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January 2024

Industry Scoop

A publication for and about Roland Machinery Co. customers • www.RolandIndustryScoop.com

Pan-Oceanic Engineering Company Inc.

Firm completes
infrastructure projects
in the Chicago area



Erjk Kohman,
Vice President
of Operations

A Message from the President



Matthew L. Roland

**Thank you for
your business**



Dear Valued Customer:

Happy New Year! We would like to thank you for your business, and we look forward to working with you in 2024. We're optimistic about growth in our industry. The infrastructure law that was passed a few years ago will boost investments in roads and bridges, which is always helpful.

There has been a lot of information lately about artificial intelligence or AI. There are wonderful possibilities for the use of AI, including in construction. In this issue, we feature an article that looks at the potential effects AI may have on our industry. I think you will find it interesting and informative.

While AI isn't yet widely used in our industry, telematics is. Data received remotely from your machinery can be a valuable tool to help increase efficiency and productivity. Komatsu makes it available via Komtrax through its My Komatsu web application. My Komatsu offers far more than just machine data. It's a digital solution that lets you see machine manuals, order parts, monitor your Smart Construction subscriptions, and more. Be sure to check out the great Q&A with Adrien Clapp, Komatsu's new Director of Digital Solutions, which spotlights My Komatsu and how it can benefit any operation.

If you have a lot of dirt to move quickly, a large excavator is an exceptional option. Komatsu's new 543-horsepower PC900LC-11 can be used in several applications, including heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation, and quarries/mining. You can learn more about the excavator inside this issue.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Roland", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Matthew L. Roland,
President

Industry Scoop



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Pan-Oceanic Engineering Company Inc. updates, replaces, constructs the Chicago area's aging infrastructure



Erik Kohman,
Vice President
of Operations

In a major city the size and age of Chicago, there's always new infrastructure projects and improvements that have to be done. For nearly 25 years, Pan-Oceanic Engineering Company Inc. has been one of the top companies completing the often daunting tasks.

"Challenges come with the territory," stated Erik Kohman, Vice President of Operations, who has been with the company for about a decade. "There's traffic, congested sites, and a lot of old existing and abandoned utilities, and we often have to schedule during non-peak hours. We do what we have to do to make it work."

That's been the mantra of Pan-Oceanic since President Gulzar Singh founded the civil contracting business in 1999. His focus then was small sitework that included layout, excavation, stone base, grading, asphalt paving, and soft surface installation. He continued to expand, and Pan-Oceanic currently takes on larger projects that often involve earthwork and underground utility installation. Additional services include demolition, shoreline stabilization and sewer structure lining.

Nearly 100% of Pan-Oceanic's work is done in the public sector market. Millions of dollars in projects have been done for entities such as the Chicago Department of Water Management, the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Its work has been recognized multiple times, including a Contractor Achievement Award for a streetscape.

"Streetscape projects in the city of Chicago, which involve curbs, sidewalks, lighting, asphalt and concrete pavement, make up a sizable portion of our workload," said Kohman. "We also have an underground division that does a lot of work for the Department of Water Management such as sewer and watermain installation. We just go where the work is."

Kohman estimated that about 95% of the company's projects are in the Chicago metro area, and some take place in the suburbs. Pan-Oceanic typically has seven to 10 jobs in progress at any one time that range in size from \$300,000 to \$20 million. Competitive pricing, timely project completion and teamwork have made Pan-Oceanic successful over the years, according to Kohman.

Recent projects

Pan-Oceanic's workload has been heavily geared toward underground work for the last few years. A recent project took Pan-Oceanic to Evanston, Ill., where a crew put in about 1,000 feet of 16-inch ductile iron water main at a depth of about 6 feet right down the middle of Green Bay Road as part of an upgrade to the city's old system. Additionally, Pan-Oceanic ran copper lines from the main to the buildings to replace old lead piping and installed new meters.

"It took about two months, and in terms of size was a smaller project," said Kohman, noting that Pan-Oceanic was the general contractor. "Like most of our jobs, we self-performed about 80%. That includes pavement removal, excavation, making all the connections, compacting the trench, and replacing concrete. We do some asphalt pavement on smaller jobs; otherwise, we sub that out, as well as landscaping and electrical."

In the South Side of Chicago, another Pan-Oceanic crew installed approximately



Pan-Oceanic crew members set pipe with a Komatsu PC138USLC-11 tight tail swing excavator in the middle of Green Bay Road in Evanston, Ill. "The excavator has a lot of power, but it's also smooth," said operator Hugo Ramirez. "It's perfect for a job like this where we have to get the job done but can't shut down traffic."

▶ VIDEO





Operator Wilberto Ruiz installs sheet piling before digging with a Komatsu PC360LC-11 excavator on a job site in Chicago. "I like the versatility," said Ruiz. "I can easily switch from one task to another and get them all done efficiently. It has more power than anything else I have run. I like the machine a lot."



30 feet of 72-inch pipe about 25 feet deep that connected to an existing sewer line. The pipe was put in place and left as a connection point for a future sewer contract. It was done as part of a contract the company has with the city for such projects.

Matching tools to the task

Kohman emphasized that having the right pieces of equipment for the task at hand factors into a project's productivity and profitability. Pan-Oceanic maintains a sizable fleet, augmenting it with rental equipment as needed.

"There are projects that call for specialty machines for a short term, and it makes sense to rent those instead of purchasing and keeping them idle for long periods of time," said Kohman. "For instance, we needed a long-reach excavator for a deep dig, so we reached out to Roland Machinery and our representatives Mike McNamara and John Kroger."

Pan-Oceanic and Roland Machinery Company have worked together on sales and rentals for about six years, according to Kohman.



"For the most part, we know what we need based on our experience, but if we are looking at machines and have questions about their digging or lifting capabilities, they have the answer," said Kohman. "The biggest thing for us is service and how quickly Roland Machinery responds. They have been great at taking care of whatever needs we have."

The first machine Pan-Oceanic acquired from Roland Machinery was a Komatsu PC490LC excavator used to tackle a large sewer project. Pan-Oceanic's current fleet of Komatsu equipment includes a PC360LC-11 excavator, two PC138USLC-11 tight tail swing excavators, and a WA270-8 wheel loader.



Discover more at
RolandIndustryScoop.com

Continued...

'We have a good relationship with the city'

... continued

"We use the PC360 for bigger projects like heavier pipe and heavier structures where we're going deep," Kohman explained. "It's also plumbed, so we can mount a vibratory hammer and drive 20- to 30-foot sheeting into the ground."

For projects with shallower trenches and lighter pipe, especially ones in congested and tight areas, Pan-Oceanic utilizes the tight tail swing excavators.

"The advantage is that we can work without having to completely shut down traffic or work close to trees in the right-of-way without worrying about the counterweight hitting those," said Kohman. "We get the job done on time with good production."

The wheel loader offers Pan-Oceanic versatility.

"It's equipped with a quick coupler, so we can easily switch from backfilling and loading trucks with a bucket to using forks to move pipe, sheeting and plates," noted Kohman.

Staying busy

In addition to streetscapes and underground work, Pan-Oceanic does more typical sitework, such as the construction of bike trails, parking lots and turf soccer fields where crews perform mass excavation, underground utility installation, drainage infrastructure, and subgrade prep. A subcontractor lays the turf on the soccer fields.

"Whatever we do, we prefer to be the general contractor because we control the schedule," said Kohman. "We'll just keep bidding and try to grow the size of the company and the revenue. We have a good relationship with the city, so we'll continue doing governmental work. For instance, we were recently the low bidder on a three-year lead service line replacement contract, so that will keep us busy along with our other projects." ■



Roland Machinery Vice President/General Manager of the Chicago Division Mike McNamara (left) talks with Pan-Oceanic Vice President of Operations Eric Kohman on a job site.



Operator Cesar Jaramillo backfills a trench with a Komatsu WA270-8 wheel loader. "The visibility is excellent, especially compared to other loader brands I have run, which is very helpful when picking up materials with the forks," said Jaramillo. "I can get the job done faster."





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AI such as ChatGPT offers potential benefits for the construction industry

Driven by the emergence of artificial intelligence or AI, the construction industry finds itself on the brink of a potential transformation. Some tasks that traditionally require a person can be solved by AI tools.

At the forefront of this development stands ChatGPT, an innovative AI language model created by OpenAI. ChatGPT is a type of generative AI that can create content or responses such as sound, images, and — in ChatGPT's case — text.

"Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence focused on content creation," said Trent Miskelly, Chief Operating Officer at Document Crunch. "It has been popularized recently with ChatGPT, which is a company built on OpenAI's large language models. You can think of a large language model as basically a database of the entirety of the internet. You can ask questions and get responses back."

Miskelly continued, "In its most basic form, generative AI is a prediction engine. Whatever question it is asked, it is going to do its best to respond to that question and hopefully be helpful to you."

The program can support some functions of a construction operation, but it is important to recognize its limitations. AI's strength lies in its capacity to analyze large amounts of data and provide valuable insights.

"It isn't going to replace the workers on your job site," said Jeff Sample, Industry Evangelist at Join, "but it may help get materials faster."

Exploring the advantages

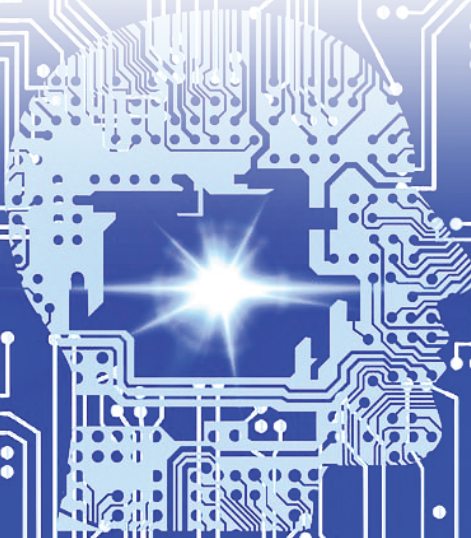
In an industry where precision is paramount, AI can be an asset in cost estimation. ChatGPT can access real-time data on material prices and labor rates and help create accurate cost projections. Construction companies equipped with this AI-driven decision-making and data processing can enhance financial planning, fortify supplier relationships, and establish well-informed budgets.

"Subject matter expertise is paramount when analyzing responses," noted Miskelly. "You must understand what you are getting from [AI], because you are in the driver's seat."

Selecting construction materials and equipment becomes a data-informed decision with AI's involvement. By analyzing project requirements, ChatGPT can suggest appropriate materials, cost-effective alternatives, and cutting-edge equipment options — steering construction projects toward efficiency and sustainability.

AI can also play a pivotal role in addressing challenges that arise during projects. While it doesn't replace human expertise, AI can

While AI doesn't replace human expertise, it can help analyze project issues, consider variables, and propose solutions to keep projects on track. It can also help identify provisions in contracts with high accuracy.





AI can assist in project management by automating routine tasks, tracking progress, and identifying potential delays, thus increasing overall efficiency.

analyze issues, consider variables, and propose solutions to keep projects on course.

"It is great for text classification, like identifying provisions in contracts with a high degree of accuracy," said Miskelly. "It can create and summarize information from documents or data."

The scope of AI extends to architectural design, offering new perspectives and solutions. ChatGPT can inject fresh ideas into the creative process, ranging from sustainable construction practices to optimizing spatial utilization — helping further additional innovation.

Navigating concerns and challenges

As AI's use gains prominence, it also brings legitimate user concerns. The dynamic data analyzing capabilities of ChatGPT introduce potential challenges worth consideration.

"I think it is incredibly important to be cautious with what you are feeding out there," said Kris Lengieza, Vice President of Global Partnerships and Alliances at Procore Technologies. "You wouldn't put a bunch of financial statements into ChatGPT if you didn't want them to be publicly available somewhere and train somebody else's model."



If not used carefully, AI can generate non-factual responses, so ensuring accuracy is essential.

Data privacy has emerged as a critical concern in the AI landscape. Ongoing investigations into OpenAI and ChatGPT show the significance of safeguarding user data.

Continued...

'I think we should be excited as an industry'

... continued

Internationally, Canada's CBC News published that the country's federal and provincial governments are opening investigations into OpenAI regarding the disclosure of personal user information, and Italy has become the first country to issue a temporary ban on the software as the country finishes an inquiry into any violations.

Another concern about AI is that ChatGPT has been known to generate non-factual responses. Recently, U.S. Judge P. Kevin Castel fined a law firm and two lawyers \$5,000 after they submitted a written argument generated by ChatGPT that contained six legal cases that did not exist, according to a report by AP News. The situation and associated reprimand are the first of its kind.

"Technological advances are commonplace and there is nothing inherently improper about using a reliable artificial intelligence tool for assistance," wrote Castel. "But existing rules impose a gatekeeping role on attorneys to ensure the accuracy of their filings."

Castel added, "[They] abandoned their responsibilities when they submitted non-existent

judicial opinions with fake quotes and citations created by the artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT, then continued to stand by the fake opinions after judicial orders called their existence into question."

Responsible usage of AI is paramount to avoid misinformation and inaccuracies. These recent instances of false information generated by AI highlight the need for accurate representation and the importance of stringent oversight to ensure the accuracy of AI-generated content.

"I think we should be excited as an industry, but we need to be responsible about how fast we move," noted Lengieza. "We need to be responsible for how much we trust these programs, and we need to make sure that the trust we give is verified."

Charting the path ahead

AI doesn't change the core dynamics of the construction worksite, but it can serve to complement it. As the construction industry navigates the evolving artificial intelligence landscape, it finds itself at the brink of the next step in this ongoing technological-driven evolution. ■

With access to real-time data on material prices and labor rates, AI can generate accurate cost projections. Construction companies can make data-driven decisions, enhancing financial planning and budgeting.





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Roland Machinery's Road Material Solutions Group ensures you're getting the most out of your roadbuilding equipment

It takes multiple steps and machines to build, maintain and rehabilitate concrete and asphalt roads. Roland Machinery Company is a one-stop shop for the complete lineup of WIRTGEN GROUP products and keeps an extensive inventory of parts on hand at its branches to ensure they are readily available for customers. The WIRTGEN GROUP has more than 60 products that are designed for the many stages and applications that come with roadwork, including WIRTGEN mills, stabilizers/recyclers and slipform pavers; VÖGELE pavers, screeds and power feeders; HAMM soil compactors, tandem rollers and pneumatic rollers for asphalt; as well as KLEEMANN jaw crushers, cone crushers, impact crushers, screening plants and stackers. Roland Machinery formed the Road Material Solutions Group about two years ago to provide customers with outstanding support.

"The cool thing about the WIRTGEN GROUP products is that each phase of a road project is covered, from the ability to make the base rock and compacting it to finish rolling a new asphalt surface," said Chris Ingram, Vice President of Roland Machinery's Road Material Solutions Group. "Because Roland has so many customers across our territory who use these machines daily, we believe it's essential to have our own group of people focused on support. That includes everything from helping customers choose the right machines for their

operations to training to initial startup to quick resolution of any issues."

Ingram continued, "What's unique with Roland is that it doesn't matter the size of the operation or machine, we can take care of the need. One goal is to match customers with the equipment that will most effectively and efficiently get the job done to maximize their productivity and profitability. A second is to ensure that remains the case throughout their life cycle with the machines by supporting customers every step of the way. The Road Material Solutions Group team members have the experience and knowledge to help with both."

Continued...



Discover more at
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The Road Material Solutions Group provides classroom and hands-on training for customers and Roland Machinery personnel.

▶ VIDEO



(L-R) Roland Machinery's Road Material Solutions Group includes Vice President Chris Ingram, Director Jake Wedig, Sales Manager Mike Brunson, Product Specialist Nick Strangberg, Product Support Trainer Sam Buse, Product Specialist Clay Hushour, and (not pictured) Product Specialist Bill Nagel.

'We're a 100% support system for our customers'

... continued

A wealth of experience

Ingram spent about 13 years working for a paving contractor before joining Roland in 2008 as a WIRTGEN GROUP specialist. He moved into sales after a couple of years, was a territory manager for about five years, then became the general manager of Roland Machinery's division in Springfield, Ill. Currently, he still holds that position and is in charge of the Road Material Solutions Group, which includes Director Jake Wedig, Sales Manager Mike Brunson, Product Specialist Clay Hushour, Product Specialist Nick Strangberg, and Product Support Trainer Sam Buse.

Wedig helps Ingram oversee the Road Material Solutions Group. He's been with Roland Machinery for about five years, and previously spent several years as a field technician for WIRTGEN America.

"It's our belief that being able to talk the same language as the contractors is a huge asset to them, and we can because we have the experience behind us; we're basically all cut from the same cloth as they are," said Wedig. "We take a lot of pride in knowing the applications and being able to assess operations to fit the right machines to go with them. With our backgrounds and WIRTGEN's extensive lineup, we can easily do that."

Once you have the right machine, knowing how to get the most out of it is essential, according to Buse, who has been with Roland Machinery for about five years in various positions and currently helps train customers and Roland Machinery personnel.

"We do operator training with customers on the machines and technology," explained Buse. "In addition, we do extensive training with our sales reps, so they know which machines are best for their customers, as well as with our technicians,

so they are well-prepared to quickly diagnose and repair issues and get customers' machines up and running with as little downtime as possible."

Customer support

Brunson was part of the Roland Machinery team when it took on the WIRTGEN line and has been part of expanding its offerings.

"The Road Material Solutions Group is relatively new, but we have been dealing with WIRTGEN GROUP products for more than 20 years," pointed out Brunson, who is approaching 40 years with Roland Machinery, half of those as the sales manager for WIRTGEN GROUP products. "As the years have gone on, we have added more products and more people who can concentrate on them. Customers can have confidence that our guys know the products and that they can rely on us for help."

As a product specialist, Hushour helps with initial startups and technical support for customers and Roland Machinery technicians. Based in Springfield, he mainly covers Illinois and Missouri. Hushour has more than 20 years of experience in the paving industry, including 16 with Roland Machinery.

"There's a lot of roadbuilding happening right now, and with the infrastructure law, it's going to continue for quite some time," said Hushour. "Of course, it's not one-size-fits-all type of work, and that's why it's important to have such a big lineup of equipment. The initial startup is a crucial part of what I do. The machines have a lot of new technology, which can be intimidating at first, but that's also very beneficial in promoting efficiency. It's nice to be able to instruct customers on how machines work and help them, so they can develop a good product."

Strangberg, who moved into a product specialist role about a year ago, mainly covers Wisconsin. Prior to the change, he was a service technician for Roland Machinery and worked on WIRTGEN GROUP products.

"We cover pretty much everything that needs to be done with the machine as far as operation and maintenance goes," said Strangberg. "Customers can call us anytime. If they have any issues, we walk them through it, so they can better run their machine. We're a 100% support system for our customers. I just like building the relationships up and being the guy who helped them out. I like that I get a sense of accomplishment within the job by being able to help them out with a problem, get them up and running as soon as possible, or just teaching them, so they can better operate their equipment." ■

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Roland Machinery helps sponsor competition, showcases forestry equipment at Great Lakes Logging & Heavy Equipment Expo



Del Keffer,
Vice President/
General Manager,
Roland Machinery,
Wisconsin Division



Marcus Steigerwaldt,
Director of Sales,
Komatsu Forest
North America,
TimberPro

The Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) held its 77th annual Great Lakes Logging & Heavy Equipment Expo at the Upper Peninsula State Fairgrounds in Escanaba, Mich. The event showcased the latest in equipment and technology solutions for the forestry industry. Roland Machinery Company had one of the largest displays, which featured Komatsu and TimberPro forestry and roadbuilding machines.

"I think in a time where there are a lot of dealers and manufacturers that are reducing their investment and engagement in individual industries, Komatsu and Roland Machinery are doing more," said Del Keffer, Vice President/General Manager of Roland Machinery's Wisconsin Division. "We continue to invest in the market and in our support such as service and parts. We're committed to all our customers' success, and we really enjoy putting on the forwarder competition."

Competition results

Roland Machinery, in conjunction with Komatsu Forest and GLTPA, sponsored the always popular Great Lakes Forwarder Operator Challenge. With Komatsu

875 forwarders, about 20 competitors navigated a course that included loading logs into the machine's bunk, moving logs between poles, and stacking five smaller logs on top of each other. The top eight times in the initial round moved on to head-to-head competition where they vied for the top prize of \$1,000 and a hunting trip to Ohio.

Caleb Patz, who works for Bill Kirschner Jr., and Manley Murray of Steve Anderson Forest Products battled it out for first place in the final run, with Patz taking the top spot with a time of 3:56.6. He ran the fastest overall time — 3:32.0 — during the quarter finals.

"I have done the competition several times, and I think fifth was my best prior to winning this year," said Patz, who typically runs a Komatsu 865 forwarder. "The 875 operates a lot like the 865, except it has the Comfort Ride, which is a really nice feature. I just tried to run smooth and as fast as possible, and I think I did. There were a few mistakes, but in the end, it is what it is. It feels awesome to win it."

Murray finished fifth in last year's competition when competitors used an 855 forwarder.

"The 875 definitely has more power in the boom," commented Murray. "You can lift more logs at once. I've done this for five or six years, and it's always a lot of fun. A big thanks to Roland Machinery and Komatsu for putting it on."

Gerald Dugree with Dugree Trucking & Forest Products Inc. took third, and Aaron Yoder of Lost Lake Logging finished fourth.

Creating value together

Roland Machinery and Komatsu Forest displayed 12 machines, including the Komatsu 875 forwarders, a Komatsu 855-3 forwarder with a Komatsu G84 grapple, a Komatsu 931XC-3 wheeled harvester with a Komatsu C144 harvesting head, a Komatsu 951-1 wheeled harvester, and a Komatsu XT445L-5 tracked harvester with a Quadco 22SC high-speed saw. The display also featured a TimberPro TF830D forwarder and a TimberPro TN725D feller buncher with a LogMax 7000XT harvesting head.

At the Great Lakes Logging & Heavy Equipment Expo, attendees had the opportunity to see machinery from Komatsu, TimberPro, Quadco and LogMax.





► VIDEO

During the Great Lakes Forwarder Operator Challenge, competitors navigated a course that included lifting logs into the bunks of their Komatsu 875 forwarders. The winner, Caleb Patz (left), received \$1,000 and a hunting trip. Manley Murray (right) placed second and won \$500.

TimberPro, Quadco and LogMax are all Komatsu-owned companies.

"We have been a large supporter of the expo for many years because it's such a great event, and the competition really complements it," said Marcus Steigerwaldt, Director of Sales for Komatsu Forest North America and TimberPro. "Komatsu is heavily invested in the global forest industry, and the Great Lakes states are a very integral part of our roots. TimberPro, where we manufacture more than 100 machines a year, is just a couple of hours away from Escanaba. This event gives us an opportunity to show that we are here for our customers and how we work together with great dealers like Roland Machinery to create value for our customers."

Dates for the 2024 Great Lakes Logging & Heavy Equipment Expo have yet to be determined, but it is slated to take place in Green Bay, Wis. ■



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Stacking logs was the final element of the Great Lakes Forwarder Operator Challenge.



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Major upgrades to popular harvester head improve reliability, productivity in the forest

A popular and established harvester head with a reliable and service-friendly design, the Komatsu S92, has been upgraded with several new functions and improvements to make it even more productive. These upgrades, which include a brand-new Constant Cut saw unit, were made based on input from customers.

"Continuous improvement is part of our DNA," stated Mikael Forsberg, Product Manager, Harvester Heads, Komatsu Forest.

Constant Cut now standard

A major new feature now standard on the S92 is the intelligent saw motor controller, Constant Cut. The motor controller ensures that the head can maintain a constant and high chain speed without the risk of overspeeding.

To extend the service life of the head, the find end function and the mechanical stops at the rear knife have been redesigned.

The upgraded feed system reduces energy loss and enhances the head performance, while improved hose routing simplifies servicing the feed system. All lubrication points can now be easily accessed with the head in an upright position.

The color marking tanks have been redesigned to provide easier access for filling, and the multi-tree handling function has a new, more durable design, providing a lower and more agile head. The upgraded S92 also enables the measuring wheel to follow the contours of the stem more closely, for excellent measurement characteristics.

"The response from customers who have tried the upgraded S92 has been positive," said Forsberg. "They told us that the feed speed is really good, and that the geometry of the saw box and the position of the saw bar make cutting faster and help increase production significantly." ■



Learn more

Komatsu's S92 harvester head has an intelligent saw motor controller, Constant Cut, that ensures the head maintains a constant and high chain speed without the risk of overspeeding. The harvester head also has improved measurement characteristics designed to enable the measuring wheel to follow the contours of the stem more closely.



Why culture in construction matters and how to make it better, so you hire and retain a dedicated workforce

It's not exactly breaking news that there is a labor shortage in the construction industry. Headlines declare that "nobody wants to work anymore" — but is this explanation really at the root of what is a long-standing, industrywide issue?

Amid the Great Resignation, as Baby Boomers retire and Gen Z workers reject the long hours of the construction industry, it's more important than ever to examine the causes of this unprecedented labor shortage and explore potential solutions.

Numerous companies are feeling the pressure, especially in the skilled trades, and many have not yet been able to solve their workforce woes. After increasing pay and flexibility with little to no results, a lot of companies find themselves asking — is our company culture to blame? During an educational session titled "Culture in Construction — Is It Really That Bad?" at CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023, speaker and construction industry advocate Wally Adamchik walked through the reasons why the answer to that question is both "yes" and "no."

The good news is that industrywide survey results indicate the construction industry's culture issue may not be so bad, according

to the 2019 People in Construction Report (PICR) by FireStarter Speaking and Consulting, said Adamchik. In fact, 83% of people say that they would reapply for their current position, and 73% of people say that they are happy at work. However, these results are not good enough to sustain successful growth and project execution, according to Adamchik. In addition, there is a significant divide between project management in the office and field supervision on the job site, according to the PICR. In the office, 81% of employees say that they have a close friend at work — in the field, only 50% of employees share that sentiment. On top of that, 75% of office workers feel that they can maintain a reasonable work-life balance, while again only 50% of field employees feel that they can maintain a reasonable work-life balance.

Action items

Rather than list off more statistics about the industry's labor shortage, many leaders want information about creating a more long-lasting and motivated labor force. There are several concrete actions that can be taken to improve company culture and keep workers happy, and companies should act now to avoid losing more of their employees. The labor shortage isn't exclusive to the construction industry, and these actions can be implemented in any workplace. Even organizations with good company culture can implement some of these changes to elevate employee experience:

- **Standards and values.** Approximately 90% of survey respondents agreed that ignoring the core values of their workplace would get them into trouble. This shows that workplace values still matter, and the most visible way to manifest this is to enforce standards across the board. There should be no double standard when it comes to values. Employees will take standards and values more seriously when they are a part of company culture and see leadership being held accountable to the same standards as employees.
- **Creating lasting change.** Three-quarters of senior leadership (those who are supposed to be spearheading change in the workplace) say that their efforts

According to an industrywide survey, 83% of people say that they would reapply for their current position, and 73% of people say that they are happy at work.





There are several concrete actions that can be taken to improve company culture and keep workers happy, such as encouraging employee participation and recognition.

fall short. Change requires organizational capacity and requires a significant personal investment from leaders. Creating a path for change with concrete steps to follow along the way will help companies maintain organization and encourage both employees and leadership to follow through.

- **Encouraging and participating in employee recognition.** There are a multitude of opportunities to tell employees how much they are appreciated. Chances are, on a daily basis there are numerous opportunities to give positive and relationship-building recognition, and companies that regularly participate in positive recognition are more likely to attract and retain loyal employees.
- **Amping up one's referral program.** About 84% of employees surveyed say that they would recommend their workplace to a friend (but don't). Furthermore, 83% of employees say that they would reapply for their current position if given the chance. There are also several ways to increase the effectiveness of a referral program, including using an easy-to-use option, offering a mixture of incentives, announcing or re-announcing the program, and

recognizing current employees for referring candidates.

- **Bridging the gap between teams and departments.** In construction, there are several discrepancies between survey answers from field and office staff members that could be corrected with a little work. For example, creating teambuilding opportunities for one's entire staff on a monthly or quarterly basis can go a long way toward building camaraderie.

While there are several improvements that would benefit the construction industry's culture, and company culture in general, the survey results show that the situation may not be as bad as advertised. There are several actions that employers can take to improve company culture, from enforcing values to bringing employees together. Even small actions make a big difference, and there is no better time to start than now! ■

Editor's Note: This article is courtesy of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (aem.org). For more information on how to attract and retain employees, visit <https://www.komatsu.com/blog/2022/employee-retention-in-the-construction-industry/>



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New Komatsu PC900LC-11 excavator delivers increased productivity, greater versatility and better transportability

Can a large excavator provide versatility? Built for tough jobs and the ability to handle multiple applications, Komatsu's new 543-horsepower PC900LC-11 can answer with an enthusiastic "yes," according to Casey Zbinden, Product Marketing Manager, Komatsu.

"The PC900LC-11 is ideal for those working in applications that involve moving large amounts of material efficiently," said Zbinden. "Productivity was a major driver of the machine's design. It's a mass excavator with the ability to handle a wide variety of jobs and materials and perform compound operations faster. It has a lot of key features that make it a major step-up from its predecessor."

Designed for heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation, and quarries/mining, the PC900LC-11 provides increased bucket and lifting capacity for higher performance compared to its predecessor, the PC800LC-8. Major structures, booms and arms as well as a redesigned revolving frame were engineered for increased durability.

The PC900LC-11 can deliver*:

- Up to a 40% increase in productivity
- 25% more arm crowd force
- 12% more swing torque

Versatility is a strong suit of Komatsu's PC900LC-11 excavator, which can be used in several applications, including heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation, and quarries/mining. It provides increased bucket and lifting capacity for higher performance compared to its predecessor, the PC800LC-8.

► VIDEO

KomVision is standard

To help operators improve situational awareness, the KomVision camera monitoring system is standard on the PC900LC-11. KomVision uses four cameras for a real-time view of the machine's surroundings. Smart Construction 3D guidance and payload monitoring options are also available.

A new optional counterweight removal system helps improve transportability. The boom configuration reduces the excavator's transport height, and it does not have to be removed from the machine before transportation. The service pass-through area allows easy access to filters, oil level checks, and sample ports to simplify maintenance.

"The excavator is designed for mobility, and customer feedback on that has been overwhelmingly positive," said Zbinden. "They also appreciate the centralized service points for daily maintenance checks and convenient access to the engine compartment. We encourage anyone with the need for a large, versatile excavator to check it out." ■

**All comparisons are to the PC800LC-8.*



Casey Zbinden,
Product Marketing
Manager,
Komatsu



Watch the video

Quick Specs

Model
PC900LC-11

Horsepower
543 hp

Operating Weight
204,148 lbs.

Bucket Capacity
3.7-8.0 cu. yd.



Cloud-based functionality helps with challenges, according to study

Data resiliency is key to handling the challenges of a heightened risk environment, according to a study published by Dodge Construction Network (DCN) in partnership with Egnyte. The report, "Data Resilience in Design and Construction: How Digital Discipline Builds Stronger Firms," defines data resilience as the ability to access all project and business documents and data to support work at any time, from anywhere and on any device.

The study showed that only 39% of architects, engineers and contractors currently have that unimpeded level of access at least 90% of the time. Top challenges include an inability to access all documents on mobile devices, software limitations that hinder the ability to work with other project team members, and a lack of timely access to documents. According to the data, such a lack of access

results in performance issues, including unplanned rework and schedule delays.

The data also suggests that cloud-based functionality can help avoid challenges. The study found that 85% of respondents who reported no issues with document access are currently using the cloud.

"The architecture, engineering and construction industries have seen a surge in migrating data to the cloud in recent years, empowering them to collaborate more efficiently and effectively," said Kevin Soohoo, Senior Director of AEC Industry Solutions at Egnyte. "This study demonstrates how the digital revolution has empowered companies to adapt to new ways of work despite the unique challenges each of these industries have faced with the opportunities and risks that come with technology today." ■



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Senior Vice President of Product Support Dan Smith made the right move by joining Roland Machinery

When Dan Smith joined Roland Machinery Company 11 years ago, he knew right away it was a perfect fit.

"Leaving the manufacturer side of the equipment industry and going to the distributor level put me closer to customers using machinery and really made me feel like I was making a difference every single day," said Smith, Senior Vice President of Product Support.

That feeling hasn't changed for Smith. He took on his current role after working for Komatsu and LeeBoy for several years after he graduated from the University of Illinois. Having grown up on a farm in the Springfield, Ill., area, he was especially interested in mechanization of the agriculture industry, but he eventually transitioned to heavy equipment. Smith said his education and background prepared him well for his position at Roland Machinery.

"I knew I wanted my career to be around equipment, and I've been fortunate to do that," said Smith, who leads all aspects of product support for Roland Machinery's 17 locations. "Because Roland represents some of the manufacturers I worked for, I knew the company well. This is a third-generation, family-owned company that really understands the value of customer satisfaction and being a partner in their success. Everyone at every level is committed to that. My role is to ensure that happens after machines are sold. It presents a challenge, but there is satisfaction in being able to provide customers with solutions that make them as profitable as possible."

Smith oversees parts, service, technical support, training and warranty. About 70% of Roland's nearly 400 employees fall under his leadership.

"Training plays a large role in ensuring we are meeting customer needs," Smith emphasized, noting that Roland Machinery has five full-time, in-house trainers and a mobile training setup that can easily be moved where needed. "The equipment world is changing rapidly with new technology and products, and it's our responsibility to our customers to stay current. That's especially critical with service, so we develop plans, curriculum and career paths for our technicians to keep them up

to date. That can be a tall task when you carry as many lines and serve as many markets as we do, but we are committed to it because in the end it minimizes downtime and increases customer productivity."

Investing in the future

Smith added that Roland Machinery is investing in further minimizing downtime with new field trucks that have higher capacity cranes.

"Roland is also actively recruiting more technicians by partnering with tech schools throughout our footprint and helping diesel programs with resources needed to continue developing relevant curriculum for our industry," Smith stated.

Smith and his wife, Lianne, have two children who they enjoy spending time with doing outdoor activities. Smith is a big sports fan and enjoys following the University of Illinois, as well as the Cubs and the Lakers. ■



▶ VIDEO
Dan Smith,
Senior Vice
President of
Product Support,
Roland Machinery



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RolandIndustryScoop.com

Senior Vice President of Product Support Dan Smith (right) talks with technician Patrick Heinen about a machine in Roland Machinery's Springfield, Ill., shop.



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Montabert expands its distribution and rebuild facility to allow in-house repair and remanufacturing of hydraulic breakers

Rebuilding and repairing breakers helps extend their useful life and can potentially increase your long-term profitability. To better serve customers looking for those services, Montabert (a Komatsu-owned company) expanded its existing distribution and rebuild facility in Nashville, Ill., to add remanufacturing and repair capabilities. Adding those on-site services can provide several benefits that enhance the company's factory-certified rebuild program, according to Amanda Carpenter, Sales Office, Warehouse and Distribution Manager, Montabert USA.

"Now we can lower breakers up to 15,000 pounds into a pit for safer extraction of power cells and to perform inspections and maintenance," said Carpenter. "The in-house rebuild center offers more visibility into scheduling, allowing quote accuracy and timely customer rebuilds on Montabert's complete line of hydraulic breakers. With everything in-house now — parts, a dedicated technician and more — our turnaround time is improved."

At an open house earlier this year, Montabert showcased the approximately 50,000-square-foot facility and its new capabilities, such as a 10-ton crane for moving breakers, a pit with a lifting table to promote safer and more efficient work conditions, and a hydraulic power unit for breaker testing prior to shipping. Montabert plans to add an industrial parts washer, a paint booth, and a second lift table in the future.

"With this expansion, we control the whole life cycle of a breaker," said Aaron Scarfia, General Manager, Montabert USA. "We're able to quickly and efficiently repair Montabert breakers with genuine Montabert parts and ship them back to customers with an extended warranty. Having everything in-house helps further improve our quality assurance as well."

Komatsu Vice President of Products, Service and Solutions Mike Gidaspow said the expanded capabilities of the facility are in line with Komatsu's commitment to continual improvement of customer support.

"Komatsu's always been known for making very productive, fuel-efficient and high-performing products to help customers get their jobs done quickly and efficiently, and what's on the front end of the machine is critical to productivity," said Gidaspow. "With Montabert, we have the opportunity to work with one of the premiere breaker manufacturers in the industry and make sure the hammer is perfectly matched to the excavator. We are pleased to support Montabert's facility expansion and its direct benefit to customers." ■



▶ VIDEO
Technician Nathan Brewster rebuilds a Montabert breaker at the company's expanded distribution and rebuild facility in Nashville, Ill. "When a breaker comes in, I can do the breakdown, diagnose it, make a list of what it needs, then present that to the customer, so they can determine if they want to rebuild," said Brewster.



Amanda Carpenter,
Sales Office,
Warehouse and
Distribution Manager,
Montabert USA



Aaron Scarfia,
General Manager,
Montabert USA



Mike Gidaspow,
Vice President
of Products,
Service and Solutions,
Komatsu



Watch the video

New Director of Digital Solutions Adrien Clapp emphasizes that all Komatsu customers can find value in solutions such as My Komatsu



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.

Adrien Clapp,
Director of Digital Solutions,
Komatsu

Adrien Clapp recently moved into the role of director of digital solutions from her previous position in marketing communications, where she led the integrated marketing communications team responsible for digital marketing, promotions, trade shows, events, customer experience centers, and merchandising. She has been with the company for 11 years.

"I got into the digital marketing aspect during my time with Komatsu, and I became really interested in how we can support customers in their self-serve research phase of equipment purchases," said Clapp. "We want to make it easy for our users to get the information they need, when they need it. We are further expanding that digital experience with applications such as My Komatsu."

Prior to Komatsu, Clapp worked in product management for a company focused on safety and facility identification. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Marquette University and an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In her current role, Clapp and her team work to help customers adopt and implement digital solutions designed to improve their efficiency and productivity.

"My background before Komatsu gave me a chance to really go through customer journey mapping," she recalled. "I'm passionate about building customer experiences, and I'm really excited to bring my experience with Komatsu to this new role and help further evolve Komatsu's digital solutions for our customers."

Clapp and her husband have a 5-year-old child, and the family enjoys spending time together, especially doing outdoor activities such as riding bikes, hiking, and visiting the local playground.

QUESTION: What are digital solutions?

ANSWER: For Komatsu, digital solutions enable our customers to optimize their operations. Today's world is connected, and our customers are seeking ways to utilize technology to gain insights and streamline their day-to-day activities, and we're working to help them do that. At the core of our digital solutions is the My Komatsu application, our 24/7 digital hub. Customers can access information for their fleet, access parts books, see current field campaigns, view their telematics data, and access Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions.

In the past, Komatsu customers needed to access multiple applications to get that information. My Komatsu started as a way to combine access to telematics data and manuals. It grew to include a parts store, and we're continuing to evolve to help customers manage their overall fleet. We're now featuring information on user warranty coverage and field campaigns and providing access to our Smart Construction and Smart Quarry customer site solutions. With My Komatsu, all these activities have been combined into one convenient site. Customers can go to <https://mykomatsu.komatsu> to get started.

QUESTION: What are the advantages of My Komatsu?

ANSWER: Komatsu customers find value in My Komatsu for a number of reasons. The functions that customers leverage within the application may vary, based on their individual wants and goals. As our team talks to customers and distributors, it's all about understanding those customer goals, and then matching them to the functions of My Komatsu that can help enable them to meet their goals.

One of the most used areas of My Komatsu is fleet telematics. We know customers often have more than just Komatsu machines. Last year, we added mixed fleet functionality, pulling in data from non-Komatsu machines, so that within My Komatsu, users can visualize telematics data for their complete fleet.

For example, a customer may be looking to lower their fuel consumption across their entire fleet of Komatsu and non-Komatsu machines.



Remote Komtrax telematics data is available through My Komatsu, in addition to other fleet management tools such as parts ordering. With My Komatsu, customers also have access to machine manuals as well as Smart Construction and Smart Quarry solutions.

Using the MyFleet feature through My Komatsu lets them see their fuel usage, as well as other critical data such as idle time, which can significantly affect the amount of fuel being used. Having that information at their fingertips allows customers to proactively address an issue and create positive change. Another example is the convenience of ordering parts through My Komatsu. To find a part quickly and easily, we're continuing to enhance the search process in many ways, by including rich parts' data and pictures to help customers feel comfortable that they are purchasing the correct part. They can see the manuals for their machines, order right from the app, and have the items shipped directly to them or have them ready for pickup at their dealer — all from the convenience of their computer or smart device.

QUESTION: Does that mean there isn't live support anymore?

ANSWER: No, we certainly offer support. Komatsu has a team of digital solutions experts dedicated to supporting both customers and distributors. We conduct voice-of-the-customer activities to identify needs and determine the types of features that could make day-to-day operations easier. That information helps drive the evolution of our digital solutions. For example, coming later this fall we'll have a refreshed user interface within My Komatsu that is based on user feedback. We are dedicated to continually working to improve our customers' experiences and help them increase productivity and efficiency, while helping lower overall owning and operating costs.



Fleet management is easier and more convenient with digital solutions such as My Komatsu, according to Komatsu's Director of Digital Solutions Adrien Clapp. "In the past, we had multiple applications that customers needed to access to get information," said Clapp. "With My Komatsu, all those have been combined into one convenient site. Customers can go to <https://mykomatsu.komatsu> to get started."

Our digital solutions team also provides extensive dealer training focused on new features being released, so they can assist customers. We want to enable our users to get the information they need quickly and easily. This self-serve information is not only for our customers; it's also for our dealer personnel, so they have what they need to be effective. At the end of the day, it's all about delivering a trusted experience for the customer and our distributors.

QUESTION: Who are digital solutions tailored to?

ANSWER: Value can be realized no matter how large or small a Komatsu customer is — whether they have a machine or two, or a large fleet with multiple locations. It all comes back to what they want to accomplish, and with digital solutions such as My Komatsu, focusing on the areas that can help deliver value. ■



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STK# KM2023119, 345 HRS, BOLINGBROOK, IL



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