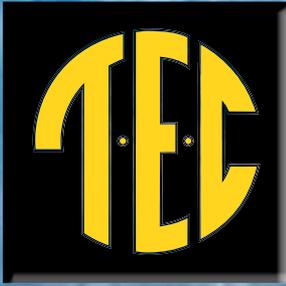


April 2020



Tractor Times



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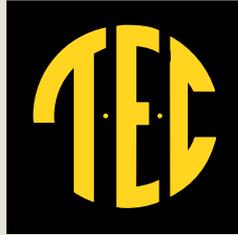


A Message from the CEO



Dan Stracener

**On the cutting
edge of
technology**



Dear Valued Customer:

Technology is a part of our everyday lives. During the past several years, its prominence in the construction, mining, quarry and other equipment-intensive industries has grown astronomically. Today's machinery is more advanced than ever with integrated GPS and telematics that provide information remotely to enable tracking and automation.

Komatsu has always been on the cutting edge. Twenty years ago, it began looking at ways to implement this technology into its construction machinery. Hours and location were the first bits of information supplied by what, in time, became KOMTRAX. Today, it and KOMTRAX Plus for mining machines, offer a wealth of data that can potentially lower your total cost of ownership. See more about the history and evolution of this innovative tool in this issue of your TEC TractorTimes magazine.

KOMTRAX has been standard on all new Komatsu equipment for quite some time, including the machines spotlighted in this issue's case study. I think you will find this interesting as it shares how equipment users like you are utilizing Komatsu equipment to increase production and efficiency.

Komatsu believes in serving as a total solutions provider and that includes being a source for financing. The Komatsu & You article, featuring Komatsu Financial President Rich Fikis, gives insight on why more than 80 percent of Komatsu machines are financed through Komatsu Financial.

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, appearing to read 'Dan Stracener', written in a cursive style.

Dan Stracener
CEO



Tractor Times

TEC1943.com

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The Products Plus The People To Serve You

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KOMATSU

Jacklett Construction, Inc., a Georgia site-development and custom-build contractor, takes pride in going the extra mile

Leonard Jacklett secured his first landscaping contract in 1978, a job that would propel him into a long career. Projects slowly began to grow from landscaping to swimming pools and eventually to mass grading. Today, Jacklett Construction provides turnkey residential and commercial services in the Atlanta metro area.

“For the first 20 years, we were a smaller-scale equipment landscape operation based in Rutherfordton, North Carolina,” said Leonard, who serves as President of the family business. “As the years went by, we bought bigger equipment and started to expand. By the time that my son Lucas started high school, he loved heavy equipment and was a big reason why we kept adding more machines.”

“Whenever I had free time during the summer, I was out on a jobsite running a backhoe or dozer,” added Lucas, who is

now the company’s Vice President. “When I was eight years old, I remember getting on a tractor for the first time and putting blankets behind my back so I could reach the pedals. I always liked the idea of taking a piece of land and turning it into something different.”

In the mid-90s, Leonard established the residential contracting and custom-build portion of the company. When Lucas joined the business, he took on the site-development side. In 2006, spurred by the strong housing market, the father-son duo moved to Atlanta in search of larger projects. Upon the economic recession, the firm downsized before resurging a few years later.

“We were fortunate to get a lot of commercial work during the downturn,” recalled Leonard. “It was a lot like the old days where we would do anything just to stay busy. Then in 2011, we landed a couple of large projects and things grew from there.”

Today, the firm employs 45 people and operates within a 50-mile radius of Atlanta. Approximately 80 percent of its work is associated with residential projects and the remainder is commercial jobs. Leonard and Lucas recognize that much of the company’s success is attributed to their employees’ hard work.

“We have a family-oriented business that operates with integrity,” said Lucas. “Our people all know that ‘good enough’ isn’t where we like to be; we take pride in our attention to detail.”

Consistent growth

Two major projects were key to the company’s growth and stand as examples of its versatility.

“In 2011, we won the contract to do the site work for Georgia Tech’s McCamish Pavilion renovation,” shared Leonard. “At the same time, we did a large residential estate. Those two projects catapulted us to where we are today.”

When it comes to the site work side of the business, the firm takes on between 10 and 12 projects annually. Jobs range in size from one to 60 acres. Currently, the company is



Discover more at
TECTractorTimes.com

Vice President Lucas Jacklett (left) and his father, President Leonard Jacklett, lead a successful Atlanta-area construction business that specializes in custom-built homes and site-development services.





▶ VIDEO

Utility Manager Casey Brown digs a ditch with a Komatsu PC360LC-11 before placing piping at jobsite near Atlanta. "We have to be very precise when we're laying pipe because we're always working around guys," said Brown. "The views from the windows make it easy to keep an eye on everyone. The machine has the right amount of power and the speed that we need."



in the midst of a multi-year endeavor in Cherokee County.

"The Belmont Hills project is a 500-acre site phased throughout four years," explained Lucas. "We're moving more than 1.3 million yards of dirt that will make way for a 470-lot subdivision. We started the first phase in September and should finish that portion soon.

"Weather is a huge challenge for this project," continued Lucas. "A lot of the utilities that we're laying go through swampy areas, which compound the wet conditions. Although it's challenging, we expect to stay on schedule."

Outstanding service from TEC

When the company needs new equipment, it turns to Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Mack Brice to find the right machines.

"We've been working with Mack for four or five years," said Lucas. "When he gives his word on something, that's what's going to happen. He fits in great with our philosophy, which is to provide the best service and do it the right way."

The relationship began when the Jackletts decided to test a Komatsu dozer against competitive models.

"The dozer was quite a bit stronger than what we were running," explained Lucas.

"At first, it had a different feel than a traditional dozer. Once the operator got used to that, it was clearly a better machine."

Jacklett Construction now relies on a wide range of Komatsu equipment, including multiple D61PX-24 dozers; PC360LC-11 and PC210LC-10 excavators; and WA320-7 wheel loaders. At the Belmont Hills site, Utility Manager Casey Brown works through the wet conditions using a Komatsu PC360LC-11 excavator.

"The PC360 is a very smooth machine," noted Casey. "We have to be very precise when we're laying pipe because we're always working around guys. The views from the windows make it easy to keep an eye on everyone. The machine has the right amount of power and the speed that we need."

The father and son appreciate the reliable service that TEC provides as well.

"Service from Tractor & Equipment has been great the few times when we have had little issues," noted Lucas. "The preventive maintenance service through the Komatsu CARE program goes flawlessly. It's a pleasure to work with Mack and the entire TEC team."

Continued . . .

'It's been a father's dream for me'

... continued



(L-R) Vice President Lucas Jacklett and President Leonard Jacklett call on Tractor & Equipment Company and Sales Rep Mack Brice for their construction equipment needs. "We've been working with Mack for four or five years," said Lucas. "When he gives you his word on something, that's what's going to happen."

Passing the torch

Going forward, the Jackletts look to continue expanding and hope to build on their success.

"We probably have more work in front of us than ever, which is going to equate to more people and more tractors," said Lucas. "If the market allows, and it makes sense, then we're going to keep growing to accommodate."

For Leonard, building a company with Lucas has been a rewarding adventure.

"My goal was to have my son work with me," said Leonard. "There were moments when I didn't know if that was the direction he wanted to take. He did, and it's been a father's dream for me."

"My next step is retirement," continued Leonard. "I couldn't be prouder to be able to step down and let Lucas run with it when the time comes. It's an incredible feeling to do that when the company is excelling and moving upward." ■

A Jacklett Construction operator uses a Komatsu WA320-7 wheel loader on a suburban Atlanta subdivision project.





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Birmingham's Milam & Co. succeeds on wide-ranging projects thanks to its versatile staff



Mike Milam,
President



Barrett Milam,
Vice President

To say that heavy equipment is in Barrett Milam's blood is an understatement. For three generations, his family has owned and operated multiple construction companies.

"I grew up in Trussville (Alabama) on 180 acres where I ran equipment, like old-style dozers," recalled Barrett. "My grandmother owned a construction company that she passed down to my uncle, my grandfather on my dad's side had a coal mining operation and my brother owns a construction business. My dad, President Mike Milam, started Milam & Co. in Birmingham, Ala., 25 years ago when he decided to go out on his own after working with my uncle."

Today, Barrett serves as Vice President of Milam & Co., which focuses on commercial and public projects and is licensed in five states. Typically, it works within a 200-mile radius of Birmingham, but it will travel farther for repeat customers.

"A lot of our projects come from people we've worked for in the past or through word-of-mouth," noted Barrett. "Jobs range from \$5,000 to about \$7 million."

Milam & Co. self-performs the majority of work on projects, thanks to its versatile staff.

"We're able to do a large portion of any contract under one umbrella," explained Barrett. "We'll handle the demo, clearing, wet utilities and grading, whereas most companies will sub out portions of that work. It's more efficient for the customer when we do a majority of it ourselves."

With 30 full-time employees, Milam & Co. is proud of its heritage as a family-owned business that does things right the first time. Project Manager and Estimator Brandon Nelson; Controller Kasondra Graveman; and Superintendents Carl Farmer, Mark Shepherd and Mitchell Cline all play important roles in the company's success. In addition to its employees, Milam & Co. relies on technology to help it compete for larger projects.

"We were a bigger company employee-wise until the economic downturn caused us to scale back," said Barrett. "Now we're actually doing larger projects because of the equipment we've invested in."

Technology expands opportunities

At any given time, Milam & Co. is engaged in up to 11 different projects, depending on their size. In 2018, crews converted the Pinson Valley High School football field from sod to turf. The project would be the first of many to incorporate Komatsu's *intelligent* Machine Control equipment into the jobsite.

"At first we thought the equipment was out of our price range," noted Barrett. "We were still interested, though, and rented a couple of machines to see the benefits. It was a no-brainer to add the iMC technology to our fleet permanently once we saw what it could do and the accuracy it brought to the table. It changes the ballgame."

Currently, the firm is completing the Etowah County Mega Sports Complex in Etowah, Ala. The \$5.3-million facility sits on 37-acres and requires moving more than 100,000 yards of material in an eight-month span to make way for eight new soccer fields and a pavilion. Before adding the Komatsu equipment, Milam & Co. would have passed on the job.

"With the grades that this project requires, I wouldn't have priced the project three years

Milam & Co. crew members use Komatsu D61PXi-24 and D61PXi-24 dozers to work in muddy conditions at a jobsite in northeast Alabama. The company recently switched to Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control dozers to take on larger projects with challenging grades. "With the grades that this project requires, I wouldn't have priced the project three years ago," explained Vice President Barrett Milam.





► VIDEO

An operator loads dirt with a Komatsu PC360LCi-11 excavator into an HM300-5 articulated truck at the Etowah County Mega Sports Complex in Etowah, Ala. The excavator utilizes Komatsu's integrated *intelligent* Machine Control technology to keep operators from digging past grade and increases new operators' efficiency. "We can rely on the intelligent machines to take unskilled operators and make them very efficient," said Vice President Barrett Milam.

ago," explained Barrett. "We're not worried about laying stakes and potentially moving dirt twice any longer. This equipment makes it simple for my father to look at a project and calculate whether it's something we can do pretty easily."

Accurate and efficient

Recently, the firm graded a 1.6-mile stretch of road for the City of Trussville.

"All our operators were running intelligent equipment," noted Barrett. "Once they learn the basic operations, they can take off and let the machine do a lot of the work for them.

"From north to south, we were less than six one-hundredths off of subgrade when the paver arrived," continued Barrett. "The paving guys love the equipment because it's less work for them not having to blue-top our subgrade before putting down their base. It saves everyone time and money because our GPS equipment got it spot on."

When looking for new equipment, Milam & Co. partners with Tractor &

Equipment Company (TEC) and Sales Rep Matt Dunlap to find the right machines.

"We made a substantial jump about two years ago when we began working with Matt and TEC," said Barrett. "We started with the Komatsu D51PXi dozer, then added the 61PXi dozer, two 360LCi excavators and a 39PXi dozer pretty quickly. Although many of the older skilled operators are retired now, we can rely on the intelligent machines to take an unskilled operator and make them very efficient."

Milam & Co. has transitioned quickly from a largely mixed fleet to primarily Komatsu equipment. Machines range from a PC88MR-10 compact excavator to a PC360LCi-11; multiple HM300-5 articulated trucks; and D39PXi-24 to D61PXi-24 dozers. When compared to competitive brands, Barrett says Komatsu leads the way.

"Komatsu's iMC controls are a step ahead of any other competitors' equipment that I've tried," stated Barrett. "They're truly innovative, and the accuracy and efficiency

Continued . . .



Discover more at
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'The future looks very promising'

... continued



Vice President Barrett Milam (left) calls on Tractor & Equipment Company and Sales Rep Matt Dunlap for the company's growing equipment needs. "TEC has eliminated going through multiple channels to get things done and really changed how we buy equipment," shared Milam.

have been key for us. Also, Tractor & Equipment keeps everything under one roof, so I don't have to call multiple people or offices when I have a question."

For Barrett, service plays a major role in continuing to partner with TEC.

"If something happens to a machine, TEC is better than anyone at making sure we have something to use until the machine is back," he said. "They're a big company but small enough to where I can walk into their office to talk and they know who I am. TEC has eliminated going through multiple channels to get things done and really changed how we buy equipment."

Continued growth

Taking on more complex and larger projects without changing the firm's identity is the next step for Milam & Co.

"We're growing quickly and adding projects on the civil side of the business that we would have never thought about previously," said Barrett. "While we want to keep our little niche; the future looks very promising." ■

At the Etowah County Mega Sports Complex in Alabama, a Milam & Co. operator moves material in muddy conditions using a Komatsu D61PXi-24 dozer with *intelligent* Machine Control. "Komatsu's intelligent controls have been a step ahead of any other competitors' equipment that I've tried," stated Vice President Barrett Milam.



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Hunter and Clint Shackelford
Shackelford Construction / Yazoo City, MS

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Crowd pours into Las Vegas for CONEXPO-CON/AGG, IFPE triennial gathering

The crowd was much better than expected under the circumstances,” said David Price, Chairperson of International Fluid Power Exhibition (IFPE), which had a co-located event with CONEXPO-CON/AGG’s show at the Las Vegas Convention Center and Festival Grounds. “We were very pleased with the strong showing from the 300-plus exhibitors at IFPE 2020, and we are looking forward to the 2023 gathering.”

Even amid concerns about COVID-19, CONEXPO-CON/AGG and IFPE drew large daily attendance. The showcase featured the latest machinery and technology for the construction, mining, scrap handling, waste, forestry and other industries. Registrations for the show totaled more than 130,000.

“CONEXPO is a great way to see what’s new,” said Seth Wisney with McGuirk Sand-Gravel of Mt. Pleasant, Mich. “It’s very impressive.”

Despite the last day being cancelled, the event reached some key metrics according to organizers, including overall contractor and producer attendance growth of 14 percent. Attendees purchased a record-breaking 75,622 tickets for educational sessions, a 46 percent increase from three years ago.

“We refer to this as the ‘heavy metal’ show, but it’s much more than that,” stated Mary Erholtz, CONEXPO-CON/AGG Show Chairperson. “It has giant machines, incredible exhibits, fantastic education and huge expectations. Organizers have a legacy of building and innovating on previous shows, and the 2020 gathering extended that record of success.”

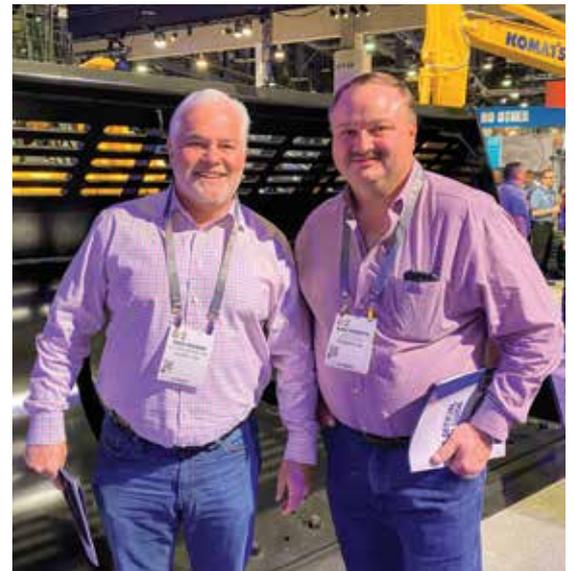
Technology at the forefront

CONEXPO-CON/AGG highlighted technology in today’s and tomorrow’s construction industry with the Tech Experience. This exhibit emphasized the effects of artificial intelligence, autonomous equipment, big data, sustainability, smart cities and modern mobility.

Brett and Brandi Owenby of Brett Owenby Grading, LLC pause for a photo during their visit to Komatsu’s booth.



Brody and Amy Campbell of Campbell Transport enjoy the Komatsu display.



Greg Rogers (left) of Plateau Excavation and Bode Roberts of Palmetto Line Contractors take in the sights at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2020.



A large contingent of people checked out the Komatsu booth during the co-located CONEXPO-CON/AGG and IFPE show in Las Vegas.

“I’m amazed at what some of the minds at the Tech Experience think up,” said Helen Horner, Director of Education Programs at the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), the organization that co-owns and operates CONEXPO-CON/AGG. “What we’re seeing in bringing all of these ideas to one place is how some connect to form new ideas. Hopefully, those germinate after the show to give us even more amazing technology to explore at the next CONEXPO-CON/AGG.”

Tech talk topics included Driving Decisions with Artificial Intelligence; Smart Cities; 3D Printing Buildings – Current Possibilities and Future Implications; Wireless Energy Transfer; and Prevention and Protection of Traumatic Brain Injuries.

“New ideas and connections are the core of what we want people to experience at CONEXPO-CON/AGG,” said Show Director Dana Wuesthoff. “The big iron and big deals are definitely fun, but the technology, information and education are what secure the future of the industry and the continuing viability of the businesses that attend and exhibit here.”

“Creating Connections”

Komatsu, with its exhibit theme of “Creating Connections” was among those making a strong showing with both equipment and technology. The company debuted machines for multiple industries, including the

D71PXi-24, its newest and largest hydrostatic transmission dozer. It features Komatsu’s *intelligent* Machine Control (iMC) 2.0, which also was introduced in Las Vegas.

Komatsu showcased its upcoming suite of 11 Smart Construction solutions that will roll out over the next year. By tapping into the Internet of Things, customers will soon be able to control construction planning, management, scheduling and costs, and optimize processes remotely and in near real time.

The D155CX-8 pipelayer, designed in conjunction with pipeline companies, made its global premiere in Komatsu’s 40,000-square-foot exhibit space. Previously previewed machines that were formally introduced at the event included the PC130-11 excavator and the WA475-10 and WA800-8 wheel loaders.

“CONEXPO provides a unique opportunity for contractors to see not only where the equipment industry is today, but also where it’s headed; and we believe Komatsu is leading the way,” said Rich Smith, Vice President, Product and Services Division. “We wanted attendees to see Komatsu’s commitment to advanced products backed by innovative solutions that can potentially reduce overall ownership and operating costs significantly. The feedback we received shows we achieved our objective.” ■



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TECTractorTimes.com

Construction, mining and aggregate customers demo latest equipment and technology



Isaac Rollor,
Komatsu District
Manager



Discover more at
TECTractorTimes.com

Komatsu welcomed customers to recent hands-on events where they had the chance to operate a variety of heavy equipment. Demo Days took place at Komatsu's Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia, where guests met with product experts and learned about the latest advancements in construction technology. Quarry Days sessions were held at the company's Arizona Proving Grounds in Sahuarita, Ariz.

Demo Days

"It's fun to see and run all of the new equipment to get a great feel for what the technology is truly doing," said Rachel Contracting Operations Manager Robbie Koopmeiners. "To be front and center with the newest and greatest technology is something that can't be replaced."

Headlining the new machinery and technology on display was Komatsu's

Proactive Dozing Control logic, available on the D51i-24 and D61i-24.

"We featured our *intelligent* Machine Control dozers with Proactive Dozing Control," said Komatsu District Manager Isaac Rollor. "We debuted this technology last spring, and a lot of customers were ready to get into the dozers and get first-hand experience with how it really works."

The three-day event featured 25 machines ranging from utility equipment to mining and aggregate pieces, including the full lineup of *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators.

"We design Demo Days as a highly interactive experience," said Rollor. "With machine demos and Komatsu experts, plus games, booths and other information, we want customers to get all of their questions answered before they leave. It's our goal to provide the best experience possible."



(L-R) Adam Dye and Tanner Phillips, Phillips Clearing & Grading; Brent Harmon, Tractor & Equipment Co.; and Stacy Phillips, Phillips Clearing & Grading



(L-R) Brett Mincey, Clifton Construction; Richard Shore, Tractor & Equipment Co.; and Perry Mincey, Clifton Construction



(L-R) Alan Preston, Tractor & Equipment Co. with Ethan, Scott and Greg Williams of Williams Grading



(L-R) Andrew Pettit, Tractor & Equipment Co. and Jay Conner and Daniel McCoy, Strack Inc.



▶ VIDEO

Demo Days attendees had the opportunity to operate a wide array of equipment as well as gather information and other tips from Komatsu product experts at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia.

Customers agreed that Komatsu accomplished its mission.

“I’m blown away at the hospitality Komatsu provided,” said War Paint Enterprises Owner Brock Parker. “You have the opportunity to see and run everything. Plus, you get to talk to the people who designed these machines and learn a lot about the equipment. I would definitely recommend coming to Demo Days.”

Continued . . .



(L-R) Michael Turner and Todd Kitchens, Jordan Excavating with Matt Dunlap, Tractor & Equipment Co.



Jeremy Kenway (left) and Chewy Varela of the City of Griffin, Ga.



(L-R) Rob Hudson and Tim Walters, Scott Bridge Co. and Andrew Huggins, Tractor & Equipment Co.



(L-R) Gary Ethridge and Lee Waldrop, Scruggs Co.; Mike Kinneman, Tractor & Equipment Co.; and Blake Sloan, Komatsu America.



(L-R) West Craft and Steve McCants of Landmark Grading Co. and Jon Lake, Tractor & Equipment Co.



(L-R) Jarrod Smith and Joey Strickland, EOM Construction and Daniel Evans, Tractor & Equipment Co.

Events offer time for meaningful conversation

... continued



Joe Sollitt,
Komatsu Senior
Product Manager

Quarry Days

More than 140 customer and dealer attendees representing 25 different companies across mining and aggregate industries attended a session during the two-week Quarry Days event.

“This is a unique opportunity to bring our customers into an actual mining site where they can operate equipment, and we can demonstrate it in an application that is representative of their working

environment,” explained Komatsu Senior Product Manager Joe Sollitt.

“We bring in a lot of larger gear and encourage customers to engage with our product experts, equipment trainers and staff to learn about the machines,” he added. “The group sizes are limited each day so that guests and employees have more time to engage in meaningful conversation.”

Quarry Days highlighted the recently introduced Komatsu HD785-8 haul truck and previewed the WA475-10 wheel loader. The HD785-8 has a rated payload of 101.6 tons and offers operators a bird’s-eye view with KomVision (see related article on page 19). The WA475-10 wheel loader has an all new hydromechanical transmission to increase efficiency.

“We’re really excited to preview the WA475-10 because it’s a major technological step that increases productivity and reduces fuel consumption,” noted Sollitt. “The HD785-8 also includes a wide range of technological upgrades and is a perfect match with the WA900-8 wheel loader.” ■



Blanton Park Jr. (left) and Brent White from Martin Marietta meet at Quarry Days.



A Komatsu WA900-8 wheel loader drops dirt into the bed of a Komatsu HD785-8 haul truck at Komatsu’s Arizona Proving Grounds during Quarry Days. “The HD785-8 includes a wide range of technological upgrades and is a perfect match with the WA900-8 wheel loader,” noted Komatsu Senior Product Manager Joe Sollitt.



▶ VIDEO

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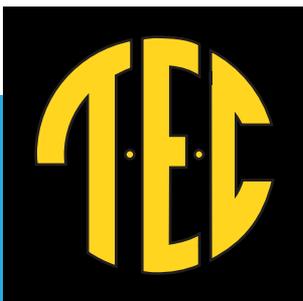
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Highly maneuverable rigid-frame truck delivers more hauling cycles for increased production

Mining, quarry and aggregate operations want to move large quantities of material as quickly as possible. Trucks with a tight turning radius, that are highly maneuverable when spotting to be loaded and positioning to dump, can provide an advantage in achieving those goals.

With a turning radius of 33 feet, 2 inches, Komatsu's new 1,140 net horsepower HD785-8 rigid-frame, off-highway truck helps users reach their objectives while delivering a payload capacity of 101.6 tons. The truck has a 7-speed, fully automatic transmission with two selectable reverse speeds. The Komatsu Advanced Transmission with Optimum Modulation Control System ensures smooth clutch engagement for a more comfortable ride and reduced material spillage.

Get more done in less time

"Thanks to its Tier 4 engine, the HD785-8 has the highest in-class horsepower in North America for the best travel performance on grade," said Robert Hussey, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager. "Additionally, it delivers

fast acceleration out of the pit when loaded and short return times to the loading area for more hauling cycles and increased production per hour."

The Komatsu Traction Control System is standard and automatically applies pressure to independent brake assemblies for optimum traction in various ground conditions, without the need for differential lock-up, so steering performance is not compromised.

"The wet multiple disc brakes on all four wheels provide excellent downhill brake retarding performance," said Hussey. "The Automatic Retard Speed Control maintains a selected downhill travel speed, rather than engine RPM, so operators can keep their focus on the haul road." ■



Robert Hussey,
Komatsu Product
Marketing Manager



Discover more

Quick Specs on Komatsu's HD785-8 Off-Highway Truck

Model	Net Horsepower	Payload Capacity	Industries
HD785-8	1,140 hp	101.6 ton	Aggregate, Quarry, Mining

Komatsu's new HD785-8 rigid-frame, off-highway truck has a turning radius of 33 feet, 2 inches, making it highly maneuverable. "It delivers fast acceleration out of the pit when loaded and short return times to the loading area for more hauling cycles and increased production per hour," said Robert Hussey, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager.



intelligent Machine Control dozers help reduce pad construction time, 'perfect for reclamation'



Art Gutteresen,
Owner



Luke Leonard,
GPS Technician



Joey Timco,
Construction
Superintendent

Ranch owner Art Gutteresen turned a blizzard into a business. "Nobody could get to work, and there were oilfield companies installing wells on the property. I leased a motor grader to move the snow and open the roads for them. I think I moved the same snow every day for three months," he recalled.

Gutteresen saw an opportunity to provide additional resources to the oil and gas companies working the 32,000 acres that comprise Gutteresen Ranch, and that was the catalyst for Gusher Oilfield Services. It now offers drill pad, road and tank battery construction; grading; heavy hauling; and reclamation services, among others.

Proven results

To streamline operations, Gusher Oilfield Services GPS Technician Luke Leonard builds topographic maps using a data collector and rover. Then, he makes a design file that can be plugged into the company's Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D65PXi-24 and D39PXi-24 dozers and used for pad construction and reclamation.

"Our operators let the machines do the work; they're simple and have led to greater efficiency," shared Leonard. "We love the integrated system, which eliminates wasted

time or additional expenses that come with the masts and cables of traditional aftermarket GPS."

"The D65PXi pushes and carries a sizeable load; and with the six-way blade, operators can do all the mass dirt moving, slope cutting and finish work for pads with one machine," added Construction Superintendent Joey Timco. "Previously, depending on pad size and the amount of material to move, construction could take five to 10 days. Now, with the D65i, we've cut that time in half. The smaller D39PXi is perfect for reclamation, because it involves working in some tight areas that are close to well heads."

Gusher Oilfield Services mounted a permanent solar-powered GPS base station with Virtual Reference Station control in the middle of the ranch at a height of 27 feet. A Technical Solutions Expert with the local Komatsu distributorship assisted with setup and calibration.

"He was instrumental in ensuring everything functioned properly," said Leonard.

"Additionally, he trained our operators on the ins and outs of the system. His expertise ensured that we were up and running quickly to maximize production and efficiency." ■

A Gusher Oilfield Services operator builds a well pad with a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D65PXi-24 dozer. "Our operators let the machines do the work; they're simple and have led to greater efficiency," said Gusher Oilfield Services GPS Technician Luke Leonard. "We love the integrated system, which eliminates wasted time or additional expenses that come with the masts and cables of traditional aftermarket GPS."

▶ VIDEO



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

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After 20 years, telematics system continues to help owners use equipment data for more cost-effective practices

Knowing where your machines are located and the number of hours on them are critical pieces of information when maintaining a fleet. Those capabilities were the original features of Komatsu's remote monitoring KOMTRAX telematics system, which celebrates its 20th birthday in 2020.

"After all of these years, those are still two important functions, although KOMTRAX has considerably more capabilities now," said Steve Day, who served as Komatsu's Director of Service in 2000, and was instrumental in the adoption and implementation of KOMTRAX. He recently retired from Tractor & Equipment Company where he was Executive Vice President/General Manager-Product Support. "It evolved into a tool for monitoring equipment health, idle time, fuel consumption and much more. The information can be used to address changes that lead to better practices, which reduce owning and operating costs."

Depending on the machine, today's KOMTRAX can deliver information on cautions, abnormality codes, actual working hours versus idle time, hydraulic relief hours, load frequency and digging hours, among other critical data. The latest version, KOMTRAX 5.0, is standard on Tier 4 construction machinery and includes Komatsu Diesel Particulate Filter

soot count, active regeneration time, operator identification and diesel exhaust fluid level.

"Early on, we recognized how valuable the data could be to customers, our distributors and to Komatsu as a manufacturer, and each has played a significant role in its evolution," emphasized Komatsu Director of Parts Marketing Chris Wasik, who also worked on the initiative that eventually led to KOMTRAX. "There was some discussion in the initial stages about what to charge for the service. However, we quickly saw such great potential benefit that we decided to provide it complimentary, and we still do."

Continued . . .



Discover more at
TECTractorTimes.com



▶ VIDEO
Steve Day,
former Komatsu
Director of Service,
now retired



Chris Wasik,
Komatsu Director of
Parts Marketing

KOMTRAX, Komatsu's remote monitoring telematics system, turns 20 this year and has evolved from a box that offered basic information on location and hours to an integrated system that provides comprehensive data on machine health, usage and more.



'The customer benefit is better support'

... continued



Rizwan Mirza,
Komatsu Manager,
KOMTRAX –
Technical Support &
Product Quality,
Products & Services
Division

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Wasik said that Komatsu now monitors hundreds of thousands of machines equipped with the technology to analyze trends and assess data, which may determine manufacturing levels and inventory. Distributors keep track of equipment in their territories to determine when to perform service intervals, what parts to stock and to remotely diagnose error codes and more.

"The customer benefit is better support," said Wasik. "For instance, when a machine has a fault code, KOMTRAX sends an alert. Before driving to a customer's site to check the machine, the technician can pull the parts that may be needed and take them along. In the past, the technician may have needed to assess the machine, determine the required parts, then go back to the shop and get them. KOMTRAX reduces downtime, and because it shows where a machine is located, the tech can drive right to it, which saves time and travel expense."

Customers can keep an eye on their machines through a secure website via desktop and laptop computers, tablets or with a smartphone using the KOMTRAX app. McManus Construction, LLC Fleet Manager James Bedgood utilizes the service to research error codes as well as to track idle time and hours.

"If I'm out of the shop, I check it through the app on my phone," said Bedgood. "It's a great

Equipment users can track a machine's hours, idle time, usage, operation modes and much more with KOMTRAX. "The increases in productivity and efficiency we get across the board with Komatsu are fantastic," said Dorado Construction Group Fleet Manager/Equipment Manager Clay Butler. "I see it every day when I look up the machines through KOMTRAX on my desktop computer or tablet."

tool that allows us to be even more proactive regarding service."

Dorado Construction Group Fleet Manager/Equipment Manager Clay Butler consistently uses KOMTRAX to track how his company's Komatsu equipment is running.

"The increases in productivity and efficiency we get across the board with Komatsu are fantastic," said Butler. "I see it every day when I look up the machines through KOMTRAX on my desktop computer or tablet. If a code pops up, it alerts us so that we can address it quickly."

Rizwan Mirza, Komatsu Manager, KOMTRAX – Technical Support & Production Quality, Products & Services Division said that this kind of end-user adoption has always been one of Komatsu's goals.

"We want customers to utilize it to its fullest and reap the benefits of what's available," added Mirza. "Whether it's basic hours and location or more advanced data, such as idle versus production time, economy mode versus power mode functionalities, unnecessary travel or something else, it's beneficial to their operations. Komatsu and our distributors can consult with customers to use the information in a way that maximizes production and efficiency."

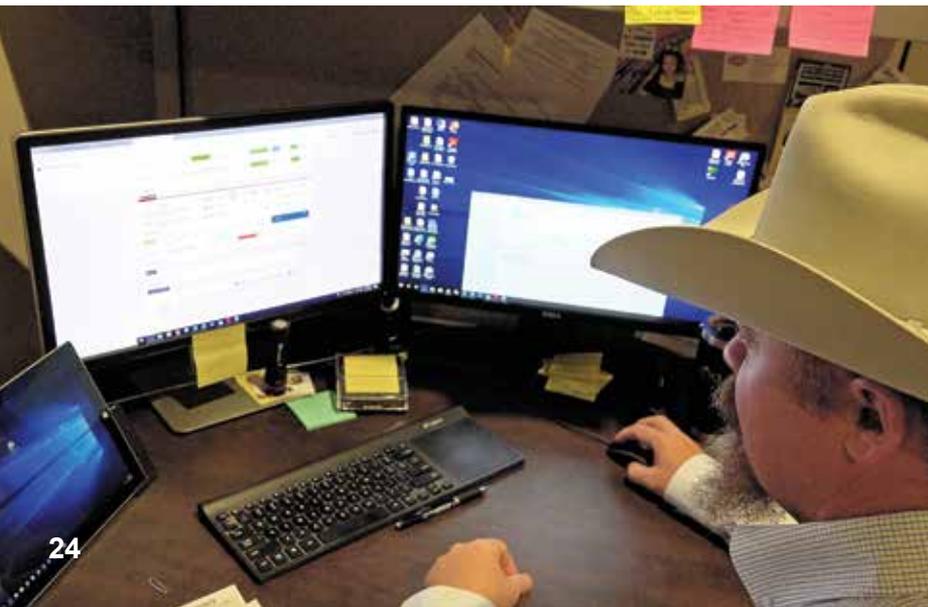
Total solutions tool

KOMTRAX has exceeded the initial development team's expectations.

"Telematics were being used in the trucking industry, and someone had the foresight to see its applications for construction equipment," Day recalled. "We started with a box and put it on one excavator to do some field testing and see what we could do with the information."

"It was introduced on four machines, and the benefits were so great that we expanded it," added Wasik. "KOMTRAX was so well-received, that we manufactured retrofit packages for older models. Some customers put it on their competitive brands and other types of equipment to track them as well."

Mirza said predictive analysis could be the next step in the evolution of KOMTRAX. "A machine may tell the customer that it's nearly time to replace a component, for instance. We are working to marry it with our MyKomatsu website and other business aspects as part of our total solutions package." ■



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

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President Rich Fikis says Komatsu Financial customizes solutions to fit needs of individual businesses

QUESTION: More than 80 percent of Komatsu construction equipment is acquired using Komatsu Financial. What makes it such an attractive lending source?

ANSWER: During the past several years, we have made a concerted effort to be closer to customers and better understand their specific needs. It helps us know what they are looking for in a monthly payment; whether they do maintenance in-house or need long-term maintenance plans built into their payment or lease structure; what their machine applications are; and more. Those items are important in making sure we focus on their success, rather than simply providing blanket financing at a certain rate during a given time frame.

As an example, in some parts of the country winter can be especially rough for contractors. They may not work for an extended time. We can build payment skips into their financing that allow them to finalize purchasing or leasing decisions, maintain good cash flow and start making payments again in the spring when projects are up and running and their receivables are better.

I believe another reason is our strong relationship to Komatsu's distributor network. Komatsu Financial provides training and works closely with sales personnel at the distributorships to ensure they are every bit as qualified to talk about Komatsu Financial products as we are. We are in lockstep with one another.

QUESTION: How long does it take to receive a financing decision?

ANSWER: The average time is about four business hours after the distributor submits the application to us. That's our goal; however, the vast majority are quicker. That's due, in part, to having numerous repeat customers and automatic approval capabilities.

QUESTION: How much of your business comes from repeat customers?

ANSWER: More than 70 percent, which is an excellent number for our industry. A lot

of that is a result of our willingness to work with customers and being flexible; they really appreciate it.

QUESTION: Do you finance more than equipment?

ANSWER: Yes, we also finance Komatsu Genuine Parts and service handled by our distributor network. We pre-approve a specific amount to help make the decision to have maintenance and repairs done. Our standard

Continued...



Rich Fikis,
President, Komatsu Financial

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.

Rich Fikis started with Komatsu Financial in 1997. At the time, he and his colleagues worked in a building that was separate from Komatsu America. "That's no longer the case; today we are a much bigger part of the picture," said Fikis. "We are closer than ever to our distributors and customers, which allows us to better understand their perspectives on financing and how we can build plans and programs tailored to their needs."

Fikis began his career in the operations area and spent four years in collections before moving into credit and then to a regional manager position. He also worked in financial planning and analysis for Komatsu America before becoming President of Komatsu Financial.

"I really enjoy going out to our distributors and sitting down with customers, listening to what their needs are and finding solutions to help," said Fikis.

He and his wife, Tami, have three sons who are active in sports, and the couple enjoys attending their athletic events.

Working to better utilize technology

... continued

term is 15 months of equal payments, which allows for a major repair without hampering monthly cash flow; however, we can develop customized payment plans as well.

QUESTION: What does the future hold for Komatsu Financial?

ANSWER: We are looking at some enhancements to tailor lease programs specifically to Komatsu Care Certified used machinery. We can look at KOMTRAX and check distributor records to verify that all of the services were done as scheduled, so when those machines go out, we and the customer are confident in their condition and value.

We continue to better utilize technology, and right now we are getting ready to launch a more dealer-friendly portal that will allow them to quickly submit an application and receive lease quote information. The enhancement of our KomatsuFinancial.com website continues as well and will offer customers the option to make payments, view their information, pull up invoices and more.

QUESTION: What is your outlook for 2020?

ANSWER: Everything we see shows that the general fundamentals of the economy are strong. Low unemployment is a positive, as are the manufacturing indexes of late. We still think there's some opportunity in the housing market. All indicators point to another strong market in 2020. ■

Repeat customers account for more than 70 percent of Komatsu Financial's business. "That's an excellent number for our industry," stated President Rich Fikis. "A lot of that is a result of our willingness to work with customers and being flexible; they really appreciate it."

President Rich Fikis says Komatsu Financial does more than provide blanket rates for certain periods of time. "During the past several years, we have made a concerted effort to be closer to the customers and better understand their specific needs," said Fikis. "That's why more than 80 percent of Komatsu construction equipment acquisitions are financed through Komatsu Financial."



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Marv Selge (with Noah & Justin) / Selge Construction, Inc. / Niles, MI

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Recruitment event for high school and college students emphasizes careers and technology



Craig Yager,
Komatsu Training
Manager

High school and college students learned about technician careers when Komatsu hosted its annual Komatsu Recruitment Day at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia last fall. The day is part of a larger initiative to generate interest in heavy-equipment careers.

“Finding qualified technicians is an issue facing the industry,” explained Komatsu Training Manager Craig Yager. “We worked with some local distributors to develop this event to help attract more people to our industry and provide information on what career opportunities are available.”

This year’s Recruitment Day brought in more than 100 attendees and four Komatsu distributors. General diesel program students from nearby Chattahoochee Technical College met and interviewed with distributor recruiting representatives and also had the opportunity to operate equipment. The high school students could talk with distributors, take part in machine walk-arounds and participate in an equipment-themed game show.

“Both groups had a unique experience here,” said Yager. “For the college students, it was geared more toward a career path and getting them in front of potential employers because they are further along in their education. An instructor shared that students start talking

about attending this experience months in advance.

“The goal for high schoolers was to raise their interest in this field and build excitement for it,” he added. “They aren’t old enough to operate the equipment, so we focus on making it both fun and informational with some interactive activities.”

‘Eye-opening’ experience

Yager says that events like this have taken on a greater role in an effort to ensure a qualified workforce for the heavy-equipment industry in the future.

“Being able to educate both the students and guidance counselors about the opportunities in our industry is very important,” noted Yager. “There are so many more options available than a four-year degree. Plus, for some of these programs, the distributors or Komatsu will pay for the schooling. That’s another big selling point we try to emphasize.

“These events also help us change the perception of this kind of work – we are a high-tech industry,” he continued.

“It’s more than grease and dirt; it’s very technology-driven. When students see what is really going on, it opens their eyes to all of the possibilities.” ■

More than 100 college and high school students participated in Komatsu Recruitment Day at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia.

“When students see what is really going on, it opens their eyes to all of the possibilities,” said Komatsu Training Manager Craig Yager.



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Aileen Collins encourages both women and men to pursue service technician careers

When people ask Aileen Collins why she didn't become a doctor or a nurse, her answer is, "I sort of did. The patients are just bigger and not human. They come to us, and we take care of them. Like people, sometimes the issues are big. Other times, it's a checkup and some maintenance."

In 2018, Collins became the first woman to graduate from a Komatsu Advanced Career Training (ACT) program when she earned an Associate of Applied Science in Diesel and Heavy Equipment, Komatsu ATC Technology degree at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT). The two-year curriculum at the school in Okmulgee, Okla., combines classroom and hands-on courses on campus, with real-world work in the shops of sponsoring Komatsu distributors.

Collins' patients represent a cross-section of heavy equipment, including dozers, excavators, wheel loaders and more. As a service technician for a Komatsu

distributorship, she can diagnose and fix what ails them.

'Very rewarding'

"I wanted a career that would never get boring," stated Collins. "This definitely hits the mark. No two days are ever the same, and there are always opportunities to learn something new."

While in high school Collins knew she wanted to pursue a career working on machinery. In 2014, she graduated with a degree in diesel and heavy equipment from a technical college, then went to work for her dad's plumbing business. After a few years, she decided to further her education.

"I didn't realize I was the first female until a couple months before graduation," said Collins. "I hope that more women consider becoming technicians. In fact, I encourage anyone – male or female – to pursue this as a career. It is very rewarding." ■

"I wanted a career that would never get boring. This definitely hits the mark."



Service technician Aileen Collins was the first woman to graduate from a Komatsu Advanced Career Training program. Now, she tells others about the benefits and opportunities afforded to service technicians. "I encourage anyone – male or female – to pursue this as a career. It is very rewarding," said Collins.

Can you spot what is different?

There are 10 differences between these two pictures. Test your power of observation, then scan the QR code to check your answers.



Scan to reveal answers



Keep visual records of your jobsites for progress, legal purposes

The first thing most contractors think about when it comes to records is retrieving copies of important documents such as contracts, invoices and pay applications. They don't often consider photographing their work. They should do so, and no less than once weekly, not only of the sites where they are working but also of those areas that may impact their work or schedule.

Case in point – a stucco contractor received a delay claim from the general contractor asserting that he hadn't completed his work on time. Fortunately, the contractor had his construction records in the form of pictures, which showed post-tension cables sticking out of the building. With those in hand, he explained to the general contractor that he was prevented from putting swing stages down the building, something essential for him to apply the stucco. A handful of photos saved him from contending with a legal headache and an expensive delay claim.

Extra steps worth the effort

Photos weigh heavily in a court of law as well. Judges and juries don't necessarily understand construction. Having photographs that depict the situation make it much easier to prove a position. Simply taking photos for construction records is not enough; contractors also need to:

- **Include a description** noting when and where each picture was taken. Having thousands of pictures from a job, which are downloaded from Dropbox with no way to tell when or where they were taken, is no help. Photos need to show a visual history of the job to be useful. Identify all pictures with a date and time stamp as well as a note indicating where they were taken.
- **Save and back up all photos.** Anyone assigned to take photos on the job can easily use a cell phone to take the pictures. However, those visuals are useless if the person's phone is lost or damaged. Save all pictures in a central location and back up everything, regularly.

Contractors should also videotape their work – especially on large jobs, although still applicable to smaller projects – by walking the site and narrating where they are and what they are looking at and then adding the video to their construction records. If needed, they should go back and take screenshots of the video and indicate the time, date and location based on the narration.

It's said that "seeing is believing." When it comes to defending or prosecuting a construction case, nothing could be more true. ■



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Editor's note: This article originally appeared at TheLienZone.com.



Documenting jobsites with photographs and videos is a great way to track progress and keep visual records for potential claims, says attorney Alex Barthet.

Gains in civil engineering salaries continue

Civil engineering compensation continues to climb, reaching a median pretax salary of \$109,000, according to a recent report from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). The research also shows that base salaries have risen 4 to 6 percent each year since 2016, according to ASCE.

Additional highlights of the “2019 Civil Engineering Salary Report” indicate that those with Professional Engineer licenses earn an

average of 20 percent more than their peers who haven’t earned this credential; males make nearly \$23,000 more on average than females; and civil engineers generally have benefits which include health insurance as well as paid time off and parental and sick leave.

Data for the report came from a survey of ASCE members. More than 80 percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. ■

Study shows impact of improving inland waterways

Increasing investment in America’s inland waterways would boost the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP), as well as create more than 470,000 jobs, according to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study. In its report, the USDA said additional funding of \$6.3 billion until 2029 and \$400 million per year thereafter through 2045 would raise

waterways’ contribution to the GDP by 20 percent.

The findings show that current waterway infrastructure has exceeded projected capacity and delays have a negative impact on operators, shippers and end users of the transported commodities. ■

ROUTES highlights funding for rural infrastructure projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) wants residents in rural areas to know infrastructure funds are available to them. It’s doing so through an initiative known as ROUTES (Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success), which DOT Secretary Elaine Chao introduced late last year. She pointed out that the fatality rate on rural roads is double the rate on urban roads and 80 percent of bridges on rural routes are in poor condition.

Part of the initiative is the formation of a rural transportation infrastructure council within the DOT to coordinate activities among the department’s agencies. Chao noted that there are several avenues for rural areas to seek funding, including the infrastructure for the Rebuilding America grant program, which has increased the dollars available for rural undertakings. ■

OSHA seeks input regarding online training

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a request for information to consider online outreach training consortia, a new model to administer online classes for the Outreach Training Program. The consortia would consist of three or four collaborators, including OSHA.

A group of four collaborators would include a stakeholder organization that is interested in developing and offering online outreach training only to their members. Examples include labor unions, associations or

employers. Each member would have specific responsibilities under a formal consortium agreement.

OSHA is requesting information and feedback on the proposed model, including modifying the current model for online delivery of outreach training, identifying the scope of online options and offerings in other languages, ensuring program management, strengthening oversight and more. For further information and to learn how to submit comments, visit www.osha.gov. ■

TEC appoints Chad Stracener as President, Jeremy Tolbert to Executive Vice President-Product Support

Tractor & Equipment Company (TEC) has named Chad Stracener as the company's new President, and Jeremy Tolbert was tabbed to fill the role of Executive Vice President-Product Support.

Stracener is taking the reins from his father, Dan, who will now serve as the organization's Chief Executive Officer.

Experience provides valuable insight

The younger Stracener began his career with TEC when he was 18 and has worked in a variety of positions at the company.

"I started in the used parts department where I pulled parts and helped tear down machines," said Stracener. "During college, I worked summers in our parts and service departments. I've held roles in machine sales; branch management; and most recently, overseeing our parts, service, and product support sales efforts in Georgia.

Noting how his experience will help him as President, Stracener noted, "Working in various branches and capacities has given me a greater understanding of how to address the needs of our customers and employees.

"Our entire management group has significant tenure with TEC and stays focused on solving problems," shared Stracener. "We have an unselfish group, and we work as a team to provide solutions. I'm proud of that, regardless of title or department, everyone's main priority is to take care of the customer."

During his time at TEC, Stracener has worked alongside many other multi-generational employees. He believes that is one of the strengths of the company as it creates a positive environment that resonates throughout the organization.

"TEC has a great culture," said Stracener. "We have many second-, third- and even some fourth-generation employees. Having an employee recommend TEC to a friend or family member speaks volumes about our working environment."

Aiming higher

Tolbert brings deep experience to his new post as Executive Vice President-Product Support.

"I've been in the heavy equipment industry for more than 20 years, and all of my experience has directly related to product support," said Tolbert. "The last 10 years have been working for TEC, and this has allowed me to become familiar with our people, culture and strengths. It's also provided an opportunity to see the areas where we can improve, and those will be our focus going forward."

Tolbert says TEC is committed to implementing new technology into its operations and providing it to customers as soon as it becomes available.

"I'm energized about the future of our business," he said. "We've seen significant technology advancements in products and support capabilities in recent years, and it's exciting to think about how we can use these tools to serve our customers better."

He looks to provide innovative ways to build on TEC's history of product support and market growth.

"It's imperative that we continue TEC's tradition of providing excellent product support to our customers," said Tolbert. "The challenge is to find a way to provide the same level of support customers have become used to as our business grows, product lines expand and technology continues to shape the industry." ■



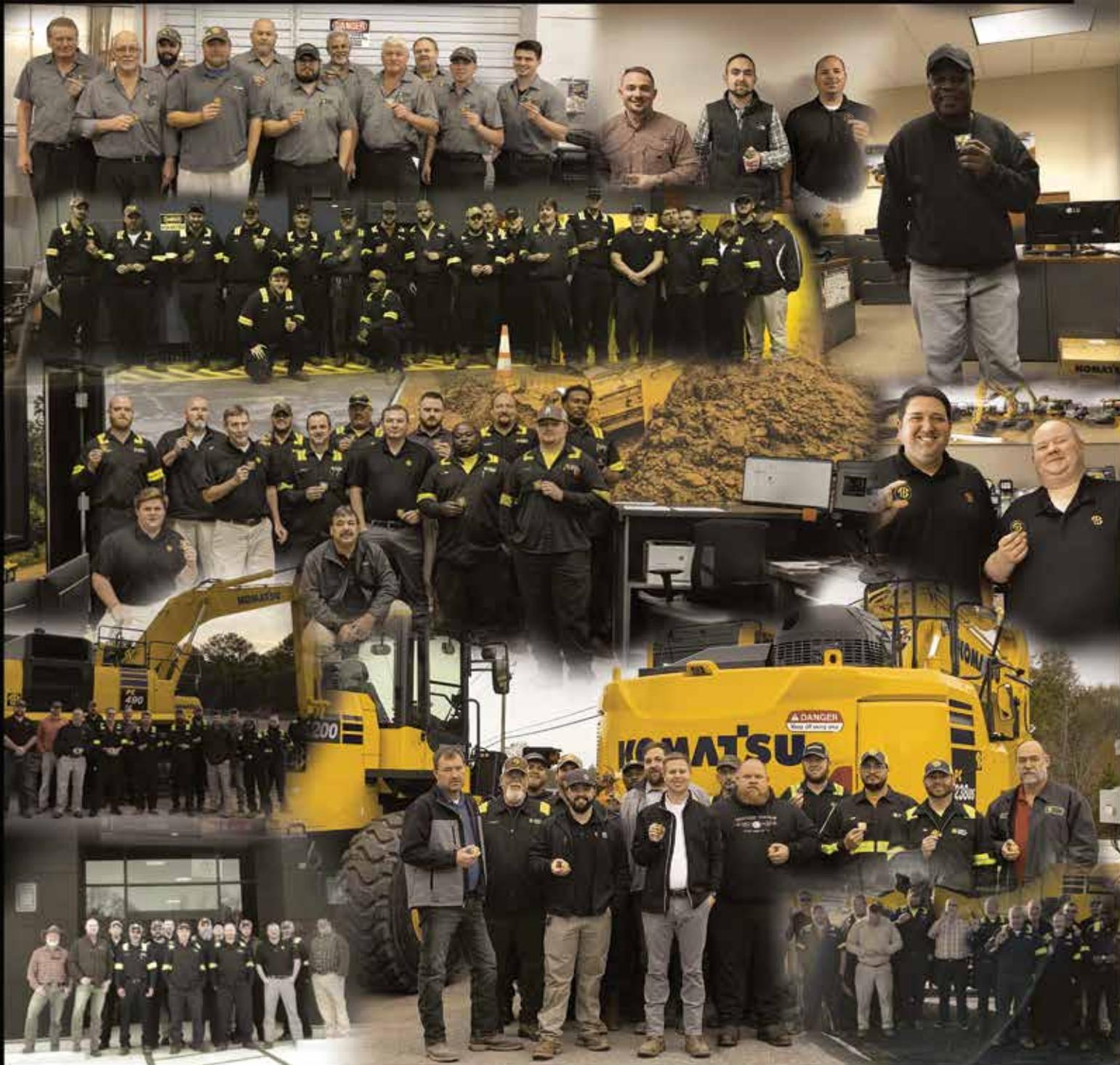
Chad Stracener,
President



Jeremy Tolbert,
Executive Vice President-Product Support



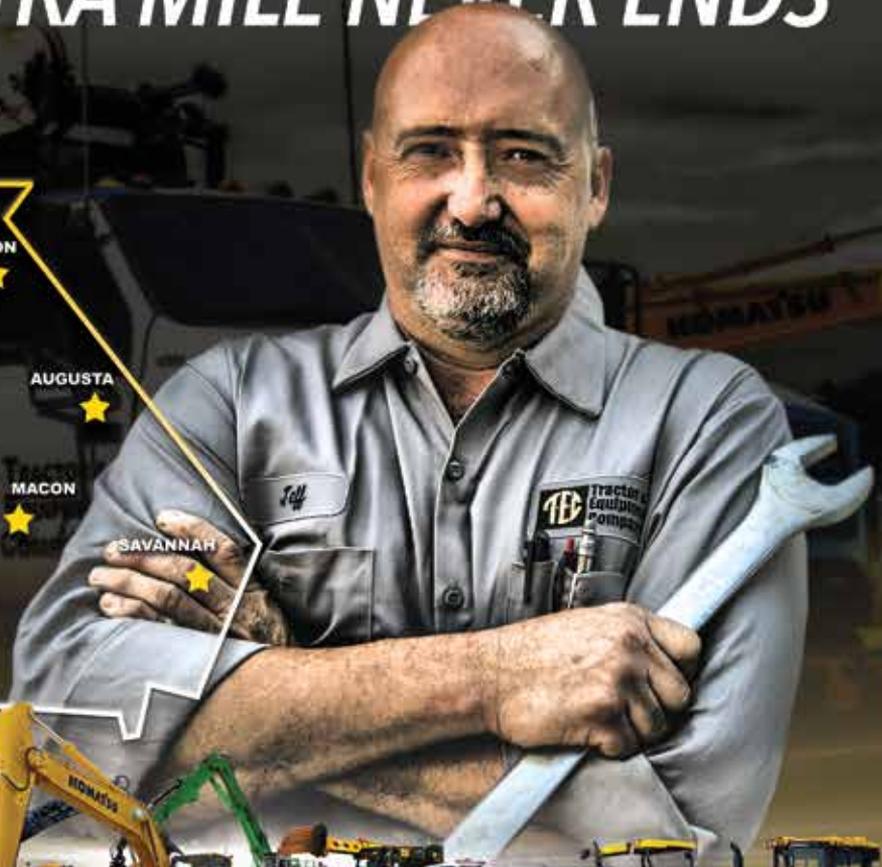
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