

DECEMBER 2018



# Tractor Times



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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dan Stracener

**Celebrating  
five years  
of *intelligent*  
Machine Control**



Dear Valued Customer:

Anniversaries are a cause for celebration, and some stand out more than others, such as 60-year marriages or businesses marking a half century of operations. While Komatsu's *intelligent* Machine Control technology's five-year anniversary isn't near that stage yet, it's still worthy of commemorating the revolutionary accomplishment of these dozers and excavators with integrated GPS.

This issue of your Tractor Times magazine spotlights the first company in North America to employ an *intelligent* Machine Control dozer, the innovative D61i-23. Right away, the firm's owners recognized that the technology was a "game changer" and have since added several other pieces to their fleet.

Many of you are utilizing these excavators and dozers and reaping the benefits as well – no masts or cables, reduced staking, minimized overcutting and lower costs. Whether you are a large contractor, an individual working on your own or somewhere in between, we encourage you to demonstrate an *intelligent* Machine Control product and see how it can make your business more efficient and productive.

Of course, there are times when a standard machine is more appropriate to the task at hand. Inside, see articles on Komatsu's new D65PX-18 Wide VPAT (Variable-pitch Power Angle Tilt) Blade Specification dozer and PC1250LC-11 excavator. Both will quickly move mass quantities of dirt, and the dozer provides the advantage of being a good finish grader.

Whatever machines you run, proper maintenance is critical and using OEM products in the process is highly recommended. Find out why Komatsu's CK-4 Genuine Engine Oil is a wise choice for keeping machines running at peak performance.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Stracener'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dan Stracener  
President



# Tractor Times

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# CTS EXCAVATIONS, LLC

## Scottsboro, Ala., company introduces integrated GPS technology to jobsite and sees immediate results

After Lamar Clark purchased a farm in 2000, he invested in several pieces of large equipment to maintain the property. To supplement his income from a job at the local paper mill, he began to work for neighbors and local contractors on small projects using the machines.

CTS Excavations Owner Lamar Clark and his wife, Cindy, who serves as the Office Manager, employ 25 people at their multi-faceted business.



A CTS Excavations operator places pipe with a PC55MR-10 for a detention pond at the Turner Farm subdivision in Madison County, Ala.



Demand for his services grew until he decided to make working with heavy equipment a full-time endeavor.

“I started out clearing driveways and lots as well as handling quite a bit of custom work,” recalled Clark. “Eventually, I was able to hire some quality people and began to do the site work for multiple Dollar General stores during a three-year period. Everything snowballed from there to where we are now.”

Today, Clark and his wife, Cindy – who is the Office Manager – run CTS Excavations, LLC, with the help of several key employees, including Project Cost Analyst Gina Moses, Project Manager Kevin Sawyer and Estimator Nolan Couch.

“We’ve found the right people at the right time for the right positions,” explained Clark. “We’re always looking to hire the best possible candidate because our people are an integral part of who we are.”

### Multi-dimensional services

The 25-employee enterprise focuses on private contracts to provide site work for new subdivisions and apartment complexes within a 50-mile radius of Scottsboro, Ala., and supplements business with some DOT projects. The company can provide clearing, erosion control, sloping, grading and mass excavation as well as underground utility, sewer and storm-drain installation. The variety of services offered are a result of the trust Clark has built with customers throughout the last 18 years.

“When we tell a customer we’ll do something, we make sure it happens,” stated Clark. “We like to take on projects that are a little more challenging. There are no excuses



Using a PC210LCi excavator this CTS Excavations operator prepares the slope for a headwall at subdivision northeast of Huntsville, Ala. “The PC210LCi has made my life a heck of a lot easier,” noted Foreman Jeremy Black. “The machine can cut straight to grade on any slope without overdigging, which means we eliminate backfill, and it frees up a dozer to work elsewhere.”

in this industry. We work hard to provide a quality final product that’s neat and looks good from beginning to end.”

Annually, CTS Excavations takes on multiple projects of up to \$4 million, which require an average of 300,000 yards of soil excavation and take four to six months to finish.

“The company has really flourished since the economy rebounded around 2014,” offered Clark. “We’ve established a reputation for completing small- to medium-size jobs on time and on budget. The inspectors have noticed the quality of work we deliver, which, in turn, has led to more business because civil engineering firms want to make sure that we’re bidding their contracts.”

Currently, CTS Excavations is in the process of grading and installing underground utilities at the Turner Farm subdivision in Madison County, Ala. The development sits on a 20-acre plot of land.

“We’re grading tiered, two- and three-foot swales to separate the 72 pads and allow for better drainage. We’re also excavating two retention ponds to aid in erosion control,” Clark explained.

Clark’s crews are also working on a site in Scottsboro to make way for a new parking

lot. They are removing all existing structures and concrete before grading and installing storm drains.

### **Relationship with Komatsu**

CTS Excavations relies on dependable machines to keep its business running. That’s why Clark turns to Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Dwight Swaim for new equipment purchases.

“Dwight really sold me on Komatsu equipment when he let us demo the D61PXi dozer,” explained Clark. “We thought we could get similar production from competitive equipment with after-market GPS technology; however, the numbers didn’t compare to the results we saw from the integrated technology on the Komatsu dozer. It’s in a league of its own.”

To kick off 2018, Clark worked closely with Swaim to purchase two Komatsu D61PXi-24 dozers. The *intelligent* Machine Control technology, which includes integrated GPS and an automated blade-control system, allows an operator to go from first cut to final grade within one tenth of an inch.

“The integration of the technology means we no longer deal with masts or hanging

*Continued . . .*

# 'TEC's service has been great'

... continued

cables," explained Clark. "The cut is right on-grade and increases production. It also removes any surveying costs because you don't have to drive stakes into the ground or do anything twice."



Tractor & Equipment Company Sales Rep Dwight Swaim (left) meets with CTS Excavations Site Superintendent Terry Ryan. CTS purchased two D61PXi-24 dozers and a PC210LCi-11 excavator with *intelligent* Machine Control earlier this year with Swaim's assistance.

A crew member with CTS Excavations preps the site for a new parking lot in Scottsboro, Ala., with the company's PC210LC excavator. The firm is removing all existing structures and concrete before grading and installing storm drains.



The rest of CTS Excavations' fleet includes a PC55MR mini excavator, a PC210LC excavator and a recently purchased PC210LCi-11 excavator with *intelligent* Machine Control.

"The PC210LCi has made my life a heck of a lot easier," noted Foreman Jeremy Black. "The machine can cut straight to grade on any slope without overdigging, which means we eliminate backfill, and it frees up a dozer to work elsewhere. When we do the final pass, it's as slick as a whistle."

The new purchases have played key roles in the success of the Turner Farm project.

"Each slope is unique and would have taken two or three passes to get correct," explained Clark. "The i-machines allowed us to do everything in one pass and kept us weeks ahead of schedule. That time saved is invaluable."

TEC provides regular maintenance for the CTS fleet. Komatsu CARE, a complimentary maintenance program for the first three years or 2,000 hours, comes with Tier 4 equipment. The company also added a Komatsu extended warranty for its new machines.

"TEC's service has been great," said Clark. "Their Technology Manager, Buddy Averett, will swing by and make sure everything is going well and check on both the big stuff and the little things. The Komatsu CARE program has been a huge advantage as well because TEC reaches out and schedules maintenance at our convenience, which means we have less downtime."

## Next generation

Clark envisions that CTS Excavations will continue to grow and provide a variety of site work throughout the Scottsboro area. He hopes that will include working with his sons, Kolton and Kolby, to build an organization they can make their own.

"My oldest is leaning toward getting a civil engineering or construction management degree," said Clark. "Ideally, when he finishes college, he can work with Kevin and Nolan to get an understanding of the business and eventually take it over." ■

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# PKS PAVING & CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

## Lithia Springs, Ga., firm delivers high-quality work



Peyton Stallings,  
Owner/President

Peyton Stallings has been around concrete and heavy equipment his entire life. He grew up operating large machines on a farm in Villa Rica, Ga. When Stallings moved to Atlanta, he landed a position with – and eventually became a partner in – a local concrete-pump sales organization. Stallings sold his share in that business just before the economic downturn of 2008 and then, in 2010, formed PKS Paving & Concrete Construction as a one-man show.

“It all started when a friend asked me to pave a parking lot,” explained Stallings. “A lot of basic maintenance was neglected during the recession. Everywhere I looked there was a pothole or asphalt in need of repair. It was a lot of driveways, parking lots and

small commercial jobs that really established the company.”

Stallings capitalized on the niche market, slowly investing in paving equipment and adding employees. As the economy rebounded, PKS expanded its services. Today, 80 percent of its activity centers on asphalt and concrete paving and repair for commercial and public properties, and the remaining 20 percent is spent on high-end residential and private-sector projects. Thanks to its ability to hire the right people, the enterprise has established a solid reputation for professional results completed on time and within budget.

“Our 50 employees have been crucial to our success,” noted Stallings. “We pay close attention to detail on everything – from paving a parking lot overnight or repairing a driveway – we cater to a customer’s needs to make sure it’s done the right way.”

With Stallings’ wife, Kelly, as the Office Manager and brothers Don and Stokes as Foremen, PKS generally operates within a two-hour radius of metro Atlanta; however, it has provided services in every state that shares a border with Georgia. PKS recently opened a new office in Birmingham, Ala.

“We have excellent subcontracting relationships with the major paving companies in the region,” said Stallings. “Our capabilities complement their services, and we hope that bond gets stronger every year.”

### Repeat customers and new challenges

Patching potholes throughout Atlanta and working with homeowners remain important components of the PKS business plan. On the other end of the spectrum, the addition of

A PKS Paving & Concrete Construction crew tackles a parking lot project in Roswell, Ga., with its Wirtgen W 200i cold milling machine. “We added the 200i because the seven-foot cut allows us to take on larger projects and increase our efficiency,” said Owner /President Peyton Stallings.





PKS Paving & Concrete Construction operator Francisco Montalvo mills in seven-foot increments using a Wirtgen W 200i cold milling machine in a Roswell, Ga., retail store parking lot. "It's a powerful and versatile machine," said Montalvo. "We run the W 200i seven days a week and have never had a major issue."

multi-million-dollar projects is a challenge the organization embraces.

"We work with a number of repeat customers, some of them since the company was founded," relayed Stallings. "They're the backbone of what we do, and they help create exposure for the larger projects we're completing. The process of milling and creating a long-lasting product has become very specialized. Customers – from those needing a small patch job to an entirely reworked parking lot – all know they can expect top quality from us."

This year has been exceptionally rainy throughout the region and created many challenges for PKS. Despite the weather conditions, Stallings and his crews met deadlines and stayed on budget.

"During the spring, we had to get creative and play catch-up when the rain would subside for a few days," recalled Stallings. "Several storms delayed us two weeks while we were replacing a parking lot. We were still able to complete everything on schedule because we rarely sub out any tasks, which streamlines the entire process."

Notable projects include parking lots for major grocery and home-improvement store chains. Many of the new high-end apartment complexes throughout metro Atlanta utilize PKS to install their parking lots. The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport also calls on the business for small repair work. In the northern suburbs of

Atlanta, the city of Roswell is contracting with PKS to repair several roads.

"We're milling and paving multiple stretches of road throughout the city," explained Stallings. "We tear up the old pavement, replace any failing piping or drainage, install new storm drains and curbing as necessary and then finish by paving and striping the road. In many regards, this type of contract is the next logical step for the company to take."

### **Adding milling capabilities**

In 2017, Stallings began crunching numbers and decided it was time for PKS to purchase a milling machine. Relying on outside contractors for equipment was presenting more challenges than solutions, and business was consistent enough that the move made sense financially.

"I realized that if we wanted to continue to grow, we needed our own milling equipment," recalled Stallings. "We asked a lot of people already running the machines what they recommended and which distributor they preferred. It was quickly apparent that Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Wirtgen were the best choices."

Stallings turned to TEC's Kennesaw Branch Manager Mack Brice to purchase a Wirtgen W 120 CF cold milling machine. Compact and capable of milling four feet at a time, the acquisition helped catalyze the firm's growth into larger endeavors. Stallings particularly appreciates the reliability of the machine.

*Continued . . .*

# 'Both milling machines are super-efficient'

... continued

"There have been very few issues so far," said Stallings. "If anything comes up, TEC quickly remedies the situation. They've been an excellent company to partner with."



PKS Paving & Concrete Construction Owner/President Peyton Stallings (left) meets with Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) Kennesaw Branch Manager Mack Brice. Stallings depends on TEC for his company's paving equipment needs.

Operators Robert Prince (left) and Jimmy Tims mill a road in Atlanta using PKS Paving & Concrete Construction's Wirtgen W 120 CFI cold milling machine. "The four-foot width on the W 120 is perfect for a job of this size," said Prince. "It can fit around tight corners and is very operator friendly."



Stallings' relationship with Brice as well as results from the W 120 CF led to the purchase of an Etnyre Black-Topper Centennial distributor truck in addition to a Wirtgen W 200i cold milling machine.

"Both milling machines are super-efficient," noted Stallings. "The 120 CF was the perfect stepping stone to really fine tune our milling process. We added the 200i because the seven-foot cut allows us to take on larger projects and increase our efficiency."

"When the equipment was delivered, TEC had someone stay on site to answer our questions," he continued. "Throughout that first week, TEC sent technicians to make sure our operators were completely comfortable with the machines."

The 200i has compact dimensions that allow it to produce equally well on large jobsites and construction areas with limited space. Capable of milling up to 13 inches, PKS uses the machine for surface course rehabilitation, fine milling and total pavement removal.

"The addition of all three pieces of equipment has been pivotal in our success," noted Stallings. "They give us the freedom to handle a wider variety of jobs, and knowing we have the support of TEC makes the future bright."

## Potential new business

Stallings believes his market is untapped or underserved in other large metropolitan areas. With a proven formula for success, he envisions expanding into other nearby markets in a replicable fashion.

"It would be easy to duplicate what we're doing now in Nashville or Birmingham," explained Stallings. "The large paving firms have the hot mix and other materials we use readily available. Continuing to work with them would help both of our businesses."

Growing smart – not fast, however, remains Stallings focus. "It's important to hire the right people," he noted. "Expansion is great, but we have to do things the correct way and to pay attention to the details. Success will follow." ■



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# INVESTMENT INCENTIVE

## New tax law expands Section 179, allows bonus depreciation on used equipment acquisitions

Used equipment buyers are the recipients of expanded benefits with the passage of last year's tax law, including the ability to combine Section 179 Expensing and first-year bonus depreciation. Previously, bonus depreciation was limited to new purchases only.

Section 179 Expensing by itself can be significant, and generally companies use this deduction first. The Tax Cut and Jobs Act doubled the deduction limit to \$1 million on qualifying equipment purchases, including previously owned machinery. It also raised the spending cap to \$2.5 million. Once that amount is reached, the deduction begins to decline on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Companies that spend more than \$3.5 million lose the Section 179 Expensing deduction altogether.

To qualify for the deduction in the current tax year, machinery must be purchased or financed between January 1 and December 31 and placed into service by the end of the year. The latter is an important component and should factor into the timing of buying decisions. The machinery must be delivered and working before the clock strikes midnight and a new year begins.

### Taking a closer look

For illustration, here are some Section 179 Expensing scenarios, which assume that used machinery is acquired and put into service:

1. You purchased outright or financed up to \$1 million worth of previously owned equipment this year. You can fully deduct that amount for the 2018 tax year. This will be the case through the end of 2022.

2. Your acquisition was between \$1 million and \$2.5 million. You can still take a deduction of \$1 million.

3. The purchase exceeds \$2.5 million. The deduction is lowered dollar for dollar. For instance, if the total purchases were \$3 million – you can only claim \$500,000, instead of \$1 million.

4. You bought more than \$3.5 million in used equipment. The Section 179 Expensing deduction is no longer available.

In scenarios 2 and 3, you can now use bonus depreciation in addition to Section 179 Expensing to lower your tax bill. As an example, if you purchased \$2 million in equipment, you can take the \$1 million Section 179 deduction and use bonus depreciation to fully deduct the other \$1 million. Your tax bracket determines your final actual cash savings. ■

*For additional information, check with your territory manager, consult your tax adviser and see the online calculator at [www.section179.org](http://www.section179.org).*

The Tax Cut and Jobs Act doubled the Section 179 Expensing deduction limit to \$1 million on qualifying equipment purchases, including previously owned machinery. It also raised the spending cap to \$2.5 million, and companies can now use bonus depreciation for used equipment as well. A calculator to check tax savings is available at [www.section179.org](http://www.section179.org).



## EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

# RECRUITING A NEW GENERATION

## Creating a sense of community and belonging can attract, retain millennial workers

Construction companies are facing a critical time. An abundance of available projects is unquestionably a good thing, but the industry's positive momentum is exposing one of its most serious issues – the lack of skilled workers.

While company owners are beginning to invest in recruiting measures, keeping new staff members will be the next challenge. That may be especially true for millennials. Hiring and retaining them is a growing concern, especially considering that they now comprise the majority of the workforce. According to a Gallup poll, six in 10 millennials are currently open to exploring new job opportunities.

Part of the reason is the ability to easily search for a seemingly infinite number of jobs at any time. There are thousands of positions listed

Companies can attract and retain millennial employees by creating a positive culture. "The real culture is what happens at the workplace every day," said Iluma Learning, Inc. Founder Amy Parrish. "If a company says it values employees' opinions, staff members should feel like their input matters. Talk to employees and managers to truly determine if your company's practices are matching up with your culture."

across hundreds of online job sites, so why would employees limit themselves to one career for the rest of their lives? Society fosters the perception that the next employer will pay more or will offer other attractive features.

Some of the blame lies in the culture of instant gratification, but a majority of the issue stems from a disconnect between employer and employee. Many young workers would like to stay at a job long term, if only their companies did a couple of things differently.

Cracking the code that is the millennial workforce will make or break businesses throughout the next decade, notes Iluma Learning, Inc. Founder Amy Parrish. "Millennials are looking to be a part of something; they crave a sense of community and belonging," she writes. "The idea of working for a faceless corporation is not always appealing to millennials – they want to be welcomed and appreciated for their efforts, regardless of the industry. A company's culture goes a long way toward helping it transcend a workplace and become something more meaningful that employees can really buy into and commit to."

### Match practices to your culture

Taking concrete steps can help your company understand how to hire, develop and retain this generation of young, ambitious workers. According to Parrish, every organization has a culture, whether it defines one or not.

"The way a company runs its daily operations, values employees and works with customers shapes its culture," she writes. "Making a concerted effort to delineate and develop a positive culture goes a long way toward attracting and retaining employees. While rules and regulations can create the outline





for a company, the culture colors, shades and highlights the areas that reside outside the lines. Policies and procedures may tell the what, but culture provides the who, why and how.”

Parrish points out that a culture is about more than buzzwords on letterhead or a website. “The real culture is what happens at the workplace every day. If a company says it values employees’ opinions, staff members should feel like their input matters. If it says it cherishes time away from work, then an organization should not require 80-hour workweeks or shame workers into forgoing their vacation days. It is important for owners and leaders to monitor the real culture of their workplace continuously. Talk to employees and managers to truly determine if your company’s practices are matching up with your culture.”

### **Avoid the turnover trap**

Millennials want to be pushed and challenged to do more. Creating a culture where employees feel welcome and encouraged to test their resolve from day one will entice new hires to join your team and also stay longer. You will be rewarded with hardworking, long-term employees who are invested in the company.

Winning over millennial talent has less to do with offering hip perks or remodeling the office than it does with showing millennials that they have a future at your organization where they can learn, grow, achieve and lead, according to a recent Gallup poll. Providing opportunities for

career growth as well as personal development plays a major role for millennials when deciding where to work and how long they are willing to stay with one company.

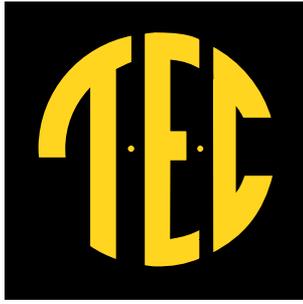
Like any employee, as millennials learn and grow, they want opportunities to provide input and the ability to work independently when appropriate. Show a candidate that there is genuine mutual trust between employer and employee to accomplish a task without micromanagement. Once a millennial is hired, create a monthly review to show progress and areas of improvement. The review should be a two-sided equation. When you involve millennials in the process and define their aspirations, you will create a stronger connection between the company and the work that millennials are doing.

“Employers will be relying on millennial talent for decades to come,” writes Klyn Elsbury, CEO & Founder of Landmark Makers in an article that appeared on Forbes.com titled “Five Proven Tactics for Hiring and Retaining Millennial Employees.” “If you want your new talent to stay with you, you have to give them unique reasons to. Only the organizations that understand how talent wants to be treated will avoid the turnover trap.” ■

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*Note: Information in this article was gathered and compiled from various sources, including an interview with Amy Parrish, M.Ed., MBE, a Professional Management Leadership Specialist for the heavy equipment industry. She has 15 years of experience in the industry and has worked with the Association of Equipment Distributors as well as several heavy equipment manufacturers.*

**A recent Gallup poll found that six in 10 millennials are currently open to exploring new job options. You can attract and keep millennials by giving them opportunities to grow and learn.**



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# COMMUNITIES AT RISK

## Additional federal infrastructure investment is critical to ensuring safe drinking water

When news of the Flint, Mich., water crisis made headlines, nearly 21 million people across the country relied on water systems that violated health standards. Low-income communities, minority populations and rural towns disproportionately deal with barriers to safe water.

Drinking water challenges are complex: failing infrastructure, polluted water sources and low-capacity utility management are all part of the issue. Declining investment in water infrastructure throughout the last several decades has exacerbated the problem.

Access to safe water is essential for our survival and our economy. Without serious investment in water infrastructure, we will continue to put communities at risk. As a country, we must support existing funding sources for water infrastructure, develop new and innovative funding mechanisms and more effectively prioritize the water needs of underserved communities.

Investment in water infrastructure has decreased. An analysis from the Value of Water Campaign shows that combined federal investment in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure declined from 63 percent of total capital spending to 9 percent since 1977. State and local governments have also decreased their capital spending on water infrastructure in recent years. The EPA estimates that the United States needs to invest \$472.6 billion in the next 20 years, the majority of which can be attributed to rehabilitating, upgrading and replacing existing infrastructure.

### Essential for health, economy

Safe water is essential to our health – and if we're not healthy, we can't work. Businesses

and industries rely on water to support worker productivity and as a raw resource for goods and services. According to the Economic Policy Institute, \$188.4 billion spent on water infrastructure investment in five years can yield \$265 billion in economic activity and create 1.9 million jobs.

Federal investment in water infrastructure must continue to grow. The reality is that Flint is not an isolated incident. Communities across the country struggle to provide safe water. People are working hard to address these issues, but more effort is needed. Everyone can play a role by making our failing water systems and the communities that rely on them a priority. Safe water must no longer be a luxury. ■

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*Sara Schwartz holds a master's degree in environmental management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. This article is excerpted from a blog post. For the full version, visit [blog.ucsusa.org](http://blog.ucsusa.org). Connect with Schwartz at [www.linkedin.com/in/saraschwartz1/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/saraschwartz1/).*



Sara Schwartz,  
Union of Concerned  
Scientists, Early  
Career Scientist  
Mentor Program  
Participant

**Investment in the nation's water systems is critical, and we must put more money toward existing infrastructure, especially in underserved communities, says Sara Schwartz, Union of Concerned Scientists, Early Career Scientist Mentor Program Participant.**





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## A 'GAME CHANGER'

### First contractor to use revolutionary *intelligent* Machine Control is more efficient, productive than ever



Joe Liesfeld III,  
Vice President



Kelby Morgan,  
Project Manager

Liesfeld Contractor takes pride in being at the forefront of construction technology. The Richmond, Va., earthwork contractor was one of the first in its community and surrounding area to use a dozer with an aftermarket GPS grading system.

"It was awkward, but it was cool; and, at times, it would grade by itself using an indicator system," recalled Vice President Joe Liesfeld III, who along with his father, Joe Jr., own and operate the firm. "The technology continued to improve, which helped with efficiency, but the drawback was that our operators had to spend time installing and taking down masts and cables every day. That takes a bite out of production time."

When Komatsu introduced its initial *intelligent* Machine Control dozer five years ago, Liesfeld

Contractor jumped at the chance to be the first to demonstrate the revolutionary D61i-23 with factory-integrated GPS that required no time-consuming set up of masts or cables.

Komatsu has since added five more sizes of the machine: D39i, D51i, D65i, D85i and D155i. Some of the dozers are in their second generation, including the D61i-24s. All feature fully automatic blade control from first pass to last. During rough-cut, if the system senses excess blade load, it automatically raises the blade to minimize track slip and maintain forward momentum. The blade also automatically lowers to push as much material as possible for maximum production in all situations.

"Right away we recognized that the original D61i was a game-changer," stated Project Manager Kelby Morgan. "Komatsu built a bulldozer around GPS, versus trying to adapt GPS to the bulldozer. By doing that, they created a superior product. After the trial period, we made it part of our fleet and have since put additional units to work. We use them in all facets of construction, from stripping topsoil to putting a site to final grade. The accuracy is outstanding."

#### Accuracy delivers productivity

With thousands of machines in North America and total fleet hours into the millions, Komatsu's *intelligent* Machine Control dozers have proven to reliably deliver accuracy on jobsites.

"The blade is a dirt pusher, and it's also our survey crew," stated Liesfeld. "The dozers always know where they are in relation to final elevation. They have virtually eliminated staking and the need for extra labor to check grade, which is a huge cost savings. After the

A Liesfeld Contractor operator grades with a Komatsu D51PXi-24 dozer. "The blade is a dirt pusher, and it's also our survey crew," said Vice President Joe Liesfeld III. "This technology allows us to do (finish grading) three to four times faster than before we acquired the first *intelligent* Machine Control dozer."

#### ▶ VIDEO





Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control excavators, including this PC360LCi-11, are go-to machines for Liesfeld Contractor, which puts them to work excavating, digging trenches and constructing ponds. “They have the versatility to move mass quantities of materials as well as do precision work such as slopes, so we were able to construct a relatively large pond rather quickly,” said Technology/GPS Manager Chris Ashby.

site model is loaded into a machine, we set up a base station and a benchmark, and that’s it. We have noticed the biggest savings with fine grading. This technology allows us to do (finish grading) three to four times faster than before we acquired the first *intelligent* Machine Control dozer.”

Liesfeld Contractor’s Technology/GPS Manager Chris Ashby builds 3-D site models based on CAD files provided by engineering firms. After checking for accuracy, he sends the models to the dozers via Topcon’s SiteLink3D system.

“It’s seamless, and once the model is loaded, the machine is ready to go to work,” said Ashby. “The operator always has an overall, site-grading map available on the high-res monitor, detailing elevations and where cut-and-fill locations are. If there is a change, I can send an update directly to the machine, so that adjustments are virtually instantaneous.”

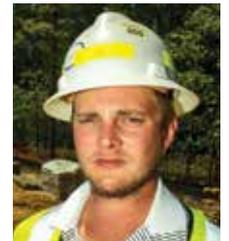
### **Excavators effective in every application**

Ashby can also transmit revised information to the firm’s *intelligent* Machine Control

excavators. Komatsu announced their arrival with its PC210LCi-10 – the world’s first such excavator – approximately one year after the D61i-23 dozers. Liesfeld Contractor runs a second-generation PC210LCi-11, as well as PC360LCi-11 units.

Among a host of standout features in the excavators 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.

“The main uses for our excavators are trench digs for dry utilities, so the models are done on a ditch-by-ditch basis, because each is unique,” Ashby pointed out. “Recently, on a large project, we had dozens to dig. If each required staking and we needed someone to constantly check grade, the cost would have been fairly high. Once I loaded the models, the operators could simply excavate the trenches and move the dirt.”



**Chris Ashby,  
Technology/GPS  
Manager**

*Continued . . .*

# 'The technology allowed us to work confidently'

... continued

## What others are saying about *intelligent* Machine Control



*"The accuracy is spot-on, and we aren't wasting materials due to overcutting. The technology is easy to use – download a file to the machine, and you're ready to roll in just a few minutes."*

**Bret Barnhart, Owner, Bret Barnhart Excavating**



*"I think what stood out the most to me was using the PC490LCi to cut a slope, and when it was done, the slope was smooth as glass. We loaded the plans, and it cut right to grade with no stakes or grade checkers."*

**Pete Sewczak, Vice President, Zak Dirt**



*"(The integrated system) saves us time and money by eliminating the need to put up and take down masts, and we no longer worry about them getting damaged or stolen. What stands out is the increased production and efficiency. We simply plug the plans into the machines and go to work."*

**Randy Ellis, Owner/Vice President, R&T Ellis**



*"The savings of time and material costs have been significant. We don't need surveyors to drive new stakes or replace the ones that invariably get knocked down."*

**Mike Greenfield, Owner/President, Greenfield Trucking**

Liesfeld Contractor uses its *intelligent* Machine Control dozers, including this D61PXi-24, from first pass to last. "Right away we recognized that the original D61i was a game-changer," said Project Manager Kelby Morgan. "Komatsu built a bulldozer around GPS, versus trying to adapt GPS to the bulldozer. By doing that, they created a superior product."



Morgan added, "There were a lot of ups and downs to those utility trenches compared to straightforward ditch digs, which added to the complexity. As a result, there was no way to use laser guidance. Every grade break required staking, but the integrated system eliminated the need for that. The technology allowed us to work confidently, knowing that once the excavators reached target depths at each point of the trenches, our operators could not go beyond that."

On the same project, Liesfeld Contractor used the excavators for additional applications. "They have the versatility to move mass quantities of materials, as well as do precision work such as slopes, so we were able to construct a relatively large pond rather quickly," said Ashby. "Because these excavators are accurate and could put the entire area to grade, we did it without a dozer. That eliminated additional machine costs."

## Upped the ante

Joe Liesfeld Jr. founded Liesfeld Contractor in 1972, clearing house lots with a dozer, chainsaw and a dump truck. As the years progressed, so did the company. By the mid-1980s, commercial site work and other large projects that involve a comprehensive package of services became the norm, most of them for repeat customers. The Liesfelds also operate an environmental company that offers wetland construction, as well as a recycling operation.

Expansion continued through the 1990s, when Joe III and his brother, Kenny (who's no longer with the company), as well as Morgan joined the business. The trio were instrumental in bringing GPS technology to Liesfeld Contractor's jobsites.

"We have moved millions of yards of dirt through the years, and we've always sought ways to be as efficient and productive as possible," said Morgan. "The *intelligent* Machine Control products really upped the ante. They make operators at every career level more effective, and our people love them." ■

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"Komatsu's i-machines definitely make my operators better at what they do. I mean, we haven't been using this technology for the past twenty years, so it's pretty new. But this tech makes it easier to do our job—makes it so that my operators can work more efficiently, and we get a better finished product."



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"Using and understanding the new product technology, available from Komatsu for our business, made me apprehensive at first. But our dealer and their technical support have worked with us to help us make the tech work for our needs. I am seeing the benefits now. I'm on board and love it!"



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## CASE STUDY



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# INTELLIGENT INSTALLATION

## Boomerang Corp. finds added value on utility applications with PC490LCi excavator

Since opening his own construction company in 1998, Bryce Ricklefs has always looked outside the box to find a hidden niche to help his company, Boomerang Corp., thrive.

Twenty years later, Ricklefs continues to search for those advantages, which is why he selected a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control PC490LCi excavator with integrated GPS technology last year.

“We were one of the earliest adopters of GPS because we knew it would help save time and money, and it’s a strategy that continues to work,” shared Ricklefs. “For us, it was a no-brainer to add the PC490LCi to our fleet.”

While most PC490LCi owners use the excavator in mass grading applications, Ricklefs believed the machine also offered advantages on Boomerang’s utility-installation projects.

“Using the PC490LCi for utility applications has improved our efficiency,” reported Ricklefs. “It’s quicker and more cost effective because we can hit grade without a person in the hole guiding the operator; the machine does that step for us. Plus, the plans are right there on the screen in the cab, so the operator doesn’t have to get out or stop to ask as many questions. We can get on grade, switch to pipe and move to the next cut faster.

“We reduce the amount of material because the excavator prevents overdigging, which also saves on rock as the bottom of the cut is always uniform,” he added. “In addition to material savings, it enables us to provide a quality finished product with consistent bedding throughout the project.”

### Komatsu delivers

Komatsu was on-hand to assist Boomerang in unlocking the advantages of the system.

“They came here for training and helped us set up,” noted Ricklefs. “It was quick and easy. Right now, we are about 10 percent more efficient and regularly within one-tenth of a foot of grade. As we get more comfortable, I’m confident we will see both of those numbers improve.”

Boomerang recently expanded its investment in *intelligent* Machine Control technology as it acquired a PC360LCi excavator last fall and two D51PXi dozers earlier this year.

“Our purchase of the PC360LCi is a direct result of our experience with the PC490LCi,” stated Ricklefs. “They are the first of what I envision as many Komatsu i-machines for us.” ■



Bryce Ricklefs,  
President  
Boomerang Corp.

A Boomerang Corp. operator uses a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control PC490LCi excavator to dig a trench to install storm pipe. “Using the PC490LCi for utility applications has improved our efficiency,” said Boomerang Corp. President Bryce Ricklefs. “We can hit grade, switch to pipe and move to the next cut faster.”



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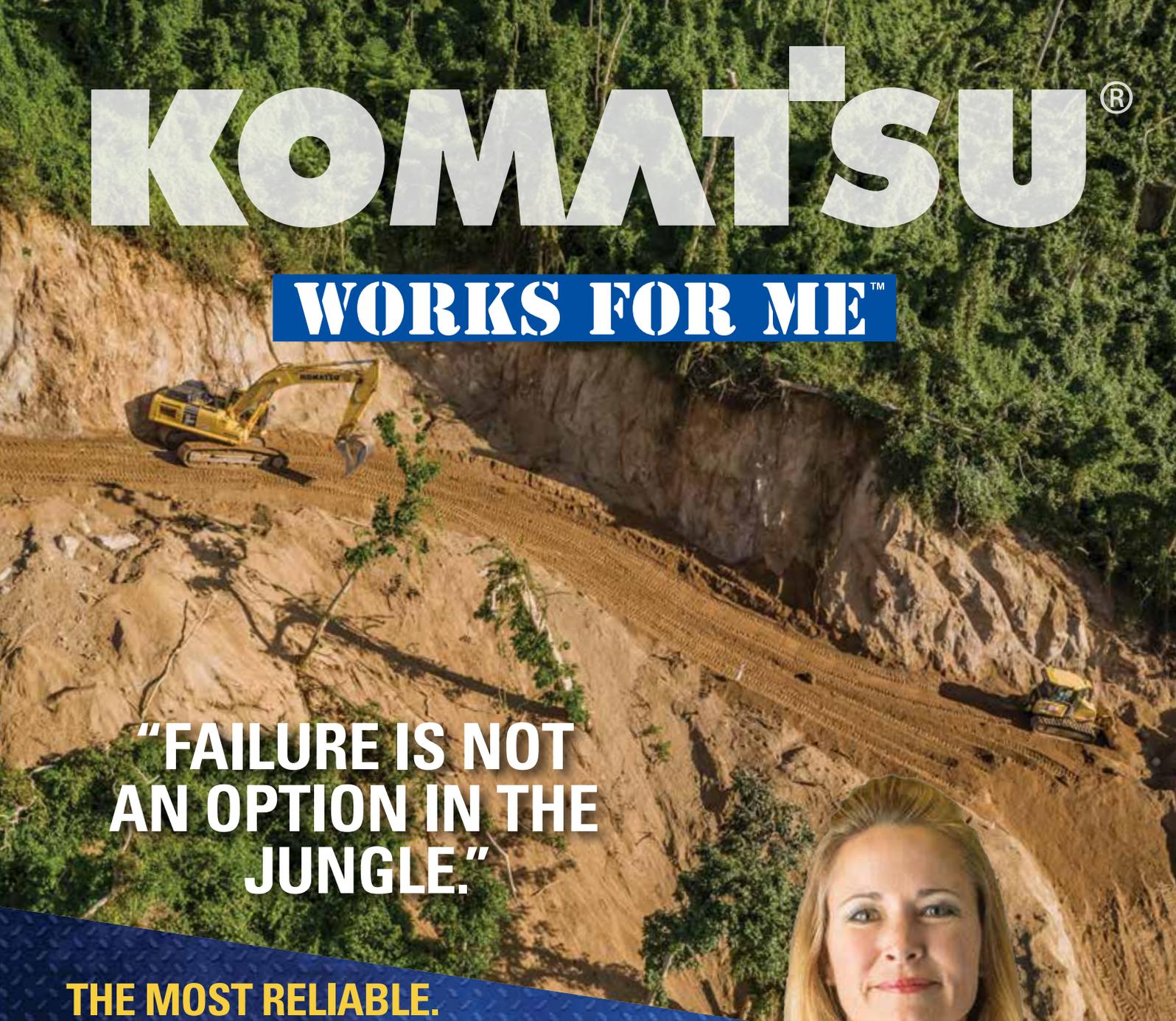
"At D. Grimm, Inc., we handle construction projects across the USA and in Puerto Rico that keep our crews and equipment constantly on the edge. And it's my reputation that's on the line, so I choose Komatsu over all other brands because they've proved that they're the most reliable. If you need exceptional construction equipment, and a company that will work hard for you, I recommend Komatsu!"

**Dawn Mallard / D.Grimm, Inc. / Conroe, TX**

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## NEW PRODUCT



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# EFFICIENT MATERIAL MOVEMENT

## Komatsu's new wide-blade dozer excels when low ground pressure is needed

The ability to move mass quantities of material and finish grade with one machine on a variety of jobsites is a distinct advantage. Komatsu's new D65PX-18 Wide VPAT (Variable-pitch Power Angle Tilt) Blade Specification dozer provides it in a package that includes nearly a foot more blade width and six-inch larger track shoes than its standard counterparts. Traditional and *intelligent* Machine Control models are available.

The 53,925-pound dozers have 14.1-foot, six-way blades, which deliver greater grading productivity and versatility, according to Chuck Murawski, Komatsu Product Manager, Dozers, who emphasized that customers are increasingly using these size-class dozers for more than slot dozing. Komatsu beefed up the C-frame to ensure it could carry the wider blade.

"Our D65s handle the heavy lifting of stripping, cutting and pushing, and the Wide VPAT blades make them excellent finish dozers," he said. "Each has increased steering power for greater maneuverability, and we added an automatic shift mode with a full-time torque converter that maximizes production and efficiency on both short and long pushes. The hydraulics are smooth, so operators can control the blade with little effort."

### Light footprint

The D65PX-18 Wide VPAT Blade Specification models really stand out in sensitive areas, said Murawski. Ground pressure with the 36-inch track shoes is approximately 5 PSI, which is 14 percent lower than machines with 30-inch shoes.

"This makes them ideal for projects such as landfill cells where the dozer is running across a liner or in pipeline construction where it's operating on top of buried pipe," reported Murawski. "Another advantage is that the

shoes are centered on the track compared to being offset like some competitive models, so the load is always evenly distributed. That helps lengthen undercarriage life."

Komatsu equipped the D65 dozers with its PLUS (Parallel Linkage Undercarriage System) Undercarriage, which features rotary bushings and larger components that undergo a unique heat-treating process for increased strength and durability.

"Customers report increased flotation and better traction with the wide, 36-inch track shoes; greater stability on slopes with the 7 percent wider track gauge; faster times when spreading material using the 14.1-foot blade; and a smooth, comfortable ride from a well-balanced machine," said Murawski. ■



Chuck Murawski,  
Komatsu Product  
Manager, Dozers

### Quick Specs on Komatsu's D65PX-18 Dozer Models

Model	Horsepower	Operating Weight	Blade Capacity
D65PX-18 Wide VPAT and D65PXi-18 Wide VPAT	217 hp	53,925 lb	5.8 cu yd

Komatsu's new D65PX-18 Wide VPAT Blade Specification dozer has wider blades and track shoes, allowing for more efficient material movement on areas where low ground pressure is essential.



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## PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT

# NEW PC1250-11 EXCAVATORS

## Increased horsepower significantly boosts productivity and profitability

Numbers tell the tale on Komatsu's upgraded PC1250 excavators. They offer a 13 percent boost in horsepower and up to 8 percent greater productivity, all while maintaining the fuel consumption of their Dash-8 predecessors. Two configurations are available – the PC1250-11 with a short undercarriage and a PC1250LC-11 with a long undercarriage – allowing users to match the excavator to their particular applications.

"The higher horsepower delivers additional power to the pumps, which helps the excavator handle the high-demand segments of a cycle more effectively," said Kurt Moncini, Komatsu Senior Product Marketing Manager, Tracked Products. "We also made some changes to reduce hydraulic pressure loss for improved efficiency. During tough applications, the machines keep their digging force longer. Operators who have run the Dash-8 model, should notice a significant increase in performance."

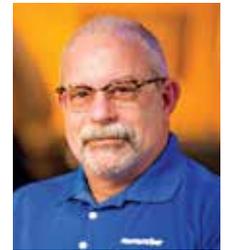
Companies involved in large, high-volume excavating jobs should choose the short undercarriage PC1250-11, which has a shorter boom that's thicker at the arch. "This short-boom configuration allows customers to use a bigger bucket," explained Moncini. "It's primarily made for one application – high-production truck loading. Fifty-ton to 70-ton-class trucks are an ideal match, but the PC1250-11 is also more than capable of loading up to 100-ton trucks."

### Versatile LC configuration

In addition to mass excavation and truck loading, the PC1250LC-11 long-undercarriage configuration excels in deep sewer and water trenching, general construction and mining/quarry applications. It features a standard 29-foot, 10-inch boom and arm options of 11'2", 14'9" and 18'8".

"The long undercarriage model provides greater versatility because its arm options and longer boom enable larger digging envelopes with greater reach and digging depths," said Moncini. "The ability to handle objects such as manholes and box culverts is outstanding, too. This is a great, larger-size, multi-purpose excavator.

"Komatsu's Business Solutions Group can help identify the right configuration and machine specifications to best suit customers' operations," added Moncini. "Whichever they choose, either excavator will meet their needs and do so more productively and efficiently, which increases profitability." ■



**Kurt Moncini,**  
Komatsu Senior  
Product Marketing  
Manager,  
Tracked Products

### Quick Specs for Komatsu's PC1250 Excavators

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Boom Length
PC1250-11	758 hp	259,960-265,900 lb	25 ft, 7 in
PC1250LC-11	758 hp	269,300-275,240 lb	29 ft, 10 in

Komatsu's new PC1250-11 short-undercarriage, mass-excavation excavator (shown below), as well as the PC1250LC-11 long undercarriage model, deliver greater production while maintaining the same fuel efficiency as their Dash-8 predecessors.



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

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# ENGAGING MINE OPERATORS

**Brian Yureskes, Director of Sales and Global Accounts, says direct conversations benefit mining customers**

**QUESTION:** Customer engagement is a key element of Komatsu's commitment to helping them run more productively, and it gains valuable feedback for machinery improvement. What role does it play for Komatsu Mining?

**ANSWER:** We are engaging both current and potential customers by going into the field more often in order to better understand their operations, requirements and what they expect from us. We want them to know how Komatsu can meet their needs with a variety of innovative and technologically advanced trucks that move massive amounts of materials, as well as with the support to ensure that they do so in the most efficient manner possible. These direct conversations also provide valuable feedback as we look to the future.

This year is the 10th anniversary of our Autonomous Haulage System, or AHS. During the past decade, the system has moved around 2 billion tons of material. Mines that are not utilizing AHS vehicles are seeking information about the benefits, which are outstanding. In the past, there may have been some reluctance on our part to talk about these advantages beyond our AHS customer base. We are more actively spreading the word to customers through various means, such as inviting them to our proving grounds where we field test the trucks.

**QUESTION:** The Peoria Manufacturing Operation (PMO) focuses on mining trucks. What specific products are produced there?

**ANSWER:** We manufacture seven of the largest electric-drive mining trucks in the



**Brian Yureskes, Director of Sales and Global Accounts, Komatsu Mining**

*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.*

It was almost a foregone conclusion that Brian Yureskes would land in his current role as Director of Sales and Global Accounts, Komatsu Mining. He started with Komatsu six years ago in product marketing for construction equipment and became Director of Training and Publications at the company's Customer Center in Cartersville, Ga. Then, in 2015 the opportunity to move into mining presented itself, and Yureskes took it.

"My first job out of college was in operations management for a mining company," recalled Yureskes, who graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in 2005 with a mining engineering degree. He recently completed his MBA at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill. "When I came to Komatsu, I was indifferent as to whether I worked in construction or mining, but, with my background, it made sense that I would eventually migrate to the mining side."

Three years ago, he took the role of a Business Development Lead, working closely with a single mining customer. Last year, Komatsu Mining expanded his duties, putting him in charge of global efforts.

"I have always found mining enjoyable," he shared. "Playing in the dirt with trucks seems like such a natural fit."

Yureskes and his wife, Katherine, have two children and like to stay active. He enjoys weightlifting, mountain biking, basketball and playing some golf now and then. "I don't like to sit still," he said.

*Continued . . .*

# Mining trends foretell future growth

... continued

world, ranging from the 200-ton-capacity 730E to the 400-ton 980E, as well as autonomous versions of some models. Every Komatsu mining truck ordered worldwide is built and shipped from the PMO. In addition, all global engineering support, research

and development, parts and testing for the products manufactured are handled it here. That's unique compared to other Komatsu manufacturing operations in North America.

**QUESTION: What is the state of the mining industry?**

**ANSWER:** There has been some overall volatility lately. After a down period, all the markets experienced a surge, then stabilized a bit. Trends look positive going forward, and analysts are predicting growth for mining during the next five years. Komatsu is taking a proactive approach to further expand its footprint in the mining sector.

**QUESTION: Do you encourage customers to visit the PMO?**

**ANSWER:** Absolutely. It's a fantastic experience for people to see how these massive haulers are manufactured. If the timing is right, visitors may even watch their own trucks being built. We also view it as a great opportunity to showcase the quality that Komatsu builds into its products and the world-class support behind them. ■



Komatsu's Peoria Manufacturing Operation produces seven of the largest electric-drive mining trucks in the world, ranging from the 200-ton-capacity 730E to the 400-ton 980E, as well as autonomous versions of some models.



Brian Yureskes, Director of Sales and Global Accounts, Komatsu Mining, says customer engagement provides valuable feedback that can have a direct impact on new products.



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# OPTIMIZING JOBSITES

## Partnership for aerial mapping provides resources to reduce costs, increase efficiency



Jason Anetsberger,  
Komatsu Senior  
Product Manager

With drones becoming an increasingly common worksite tool, Komatsu has identified aerial mapping and analytics as key components of its SMARTCONSTRUCTION initiative – a range of integrated hardware and software solutions designed to offer an end-to-end workflow for each phase of construction. In addition to its long-standing relationship with Skycatch, Komatsu recently boosted those capabilities by partnering with Propeller Aero, a global leader in cloud visualization and analytics solutions.

“A Komatsu SMARTCONSTRUCTION jobsite, by definition, is technology enhanced and production optimized,” said Jason Anetsberger,

Komatsu Senior Product Manager. “Adding Propeller Aero as a key partner gives our North American distributors and customers exceptional capabilities to achieve this standard for aerial mapping. Propeller combines simple, yet powerful analysis tools with fast and accurate site visualization.”

Komatsu spent several years testing various commercial drone mapping and analytics options. In Propeller, it found an exceptionally robust product, well-suited to meet the needs of modern construction operations. Propeller balances ease of use with survey accuracy and reliability.

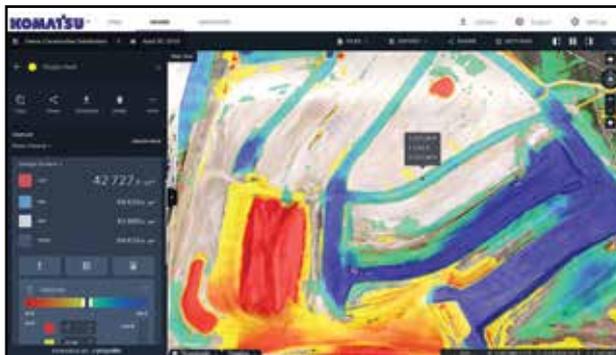
### Powerful data at your fingertips

Propeller’s processing machinery quickly crunches drone images and delivers the results as a cloud-based, 3-D model to a desktop or tablet. From there, powerful collaboration and analysis tools let users perform height, volume and slope calculations as well as monitor if a project is on-track.

The technology platform created by Propeller supports multiple coordinate systems, including local site calibrations. This allows personnel to capture up-to-date data expressed in the specific geospatial coordinate already in use on that jobsite. Local grid support is crucial for ensuring that drone-captured maps and models match up with plans and previous surveys.

“Worksite managers are starting to see the real business value of accurate, up-to-date drone data,” said John Frost, Vice President of Business Development at Propeller Aero. “That’s why we’re building tools and workflows designed for experts and non-experts alike. It’s all about empowering users with information to reduce costs, improve safety and make the most efficient use of resources.” ■

Komatsu is now partnering with Propeller Aero – a leader in cloud visualization and analytics solutions – to provide customers with simple, yet powerful tools that offer accurate site visualization. Propeller balances ease of use with survey accuracy and reliability.





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# NEW ENGINE OIL

## Komatsu designed its CK-4 Genuine Engine Oil for better wear protection in all conditions

Lubricants are the lifeblood of any machine, helping them run at peak performance, according to Bruce Gosen, Senior Product Manager, Komatsu Parts Marketing. “They protect against wear, so it’s essential to have the best oil possible for extended engine life,” said Gosen.

Komatsu makes its new EO15W40-LA (CK-4) from semi-synthetic base oil rather than from conventional base oils. “That provides better protection, especially in severe conditions, compared to most other 15W-40 engine oils in the marketplace,” said Gosen. “It also has several benefits that contribute to better fuel economy compared to the CJ-4, which this new product replaces.

Specific benefits of the new oil:

- It has outstanding resistance to oxidation and deposit formation, helping engines maintain their original horsepower and fuel-efficiency ratings.
- The new oil quickly sheds air bubbles, enabling equipment to operate on extreme grades where air can be drawn into the oil-pump suction line and compromise engine health and performance.
- It was designed to protect even the hottest components in off-road engines such as turbocharger bearings, piston rings, top lands and more.
- The oil was formulated to maintain its viscosity, even under extreme oil-drain conditions. EO15W40-LA has a low-ash formula that has been enhanced to meet CK-4 specifications. In addition to Tier 4 equipment, it is backward-compatible for use in Tier 3 and older machinery.

The new engine oil can be used in any brand of equipment that requires 15W-40, CK-4, CJ-4, CI-4 or ECF-3 oil.

“While not required by the American Petroleum Institute, we field tested EO15W40-LA in order to confirm its performance and benefits in large, off-road equipment,” said Gosen.

“We encourage anyone who wants excellent performance throughout the life cycle of their machinery to choose Komatsu Genuine Oils like our CK-4, which is one in a line of competitively priced products that are available through our distributors.” ■



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

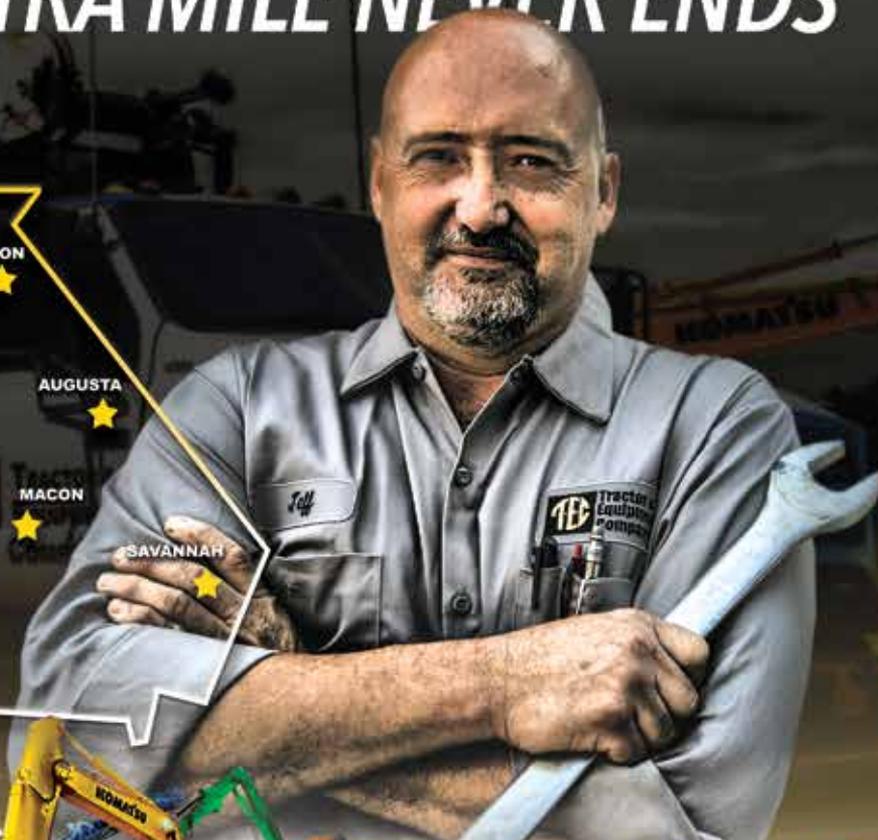


Komatsu’s EO15W40-LA (CK-4) Genuine Engine Oil reduces wear and helps maintain original fuel economy. It is approved for use in all engines that require CK-4 and is backward-compatible for use in Tier 3 and older machines.





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