely with customers,” said Arapidis. “I’ve always found that very enjoyable. Nothing is more satisfying than helping people find the right equipment to match their needs, so they can be productive and profitable.”

John and his wife, Sherri, enjoy traveling and exploring the beautiful cities of the world. He’s also a classic car and motorcycle enthusiast.

# Komatsu-certified equipment provides peace of mind

... continued

three years or 2,000 hours. Our distributors have records showing these services and inspections. Only units that have met all of the Komatsu CARE requirements are eligible for the Komatsu CARE Certified Equipment designation. The machines must also meet or exceed ReMarketing's already rigorous inspection process that includes mechanical and diagnostic operations, as well as interior and exterior appearance standards. Only then

All scheduled service on new and rental Komatsu Tier 4 equipment is covered for the first 2,000 hours or three years through the Komatsu CARE program. Certified technicians perform all of the work, which includes a 50-point inspection with each service interval.



John Arapidis, Vice President, Rental & Used Equipment, says one of the benefits of choosing rental and used equipment through Komatsu's ReMarketing program is peace of mind. "Customers can be assured that the machine has been well maintained by their Komatsu distributors' technicians, with records to back it up," said Arapidis.



can a machine be labeled as Komatsu CARE Certified Equipment.

We believe this gives customers added confidence that they are buying the best-made and maintained machines in the world. To make that easier, our distributors offer financing, extended maintenance and warranty options on all types of used equipment.

**QUESTION: Does this mean customers should avoid older machines?**

**ANSWER:** Absolutely not. Our ReMarketing machines are more than a piece of equipment with a new paint job. There are still a lot of Tier 3 – and older – machines available that will suit a variety of needs. Those have been inspected, repaired if necessary, and may also come with financing and warranty options.

With the certification process that Komatsu America offers for both Distributor Certified and Komatsu CARE Certified Equipment, we want to clearly demonstrate that we can provide a valued product in the marketplace and differentiate ourselves with the best alternatives to buying new.

**QUESTION: How should customers go about checking availability of rental and ReMarketing machines?**

**ANSWER:** The first contact should be with their local distributor. Generally, they will find all the answers they need there. If they want to see machines that are offered through ReMarketing, they can check [www.komatsuused.com](http://www.komatsuused.com).

**QUESTION: What do the rental and used markets look like going forward?**

**ANSWER:** Those markets have been strong the past years, and we expect that to continue to be the case. While customers are buying more new machines today, they are still cautious and augmenting their fleets through rentals and used pieces. It's smart economically. As an equipment supplier, we want to continue the successful relationships we have with Komatsu customers through our distributors in order to help them achieve their goals. ■

## INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

# POWER ON THROUGH!

## TEC carries a vast array of powerful, versatile Fecon machinery to meet mulching, clearing needs

About six years ago, Tractor & Equipment Company partnered with Fecon to offer stellar mulching solutions to customers in Alabama and Georgia. Today, Tractor & Equipment carries the full line of Fecon products – including excavator heads, tractors and the Bull Hog attachment – as well as the parts and service to back them up so users can *Power on Through!* their projects.

One of Fecon's newest products includes the FTX128L, which is strong on cutting power and more versatile than any other purpose-built mulching tractor in its class. It is the machine of choice for right-of-way

mulching; clearing and related forestry; and urban work. The tractor's 128-horsepower diesel engine – coupled with Fecon's latest hydraulic technology – allows the FTX128L to outperform machines with higher horsepower, while keeping fuel consumption under 4.5 gallons per hour.

With adjustable flow of up to 60 gallons per minute, the FTX128L can power the Bull Hog forestry mulcher, Stump Hog stump grinder, tree shears, grapples, cold planers and many other skid steer attachments. The compact FTX128L features 20-inch tracks that

*Continued . . .*



Fecon's FTX128L mulching tractor features low ground pressure, making it ideal for areas that require minimal ground disturbance. Its 20-inch tracks help it maneuver effortlessly when cutting uphill.

# Fecon has the products for your clearing projects

... continued

provide low ground pressure (3.8 psi) for minimal disturbance. The tracks also make uphill cutting effortless and are ideal for soft conditions.

Operators have four points of egress, thanks to an innovative cab design. Wide-opening side and rear doors and a full-width engine hood provide full-access serviceability during maintenance.

## Excavator mulching heads

Tractor & Equipment also offers Fecon Bull Hog excavator heads for machines from 7 to 45 tons, including the CEM36 for 7- to 15-ton excavators. All Bull Hog excavator heads feature Fecon's durable Fixed Rotator System, which allows users to customize their mulcher to the job and the material.

Mulcher cutting tools can be further tailored to the application by choosing either FGT or HDT Tooling Systems, which offer carbide or knife tooling options. Depth Controlled Rotor is another option. It has a controlled bite with the reversible Samurai Knife Tools, ideal for jobs where impact with rocks is less frequent.

In addition to ditch, stream and roadside vegetation management, Fecon excavator

heads are perfect for maintaining fence rows; right-of-way and pipeline clearing; invasive species removal; fire breaks; land clearing; and site prep.

## New Fecon stump grinders

Fecon's SH360 stump grinder attaches to 20-ton or larger excavators, allowing operators to blast through stumps and keep on moving. The SH360 also comes with a quick-attach option, enabling operators to switch easily from the SH360 to the Bull Hog without missing a beat.

Tractor & Equipment Company also carries Fecon's Stumpex stump grinder for skid steers that run at as little as 20 gallons per minute of hydraulic flow. Stumpex grinders run with low rpm and as much as 33,600 foot-pounds of torque at 4,000 psi. The 1,500-pound attachment will draw itself down into any species of stump 10 to 28 inches in diameter and up to 20 inches deep in a single pass. Large-diameter stumps are processed by making additional passes.

A threaded cone and staggered AR500 cutting blades grind out stumps and root materials with minimal discharge and without requiring any fast-wearing carbide cutting tools. Low maintenance costs, high production, less clean-up and increased safety make the Stumpex a great choice for grinding contractors in land clearing, tree care and municipal applications.

Soon, the Stumpex will be available to mount on an excavator.

## What else is in the works?

Fecon is completing testing on the RTF280, its newest rubber-tired machine. With 280 horsepower; all-wheel steer rubber tires; and the ability to mount attachments on the back or front, this machine screams versatility. For instance, a Fecon Bull Hog mulcher can be mounted to the front while a crane with a grapple saw is run off the back. The RTF280 can even be configured with rear 3-point PTO capability. Its extremely low center of gravity allows the RTF280 to handle slopes with amazing stability. Look for this adaptable machine in mid-2016. ■

Fecon makes several models of excavator mulching heads that are perfect for vegetation management, right-of-way clearing, maintaining fence rows and a host of other applications.



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# PAVING IN LESS TIME

## Wirtgen's AutoPilot stringless system makes slipform projects with its SP 15 machines even more efficient



Erik Smydra,  
Stringless Machine  
Control Specialist,  
Wirtgen America

When it comes to versatility on paving monolithic profiles, Wirtgen set the standard with slipform pavers such as its SP 15 and Tier 4 Interim SP 15i models. They are true multipurpose machines that lay curb and gutter, barrier, sidewalk, V-ditch, special applications and slabs. Both can be quickly configured on-site for left- or right-side pouring, have maximum paving widths of 6 feet, and maximum barrier/parapet placement height of 4 feet 3 inches.

Wirtgen's new AutoPilot stringless paving system for poured-in-place concrete profiles – designed exclusively for its slipform pavers – has helped make those standard-bearers even more efficient. AutoPilot is a GPS-based system that ensures the highest precision and optimum efficiency, regardless of whether the job calls for straight profiles or highly complex curved paths.

Wirtgen's SP 15 slipform paver with a GPS-based AutoPilot stringless paving system for poured-in-place concrete profiles ensures the highest precision and optimum efficiency on any job. The system bypasses the need to establish a digital terrain model.

"The system creates a virtual stringline, and the machine runs off that," explained Erik Smydra, Stringless Machine Control Specialist with Wirtgen America. "There are no trip points or strings to knock down or pins to set. Users can either import shapes from a CAD file or use a field rover to shoot hubs and input the data. The machine starts paving from there."

### Intuitive operation, increased production

Wirtgen's proprietary AutoPilot control system gives construction companies a distinct competitive edge, because it bypasses the need to establish a digital terrain model. Programming is completed with a rover pole to capture coordinates or by simply using the jobsite plans, eliminating the need for a surveyor.

The system uses a computer that is integrated into the machine, as well as a control panel that allows intuitive operation. For course control, two machine-mounted GPS receivers communicate with an additional GPS reference station positioned on-site. For precise grade control, a laser, ultrasonic sensor or total station is used.

"It saves a significant amount of time because a crew doesn't have to come to the jobsite ahead of time to set pins and lines," said Smydra. "That makes paving any job faster and more efficient, and it especially pays for itself on tight radii with the elimination of setting all the pins necessary for those pours. Theoretically, you could shoot hubs in the morning, import the files and be paving the same day – increasing the number of feet poured compared to traditional methods." ■



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## NEWS & NOTES

# TOP PSSR

## Joey Majors of Panama City branch wins TEC award

Product support is perhaps the most significant factor when it comes time to purchase equipment. Think of your own business. If you buy a machine from a dealer who does a lousy job of providing parts and service – you’re probably not going to go to that dealer for your next purchase. That is why Tractor & Equipment Company emphasizes product support – because it is important to you.

To that end, TEC has a contest to recognize its top Product Support Sales Rep (PSSR) for the year. The winner is the PSSR who, on a market-share basis, does the best job of supplying customers with commodity parts such as undercarriage, rubber tracks, filtration, hoses and belts. This year’s winner is Joey Majors from the Panama City branch. Joey, who’s been with TEC for 16 years, received a plaque and a Yeti cooler for winning the award.



Panama City branch PSSR Joey Majors (third from left) was named Tractor & Equipment Company’s Top PSSR for 2015. (L-R) TEC’s VP Product Support Marketing Tim Tipton, President/CEO Dan Stracener, and Executive VP/GM – Product Support Steve Day presented him with a plaque.

“We feel we have the best quality and pricing on commodity parts of any equipment dealer,” said Steve Day, TEC Executive VP/GM – Product Support. “Nonetheless, it’s a competitive market, and we recognize that our customers have choices. That’s why we hold this contest for our PSSRs. We congratulate Joey on his 2015 win.” ■

# SPENDING BOOM

## Construction spending sees fastest growth in nearly a decade

Construction spending in the U.S. increased 12 percent from June 2014 to June 2015, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Associated General Contractors of America said it was the fastest growth rate since 2006, as total spending topped \$1 trillion.

Residential had the highest percentage increase at 13 percent (\$378 billion), while non-residential led spending at \$687 billion,

an 11.5-percent rise. In the residential sector, single-family construction was up by nearly 13 percent and multi-family grew by more than 23 percent.

On the non-residential side, manufacturing was up 62 percent, followed by lodging (42.2 percent), amusement and recreation (39.2), and office (24.4). However, spending was down in the power (-16.5) and public safety (-3.1) sectors. ■



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**Certified Master Technician.** Our thanks to **Paul** for going the Extra

Mile to earn the prestigious TEC Certified Master Technician ring for **excellence!**



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## RECOGNITIONS

# MASTER TECHNICIANS

## Two Georgia TEC field service techs earn top job status

Two more Tractor & Equipment Company employees, Jason Dowd and Jeff Garner, have earned the title Master Service Technician. It's a designation that recognizes top technicians for their tenure (10 years minimum with TEC); a high level of training achieved, including a minimum of 250 hours of manufacturer schooling; assisting in the training of other technicians; and demonstrating professionalism on the job.

"Becoming a Master Technician takes years of dedication in the training room and working in the field," said Chad Stracener, VP Product Support – Georgia. "TEC takes this achievement very seriously and recognizes our Master Service Technicians with pay incentives and a ring. They provide our customers with an extremely high level of service due to their experience, knowledge and professionalism. They also tend to mentor other technicians who are eager to grow."

Jeff Garner works out of the Hoschton, Georgia, branch, and Jason Dowd is based in Savannah.

"I work on every line that TEC carries, but my greatest strength is electrical systems," said Garner. "I'm one of those guys who tends to take his work home with him. If I've been out on a job and I wasn't able to figure out the problem right away, I go home and do research on my own time at night, so I can fix it the next day. I guess that's being conscientious. I really just want to help our customers get back up and running as soon as possible," Garner added. "In my 10-plus years with TEC, I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from some of the finest technicians in the industry."

"I would estimate I go to an average of 80 hours of factory classes per year and do ongoing online education on top of that," said Dowd.

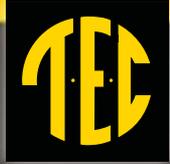
"Things change so fast on equipment today – the electronics and the hydraulics – if you don't keep up with it, you'll get left behind. I absolutely believe today's machines are better than ever before – by a long shot. Also, diagnostic tools like KOMTRAX help us troubleshoot and make repairs much faster than we could in the past."

"We're proud that Jeff and Jason have joined the other TEC technicians who have achieved Master status," said Stracener. "We believe that this program raises the level of product support and professionalism in our service departments at every TEC branch." ■



Jeff Garner (above) and Jason Dowd (left) were both named Master Service Technicians by Tractor & Equipment Company. "We are proud that Jeff and Jason have joined the other TEC technicians who have achieved Master status," said Chad Stracener, VP Product Support-Georgia.

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