

Road Signs

May 2023



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

RMSroadsigns.com



DeCook Excavating Inc.

Minnesota company's hard work and quality customer service lead to success

KOMATSU

A message from the CEO



Dear Valued Customer:



Mike Sill II

This time of year tends to be the busiest in the industry. For that reason, Komatsu and Road Machinery & Supplies Co. have made a significant investment in performing routine maintenance on your behalf so that you can focus on your customers.

That is why most new Komatsu machines come with complimentary Komatsu Care for the first three years or 2,000 hours. Our trained technicians perform the services at your convenience to help limit downtime — typically after normal work hours or when your equipment is not being used.

Komatsu Care also gives you certainty in your owning and operating costs. Learn about Komatsu's new program, Komatsu Care Cost Per Hour, in this issue. We believe it's well worth the investment.

We hope you were able to attend CONEXPO-CON/AGG this past March, but if not, there's a recap of the event inside this issue that provides information about some of the machines that were on display, such as Komatsu's new PC210LCE electric excavator.

Plus, due to the growing demand for off-road trucks in construction, quarry and mining operations throughout North America, Komatsu is once again producing the popular HM400-5 articulated haul truck at its Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation in Tennessee. Check out the article for more information.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Road Machinery & Supplies Co.

Mike Sill II
Mike Sill II, CEO

KOMATSU

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DeCook Excavating Inc.

Several acquisitions lead to diversification and spark growth for Byron, Minn., company



*Chris DeCook,
Owner*

Chris DeCook started DeCook Excavating Inc. in Byron, Minn., in 2004. He knew hard work and quality customer service would lead to success, but he never imagined his business would eventually include five separate companies and more than 170 employees.

"It started with two employees in 2004 — myself and my nephew, Levi Henson — and we focused on residential projects like digging basements," recalled DeCook. "I figured we'd always stay a smaller company with around 10 employees. We just kept getting more work and hiring great people. It's led to 19 straight years of growth."

Meeting customers' needs fueled that early and consistent growth for DeCook. The latest wave of expansion has been a result of acquisitions. The first started with DeCook Landscaping in 2010. Adam Prigge has been instrumental in growing the business from two employees to over 20. DeCook also recently added a retail garden center — The Plant Shack — to the landscaping facility.

Then, DeCook acquired Bob Braaten Construction Inc. in 2017 as Braaten approached retirement.

"That move really increased our capabilities and laid the groundwork for the last several years," said DeCook. "It gave us the manpower and experience to move into commercial site development and municipal work because that's what those crews were used to doing. It was a great fit with what we already had in the residential sector."

It also eventually led to DeCook getting into the aggregate industry with Olmsted Aggregate Inc. Today, Olmsted Aggregate creates a variety of products from its four locations — a rock quarry and sand pit in Byron, and two sand pits in Oronoco, Minn.

The next piece added to DeCook's portfolio was DeCook Drainage Inc., which happened when the owner of L&E Farm Drainage retired in 2019.

"We knew the owner, Larry, and he did some field tiling for my brother's farms," said DeCook. "When we started, we had five employees, and now it's grown to 15, and we added a second plow."

The latest addition to DeCook Companies is DeCook Contracting Inc., which is the union arm of the excavating division.

"We opened this shop to accommodate the union general contractors in the Rochester area," said DeCook. "Currently, we have 20 employees in that company."

DeCook credits the growth of the company to his employees, including Henson, who is now General Manager; the estimating team of John Allen, Corey Stephens and Brent Vatland; Project Managers Jody Beck, Joe Allen, Jared Munnikheysen, Bud Kundert and Sean Kutzler; and his dedicated team of foremen, operators and laborers.

Closing the loop

The growth curve has been a rapid one. However, DeCook says that each move



*Levi Henson,
General Manager*



A DeCook Excavating crew places a trench box with a Komatsu PC210LCi-11 intelligent Machine Control (iMC) excavator on a street reconstruction project in Byron, Minn.



► VIDEO

With a Komatsu PC390LCi-11 iMC excavator and a Komatsu D51PXi-24 iMC dozer, a DeCook Excavating crew performs work at the Bigelow-Voit 8 project, a 46-unit residential subdivision in Kasson, Minn. “You can program in your project, boot it up, and dig to grade,” said Project Manager Sean Kutzler. “You don’t need to check anything. You can if you want, but the intelligent Machine Control technology is spot on.”

made sense and was a great opportunity to strengthen and diversify the overall operation of DeCook Companies.

“For the most part, each company complements the other in some way,” DeCook said. “DeCook Excavating uses product from Olmsted Aggregate. Customers appreciate that we have DeCook Landscaping to come in after we perform sitework because there’s less scheduling conflicts. The tiling is a little bit separate, but it still fits with what we do.”

An example of the synergy is the Bigelow-Voit 8 project, a 46-unit residential subdivision in Kasson, Minn. DeCook Excavating performed the initial grading, installed underground utilities, and will dig the basements. It used material from Olmsted Aggregate to build the roads in the development, and DeCook Landscaping will perform residential landscaping at the end.

“This is a large project, and we are able to take it from a farm field to a complete development,” explained DeCook. “We were the first ones on the site, and we’ll be the last ones on it, too.”

DeCook says that the growth has enabled the company to offer a more complete package to customers and allowed it to do larger commercial projects.

“We started on a plant expansion for McNeilus Steel Inc. in 2019 that included a private street, a city street, a large pond, parking lots, utilities, underground storm retention, and an expansion to the steel yard,” said DeCook. “At the time,



An operator uses DeCook Excavating’s Komatsu D71PXi-24 iMC dozer to grade a road at Moon Valley, a residential development in Genoa, Minn. “[The iMC machines] have surpassed my expectations on what they can do,” said Project Manager Jody Beck.

it was the largest job we had done. Before we expanded, I wouldn’t have even bid on the job, but now with the people we have in place, we are able to perform the work with confidence.”

Equipment upgrade

DeCook’s expansion is not just limited to employees and project size — it also includes the company’s equipment fleet.

“Our equipment needs have changed as we’ve grown,” said DeCook. “We not only needed more pieces to do more jobs, but we also needed larger equipment and better technology to help us improve efficiency.”



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Continued . . .



*Sean Kutzler,
Project Manager*



*Jody Beck,
Project Manager*



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To accomplish those goals, DeCook turned to Road Machinery & Supplies Co. Territory Manager Jeff Bistodeau. DeCook wasted little time in beefing up the fleet and ordered 12 machines at once — nine of which were Komatsu intelligent Machine Control (iMC) pieces that featured integrated, semi-automated GPS technology.

The order included four Komatsu iMC dozers (a D39PXi-24, a D51PXi-24, a D61PXi-24, and a D71PXi-24), five Komatsu iMC excavators (a PC210LCi-11, a PC360LCi-11, a PC390LCi-11, and two PC490LCi-11 models), a Komatsu PC170LC-11 excavator, a Komatsu PC238USLC-11 excavator, and a KPI-JCI 13-36150 conveyor.

“That was by far our largest one-time purchase,” laughed DeCook. “The reason we did it all at once was because we knew we needed GPS equipment. We had a few GPS machines, and once we started using them, we realized how much time and money the technology could save us.”

In order to maximize the investment in iMC technology, DeCook’s crews required additional training. Technology Solutions Expert Chris Potter was instrumental in making that happen.

“We were really green,” said DeCook. “The operators had been doing their jobs the same way for their whole careers, but Chris was great about explaining the technology to them and being patient. He probably came down more than he was supposed to, but he really wanted us to learn it.”

The machines have proven themselves in the field.

“We can have our in-house GPS Specialist Tyler Johnson build a program for the project, boot it

up, and dig to grade,” said Project Manager Sean Kutzler. “You don’t need to check anything. You can use a laser if you want, but the intelligent Machine Control technology is spot on.”

“Having multiple pieces of intelligent Machine Control equipment has helped our efficiency,” explained Project Manager Jody Beck. “We can dig to grade faster, and it improves the capabilities of all of our operators. They have surpassed my expectations on what they can do, especially in helping us come up with competitive bids.”

A trusted partner

Purchasing 12 machines at once doesn’t happen on a whim. It is the result of trust built over a period of time. DeCook’s relationship with RMS began in 2008, and it has only strengthened over the years.


“Jeff has been great to work with, and so has everyone at RMS,” stated DeCook. “When we were small, we would get in spots where we needed something quick. They always worked with us to get us a machine, whether it was a demo, rental or RPO. Other companies weren’t as flexible. RMS trusted us, and that helped us grow. It’s led to a great relationship and a lot of equipment purchases, too. They were there for us when we needed them, and I haven’t forgotten that.”

Plus, the commitment from RMS goes beyond just sales, according to DeCook.

“Whenever someone hires us to do a job, we know we can get it done in a timely manner because of RMS,” DeCook declared. “We can’t afford to stop working because a machine is down. RMS does a great job of either fixing the machine quickly or getting us a replacement to keep us going. It’s pretty monumental; no matter what, RMS always seems to figure something out to keep us running, and it’s always been that way. Whether we had 10 guys or 100, they’ve been there for us.”

“On the service side, whenever we need something, they are there for us,” commented Beck. “Especially with the training on the iMC. Bar none, they are the best.”

DeCook considers RMS a partner in his business.

“It isn’t all about RMS when we’re working with them; they want us to succeed,” he said. “They’re ahead of the competition because they understand that relationships are an investment. If we are successful, they are going to be successful, too. There is a lot of trust and respect between us because we are both looking out for each other.” 



Olmsted Aggregate’s rock quarry in Byron, Minn., utilizes a Komatsu PC490LC excavator and an Astec SuperStacker.

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Tibbetts Trucking Inc.

TimberPro equipment boosts production by nearly 50% for northern Minnesota company



Greg Tibbetts,
Owner



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Felling timber in the middle of the winter is a race against the clock and Mother Nature. In order to meet production goals, you need equipment that is reliable and maximizes the short window of the season.

That's why Greg Tibbetts, Owner of Tibbetts Trucking Inc., utilizes TimberPro forestry equipment. With a fleet consisting of a TN735D feller buncher, TF830D and TF830C forwarders, and a TF830D forwarder equipped with a Waratah H219X harvester head, Tibbetts' crews are able to meet their lofty production goals.

"We're felling ahead of the processors and placing the trees in bundles," explained Tibbetts. "This allows us to process at the bundles and let forwarders get a full load in two to three stops. I'd say we gain about 50% production with this approach."


The TimberPro equipment delivers peace of mind for Tibbetts as he trusts it to perform every day in some of the harshest conditions. That is why TimberPro continues to earn its way into his fleet.

"I like the way they are built, and I've had zero issues with them," said Tibbetts. "They are impressive, and it makes me want to keep buying them."

Tibbetts' relationship with Road Machinery & Supplies Co. and Territory Manager Joel Elden is another factor in the decision to keep using TimberPro.

"Joel is always in contact with me to see if there is anything we need," said Tibbetts. "He does a great job taking care of us."

When it comes to parts and service, Tibbetts notes that the proximity of the Virginia and Duluth branches to the company's work area is a positive. Fortunately, Tibbetts says that he hasn't had to put RMS' response time to the test.

"RMS is close by, and I know they will have parts and service available when I need it," said Tibbetts. "The best part is I haven't had to call them. TimberPro speaks for itself." 

Tibbetts Trucking Inc. uses TimberPro equipment like this TF830D forwarder equipped with a Waratah H219X harvester head to maximize its production season. "I like the way they are built, and I've had zero issues with them," said Owner Greg Tibbetts. "They are impressive, and it makes me want to keep buying them."



▶ VIDEO

C144 harvester head, grapple line

Komatsu's new forestry attachments improve performance with increased reliability for great productivity

For success on forestry projects, your equipment needs to be highly productive and reliable. Komatsu's upgraded C144 harvester head and new grapple range can help deliver both.

The C144 features a new valve bank with a longer service life than its predecessor (verified through testing). Its resilience against wear boosts the reliability of the harvester head and contributes to more uptime and reduced repair costs. To save fuel, the new valve bank lowers energy losses due to decreased hydraulic resistance in the valve block.

An increased feed rate on the smaller feed roller motor from approximately 16 feet per second to 21 feet per second helps deliver greater production and profitability. The design of the saw box has been improved to simplify maintenance and increase reliability.


Better stem holding performance during felling is another improvement. It comes from inverting the direction of the oil flow in the feed system. Test operators who tried the new C144 said that they got more response from the head and described it as "distinct."

Longer service life

To help save time, Komatsu's new grapple range encompasses 10 completely redesigned models with larger openings that offer better wood pile penetration and make it easier for the logs to roll into the grapple. They have also been refined for gathering and straightening timber.

In addition to new features, the grapples retain the key advantages of the previous models such as a robust, durable design. Several improvements on the new grapples

contribute to a longer service life, ensuring durability in demanding forest environments.

New models range from the G82, which holds 0.85 square feet, to the G87H, which holds 1.64 square feet. The range is divided into standard, bioenergy (brushwood) and heavy-duty applications. All are compatible with the most common forwarders, as well as most types of truck cranes and other vehicles that handle timber. 



C144



Grapples



Komatsu's upgraded C144 harvester head features a new valve bank with a longer service life to help increase its reliability and contributes to more uptime and reduced repair costs. Komatsu's new grapple range encompasses 10 completely redesigned models with larger openings to help save time because they offer better wood pile penetration and make it easier for the logs to roll into the grapple.

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St. Louis County Public Works

Increasing equipment size allows St. Louis County to deliver better results for taxpayers

The St. Louis County Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining 3,000 miles of northern Minnesota roads in its territory. With many of those being rural miles that wind through the Superior National Forest and up to the Canadian border, it's a much larger task than the maintenance of well-manicured suburban roadways. The department needed equipment less suited for landscaping and more suited for another popular northern Minnesota industry.

"We need to have logging-type equipment, so we can cut bigger trees out of the way in order to mow," said Fleet & Property Manager Chad Skelton. "One of the things we've really invested in over the last five years is increasing the ability of our roadside mowing equipment."

Two years ago, the department decided to rent a Komatsu PC290LC excavator with a Quadco mulching head attachment from Road Machinery & Supplies Co. The results were undeniable.

"It's a quick machine, and it'll grind up about any tree and not have a problem with it," said Equipment Operator Senior Jesse Verbonich. "Plus, the cab is comfortable and warm, which is nice."

Those results led the department to make the decision to purchase the machine.

"We liked it so much, we decided to buy it," said Skelton. "We were able to do a lot more a lot faster."

As with many governmental agencies, the decision to buy was one that included more than performance and price. Fortunately, two RMS locations in St. Louis County — Virginia and Duluth — and a good relationship with Territory Manager Joel Elden enabled the department to check all the necessary boxes.

"The money that we spend goes back to services to our taxpayers, so it's very important that we consider all the factors of the machine ownership before making the decision to buy," said Skelton. "Service and reliability really are important."

Skelton added, "RMS is local. To have a vendor be able to show up at the drop of a hat is very important to us. If our machine is down, we aren't getting our job done, and that means that we aren't providing those services that the taxpayers expect from us. RMS and Joel gave us the confidence that we could rely on the equipment to perform consistently."



*Chad Skelton,
Fleet & Property
Manager*



*Jesse Verbonich,
Equipment Operator
Senior*



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RMSRoadSigns.com



▶ VIDEO

St. Louis County Equipment Operator Senior Jesse Verbonich uses a Komatsu PC290LC excavator with a Quadco mulching head to clear trees from the right-of-way of a rural road north of Duluth, Minn. "It's a quick machine, and it'll grind up about any tree and not have a problem with it," he said.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023

Attendees see the future of construction as manufacturers highlight electric equipment



Watch the video

Electric! That describes both the atmosphere and an abundance of new machines at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023, which was held March 14-18 in Las Vegas. With an eye toward sustainability, a host of manufacturers across multiple industries debuted electric and autonomous equipment designed to reduce fuel usage and carbon footprints.

A record crowd of more than 139,000 people attended North America's largest equipment show, which was co-located with the International Fluid Power Exposition (IFPE) at the Las Vegas Convention Center. More than 2,400 exhibitors from 36 countries were spread out across approximately 3 million square feet of exhibit space, which was about 10% larger than the previous show in 2020.

"The innovations in the construction industry unveiled this week will play a role in helping construction professionals drive meaningful and sustainable economic growth," said CONEXPO-CON/AGG Chair Phil Kelliher. "Live events in the construction industry are very important, because you can see, touch

and experience the products. That value was reaffirmed this past week across the show floor."

Sustainable focus

Komatsu introduced innovative electric products such as the 20-ton PC210LCE electric excavator that features Proterra's lithium-ion battery technology. It has 451 kilowatt hours (kWh) of battery capacity that offer up to 8 hours of operating time, depending on workload conditions and application.

Suitable for a diverse range of workplaces, including indoors, the Komatsu PC30E electric mini excavator with a 35-kWh battery and a 17.4-kilowatt electric motor was on display. The PC30E is designed to be fast-charged, and it offers quiet and simple operation with zero emissions and no vibrations.

Attendees had the opportunity to see Komatsu's smallest electric excavator — the PC01E electric micro excavator. Developed jointly with Honda, it is powered by portable and swappable mobile batteries. The new machine is designed for confined spaces in landscaping, agriculture and construction.

Komatsu's vision for the swappable battery system is to scale up the technology for use in larger micro excavator models. The PC210LCE, PC30E and PC01E will be available in select markets later this year.

Komatsu also showcased three types of charging infrastructure, as well as its WA electric wheel loader prototype with a chassis based on the WA70. The wheel loader prototype utilizes an "intelligent electrification system" that features an electric traction motor, lift, tilt and steering cylinders, power electronics, a system control computer, a battery, and a battery management system.



▶ VIDEO

At CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023, Komatsu introduced innovative new electric products such as the 20-ton PC210LCE electric excavator that features Proterra's lithium-ion battery technology.



In addition to electric equipment, Komatsu showcased its new PC900LC-11 excavator, which was paired with a Komatsu HM400-5 articulated truck.

In addition to electric equipment, Komatsu highlighted its HB365LC-3 hybrid excavator designed for high production and efficiency with low fuel consumption. Its hybrid system can provide an additional 70 horsepower on demand and allows operators to be up to 15% more productive in Power mode. The hybrid's environmentally friendly operation offers up to 20% more fuel efficiency and 20% less carbon dioxide emissions compared to the standard PC360LC-11.

Also on display was Komatsu's suite of Smart Construction solutions — Dashboard, Design, Drone, Field, Fleet, Office, Remote and Retrofit — designed to optimize the job site, as well as its new Smart Quarry solutions that help increase efficiency, improve production, and maintain a high level of performance, such as Smart Quarry Site and Smart Quarry Study.


Lastly, Komatsu featured its intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 dozers and excavators, along with the new PC900LC-11 excavator, and other construction and forestry machines.

"We had a lot of great conversations at the show and really wanted customers to take away that we are committed to working with them to create value together," said Komatsu's Brandon Rakers, Senior Product Manager for Technology Business Solutions. "CONEXPO gives us the opportunity to show attendees how Komatsu



Manufacturer representatives were on hand to answer attendees' questions about equipment and technology. "CONEXPO gives us the opportunity to show attendees how Komatsu can be an end-to-end solutions provider with equipment and digital tools that can help increase efficiency and reduce costs," said Komatsu's Brandon Rakers, Senior Product Manager for Technology Business Solutions (pictured above, right).

can be an end-to-end solutions provider with equipment and digital tools that can help increase efficiency and reduce costs."

CONEXPO-CON/AGG is scheduled to return to the Las Vegas Convention Center March 3-7, 2026. 

Learn more about Komatsu at CONEXPO: https://www.komatsu.com/events/conexpo/?utm_source=Komatsu&utm_medium=PressRelease&utm_campaign=ConExpo2023&utm_content=pc900



Learn more

Continued . . .



(L-R) Baker Enterprises Inc.'s Blake and Shawn Baker from Waverly, Iowa, visited the Komatsu booth.



(L-R) Ames Construction's Tim King and Chad Hanson came from Burnsville, Minn., to learn about new technology and machinery.

Electric experience at CONEXPO



"This is our first CONEXPO experience. It's mind-boggling how large it is, but that's why we came. We wanted to know what's coming, so we can gear our business around where the industry is going." – **Sy Kirby, Sy-Con Excavation & Utilities**

"It's a chance to see what's new in equipment and how it could possibly help our business. I ran a simulator that was just like actually operating a real truck. It would be great for teaching new drivers." – **Jesse Cummings, Scott Schofield Construction Inc.**



"We see CONEXPO as an opportunity to experience a little more outside of what we do every day. It's been a great time." – **Jon Martzall, Iron Eagle Excavating**



(L-R) K-Construction Inc.'s Tony and Sharaya Knospe from Elkader, Iowa, attended CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023.



(L-R) Kevin and Derek Gustafson represented Gustafson Excavating, which is based in North Branch, Minn.



(L-R) Boulder Contracting was represented by Luke and Kittie Kjormoe as well as Amanada and David Capsopoulos from Grundy Center, Iowa.



(L-R) Fred Rudolph from All Rental, Phil Major from RMS, and Jason Ferche from All Rental checked out the Komatsu equipment on display. "There's been a lot of electric, especially in the smaller size, but now you're even seeing it in bigger sizes," commented Ferche, a longtime CONEXPO attendee. "Compared to last time, there's a lot more people, and the new building here is nice."

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Electrification

A glimpse into the future of the electric construction site



*Andrew Earing,
Director of
Tracked Products
and Service,
Komatsu*

From electric vehicles (EVs) to mining equipment, the shift toward an electric-powered world to reduce carbon emissions — including construction equipment electrification — has already begun.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which President Joe Biden signed in November of 2021, includes an investment of up to \$7.5 billion for EV charging stations to help build out a national network of 500,000 EV chargers.

Additionally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created a joint office between the Departments of Energy and Transportation to collaborate with local communities and provide technical assistance to support the creation and development of EV charging infrastructure.

Actions are being taken at the state level as well. The California Air Resources Board announced the Advanced Clean Cars II

rule in August of 2022 that codified Governor Gavin Newsom's climate goals for the state. The rule established that all new cars and light trucks sold in California must be zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

"While electrification is at the forefront of everyone's mind due to automotive, our equipment on the construction site is often creating that infrastructure for electric automobiles," remarked Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Service at Komatsu.

"There are challenges, and we have solutions to those challenges that we are exploring, but it's not going to be a one-size-fits-all solution for the various applications and the various sizes of the products that we provide."

The electric advantage

Komatsu recently showcased a PC210LCE electric excavator and a fully electric compact wheel loader prototype at Bauma 2022, an international trade fair that was held in Munich, Germany, as well as CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023 in Las Vegas.

In a press release, Seiichi Fuchita, Chief Technology Officer and President of the Development Division at Komatsu, noted that for Komatsu to reach its target of reducing the CO2 emissions of products in use by 50% by 2030 (from 2010 levels), and "to achieve carbon neutrality by the end of 2050, we are looking for promising technologies from suppliers to accelerate our electric machine development."

"Industries including construction are trending in the direction of carbon neutrality," added Earing. "We want to be a leader. We are a technology leader when it comes to construction and mining equipment. We feel that electrification is one viable option in the construction space."

With the PC210LCE, Komatsu created an electric excavator from a popular size class.



An operator places a battery in an electric Komatsu machine. "While electrification is at the forefront of everyone's mind due to automotive, our equipment on the construction site is often creating that infrastructure for electric automobiles," remarked Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Service at Komatsu.



Komatsu's PC210LC electric excavator provides immediate advantages over a combustion machine, such as better air quality and reduced noise. "It can operate in areas where it may not have been able to operate before, and for longer durations," said Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Service at Komatsu.

"We wanted to introduce the 20-ton size class, because it opens us up to a lot of different operating applications and environments," explained Earing. "They're going to be used indoors and outdoors. It's a very diverse size class, and we wanted to get a much better understanding of all those applications and how they work with electrification."

In 2023, the PC210LC will begin to see real work on the job site.

"In North America, we are going to conduct a pilot program where we will work with many of our customers to jointly test not only this machine, but the solutions for our customers' applications to better understand the benefits to them, and how we can help meet their needs," said Earing.

Meanwhile, a Komatsu electric wheel loader prototype, created in collaboration with Moog, is currently undergoing further tests to enhance and showcase the advantages of a fully electric machine, such as increasing its operating cycle, adding assist functions, and creating a comfortable environment for the operator. The wheel loader also has sensors to add automation capabilities.

Compared to its combustion predecessors, electric machinery provides two immediate advantages: better air quality and noise reduction.

"With a zero-emissions machine, it allows the flexibility for that piece of equipment to operate indoors without harming the air quality around it," said Earing. "It can now operate in areas where it may not have been able to before and for longer durations. When you have a traditional emissions vehicle operating indoors, air quality has to be monitored, and sometimes the machine must be shut down for extended periods of time to let emissions dissipate."

Metropolitan and urban worksites are often accompanied with restrictions for when a contractor can work — in part to reduce noise pollution for the populace.

"That's why urban environments are another application for electric machines," Earing continued. "It's not only due to exhaust emissions, but also because of sound emissions. Going with an electrified machine, which has near zero sound emissions, allows for an extended operating window for our contractors and customers."

Bridging the gap to construction equipment electrification

While combustion engines will remain crucial to the development of electric infrastructure, there is currently hybrid



*Kurt Moncini,
Senior Product
Manager,
Komatsu*

Continued . . .

machinery available to help the transition between 100% combustion and 100% construction equipment electrification.

Komatsu released its first hybrid excavator in 2008, and its most recent model, the HB365LC-3, entered the market in 2017.

“The HB365LC-3 offers increased fuel efficiency without sacrificing power. A topper on the cake is the added benefit of reduced emissions that lowers your carbon footprint and promotes sustainability,” said Kurt Moncini, Senior Product Manager at Komatsu. “Based on the Environmental Protection Agency’s CO2 formula, the hybrid potentially offers up to a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to the standard PC360LC-11.”

The force behind the excavator’s fuel savings is its electric swing motor, which offers a glimpse into the capabilities of future electric excavators. The electric swing motor captures and regenerates energy as the upper structure slows down and converts it to electric energy.

Moncini explained, “It’s using energy that would normally be wasted and makes it available to do work, contributing to increased efficiency and decreased diesel usage.”

The energy captured during each swing braking cycle is stored in the HB365LC-3’s ultracapacitor. Each time the excavator swings, the capacitor discharges electric power to the electric swing motor.

“A traditional battery requires time for the chemical process that releases electricity to occur,” stated Moncini. “The heavy work nature of construction equipment places a much faster demand on power transfer. The ultracapacitor’s ability to store and discharge energy quickly makes it ideal.”

He added, “Since swing is fully electric, all available engine power can go to the boom, arm and bucket when bringing a loaded bucket out of the ground and over a truck, spoil pile or hopper. This creates a faster cycle time and a very quick, responsive swing.”

In addition to powering the swing motor, the ultracapacitor sends electric energy to the engine via the motor-generator. This energy is used to accelerate the engine from an ultra-low idle speed of 700 revolutions per minute (rpm) and improve hydraulic response.


It is this technology that can likely be applied to future electric excavator models to extend battery life and increase power.

“Komatsu has the technology to not only capture but also supply energy into an electric swing motor, which gives the HB365LC-3 up to an additional 70 horsepower that it can use for efficiency needs or even use for additional performance needs depending on the customer’s application,” said Earing.

Steps toward carbon neutrality

Complete construction equipment electrification and hybrids are at the forefront of construction’s push toward carbon neutrality, but electrification is just a part of what the industry sees as a solution to meeting carbon goals.

“We’re not just exploring electrification — we’re also exploring other technologies that are out there such as hydrogen fuel cells and clean fuels,” said Earing. “We’re looking at all of these options because we’re making sure that we have the right solution for the right job site and customer application.”

Earing concluded, “In the future, I would say that the trends that we see in carbon neutral machines will depend on the machine application, plus size and weight. With different sizes, there are going to be different technologies that suit those machines.” 



Hybrid equipment, such as the Komatsu HB365LC-3 excavator, bridges the gap between combustion and electric machinery. “The HB365LC-3 offers increased fuel efficiency without sacrificing power. A topper on the cake is the added benefit of reduced emissions that lowers your carbon footprint and promotes sustainability,” said Kurt Moncini, Senior Product Manager at Komatsu.

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Protect your data

Construction companies should consider cyber insurance that may mitigate risks, use strong cybersecurity practices

Cybercrime is an increasingly prominent threat to many industries, and construction is no exception. With the growing use of digital technologies in what was once a primarily “offline” industry, cyberattacks can pose a significant threat at every level of the construction industry.


The construction industry routinely handles sensitive information that is of value to cybercriminals, including project plans, client information, financial records, and employee data. Furthermore, due to the tight project deadlines and complicated project scheduling common in the construction industry, it can be particularly susceptible to ransomware attacks that disrupt critical digital assets to extort “ransom” from their victims. Struck by a ransomware attack at the wrong time, a contractor, construction manager, or design professional may face the unenviable position of choosing between contractual penalties for delay or paying an anonymous hacker large sums of money to free compromised data or digital systems.

As with the many other business risks faced by the industry, the response of many players in the industry is to obtain insurance. While cyberattacks are usually excluded from standard Commercial General Liability (CGL) policies, many major insurers now offer optional coverage under a Professional Errors and Omissions policy or through standalone cyber insurance. While insurance can afford some degree of protection against attacks, this is an imperfect defense at best. Disruption or damage caused by a cyberattack can be expensive, with data breaches and ransomware attacks often costing even comparatively small victims millions of dollars per attack in direct costs. These amounts can easily exceed policy limits. Downstream costs like loss of intellectual property, reputational

damage, and in some cases, legal liability to the owners of compromised information are often nearly or entirely uninsurable.

Proper digital hygiene

Additionally, companies have seen a rise in cyberattacks led by hostile state actors. Often originating from countries hostile to the United States, such as Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran, these attacks are uniquely dangerous to companies due to their sophistication and because most cyber insurance policies contain exclusions for “hostile or warlike actions.” Although still a developing area of the law, particularly given the ambiguity about whether a cyberattack that does not cause physical damage but nonetheless carries heavy economic costs is a “warlike” action, the exclusion risks a denied policy claim. Further, because cyberattacks by state actors often involve state secrets or national security concerns, insureds often have difficulty developing the facts around the cyberattack, complicating efforts to recover under their policy.

Despite its limitations, construction industry actors may want to consider obtaining or at least looking into cyber insurance or adding it as coverage to one of its existing forms of insurance. While it should not be relied upon as a sole means of protection, it may help mitigate the risk that modern construction companies face. Practicing proper digital hygiene by implementing strong cybersecurity measures like firewalls, multifactor authentication, encryption, and air gapping sensitive data, could be an essential, and unfortunately often neglected, safeguard in today’s digital economy. 

Editor’s Note: This piece originally appeared on Robinson+Cole’s Construction Law Zone. View it here: <https://www.constructionlawzone.com/2023/02/cyber-insurance-for-the-construction-industry/>.



*Joshua L. Coker,
Associate,
Robinson+Cole*

About the Author: Joshua L. Coker is a member of Robinson+Cole’s Litigation Section as well as the Construction Law Group and Construction Industry Team. Prior to joining Robinson+Cole, Coker served as a legal extern with the Office of the New York State Attorney General while attending law school. Coker’s previous work included matters involving civil rights, consumer fraud, wrongful death, and pandemic response.



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Increase efficiency

New replacement monitors, GNSS receivers provide upgrades to your existing intelligent Machine Control devices

Komatsu's intelligent Machine Control (iMC) equipment has always been on the cutting edge of technology that automates grading and excavating. To ensure that's the case on all models of iMC equipment, Komatsu has now introduced remanufactured, upgraded machine control monitors and GNSS (global navigation satellite system) receivers.


"Komatsu always looks to upgrade its equipment and components in order to increase our customers' efficiency and production, and we updated these devices to the latest technology as well," said Goran Zeravica, Senior Product Manager, Reman. "There have been slight changes to the hardware, but the biggest upgrades came in software that makes them even more effective than the previous models."

The new devices are replacements for the original monitors in iMC dozers and excavators and their GPS/GNSS receivers. All are now Komatsu Genuine Reman with proprietary technology, including the PH700 iMC excavator

monitor (replacing the older X31) that shows operators where cuts and fills are, as well as other job site features. Users can upgrade their GX-60 to a new GX-55 in iMC dozers. As with the PH700, the GX-55 shows cuts and fills and other job site features.

Previous MC-i3 GNSS receivers have been replaced with new MC-i4 models, which provide GPS/GNSS positioning for the machine, so it knows where it is on the job site and in relation to final plan elevations.

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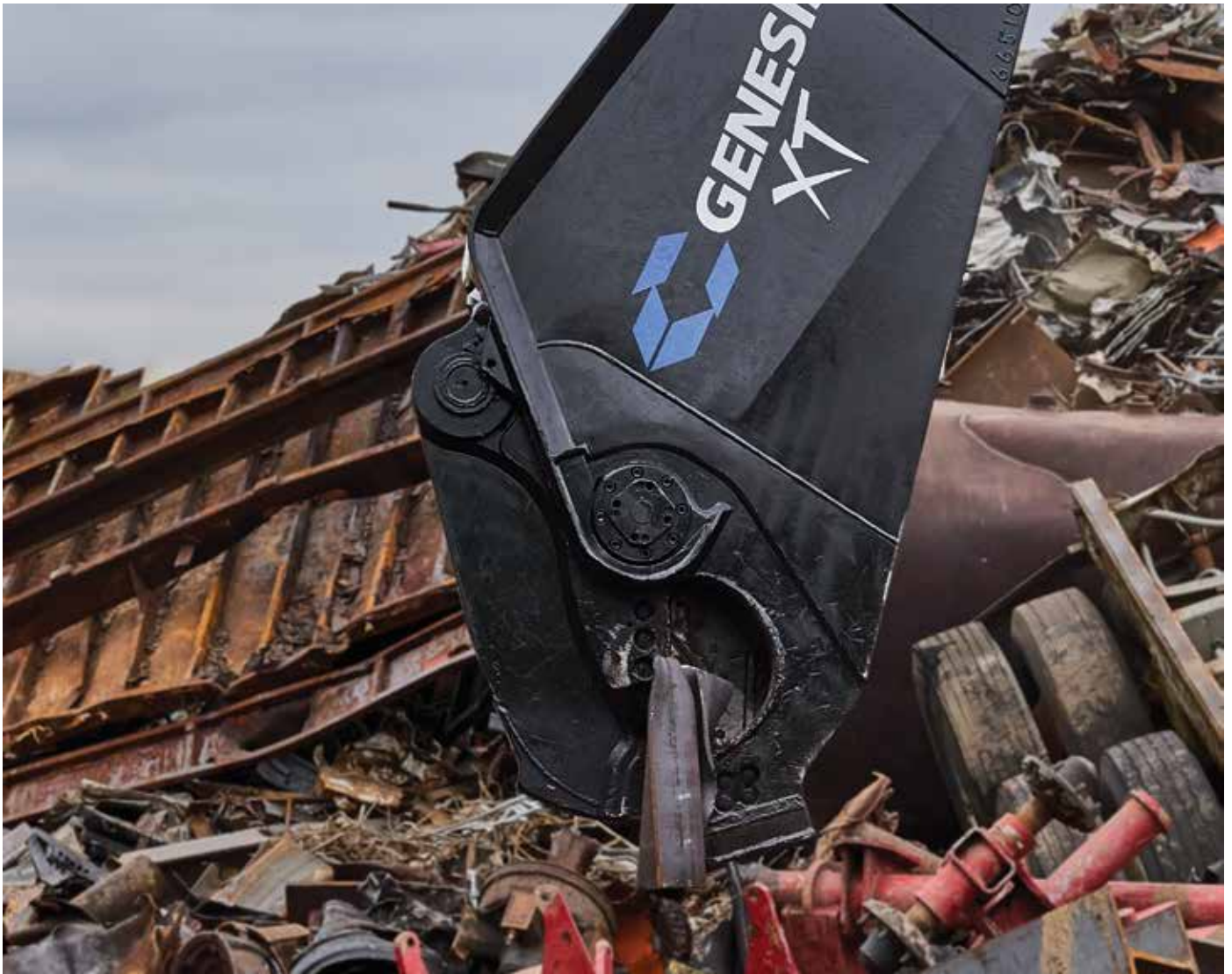
"As with cell phones, which you upgrade periodically to have the latest technology, we encourage you to do the same with your iMC devices," said Arash Moghaddamzadeh, Product Manager, Reman Products and Forestry Aftermarket. "These new devices are available through your Komatsu distributor by contacting your product support representative, technology solutions expert, or through the parts department. Additionally, they are available as Reman by using your My Komatsu account." 



*Goran Zeravica,
Senior Product Manager,
Reman,
Komatsu*



Komatsu Genuine Reman devices for intelligent Machine Control (iMC) dozers and excavators feature proprietary technology that helps increase earthmoving efficiency.



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Growing demand

Komatsu restarts production of popular HM400-5 articulated haul truck at its Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation

Due to the growing demand for off-road trucks in construction, quarry and mining operations throughout North America, Komatsu is once again producing its HM400-5 articulated haul truck at its Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation (CMO) in Tennessee. The trucks were produced at CMO in the mid-2000s, but production shifted to Japan, where it has remained until now.

“The HM400 is a very popular truck because it’s built for reliability and durability,” said Bruce Boebel, Director of Products and Services for Wheel Products at Komatsu. “We’re excited about reshoring production here in North America. As trucks are completed, they’re on a lowboy going to a customer’s site immediately.”

Komatsu designed the 473-horsepower HM400-5 to move material across challenging terrain while delivering productive, consistent performance for operators of all skill levels. It has a 44.1-ton payload and a low loading height of 10 feet, 5 inches.

“The HM400-5’s versatility makes it a great fit for a variety of applications,” Boebel noted. “A dump bed for hauling materials is most common with the HM400, but they can be customized for water and lube trucks too.”

Continued . . .



*Rod Schrader,
Chairman/CEO,
Komatsu
North America*



*Bruce Boebel,
Director of Products
and Services for
Wheel Products,
Komatsu*



To support growing demand in North America, Komatsu is once again producing HM400-5 articulated haul trucks at its Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation in Tennessee. The factory also produces excavators and forestry products.



*Darin Matson,
President/CEO,
Rogers Group Inc.*



Watch the video

Quick Specs

Model

HM400-5

Gross Horsepower

473 hp

Gross Vehicle Weight

165,644 lbs

Payload

44.1 tons

First off the line

Rogers Group Inc., an aggregate producer and highway construction company based in Nashville, Tenn., purchased the first HM400-5 off the CMO line and is using it in one of its 70-plus quarries, along with many other Komatsu products.

“We have found as we study owning and operating costs of all our fleets that the HM400 gives us the best overall value [on articulated trucks],” said Darin Matson, President and CEO of Rogers Group. “Komatsu is a big supporter of our industry, and that’s something we look at in our equipment-buying decisions. Of course, we think it’s great that they are building the HM400 right here in our home state.”


Optimum traction in soft ground

The HM400-5 features the Komatsu Traction Control System (KTCS) that is designed to provide excellent traction in soft and slippery ground conditions without sacrificing steering performance. If conditions worsen and the truck detects tire slippage, the inter-axle-lock kicks in. If tire slippage continues, it will automatically apply an independent brake to the wheel on which the slip was detected to help regain traction.

Boebel added, “The hydro-pneumatic seat suspensions help cushion the ride for operator comfort and reduced fatigue.”

An integrated payload meter is standard and displays loaded-material weight on the in-cab monitor. External lamps illuminate green, yellow or red as the payload increases to help prevent under- and over-loaded haul cycles.

Komatsu made service convenient with a lightweight resin hood and a cab that tilts rearward for easy access to the engine and transmission. Production data and other information is stored on board the HM400-5 and is accessible by plugging a laptop into a port or remotely via Komtrax. Users can monitor daily, weekly or monthly detailed data to allow for full production studies.

“We have seen the demand for our HM400-5 trucks grow significantly in both the U.S. and Canada, which is why we began producing the trucks here in the U.S.,” said Rod Schrader, Chairman and CEO, Komatsu North America. “The domestic production of this popular truck supports Komatsu’s commitment to jobs and manufacturing in the U.S.” 



► VIDEO

Komatsu’s 473-horsepower HM400-5 articulated haul truck delivers performance for operators of all skill levels.

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Subscription-style billing plan

Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour gives you a fixed hourly rate on unlimited services for 60 months

As your machines age, increase certainty in your owning and operating costs with Komatsu's new Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour program that delivers unlimited scheduled maintenance services at a fixed rate for 60 months.

"Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour is a subscription-style billing plan that gives customers a very cash-flow-friendly alternative and lets them extend coverage beyond the complimentary maintenance period," said Komatsu National Accounts Manager Felipe Cueva. "There is a nominal, up-front, opt-in charge. Customers then lock in their cost per hour for that 60-month period and are billed based on the machine's monthly usage. Price protection is built in. The rate doesn't change, which offers a hedge against inflation and rising costs."

The benefits of Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour include:

- Unlimited hours
- Up to 60 months of coverage guaranteed
- Price protection
- Total periodic maintenance (oils, filters, labor, travel and oil sampling)
- Monthly payments based only on machine utilization reported in Komtrax
- National coverage


How it works

"For example, if the rate on their particular machine is \$5 per hour and the customer used the machine for 10 hours, they would be billed \$50," Cueva explained. "If they put 100 hours on the machine, the cost would be \$500 for that month."

The usage is tracked with Komatsu's Komtrax telematics system to ensure accurate billing.

"Added peace of mind comes in knowing that, as with other Komatsu Care programs, the services performed with Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour are done by certified technicians," said Cueva.

He also noted that Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour is restricted to current production models such as Dash-11 excavators. Hourly rates vary depending on machine. Once the initial 60-month period ends, customers may opt in again at the current rate.

"Customers can cancel their subscriptions at any time after 1,000 hours and two completed services without penalties or fees," said Cueva. "We encourage anyone who wants more certainty in their costs to check this out, as well as other options through My Komatsu. Your local Komatsu distributor can help get you covered." 

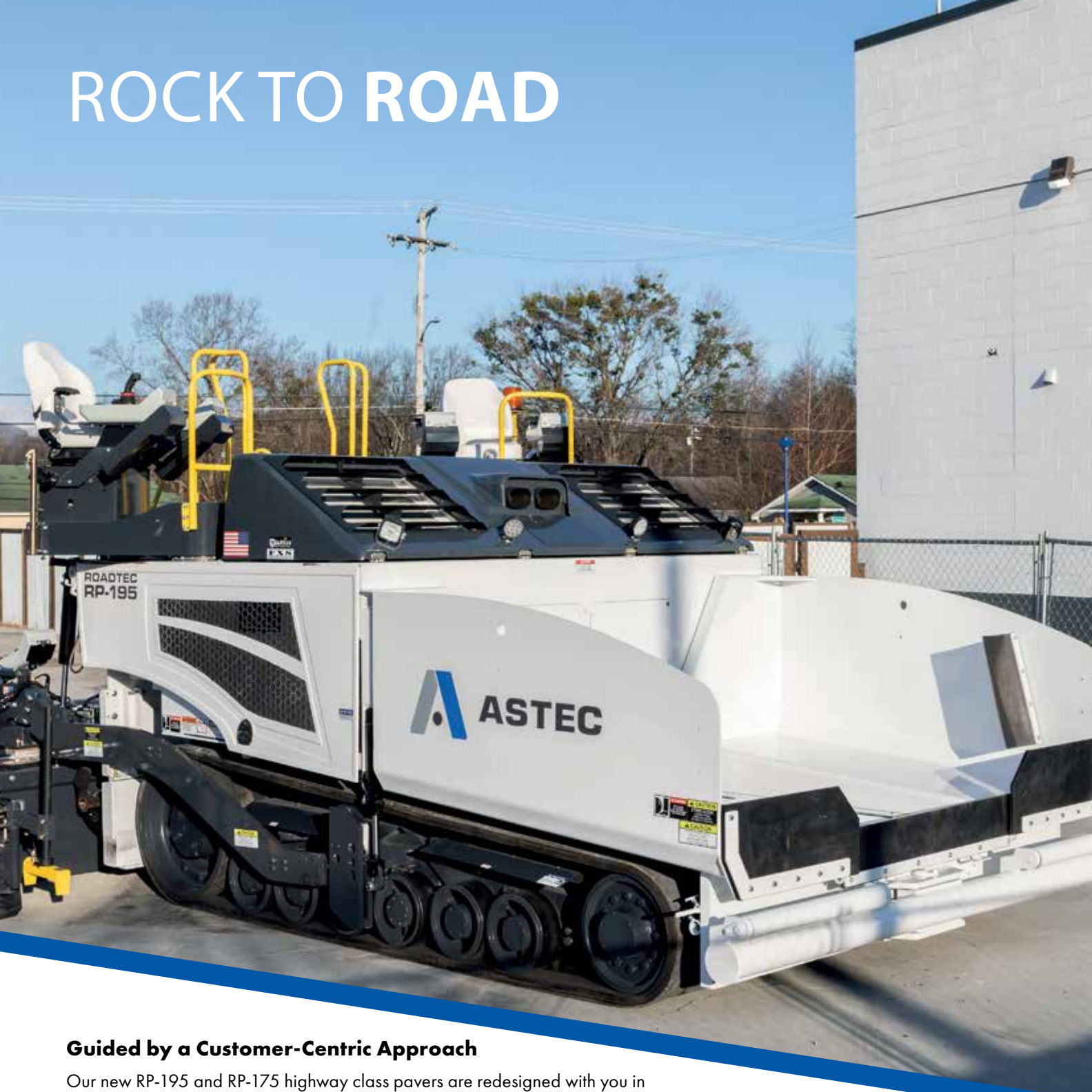


*Felipe Cueva,
National Accounts
Manager,
Komatsu*



Komatsu Care Plus Cost Per Hour locks in a fixed hourly rate for 60 months, and customers are billed on their monthly usage, which is tracked with Komatsu's Komtrax telematics system to ensure accuracy. Services are performed by certified technicians.

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Protect workers

OSHA reports large rise in trench-related fatalities, announces enhanced enforcement and oversight

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reported that nearly 40 deaths occurred in trenching and excavation work during 2022, making it one of the deadliest years on record. The total more than doubled the 15 fatalities reported in 2021.

OSHA reported 22 deaths in the first half of 2022, prompting it to launch enforcement initiatives to protect workers from known industry hazards. Compliance officers from OSHA were sent to perform more than 1,000 trench inspections nationwide.


“The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is calling on all employers engaged in trenching and excavation activities to act immediately to ensure that required protections are fully in place every single time their employees step down into or work near a trench,” said OSHA Assistant Secretary Doug Parker. “In a matter of seconds, workers can be crushed and buried under thousands of pounds of soil and rocks in an unsafe trench. The alarming increase in the number of workers needlessly dying and suffering serious injuries in trenching accidents must be stopped.”

OSHA reminded companies and workers that trenching and excavation operations require protective systems and inspections before workers can enter. Those requirements apply to trenches 5 feet or deeper unless they are made entirely in stable rock. Safe access and egress, including ladders, steps, ramps or other safe means, are required for employees working in trench excavations 4 feet or deeper, and they must be located within 25 feet of all workers.

When designing a protective system, you must consider factors such as soil classification, depth of cut, water content of the soil, changes caused by weather or climate, surcharge loads, and other operations in the vicinity.

Protective systems include:

- **Benching:** Protecting workers from cave-ins by excavating the sides of an excavation to form one or a series of horizontal levels or steps, usually with vertical or near-vertical surfaces between levels; this method cannot be done in Type C soil
- **Sloping:** Cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation
- **Shoring:** Installing aluminum hydraulic or other types of supports to prevent soil movement and cave-ins
- **Shielding:** Protecting workers by using trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins

“OSHA stands ready to assist any employer who needs help to comply with our trenching and excavation requirements,” Parker said. “We will conduct outreach programs — including safety summits — in all of our 10 regions to help ensure any employer who wants assistance gets it. The stakes are too important.” 



OSHA requires protective systems for trenches 5 feet or deeper unless they are made entirely in stable rock. Safe access and egress, including ladders, steps, ramps or other safe means, are required for employees working in trench excavations 4 feet or deeper, and they must be located within 25 feet of all workers.

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Russell Sheaffer named to AED Board of Directors

Road Machinery & Supplies Co. President Russell Sheaffer joined the Associated Equipment Distributors (AED) Board of Directors as At-Large Director. His nomination was approved by the AED Board of Directors in December 2022, and he will serve a three-year term.

As At-Large Director, Sheaffer will help develop strategies to support AED's membership and establish legislative priorities that serve to benefit the industry.


"Road Machinery & Supplies Co. has been a longtime member and strong supporter of AED," said Sheaffer. "I am honored to accept this role, and I look forward to serving on the board of an association that plays such a vital role in the success of our industry. It's our ability to speak with one unified voice as an industry that makes AED such a valuable resource to its members. This is a great opportunity for Road Machinery & Supplies Co. to be directly involved in shaping the key legislative issues affecting our industry. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve." 



*Russell Sheaffer,
President,
RMS*


Rochester branch opening slated for summer of 2023

The newest Road Machinery & Supplies Co. location is scheduled to open in the summer of 2023. Located in Byron, Minn., the 15,000-square-foot facility will provide equipment sales, service and rental capabilities in addition to technology

solutions and greater parts availability for customers in southeastern Minnesota. It will feature four drive-through service bays, a dedicated wash bay, a parts warehouse, employee offices, and an equipment yard. 

Terramac joins RMS fleet

Road Machinery & Supplies Co. is proud to announce that it has added Terramac crawler carriers to its sales offering. Terramac carriers are strategically designed for off-road use, affording contractors easy access to remote and confined job sites.

These versatile units feature rubber-tracked technology with low ground pressure and increased traction to travel across rugged, wet, loose, and steep terrains while minimizing ground damage. Ideal for hauling materials, support equipment or personnel, crawler carriers are improving efficiencies for many industries we serve, including general construction, mining, forestry, environmental restoration, utility, and landfill management. Completely customizable, Terramac carriers easily accommodate specialty attachments such as digger derricks, aerial lifts, concrete mixers, vacuum excavators, trash vacuums, hydroseeders, and more. 



Terramac crawler carriers are now available at RMS.

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..... **\$459,000**



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2012 CATERPILLAR 336EL
Stk# 063190, 12,889 Hrs., Hyd coupler,
bucket, S/N: ZY01137 **\$82,900**



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Stk# 062235, 3,029 Hrs., Aux hydrau-
lics, Coupler, Bucket **\$185,000**



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Stk# 062345, 783 Hrs., Machine control
GPS system **\$196,800**



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061929, 2,562 Hrs., S/N: A22376 . . .
..... **\$198,750**



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062285, 4,482 Hrs., ROPS Enclosed,
S/N: B60249 **\$195,000**



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062901, 982 Hrs., 14'1" Arm, 36" Tracks,
Aux Hyd, Hyd Thumb **\$888,670**



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2013 CATERPILLAR D6N LGP
Stk# 063191, 11,524 Hrs., ROPS Encl,
6-way blade, draw bar **\$99,500**



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