

# Road Signs

April 2020



A publication for and about Road Machinery & Supplies Co. customers

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Seth Deutmeyer,  
Operations Manager

## Weber Stone Company

Iowa limestone operation carries on 170-year legacy of Stone City Quarries

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear Valued Customer:



*Mike Sill II*

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 Road Signs 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,  
ROAD MACHINERY & SUPPLIES CO.

Mike Sill II, CEO

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# WEBER STONE COMPANY

## Eastern Iowa limestone operation carries on 170-year legacy of Stone City Quarries



*Seth Deutmeyer,  
Operations Manager*



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It's unclear if Stone City was named before or after the discovery of the massive limestone vein that runs below the surface of this small, eastern-Iowa community. Either way, it is properly named. Situated on the Anamosa facies of the Gower Formation, the town of 192 people is home to some of the most unique limestone in the world.

Stone City Quarries was founded specifically for this limestone. As the quarries near their 170th year of continuous operation, they run today under the name of Weber Stone Company. This family business produces an assortment of limestone products including crushed aggregates, sand, landscaping stone and architectural design stone.

"This place has a long, rich history," said Mike Deutmeyer, who along with his brother, Pat,

are third-generation owners. "Everyone who has lived in Stone City at one time or another has a connection to this place. The continued success of the company is because of the folks who have worked in the quarries through all of the years as well as our dedicated customers."

The Deutmeyer family got into the stone business in 1952 when Mike and Pat's grandfather, Bill Weber, took ownership of Stone City Quarries after purchasing them from C.B. DeWees. He ran them until 1980 when he sold them to his son-in-law, Frank Deutmeyer. Mike and Pat assumed day-to-day operations of Weber Stone in 2009 when they bought the business from Frank. The fourth generation officially became involved when Mike's son, Seth, joined full time after graduating from Iowa State University in 2019.

The affinity for the quarries is in the family's DNA.

"I am excited to follow in their footsteps and help continue the future of the quarries," shared Seth, who serves as Operations Manager.

### Innovation drives growth

For a quarry to remain productive for almost 17 decades, it needs more than an abundance of materials. Innovation has been at the heart of Weber Stone Company. From products to equipment, the business always looks for ways to improve.

One of the first examples of that continuous-improvement mindset dates back to 1968 when Bill decided to open an underground mine in a hillside in order to produce building stone. His plan was to access the harder and higher-quality limestone directly, instead of removing overburden and blasting down to it.

To do this, however, the company needed specialized equipment that it did not have nor could afford to buy at the time. The project did



*A Weber Stone Company operator uses a Komatsu D65PXi dozer with intelligent Machine Control to strip overburden and create a road.*





► VIDEO

*Using a Komatsu PC800LC excavator and an HM400 articulated truck, a Weber Stone Company crew removes overburden along a ledge at a Stone City, Iowa, quarry. "The efficiency and workability of the Komatsu machines are impressive," noted Operations Manager Seth Deutmeyer. "They perform in the quarries, and our operators like to run them."*

not stop there, Frank came up with a solution: by utilizing parts of used machinery he was able to fabricate the equipment needed to mine underground efficiently.

Another example of the company's ingenuity happened when Bill and Frank wanted to dry-saw the stone along a ledge. To accomplish this, they approached a manufacturer to design a piece of equipment that would allow them to do the job.

"Bill and Frank just made things happen," remembered Mike. "Their pioneering drive shaped our future. That allowed us to make long-term customer connections and attract and retain great people."

Innovation also came from a need for increased production. In the late 1970s, Frank thought the operation required a large stone crusher to keep up with aggregate demand, so he built one from spare and used parts from other quarries. It still runs today.

### Building a modern fleet

Having leading-edge equipment is always a top priority for Weber Stone. Fortunately, the company doesn't have to invent or build it. When Weber Stone was looking to incorporate



*Former Owner Frank Deutmeyer built this large rock crusher by hand with spare parts in order to boost production in the late 1970s.*

technology to boost efficiency, they called Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) Sales Rep Jeff White for a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D65PXi dozer.

"Water management is very important when we are removing overburden," noted Seth. "Being able to upload the plans into the dozer makes the operator's job so much easier. The



*Dave Walker,  
Head Mechanic*

*Continued . . .*





*Weber Stone Company moves its limestone cutting operation inside a 14-acre underground mine during the winter months.*



*To cut large pieces of limestone, Weber Stone Company uses an 11.5-foot saw blade. "We can produce a slab of limestone in about 25 minutes," said Sawyer Dave Ammeter (inset).*

blade follows the blueprint, and the operator simply needs to push dirt. It even makes a lousy grade man like me look pretty good."

In addition to addressing water flow, Seth says the dozer has been valuable for training operators as well as designing and maintaining haul roads and pads for stockpiles.

Komatsu and RMS have earned their spot in the quarries. Weber Stone has a PC800LC excavator, an HM400 articulated truck and a D275 dozer in operation there.

"The efficiency and workability of the Komatsu machines are impressive," noted Seth. "We are always demoing and testing equipment, and Komatsu continues to prove itself. They perform in the quarries, and our operators like to run them."

The equipment includes Komatsu CARE, which provides complimentary service for the first 2,000 hours or three years of operation.

"Komatsu handles everything," stated Head Mechanic Dave Walker. "They do a fantastic job and that allows me to focus on our other machines. It's a definite asset."

### **Designed for excellence**


Many people may not know where Stone City is, but architects and designers do. From the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa, Weber Stone Company has delivered for customers across the country.

"We're proud to be featured on some prominent projects," said Mike. "We have a unique product, and we also have an amazing group of people who cut it out, design it and create a high-quality finished product."

The company also specializes in memorials and other customized designs, especially to honor veterans.

"We take a lot of pride that something we make can have an impact for decades to follow," said Seth. "Military service is an important part of our family's history, so having a part in these lasting memorials is something we enjoy doing."

While the Anamosa facies of the Gower Formation has earned a national reputation for its limestone, the next step for Weber Stone is to go global.

"Weber Stone is looking forward to mining this local limestone for an overseas project," added Seth. "That would be quite an accomplished milestone in the rich history of the Stone City Quarries." 





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# MORE THAN HEAVY METAL

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



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**“T**he 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.

“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,



Rebecca and Chuck Jerome of Jerome Excavating Contractors, LLC check out the Komatsu booth.



Tom Underdahl (left) and Jason Miller of Minnesota Roadways Co. take a break at CONEXPO-CON/AGG.



(L-R) Tony Stepien, Jesse Kuphal, Carson Hallett and Jay Rickert all of Rickert Excavating Inc. pause for a photo.





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

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.

*Continued . . .*



*Metro Paving’s Richard (left) and Mike Newcomb enjoy the exhibit hall.*



*Jordan Benz of CW Benz Inc. checks out the Komatsu WA800 wheel loader.*



*(L-R) Mike DeJulius, Nancy DeJulius, Erin Holst and Garret Holst of NJ Miller, Inc. pose with RMS Territory Manager Bryan Stolee.*



*RMS Territory Manager Wade Stromgren (left) and Andrew Wagner of Ulland Brothers, Inc. stand in front of a Komatsu HM400 truck.*



*Tom Schneckloth (left) of Pottawattamie County and Kevin Sampson of Sampson Construction smile for a photo.*



*(L-R) Hans Herness of Sinn City Builders takes in the sights with Dena Strain and Jody Beck of DeCook Excavating.*

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." ■



*Cody (left) and Warren Rognes of Rognes Corp enjoy the Komatsu display.*



*Ulland Brothers, Inc.'s Jesse Suihkonen visits with RMS Territory Manager Wade Stromgren.*



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

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**Hunter and Clint Shackelford**  
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# HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

## Construction, mining and aggregate customers demo latest equipment and technology

**K**omatsu 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



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*Continued . . .*



*Isaac Rollor,  
Komatsu District  
Manager*



*(L-R) Karen Montour and  
Chris Potter, Road Machinery &  
Supplies Co. (RMS); Austin  
Addyman, Ramsey Excavating;  
Curt Giles, RMS; Kevin Topp,  
Northdale Construction; Nick  
Decker, Veit & Company; and  
Phil Major, RMS*

### ► 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.*



*(L-R) Justin Sailer, Komatsu America; Tyler Beck and  
Corey Stephans, DeCook Excavating; and Jeff Bistodeau,  
Road Machinery & Supplies Co.*



*Shawn Mitchell,  
Road Machinery &  
Supplies Co. (left),  
and Dan Watkins,  
Casper Construction*



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."

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 here."



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(L-R) Joe Schmittlein, Road Machinery & Supplies Co.; Bruce Hansen, Martin Marietta; and Michael Gidaspow, Komatsu America, meet at Quarry Days in Arizona.


## 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." 

## ▶ VIDEO



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.



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# TECH ADVANTAGE

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



Art Guttersten,  
Owner



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**R**anch owner Art Guttersten 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.

Guttersten saw an opportunity to provide additional resources to the oil and gas companies working the 32,000 acres that comprise Guttersten 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."*



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**M**ining, 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

<b>Model</b> HD785-8	<b>Payload Capacity</b> 101.6 ton
<b>Net Horsepower</b> 1,140 hp	<b>Industries</b> 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.*



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# DATA DRIVEN

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

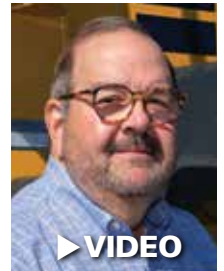
**K**nowing where your machines are located and the number of hours on them are critical pieces of information when maintaining a fleet. Those capabilities were the original features of Komatsu's remote monitoring KOMTRAX telematics system, which celebrates its 20th birthday in 2020.

"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

*Continued . . .*



*Steve Day, former  
Komatsu Director of  
Service, now retired*



*Chris Wasik,  
Komatsu Director of  
Parts Marketing*



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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.





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

great potential benefit that we decided to provide it complimentary, and we still do.”

### **Beneficial to all**

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 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.” 



*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.”*



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# CUSTOMIZING SOLUTIONS

## 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

*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.



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 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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# BUILDING THE FUTURE

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

**H**igh 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.” 



*Craig Yager,  
Komatsu Training  
Manager*



*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.*



# LEADING THE WAY

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

**W**hen 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." 

*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.*







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# TRUSTED GUIDANCE

**New RMS Mining Solutions division providing world-class support to mining customers across the globe**



*Jon Anderson,  
Vice President  
Northern Operations*



*Jakob Mount,  
Branch Manager*

**W**orking closely with mining customers for years in northeastern Minnesota's Iron Range, Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) has earned a reputation for delivering quality solutions to the industry. Because of that experience, RMS Mining Solutions was launched this winter in Hibbing, Minn., to offer customers specialized service options.

"There was a definite need for something like this in the market," explained Vice President of Northern Operations Jon Anderson. "We understand the urgency of having components on the shelf. We carry those that are up to a recognized original equipment manufacturer (OEM) standard."

The main focus of RMS Mining Solutions is machinery, parts and rebuild sales of Komatsu mining trucks and hydraulic shovels.

"Our strategy is to purchase and refurbish Komatsu mining machines and parts to sell them in the secondary market," said


Anderson. "What comes out of our facility will be the highest quality available."

## **Plenty of space for oversized mining equipment**

The operation is based in a new 60,000-square-foot facility in Hibbing. The branch has six massive garage bays and a warehouse designed specifically for the mining industry.

"We have a great team in place, and customers are very excited about this venture," said Branch Manager Jakob Mount. "We're ready for the challenge and will grow to accommodate as needed." (Read more about Jakob Mount on page 34.)

Mount adds that RMS Mining Solutions is focused on all customers in the mining industry.

"We have a global outlook. We want to be a resource that customers from all over the world can rely on for solutions. RMS has a proven track record of success in this industry, and we are ready to show everyone what we can do." 

*Road Machinery & Supplies Co. launched RMS Mining Solutions in Hibbing, Minn., this winter to provide machinery, parts and rebuild sales of Komatsu mining trucks and hydraulic shovels for mining customers.*





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# JAKOB MOUNT

## Opportunity to build from scratch attracts Branch Manager for new Hibbing, Minn., location

**W**hen Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) called Jakob Mount to discuss a Branch Manager opening at its new Hibbing, Minn., site, he wasn't exactly looking for a different job.

"I enjoyed what I was doing, but when Jon Anderson, (RMS Vice President of Northern Operations) explained the position and what it would entail, I was on board," recalled Mount. "RMS has a great team, and I was drawn to being a part of it. To have the chance to open a branch for RMS, pretty much from scratch, was very exciting."

While overseeing the launch of a new facility was enticing, Mount was equally interested in the day-to-day responsibilities that would follow once the doors opened.

"In my previous position, I was an operations manager who supported the sales team," he explained. "As branch manager, I get to oversee both sales and operations, which is very beneficial. It's a challenge that I am ready for. I look forward to providing value to our customers."


### Total mining solutions provider

Another aspect of the job that appealed to Mount was the fact that this branch will be uniquely tailored to the mining customers on the Iron Range and will serve as the Mining Solutions program headquarters for RMS (see full story on page 32).

"The mining industry is crucial to this area and numerous other locations across the world," said Mount. "Having an RMS option to supply used and rebuilt parts and equipment is an important asset for us and another testimony to the focus of this team. It's exciting to see the growth at RMS as we work to meet customers' needs."

In the meantime, Mount and his team are busy laying the foundation to ensure those goals are achieved.

"Our current focus is on opening the branch successfully," said Mount. "We are off to a strong start. We have relationships in place with local customers, and they are really eager for us to ramp up."

In addition to opening the Hibbing facility, Mount and his wife, Emily, are parents to three children between the ages of 9 and 11. "We're always doing something – church, sports, hanging out with family and friends – we stay pretty busy," shared Mount. 



*Away from the job, RMS Hibbing Branch Manager Jakob Mount (left) enjoys spending time with his family. "We're always doing something – church, sports, hanging out with family and friends – we stay pretty busy," shared Mount.*





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# BRANDON VANDEVEIRE

## From hoses to mining truck components, RMS Hydraulic Services Foreman has customers covered

**W**hile Brandon VanDeVeire is a machinist and welder by trade, the Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) Hydraulic Services Foreman got his start in the aviation field working on jets. He decided to leave that economically volatile industry in 2009 and return to a career in welding. It was during that time he began to focus on hydraulics.

"There were so many ups and downs with the economy, I'd finally had enough," he recalled. "A couple of people I grew up with opened a hydraulic shop, and I helped weld cylinders when they were really busy. Finally, they asked me to join, and I've been involved with hydraulic cylinders ever since."

In addition to stability in his career path, that decision eventually led him to RMS Hydraulic Services in Savage, Minn.

"I had been around hydraulics for 25 years. Although my involvement was off and on, I always enjoyed working on them" shared VanDeVeire. "There will always be a repair need for them, so it made a lot of sense to jump in."

### More than repairs


At the hydraulics shop, VanDeVeire and his team tackle roughly 100 hydraulic cylinder repairs for construction and mining customers each month, in addition to making hoses and hard lines.

"While our main business is repair, we also build custom hoses and tubes with flared ends and build new cylinders as well," VanDeVeire explained. "We're able to handle any type of project, from hoses to 7,000-pound cylinders for mining equipment."

VanDeVeire said that having a dedicated hydraulics shop is a vital resource for RMS customers, especially since his crew handles a wide variety of projects.

"We can build pretty much any part of a cylinder, including barrels, pistons and heads," he said. "The only thing we don't do are the pieces that require specialized manufacturing, like a holding valve, for example."

"A lot of times we talk with customers who don't realize all that we can do," VanDeVeire continued. "I would encourage anyone in need of a repair to contact us and see how we can help. Typically, we're less expensive than ordering a new part, and our turnaround time is very quick."

Away from the shop, VanDeVeire is an outdoorsman who enjoys a variety of sports as well as hunting and fishing. 



*RMS Hydraulic Services Foreman Brandon VanDeVeire helps customers find cost-effective solutions with hydraulic component repairs.*



# MURRAY HILDESTAD

**New Des Moines Service Manager aims for modernization, growth in service technician ranks**



*Murray Hildestad,  
Service Manager*

**B**efore joining Road Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) as Des Moines Service Manager, Murray Hildestad was competing with the firm as a Regional Service Manager for a heavy equipment distributor in Davenport, Iowa.

"I always knew RMS was a great company with a solid reputation," noted Hildestad. "When the opportunity came up to move to Des Moines and become the Service Manager there, I jumped at it."

Hildestad joined the RMS team last November and hit the ground running.

"I want customers to look to RMS for their service because they are confident that we're going to do it, and do it right," stated Hildestad. "Modernization is one way to do that. Technology in this equipment will continue to become more sophisticated, so we need to make sure our service technicians have all of the tools and training they need to succeed."

## Emphasis on recruiting


"Growth is another area that I am focusing on," he added. "Ideally, I'd like to increase our head count by about 30 percent in the near future. That means more technicians in the garage and establishing resident techs throughout the region."

Hildestad understands that both goals are easier said than done, especially the growth part. That is why he and RMS are working with area high schools and community colleges to recruit prospective employees to the industry.

"We need to be proactive in order to have enough technicians," he said. "This type of work is a passion for some; but in many cases, people don't realize they can do this for a job. That's the message we want to share: this is a very fun and rewarding career."

Being front and center to achieve these goals is also paramount for Hildestad, and fortunately, he is up for the challenge.

"I love interacting with people – connecting with customers is my favorite part of this job," noted Hildestad. "If customers and employees have a consistent contact they can turn to, that goes a long way toward establishing a respected reputation and building long-term relationships."

Away from the office Hildestad enjoys hunting and fishing with his dog, Harpo, or looking for an excuse to get out of a workout with his wife, Morgan, who is a personal fitness instructor. 



*Establishing more resident field technicians is an important part of new Des Moines Service Manager Murray Hildestad's growth initiative. "I want customers to look to RMS for their service because they are confident that we're going to do it, and do it right."*



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# EXPANSION UNDERWAY

**Newest RMS branch serving rapidly growing eastern Iowa corridor slated to open in Cedar Rapids this summer**

**R**oad Machinery & Supplies Co. (RMS) broke ground on its new Cedar Rapids, Iowa, branch this winter, making the long-awaited project a reality for eastern Iowa customers and employees. The state-of-the-art facility will house sales, service and rental operations for the area.

"We are excited about this expansion, which will allow us to better service our customers in Cedar Rapids and throughout the region," said CEO Mike Sill II.


The greater Cedar Rapids area and neighboring Johnson County comprise Iowa's second-largest population concentration, with both experiencing consistent growth. Johnson County, which includes Iowa City, is Iowa's second-fastest-growing county according to the U.S. Census Bureau with a 15.6 percent growth rate since 2010. Linn County includes Cedar Rapids and is Iowa's second-largest county by population and saw 6.9 percent growth according to the same source.

RMS believes the area is uniquely poised for further growth in the coming years.

The site is off Interstate 380 near the Eastern Iowa Airport, so the facility is conveniently located to provide service to customers throughout the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Corridor. The 22,500-square-foot building will feature 10 service bays, including an oversized through bay for aggregate equipment. The project is scheduled for completion this summer.

## Greater presence in Iowa

"This new building will provide the infrastructure to offer new and exciting opportunities for both current and future RMS employees," noted President Russell Sheaffer.

The new Cedar Rapids branch is a part of a larger initiative for RMS in the state. Construction began on a new Des Moines-area facility in 2019 in Bondurant and is expected to be online early this summer. In 2018, RMS opened its new shop in East Moline, Ill., to support Quad Cities customers. 



*Road Machinery & Supplies Co., will open a new 22,500-square-foot, 10-bay Cedar Rapids branch in 2020. The facility will be located at 10740 High Life Court SW in Cedar Rapids near the Eastern Iowa Airport.*



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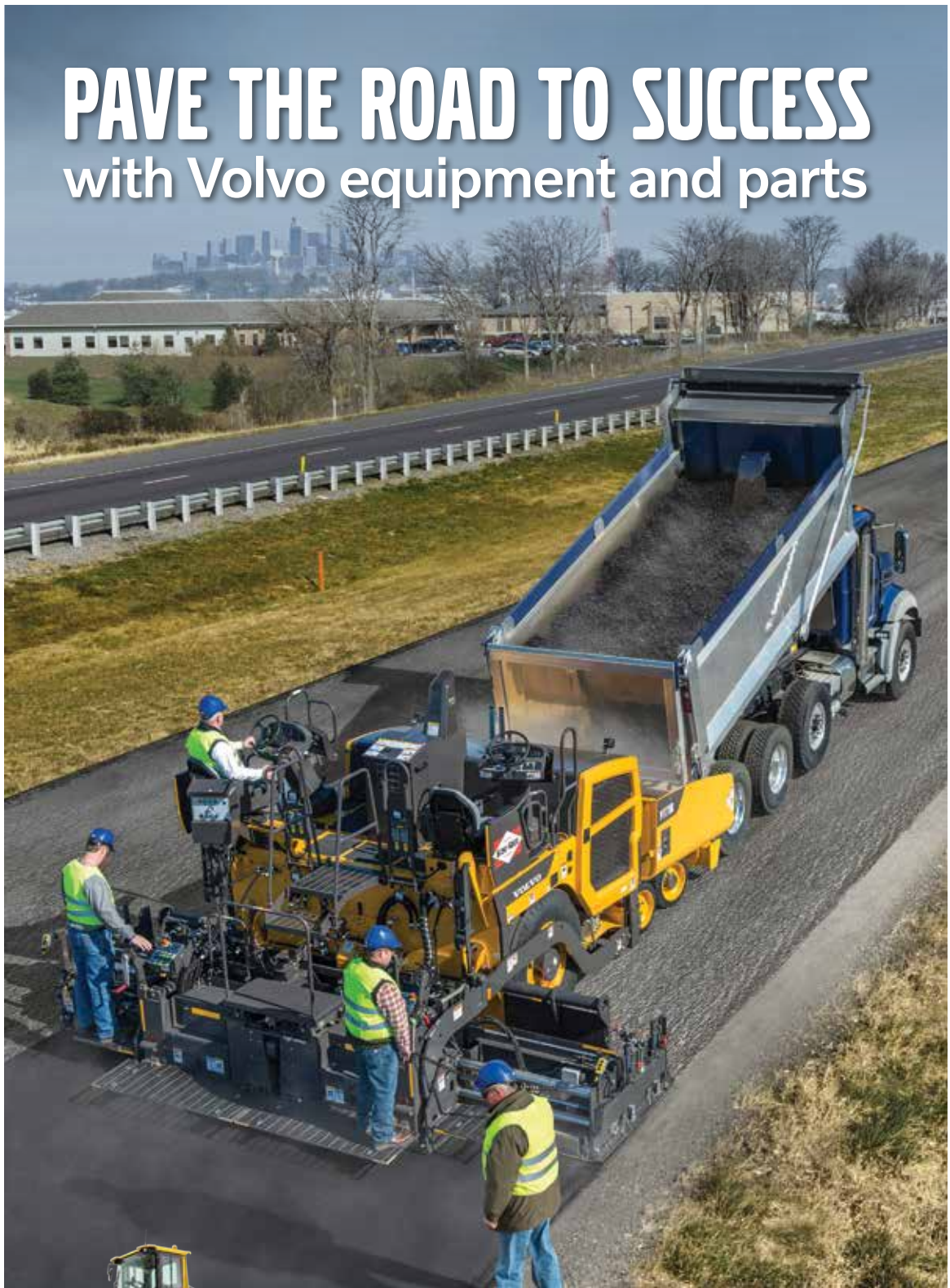
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