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E.T. Simonds Construction Company

Family business offers range of services in Southern Illinois

KOMATSU



ACLAN

September 2023

Beck Simonds, President

A Message from the President



Matthew L. Roland

Celebrating 10 years of IMC



Dear Valued Customer:

We sincerely hope that your year is going well. While the economy has seen its ups and downs, construction is one industry that has continued to be an overall bright spot even if some sectors have been somewhat slower lately.

On a celebratory note, it is the 10th anniversary of Komatsu's Intelligent Machine Control (IMC). What a decade it's been for the factory-integrated GPS excavators and dozers that continue to improve. Companies of every size are seeing improved savings in both time and costs, and you can read some of their stories in this issue.

With its extensive lineup of construction, mining, forestry and industrial machinery, Komatsu continues to innovate. Get a glimpse of what Komatsu has to offer and see the future of construction inside this issue. We highlight the PC210LCE electric excavator and the fuel-cell excavator that is currently in development. Also featured is the new PC130LC-11 that's a great all-around excavator designed to work in a wide variety of applications and is portable enough to be moved behind a dump truck or a larger pickup.

No matter what you need, we have you covered with machines and innovative products. If you are looking for equipment, you should consider tax advantages such as bonus depreciation. This year, full (100%) bonus depreciation, which was passed under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA), dropped to 80%. Under the law, it will continue to decrease by 20% per year until it reaches 0% in 2027, so now may be a great time to make a purchase. Check out the article in this issue for more information.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please feel free to contact one of our branch locations.

Sincerely, Roland Machinery Co.

Matthew L. Roland, President





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E.T. Simonds Construction Company grows through three generations, becomes a top contracting firm in Illinois



Beck Simonds, President

Starting in the late 1950s, the interstate highway system spurred a new era of transportation for the nation. It was also a catalyst for E.T. Simonds Construction Company's growth.

"The interstate system running through Southern Illinois really catapulted the company to another level," said Beck Simonds, whose grandparents Eugene T. and Emma K. Simonds founded the company in 1946 in Carbondale, III. "They were fortunate enough to be a part of a lot of the projects in the 1960s and 1970s that provided a big uplift to the construction business."

Ironically, many of E.T. Simonds Construction's projects are for the Department of Transportation (DOT), which is where Eugene worked prior to joining the Air Force as a navigator during World War II. When he returned home from his deployment, he and Emma decided to set off on their own.

"They took some chances that paid off," Edward and Kassy Simonds - got involved and eventually ran the company."

Each generation has helped the business grow into one of Southern Illinois' top contractors, offering everything from residential service to complete heavy highway construction and reconstruction, including milling, earthwork and

A crew paves a county road with a VÖGELE SUPER 2000-3i tracked paver.



drainage, structure removal and replacement, as well as concrete and asphalt paving.

Learning with each project

Like most who grew up around family businesses, Beck worked after school and during summers for E.T. Simonds Construction. After graduating from college, he returned to E.T. Simonds Construction and went to work in the field before transitioning to the office to oversee projects. He eventually became the chief of operations and was promoted to president three years ago when his father retired, which made him the third generation of Simonds at the helm of the company.

E.T. Simonds Construction is now under the Simonds Group umbrella, along with E.T. Simonds Materials, which was created about 10 years ago and produces asphalt materials, and Illini Asphalt, which was founded in 1975 and offers oil and chip services. Simonds Group also includes two limestone operations in Illinois: Kinkaid Stone near Campbell Hill and Anna Quarries located in Anna. Beck's sister Kate Stevens is the president of Illini Asphalt, and their cousin Will Pyatt is the president of the quarry operations.

"The companies bid to each other and assist on different capacities depending on the project," explained Beck. "Each remains a separate entity too, so they have their own workloads. E.T. Simonds Construction remains the largest and does about \$100 million in volume annually with projects ranging in size from a driveway to a comprehensive multimillion-dollar highway job."

E.T. Simonds Construction typically has 20 to 25 projects in the works at any one time throughout Southern Illinois. A staff of about 75 full-time employees - augmented to between 400 and 500 during the summer - ensure the company stays on track. Beck estimated that 80% of projects are done as a general contractor with staff self-performing approximately 85% of the work.

Recently, E.T. Simonds Construction general contracted a \$60 million job to install new lanes on a 9-mile stretch of Interstate 57 between Marion and Mount Vernon. The project also included replacing two bridges.



Operators work in tandem with Komatsu PC360LC and PC228USLC excavators to demolish a bridge. The PC228USLC is equipped with a Tramac hammer.

"It was particularly challenging because of the high traffic levels, which is the reason for adding the lanes," Beck noted. "That meant a lot of our material delivery had to be done during off-peak hours, which made it even tougher because we basically had to work around the clock. In fact, in the past 15 to 20 years we have seen more of those, which often puts us working in tighter timeframes too. We continue to learn on every job."

A valuable partnership

Beck emphasized that Roland Machinery Company's expertise has been valuable as well. The two companies have worked together for several years on sales, rentals and service. Recent acquisitions have been done with the help of Carterville-based Territory Manager Austin Robertson.

"Our shared history goes way back, and I feel like it's continued to get stronger because Roland and its people like Austin understand our business and how best to match the machines to our needs," said Beck. "A lot of times we sit down ahead of a bid to see what equipment they have available that we don't have in our fleet that will help us compete at a level to secure the project. They've visited job sites and helped us determine how we could better utilize our existing equipment to increase production and efficiency. They also know how critical service is. With tighter deadlines, uptime is more critical than ever. All machinery is going to have issues, so having a dealer like Roland that responds right away is essential."

Beck added that Roland helps during off-peak times as well.

"We have taken advantage of winter downtime by having Roland come out and provide some training to our personnel, as well as to have their technicians go through our equipment and make sure it's in top shape before it goes back to work," noted Beck. "Their knowledge of the newer electronic and emissions systems is invaluable. From start to finish, they work to maximize our productivity and profitability."



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'Our operators prefer Komatsu'

... continued



Roland Machinery Territory Manager Austin Robertson (left) talks to E.T. Simonds Construction Equipment Manager Merv Lence next to E.T. Simonds Construction's original truck from 1946.



WIRTGEN

Equipment to meet any need

Having a diverse lineup of equipment manufacturers is important too, according to Beck. E.T. Simonds Construction works with Robertson and Roland to acquire products from Komatsu, WIRTGEN GROUP, Tramac and more.

E.T. Simonds Construction relies on Komatsu excavators for a variety of tasks, such as earthwork and demolition, and utilizes Komatsu dozers for stripping, grading and placing materials. Its sister companies use Komatsu wheel loaders to feed crushers and load trucks.

"Our operators prefer Komatsu," declared Beck. "They continue to ask for them, and that goes a long way in determining what the next machine will be when we look to add on to the fleet or trade for a new one. That's especially been the case with the excavators, which are our mainline machines. The operators say there is a big difference in breakout force and the sheer power compared to other brands. Nearly all we have, especially in the midsized range, are plumbed to run a hammer or other attachment for bridge and pavement removal."

Equipment Manager Merv Lence added, "Komatsu's undercarriages on the tracked machines have continued to get better. We have used excavators since the mid-1990s, and at that time, we were getting 5,000 to 6,000 hours. Several of our newer machines have gone almost double that with the original

E.T. Simonds Construction uses several WIRTGEN GROUP products, including WIRTGEN mills and HAMM rollers.

Marchanter and Marchant



With a Komatsu WA500-8 wheel loader, an operator loads a truck at Anna Quarries, which is a sister company to E.T. Simonds Construction.

undercarriage. Other brands we are typically changing out at 4,000 hours."

Merv tracks critical data with remote telematics systems, including Komatsu's Komtrax and WIRTGEN's WITOS. Both have been great for staying on top of maintenance and better fleet management.

"Komtrax helps us track our Komatsu equipment, and if a code pops up, we know what it is almost immediately," said Merv. "WITOS also helps a lot with the diagnosis of the WIRTGEN GROUP equipment."

E.T. Simonds Construction began using WIRTGEN products about 15 years ago after Beck visited with Roland personnel and manufacturing representatives at World of Asphalt, the leading trade show for the aggregate, asphalt, pavement maintenance, and traffic safety industry sectors. E.T. Simonds Construction had extensively used another brand up until that time.

"We knew we wanted the best machine for our line of work, and after talking with them and doing some in-depth study, we determined that a VÖGELE paver was what we needed," said Beck. "It's been our paving brand since, and we firmly believe it's the best paver on the market. The trend for the past few years has been for the DOT to have tighter requirements for pavement smoothness. We believe having the superior class of asphalt paving equipment allows us to achieve high marks and earn bonuses." E.T. Simonds Construction's great experience with the VÖGELE paver encouraged the company to buy WIRTGEN mills and eventually HAMM rollers.

"It's a great opportunity to be able to work through one dealer and one host of companies for that many different lines," said Beck.

Longtime employees, strategic acquisitions

One of Eugene's values when he first started the business was staying close to home. He and Emma wanted employees to be able to drive to a job and back home every day.

"That philosophy has endured, and I don't see us changing it," said Beck. "Our main focus is Southern Illinois, and we work to gain market share here rather than taking on things where our staff would have to stay long periods of time away from their families. That's helped us gain a lot of longtime employees, including multigenerational workers from the same family. We love that."

E.T. Simonds Construction has gained market share by making strategic acquisitions over the years.

"That helped us pick up some new employees and upped our level of expertise at the same time, so it was a win-win," said Beck. "Over the years, we have done that a few times with good results. I don't know if that will continue, but I do know that we look at possibilities within this area for ways to grow and improve as we have always done." ■

A Decade of Data

The 10th anniversary of IMC confirms that users have saved time, lowered costs with integrated GPS grade control



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

In 2013, Komatsu changed the landscape of the construction equipment industry with the introduction of the first Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) dozer that provided fully automatic blade control from rough cut to finish grade. The D61i-23 made an immediate impact, and a decade later, there is plenty of evidence that IMC equipment has cut costs significantly for customers and increased operator efficiency.

"Providing that semi-autonomous functionality in the dozers from the factory was unheard of in the industry," said Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Technical Service for Komatsu. "It was revolutionary. The integrated GPS grade control gave operators the ability to move dirt faster and more accurately with fewer stakes and reduced surveying costs. We found that novice operators saw their skill set grow rather quickly when using Intelligent Machine Control, because the semi-autonomous operation is a learning tool that is teaching them proper operation. Experienced operators found that it helped them work more comfortably throughout the day, and we found those operators willing to stay in the workforce a little bit longer because of the more enjoyable experience that the technology provided them."

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Upgrades

The D61i-23's success set the stage for additional models, as well as IMC excavators that go beyond simple guidance to semi-automatically limit over-excavation and trace a target surface. Once the target elevation is reached, no matter how hard an operator tries to move the joystick to lower the boom, the excavator doesn't allow it. This reduces wasted time and the need for expensive fill materials.

Liesfeld Contractor, based in Richmond, Va., was the first company to adopt a D61i-23 dozer in 2013. It has since upgraded its fleet multiple times and currently has 10 IMC dozers and three IMC excavators, including some IMC 2.0 models with advanced features that help further increase productivity. The IMC 2.0 dozers have proactive dozing control, which enables even less-experienced operators to cut/strip automatically from existing terrain, as well as lift layer control, tilt steering control, and quick surface creation.

The IMC 2.0 excavators feature bucket angle hold control, which automatically holds the bucket angle to the design surface during arm operation. It's less fatiguing for operators, so they are more productive, and it produces a better finish-grade surface. Plus, auto tilt bucket control assists operators by aligning the bucket parallel with the slope, so that finish grading can be accomplished without needing to align the machine with the target surface.

Komatsu IMC excavators go beyond simple guidance to semi-automatically limit over-excavation and trace a target surface.



Komatsu's D61i-24 IMC 2.0 dozer is the second generation of the original IMC dozer introduced in 2013. Its features include proactive dozing control, lift layer control, tilt steering control, and quick surface creation.

"We have come to rely on IMC, as it puts a lot of the information about the job right in front of the operator on the monitor," said Kelby Morgan, Operations Manager at Liesfeld Contractor. "The more we can put on the job site, the better off we are. We can get jobs done with fewer worker hours. We're less reliant on surveying. Everything combined makes us more efficient. I think it gives us an advantage over those who don't use it."

Increased efficiency, lower costs

Wisconsin-based Soper Companies performs earthwork and various other services with a sizable fleet of equipment that includes several Komatsu IMC excavators and dozers.

"We're committed to incorporating technology into our practices — from having our own survey techs who lay out jobs to digital plans to using the latest innovations in grade control — because we see increased efficiency and overall lower costs," said Vice President Ethan Engel. "Our labor expenses are down because we don't need grade checkers, and we're moving material faster and more accurately."

Engel praised the Komatsu PC290LCi-11 IMC 2.0 excavator for its ability to follow complex design plans in foundation and utility digs.

"It's been spot-on, and once you hit target depth on the model that's been uploaded to the excavator, it won't let you dig any deeper," said Engel. "Operators hit final elevation without over-digging, so we are not replacing dirt with expensive backfill. In turn, that reduces trucking, lowers fuel consumption, and helps profitability. We are seeing similar savings with the dozers. Our operators get to grade faster with less material movement."

Frank A. Rogers & Company Inc. (FARCO), a general contractor in Arkansas, saw similar results when an operator used a D39PXi-24 IMC dozer to complete a 52,000-square-foot commercial building that included 4 acres of pads. According to President Taylor Meharg, it saved approximately 10% to 20% on costs compared to a similar project the company did with rental equipment. FARCO has also found that the D39PXi-24 cuts down on surveying time.

"We can do most of our surveying with one piece of equipment," said Meharg. "The level of accuracy you get with IMC is an upgrade over traditional equipment, and I think even the best operators in our company would agree with me that it makes their job easier and helps get the project done faster."

'We view IMC as a time-saving tool'

... continued

Texas-based Baker & Company Construction LLC realized the benefits of IMC when it compared a GPS-integrated dozer to a competitive model with an aftermarket system.

"Komatsu was the clear winner," stated President Brad Baker. "Operation was smooth, and the fact that there are no masts or cables to deal with made it a no-brainer. We now have four IMC dozers that we rely on heavily for stripping to finish grade. Our productivity is higher, and our costs are reduced because those dozers allow us to move material once and more efficiently. Operators know exactly where to place, cut and grade because the plans are in the dozer, and it's automatically doing what's needed in relation to reaching finished elevation. They have cut our mass grading time by roughly 50%."

Specialty situations

Komatsu IMC technology works in specialty situations as well as traditional earthmoving. ABR Construction Inc., which is headquartered in Nicholasville, Ky., equips its PC360LCi-11 excavators with rock grinders.

"Using a grinder with the IMC technology allows you to achieve grade without over-digging or misalignment because misaligning a rock trench can be a very expensive mistake," explained Project Manager Ben Troxell.

ABR Construction also uses IMC dozers to complete everything from stripping to finish grade. The company gets further versatility by outfitting the dozers with rippers. "We were constantly replacing stakes, and now, the whole site plan is in the dozer itself," said President Christian Ach. "We have less downtime, so we view IMC as a time-saving tool that makes our operators more functional. Now, they produce eight to 10 hours a day rather than worrying about knocking down stakes."

"I feel as though our overall efficiency has gone up 100% since we aren't wasting time staking, and that also frees up project managers to do other tasks," noted Senior Project Manager Darrin Darnell.

Continuing to build

According to Earing, customers across North America — and the world — have seen similar results with IMC equipment.

"The original vision for IMC was to provide a solution that all of our customers can benefit from," said Earing. "We wanted to make this available, scalable and really intuitive enough that everyone can use it, no matter the size of the contractor. Ten years later, we can pointedly say that we believe we achieved that and much more. We're continuing to build on it, and with customer input, we are seeing applications for IMC machines that we hadn't thought of at the beginning."

*The opinions expressed here are from the end users who are quoted. The results described herein are those of these end users under certain conditions. Your results may vary.

The D71i-24 models are the newest Komatsu IMC 2.0 dozers.



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Guest Opinion

Do you know the drill? The importance of preparation and timeliness for reporting construction site injuries



Dimitrius King, Chief Claims Officer, Pie Insurance

About the Author: As Pie's first chief claims officer, Dimitrius is responsible for leading and implementing the company's claims strategy. Over the past 15 years, Dimitrius has held various strategic and claims leadership roles in both personal lines and commercial lines. His background includes leading in workers' compensation, group benefits, auto, property, and catastrophe claims organizations. To learn more about Dimitrius, construction safety and workers' compensation claims, visit Pie Insurance.

With nearly 6.5 million people on construction sites across the U.S. each day, accidents are likely to occur. In 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 1,008 fatal and 174,000 non-fatal construction injuries. The injuries included falls, structural collapses, electric shocks, failure to use proper protective equipment, and many others. While safety guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) are put in place, accidents still happen. Are you and your crew prepared for the aftermath? When an injury inevitably occurs, employers must understand their roles as business owners, especially when it comes to the claims process.

Before an injury occurs, employers should educate all team members on workers' compensation injury and illness reporting requirements, outline who an employee should report an incident to, and how that report should be handled.

How does the workers' compensation claim process work?

When an injury occurs, the injured employee must notify their employer and file a formal workers' compensation claim. The employer is then responsible for giving the employee the appropriate paperwork and guidance, as well as filing the claim with the insurance provider in compliance with state law for reporting workplace injuries. However, it's important to remember that every situation is different.

Accidents happen. Having a clear plan in place when they occur is essential, according to Dimitrius King, Chief Claims Officer for Pie Insurance.



State workers' compensation laws and deadlines vary considerably, so employers should do their research and speak with a trusted advisor when an employee injury occurs at the workplace.

Once reported by the employee, the employer has limited time to submit the paperwork for the employee to receive workers' compensation benefits. The timeline for filing a workers' compensation claim for benefits varies significantly depending on the state and can range from one to three years or more. It's always best to report an incident as soon as possible, as this often reduces the time it takes to close a claim. Both parties should act quickly when workplace injuries occur as the claim can be denied if a state's workers' compensation claim deadline is missed.

Important steps construction business owners should take when filing a workers' compensation claim

Educating employees on proper reporting processes can help streamline claims if and when injuries occur. When an injury occurs, employers must:

- Ensure the injured employee receives immediate medical care
- Complete an injury/illness report and file it with the organization's workers' compensation carrier — within 24 hours of the injury if possible
- Keep communication open with the workers' compensation carrier and the injured employee
- When appropriate, establish a timeline for returning to work
- Support the injured employee as they transition back into their role within the organization

While not all accidents can be prevented, having a clear plan in place when they occur is essential. Employers must understand their responsibility to employees and their businesses' bottom line when correctly and efficiently filing workers' compensation claims.

Editor's Note: This article is for informational purpose only and not an endorsement of any particular insurance carrier.



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Product Focus

Upgraded PC130LC-11 excavator increases lifting capacity while remaining highly portable for use in a variety of applications

Looking for an excavator that can help complete jobs faster? Easily transported from job to job, Komatsu's newly upgraded PC130LC-11 increases lifting capacity by up to 20%, compared to the previous model.

"The new PC130LC-11 has a longer undercarriage with 8% more track length, which provides greater stability and increased operating weight," said Nathaniel Waldschmidt, Komatsu Product Manager. "The result is increased lifting capacity both over the front and side. The upgraded PC130LC-11 can easily handle a wide variety of utility work or small construction jobs."

With fast cycle times, seamless multifunction motions, and exacting bucket movements for high productivity, the PC130LC-11 uses up to 12% less fuel, compared to the PC130-8. To further reduce fuel usage, the excavator also features auto idle shutdown, which stops the engine after a preset amount of time.

Its operating weight of 28,440 to 29,101 pounds makes the PC130LC-11 highly portable,

and users can move it with a tag trailer and still have capacity to spare for additional support equipment.

"Mobility remains a clear asset," said Waldschmidt. "When a contractor finishes one job, they can easily load the PC130LC-11 and quickly be on their way to the next job site. When they get there, it's a matter of minutes to unload and start working, so it maximizes productivity."

Built-in durability

Steel castings in the boom foot, boom nose and arm tip provide durability. The large one-piece hood, ground-level grease points, engine oil, and fuel filters provide quick-and-easy service access. Plus, high hydraulic pressures help optimize high arm and bucket digging forces.

Waldschmidt concluded, "We encourage anyone who's looking for a smaller conventional tail swing excavator that's proven to get the job done to contact their distributor for additional information and to set up a demo."



Nathaniel Waldschmidt, Product Manager, Komatsu





Demo Days

Customer feedback helps drive innovation at Komatsu Demo Days 2023 in Georgia



Michael Gidaspow, Vice President of Product Service and Solutions, Komatsu



Kurt Renzland, Owner, K.J. Renzland Excavating Inc.



Thomas Wayson, Operator, The Quartz Corp. of America



Bennett Conrad, Operator/ Fleet Manager/ Technician, Conrad Brothers

Komatsu customers had their first chance to get their hands on the new products that were featured at CONEXPO-CON/AGG at the company's annual Demo Days in Cartersville, Ga.

"We had about 400 customers come through the event with their distributors," said Michael Gidaspow, Vice President of Product Service and Solutions for Komatsu. "There were many Komatsu experts who talked to customers and got their feedback on our equipment and our solutions."

Customers at the event were eager to get in the operator's seat of two new excavators showcased at CONEXPO-CON/AGG: the PC900LC-11 excavator and the PC210LCE electric excavator.

"Those two machines were the stars of the show; they got a lot of feedback and operation," said Gidaspow. "Customers want to know how the PC210LCE electric excavator compares to their traditional excavator, or how the PC900 operates."

The event also featured Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) 2.0 equipment; Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions; Montabert, Lehnhoff and Hensley products; and Komatsu's newest forestry machine: a PC230F-11.

"We want to make sure that Komatsu equipment is fully utilized, and that our customers' entire job sites are as efficient as possible," said Gidaspow. "That is where Komatsu technologies come in, so they can help customers hit their goals. When they come to Cartersville, customers can see what Komatsu does and learn about how our offerings can assist them."

While new machines and technology were a significant draw for the event, some customers noted the overall reliability Komatsu has provided their operations over the years.

"My experience with Komatsu is that the machines are very reliable," commented Kurt Renzland, owner of K.J. Renzland Excavating Inc. "That's why I'm here. My PC400 excavator is over 20 years old, and it has over 20,000 hours with the original motor and hydraulic pumps. For us, that reliability means we can keep working and aren't wasting time repairing machinery or having to deal with expensive repair bills. Even when we went

At Demo Days, an attendee scoops material with a Komatsu PC900LC-11 excavator equipped with an 8-yard bucket.





A Komatsu instructor guides an operator through the capabilities of a Komatsu PC900LC-11 excavator.

through tough times, I was able to lean on our Komatsu machines and get through."

Powerful, efficient PC900LC-11

Towering above the other machinery and quickly drawing a crowd at Demo Days was Komatsu's PC900LC-11 excavator equipped with an 8-yard bucket.

"My first thought was that the bucket is monstrous," stated Thomas Wayson, an operator for The Quartz Corp. of America. "It would increase our production by being able to load trucks faster. You probably only need two buckets to fill the rigid frame dump trucks, so you'd be able to speed up the process quickly."

Despite its size, the machine shares similarities with smaller models.

"I like how the cab and controls are the same, so it doesn't matter if you're on a 160 or the 900 because everything's the same inside," said Bennett Conrad, a third-generation operator, fleet manager and technician at Conrad Brothers. "I like the visibility with the cameras and the serviceability. The filters are easy to get to and are in a good spot." The cohesiveness among models lends itself to faster operator training.

"It was like running a 390, just bigger; there was no change or parasitic drag," said Wayson. "For training, it would be a quick transition from a smaller Komatsu machine to the PC900."

Testing Komatsu's electric excavator

Demo Days attendees were some of the first customers in North America to get behind the controls of the PC210LCE electric excavator, which will be field tested later this year.

"I currently run a diesel-powered PC210 excavator, and I think that if you were blindfolded, you would not be able to tell the difference between the two," said Wayson. "I expected the electric excavator to be underpowered, but it was not. It exceeded my expectations."

Wayson was also surprised by the comfort of the machine.

"When I was operating, I turned the air conditioner off just to get a feel for the machine and see how quiet it actually is," noted Wayson. "It was astonishingly quiet."



Joel Nicol, Vice President, Nicol and Sons Inc.



'The Komatsu motor grader is smooth, quiet and powerful'

... continued

Hands on with GD655-6, IMC 2.0

Attendees were also quick to note the performance of the Komatsu GD655-6 motor grader.

"I use motor graders for fine grading quarry stone for parking lots," explained Renzland. "The Komatsu motor grader is smooth, quiet and powerful. The controls are super sensitive, and the visibility allows me to sit in my seat while operating. I'm used to standing up and working large levers, so the operator comfort is better in the Komatsu machine."



Operators move material with Komatsu D71PXi and D51PXi Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) 2.0 dozers, while another operator utilizes a Komatsu GD655-6 motor grader.

Plus, Demo Days gave customers the ability to test Komatsu technology, such as IMC 2.0.

"I ran the D71PXi, which was my first experience with the 2.0 technology," said Joel Nicol, Vice President of Nicol and Sons Inc. "I could not believe the advancements in the mapping system, and an operator doesn't have to interfere with the process, it just pushes."

Visit Cartersville

Moving forward, Gidaspow encourages customers to visit Komatsu in Georgia and take the opportunity to operate new machinery and technologies.

"Any customers who haven't had a chance to come out, please talk to us, and talk to your distributor," said Gidaspow. "We have customers visit us year-round, and we have equipment here that hasn't yet been released to the market. We encourage feedback from our customers, so we can learn what's working or what we can do to make our equipment and our solutions better for you." ■

*The opinions expressed here are from the end users who are quoted. The results described herein are those of these end users under certain conditions.



Roland Machinery's Robert Schalow, Michael McNamara and Jeff Mikus, Concord Excavating's Ovidio Garcia, Delta's David Schultz, and PT Ferro's Tom Pranskus saw Komatsu's dedication to continuous improvement, engaging with attendees to shape the future of construction technology at Demo Days 2023.



Roland Machinery's Jeremy Boettcher, Source Energy's Rob Newman, Sam Bush and Brian Lyngen, and Roland's Scott Barnhart check out a Komatsu WA600 wheel loader.



Total Excavating's Craig Gienau, Roland Machinery's Scott Barnhart and Jeremy Boettcher, Bohl Excavating's Chris Bohl, Roland Machinery's Craig Sedlacek, Source Energy's Sam Bush and Rob Newman, Roland Machinery's Justin Stienmeyer, Source Energy's Brian Lyngen, and Total Excavating's Gary Tuenge, Dan Olson and Dennis Olson learn about Komatsu's Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions.

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New Technology

WIRTGEN's AutoTrac system for stabilizers and recyclers increases efficiency, reduces environmental impact

Using environmentally friendly processes and handling valuable resources responsibly are becoming more important in the areas of soil stabilization and cold recycling. Cost-effective realization of these processes is only possible when they are efficiently executed. With the launch of the AutoTrac system for its WR Series, WIRTGEN now offers a technology that focuses precisely on this.

Soil stabilizers are used for resource-efficient preparation of pavement bases on infrastructure projects. A subbase with insufficient load-bearing capacity is transformed into resilient materials that can withstand heavier loads. This process takes the existing soil and adds and mixes in binding agents such as cement and/or lime. In the case of cold recycling with the WR Series machines, damaged asphalt layers are milled and resized in a single operation, rebound by the addition of binding agents and water, and then repaved. New base layers produced by this process have extremely high load-bearing capacities.

Automatic steering for optimal overlaps

By enabling precise, automatic steering, the AutoTrac system helps WIRTGEN machines achieve greater process efficiency and, as a result, a high degree of environmental sustainability. It steers the machine accurately within tolerances of a few centimeters on the basis of a previously established reference strip and a specified overlap of adjacent strips, which enables consistent utilization of the machine's ideal working width. AutoTrac relies on various global navigation satellite systems for precise control of the machine's position and direction of travel. The system is operated from an additional control panel that also enables the operator to view information about the position of the machine and previously completed strips.

Shorten completion time

Adhering to the pre-set overlaps reduces the consumption of binding agents, consumables and fuel, making the carbon footprint smaller and shortening the project's completion time. The result is increased project efficiency, as well as cost-effectiveness and reduced environmental impact.

Reduce operator workload

Manual steering of the machine always requires considerable effort when it comes to avoiding unprocessed gaps in the ground being worked. AutoTrac's automatic steering assists the operator and reduces the workload. Maintaining the desired overlap avoids unwanted gaps in the final results. The operator can concentrate entirely on the mixing process and keep an eye on what's going on around the machine.





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Paving Corner

Ideal for chipsealing, HAMM's new HP 100i pneumatic-tire roller delivers homogenous compaction with greater efficiency

Designed especially for the North American market, HAMM has developed the HP 100i articulated pneumatic-tire roller primarily for the chipseal process. With five wheels on the front axle and four wheels on the rear axle, the working width is 67.9 inches, and the generous overlapping of the tire tracks ensures homogenous compaction.

To match the application, the HP 100i is offered with 6-ton, 8-ton and 10-ton operating weights. The ballast kits for adjusting the weight are designed in such a way that individual modules can be attached or detached as required. The 185-gallon-capacity water tank can be used for the ballasting. As an option, the roller can be equipped with a water-sprinkling system as well as scrapers for the tires, thermal aprons, and the HAMM Temperature Meter.

The working speed of the roller can be steplessly increased up to 11.8 miles per hour, while an intelligent travel control system supports smooth and precise reversing behind the paver. Anti-slip control (ASC) is also available as an option for improved traction on rough terrain. The steering provides an extra layer of safety. Thanks to a steering angle sensor and the associated speed control depending on the steering angle, the speed is automatically reduced during fast cornering. The operator can conveniently return to the

preset speed at any time via a rocker switch on the driving lever.

The HAMMTRONIC machine control system also guarantees energy efficiency in the on-board load management. It reduces the engine speeds in such a way that maximum power is always called up while fuel consumption remains low. The optionally available engine stop system, which automatically shuts down the engine during prolonged inactivity, also ensures low fuel consumption and low operating hours.

HAMM offers the pneumatic-tire roller with an open operator's platform, including ROPS, with a protective roof or with a ROPS cab. Many storage options are available in both, and depending on the configuration, cup holders, heating and an air-conditioning system are standard equipment or available as an option.

Seat height and the degree of hardness of the suspension — as well as seat tilt and the tilt and height of the armrests — can be adjusted as standard. For optimum visibility, the seat operating unit can be rotated 90 degrees to the left and right. Several optional features are also available, including a lighting package. ■

Quick Specs Model HP 100i Operating Weight (With Cab) 12,987 lbs. Horsepower 75.3 hp Working Width 67.9 in.

HAMM's new HP 100i pneumatic-tire asphalt roller has five wheels on the front and four in the rear, and the generous overlapping of the tire tracks ensures homogenous compaction. Designed especially for the North American market, the roller is ideal for chipsealing.

Virtual Learning

Komatsu launches Komatsu Academy, a new online training system for customers and dealers

Komatsu Academy, a new online training system that is currently available for Komatsu dealers, will become available for Komatsu customers this fall via the My Komatsu app.

Intended to easily provide educational content to users at any time, "Komatsu Academy is designed to help our dealers and customers recruit, strengthen their workforce, and retain their technicians and operators," said Craig Yager, Training Manager for Komatsu. "It's part of an ecosystem to bolster and improve the skill sets of current technicians and operators, while drawing new people to this industry by providing access to high school and technical school students."



Yager continued, "It's important for Komatsu to provide our dealers with in-depth knowledge of our products, so they can support our customers. And, for our customers, Komatsu Academy can provide training to support the creation of a skilled workforce that can operate our equipment more efficiently and effectively, to help reduce machine downtime by identifying problems before they worsen."

Komatsu Academy will offer module-based, blended learning content such as videos, animations, documents, competency tests, and microlearning sessions that include safety, machine maintenance and operating best practices. These modules can be accessed easily through a mobile app and completed at an individual's own pace. For Komatsu customers, Komatsu Academy will offer some free courses and content, but the full suite of content will be accessible on a subscription or a per-course cost.

Flexible career development

Aside from relevant job training, Komatsu Academy will also provide career paths for users, allowing them to learn additional skills and become certified, which could help them advance within their organization.

"The ability to develop a career path is going to help an employee grow by identifying what training and skills are needed for advancement," explained Yager. "For example, Komatsu Academy can help an employee who works at the parts counter and wants to be a parts manager by providing a view to their career path and explaining what training and skills they need to achieve their goal."

When a person logs into Komatsu Academy, they are identified by their job role, and then the system tailors recommended courses for them.

"The system recognizes any potential career paths and displays certifications based on the job role information," said Yager. "Users can find additional certifications and information relevant to their career path and see how the content they have taken to date applies to other potential careers."

For certifications, users can supplement hands-on training with educational content

Komatsu Academy will offer module-based, blended learning content such as videos, animations, documents, competency tests, and microlearning sessions that include safety, maintenance and machine operation.



In the fall, Komatsu Academy will be accessible for customers via the My Komatsu app and will provide educational content wherever users have internet access.

on Komatsu Academy to minimize time away from their organization.

"Our dealers are often faced with the difficult choice between supporting their customers or sending their technicians to do training to improve their skills," said Yager. "Komatsu Academy will provide them with an option to do both simultaneously. The technician can learn more about our products and how to troubleshoot them on their own, on the job, all with microlearning content at their fingertips. Instead of attending a traditional 40-hour class, they have access to content that's online, easily searchable, and consumed in small modules. They could be standing out at the machine on their lunch break and learn something about an excavator."

Development of VR training

As technology continues to evolve in the construction industry, virtual reality (VR) will likely be a crucial aspect of Komatsu Academy in the not-so-distant future.

"Our team at Komatsu is working with Arizona State University to develop virtual operator training using haptic gloves and VR goggles," said Yager. "Haptic gloves give you the feel of interacting with the machine. The user feels feedback through the gloves, and the VR gives them a 360-degree view of the machine. They can actually feel and see that they are grabbing a wrench and can feel the bolt tightening."

The technology enables people to have hands-on experiences with a machine, even if there's not a physical model on-site. VR training can circumvent any machine availability issues and provide hands-on content whenever and wherever.

"Someone training could be in a small classroom a thousand miles from the instructor, but they could virtually see and feel the machine and interact with the instructor," said Yager. "The potential use cases are endless. VR is going to be important for technical training, and Komatsu Academy will provide the necessary training information to make the workforce stronger and to spark renewed interest in careers within the construction and mining industry." ■



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Komatsu selected as a Sourcewell heavy equipment provider

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

Among the largest governmental cooperative agencies in North America, Sourcewell represents more than 60,000 member organizations that have access to hundreds of competitively solicited contracts covering a variety of products, solutions and services. With Sourcewell, the procurement process is simplified.

First named a Sourcewell partner in 2019, after an extensive evaluation process, Komatsu was again awarded a national cooperative contract for construction equipment with related attachments and technology. Sourcewell members can

KOMATSU

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choose to purchase from more than 50 Komatsu models of construction and compact equipment, across 10 product groups. Komatsu's distribution network, which includes 29 dealers with collectively more than 200 branches across North America, will provide support to Sourcewell members.

"Sourcewell provides its members with a unique advantage in the cooperative purchasing process by leveraging qualified suppliers and ensuring that the process and pricing is streamlined to increase efficiency and generate savings for their members," said Komatsu's Robert Richens, Director of National Accounts. "Komatsu is thrilled to continue our relationship with Sourcewell and build upon our previous successes in North America. Sourcewell is a strategic partner in the governmental, education and non-profit sector, and we look forward to continuing to provide their members with our world-class products, services and customer-focused solutions."

MATSU

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

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Engineering organization urges H-1B visa changes

In a letter to President Biden, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) CEO Linda Bauer Darr urged changes to the H-1B visa and other federal workforce programs in order to attract and retain more skilled professionals. Darr said that there are not enough U.S. citizens or permanent residents to meet the workforce needs of engineering firms, citing a growing need for additional engineers due to recent legislation such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

"Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the engineering workforce was at full employment before implementation of IIJA, IRA, and the CHIPS and Science Act," Darr wrote. "The ACEC Research Institute highlighted concerns about capacity in its most recent quarterly engineering business sentiment study when it reported that 49% of firms have turned down work specifically due to workforce shortages."

H-1B and other immigrant visa programs allow foreign citizens to work in the U.S. To qualify for an H-1B visa, the potential employee must hold at least a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in training, experience and education in a related field. Employers can apply to sponsor a visa for an employee. A statutory cap limits petitions to 65,000 each fiscal year, with an additional 20,000 H-1B visas available to those with a master's degree or higher from an accredited U.S. university. ACEC said it favors an increase in visas, with the possibility of the cap increasing based on employment market conditions. ■



Field Testing

Komatsu's PC210LCE electric excavator set to enter pilot program this year

After making its North American debut at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023, Komatsu's PC210LCE electric excavator is set to enter a test pilot program later this year.

"As we enter this testing phase, we know that there are many questions about this electric machine, and we will be learning alongside our customers to ensure that, ultimately, the excavator can work well for them," said Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Technical Service for Komatsu.

Komatsu's electric excavator development is part of a larger climate goal for the company.

"We have our own corporate goals of working toward carbon neutrality by 2050," explained Earing. "That may seem like a long time away, but it's not. We are dedicated to striving to meet those goals along with the goals of a lot of our customers — which happen to be very similar."

The PC210LCE is in the 20-ton class and is ideal for operating in urban or indoor environments because it has zero emissions and runs more quietly than combustion-engine excavators.

"With the emissions-free product, it opens up a few doors," noted Earing. "The first is that this machine can work indoors. It's zero emissions, so you don't have to worry about adding on a scrubber or monitoring indoor air quality. You can take it indoors, get to work, and not worry about those factors."

Earing added, "The other big benefit is the operating environment. The additional feedback that we often get is that it's an extremely quiet excavator, especially when you have the cab door shut. This means a more comfortable experience for our operators, and externally, a quieter job site for ground crews."

Partnership with Proterra

The PC210LCE is powered by lithium-ion battery technology developed by Proterra that can give it up to eight hours of operating time, depending on the application.

"Proterra's been in this industry for over 10 years now," said Earing. "They are known for producing and installing these batteries in 100% electric transit vehicles, primarily buses, and their transit buses can operate 12 to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These duty cycles meet or exceed what is expected in the construction industry, so we have confidence in the technology. We're very proud to have them as a partner."

With the Proterra battery, the PC210LCE provides optimal performance.

"The battery system, coupled with a 123-kilowatt, 165-horsepower electric motor as the power plant, is going to deliver the same levels of performance as a conventional PC210LC-11 excavator," remarked Earing.

The electric excavator is also compatible with Komatsu's Smart Construction Retrofit, an affordable guidance kit that gives operators in the field and managers in the office both access to 2D and 3D design and payload data to help drive accuracy, control load volumes, and improve operations. ■



Komatsu's PC210LCE electric excavator

will be field tested later this year.

KOMATSU

VIDEO

Andrew Earing, Director of Tracked Products and Technical Service for Komatsu, discusses the features of the Komatsu PC210LCE electric excavator with customers at Komatsu Demo Days, which was held in May. "The battery system, coupled with a 123-kilowatt, 165-horsepower electric motor as the power plant, is going to deliver the same levels of performance as a conventional PC210LC-11 excavator," said Earing.

Watch the video

Tax Savings

Bonus depreciation has dropped to 80%; equipment must be purchased, placed into service by midnight Dec. 31

This year, full (100%) bonus depreciation, which was passed under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA), dropped to 80%. Under the law, it will continue to drop by 20% per year until it reaches 0% in 2027.

Bonus depreciation is available for both new and used equipment placed into service by the end of the year. Eligible qualified property includes depreciable assets that typically use the Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System (MACRS) with a recovery period of 20 years.

"The purpose of bonus depreciation is to encourage businesses to invest in new equipment and machinery," said Sean Farrell in the article "A Guide to the Bonus Depreciation Phase-Out 2023" on SharedEconomyCPA.com. "It provides businesses a tax incentive to do so."

With the percentage of bonus depreciation dropping, now may be a good time to consider making a purchase, according to Dan Furman, Vice President of Strategy at Crest Capital.

In the article "Goodbye, 100% Bonus Depreciation — Phase-Out Begins in 2023" published by Equipment World, Furman writes, "To qualify, the equipment must be bought and placed into service during the calendar year, so making your bonus depreciation purchase as early as possible has advantages (avoiding supply-chain issues delaying shipment/etc.). Further, if you were considering a major purchase in 2024 or beyond and planned to use bonus depreciation, perhaps bumping that purchase to 2023 makes sense (80% depreciation this year vs. 60% next, and so on). In addition, finance rates are predicted to keep rising, so if you were planning to finance your purchase, there's another advantage to buying earlier."

Higher amounts for Section 179

An additional advantage with bonus depreciation is that it has no limit on the amount. It can be used in conjunction with Section 179 expensing, another tax savings vehicle, that does have a cap.

Section 179 limits the 100% depreciation amount to \$1,160,000 in 2023, an increase of \$80,000 compared to 2022. After that amount, the expensing percentage begins to reduce. The total equipment purchase limit for this year is \$2,890,000, which is up from \$2.7 million. ■

Editor's Note: This article is for informational purposes only. To learn more about how to take advantage of these tax savings, contact your tax adviser or equipment dealer for more information.

> You can take 80% bonus depreciation on eligible new and used equipment purchased and placed into service by midnight on Dec. 31. The percentage drops to 60% in 2024.

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