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ASPHALT CONTRACTORS, INC.

Family-owned Union Grove, Wisc.,
business turns opportunities
into growth



Robert Kordus,
General Manager

RAMS CONTRACTING, LTD.

Incorporating technology keeps this
Lannon, Wisc., company ahead of the curve



Tammy Ristow,
President/CEO

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Matthew L. Roland

**Komatsu
leads the tech
revolution**



Dear Valued Customer:

Construction's technological revolution is on a dizzying pace. The industry has embraced telematics for gathering data; increased usage of GPS, drone surveying, parts ordering via the web; and more. Komatsu continues to be at the forefront with *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators that are proven to increase production and efficiency, while reducing costs.

Komatsu wants customers to realize the greatest benefit from its *intelligent* Machine Control equipment, so when it launched the machines, we worked together to add personnel to our staff who can provide high-level technical support. Komatsu has also introduced SMARTCONSTRUCTION, a suite of services designed to assist customers with drone surveying, jobsite setup, model building and much more. Read about the benefits of SMARTCONSTRUCTION in this issue of your Roland Industry Scoop magazine, then contact us to see how our SMARTCONSTRUCTION team members can be of service to you.

Rear cameras are now a staple in the construction industry, allowing operators to use an in-cab monitor to see what's behind them. Komatsu has taken the concept a step further with KomVision, which places multiple video cameras around a machine to give operators an all-around view. Check out the article on KomVision inside to learn more.

If you want a wealth of information about your machinery, as well as the ability to find parts and fulfill service needs, the new MyKomatsu website provides it all in one convenient place. More details are in this issue.

We also have informative stories about a customer using *intelligent* Machine Control dozers as well as Komatsu corporate trainers who can help you maximize production.

We hope 2019's construction season is a busy and profitable one for you. If there's anything we can do to assist you, please call or stop by one of our branch locations.

Sincerely,
ROLAND MACHINERY CO.

Matthew L. Roland
President

Industry Scoop



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A SALUTE TO A CUSTOMER

RAMS CONTRACTING, LTD.

Incorporating technology keeps this Lannon, Wisc., company ahead of the curve



Tammy Ristow,
President/CEO

Speed. Efficiency. Accuracy. Devising a plan to achieve all three of those goals on a consistent basis can separate a company from its competition. For RAMS Contracting, LTD., a Milwaukee-area, full-service contracting company, that plan involves a heavy dose of leading-edge technology.

"Working smarter, not harder is critical," said President/CEO Tammy Ristow. "We are constantly looking for ways to improve our operation. Having the latest technology is the best way to do that. We believe in technology and will always invest in it."

With that philosophy, RAMS turns to Roland Machinery Company and Sales Rep Jen Jacobs for Komatsu's *intelligent* Machine Control equipment with integrated GPS technology and semi-automation. The company, which was one of the first in the area to test a D61PXi dozer in 2014, added a D39PXi dozer and PC490LCi excavator last summer.

Utilizing a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control PC490LCi excavator, like the one pictured here, has helped RAMS Contracting increase its efficiency. Last summer, the excavator was essential in the company's completion of a 16-acre athletic complex on schedule, despite wet conditions.



"The *intelligent* Machine Control pieces are next-level," said Project Engineer Mike Butchart. "I would estimate that they increase our production by 30 to 40 percent. Plus, we don't waste time with masts and cables, and we rarely stake a site. On top of that, the system works well. It's like it anticipates what it needs to do next, instead of reacting. That's a huge advantage."

In addition to saving time and money, the machines also enable inexperienced operators to be productive right away.

"Finding skilled operators is a challenge for everyone in our industry right now," lamented Ristow. "The Komatsu *intelligent* machines give new operators the ability to get in the cab and contribute, which really augments the talent pool."

The integrated GPS provides a boost for RAMS' most experienced operators as well, said Foreman Keith Argue. "It elevates their performance. I compare it to giving Aaron Rogers the best wide receivers in the world, instead of a bunch of undrafted free agents."

Serious results

RAMS Contracting is committed to deploying the most advanced technology, and Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control has continually delivered. Last summer RAMS used it successfully on several projects.

On a 16-acre athletic complex for the City of Cedarburg, the *intelligent* Machine Control pieces allowed RAMS crews to save money and time, and also helped them battle rainy conditions.

"We needed to move 20,000 yards of material and place an additional 8,000 yards of



RAMS Contracting Foreman Keith Argue uses a Komatsu *intelligent* Machine Control D61PXi dozer to finish grade a pad in Lannon, Wisc. “The D61PXi is my favorite machine because it’s light, agile and stable,” said Argue. “We do so much with it – finish grading pads, mass grading on ponds, stoning parking lots, grading slopes – anything.”

topsoil for the project; however, it was a very wet summer and there were weeks where we could only work two days,” recalled Argue. “The D61PXi and PC490LCi were crucial to us finishing on time. Being able to excavate and grade with the D61PXi was a huge time-saver. Even with limited access to the project, we were able to make sure the site drained correctly and avoided puddles.

“Also, we could use the PC490LCi to move a lot of dirt, even though it was too wet for scrapers,” he continued. “We could get into those areas without tearing the site up, excavate on-grade and keep loading trucks. The Komatsus made that possible.”

The versatility of the *intelligent* Machine Control equipment further increases its value for RAMS.

“The D61PXi is my favorite machine because it’s light, agile and stable,” said Argue. “We do so much with it – finish grading pads, mass grading on ponds, stoning parking lots, grading slopes – anything. Plus, the visibility from the cab is amazing, I can see the valve boxes, manholes and any other obstacles. The blade doesn’t jump,

the machine rides smooth and we’re within a tenth of a foot. It eliminates the need to bring another machine in to clean up when we’re done. It’s amazing.”

Always learning

Ristow knows that just because RAMS Contracting is ahead of the innovation curve today, that doesn’t guarantee it will be tomorrow. That’s why the RAMS team is always looking for ways to improve.

“Technology isn’t just the wave of the future, it’s already here,” she stated. “It’s constantly changing and improving, and we must learn how to incorporate it, or we will be left behind. We’re always looking for the latest advancements and how to use them. When you sit back, you get left in the dust.”

Ristow sees a similar mindset in Roland and Komatsu.

“Having a manufacturer and dealer that think the same way is paramount for us,” she added. “Komatsu is committed to developing new technology, and Roland does an excellent job educating and training us, so we can use it to the fullest.” ■



Mike Butchart,
Project Engineer



Keith Argue,
Foreman

A SALUTE TO A CUSTOMER

ASPHALT CONTRACTORS, INC.

Family-owned Union Grove, Wisc., company turns opportunities into growth



Robert Kordus,
General Manager

In 1979, Bob and Pete Kordus opened Asphalt Contractors, Inc., focusing on sealcoating and maintenance work in and around Union Grove, Wisc. Bob's son, Robert, took an immediate interest in the company and tagged along with his dad as soon as he was allowed.

"I don't remember exactly when I started, but I recall earning my first paycheck when I was 14," laughed Robert, who serves as General Manager of the firm with Bob as President. "I was on jobsites and machines well before that age. I knew this was what I wanted to do."

The family business has evolved considerably from those modest beginnings. In 1992, the company added paving services to its portfolio, an asphalt plant followed in 2009 and, in 2015, it began crushing and recycling aggregates. Today, it employs 90 people and completes jobs across the country.

This Asphalt Contractors, Inc. crew uses a Vögele Super 1700-3i paver to complete a parking lot in Hales Corners, Wisc. "The 1700-3i is our mainline paver," said General Manager Robert Kordus. "It's productive, efficient and has longevity. It's the best paver on the market."

"The majority of our work is in southeastern Wisconsin, but we've done projects in Ohio, Texas and Delaware," said Robert. "We are now at the point where we handle the majority of aspects on paving assignments. We can do everything from milling to paving to striping – we even have a crew that handles signage and guardrails."

While the addition of services has resulted in Asphalt Contractors' growth throughout nearly 40 years of operation, the company hasn't lost its small, family-run sensibilities. It boasts a project list that ranges from parking lots that require 30,000 tons of asphalt, to a driveway that needs a layer of sealcoating.

"Our goal is to serve a wide range of customers," explained Robert. "While the majority of our time right now is on private commercial work, we still have crews that do driveways. We don't forget the jobs that made us. Each time we've increased in size, it's been to help us serve all of our customers better. Efficiency is the goal."

Rolling with Roland

As Asphalt Contractors continues to thrive, it needs dependable equipment to operate efficiently. That's why it turns to Roland Machinery Company and Territory Manager Aaron Strade for Wirtgen Group machinery. Asphalt Contractors' fleet includes three Wirtgen milling machines (W 2000, W 50 DC and W 130CF), two Hamm rollers (HD 10 C and HD 12) and a Vögele Super 1700-3i paver.

"Everything Wirtgen Group introduces is two years ahead of the competition," shared Robert. "They set the trends in our industry. Their products have the most advanced





Using a Komatsu PC490LC, an Asphalt Contractors, Inc. operator feeds a MOBIEX MR 130 Kleemann mobile impact crusher at the company's yard in Milwaukee. "The crushers are amazing," said General Manager Robert Kordus. "They certainly have made our operation what it is today. They are durable and efficient. Crushing isn't very machine-friendly, but the Kleemann 130 crusher is up to the task every day."

technology and are extremely durable. Other paving equipment just isn't as good. The Hamm rollers are tanks, the Wirtgen mills are the best on the market and the Vögele paver is our mainline machine. Wirtgen is the best – plain and simple. Second place isn't even close."

Roland and Strade also supply Asphalt Contractors with Komatsu equipment, including a WA380 wheel loader and PC490LC-10 excavator.

"The relationship we have with Roland is fantastic," said Robert. "Whenever we need a machine or service, Aaron is there. They have delivered at every turn, and we appreciate that."

Crushing a new venture

When Asphalt Contractors began crushing, it was with the idea to secure better availability of materials for its projects. Today, the division is a full-blown revenue stream.

"It went from helping us have access to products when we needed them, to a serious operation with a dedicated customer list," detailed Robert. "The most common product we make is inch-and-a-quarter DOT-spec for road contracts. We also produce three-inch-minus, six- to eight-inch select crushed and three-quarter-inch minus. This

year, we will turn out nearly 125,000 tons of crushed concrete from our yard in Milwaukee."

The company uses two MOBIEX MR 130 Kleemann mobile impact crushers, purchased from Roland, at its two main yards and moves them to crush at smaller satellite locations.

"The crushers are amazing," said Robert. "They certainly have made our operation what it is today. They are durable and efficient. Crushing isn't very machine-friendly, but the Kleemann 130 crusher is up to the task every day."

Controlled expansion

Asphalt Contractors, like many companies in strong economic times, anticipates annual increases in both jobs and employees. However, recent trends have defied even the firm's most aggressive projections.

"We've grown approximately 20 percent every year since 2012," stated Robert. "I didn't envision us at this size. It's a great situation to have, but our main focus is on controlled expansion instead of adding people, equipment and jobs just because we can. I've seen a lot of companies get really big one day and be gone the next. We want sustainable growth, and that's the question we ask ourselves with every decision. As long as an opportunity makes sense, and we can manage it, we will do it." ■





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COMPLETE LINEUP

Customers test wide range of Komatsu equipment using a variety of materials at Demo Days

Construction equipment owners and operators from across the United States met at the Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia for the three-day fall Komatsu Demo Days event. To provide realistic working conditions, sand, gravel and rocks of various sizes were available so that customers could test machines to their fullest capabilities using materials consistent with their usual jobsites.

Each day began with a tour of the Chattanooga Manufacturing Operation in Tennessee, where many Komatsu excavator models are assembled. After a catered lunch and an informational session about KOMTRAX and Komatsu CARE, attendees made their way to the 45-acre demonstration site to test the latest equipment Komatsu offers.

"Demo Days featured more than 40 Komatsu machines for attendees to operate," explained Komatsu Director of Training and Publications Bill Chimley. "Customers could try out our full range of equipment, with Komatsu experts ready to answer any questions."

New competition

The newest addition to the event was a timed competition where participants used a Komatsu PC55MR-5 compact excavator to pick up and drop three rubber balls into a tub as quickly as possible. Daily winners earned a Komatsu jacket and all who finished in 30 seconds or less received a Komatsu hat.

"We work in a very competitive industry and wanted to introduce some of that spirit into the event," said Rich Smith, Vice

President, Product and Services Division, Komatsu America. "Our goal is to give the customers a new experience every time they visit the Cartersville Customer Center." ■



(R-L) Gulzar Singh and Kit Gakhal, Pan-Oceanic Engineering Co.; Aaron Vargas, Roland Machinery Company; and Fintan Brophy and Bernie McNally, Brophy Excavation get ready to test equipment at Demo Days.

The recent, three-day Demo Days event included more than 40 machines for guests to operate at the 45-acre Cartersville Customer Center demonstration site.



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BRING THEM BACK

In tight labor market, hiring former employees is valid consideration for boosting employee payroll numbers

The largest complaint that I hear from most contractors is their inability to get good workers. That situation hasn't improved with the current low unemployment rate, combined with what is fast becoming a shortage of immigrant personnel.

One source you may not have considered are your former employees, often called "boomerang" workers. This is yet another reason to maintain a cordial relationship with employees when they leave for what they perceive as a better opportunity. Why not ask them if they want to come back, especially when they have shown they are diligent in their jobs?

Each of us makes decisions based on our personal needs at the moment. These may change through time, of course, and a previous work environment may look better with the visibility of hindsight. If you have created a great culture at your organization, this should lend confidence that if circumstances have changed for the employee, then coming back to work for you will appear attractive once again.

Highlighting the benefits

Today, with the advent of social media, it has become possible to stay in touch with former employees via a professional site like LinkedIn. When previous staff members have new accomplishments, be sure to congratulate them. You may learn they have gained new skills that will make them even stronger employees than they were previously.

If you do try to entice former employees back to your firm, be ready to tell them why it will be good for them, not just a plus for

you. There is a natural tendency to feel that returning to a former employer is a step backward in a career. It will be up to you to show them why that is not the case. You may also want to consider if there are any benefits you might be able to provide to confirm that returning to work for you will be positive for them and their families. ■

Ranger Kidwell-Ross is a multi-award-winning author, who has provided advice to contractors in the power sweeping industry for more than 30 years. He is Editor of the largest website for that business sector, WorldSweeper.com, as well as Executive Director of the World Sweeping Association.



Ranger Kidwell-Ross,
 Executive Director,
 World Sweeping
 Association

In this tight labor market firms should consider rehiring former employees, suggests Ranger Kidwell-Ross, Executive Director, World Sweeping Association. "If you have created a great culture at your organization, this should lend confidence that if circumstances have changed for the employee, then coming back to work for you will appear attractive once again," said Kidwell-Ross.



CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

NEW YEAR BRINGS EXPANSION

Construction industry experts project continued growth for nearly every sector in 2019

Forecasters seem to agree that 2019 will continue the ongoing trend of growth in the construction industry, albeit at a slower pace than in previous years. The Dodge Construction Outlook report predicts total starts will reach nearly \$808.3 billion, up from the \$806.8 billion it projected for 2018.

"The fundamentals continue to be sound, and I don't think we're going to be seeing a repeat of what took place in 2008 and 2009," said Robert Murray, Chief Economist for Dodge Data and Analytics.

A decade ago, the overall economy went into turmoil, then began recovering from one of the worst downturns since the Great Depression. Construction was especially hard hit, causing hundreds of businesses to close or severely cut back on staffing. Millions of construction workers were let go and never returned to the profession.

The American Institute of Architects predicts 4 percent growth in 2019 for nonresidential construction, which includes several market sectors.

In 2018, industry unemployment fell to 3.9 percent, nearly the level recorded pre-recession. Construction employment numbers are expected to continue rising. A recent survey of construction executives by the Vistage Research Center found that 64 percent planned to increase hiring in 2019. Another study from Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) showed a large percentage of businesses wanting to hire, if they can overcome the challenge of finding workers. Eighty percent of construction firms reported having trouble hiring hourly craft workers and expect that task to remain difficult or become harder.

"Demand for construction remains strong and pay is rising faster than the overall economy," said Ken Simonson, AGC's Chief Economist. "However, contractors are having increasing difficulty finding qualified workers as industry unemployment slides to historic lows."

Agree to disagree?

Despite agreement on overall growth, industry experts are not always on the same page with regard to individual markets. For instance, Dodge Data & Analytics sees nonresidential construction as basically flat in 2019. On the other hand, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) projects an increase of 4 percent, led by institutional building with a 4.5 percent expansion.

According to AIA, institutional building includes sectors such as public safety, healthcare facilities, education, amusement/recreation and religious. It projects a rise in each category, with the exception of religious, which it sees as flat.

"At the halfway point of 2018, this panel was even more optimistic," said AIA Chief Economist





Dodge Data & Analytics and the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) forecast transportation infrastructure expenditures to rise in 2019. Dodge sees 3 percent growth in the market, while ARTBA eyes an increase of 4.2 percent.

Dr. Kermit Baker last fall. "Its forecasts were marked up to 4.7 percent growth in spending for 2018 and an additional 4.0 percent in 2019. If these projections materialize, by the end of the next year the industry will have seen nine years of consecutive growth, and total spending on nonresidential buildings will be 5 percent greater – ignoring inflationary adjustments – than the last market peak of 2008."

AIA also foresees that the commercial/ industrial market will gain 3.4 percent, led by industrial at 4.9 percent. The organization projects office space to expand by 4.1 percent, hotels by 3.6 percent and retail by 2.7 percent.

Transportation to take off

Another bright spot, according to both Dodge Data & Analytics and the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), will be transportation infrastructure. Dodge forecasts 3 percent growth in the market, while ARTBA eyes an uptick of 4.2 percent, which is identical to 2018 when airport terminal and runway construction led transportation spending.

Airport-related work grew nearly 40 percent in 2018, and ARTBA believes it will rise by 4.5 percent in 2019 compared to the previous year. It expects ports and waterways to experience 3 percent growth. Additional forecasts from ARTBA include an upsurge in bridge and tunnel

work this year and next, after a slowing in the sector for 2018. Public transit and rail construction will increase 5.7 percent, with subway and light rail investment expected to reach a record level.

Public highway and street construction were up in 2018 as well, and ARTBA Chief Economist Dr. Alison Premo Black said greater transportation investment by federal, state and local governments will help drive growth in 2019. ARTBA projects it to reach \$278.1 billion, up from \$266.9 billion.

ARTBA said highway construction is expected to increase in approximately 50 percent of states and in Washington, D.C., while slowing down or remaining steady in the other half. The real value of public highway, street and related work by state DOTs and local government should ramp up 5 percent to \$66.5 billion, according to ARTBA. It also anticipates private highways, bridges, parking lots and driveways to hit approximately \$69.1 billion, up from \$65.9 billion in 2018.

Black did caution that reauthorization of the current surface transportation law (FAST Act) in 2020 and Congress' ability to find additional revenue sources may dampen the outlook. "If states start delaying transportation improvement projects in response to uncertainty over the future of the federal program, it will temper 2019 market growth," shared Black. ■

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'OUR BRAND OF CHOICE'

High production, costs savings with *intelligent Machine Control* dozer spur growing firm to build Komatsu fleet

Good decisions are often directly tied to profitability and prosperity. Justin Lott, Co-owner/Senior Vice President of Southern Transport & Equipment, LLC, learned that lesson after completing fire school.

"I had my sights set on being a firefighter, but I had to finish EMT training as well," recalled Lott. "The summer after I graduated, I took a job working for an oil-field company to make some money. I quickly realized that type of work paid much better than I was projected to make as a firefighter. I was given an opportunity to grow with the business that I worked for, so I took it."

Lott started his own land-clearing and earthwork firm to keep busy during breaks in the company's two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off schedule. Those side jobs eventually evolved into a full-time business, and after a few years, he combined forces with three other entrepreneurs to form Southern Transport & Equipment in 2017.

First impressions

The new venture needed a dozer to make aggressive pushes in tough material. A colleague suggested a standard Komatsu D155. A visit with the local Komatsu distributor convinced Lott to demo an *intelligent Machine Control* D155AXi-8.

"The material at the test site was a very coarse aggregate, and the dozer handled it with ease," Lott recalled. "The grade control is phenomenal, and the fact that we can use a machine of its size from first pass to last on large-scale projects is incredible."

After purchasing the initial D155AXi-8 and then a second, Southern Transport & Equipment also added two *intelligent Machine*

Control D65PXi-18s, a D61PXi-24 and a D85PXi-18. "No matter the size of the dozer, the integrated GPS system works flawlessly," reported Lott. "The costs savings are apparent. Fuel usage is down, while production and efficiency are up. We love that there are no masts or cables to install or remove every day. That increases time spent moving material."

The company has invested in standard Komatsu machinery as well, including a WA500 wheel loader it uses to fill trucks at a gravel pit. On some projects, Southern Transport & Equipment utilizes PC360LC-11 excavators and HM400 articulated trucks to move mass amounts of material.

"Once we tried the intelligent dozers, Komatsu equipment became our brand of choice," declared Lott. ■

Southern Transport & Equipment relies heavily on Komatsu *intelligent Machine Control* dozers. "No matter the size, the integrated system works flawlessly," said Justin Lott, Co-owner/Senior Vice President. "The cost savings are apparent. Fuel usage is down, while production and efficiency are up."



Justin Lott,
Co-owner/Senior
Vice President,
Southern Transport &
Equipment



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SMARTCONSTRUCTION provides a full suite of offerings to help implement technology

Technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace in the construction industry, and those companies that embrace and fully utilize it are more likely to win future bids and finish jobs faster and more profitably. Komatsu is committed to helping customers optimize their jobsite productivity through its SMARTCONSTRUCTION suite of offerings, including *intelligent* Machine Control dozers and excavators.

Available through Komatsu distributors, SMARTCONSTRUCTION provides aerial mapping, 3-D modeling, training and consultation, GPS hardware and jobsite setup. Komatsu-certified Technology Solutions Experts (TSEs) and SMARTCONSTRUCTION consultants can assist customers with technology implementation as well as optimization of the jobsite.

"We want every user to realize the full potential of their jobsite," stated Jason Anetsberger, Komatsu Senior Product Manager. "Technology is changing every day, and our customers want to be on the cutting edge. With SMARTCONSTRUCTION, we can help them access the latest innovations. Our TSEs and consultants have the knowledge and skills to help with every aspect, whether it's choosing the right *intelligent* machinery and implementing it into a fleet, training on base and rover usage or providing aerial mapping and other solutions that maximize production and efficiency."

Komatsu sparked a revolutionary leap in machinery with the introduction of its GPS-integrated *intelligent* Machine Control dozers in 2013. Excavators followed soon after. Komatsu developed SMARTCONSTRUCTION as a one-stop

source for solutions that help *intelligent* Machine Control users maximize production and efficiency.

"For those new to *intelligent* Machine Control equipment, we offer initial instruction from our certified trainers on how to quickly and easily adopt the technology," said Anetsberger. "From there, we focus on consulting with customers to deliver the targeted jobsite efficiency improvements."

Improved accuracy with aerial mapping

One popular SMARTCONSTRUCTION service is aerial mapping, which gathers topographic

Continued . . .



Jason Anetsberger,
Komatsu Senior
Product Manager



Discover more



Komatsu's SMARTCONSTRUCTION program provides one-stop solutions to help *intelligent* Machine Control users maximize the advantages of the technology throughout a project.

Increasing demand for aerial mapping

... continued

data from above. Surveys can be completed before, during and after a project to measure existing and ongoing volumetric changes, stockpile calculations, record amounts of material moved and gather final as-built data.



Komatsu Technology Solutions Experts and SMARTCONSTRUCTION consultants play a vital role delivering SMARTCONSTRUCTION services on the jobsite. Trained and certified by Komatsu, they are specialists at deploying technology to help operations run at peak efficiency.



Komatsu and its distributors have partnered with leaders in aerial mapping technology so that customers can enjoy the benefits of highly accurate, yet quickly gathered topographic data.

Anetsberger said customers are amazed by the resolution and accuracy of the data collected. The highly detailed information gathered prior to the start of a project helps in preparing better estimates and bids, as well as in jobsite planning for greater production and efficiency.

During the construction phase, drones can finish numerous surveys per day without disrupting an active jobsite. That allows companies to get a more accurate picture of progress in less time compared to traditional methods.

"Aerial mapping with drones is something that customers request frequently," said Anetsberger. "Time savings is one of the main reasons. We find that it takes one drone operator roughly 30 minutes to survey a 40-acre site. Compare that to the half-day it typically takes a manned topography crew, and it's easy to see why there's a demand for this service. Additionally, on many jobsites, manned topography may measure only every 20 or 50 feet on a grid, whereas a drone can map nearly every tenth of a foot. That offers greater resolution and improved accuracy."

Allows excavation companies to concentrate on moving dirt

SMARTCONSTRUCTION personnel can not only help companies utilize the data collected from aerial mapping, but also with other data services such as takeoffs.

3-D data modeling services are offered to provide customers of all sizes and capabilities with information for their GPS equipment.

"We are providing quality 3-D data, and our TSEs and consultants know how to optimize it for the machine and the application," said Anetsberger. "With SMARTCONSTRUCTION, we are able to take all of the knowledge and data we have compiled and use it as a total solution to help our customers operate their jobsites at maximum efficiency. That lets earthmoving and excavation companies concentrate on what they do best – move dirt." ■

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

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BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

New camera system gives operators unparalleled look at work area from excavator cab

Jobsites are often described as choreographed chaos – multiple machines and workers completing tasks in tight spaces and under extreme deadline pressure. That is why Komatsu developed KomVision, a multi-camera system that helps operators better track activity around their machines.

"Rearview cameras are already standard on our machines today; this was the next logical step," said Komatsu Senior Product Marketing Manager, Tracked Products Kurt Moncini. "Inside an excavator, the counterweight as well as the engine and pump compartments create unavoidable blind spots for the operator. KomVision helps eliminate them and improve situational awareness for everyone on a jobsite."

KomVision uses software to stitch together video from mounted cameras and then displays it on the in-cab monitor in real-time as one image that looks as if it were filmed from above the machine.

"It gives the operator a bird's-eye view of everything surrounding the excavator," Moncini added. "This is a great feature, especially for those who work in confined spaces. The operator has a complete view of the area to locate poles, equipment or crew members near the machine. It significantly improves situational awareness."

KomVision is currently available on six Komatsu excavators – PC170LC, PC238USLC, HB365LC, PC650LC, PC1250 and PC1250LC – and Moncini expects that number to increase in the near future.

Customized views

On standard excavators, the four-camera system captures a 300-degree view, while short-tail models use three cameras to monitor 240 degrees, with the remaining area in clear,

first-person view of the operator. KomVision's view reaches beyond a fully extended arm and bucket to cover the entire work zone. Additionally, the counterweight swing radius is marked with a red line while a yellow one denotes a "caution area" with a radius that is two meters wider.

"You get an optimal view of your surroundings to easily identify any potential hazards within those zones," noted Moncini. "Increasing an operator's situational awareness is the primary objective."

Operators can use the default, split-screen mode, which displays the bird's-eye view on the left and a selectable camera view on the right, or they can switch to full-screen mode to display the feed from all cameras simultaneously.

"When backing up, for example, the operator can use the split-screen mode to see the rearview camera on one side and the overhead view on the other," noted Moncini. "It's customizable and easy to toggle between cameras." ■



Kurt Moncini,
Komatsu Senior
Product Marketing
Manager, Tracked
Products



Discover more at
RolandIndustryScoop.com



KomVision uses multiple cameras mounted on the exterior of an excavator to compile video from the machine's blind spot and then uses software to stitch it all together and display a real-time, bird's-eye view on the in-cab monitor.



PASSING THE TEST

Attention to detail is the key for Komatsu's Arizona Proving Grounds General Manager Neil Johnson



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.

Neil Johnson, General Manager,
Komatsu's Arizona Proving Grounds

Neil Johnson has spent his entire career with Komatsu. After graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering in Newcastle, England, he began conducting research and development on excavators for Komatsu UK Limited.

"For nine years, I worked with wheeled, crawler, high-reach, road-rail, super-long-front and utility excavators," recalled Johnson.

In 2009, he moved stateside to Komatsu's U.S. Test Group (USTG) in Cartersville, Ga.

"When I came to the States, I visited customer sites and conducted many field tests," shared Johnson. "Then, I got involved with the *intelligent* Machine Control machines, which used a D51-22 dozer that was converted to the prototype for the D61PXi dozer."

Two years after arriving in Georgia, he moved to the Arizona Proving Grounds, where he served as Chief Engineer and was eventually promoted to his current role of General Manager. His tenure at the facility has included several exciting projects.

"One of the major events was moving to this current facility in 2015," noted Johnson. "We put a lot of thought into the building design, test courses and the mining site, in addition to installing permanent infrastructure for the Autonomous Haulage System."

In his free time, Johnson enjoys traveling with his wife, Angela, and riding motorcycles, in addition to mechanical projects.

QUESTION: What is the Komatsu Arizona Proving Grounds?

ANSWER: It's a 660-acre facility in Sahuarita, Ariz., where up to 40 employees conduct research and development primarily for Komatsu mining haul trucks. However, with the formation of Komatsu Mining, we are expanding our reach to test other mining products. We currently have a PC7000 excavator and P&H 77XR drill here.

QUESTION: What kind of testing takes place at the facility?

ANSWER: We focus on three types of testing: performance, structural and durability. Typically, we address the first two on our site. We have a mine operation set up here, and we spend hours running the equipment through various exercises. Once we complete performance and structural testing, we closely monitor the durability of the machine at a customers' site for approximately 2,500 hours.

QUESTION: What role does the Arizona Proving Grounds play in the development and testing of Komatsu's Autonomous Haulage System (AHS)?

ANSWER: We are the only Komatsu site that engages in AHS development and benchmarking. We have the same testing process for AHS as we do for the trucks. The group in Peoria, Ill., handles the design and integration, and we put it to work in the field to validate performance. We ensure that the sensors in all structures meet life expectancy and measure stress as well as vibration on those components.

Here in Arizona, we also analyze software updates before they are integrated into Komatsu



Komatsu's Arizona Proving Grounds is a 660-acre facility north of Tucson in Sahuarita, Ariz. It primarily handles research and development for mining haul trucks and recently began testing other Komatsu Mining equipment and alternative technology.

equipment. Our group performs a stability test, which is a 150-hour exercise that searches for any failures in the system. If issues are detected, they are addressed and testing begins again. We pride ourselves on delivering products and technology that perform to our customers' high standards from the very beginning.

QUESTION: In addition to addressing equipment and technology, are there other ways you help customers increase productivity?

ANSWER: While equipment and technology are major components to efficient operation, we also look at site design. Sometimes removing three stop signs from an operation or changing an incline can result in significant fuel savings, so we work with customers to address those as well.

QUESTION: What does the future look like for the Arizona Proving Grounds?

ANSWER: We have several new things coming up, including larger customer events. In the past, we primarily hosted individual customer demos, but, for the first time, we recently held an AHS event for a group of customers, and we have others planned. It's exciting to open the doors to the facility so that people can see it and experience the equipment, because both are really impressive.



Equipment goes through rigorous testing at the Arizona Proving Grounds. "We focus on three types of testing: performance, structural and durability," said General Manager Neil Johnson. "We have a mine operation set up here, and we spend hours running the equipment through various exercises."



In addition to equipment and technology testing, the Arizona Proving Grounds evaluates mining site plans to help customers layout their operations in the most efficient manner.

We will continue to work with AHS, including testing the Innovative Autonomous Haul Vehicle. It is the world's first cabless, driverless haul truck. Komatsu debuted the prototype at MINExpo in 2016. After the show, it came straight here for testing. It's been a very good research platform. ■

2 BILLION TONS HAULED

FrontRunner autonomous haulage system sets record with latest milestone



Dan Funcannon,
Vice President/
General Manager,
Large Mining Truck
Division, Komatsu
America

The numbers doubled quickly. In 2016, Komatsu's FrontRunner Autonomous Haulage System (AHS) marked 1 billion tons hauled since its first commercial deployment in 2008. Then, in 2018, AHS hit the 2-billion-ton mark, which is higher than all other commercial systems combined.

The feat was accomplished with more than 130 driverless trucks in operation in mines across the world. The number of tons hauled will keep rising significantly, with an additional 150 trucks slated for deployment in the Canadian oil sands throughout the next seven years.

"AHS continues to play an increasingly crucial role in effective mine management as more and more operations transition from manned to unmanned fleets," said Dan Funcannon, Vice President/General Manager, Large Mining Truck Division, Komatsu America. "As the demand for AHS grows, Komatsu will continue raising the

bar in an effort to help mines provide safer environments, maximize production and reduce operating costs."

Future focused

Komatsu has accelerated the pace of AHS deployment by working closely with customers and educating them about the system's 10-year, zero-harm and productivity record as well as unmatched ability to accommodate an array of mining environments. Today's FrontRunner system operates around the clock to haul copper, iron and oil sands at seven sites across three continents.

"The ongoing investment in technology and equipment by major mining companies underscores their belief in the value of autonomous haulage," said Anthony Cook, Vice President Autonomous and Communications Solutions at Modular Mining Systems, a subsidiary of Komatsu.

Komatsu's best-in-class approach for FrontRunner AHS brings the world's best-selling, ultra-class dump trucks together with Modular Mining Systems' industry-leading DISPATCH Fleet Management System, the preferred management system in nine of the 10 largest mining operations in the world. The system enables 100-percent compliance with proven optimization methodology, delivering unrivaled performance.

Komatsu plans to enhance AHS' mixed-operations functions. In an effort to enhance safety and efficiency, Komatsu is working with industry stakeholders to standardize interoperability between Komatsu and non-Komatsu autonomous vehicles. ■

Komatsu's FrontRunner Autonomous Haulage System passed the 2-billion-tons hauled mark recently. Commercial deployment of the driverless trucks began in 2008, and today there are more than 130 of them in operation around the world.



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ALL IN ONE PLACE

'MyKomatsu' website brings together wealth of machine information and support items

What if you could check the location of your machines, their health and how they are being used and then order parts or learn the status of an order already placed, all from the same tool? Soon, you will be able to do all of that and more with the MyKomatsu website, set to launch in early 2019. The rollout across the country in the months to follow promises to bring a variety of information about your fleet and the support you need to maintain it, right to your desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile device.

"Customers told us they wanted comprehensive information in one convenient spot, instead of looking for it through multiple applications," said Rizwan Mirza, Komatsu Manager, KOMTRAX, Products and Services Division. "We responded with the new MyKomatsu website. Owners can monitor their fleet and find the necessary items to maintain it with a solid integration of the parts world."

MyKomatsu is more than just a telematics tool, it's also a complete redesign of Komatsu America's eCommerce solution. "MyKomatsu is designed to bring eCommerce and parts ordering back into the comprehensive fleet management conversation," says Dan Chapeck, Manager of Retail Marketing, Komatsu Parts. "We understand our customers require a tool that brings everything into one place, so our goal was to create a single environment where owners can learn about their machines, monitor jobsites, and maintain equipment with the highest quality Komatsu Genuine Parts, all in the same place."

Free and easy-to-use

The MyKomatsu website (<https://mykomatsu.komatsu>) will offer a familiar suite of all-inclusive telematics solutions, allowing owners to access information about their equipment location, machine hours, load

factors, cautions and more, as reported through Komatsu's existing telematics resources, such as KOMTRAX or KOMTRAX Plus. Signing up for an account is free and simple and can be done through your local Komatsu distributor.

"You can get a general overview of an entire fleet, such as average idle time, as well as have the ability to drill down to specific machines for greater detail," said Mirza. "For example, owners can take a quick glance at the machine's performance or health; pull up a specific machine's spec sheet; look up operator and maintenance manuals or parts and service news; plus use a catalog to find a part and place an order online with a local Komatsu distributor."

"To best serve our customers and continue to earn the right to be their partner in business, we are offering tools to simplify the entire ownership experience. Being able to view and manage your business in this environment in the same way as you do in reality was the smartest place to start," added Chapeck. ■

For more information or to register for MyKomatsu, contact your local authorized Komatsu distributor.



Rizwan Mirza,
Komatsu Manager,
KOMTRAX, Products
and Services Division



Dan Chapeck,
Manager,
Retail Marketing,
Komatsu Parts



The MyKomatsu website (<https://mykomatsu.komatsu>) provides a wide range of information to track equipment, including hours, load factors, cautions and more. "Users can monitor their fleet and find the items necessary to maintain it," said Rizwan Mirza, Komatsu Manager, KOMTRAX, Products and Services Division.

PRODUCTIVITY POINTERS

MAKING MORE TOP OPERATORS

Komatsu helps build combination of skilled operators and well-designed machines for maximum production

Ask any group of construction equipment owners about the importance of their operators, and chances are you will hear very positive comments about the people in their cabs. That's because, according to Kurt Wilson, it takes a combination of well-designed machines and proficient operators to achieve top production.

Wilson is one of three corporate trainers certified and qualified by Komatsu to offer expert-level instruction. They work with equipment owners and their staff members to help them get the most from Komatsu machines. With years of experience running equipment – as well as delivering training – all Komatsu corporate trainers have the skills and knowledge to help companies increase job efficiencies and operators enhance their skills.

They offer training at Komatsu's Cartersville Customer Center in Georgia or at a customer's requested location.

"As we work with operators, we are learning too," said Wilson. "We have techniques, tips and information about the machines that we

can share based on our experiences. At the same time, they often provide us with valuable insight that we can incorporate into our training and pass along to others. It's a two-way street."

Focusing on safety

Safety is of utmost importance, so Komatsu corporate trainers emphasize it in every session. "Once we have established that safety comes first, then we typically begin with classroom activities," explained Todd Bresemann, another Komatsu trainer. "During these meetings, we present information about the machines, and, at the same time, participants help us better understand their particular circumstances and needs."

When a group moves from the classroom to a site, they begin with a complete walkaround of the machine. "We go over pre-operation inspections thoroughly, then move to systems, functions and actual operation," said Jason Gillard, the third training team member.

"We help operators familiarize themselves with the latest machine features as well as proven operational techniques," noted Gillard. "Our aim is to assist those who run equipment to boost operational effectiveness, and to do so in ways that reduce maintenance issues. That leads to increased machine availability, which, in turn, provides even greater output and lower per-ton and per-yard costs."

"Observing people in action is always part of the process, with the goal of pointing out strategies to use the machinery most effectively," added Wilson. "We want to see companies achieve the greatest returns on their equipment investment as possible, and we know that skilled employees are one of the keys to doing that." ■



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(L-R) Komatsu Corporate Trainers Kurt Wilson, Todd Bresemann and Jason Gillard assist companies in improving return on investment through hands-on and classroom learning. Training can be arranged through your Komatsu distributor.





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BREAKING THE MOLD

Varied paths lead two women to rewarding careers as Roland Machinery Company managers

This is the first in a series of articles that will showcase Roland Machinery Company's female employees who are making their mark in the heavy equipment industry.

Jen Jacobs and Carolyn Kowalik grew up in construction families and had a familiarity with heavy equipment, yet their paths to Roland Machinery Company weren't as obvious as they might have been for males with similar backgrounds. Eventually though, both women found their way to the heavy equipment industry.

Jacobs comes from a family that has been in the construction business for 22 years. Working in a small business, she had exposure to many aspects of the construction industry. Jacobs has also spent many years in the corporate world.

"Last year, our Roland Sales Rep, Aaron Strade, said they had an opening for a Territory Manager," Jacobs said. "My brother suggested that I give it a shot because I knew equipment and had sales experience. At first, I joked with Aaron about it, but once I gave it some thought, it seemed like a great opportunity."

Kowalik began her career with Roland in 1994 as a secretary at the Carterville branch and

worked her way up the ladder, breaking tradition each step of the way.

"While there wasn't a clear path from the secretary position, as spots came open, I raised my hand and started moving up," she recalled. "When our manager left in 2014, I began asking questions about the process because I wanted to know who my new boss was going to be. To my surprise, they asked me to apply, and I got the Parts and Service Manager job."

Both Jacobs and Kowalik understood that competing in a male-dominated profession would present some challenges; however, it didn't take long for people to recognize that both women are the real deal.

"Customers just want to work with someone who can help them," stated Kowalik. "They see that I take this job seriously, and they appreciate it. There's a level of trust."

"I think I took some of them by surprise when I first showed up," laughed Jacobs. "I expected some customers to test me, and I was ready. Everyone has been great to work with."

Setting a trend

Kowalik and Jacobs are happy to be trendsetters and hope they are joined by more females in the near future.

"I wish I would have been doing this job for the last 20 years, I love it so much," shared Jacobs. "With it becoming harder to find workers in our industry, I hope companies will think outside of the box and that more women will seek employment here."

"It would be a win-win if more women were involved," echoed Kowalik. "Greater diversity will help the industry evolve and adapt to today's market. This work can instill a sense of confidence and toughness in females that they can do anything they want to do." ■

Territory Manager Jen Jacobs (left) and Carterville, Ill., Parts and Service Manager Carolyn Kowalik are industry trendsetters who are enjoying their careers with Roland Machinery Company.



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2007 KOMATSU D155AX-6 \$174,500
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2014 KOMATSU WA270-7 \$109,500
STK# KM17236, 5,015 HRS, MARENGO, IL



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