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Proactive Dozing Control

See how new intuitive technology uses real-time data to mimic actions of experienced operators



Also inside:
**Virginia Explosives &
Drilling Company (VEDCO)**



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



David Coultas

Passing
knowledge
through
technology



Dear Valued Customer:

Charles Dickens once wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Although that may be a bit of an exaggeration in relation to the current state of construction, it does seem somewhat fitting. During the past several years, the industry has enjoyed significant gains across nearly every market sector, and unemployment is low.

On the flip side is the continuing struggle to find construction workers, specifically equipment operators. Industry groups have taken steps to recruit and retain new people to fill the numerous open positions. As people retire or otherwise leave the industry, they take a wealth of knowledge with them.

Komatsu is committed to making new dozer operators as productive as possible, as quickly as possible with its new Proactive Dozer Control logic that interprets data and makes decisions that mirror seasoned operators. Read more about how this intuitive technology can deliver productivity gains within 6 percent of an experienced operator on select Komatsu dozers.

Speaking of dozers, if you are in need of a large, low-ground-pressure machine, Komatsu's new D155AX-8 LGP is a great fit. It's especially good for applications such as energy and pipeline work. Find out more inside.

There are a couple of interesting case studies in this issue of your Brandeis Focusing on Solutions magazine. One focuses on how a contractor gets jobs done faster and more efficiently with an *intelligent* Machine Control dozer. The second, takes a look at a governmental entity that's seeing similar results with a Komatsu GD655 motor grader.

Finally, I encourage you to check out the CONEXPO-CON/AGG preview that provides some insight into what you will find at the triennial event that will be held in Las Vegas in March. We've included a location map to help you find your way around. I hope you can make it to the "World's Largest Heavy Metal Show" in 2020.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please call or stop by one of our branch locations, or contact your Brandeis sales representative.

Sincerely,
BRANDEIS MACHINERY & SUPPLY COMPANY

David Coultas
President

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VIRGINIA EXPLOSIVES & DRILLING COMPANY (VEDCO)

Company diversifies to meet markets' needs

Drilling and blasting in Central Appalachia is a challenging venture. In order to do it safely, successfully and efficiently, customers turn to Virginia Explosives & Drilling Company (VEDCO). With its two wholly-owned subsidiaries, Austin Sales and Virginia Drilling, the company delivers a complete line of services.

"We offer our customers a full-service drilling and blasting package," explained CEO Virlo Stiltner. "We learned early on that if we were going to shoot rock, we needed to do everything, including prep work for permits. With control of the explosive, drill, hole and patterns, we believe we save customers money."

While the current version of VEDCO provides one-stop-shopping, it was a gradual evolution to get to that point. The company traces its roots back to 1935 when Dick Schubert opened Schubert Sales, an explosives retailer for Austin Powder Company. In the mid-1960s, Schubert sold the company to two employees and the name changed to Austin Sales. Virlo purchased a stake in the company in 1991, and Virginia Drilling was formed in 1998 as VEDCO began to resemble its current form.



Virginia Explosives & Drilling Company (VEDCO) has two wholly-owned subsidiaries, Austin Sales and Virginia Drilling, and is led by (L-R) Chief Executive Officer Virlo Stiltner, Chief Operating Officer Andy Stiltner and Chief Financial Officer Kevin Staton.

In the 2000s, an investment group joined the management team to help fund the rapid growth that was fueled by the addition of drilling. In 2016, Virlo acquired them and entered into a partnership with Dyno Nobel – a global leader in commercial explosives manufacturing – and sold part of his share in VEDCO to his son, Andy, who serves as Chief Operating Officer. Today the Vansant, Va., company employs roughly 230 people and works in five states.

"I was the sixth employee hired by the company when I joined in 1974," recalled Virlo. "I started here cutting weeds and unloading trucks. The company was built by servicing the underground market, and we continue to serve that segment. We were able to move into the Q&C (quarry and construction) sector, with the addition of drilling and blasting, and that is our focus today."

Customer-centric

Successful organizations are able to deliver repeatedly for their clients. When a company boasts nine decades of operation, it must evolve consistently to meet the changing needs of the marketplace. VEDCO has done just that.

"This is a relationship-driven business," noted Virlo. "That's what it's about in Central Appalachia. That's behind our success and what helped us decide how to grow."

Getting into the drilling side of the industry was a result of working to meet customers' complete needs.

"Explosives sales are our base; however, drilling is our identity today," explained Andy. "This has led to our concentration on a vertically integrated drilling and blasting



Using an Epiroc SmartROC T45-10 surface drill rig, a Virginia Explosives & Drilling Company operator drills holes for blasting. "There's only one type of equipment we will use, and that's Epiroc," said Chief Operating Officer Andy Stiltner. "Other brands just aren't the same."

service model. It differentiates us from the competition, and it's a more efficient process."

When Virginia Drilling was formed, most customers still did their own drilling. However, after nearly 20 years, that practice has changed for those that VEDCO serves.

"We are seeing a lot more customers choosing a full-service model," said Chief Financial Officer Kevin Staton. "We spent the first 10 years proving that we could do it all. Because of that, the market has accepted this as a best practice."

Andy says the goal is to convert every VEDCO customer to the full-service model.

"On the coal side, we shoot behind approximately 95 percent of our own drills," he said. "We've put a lot of effort into developing our

Q&C market during the last five years, and 60 to 70 percent of those clients have us do it all. I think that number will be closer to 80 percent shortly."

Safe blasting

Hiring VEDCO to take care of the totality of a job, compared to separate companies for each step, saves time and money. It simplifies the process and provides an increased measure of safety.

"The industry that we are in – from acquisition to possession to utilization of explosives – is highly regulated," detailed Kevin. "Customers have found that by allowing us to handle the process, they gain a lot of efficiency while also minimizing risk."

"Our combination of product knowledge with the explosives and field experience

Continued . . .

'Brandeis taught us a lot'

... continued

in drilling is a huge advantage," added Andy. "That allows us to be faster, but more importantly, it makes us a lot safer."

The safety factor is more than lip service in the explosives industry. Working with explosives is a highly specialized and technical field. Mistakes can equate to costs that go beyond a spreadsheet.

"Safety is our number-one focus," said Andy. "You can't get hired if you have a poor safety record, and we're certainly proud of ours. We do more than just drill holes and load them. There's a lot of pre-work that goes into it, like profiling faces to determine the best depth to avoid a blowout. The drilling and blasting process has evolved through the years and now requires a much more technical, scientific approach."

Only Epiroc

Adding drilling in the early 2000s was a landmark decision for VEDCO. Turning to Brandeis Machinery & Supply Company and District Sales Rep Jason Douglas for equipment and training was also a pivotal part of its success.

An operator with Virginia Explosives & Drilling Company uses an Epiroc SmartROC D60 surface drill rig at a quarry in the Central Appalachian region.



"We knew a lot about drilling and shooting, but we didn't know anything about the drills," said Virlo. "Brandeis taught us a lot. In the beginning we had them service the drills. Because of that, our rigs blew away every life expectancy that Brandeis projected for them. Every component outproduced anything Brandeis had seen before. I couldn't ask for a better working partner than Brandeis."

"There's only one type of equipment we will use, and that's Epiroc," stated Andy. "Other brands just aren't the same."

For Q&C sites, VEDCO typically deploys Epiroc SmartROC T45-10 and D60 surface drill rigs. For coal projects, the machine of choice is a DM45 blasthole drill. For VEDCO, it's the SmartROC automation technology, which is integrated into the rigs, that sets Epiroc apart from the competition.

"The SmartROC package is better than we could have imagined," shared Andy. "At one point this technology was a pipe dream, and now it's a reality. If we program a machine for a 30-foot hole, we know we're getting 30 feet and not 29. It allows us to easily calibrate the hammers, hydraulics and pressures to the type of rock we are in. It maximizes the efficiency of the machine."

"In addition, the GPS and navigation package available with SmartROC is fantastic," he added. "We can plot a site in AutoCAD, upload it from a jump drive into the machine, and the drill knows exactly where those holes are supposed to go. It make us more precise and efficient."

Looking ahead

VEDCO has enjoyed success for 85 years by delivering for customers and developing strong relationships. While offering a full complement of services has helped it grow and diversify, meeting the needs of those in the industry has enabled the organization to prosper.

"At the end of the day, we're a service company," stated Andy. "Our focus is more than drilling holes or pushing product, we want to make sure customers receive the best service they can get anywhere in the country." ■



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A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Brandeis unveils new Proactive Dozing Control logic at annual Technology Day

Nearly 50 attendees learned about Komatsu's new Proactive Dozing Control logic for the first time at Brandeis Machinery & Supply Company's Technology Day hosted by its Evansville, Ind., branch.

"The goal for this year's event was to inform current and potential customers about the new dozing technology," explained Brandeis Machine Control Specialist Jeremy Scott. "This is an exciting advancement that takes *intelligent* Machine Control to another level."

Dozing control was introduced this summer on Komatsu's D51i-24 and D61i-24 dozers. Scott has been visiting with customers to install the updated software; however, Brandeis' Technology Day was the first large-scale demonstration for most users.

"We wanted to show customers exactly how this new system works, and how it can benefit them," said Scott. "When we are updating customers' equipment it is difficult to get deep into the details because it's typically happening at an active jobsite. At an event like this, we can provide a clear idea of what the logic can do. We had a customer run a D61EXi dozer with Proactive Dozing Control head-to-head against a customer in a D61PXi with only *intelligent* Machine Control. The D61EXi won easily, and it had a smoother surface during transitions."

It was the result that Scott, who calls the system a "game changer," expected.

"This allows the operator to use the integrated GPS system from first pass to last," noted Scott. "It was designed to make cuts and work to grade in a way that an experienced operator would. As the dozer is rolling, it constantly maps the surface and anticipates

the most efficient way to work to grade. Every time the dozer cuts, it is working with a full blade, which is important in construction."

Educational opportunity

The event gave customers the opportunity to operate other *intelligent* Machine Control equipment including D51PXi and D61PXi dozers as well as PC210LCi and PC360LCi excavators. The day also included a drone surveying demonstration and classroom session for attendees to earn credits toward their Vanderburgh County contractor's certification.

"We designed this as an educational opportunity for our customers," said Regional Operations Manager, Western Region, Bob Morris. "Many new advancements are happening, and events like this are very important to keep our customers at the forefront of the industry." ■



Jeremy Scott,
Brandeis Machinery &
Supply Company
Machine Control
Specialist

For more information
about Proactive
Dozing Control,
see article on pg. 17.

Brandeis Machinery & Supply Company's Evansville, Ind., branch hosted its annual Technology Day and featured Komatsu's new Proactive Dozing Control logic, which is designed to grade from first to last pass in a manner comparable to an experienced operator.

▶ VIDEO



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'LARGEST HEAVY METAL SHOW'

CONEXPO-CON/AGG returns to Las Vegas with record number of exhibitors, exhibit space

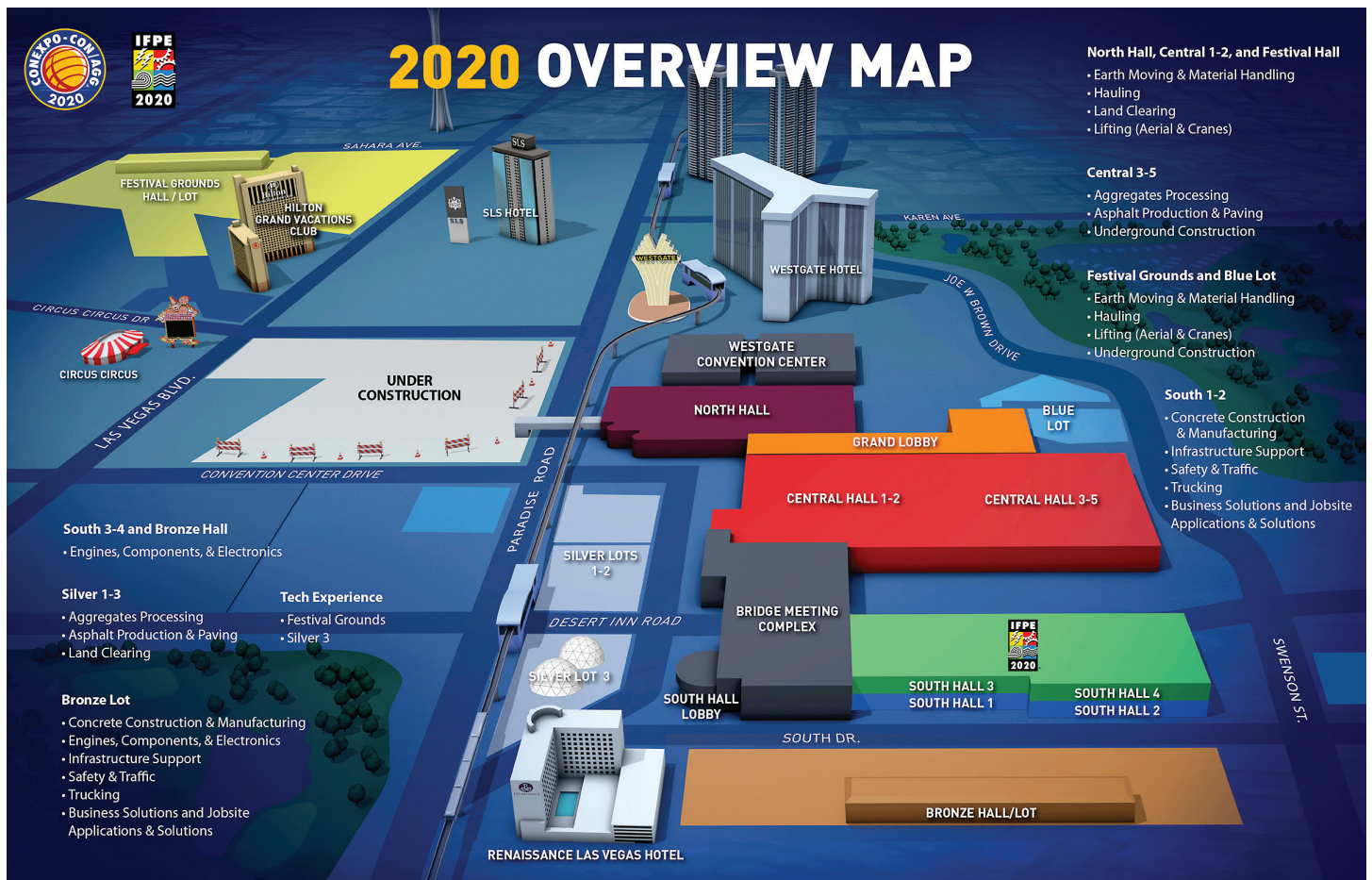
The "World's Largest Heavy Metal Show in 2020" is right around the corner with the return of CONEXPO-CON/AGG to the Las Vegas Convention Center and beyond, March 10-14. Presented every three years, it is North America's biggest trade show and features the latest in equipment and innovation from every key construction-related sector.

In total, a record-setting 2,800 exhibitors are expected to converge on 2.6-million square feet of exhibit space. The show's footprint

has changed with the Gold Lot under construction, making it unavailable. Instead, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will use the Las Vegas Festival Grounds, located on the Las Vegas Strip adjacent to the Circus Circus hotel. The grounds will contain lifting (aerial and cranes), earthmoving, hauling and underground construction equipment, among other things.

"This show is shaping up as one of the best ever; attendees and exhibitors will not be disappointed," said Mary Erholtz,

Continued . . .



Gearing up for 'best possible experience'

... continued

CONEXPO-CON/AGG Chair. "AEM (Associated Equipment Manufacturers, the show's lead sponsor) and our show committees of industry leaders are working hard to deliver an outstanding event focused on the latest innovations, technologies and best practices to succeed in our changing world."

'Smart city' display

Similar to 2017, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will emphasize technology. The Tech Experience

returns and focuses on three areas that impact the industry: modern mobility; sustainability and sustainable building; and smart cities, according to Al Cevero, Senior Vice President Construction, Mining & Utility at AEM.

Cevero and other members of the show planning team recently unveiled a 10 x 22-foot "smart city" replica scheduled for display. It demonstrates how a smart city, through sensors and analytics "will be able to transform information into digestible data, providing knowledge for the city to work smarter," according to show organizers.

The smart city replica will showcase several scenarios, including various city grids and how a city responds to heat, wind and storms; connectivity, including 5G sensors, telematics and the internet of things (IoT); and the impacts of construction such as the jobsite of the future within the city and how equipment will communicate.

"The main goals of the Tech Experience are to drive awareness and adoption of new technologies and innovations, engage and attract the next generation of attendees and position the show as a thought leader," said Cevero. "Our plan is to demonstrate how the three areas will transform the contractor's business of the future."

Multitude of education sessions, tracks

More than 150 educational sessions are scheduled throughout the week to highlight the latest topics and industry trends. They are grouped into tracks for ease in finding areas of interest. Tracks include aggregates; asphalt; earthmoving and site development; equipment management and maintenance; business best practices; how to attract, engage and retain talent; safety; and technology solutions.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG will be co-located with the International Fluid Power Expo, and new for 2020 is the opportunity to mix and match education sessions offered through both shows. Attendees can register for educational sessions as well as the show itself through the CONEXPO-CON/AGG website at www.conexpoconagg.com. ■

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North America's largest trade show, CONEXPO-CON/AGG will feature the latest in equipment and innovation from every key construction-related sector. It is slated for March 10-14, 2020, in Las Vegas.



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WHAT IS THE COST OF SAFETY?

Investing in workers' well-being is good for the bottom line, your company's standing in the industry

It may seem callous to look at worker safety from the standpoint of profit versus cost. Let's face it, there are those who don't see the value in making the necessary investment in jobsite safety. They may espouse "safety first" and have signage reflecting this message across their jobsites. Yet, when it comes to application, the message falls short, and they end up playing Russian roulette with their workers' well-being.

Hopefully you aren't one of those who subscribe to this perspective on safety. Even those who make a concerted effort to maximize safety on their sites need occasional reinforcement as to why this investment pays off. As for those who don't, here's a breakdown of the costs of worker injuries and fatalities in hard terms that might just prompt them to reassess their current approach.

By the numbers

According to National Safety Council estimates, the cost of work injuries per worker in 2017 was \$1,100 (this is not the average). The cost per injury requiring medical consultation/attention was \$39,000, while the cost per fatality was a whopping \$1.15 million. These figures include estimates of wage losses, medical bills, administrative expenses and employer costs, but not property damage, except that to vehicles.

Now, add the potential expenses of fines should an employer be found negligent in the incident. As of January 2019, the maximum penalty amount per willful or repeat violation was set at \$132,598 per violation. Keep in mind that most accidents on construction jobsites typically result in multiple violations. Such estimates are based on the direct costs of workplace injuries and illnesses. There are indirect costs that must be factored in as well.

Perhaps a better way to view safety is not as a cost but as a long-term investment in your company's profitability. One way safety has a direct impact on the bottom line is in workers' compensation insurance costs. A company with a good safety record will typically pay far less in premiums per year than one with a higher experience modification rating.

To delve even further into the benefits, Dodge Data & Analytics began conducting studies on safety management practices in the construction industry in 2012. Conducted every three years, the study results consistently show that contractors experience a payback from their safety investments, including a positive impact on their budgets and ability to find new work, a reduction in reportable injuries and better staff retention, among other outcomes. Implementing safe practices is well worth the investment. ■

Becky Schultz has served as editor of Equipment Today magazine since 1998. This article was excerpted from a piece that appeared on the For Construction Pros website. To read the article in its entirety, visit www.ForConstructionPros.com/21081057.



Becky Schultz,
Editor,
Equipment Today

Becky Schultz says a commitment to safety has a direct impact on a company's bottom line and its reputation, making implementation of safe practices well worth the investment.



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PROACTIVE DOZING CONTROL

New intuitive technology uses real-time data collection to mimic actions of experienced operators

Construction companies continue to face a growing shortage of operators. Whether they retire or leave for other opportunities, firms often struggle to find new personnel with the skills and knowledge to replace them.

Komatsu aims to help bring newer operators up to speed faster with the intuitive technology of its Proactive Dozing Control logic. The GPS-grading system is designed to collect and interpret data and make decisions that mimic those of seasoned professionals. The system is available on four dozers: D51EXi-24, D51PXi-24, D61EXi-24 and D61PXi-24.

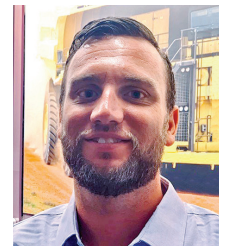
“Like an experienced operator, Proactive Dozing Control logic understands what the terrain around the machine looks like and decides on the appropriate action such as

whether to cut and carry material, spread or fill that material or whether it should be finish grading,” explained Derek Morris, Product Marketing Manager, *intelligent Machine Control*. “The system provides the real-time position of the dozer on the jobsite to create a highly accurate elevation for it to drive the blade to the precise grade needed.”

Improving productivity

Proactive Dozing Control logic can be used from first pass to last to perform auto-stripping, auto-spreading, high production dozing and finish grading. Morris stated that it gives operators the ability to use dozers to their full capacity, leading to increased utilization, better return on investment and greater production.

Continued . . .



Derek Morris,
Product Marketing
Manager,
*intelligent Machine
Control*

▶ VIDEO



Proactive Dozing Control logic understands what the terrain around the machine looks like and decides whether to cut and carry material, spread or fill with it or whether it should finish grade, just like an experienced operator. The integrated GPS grade control system works from first pass to last to perform everything from auto-stripping to final grading.

'Entirely new level of efficiency'

... continued

Morris added that owning and operating costs are also lowered because wear and tear on the machine is reduced with automated operation, including minimized track slippage during operation, which lengthens undercarriage life.

"Proactive Dozing Control logic opens up a world of application possibilities for machine control technology," said Morris. "Traditionally, GPS machine control focused on finish grading, which meant that operators only used the technology approximately 10 to 20 percent of the time. Proactive Dozing Control logic is a game-changer because the

integrated system now lets operators use automation any time."

A difference in data

Morris emphasized that Proactive Dozing Control logic collects real-time data from the tracks, a significant difference from traditional blade-mounted aftermarket systems.

"Conventional systems only understand the position of the blade and capture data at the cutting edge, so when an operator backs up and raises the blade, he or she could potentially be capturing false data," said Morris. "Because our data is collected at the tracks, that's not an issue.

"We took the data that was always naturally available and provided it directly to the machine, making it highly intelligent and giving the dozer awareness of the terrain around it," Morris continued. "The result is an intuitive technology that delivers productivity gains of within 6 percent of an experienced operator.

"By using the tracks, we have created machine control that is far more advanced, offering an entirely new level of efficiency," he added. "Whether you are an experienced operator or someone new to the job, Proactive Dozing Control logic enables precision work every time, making operation easier and more productive." ■

With Proactive Dozing Control logic, data is collected at the tracks and provided to the machine, making it highly intelligent and giving the dozer awareness of the surrounding terrain.

"The result is an intuitive technology that delivers productivity gains of within 6 percent of an experienced operator," said Derek Morris, Product Marketing Manager, *intelligent Machine Control*.



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

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Discover more

NEW SPECIALTY DOZER

Machine minimizes ground disturbance while providing high production on sensitive jobsites

Equipment users often balance the need to minimize ground disturbance while maintaining high production. That can be especially challenging for larger tracked equipment. Komatsu's new D155AX-8 LGP (low ground pressure) dozer strikes the right balance.

"The D155AX-8 LGP's newly designed eight-roller undercarriage distributes weight and provides optimum balance and traction while reducing ground pressure," said Komatsu Product Manager Chuck Murawski. "Previously, there were few machines with those attributes in this size class. Now, the D155AX-8 LGP is ideal for mining and reclamation operations, especially mine-site applications such as leach-pond cleanup, tailing, settling and drainage-pond work, as well as liner installations."

Murawski illustrated that despite a heavier operating weight than a standard model, the D155AX-8 LGP's longer and wider tracks maintain the lowest-in-class ground pressure of 7.7 psi. The ground contact area is increased by 72 percent, improving flotation in soft conditions and reducing ground pressure by up to 47 percent. The D155AX-8 LGP has a 12-percent wider track gauge and 9-percent longer track on ground than a standard D155AX-8.

Fewer passes to move more

"The D155AX-8 LGP is excellent for applications that require low ground pressure and can be especially useful for energy and pipeline work, as well as mining," said Murawski. "When equipped with 38-inch extreme service shoes, angle blade and towing winch, it has a higher operating weight compared to competitors. That increases usable drawbar pull when using a powerful towing winch."

Murawski added that the dozer can be equipped with either a 12.9-yard semi-u blade or a 9.6-yard angle blade. Optional rear attachments include a counterweight with rigid drawbar, hydraulic winch, long drawbar and a multi-shank variable pitch ripper.

"The D155AX-8 LGP can move large amounts of material, while the wider cutting edge reduces the number of passes needed when grading," said Murawski. "For applications that don't require an angle blade, the higher-capacity semi-u with dual tilt and pitch hydraulics is a great choice. For sandy soil applications, an abrasion-resistant spec with rotating bushing undercarriage is available." ■



Chuck Murawski,
Komatsu Product
Manager

Brief Specs for Komatsu's D155AX-8 LGP Dozer

Model	Net Horsepower	Operating Weight	Ground Pressure
D155AX-8 LGP	354 hp	92,800-100,000 lb	7.7 psi

The new D155AX-8 LGP's eight-roller undercarriage provides excellent traction and optimum balance while reducing ground pressure, said Komatsu Product Manager Chuck Murawski.





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HEAVY-DUTY DIRT MOVER

D65PXi-18 dozer checks all the right boxes, boosts productivity



Jeff Peterson,
President



Tim Peterson,
Vice President



James Peterson Sons, Inc., Operator Jay 'Snarf' Kleist uses a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D65PXi-18 dozer to grade a jobsite. "The GPS is an amazing tool that works great," said Kleist. "The D65PXi is pretty smooth."

James Peterson Sons, Inc., wanted to boost its productivity for a recent 200-acre site development project. To accomplish that, it required a dozer that could handle the varying job tasks while also moving serious quantities of dirt.

"We needed a machine that could push; cut and fill; place topsoil; shape slopes on ponds; and move a lot of dirt," said President Jeff Peterson. "The D65PXi checked those boxes."

When the dozer arrived in late 2018, it was the first Komatsu D65PXi-18 sold in the state of Wisconsin.

"We wanted a model that could do some heavy-duty pushing, and the D65PXi has delivered," said Vice President Tim Peterson. "We can move about 6,000 yards of material per day with it."

To hit those high production numbers, James Peterson Sons required every bit of the D65PXi's 220-horsepower Tier 4 Final engine and 24.4-ton operating weight. More importantly, it needed that muscle in the correct package. That's why the company selected the PX model, which features wider tracks and a six-way blade.

"We're in soft ground all of the time, so the float is very important," explained Operator Jay 'Snarf' Kleist. "Being able to get 36-inch grousers on a dozer with a six-way blade wasn't an option with the competition. That was a deal-breaker."

Added value

In addition to the size of the D65PXi-18, James Peterson Sons desired the added production that Komatsu's *intelligent* Machine Control technology offered.

"We replaced a competitive machine with the D65PXi, and we've seen production gains," Jeff said. "It's balanced, powerful, saves on fuel, the GPS system works great and the operators love running it."

The D65PXi-18 also delivers productivity beyond the traditional measures of material moved, gas and time.

"There are so many benefits," said Jeff. "We no longer need a person dedicated to checking grade. The machine keeps track of where we are. We can download information and know what volumes are being moved. It also allows us to change grades easily. Customers expect this technology on their jobsites. We couldn't do grading on this scale without a GPS dozer." ■

► VIDEO



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PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

Motor graders enable Texas county to finish jobs faster at lower costs



Wesley Link,
Crew Foreman



Jay Clement,
Operator

If a road is located within Montague County, Texas, it's likely maintained by county employees. For nearly 220 miles of roadway, they handle everything from grading to ditch cleaning. About 10 percent of that roadway is pavement; the rest is gravel, which takes nearly constant maintenance to keep them in good condition.

Montague County Precinct 2 began using two Komatsu GD655-6 motor graders in 2018 to spread rock on roads and shoulders as well as to clean ditches. The GD655 has the longest wheel base in its size class for fine grading. Additionally, it has a 25-degree articulation to allow the grader to maintain a tight turning radius of 24 feet, 3 inches.

"The visibility is better than the competitive graders that we replaced," said Crew Foreman Wesley Link. "You have a full view of the blade when feathering rock or cutting into ditches, so we're more productive. You can get the job done in fewer passes."

Eliminating stall outs

Link added that the GD655's dual-mode transmission makes a significant difference too,

because it delivers high ground speeds and tractive effort, while providing superior control at low speed, with the anti-stall features of a torque-converter transmission.

"Even at lower RPMs, you get the full functionality and quickness of the hydraulic system," explained Link. "That gives us better fuel economy and when working at lower speeds, the grader keeps moving without stalling. With the competitive brand, we had to throttle up to get the hydraulics to work, and at idle the motor would, or almost would, stall out."

Operator Jay Clement shared that he values the relatively high road speeds of the 218-horsepower graders, which allow him to move from the maintenance yard to the project site faster. The GD655 has eight forward and four reverse gears and a top speed of 28 miles per hour.

"We drive them to and from wherever we are working, so having a machine that can get there faster means we can get to the job and finish it quicker than before," said Clement. "They are also comfortable with plenty of room in the cab." ■

Montague County Precinct 2 maintains gravel roads with its Komatsu GD655-6 motor graders. "Even at lower RPMs you get the full functionality and quickness of the hydraulic system," said Crew Foreman Wesley Link.



▶ VIDEO

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IMPROVING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Director of Parts Marketing Chris Wasik shares programs for minimizing downtime, operating costs



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.

Chris Wasik,
Komatsu Director of
Parts Marketing

Earlier this year, Chris Wasik received a 20-year service award from Komatsu and shared why he has stayed with the company so long.

“It’s the people I work with,” explained Wasik. “We genuinely want each other to succeed. We all know, too, that our success is directly tied to our customers’ success, so we are working toward a common goal to deliver the best equipment and support in the industry.”

The northern Illinois native said he noticed this culture from the minute he joined Komatsu in 1999 to work on the initiative that eventually led to Komatsu’s KOMTRAX telematics system.

In 2015, Wasik became Director of Parts Marketing, where he oversees programs to promote undercarriage, filters, batteries, reman products, kitting and more.

Wasik married his wife, Denise, the same year he joined Komatsu. The couple has a 14-year-old son, and Wasik enjoys coaching his son’s baseball team and camping.

QUESTION: What does Komatsu offer beyond Komatsu CARE, which covers routine scheduled maintenance?

ANSWER: To help maintain peak performance and minimize downtime, we recently introduced Genuine Care to extend the benefits of Komatsu CARE, where services are completed by certified technicians using Komatsu genuine parts, filters and fluids. Customers can sign up with their distributors for customized solutions that best matches their needs. That may be performing services on the same schedule as Komatsu CARE, or perhaps they prefer to have major services done every 1,000 hours. Options are definitely available. Genuine Care gives customers peace of mind knowing that services are done on time and on location with the right parts.

QUESTION: What other new programs can assist customers?

ANSWER: Recently, we launched the MyKomatsu website application that ties together machine telematics, manuals and online parts ordering. Customers can access information about their machines from any computer or mobile device. The web app allows owners to monitor their fleets and find the items necessary to maintain them. Parts can be selected from the parts book and dropped into a shopping cart. The order is then sent to a Komatsu distributor for quick fulfillment. MyKomatsu brings together initiatives such as KOMTRAX and eParts into a single location.

QUESTION: Does Komatsu still maintain its other support initiatives?

ANSWER: Absolutely. Many remain popular because they have been proven to save customers time as well as keep down their



Komatsu works with its distributors on inventory management (based on machine population and other factors) to ensure that parts are available when needed.

owning and operating costs. For instance, overhaul programs for older machines offer scaled discounts, depending on how many components are rebuilt or replaced. That can be tied in with our Firm Future Order program, which enables machine owners to order major components several months in advance of their planned replacement. This locks in pricing at the time of the order and guarantees that genuine Komatsu parts are on-hand when the customer is ready to have the work completed.

QUESTION: There are many aftermarket sources for parts. Why should owners choose genuine Komatsu parts?

ANSWER: Machines today are built to more exacting standards and operate under higher pressures and temperatures than ever before. Using parts that are not specifically engineered for a machine could result in performance loss, early wear and premature failure. In the end, it will cost more to use cheaper aftermarket parts.

Komatsu genuine parts come with a minimum 12-month warranty, which is exceptional in our industry. Customers are also getting the support of Komatsu and its distributor network. If a part fails, no matter



where the customer is located, we have trained personnel who can repair it quickly. And, with nine regional parts depots and a master parts distribution center that is located close to a major FedEx hub, most parts can be delivered within 24 hours to any region of the United States or Canada.

We also collaborate with our distributors on inventory management. This ensures that the right parts (based on machine population in their territory and other factors) are available when customers need them. ■

Chris Wasik, Komatsu Director of Parts Marketing, says genuine Komatsu parts should always be the first choice for service and repairs. "Using parts that are not specifically engineered for a machine could result in performance loss, early wear and premature failure. In the end, it will cost more to use the cheaper aftermarket part."

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EQUIPMENT BUYING MADE EASIER

Here's what Komatsu's Sourcewell certification means to purchasers

If you work for a municipality, not-for-profit or government agency, money and time are often tight. When it comes to purchasing new equipment, you need to know you're getting high quality, backed by good service. One of the easiest ways to do that is to join a cooperative purchasing agency such as Sourcewell. Membership is free, and there are no minimum contract requirements.

Among the largest government cooperative agencies in North America, Sourcewell (formerly the National Joint Powers Alliance) represents more than 50,000 member organizations that have access to hundreds of competitively solicited contracts covering a variety of products, solutions and services. With Sourcewell, the procurement process is simplified.

Ready-to-use contracts

Following an extensive evaluation, Sourcewell recently awarded Komatsu America a four-year contract to provide

members with access to more than 50 heavy-construction-equipment products, as well as Komatsu's technology, service and solutions. Komatsu's distribution network, which includes 34 dealers with collectively more than 200 branches across North America, will provide support to Sourcewell members.

"It stands to reason that if a well-respected agency, such as Sourcewell, thoroughly vets a manufacturer and selects it as a trusted heavy-equipment provider for governmental entities, then it meets the criteria for high-quality machines and world-class service," said Doug Morris, Director, Sales and Marketing, Komatsu America. "That should that give members and nonmembers alike confidence to source equipment solutions from a Komatsu distributor."

To learn more about Komatsu's contract with Sourcewell, visit komatsuamerica.com/sourcewell-cooperative-purchasing. ■



Doug Morris,
Director, Sales
and Marketing,
Komatsu America



Sourcewell, one of the largest governmental cooperative agencies in North America, recently awarded Komatsu America a four-year national cooperative contract for heavy-construction equipment and related accessories, attachments and supplies.

ASCE earns commendation for including stormwater in next report card

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Environmental & Water Resources Institute added a stormwater chapter to its 2021 Infrastructure Report Card. This is the first time that drainage structures and facilities will be graded by the organization, which issues the report every four years. In its most recent report in 2017, the United States' overall infrastructure condition earned a grade of D⁺.

Adding stormwater to the report drew praise from the Water Environment Federation (WEF), which conducted an analysis earlier

this year that showed an estimated annual funding gap of \$7.5 billion in that sector.

"The inclusion of stormwater to ASCE's report card will provide a much-deserved boost in visibility for infrastructure that is vital to communities across the country," said WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill in a recent Concrete News article. "We hope that adding stormwater to the report card will result in more resources and focus directed to this essential part of our infrastructure and subsequent improvements in water quality." ■



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ABOVE AVERAGE WAGES

Amid growing labor shortage, construction earnings continue to rise

Average hourly earnings in construction recently hit \$30.73 per hour, surpassing other private-sector industries by 10 percent, according to an analysis of governmental data by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). According to AGC, the figure reflects a 3.2-percent year-over-year increase and is a measure of all wages and salaries.

The organization announced the data in July after figures showed a jump in construction employment of 21,000 jobs, compared to the previous month, and by 224,000 during the prior 12 months. Association officials noted that companies are increasing pay to attract new hires in an ever-tighter labor market.

“Construction firms continue to go to great lengths to recruit and retain workers during one of the tightest labor markets many of them have ever experienced,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, AGC’s Chief Executive Officer. “Making matters worse, relatively few school districts offer the kind of career and technical education programs that encourage students to explore careers in high-paying fields like construction.”

Little to no experience required

Sandherr noted that the unemployment rate for jobseekers who last worked in construction declined to 4 percent from 4.7 percent in June 2018, and the number of such workers decreased in the last year from 466,000 to 390,000. Additional government data showed the number of job openings in construction, last reported for May, totaled 360,000, the highest May total in the 10-year history of that category.

Association officials pointed out that in addition to rising pay and other benefits, many firms have increased their investments in

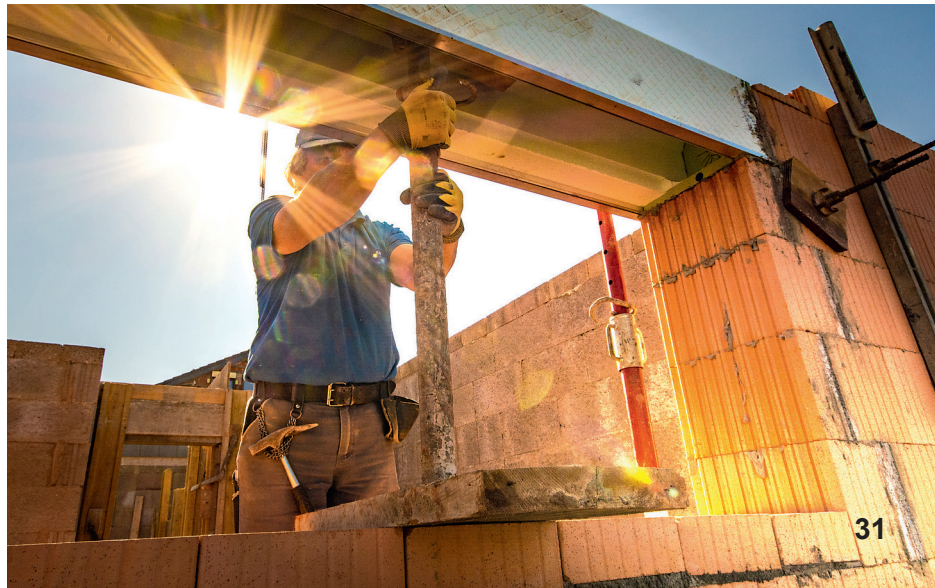
training as they recruit workers with little or no prior experience in construction. According to AGC, federal officials could help attract more people into high-paying construction careers by boosting funding for career and technical education programs in schools and enacting immigration reform that allows more people with construction skills to legally enter the country.

“The nation’s education system continues to produce too many over-qualified baristas and not enough qualified bricklayers and other craft, construction professionals,” said Sandherr. “As a result of these educational imbalances, too many young adults are struggling to pay off college debts while many construction firms are struggling to fill job positions that pay well and don’t require costly degrees.” ■

Average construction earnings recently topped \$30 per hour, surpassing other private-sector industries by 10 percent, according to an analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America. Organization officials noted that firms continue to increase pay as they attract new hires in an ever-tighter labor market.



Stephen E. Sandherr,
AGC Chief
Executive Officer



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