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Featured in this issue:

HIGHWAY SERVICE COMPANY

Husband-and-wife team built this successful sign business from scratch

See article inside...



Roger and Pam Swap, Owners



... for — and about — our valued Michigan customers.

KOMATSU

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Larry Behrenwald



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Dear Equipment User:

As you might expect, we believe Komatsu equipment is top-of-the-line. Some might argue there are comparable machines within certain models, but top-to-bottom and across-the-board, you're going to be hard-pressed to come up with a more solid lineup — and in specific machines, you're not even going to be able to come close to the performance you get from Komatsu. All we want is a chance to prove to you the difference Komatsu and AIS Construction Equipment Corporation can make in your business.

If you're in the market for a new machine, we ask you not to buy until you've thoroughly investigated your options. Spec the machine out — then try it out. In many cases, the Komatsu advantage will be apparent.

In other ways, the Komatsu advantage may be less apparent, but make no mistake, Komatsu is doing things no other manufacturer is doing. For example, you may not yet be using a remote equipment monitoring and management system, but it's definitely the wave of the future. With Komatsu, the KOMTRAX system is factory-installed as standard equipment on virtually all new machines, and there are no communications charges for the first five years. Compare that with other top brands that charge you for the system and the installation, then charge you a monthly communication fee. Consider Komatsu's totally free system versus the competitors' cost of thousands of dollars per machine. That's a prime example of the Komatsu advantage.

At AIS, we'll be happy to show you other things we and Komatsu are doing to make your equipment owning and operating experience a pleasant one. Feel free to give us a call, or stop by at any time. We look forward to the opportunity to prove we can and will do whatever it takes to earn your business.

Sincerely,
AIS CONSTRUCTION
EQUIPMENT CORPORATION

Larry Behrenwald
Chairman



IN THIS ISSUE

HIGHWAY SERVICE COMPANY

Find out how hard work has enabled this company's husband-and-wife team to build a successful sign business from scratch.

MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS

With Spanish becoming more prevalent on many work sites, employers need to know how to bridge the language barrier. Here are some ideas on keeping a bilingual workplace safe and productive.

KOMATSU & YOU

Greg Hewitt, V.P./General Manager Construction Division, Komatsu America Corp., shares his thoughts on continuous improvement.

NEW PRODUCTS

Find out why the Komatsu PC800LC-8 is the new "go-to" excavator for large jobs.

MORE NEW PRODUCTS

See how Komatsu's new mid-size wheel loader, the WA430-6, can help lower your fuel costs while improving productivity.

NEW UTILITY PRODUCTS

If you're looking for an economical backhoe loader that still offers excellent power and comfort, Komatsu's new WB142-5 may be the answer.

PRODUCTIVITY POINTERS

If you're not already using Komatsu's KOMTRAX equipment-monitoring system, this article will convince you!

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Other AIS Companies serving you in Michigan:



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A SALUTE TO A CUSTOMER

HIGHWAY SERVICE COMPANY

Hard work enables husband-and-wife team to build successful sign business from scratch

When most people start a business, they do so with the expectation that it will be successful. But Roger and Pam Swap say for them, it was more a case of, what do we have to lose?

"The company Pam was working for relocated its corporate headquarters to New Jersey, and I was getting a little restless in my position," Roger recalled. "Owning my own business was something I had always wanted to do, but honestly, I didn't have any idea if we'd be able to make a go of it. In fact, I thought it was likely that we might only be in business a couple of years. It was just something I knew I had to do to get it out of my system or I'd regret it forever."

So, in 1981, Pam and Roger started Highway Service Company. "We supplied traffic-control items such as plastic barrels, lighted arrows and small signs for road jobs," Roger explained. "It was similar to the work I was doing previously, so I had some background in it, but it was definitely a gamble — and having never run a business before, I didn't think the odds were in our favor."

Roger and Pam Swap are founders and owners of Highway Service Company, based in Woodhaven, Mich.

Mostly through hard work, the Swaps turned those odds around, and last year, Highway Service Company celebrated its 25th anniversary. Today, the company, which started with just Pam and Roger, along with Jim McIver, employs about 30 people. Along the way, Highway Service changed its focus from being a traffic-control supplier, to being a company that installs large highway signs, including the massive electrical, changeable message signs that span many of the Interstate highways throughout Michigan.

"It was a gradual, step-by-step process to get to where we are today," said Roger. "I always wanted to do permanent signage, but you've got to walk before you can run. After about five years of supplying barrels and such, we started installing small signs with an air compressor and a stake truck. Then, in the early '90s, after we'd been in business about 10 years, we started doing the big concrete foundation truss and cantilever signs that we do today."

Doing jobs quickly

Based in Woodhaven, Mich., just south of metro Detroit, Highway Service Company bids and completes jobs across the state of Michigan. Most of its work is with the State Department of Transportation, or as a subcontractor to a paving company. The company has worked on all the Interstates and most of the other highways throughout Michigan.

"For example, we did many of the signs on I-696 (which connects I-96 and I-94 through the suburbs north of Detroit)," Pam recalled. "We were in a bus with Governor Blanchard when they opened it, which was pretty cool."



"One of our calling cards is that we get in and get the job done quickly," noted Roger. "That's what everybody is looking for in this business. It's not easy because the primary contractors have to finish their work before we can come in to put up the signs, and they aren't always able to give us precise dates. But we pride ourselves on being able to work with them and with the DOT to deliver the job on time and on budget."

Talented work force

A talented, veteran work force is one of the reasons Highway Service Company is able to successfully complete time-sensitive jobs, and is a big reason for the company's success through the years.

"Jim McIver has been here since the beginning and he's still with us as General Superintendent," said Pam Swap, who, as President of Highway Service Company, oversees all office activities. "We don't have much turnover. We try to hire the best people and treat them right. As a result, they tend to stay with us and that helps make us more productive and more efficient."

Other key employees at Highway Service Company include Mark Howard, Jack Roberts and Kim Featherly (Field); Jerry Ruhlig (Maintenance); Valerie Hornyak (Controller); and Stella Ader and Susan Powell (Office).

Reliable equipment

Roger Swap also credits Komatsu equipment and his relationship with AIS Construction Equipment for helping Highway Service Company succeed.

"Back when we first started looking for equipment, I didn't have any machine experience myself, so I started looking around. I noticed that one of the top contractors around here had a bunch of Komatsu equipment, and I knew he knew what he was doing, so I checked into it and gave it a try. We've been loyal to Komatsu and AIS ever since."

Today, Highway Service has four Komatsu hydraulic excavators including a new tight-tail-swing PC228USLC-3 (also a PC100LC-6 and two PC95s) and a new WA200-5 wheel loader.



Highway Service Company uses its Komatsu PC228USLC-3 excavator, which is fitted with a Lo-Drill unit, to auger a 48-inch-diameter, shafted sign foundation.



At another project in Detroit, Highway Service Company crews put the PC228USLC-3 excavator to work doing 48-inch-diameter, shafted foundations 30 feet deep.



Jim McIver

"From the first machine we bought, we've been very pleased with all of our Komatsu units," said Roger. "They're productive and very reliable. We got the PC228 specifically to handle a Lo-Drill unit that we got for our shafted foundation work, which is a new way of installing signs by digging deeper and without the large base required for formed foundations. The Komatsu handles the drill easily; it's easy to transport, which is important to us; and with the tight tail swing, it allows us to work around traffic without closing a lane. It's been an excellent machine for us."

Dealer support

Equally important to the Swaps is the support AIS and Sales Representative Tim Kitzmiller have provided through the years.

Continued . . .



**RELIABLE
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**RESPONSIVE
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Highway Service lives up to its name

... continued



Kim Featherly



Mark Howard

"AIS and Tim have been excellent business partners," said Roger. "We work throughout the state and they have locations throughout the state, so we're never far from one of their branches and that's a big plus for us. Service-wise, they're very responsive — and parts-wise, even if we're working in fairly remote areas, they deliver to drop-off boxes so we get replacement parts the same day, or the next day at the latest.

"The other thing is, we appreciate that they wanted to work with us back in the beginning," Roger added. "When we were starting up, nobody else really wanted to talk

to us. Then, after we had a few Komatsus out on the street, the other guys started coming around and wanted to be our friend. I told them we already have a friend and it's AIS. They were there for us in the beginning and they're still there for us. When I call Tim and AIS, I know they're going to take care of us, so that's one less thing I have to worry about."

Live up to the name

Swap says Highway Service Company is comfortable at its current size, but he doesn't rule out future growth.

"I'd say there's growth potential for us. It's always a question of how much can you manage? In our case, I think we're set up to handle additional work. But of course, there have to be jobs for us to do. There are about half a dozen firms in the state that do the type of large sign work that we do and we all depend upon the federal government funding the roads jobs and the state putting them out for bid."

Lately, business has been good, according to Roger.

"There's been a fair amount of work recently and we're optimistic that will continue to be the case. We belong to the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA), which does a good job of representing our industry and making sure the funding is adequate."

As for the longer term, Pam says Highway Service Company will continue to evolve as necessary.

"I don't foresee us getting out of the sign business, but I think we always have to keep an eye open for opportunities. When we were deciding on a name for our company, we said, well, we're working on highways and we intend to provide a service. I think that's the key to our success — serving our highway customers and doing what we say we're going to do. As long as we continue to live up to our name and provide a worthwhile service to the highway industry, we'll be okay in this business." ■

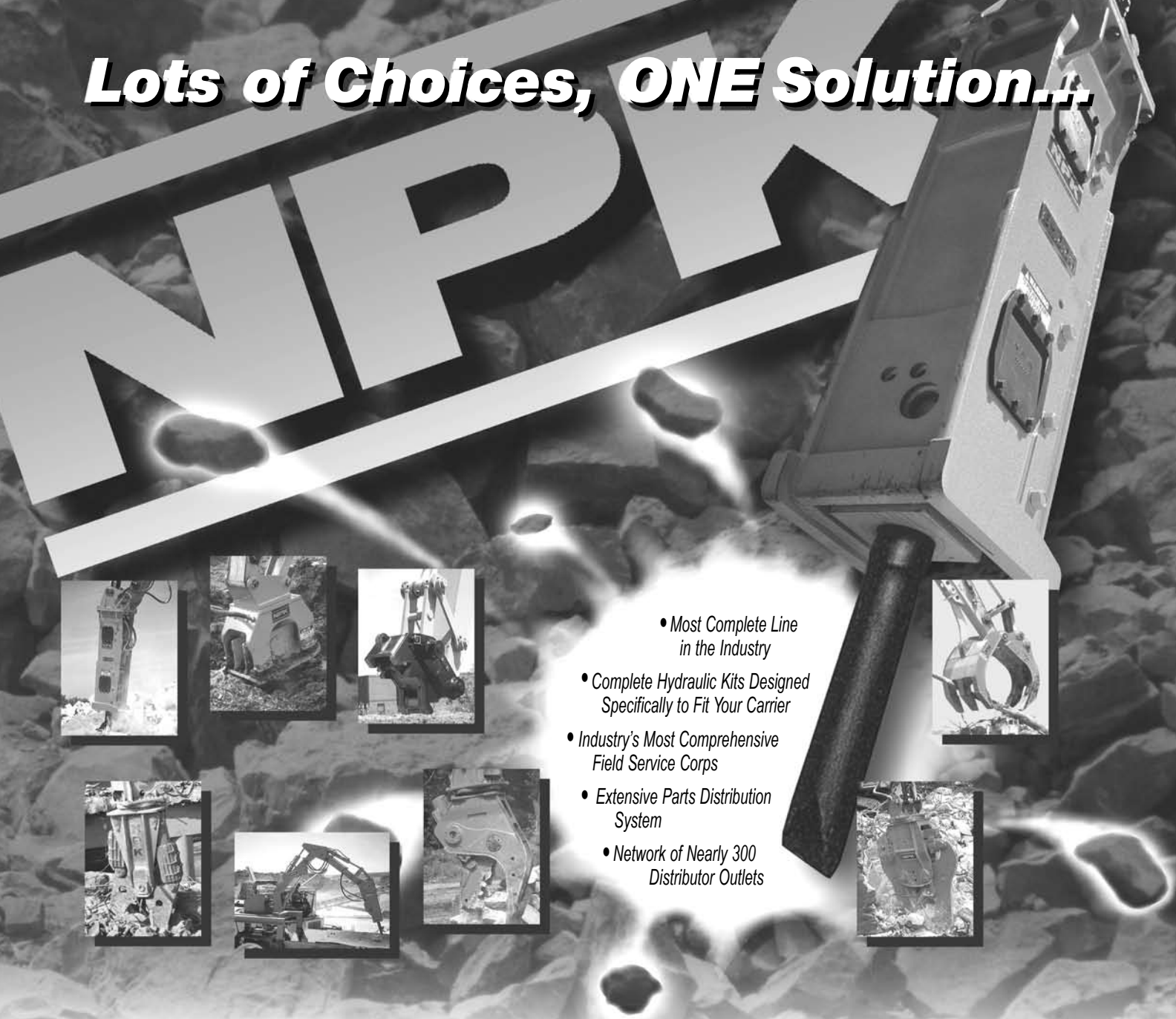


The operator of Highway Service Company's new WA200-5 wheel loader is at a jobsite in Southfield.



Highway Service office staff took time out for a photo with AIS Sales Rep Tim Kitzmiller. They are (L-R seated) Pam Swap and Stella Ader, who helps take care of the office, (L-R standing) Roger Swap, Controller Valerie Hornyak and Kitzmiller.

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SAFETY ECONOMICS

A proactive approach to avoiding mishaps can lead to better productivity, higher profits

This report is based on information from a wide variety of sources serving the construction industry.

Through the years, safety has become one of the most important aspects of the construction industry, if not the most important. Legislation protecting workers from harm is extensive, as lawmakers require businesses to put worker safety ahead of profitability. But that doesn't necessarily mean your business will lose money by implementing sound practices.

As you know, OSHA requires companies to have a safety program that outlines good practices and policies designed to keep the worker from harm. The intent is for everyone in the company, from the president down to the laborer, to understand what constitutes safety, how to avoid potential hazards and what to do in an emergency. It's often a general outline, but can be more specific to your business. For example, an underground utility company should have a good portion dedicated to trench safety as well as Material Safety Data Sheets that list the hazards of using all types of pipes and glues.

While many aspects of a good safety program are relatively simple to initiate, they can be very effective. A case in point: wearing hard hats on jobsites at all times.



While the idea is a solid one, the implementation of these programs is often less than ideal. For small businesses especially, the idea of putting together a manual that covers nearly every possible safety scenario can be daunting. Larger companies often have specific safety experts on staff, but smaller companies typically lack the resources necessary to hire, train and maintain these specialists. However, they face no less risk and responsibility than their larger counterparts do.

So what happens? Often businesses copy or modify a standard OSHA or other safety plan, keep it on file and forget about it. Safety sometimes becomes secondary to production, and safety manuals are put on the shelf to collect dust. Some businesses tend to take a reactive approach, responding after an accident has happened, rather than a proactive approach to prevent mishaps.

If this sounds familiar, it may be time to rethink what safety can mean to your business and its profitability. If you're not already figuring how safety can make you more competitive, you're behind the game. No longer does the lowest bid always win a job. More and more owners and municipalities are checking the safety records of the companies, and factoring in those safety records, before awarding contracts. Those with spotty records will often find themselves left behind, no matter how much lower their bid is than the competition.

Focus your efforts

Putting safety first can help your company be more profitable in an increasingly competitive construction market. By focusing on safety and decreasing the number of incidents your business faces, you can lower your workers' compensation and insurance rates. Doing so can

help you improve the final figure you submit on a bid, increasing your chances for getting a job.

Lowering the number of incidents also has a positive effect on your reputation. It's in the owner's best interest to hire companies that have good safety records, as it lowers the chances of an accident happening on their jobsite, thereby lowering the likelihood of being sued because of an accident. That's why many owners are taking the safety records of the contractors they hire into consideration. If you have a reputation for unsafe practices, your chances of getting a job decrease dramatically.

If your number of incidents, insurance rates and workers' compensation are high, you can do something about it by changing the way your company views safety. Starting immediately, make safety a top priority, placing it above productivity and profitability. By doing so, your productivity and profitability should increase as the amount of time and money lost by accidents decreases.

Start with a comprehensive program

Getting started is not difficult. Remember that safety program? If you don't have one, you need one immediately. If you do have one and aren't using it, pull it out and go through it thoroughly. Tailor it to fit general safety practices and specifically, your type of business. Spend time making sure it thoroughly covers all aspects of your business, including procedures to follow in case of emergency. Seek input from employees at all levels of the company to ensure you cover scenarios and potential hazardous situations you may not have thought of.

The chief concern of the program should be that no work will be performed until it can be done safely. Other parts of the program should include items such as a safety and health policy or philosophy, safety and health objectives, how to conduct jobsite inspections, safety rules and discipline.

Once the program is in place, make sure everyone understands the full scope of it. While it may seem unproductive, hold a meeting or series of meetings with everyone in the company to make sure each person has a copy of the program and understands its contents. The time



Underground contractors know good practices in trench safety are extremely important, including trench shields or boxes for deep excavations, ladders for egress at proper intervals and hard hats and other safety gear to keep workers protected from potential falling objects.



away from the job to cover it will easily be made up if management and workers understand safety and employ the practices outlined in the program. That will lead to a lower number of incidents.

If you have the resources to hire a safety staff or safety expert, you should. Those experts are generally well-versed in implementing and documenting your safety program and

Careful planning is necessary to set up and maintain a safe work environment. Everyone on the site should check often for potential safety hazards, and safety meetings should be mandatory.

Continued . . .

Putting safety first benefits all

... continued

charting its progress. They also know ways to decrease your risks to exposure. If you can't afford to do this, you can still place someone — be it the president, vice president, general superintendent, etc. — in charge of overseeing the safety of the entire company. If it takes a little extra compensation to do it, it's well worth it in the long run.

While each employee should be trained in and held accountable for safety, it's still the company's responsibility to provide a safe work environment. In addition to an overall safety expert, each jobsite should have someone who is responsible for consistently checking hazardous conditions. This means before, during and after each shift. This person is generally referred to as a "competent person" by OSHA standards. In addition to checking the site conditions, this person should also inspect workers' gear such as hard hats, safety glasses and clothing for potential defects that could contribute to an incident.

Review your plan often. You may believe you have every potential situation covered, but that could easily be a mistake. Update the plan as often as necessary, and inform employees of changes. Listen to employee concerns and adapt your policies, if necessary, to take into consideration their ideas.

Safety programs are comprehensive and cover general ideas. They should be used as

a general guideline for all jobs, but each job should be considered individually as well. When estimating and bidding a project, take into account hazards specific to that job, and build how you will deal with those into your bid. By planning ahead, you won't have to deal with unforeseen circumstances that may cost you profits in the long run. Your thorough focus on safety may win you the bid even if yours isn't the lowest.

A "safety culture"

These efforts are all part of a comprehensive mind-set that some call a "safety culture." This culture takes into account more than just having a safety program. It calls into play goals that each company should set for itself and strive to maintain. They should be specific and measurable, such as increasing the number of man-hours worked without a lost-time accident.

Once the goals are in place, make sure everyone understands them and works to achieve them. Don't ever forget them. Work hard to document the progress of each goal and inform everyone in the company of how well they are meeting the stated objectives. If a goal is met, reward it in some meaningful way.

Make safety training a part of your plan. Hold safety meetings regularly and make sure everyone fully understands the topics being discussed. OSHA and other organizations have literature and experts available to help in your efforts, including materials in multiple languages.

The future will likely bring more safety rules and potential legislation aimed at stiffening penalties for businesses that fail to put safety ahead of productivity. By implementing good safety practices now, you can put yourself in position to be ready for any potential incidents as well as stricter legal guidelines.

All this may seem like overkill, but it's not. By implementing these safety practices, you cut the risk of lost-time and costly accidents significantly. Spending the money to provide safe work environments will lead to better quality, better production, less turnover and lower insurance and workers' compensation rates. All will put more money in your pocket in the long run. ■

Working in high places means extra safety equipment, such as safety harnesses, which should be tied off and checked often for proper fit and to ensure they're securely fastened.



CRITICAL COMMERCE CORRIDORS

ARTBA proposes new highway program to move freight more efficiently in future years

The development of a national strategy to improve the efficient movement of freight is critical to future U.S. economic productivity and should be a top priority for federal policymakers charged with writing the next highway and transit reauthorization bill in 2009. That's the message American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) President Pete Ruane delivered at a recent U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation conference.

Ruane cited a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) report showing that freight bottlenecks are causing trucks more than 243 million hours of delay annually, at a cost of nearly \$8 billion. "If the U.S. economy grows at a conservative annual rate of 2.5 to 3 percent over the next 20 years, domestic freight tonnage will almost double and the volume of freight moving through the largest international gateways may triple or quadruple," the FHWA report says. "Without new strategies to increase capacity, congestion at freight bottlenecks on highways may impose an unacceptably high cost on the nation's economy."

Plan addresses future needs

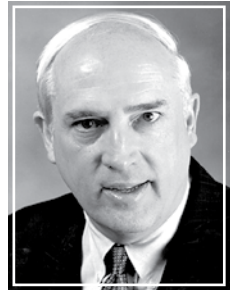
In his remarks, Ruane outlined a two-part plan approved by the ARTBA Board of Directors that is aimed at addressing the nation's future surface-transportation needs. Part one of the plan is to continue the current highway and transit programs, but with better funding to address future safety and mobility priorities.

Part two of the plan establishes a new federal government program called the "Critical Commerce Corridors (3C) Program." Funded by freight-related user fees, it would improve U.S. freight movement and emergency response capabilities. The program would strategically

link and upgrade the nation's major water ports, airports, border crossings and rail networks with national intermodal freight transfer centers. Where possible, the network would separate commercial traffic from passenger vehicles.

The scheduled 2009 reauthorization of the highway and transit investment law (SAFETEA-LU) provides a meaningful opportunity for Congress to develop a national freight strategy and allow the U.S. Department of Transportation to assume the lead role in identifying and defining a "Critical Commerce Corridors" system, according to Ruane.

"The result of this initiative would be a clear and focused strategy directed at the growing dilemma of efficiently moving freight," Ruane said. "This challenge is about more than congestion, bottlenecks and delayed deliveries. It is about securing America's place in the global competitive market. The American people and business community deserve nothing less." ■



Pete Ruane, President, American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA)

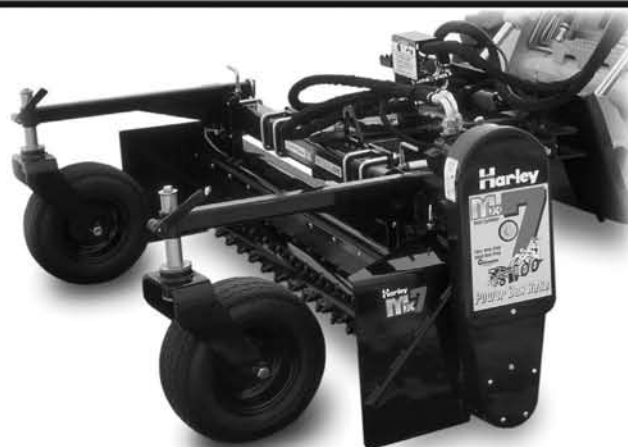
ARTBA is proposing a new federal program to improve freight transportation by strategically linking and upgrading ports, airports, border crossings and rail networks — and separating commercial traffic from passenger vehicles where possible.



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NEW PRODUCTS

NEW “GO-TO” LARGE EXCAVATOR

The PC800LC-8 is bigger, faster and more fuel-efficient than its predecessor

For large earthmoving jobs, as well as heavy underground utility projects, the Komatsu PC800LC-8 is the new “go-to” machine. The PC800LC-8, which meets Tier 3 emissions-reduction standards, has replaced the PC750LC-7 in Komatsu’s excavator lineup.

Weighing in at more than 180,000 pounds, the PC800LC-8 is several thousand pounds heavier than its predecessor and has a faster cycle time.

“The additional weight gives the PC800 improved lift capacity and over-the-side stability, which makes it ideal for lifting and placing heavy pipe,” said Komatsu Hydraulic Excavator Product Manager Peter Robson. “The improved cycle time was achieved with a quick arm-return circuit and a faster bucket dump. The result is greater productivity in truck loading.”

Like all Dash-8 excavators, the PC800 delivers outstanding fuel economy, especially when run in the Economy working mode. The machine also has a Heavy Lift mode which delivers 10 percent more lifting force on the boom whenever it’s needed.

The KOMTRAX monitoring system is standard equipment on the PC800LC-8, which also has a hydraulic fan with a Reverse mode that operators can activate through the monitor panel to help clean the radiator when operating in particularly dusty conditions.

King of the hill

The PC800LC-8 has 487 net horsepower, which is 7 percent more than the PC750LC-7.

“That’s nice, but an excavator is not like a dozer or a truck where you need raw horsepower to pull up a hill,” Robson explained. “With an

excavator, it’s all about how fast you can dig, and top digging performance is achieved through precise engine and hydraulic management, not higher horsepower. If you can use less horsepower to get the production you need, you’re king of the hill. And that’s what we’ve done with the PC800LC-8. We’ve developed a machine that digs faster but uses less fuel.”

Robson says the PC800LC-8 features the durability and reliability that Komatsu excavators are known for, and is also a very smooth machine that operators will appreciate because it handles like a much smaller excavator. ■

For more information on the PC800LC-8, contact your sales representative, or call our nearest branch location.



Peter Robson,
Komatsu Hydraulic
Excavators Product
Manager

Brief Specs on Komatsu PC800LC-8

Model	Flywheel horsepower	Operating weight	Bucket capacity
PC800LC-8	487 hp	182,980 lbs.	2.23-5.93 cu. yd.

If you're looking for a large excavator that digs faster and uses less fuel, the new Komatsu PC800LC-8 is the answer. The massive 487-horsepower machine delivers outstanding fuel economy and 10 percent more lifting force in the Heavy Lift mode.





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MORE NEW PRODUCTS

NEW WHEEL LOADER

Mid-size WA430-6 offers better production at a lower cost

Like most equipment users, you're probably looking for a way to lower your fuel costs while maintaining or improving productivity. Komatsu's new WA430-6 wheel loader delivers on both counts.

The WA430-6 replaces the WA400-5 in Komatsu's wheel loader lineup. Like Komatsu's other Dash-6 models (WA380, WA450, WA480, WA500 and WA600), the WA430-6 is powered by an ecot3, Tier 3-compliant engine.

"We've seen significant production and fuel-efficiency increases with the WA430-6 compared to its predecessor," said Rob Warden, Komatsu Wheel Loaders Product Manager. "For example, this machine can use up to 15 percent less fuel to do the same amount of work. Like the other Dash-6 models, it has a large-capacity torque converter, so the user will have a lot of power going up a hill and greater rimpull going into a pile. It also has 21 percent more breakout force than the WA400-5."

The WA430-6 comes standard with a variable-displacement piston pump that works in combination with Komatsu's Closed-center Load Sensing System (CLSS) to deliver only the necessary amount of flow needed for hydraulic function. The design prevents wasted hydraulic flow, which in turn provides better fuel economy.

Pick the best mode

Fuel efficiency and power are enhanced through several operation modes, including the "E" (Economy) mode for general loading. An automatic transmission with an "Auto Low" mode is used for low-engine-speed operations, and a "P" (Power) mode gives the WA430-6 maximum digging power. An

"Eco" indicator informs the operator when the machine is maximizing fuel efficiency.

Tracking utilization and machine condition is easy with the KOMTRAX equipment monitoring system that comes standard on the WA430-6. The system allows users to monitor machine location, meter reading and error codes, as well as a host of other information.

"The WA400-5 was a great machine, so we took its basics and made it better with the WA430-6," explained Warden. "We believe this machine, like our other Dash-6 models, is an industry leader that will improve performance in a wide range of applications." ■



Rob Warden,
Product Manager

Comparative Specs for the Komatsu WA430-6

Model	Output	Bucket Capacity	Breakout Force
WA400-5	200 hp	4.1-5.6 cu. yds.	33,290 lbs.
WA430-6	231 hp	4.1-5.6 cu. yds.	40,333 lbs.

Komatsu's new WA430-6 wheel loader, which replaces the WA400-5, provides increased production and fuel efficiency compared to its predecessor. A large-capacity torque converter gives added power for hill climbing and greater rimpull going into a pile.





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Komatsu skid steer loaders are designed for comfortable operation all day, every day. Making the operator comfortable ensures the highest levels of safety and productivity. Coupled with ease of service, durability, reliability and quality, Komatsu skid steer loaders provide the ultimate comfort and productivity package.

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- Radial lift and vertical lift loader models make it easy to choose the right machine for your business.

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NEW UTILITY PRODUCTS

NEW BACKHOE LOADER

Komatsu's WB142-5 offers excellent productivity in an economical package

Owners looking for a solid backhoe loader that's economical, yet powerful enough to tackle a variety of tasks can turn to Komatsu's new WB142-5.

"The WB142-5 is the fifth model in an outstanding line of backhoe loaders from Komatsu," said Jeff Aubrey, Product Manager Backhoe Loaders. "It's aimed at the cost-conscious buyer who wants a machine with lots of performance in a simple package. Therefore, it's priced lower than our high-spec deluxe models. It's what we call an 'entry-level' backhoe loader, but it has many of the same design features of its big brother, the WB146-5."

High production

Production in both loader and backhoe applications is driven by a Komatsu 76-net-horsepower diesel engine that's housed in a heavy-duty, cast nose guard, which provides integral counterweight and front protection to the engine. Standard four-wheel drive lets operators work on days when other machines are parked.

Unlike many units in its class, the WB142-5 features a high-output (37 gpm), tandem-gear-pump hydraulic system designed for maximum speed, power and control. It even has two settings for the loader and the backhoe, so the operator can choose between maximum performance and maximum fuel economy.

Roomy work station

Komatsu kept the operator in mind with the new WB142-5, which features a state-of-the-art interior that's rugged, yet elegant. A suspension seat provides a comfortable fit for any size operator. The ROPS/FOPS canopy has a true dual-entry platform. Controls, switches and

gauges are clustered to simplify operation and visibility.

A corner-mounted exhaust allows the operator a full 360-degree unobstructed view, including a clear look at the loader bucket, even at maximum height. Komatsu's new S-boom design is narrow, providing better visibility in both the trench and in loading trucks.

The operator may choose from either Power or Economy mode when using the 14-foot-class backhoe. A one-cubic-yard loader bucket with a bolt-on cutting edge is standard, as are reversible stabilizer pads.

A pleasure to own

Daily service checks are simple. Just raise the one-piece, tilting hood, and all daily checks are grouped on the left side of the engine. Grease points are conveniently located and fuel filling is at ground level. There's also a standard lockable tool box. And like all Komatsu machines, the WB142-5 uses O-ring face-seal hydraulic fittings for leak-free operation. ■

Brief specs on the WB142-5

Model
WB142-5

Output
76 hp

Operating Weight
14,513 lbs.

Bucket Capacity
1.0 cu. yd. (loader)

Komatsu's new WB142-5 offers many of the same benefits as larger Komatsu backhoe loader models — operator comfort, high value, high productivity, ease of service and security.





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NEW QUARRY PRODUCTS

HD785-7

Komatsu's new haul truck features advantages designed to lower users' cost per ton

Part of any efficient quarry operation involves moving materials quickly from the ground to the crusher at the lowest cost per ton possible. Komatsu's new HD785-7 haul truck was designed with maximum efficiency in mind to help you move more material faster with less fuel consumption.

"More and more quarries are going to larger-capacity haul trucks, such as the 100-ton HD785-7," said Tom Stedman, Marketing Manager - Mining Trucks. "It has the tightest turning radius of any truck in its class. In quarry operations, where space is often limited, that's a big advantage."

The HD785-7 has several other features that make it advantageous, including a high-performance engine that delivers nearly 10 percent more horsepower than its predecessor, the HD785-5. Variable Horsepower Control (VHPC) allows selection of two modes, Power and Economy, which can be set according to working conditions. In either mode, the VHPC system detects whether the truck is loaded or empty and selects the optimum horsepower for production and fuel efficiency.

Tracking fuel efficiency and maintenance is easy with the Vehicle Health Management System (VHMS), a fully integrated system that collects data throughout the truck. "It's a great tool for looking at long-term trends," said Stedman. "VHMS provides data gathered from all areas of the truck, including pressures, temperatures and speeds, to name just a few. Customers can use this information to customize their maintenance programs accordingly."

All-wheel, wet-disc brakes

Komatsu worked to lower maintenance costs with the addition of all-wheel, wet-disc brakes. Each brake is fully sealed to keep contaminants

out, reduce wear, and require no adjustments. "They are much more efficient than dry-disc brakes," Stedman noted. "Over the long haul, they're going to save the user quite a bit."

An Automatic Retard Speed Control (ARSC) utilizes a large-capacity retarder that allows operators to set downhill travel speed at a constant level, so the operator can concentrate on steering. "It's like cruise control for downhill operation," explained Stedman. "When the operator reaches the speed he's comfortable with, he activates the system with the push of a button, and the truck will maintain that speed. It's very good for areas where there are long downhill hauls.

"The ultimate goal of the new HD785-7 is to save the user time and money," he added. "With more horsepower and lower fuel consumption, the cost per ton is fantastic. We'll be bringing these features to more of our haul trucks in the future." ■



Tom Stedman,
Marketing Manager
Mining Trucks

Komatsu's new 785-7 100-ton haul truck offers 10 percent more horsepower than its predecessor, while lowering fuel consumption. Additional features include all-wheel, wet-disc brakes, Variable Horsepower Control and a Vehicle Health Management System.

Brief specs on the Komatsu HD785-7

Model	Capacity	Net Horsepower	Vehicle Weight
785-7	100 tons	1,178	366,000 lbs.





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PRODUCTIVITY POINTERS

THE KOMTRAX ADVANTAGE

How Komatsu's wireless equipment-monitoring system can help you improve productivity

Chances are you've heard of KOMTRAX, Komatsu's wireless system that allows you to monitor your equipment from your office computer or laptop. You may know it provides basic information, such as where a machine is and how many hours are on it, which is useful if a machine is stolen, and for service and maintenance. What you may not realize is that the new version of KOMTRAX can also be an extremely useful tool in improving your field productivity.

"Customers who use the full-range of KOMTRAX services have a distinct advantage over those who don't. It's really that simple," said Ken Calvert, Komatsu Director of IT Support. "How? By providing details on asset utilization. How many of your machines are actually working at any given time? Do you need more machines, or could you get by with fewer? Is a machine working or idling? Is it being run in Power mode or Economy mode; and if it's full power, is that really necessary or is it a waste of fuel? These are all money matters that directly impact a contractor's bottom line."

"Of course, KOMTRAX is also still a valuable tool for scheduled maintenance and helping implement a repair-before-failure program for major components," added Chris Wasik, Manager of Service Support Programs for Komatsu. "But we believe KOMTRAX's operational information will help a contractor improve efficiencies, availability and profit."

The KOMTRAX difference

Komatsu is so convinced that wireless equipment monitoring is a true difference maker for equipment users that it's taken unprecedented steps to make the system available, affordable and user-friendly. These steps include:

- Factory installing KOMTRAX as standard equipment on almost every new Komatsu machine, and making it totally free for five years (top competitors charge more than \$2,000 for the hardware and installation, then also charge a monthly communication fee);
- Having a team of Komatsu and distributor personnel dedicated solely to monitoring KOMTRAX, and communicating with customers to help them keep costs and downtime to a minimum;
- Making the information easy to use and understand, including, in the not-too-distant-future, communicating KOMTRAX info to customers via e-mail.

"Right now, thousands of KOMTRAX-equipped machines are out in the field, but only a small percentage of customers actually use the data," observed Calvert. "We want to increase that number because we're convinced Komatsu customers who use KOMTRAX properly will be more productive and more profitable." ■



Ken Calvert,
Director of IT Support



Chris Wasik,
Manager of Service
Support Programs

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Serving customers better is the goal of V.P./General Manager of Construction Division

QUESTION: As someone relatively new to Komatsu, what are your initial thoughts on what the company does best?

ANSWER: As one of my former bosses used to say, "Product is King," and one of the things I've learned is that Komatsu products are excellent. We make very high-quality, technologically advanced equipment that's productive and reliable. We believe our products provide the best value in the industry when you take into account the performance, the uptime, the longevity and what you'll get in resale or trade-in.

QUESTION: At the other end of the spectrum, where does Komatsu need to improve?

ANSWER: The biggest thing is product support. Certainly, that's not unique to Komatsu. Probably every equipment manufacturer and every equipment dealer in the country would say they want to improve product support because that's where you create customer loyalty. From what people tell me, Komatsu has improved in that area in recent years. I believe we're doing a good job supporting our product now, but we're still not as good as we want to be or need to be. Our goal is continuous improvement that results in ever greater customer satisfaction.

QUESTION: What steps is Komatsu taking to improve the level of support?

ANSWER: The Komatsu Training and Demonstration Center in Cartersville, Ga., is a good example of a step we've taken to improve the quality of service we provide. It's a state-of-the-art facility that offers training for distributors' technicians, their in-house trainers and their customers. On the parts side of the

Continued . . .



Greg Hewitt,
V.P./General Manager Construction Division,
Komatsu America Corp.

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.

A native of Knoxville, Tenn., Greg Hewitt graduated from the University of Tennessee with a business degree, then joined the Maytag Company. Unlike the Maytag repairman of TV commercial fame, Greg was never the loneliest guy in the world while at Maytag. He spent 17 years there, where he earned an MBA and held a variety of increasingly important jobs. He left Maytag in 2004 to join Textron, a large multi-industry company, as Executive Vice President of the Jacobsen (professional mowers) Division.

Last November, Greg was recruited by Komatsu America Corp. to become V.P. and General Manager of the Construction Division. It's a new position in which Hewitt oversees all activities associated with planning, operations, selling and servicing Komatsu's construction-size equipment line, which consists of D31 to D275 dozers; PC120 to PC1250 excavators; WA150 to WA700 wheel loaders; GD555 to GD675 motor graders; articulated trucks; and rigid trucks less than 715 hp.

"Even though I had never worked in heavy equipment manufacturing, I knew Komatsu was a great company and that this was a great opportunity," said Hewitt. "Having been here for a while now, I'm even more excited about the prospects. One of Komatsu's strengths is a product that, in my opinion, across-the-board, is equal or superior to anything else out there. Our goal is to build on that strength to deliver an unprecedented level of satisfaction to customers."

Hewitt is married with two daughters, ages 8 and 12. "My work days can be fairly long. When I'm away from the job, I enjoy investing time with family, staying in shape, reading and traveling."

Komatsu to introduce new, small dozer line

... continued

support equation, we continue to open Regional Parts Depots to ensure that our distributors can get same-day or early next-morning delivery of virtually any part. We now have a fill rate in the high 90th percentile, which we'll put up against anybody in the world.

QUESTION: Product-wise, what should Komatsu customers be excited about this year?

Komatsu's focus on product support places an emphasis on training. The company's state-of-the-art Training and Demonstration Center in Cartersville, Ga., provides training for distributors' technicians and in-house trainers as well as customers.



To augment its larger dozer line, which includes machines such as this D155AX, Komatsu plans to introduce a new line of small dozers in 2007.

With a wide range of equipment from large mining machines to compact utility equipment, Komatsu produces high-quality, technologically advanced equipment that's productive and reliable. "We believe it's the best value in the industry," stated Greg Hewitt, V.P. /General Manager Construction Division, Komatsu America Corp.



ANSWER: Our big launch in 2007 is a new, small dozer line (machines roughly in the 75- to 125-horsepower range). We believe our current Komstat dozers are excellent — highly productive and reliable — and that the new models will be best-in-class by a large margin.

QUESTION: If you had one-on-one time with a contractor who's trying to choose between a Komatsu machine and another leading brand, what would you tell him to convince him to buy Komatsu?

ANSWER: I would just give him the facts. Fact number one: if production is important, examine horsepower, digging speed, capacity, fuel efficiency, reliability — all of those things. Shop and compare. In most cases, we're going to come out on top. Fact number two: do some research on resale value. Due in part to our commitment to R&D and engineering, our machines last a long time and hold their value better than the competition. Fact number three: look at the big picture. We're a \$16 billion global company. With Komatsu and our distributors, you get the kind of cradle-to-grave total support that only the largest of companies can provide.

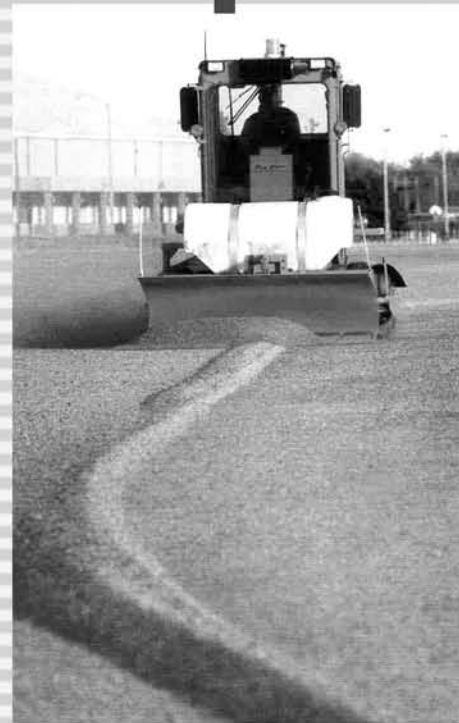
Lastly, I'd tell him to look for the best value. If he studies the machine owning and operating costs, we feel confident that Komatsu will be the choice more times than not.

QUESTION: What is Komatsu expecting from the construction economy this year?

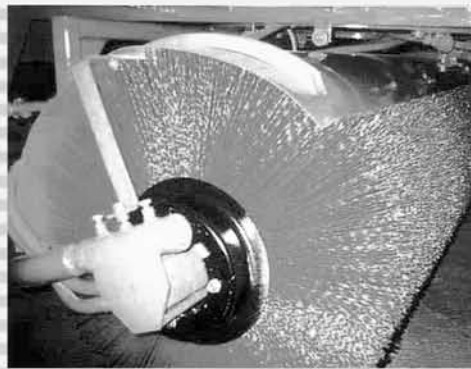
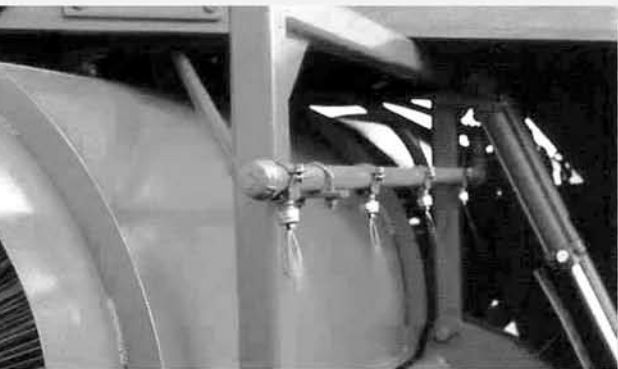
ANSWER: We're fairly positive about the construction market. As everybody knows, housing is down, but everything else is holding its own. The overall industry forecast is for about a mid- to high-single-digit decrease in the total number of units sold this year. On the face of it, that doesn't sound great, but when you consider we're coming off a couple of all-time-record years, it's really not bad at all.

And frankly, at Komatsu, we think there's a potential for us to grow our business even in a slightly slower market. In the overheated environment we've been in, some manufacturers did well largely because they had inventory available. Now, with inventory more plentiful, customers will probably do more shopping around looking for the best value. We welcome that environment as an opportunity to prove our worth to an equipment user. ■

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TOP TECHS

AIS technicians win high honors at nationwide Komatsu competition

Some of the very best Komatsu distributor technicians from across the country have once again showcased their troubleshooting talents at the Komatsu Advanced Technic Contest (ATC) at the Komatsu Training Center in Cartersville, Ga. This year, the team representing AIS took home national honors in two of the five categories, which were excavator, dozer, wheel loader, articulated truck and compact track loader.

Mike Burgtorf of AIS's Grand Rapids location won first place on the CK30 compact track loader and Joe Thompson of the Lansing branch finished fourth on the WA600-6 wheel loader. Burgtorf was awarded \$4,000 for finishing first while Thompson received a trophy for his fourth-place finish. Other team members included Brad Messing, Michael Kushion and Robert McDowell.

The ATC is an annual competition in which technician contestants are graded on how well they can identify two problems that have been programmed into a piece of Komatsu machinery. Contestants are given one hour to work and are judged not only on whether they find the problems, but on how they use shop manuals and diagnostic tools, what questions they ask the operator/judge to help them find the problems, and how they demonstrate safety.

"We had a really strong group of guys go to ATC this year," said AIS Technical Trainer Steve Sutton. "They were competing against the best of the best, so I was very pleased with how well we did."

Valuable training

Sutton said ATC is viewed as not only a competition, but as a training tool that can help sharpen the skills of technicians who participate.

"There's no doubt it helps make them better technicians," he said. "Our guys look at this as a learning experience as well as a personal challenge. They have to identify what's wrong with the machines and the best approach to fix them."

"The competition helps keep me sharp for when I'm looking at a customer's machine," Burgtorf concurred. "It's a pressure situation that I might not see on a normal day, but if I do, it helps make me aware of what to look for."

"ATC helps our customers in a couple of ways," Thompson added. "First of all, the knowledge we gain will help us get their machines up and running more quickly, saving them money. Plus, I think it generally gives our customers added confidence in the work we do, which is extremely valuable." ■



Mike Burgtorf,
AIS Technician
First place, CK30



Joe Thompson,
AIS Technician
Fourth place, WA600-6



At the Komatsu Advanced Technic Contest (ATC), technicians had one hour to troubleshoot equipment under the watchful eye of Komatsu judges. Scoring criteria included how well contestants used their manuals and diagnostic tools to fix preset problems.



INDUSTRY NEWS

Small business health insurance being studied

This article appeared in AED's (Associated Equipment Distributors) "Washington Insights" newsletter

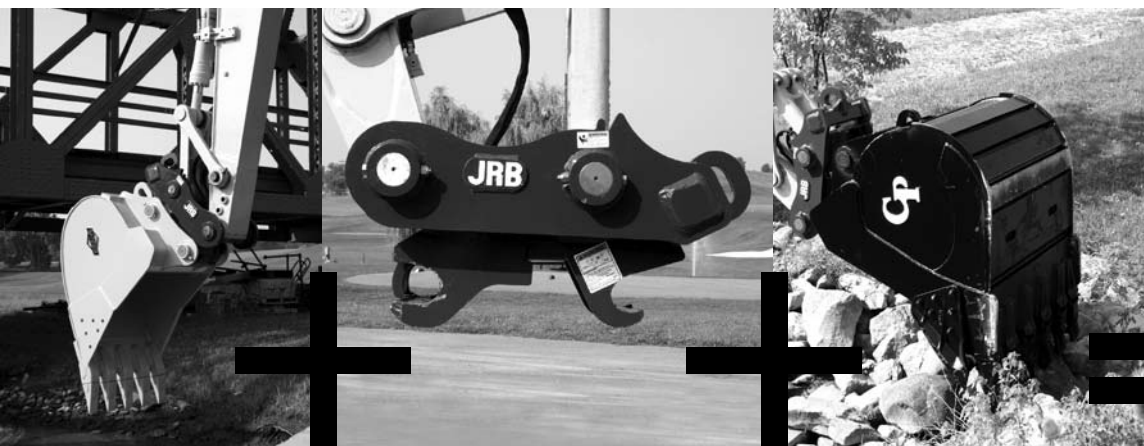
The House Small Business Committee recently held a hearing on the state of healthcare for small business. The committee acknowledged that rising healthcare costs are one of the biggest concerns for small businesses, and that fewer entrepreneurs are able to provide adequate health insurance to their employees.

According to the committee, of the 46 million uninsured Americans, more than half live in a household headed by a small-business owner or employee. While most businesses that employ more than 200 provide health insurance to their employees, less than half of small-business employers offer coverage.

As House Small Business Committee Chairman Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) noted, "The high cost of healthcare is a serious

obstacle for small businesses that are trying to compete in the global marketplace. We know small firms pay more per employee to provide health insurance than large firms and that many of our nation's main job creators simply cannot afford it. Meaningful reform that addresses these concerns is a necessity, and this committee will be working to find a solution to this ongoing crisis."

Possible solutions to the problem include changing the tax treatment of health insurance, exploring reinsurance options, and expanding pooling options available to small businesses. A recent AED survey shows that members believe Congress should enact legislation to reduce small-business insurance costs, thus helping members provide health insurance to their employees. ■



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STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

How customers benefit from the growth of Komatsu's Certified Used equipment program



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The program started with just a handful of distributor technician-evaluators trained to inspect used machines. Today, there are more than 600 such certified inspectors.

"The growth of the program and the growth of the number of trained evaluators is significant because it ensures a high level of

consistency from coast-to-coast," said Komatsu Director of ReMarketing Lee Haak. "All of our technician-evaluators are trained to the same standards and certified by the same person, Komatsu ReMarketing Training Manager Alan Christensen. They all use the same worksheet and the same criteria. Wherever you are in North America, if you buy a Komatsu Distributor Certified used machine, you're assured of what you're getting and of what the machine is going to do."

Full disclosure

The Distributor Certified evaluation process includes diagnostic tests and covers all essential aspects of machine operation, from the engine, drive train and hydraulics to the undercarriage, work equipment and electrical system.

"The inspection and resulting rating basically constitute a 'full disclosure' report to the buyer of that piece of equipment," explained Christensen. "We're providing honest, straightforward and factual information. Sometimes, when we find issues, we repair them. But mostly, we're here to give a true assessment of a used machine's status."

The inspection/assessment is something each evaluator takes very seriously, according to Christensen. "The evaluator's name is on that report. By signing it, he is, in essence, looking the salesman in the eye and saying, 'You can tell your customer he can buy this with confidence because I've given it a thorough inspection.' It's like his own personal seal of approval."

Because of the rigorous inspection, Komatsu distributors are willing to stand firmly behind the product, which is also often eligible for extended warranties and special rates from Komatsu Financial. ■

(Right) Following about five hours of classroom training, technicians are critiqued on their practice evaluations.



(Below) Komatsu ReMarketing Training Manager Alan Christensen conducts a training session at a Komatsu distributor.



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