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Tractor Times



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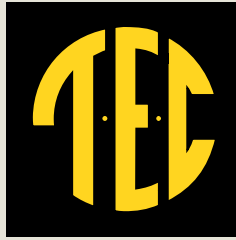
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A Message from the CEO



Chad Stracener

**Thank you for
your business**



Dear Valued Customer:

Happy New Year! We would like to thank you for your business, and we look forward to working with you in 2024. We're optimistic about growth in our industry. The infrastructure law that was passed a couple of years ago will boost investments in roads and bridges, which is always helpful.

There has been a lot of information lately about artificial intelligence or AI. There are wonderful possibilities for the use of AI, including in construction. In this issue, we feature an article that looks at the potential effects AI may have on our industry. I think you will find it interesting and informative.

While AI isn't yet widely used in our industry, telematics is. Data received remotely from your machinery can be a valuable tool to help increase efficiency and productivity. Komatsu makes it available via Komtrax through its My Komatsu web application. My Komatsu offers far more than just machine data. It's a digital solution that lets you see machine manuals, order parts, monitor your Smart Construction subscriptions, and more. Be sure to check out the great Q&A with Adrien Clapp, Komatsu's new Director of Digital Solutions, which spotlights My Komatsu and how it can benefit any operation.

Featured in this issue is Komatsu's new 543-horsepower PC900LC-11, which can be used in several applications – including heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation and quarries/mining. You can learn more about the excavator inside this issue.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please feel free to call or stop by one of our 20 locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chad Stracener'. The signature is stylized with a large 'C' and 'S'.

Chad Stracener
CEO



Tractor Times

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Russell Lands Inc. adds new build-to-suit lakefront properties at The Heritage, its newest community on Lake Martin



Johnny Peterson,
Project Manager



Scott Peterson,
Operator/Manager



Erick Taunton,
Operator

Along the shores of Alabama's Lake Martin, Russell Lands Inc. is redeveloping a portion of its lakefront property into a luxury residential community for individuals and families alike to eat, socialize and golf, while enjoying the serenity of lake life.

Benjamin "Mr. Ben" Russell, the visionary founder of Russell Corporation, foresaw the recreational potential of waterfront property around Lake Martin when the man-made lake was completed in 1926, so he began purchasing the surrounding acres. What would eventually become Russell Lands was originally established by Mr. Ben as Dixie Farms, a cooperative farming venture that supported local farmers, especially during the Great Depression. Mr. Ben was also a significant supporter of Tuskegee Institute, and he collaborated with Dr. George Washington Carver on agricultural initiatives. After Mr. Ben's passing in 1941, his legacy continued through the Benjamin and Roberta Russell Educational and Charitable Foundation, which donates millions annually for scholarships, endowments and grants.

The Russell family expanded their contributions to the community with ventures such as the Church in the Pines and Wind Creek Park, while Russell Corporation diversified into various sectors like banking, textiles and real estate development. Today, Mr. Ben's grandson, Ben Russell, and his wife, Luanne, guide the company's endeavors.

"The company operates four lakefront marinas, two boating dealerships, two golf clubs, nine hardware and building supply stores, three restaurants, a specialty market, a full-service coffee shop, and our very own amphitheater," elaborated Scott Peterson, an operator and a manager. "A cornerstone of our efforts is the charity work we do, especially with Children's Hospital in Birmingham. They also support Children's Harbor here on Lake Martin, a non-profit dedicated to providing free experiences for families of seriously ill children."

For 45 years, Project Manager Johnny Peterson has played a first-hand role in some of the key projects throughout Russell Lands' footprint.

"When I began working here in 1979, they owned 33,000 acres of land," recounted Johnny. "Since that time, the company has built and maintained approximately 750 cabins, some of which have fallen into disrepair from storm damage. Over the last couple years, we've redeveloped some of that land into promising real estate spots."

The Heritage

As part of the development process, a 15-man crew recently began work in phase three of The Heritage community. The multi-year project includes custom-built homes, a private golf course designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, a resident-owned clubhouse and recreation complex, a marina, and other amenities.

An operator moves material with a Komatsu D61PXi Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) dozer.

► VIDEO





▶ VIDEO

With a Komatsu PC240LC excavator, an operator loads a Komatsu HM400 articulated haul truck.

"The Russell Lands sitework crew is a turnkey operation," explained Scott. "We handle everything on the sitework side from start to finish and will take a project from trees to asphalt. We all wear multiple hats and can handle everything from logging to fine grading."

Staying on or ahead of schedule is key for the crew. One of the driving forces behind their accelerated progress has been the adoption of cutting-edge equipment.

"Recently, we've added two Komatsu IMC dozers, the D61PXi and the D51PXi," said Scott. "They've transformed our operations. Everything is exact, efficient, and at the turn of a key. You've got everything at your fingertips inside the cab, eliminating guesswork and showing you precisely what needs to be done."

The transition to the Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) dozers was not just an upgrade; it was a paradigm shift. Especially as the crew embarked on the third phase of The Heritage, the dozers have proved instrumental in reducing project timelines. Echoing Scott's sentiments, Erick Taunton, a seasoned operator with 32 years of experience, weighed in.

"The D61 is the only tractor I've ever been on that doesn't need advertising," stated Erick.



An operator utilizes a Komatsu GD655 motor grader.

"It will convince you of its worth. Save your money, get on one, and see how it saves you time and helps you not waste material."

Delving deeper into his experience with these machines, Erick added, "The ease of its operation is unmatched. It's balanced, efficient and unbelievably quick. I've been using a competitive brand all my life, but Komatsu's IMC machines

Continued...

'I'm proud to have TEC on my site'

... continued



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have changed my allegiance. They're just miles ahead in terms of technology and performance."

Erick's admiration for the dozers extended to their user-friendly features.

"It took me thirty minutes to learn how to operate it," he emphasized. "If you can read a

receipt, you can run this machine. Everything is self-explanatory."

Russell Lands also added a Komatsu XT445L tracked feller buncher to clear trees along the fairways of the golf course during phase one of the project. After witnessing the machine's capabilities, Scott made sure to keep the machine in the fleet to help clear trees throughout future phases.

"When we started developing the golf course, the XT445L became indispensable," noted Scott. "It's such a unique piece of equipment, assisting in our logging endeavors and proving itself to be invaluable in new developments. With its 360-degree swivel head, the cutter allows us to streamline tree removal and preparation, making the whole process more efficient and safer."

In addition to cutting and digging, transportation is crucial. With Komatsu HM300 and HM400 articulated haul trucks, the crew can rapidly move materials across project sites. Alongside the haul trucks, a Komatsu GD655 motor grader and HAMM H 10i and H 10i P compactors ensure the land is set perfectly for construction.

"Each piece of equipment brings a unique advantage to our projects, ensuring quality and speed," said Scott.

The firm's equipment lineup also includes a range of Komatsu excavators — a PC20, a PC55MR, a PC240LC, a PC290LC, and a PC360LC — outfitted with custom-built thumbs



► VIDEO

An operator clears trees with a Komatsu XT445L tracked feller buncher.

(L-R) TEC's Barry Thornburg and Jay Wages provide service to Russell Lands, including Erick Taunton, David Edmondson, Jeff Abbett, Brandon Farrow, James Batten, Johnny Peterson, Caleb Lamb, David Albright, Jeremiah Vernon, and Scott Peterson.





Russell Lands' fleet of equipment also includes a HAMM H 10i compactor.

from Solesbee's to handle the blue granite without breaking.

Scott elaborated, "Our excavators are used daily. Partnering with Komatsu and Solesbee's, the custom thumbs designed for us are unparalleled. They've proven especially resilient when dealing with our rock quarry tasks, and we couldn't do what we do without them."

TEC relationship pivotal

To support the extensive lineup of Komatsu and HAMM equipment, Russell Lands works closely with Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC).

"We love our sales representative, Jay Wages," Scott enthusiastically stated. "We also love our support team from TEC in Oxford/Anniston. They're just a part of our family now. Anything we need, we call them, and they get it to us right away. We don't ever have to worry about not having parts to keep our tractors running. Everybody in their office always makes sure we have what we need."

"TEC's support has been just awesome," said Johnny. "You can't ask for anything better. Their field techs are really good. Whenever we have something down, it doesn't take long for them to get here to fix it."

Scott added, "Their technician Barry checks over all our equipment, ensuring everything is in top shape. Woody and Kerry have extensive knowledge and are some of the best mechanics I've seen."

"I'm proud to have TEC on my site," declared Johnny. "Our equipment is used but well maintained. If you have a good operator who takes care of your equipment, and the dealership support to keep it running, you get optimal production."

Continued development

As development progresses in The Heritage, the company's sights are already set on upcoming projects, each promising to further elevate the community experience.

"After finishing up here, we'll head to other areas of future development within the Russell Lands community," noted Johnny. "After that, we're looking forward to developing The Benjamin, featuring a pool, pickleball, tennis, and an overall recreation facility for The Heritage community."

On the technology side of the company, Scott hinted at the firm's intent to further embrace IMC equipment.

"I'm excited about possibly demoing our first Komatsu PC360LCi excavator," said Scott. "The prospect of integrating more IMC machines into our operations is thrilling. With these IMC machines, we can eliminate guesswork and enhance precision, ensuring our projects proceed smoothly." ■

**The opinions expressed here are from the end user quoted. The results described herein are those of this end user under certain conditions. Your results may vary.*

CBH Contracting Company Inc. charts growth and success with Komatsu IMC equipment and strong partnerships



Burt Hewitt,
Owner/President



Zak Taylor,
Foreman

Burt Hewitt, a fourth-generation construction expert and the owner and president of CBH Contracting Company Inc., transformed his childhood passion into a successful business that specializes in small commercial site development. From demolition to installing underground utilities, CBH Contracting prides itself on delivering turnkey sitework services for projects that are up to 10 acres. The company has earned a reputation for executing diverse projects, including industrial sites, quick-serve restaurants, and small commercial retail spaces.

"I started out in the early 2000s by renting a machine and backfilling curb and gutter at Chick-fil-A restaurants for a dollar a foot," recalled Hewitt. "Gradually, I expanded my services by taking on bigger projects and evolving to meet the needs of my clients. Today, we handle projects with budgets ranging from \$10,000 to over \$1 million."

Hewitt continued, "As far as the sitework, we go from erosion control to clearing to grading. We don't do paving or concrete work. It helps our general contractors to have one person or company that can handle 90% of their sitework."

Based in Canton, Ga., CBH Contracting focuses primarily on the Metro Atlanta area. However, the company's commitment to customer satisfaction has led them to undertake projects in other locations, such as Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama. Hewitt attributes

the company's success to its dedicated workforce of approximately 20 employees, who operate about 25 machines, and their ability to consistently deliver on promises with a positive attitude.

Adding IMC equipment

At CBH Contracting's current job site in Peachtree Corners, Ga., the company is rerouting the storm drain system for IMETCO to accommodate a new canopy overhang and two 15,000-square-foot building additions. The project involves demolition, storm drain installation, water line relocation, underground detention and grading. The company's diverse equipment inventory, including Komatsu Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) dozers and excavators, is essential for efficiently completing tasks like quickly digging large, deep underground pits and lifting heavy concrete vaults without a crane.

According to Foreman Zak Taylor, the company typically uses its Komatsu PC360LCi IMC excavator to lay pipe and move large amounts of dirt quickly. The excavator's power enables operators to lay 36-inch storm drainpipes and handle other heavy-duty tasks with ease. The PC360LCi has also revolutionized how the company operates by eliminating the need for additional personnel to check elevations with a grade rod.

With a Komatsu WA270 wheel loader, an operator places material into a pile.





► VIDEO

At CBH Contracting's current job site in Peachtree Corners, Ga., operators utilize three pieces of Komatsu equipment — a WA270 wheel loader, a D39PXi-24 Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) dozer, and a PC360LCi-11 IMC excavator — to tackle multiple aspects of the project at once.

"The excavator's integrated GPS system allows me to access job blueprints, locate pipelines, and determine grades and elevations without having to leave the operator's seat," noted Taylor. "It's very helpful."

CBH Contracting also utilizes Komatsu D39PXi-24 IMC dozers. The integrated GPS feature on the IMC dozers streamlines the grading process, making it simple even for less experienced operators.

"When the automatics are turned on, the dozer basically grades for you," declared Taylor.

The Komatsu equipment's reliability, comfort and power have made it a favorite among CBH Contracting's team. The D39PXi even features a self-greasing system, which automatically lubricates the machine's fittings every 30 minutes.

According to Hewitt, the Komatsu IMC machines enabled CBH Contracting to take on larger projects, such as a recent 9-acre parking lot in Forest Park, Ga.

"We wouldn't have considered that job without our IMC dozers and excavator," stated Hewitt. "The GPS equipment has broadened our horizons. It allows our team to work efficiently and accurately, cutting slopes to grade and loading trucks quickly. Despite the slightly higher initial investment for the equipment, the machines have ultimately led to greater profits by enabling faster, higher



An operator works around a trench with a Komatsu PC360LCi-11 IMC excavator. "I can adjust and dig to specific grades, locate structures, and determine other essential information independently," noted Foreman Zak Taylor.

quality work. It gives us a competitive advantage, even on smaller job sites."

Partnership matters

For CBH Contracting, a strong partnership with Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) has been crucial to its success. TEC provides the company with essential parts, services and support, ensuring a smooth and efficient process.

"They have treated me like I'm their biggest customer, and I know I'm not by far," commented Hewitt. "It's relationship-based,



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Continued...

'TEC is a one-stop shop for us'

... continued



An operator moves part of the storm drain system into place with a Komatsu PC210LCi-11 IMC excavator, while another operator removes material from the ditch with a Komatsu PC360LCi-11 IMC excavator. CBH Contracting's fleet also includes a HAMM H7i compactor.



(L-R) CBH Contracting's Burt Hewitt partners with TEC's Jeff Duncan to get CBH Contracting's Zak Taylor, Brandon Franks and Zane Cox the right equipment for each job.

With a Komatsu D39PXi-24 IMC dozer, an operator pushes material on grade.



and that's key. That's what we are as a company. We're relational not transactional."

Hewitt doesn't have to shop around for equipment; he relies on his TEC sales representative, Jeff Duncan, to quickly find the machines he needs. Currently, CBH Contracting operates about 15 Komatsu excavators and dozers, six of which are IMC machines, as well as a HAMM H7i compactor, demonstrating the company's trust in TEC's product offerings.

"TEC is a one-stop shop for us," noted Hewitt. "They handle everything from equipment to software and computer hardware support. [Technology Solutions Expert] Richard Shore always answers our calls. He will answer any questions we have and make sure we're back up and running quickly. When I bought our first GPS machine, Richard told me that I could call him 24 hours a day, seven days a week for unlimited technical support. I thought he might change that policy based on the number I've times I've called him at odd hours, but he's been a man of his word."

TEC's service department also plays a crucial role in keeping CBH Contracting's equipment functional.

"There was an instance where we had an issue in the afternoon, and TEC had a truck on-site the next morning and resolved the problem by lunchtime," recounted Hewitt. "You can't ask for any more than that. TEC does what they say they're going to do, kind of like what I say my company is, and that's why I go back to them time and time again."

Steady growth

Looking ahead, CBH Contracting aims to maintain steady growth while preserving the hands-on approach and family atmosphere that have contributed to its success thus far.

"I want to grow a little bit more but keep it where I know what's going on in the field," said Hewitt. "I know my men by a first-name basis. They can contact me if they need something. I've tried to create that family atmosphere and want to keep that intact as we grow."

By focusing on a balanced approach to growth, CBH Contracting ensures that it remains a reliable and trusted partner for its clients and a supportive employer for its team.

"I've achieved more than I ever thought I could in my wildest dreams," said Hewitt. "So, it's not all about bigger is better. There's a good niche market in what we do. We have great relationships with our clients and want to continue developing those as we grow." ■

SMART CONSTRUCTION



Tractor & Equipment Company knows that productivity is a key factor to the success of any job site. Komatsu's intelligent Machine Control technology is designed with your productivity in mind. Through automatic dozing, rough cut to finish grade, iMC-equipped machines help you make every pass count to achieve superior production compared to traditional aftermarket systems.



TEC1943.COM

AI such as ChatGPT offers potential benefits for the construction industry

Driven by the emergence of artificial intelligence or AI, the construction industry finds itself on the brink of a potential transformation. Some tasks that traditionally require a person can be solved by AI tools.

At the forefront of this development stands ChatGPT, an innovative AI language model created by OpenAI. ChatGPT is a type of generative AI that can create content or responses such as sound, images, and — in ChatGPT's case — text.

"Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence focused on content creation," said Trent Miskelly, Chief Operating Officer at Document Crunch. "It has been popularized recently with ChatGPT, which is a company built on OpenAI's large language models. You can think of a large language model as basically a database of the entirety of the internet. You can ask questions and get responses back."

Miskelly continued, "In its most basic form, generative AI is a prediction engine. Whatever question it is asked, it is going to do its best to respond to that question and hopefully be helpful to you."

The program can support some functions of a construction operation, but it is important to recognize its limitations. AI's strength lies in its capacity to analyze large amounts of data and provide valuable insights.

"It isn't going to replace the workers on your job site," said Jeff Sample, Industry Evangelist at Join, "but it may help get materials faster."

Exploring the advantages

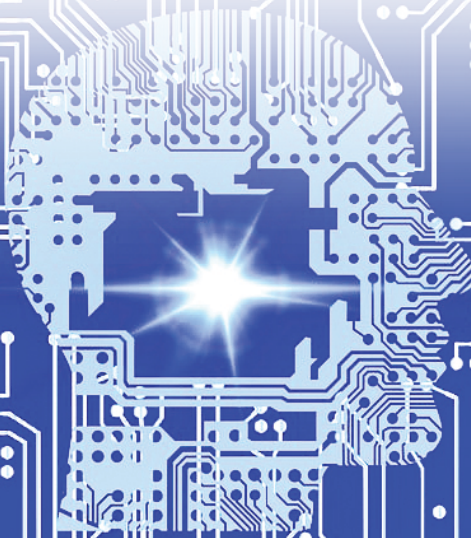
In an industry where precision is paramount, AI can be an asset in cost estimation. ChatGPT can access real-time data on material prices and labor rates and help create accurate cost projections. Construction companies equipped with this AI-driven decision-making and data processing can enhance financial planning, fortify supplier relationships, and establish well-informed budgets.

"Subject matter expertise is paramount when analyzing responses," noted Miskelly. "You must understand what you are getting from [AI], because you are in the driver's seat."

Selecting construction materials and equipment becomes a data-informed decision with AI's involvement. By analyzing project requirements, ChatGPT can suggest appropriate materials, cost-effective alternatives, and cutting-edge equipment options — steering construction projects toward efficiency and sustainability.

AI can also play a pivotal role in addressing challenges that arise during projects. While it doesn't replace human expertise, AI can

While AI doesn't replace human expertise, it can help analyze project issues, consider variables, and propose solutions to keep projects on track. It can also help identify provisions in contracts with high accuracy.





AI can assist in project management by automating routine tasks, tracking progress, and identifying potential delays, thus increasing overall efficiency.

analyze issues, consider variables, and propose solutions to keep projects on course.

"It is great for text classification, like identifying provisions in contracts with a high degree of accuracy," said Miskelly. "It can create and summarize information from documents or data."

The scope of AI extends to architectural design, offering new perspectives and solutions. ChatGPT can inject fresh ideas into the creative process, ranging from sustainable construction practices to optimizing spatial utilization — helping further additional innovation.

Navigating concerns and challenges

As AI's use gains prominence, it also brings legitimate user concerns. The dynamic data analyzing capabilities of ChatGPT introduce potential challenges worth consideration.

"I think it is incredibly important to be cautious with what you are feeding out there," said Kris Lengieza, Vice President of Global Partnerships and Alliances at Procore Technologies. "You wouldn't put a bunch of financial statements into ChatGPT if you didn't want them to be publicly available somewhere and train somebody else's model."



If not used carefully, AI can generate non-factual responses, so ensuring accuracy is essential.

Data privacy has emerged as a critical concern in the AI landscape. Ongoing investigations into OpenAI and ChatGPT show the significance of safeguarding user data.

Continued...

'I think we should be excited as an industry'

... continued

Internationally, Canada's CBC News published that the country's federal and provincial governments are opening investigations into OpenAI regarding the disclosure of personal user information, and Italy has become the first country to issue a temporary ban on the software as the country finishes an inquiry into any violations.

Another concern about AI is that ChatGPT has been known to generate non-factual responses. Recently, U.S. Judge P. Kevin Castel fined a law firm and two lawyers \$5,000 after they submitted a written argument generated by ChatGPT that contained six legal cases that did not exist, according to a report by AP News. The situation and associated reprimand are the first of its kind.

"Technological advances are commonplace and there is nothing inherently improper about using a reliable artificial intelligence tool for assistance," wrote Castel. "But existing rules impose a gatekeeping role on attorneys to ensure the accuracy of their filings."

Castel added, "[They] abandoned their responsibilities when they submitted non-existent

judicial opinions with fake quotes and citations created by the artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT, then continued to stand by the fake opinions after judicial orders called their existence into question."

Responsible usage of AI is paramount to avoid misinformation and inaccuracies. These recent instances of false information generated by AI highlight the need for accurate representation and the importance of stringent oversight to ensure the accuracy of AI-generated content.

"I think we should be excited as an industry, but we need to be responsible about how fast we move," noted Lengieza. "We need to be responsible for how much we trust these programs, and we need to make sure that the trust we give is verified."

Charting the path ahead

AI doesn't change the core dynamics of the construction worksite, but it can serve to complement it. As the construction industry navigates the evolving artificial intelligence landscape, it finds itself at the brink of the next step in this ongoing technological-driven evolution. ■

With access to real-time data on material prices and labor rates, AI can generate accurate cost projections. Construction companies can make data-driven decisions, enhancing financial planning and budgeting.



A JOHN DEERE COMPANY

A large-scale construction site under a bright, sunny sky. In the foreground, a green Wirtgen roller is compacting a layer of gravel. Behind it, a large Wirtgen paver is spreading material. Further back, a yellow Wirtgen machine is visible. Several workers in high-visibility vests are standing near the machinery. The ground is uneven and covered with loose material.

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My Komatsu

My Komatsu helps Ascendent Demolition LLC stay on top of maintenance, keep machines running in challenging applications

Demolition puts a heavy strain on equipment and attachments. To keep Ascendent Demolition LLC's machinery in top shape and avoid costly breakdowns, the firm's Equipment Manager Kyle Jolk uses an aggressive preventive maintenance program that includes tracking the company's Komatsu equipment with Komtrax through My Komatsu, a comprehensive digital hub that allows 24/7 access to machine telematics data, parts manuals and service manuals. Jolk monitors daily service hours, machine hours, idle time, abnormalities and other critical data.

"My Komatsu is a great fleet management tool," stated Jolk. "It helps us keep track of when maintenance is due, and it's been valuable in ensuring that we get that service done on time. The graphical design is great for us, and it's easy to look at."

Remote telematics data and information through My Komatsu enables users to access and evaluate their assets, including Komatsu equipment and other machinery brands that have been registered with My Komatsu. It can save hours of tracking down machine information and helps users be more proactive about service and repairs. My Komatsu alerts users when to order parts, which can easily be ordered through the digital hub.

"In addition to Komtrax, I also use My Komatsu to look at manuals for troubleshooting," Jolk added. "Komatsu equipment has been great to work on. That has a lot to do with the amount of service manuals and technical information available through My Komatsu. We have some older non-Komatsu equipment, and it's more difficult to deal with those because they are not in that centrally located hub of My Komatsu. In general, I'm impressed with support to the end user, both from Komatsu and our dealer. It's something you just don't see from other manufacturers. It's incredible." ■

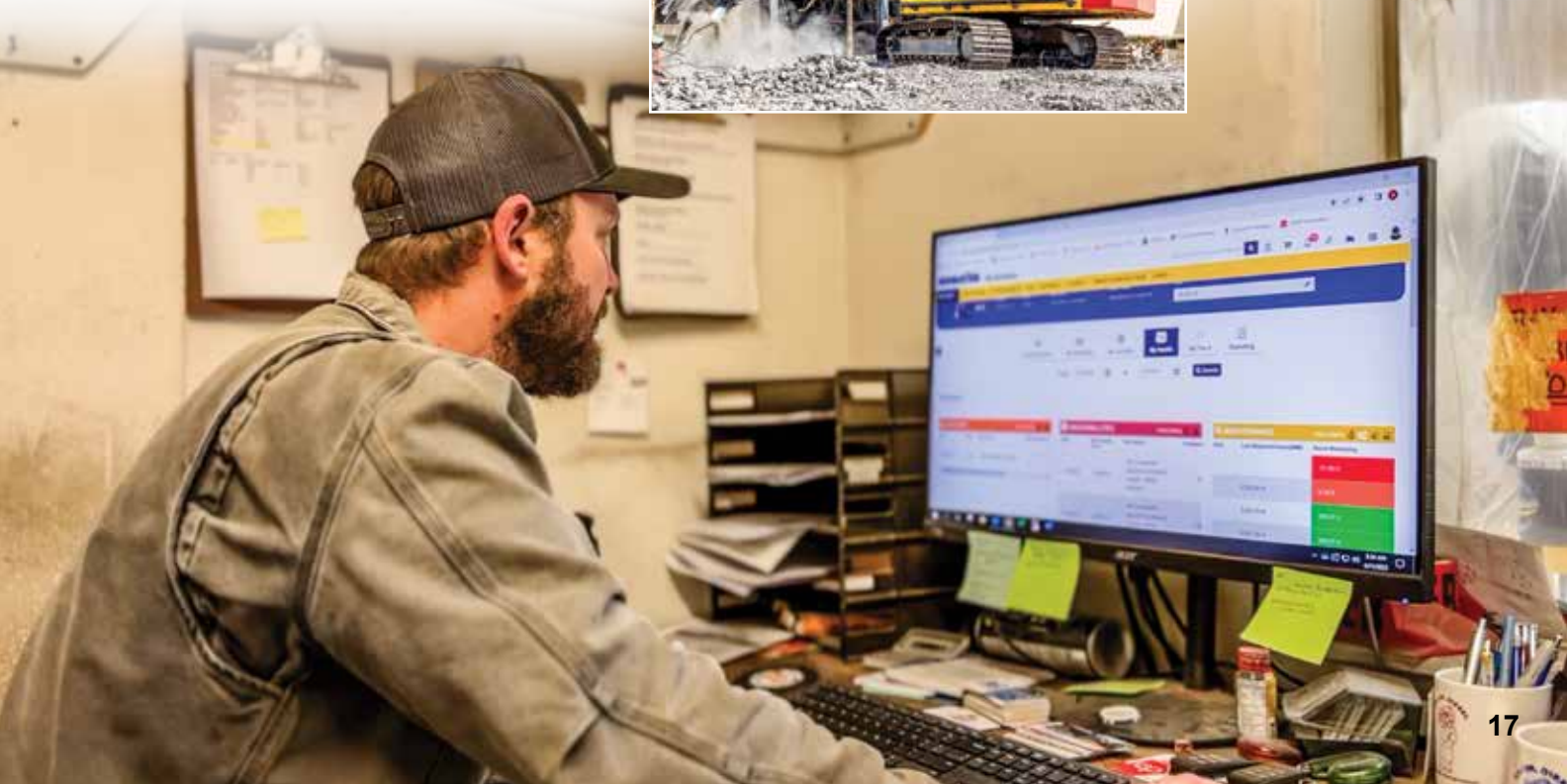
**The opinions expressed here are from the end user quoted. The results described herein are those of this end user under certain conditions. Your results may vary.*



**Kyle Jolk,
Equipment Manager,
Ascendent
Demolition LLC**



Ascendent Demolition Equipment Manager Kyle Jolk uses My Komatsu to remotely monitor the company's Komatsu equipment, check manuals, and order parts. "My Komatsu is a great fleet management tool," stated Jolk.



Why culture in construction matters and how to make it better, so you hire and retain a dedicated workforce

It's not exactly breaking news that there is a labor shortage in the construction industry. Headlines declare that "nobody wants to work anymore" — but is this explanation really at the root of what is a long-standing, industrywide issue?

Amid the Great Resignation, as Baby Boomers retire and Gen Z workers reject the long hours of the construction industry, it's more important than ever to examine the causes of this unprecedented labor shortage and explore potential solutions.

Numerous companies are feeling the pressure, especially in the skilled trades, and many have not yet been able to solve their workforce woes. After increasing pay and flexibility with little to no results, a lot of companies find themselves asking — is our company culture to blame? During an educational session titled "Culture in Construction — Is It Really That Bad?" at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023, speaker and construction industry advocate Wally Adamchik walked through the reasons why the answer to that question is both "yes" and "no."

The good news is that industrywide survey results indicate the construction industry's culture issue may not be so bad, according

to the 2019 People in Construction Report (PICR) by FireStarter Speaking and Consulting, said Adamchik. In fact, 83% of people say that they would reapply for their current position, and 73% of people say that they are happy at work. However, these results are not good enough to sustain successful growth and project execution, according to Adamchik. In addition, there is a significant divide between project management in the office and field supervision on the job site, according to the PICR. In the office, 81% of employees say that they have a close friend at work — in the field, only 50% of employees share that sentiment. On top of that, 75% of office workers feel that they can maintain a reasonable work-life balance, while again only 50% of field employees feel that they can maintain a reasonable work-life balance.

Action items

Rather than list off more statistics about the industry's labor shortage, many leaders want information about creating a more long-lasting and motivated labor force. There are several concrete actions that can be taken to improve company culture and keep workers happy, and companies should act now to avoid losing more of their employees. The labor shortage isn't exclusive to the construction industry, and these actions can be implemented in any workplace. Even organizations with good company culture can implement some of these changes to elevate employee experience:

- **Standards and values.** Approximately 90% of survey respondents agreed that ignoring the core values of their workplace would get them into trouble. This shows that workplace values still matter, and the most visible way to manifest this is to enforce standards across the board. There should be no double standard when it comes to values. Employees will take standards and values more seriously when they are a part of company culture and see leadership being held accountable to the same standards as employees.
- **Creating lasting change.** Three-quarters of senior leadership (those who are supposed to be spearheading change in the workplace) say that their efforts

According to an industrywide survey, 83% of people say that they would reapply for their current position, and 73% of people say that they are happy at work.





There are several concrete actions that can be taken to improve company culture and keep workers happy, such as encouraging employee participation and recognition.

fall short. Change requires organizational capacity and requires a significant personal investment from leaders. Creating a path for change with concrete steps to follow along the way will help companies maintain organization and encourage both employees and leadership to follow through.

- **Encouraging and participating in employee recognition.** There are a multitude of opportunities to tell employees how much they are appreciated. Chances are, on a daily basis there are numerous opportunities to give positive and relationship-building recognition, and companies that regularly participate in positive recognition are more likely to attract and retain loyal employees.
- **Amping up one's referral program.** About 84% of employees surveyed say that they would recommend their workplace to a friend (but don't). Furthermore, 83% of employees say that they would reapply for their current position if given the chance. There are also several ways to increase the effectiveness of a referral program, including using an easy-to-use option, offering a mixture of incentives, announcing or re-announcing the program, and

recognizing current employees for referring candidates.

- **Bridging the gap between teams and departments.** In construction, there are several discrepancies between survey answers from field and office staff members that could be corrected with a little work. For example, creating teambuilding opportunities for one's entire staff on a monthly or quarterly basis can go a long way toward building camaraderie.

While there are several improvements that would benefit the construction industry's culture, and company culture in general, the survey results show that the situation may not be as bad as advertised. There are several actions that employers can take to improve company culture, from enforcing values to bringing employees together. Even small actions make a big difference, and there is no better time to start than now! ■

Editor's Note: This article is courtesy of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (aem.org). For more information on how to attract and retain employees, visit <https://www.komatsu.com/blog/2022/employee-retention-in-the-construction-industry/>



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LeeBoy's new 210-horsepower 8680 asphalt paver is its largest tracked paver to date

Industry need and customer demand led LeeBoy to create its largest tracked paver to date, the 8680, which is designed to be a commercial paver with highway-class features. At 28,000 pounds, the 8680 runs on a 210-horsepower Tier 4 engine.

"There was a distinct gap in the market for an asphalt paver this size," said Chris Broome, Senior Product Manager at LeeBoy. "This machine features higher production, higher horsepower, and will be capable of doing more road paving projects and those larger production jobs we're seeing more of in the heavy-commercial-class market."

As machine size increases, so do the benefits to the contractor as additional highway-class features make their way onto commercial pavers. The LeeBoy 8680 has high-speed smooth rubber tracks with oscillating bogies, a four-speed drive system, power tunnel shields, and height-adjustable augers.

"These highway-class features are going to give this commercial-class machine great results," said Broome. "Increased performance, efficiencies and consistency

will all be seen with these features on the 8680 asphalt paver."

The paver also features the proven performance of the HD Pro Screed used on the 8530 and 8616D asphalt pavers — but upgraded for the 8680.

Plus, the paver has the ability to travel up to 616 feet per minute, or 7 miles per hour, with a paving speed of up to 300 feet per minute, or 3.4 miles per hour. ■



The new LeeBoy 8680 asphalt paver is a heavy-commercial-class paver with upgraded highway-class features and benefits. The LeeBoy 8680 has high-speed smooth rubber tracks with oscillating bogies, a four-speed drive system, power tunnel shields, and height-adjustable augers.

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Montabert expands its distribution and rebuild facility to allow in-house repair and remanufacturing of hydraulic breakers

Rebuilding and repairing breakers helps extend their useful life and can potentially increase your long-term profitability. To better serve customers looking for those services, Montabert (a Komatsu-owned company) expanded its existing distribution and rebuild facility in Nashville, Ill., to add remanufacturing and repair capabilities. Adding those on-site services can provide several benefits that enhance the company's factory-certified rebuild program, according to Amanda Carpenter, Sales Office, Warehouse and Distribution Manager, Montabert USA.

"Now we can lower breakers up to 15,000 pounds into a pit for safer extraction of power cells and to perform inspections and maintenance," said Carpenter. "The in-house rebuild center offers more visibility into scheduling, allowing quote accuracy and timely customer rebuilds on Montabert's complete line of hydraulic breakers. With everything in-house now — parts, a dedicated technician and more — our turnaround time is improved."

At an open house earlier this year, Montabert showcased the approximately 50,000-square-foot facility and its new capabilities, such as a 10-ton crane for moving breakers, a pit with a lifting table to promote safer and more efficient work conditions, and a hydraulic power unit for breaker testing prior to shipping. Montabert plans to add an industrial parts washer, a paint booth, and a second lift table in the future.

"With this expansion, we control the whole life cycle of a breaker," said Aaron Scarfia, General Manager, Montabert USA. "We're able to quickly and efficiently repair Montabert breakers with genuine Montabert parts and ship them back to customers with an extended warranty. Having everything in-house helps further improve our quality assurance as well."

Komatsu Vice President of Products, Service and Solutions Mike Gidaspow said the expanded capabilities of the facility are in line with Komatsu's commitment to continual improvement of customer support.

"Komatsu's always been known for making very productive, fuel-efficient and high-performing products to help customers get their jobs done quickly and efficiently, and what's on the front end of the machine is critical to productivity," said Gidaspow. "With Montabert, we have the opportunity to work with one of the premiere breaker manufacturers in the industry and make sure the hammer is perfectly matched to the excavator. We are pleased to support Montabert's facility expansion and its direct benefit to customers." ■



▶ VIDEO
Technician Nathan Brewster rebuilds a Montabert breaker at the company's expanded distribution and rebuild facility in Nashville, Ill. "When a breaker comes in, I can do the breakdown, diagnose it, make a list of what it needs, then present that to the customer, so they can determine if they want to rebuild," said Brewster.



Amanda Carpenter,
Sales Office,
Warehouse and
Distribution Manager,
Montabert USA



Aaron Scarfia,
General Manager,
Montabert USA



Mike Gidaspow,
Vice President
of Products,
Service and Solutions,
Komatsu



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PRODUCT SUPPORT TEAM



New Komatsu PC900LC-11 excavator delivers increased productivity, greater versatility and better transportability

Can a large excavator provide versatility? Built for tough jobs and the ability to handle multiple applications, Komatsu's new 543-horsepower PC900LC-11 can answer with an enthusiastic "yes," according to Casey Zbinden, Product Marketing Manager, Komatsu.

"The PC900LC-11 is ideal for those working in applications that involve moving large amounts of material efficiently," said Zbinden. "Productivity was a major driver of the machine's design. It's a mass excavator with the ability to handle a wide variety of jobs and materials and perform compound operations faster. It has a lot of key features that make it a major step-up from its predecessor."

Designed for heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation, and quarries/mining, the PC900LC-11 provides increased bucket and lifting capacity for higher performance compared to its predecessor, the PC800LC-8. Major structures, booms and arms as well as a redesigned revolving frame were engineered for increased durability.

The PC900LC-11 can deliver*:

- Up to a 40% increase in productivity
- 25% more arm crowd force
- 12% more swing torque

Versatility is a strong suit of Komatsu's PC900LC-11 excavator, which can be used in several applications, including heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation, and quarries/mining. It provides increased bucket and lifting capacity for higher performance compared to its predecessor, the PC800LC-8.

► VIDEO

KomVision is standard

To help operators improve situational awareness, the KomVision camera monitoring system is standard on the PC900LC-11. KomVision uses four cameras for a real-time view of the machine's surroundings. Smart Construction 3D guidance and payload monitoring options are also available.

A new optional counterweight removal system helps improve transportability. The boom configuration reduces the excavator's transport height, and it does not have to be removed from the machine before transportation. The service pass-through area allows easy access to filters, oil level checks, and sample ports to simplify maintenance.

"The excavator is designed for mobility, and customer feedback on that has been overwhelmingly positive," said Zbinden. "They also appreciate the centralized service points for daily maintenance checks and convenient access to the engine compartment. We encourage anyone with the need for a large, versatile excavator to check it out." ■

**All comparisons are to the PC800LC-8.*



Casey Zbinden,
Product Marketing
Manager,
Komatsu



Watch the video

Quick Specs

Model
PC900LC-11

Horsepower
543 hp

Operating Weight
204,148 lbs.

Bucket Capacity
3.7-8.0 cu. yd.



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Infrastructure investment provides clear economic benefit, according to new APWA report that shows GDP increase

Communities are benefiting from infrastructure investments, according to a recent report from the American Public Works Association (APWA). For every \$1 invested in transportation, the report found that \$5 in economic benefits are returned and every \$1 billion supports and creates approximately 50,000 jobs.

"This important report shows just how essential the public works profession is in every community throughout the U.S.," said APWA CEO Scott D. Grayson, CAE. "For surface transportation, and water and emergency management, we now know the level of financial benefit of every dollar invested, and we know what the benefit could be if budgets at all levels of government came closer to actual need."

Grayson continued, "Asset management technology is giving communities better insight into the health of their infrastructure, which is allowing them to schedule and fund maintenance projects and extend the life of roads, sewer systems and bridges. However, AM is also providing a clearer picture of what needs to be replaced now."

Additional funding needed

Further findings show a greater economic benefit would be realized if funding more closely matched need. The report said there is an \$81 billion funding gap in total water sector capital expenditures. As a result, 2.1 trillion gallons of drinking water worth \$7.6 billion are lost due to aging infrastructure. Lower production volumes could also result in 636,000 jobs lost annually by 2039.

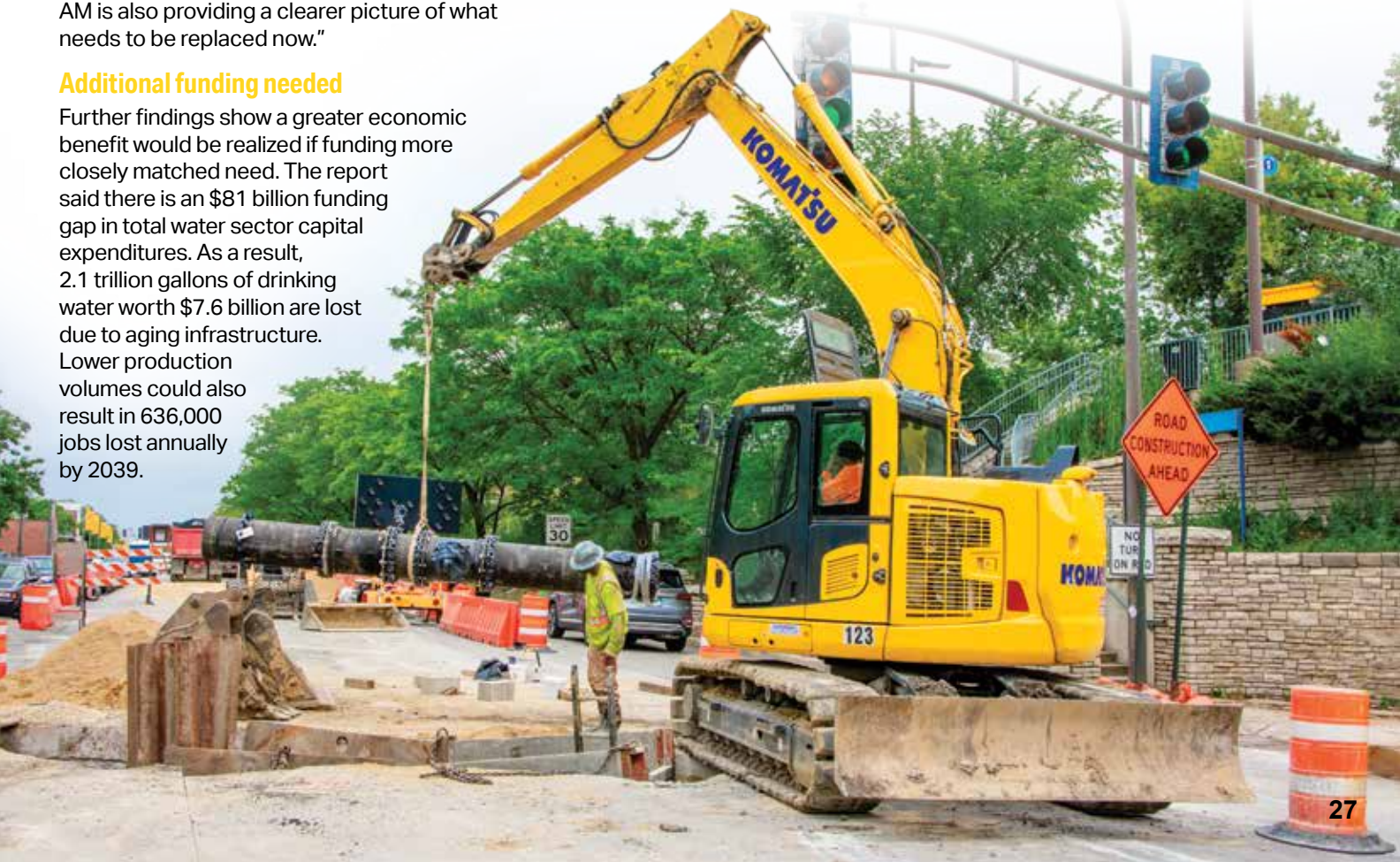
"Public works teams keep the water flowing, but in some communities, duct tape and bailing wire no longer work, as this research shows," said APWA President Keith Pugh, PE, PWLF.

According to the report, if the U.S. increased its investment in water infrastructure by \$109 billion a year until 2043, approximately 800,000 new jobs would be created and the increased reliability in water services would help consumers avoid \$7.7 billion in medical costs, \$2.6 trillion in losses caused by service disruptions, and \$1.4 trillion in lost income.

Grayson and Pugh acknowledge the significant strides being made to rebuild transportation and water infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA).

"IIJA is the official acknowledgment that our infrastructure needs more and better help," Pugh said. "As we always have, APWA is working with local, state and federal partners to ensure the historic act's success." ■

An American Public Works Association report shows that for every \$1 invested in transportation infrastructure, \$5 in economic benefits are returned, and every \$1 billion supports and creates approximately 50,000 jobs.



New Director of Digital Solutions Adrien Clapp emphasizes that all Komatsu customers can find value in solutions such as My Komatsu



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.

Adrien Clapp,
Director of Digital Solutions,
Komatsu

Adrien Clapp recently moved into the role of director of digital solutions from her previous position in marketing communications, where she led the integrated marketing communications team responsible for digital marketing, promotions, trade shows, events, customer experience centers, and merchandising. She has been with the company for 11 years.

"I got into the digital marketing aspect during my time with Komatsu, and I became really interested in how we can support customers in their self-serve research phase of equipment purchases," said Clapp. "We want to make it easy for our users to get the information they need, when they need it. We are further expanding that digital experience with applications such as My Komatsu."

Prior to Komatsu, Clapp worked in product management for a company focused on safety and facility identification. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Marquette University and an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In her current role, Clapp and her team work to help customers adopt and implement digital solutions designed to improve their efficiency and productivity.

"My background before Komatsu gave me a chance to really go through customer journey mapping," she recalled. "I'm passionate about building customer experiences, and I'm really excited to bring my experience with Komatsu to this new role and help further evolve Komatsu's digital solutions for our customers."

Clapp and her husband have a 5-year-old child, and the family enjoys spending time together, especially doing outdoor activities such as riding bikes, hiking, and visiting the local playground.

QUESTION: What are digital solutions?

ANSWER: For Komatsu, digital solutions enable our customers to optimize their operations. Today's world is connected, and our customers are seeking ways to utilize technology to gain insights and streamline their day-to-day activities, and we're working to help them do that. At the core of our digital solutions is the My Komatsu application, our 24/7 digital hub. Customers can access information for their fleet, access parts books, see current field campaigns, view their telematics data, and access Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions.

In the past, Komatsu customers needed to access multiple applications to get that information. My Komatsu started as a way to combine access to telematics data and manuals. It grew to include a parts store, and we're continuing to evolve to help customers manage their overall fleet. We're now featuring information on user warranty coverage and field campaigns and providing access to our Smart Construction and Smart Quarry customer site solutions. With My Komatsu, all these activities have been combined into one convenient site. Customers can go to <https://mykomatsu.komatsu> to get started.

QUESTION: What are the advantages of My Komatsu?

ANSWER: Komatsu customers find value in My Komatsu for a number of reasons. The functions that customers leverage within the application may vary, based on their individual wants and goals. As our team talks to customers and distributors, it's all about understanding those customer goals, and then matching them to the functions of My Komatsu that can help enable them to meet their goals.

One of the most used areas of My Komatsu is fleet telematics. We know customers often have more than just Komatsu machines. Last year, we added mixed fleet functionality, pulling in data from non-Komatsu machines, so that within My Komatsu, users can visualize telematics data for their complete fleet.

For example, a customer may be looking to lower their fuel consumption across their entire fleet of Komatsu and non-Komatsu machines.

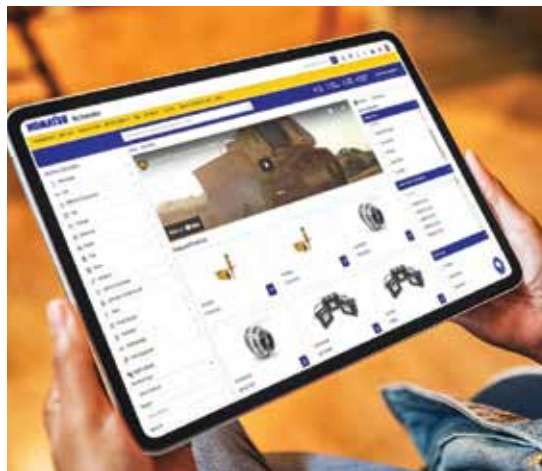


Remote Komtrax telematics data is available through My Komatsu, in addition to other fleet management tools such as parts ordering. With My Komatsu, customers also have access to machine manuals as well as Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions.

Using the MyFleet feature through My Komatsu lets them see their fuel usage, as well as other critical data such as idle time, which can significantly affect the amount of fuel being used. Having that information at their fingertips allows customers to proactively address an issue and create positive change. Another example is the convenience of ordering parts through My Komatsu. To find a part quickly and easily, we're continuing to enhance the search process in many ways, by including rich parts' data and pictures to help customers feel comfortable that they are purchasing the correct part. They can see the manuals for their machines, order right from the app, and have the items shipped directly to them or have them ready for pickup at their dealer — all from the convenience of their computer or smart device.

QUESTION: Does that mean there isn't live support anymore?

ANSWER: No, we certainly offer support. Komatsu has a team of digital solutions experts dedicated to supporting both customers and distributors. We conduct voice-of-the-customer activities to identify needs and determine the types of features that could make day-to-day operations easier. That information helps drive the evolution of our digital solutions. For example, coming later this fall we'll have a refreshed user interface within My Komatsu that is based on user feedback. We are dedicated to continually working to improve our customers' experiences and help them increase productivity and efficiency, while helping lower overall owning and operating costs.



Fleet management is easier and more convenient with digital solutions such as My Komatsu, according to Komatsu's Director of Digital Solutions Adrien Clapp. "In the past, we had multiple applications that customers needed to access to get information," said Clapp. "With My Komatsu, all those have been combined into one convenient site. Customers can go to <https://mykomatsu.komatsu> to get started."

Our digital solutions team also provides extensive dealer training focused on new features being released, so they can assist customers. We want to enable our users to get the information they need quickly and easily. This self-serve information is not only for our customers; it's also for our dealer personnel, so they have what they need to be effective. At the end of the day, it's all about delivering a trusted experience for the customer and our distributors.

QUESTION: Who are digital solutions tailored to?

ANSWER: Value can be realized no matter how large or small a Komatsu customer is — whether they have a machine or two, or a large fleet with multiple locations. It all comes back to what they want to accomplish, and with digital solutions such as My Komatsu, focusing on the areas that can help deliver value. ■

Major upgrades to popular harvester head improve reliability, productivity in the forest



Learn more

A popular and established harvester head with a reliable and service-friendly design, the Komatsu S92, has been upgraded with several new functions and improvements to make it even more productive. These upgrades, which include a brand-new Constant Cut saw unit, were made based on input from customers.

"Continuous improvement is part of our DNA," stated Mikael Forsberg, Product Manager, Harvester Heads, Komatsu Forest.

Constant Cut now standard

A major new feature now standard on the S92 is the intelligent saw motor controller, Constant Cut. The motor controller ensures that the head can maintain a constant and high chain speed without the risk of overspeeding.

To extend the service life of the head, the find end function and the mechanical stops at the rear knife have been redesigned.

The upgraded feed system reduces energy loss and enhances the head performance, while improved hose routing simplifies servicing the feed system. All lubrication points can now be easily accessed with the head in an upright position.

The color marking tanks have been redesigned to provide easier access for filling, and the multi-tree handling function has a new, more durable design, providing a lower and more agile head. The upgraded S92 also enables the measuring wheel to follow the contours of the stem more closely, for excellent measurement characteristics.

"The response from customers who have tried the upgraded S92 has been positive," said Forsberg. "They told us that the feed speed is really good, and that the geometry of the saw box and the position of the saw bar make cutting faster and help increase production significantly." ■



Komatsu's S92 harvester head has an intelligent saw motor controller, Constant Cut, that ensures the head maintains a constant and high chain speed without the risk of overspeeding. The harvester head also has improved measurement characteristics designed to enable the measuring wheel to follow the contours of the stem more closely.





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