

WOOD WORKS

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EASTERN CONTRACTORS, INC.

Immigrant fulfills dream by building
largest institutional contracting
company in U.S.

See article inside...



Ramesh Motwane, CEO
Eastern Contractors, Inc.

A MESSAGE FROM C.N. Wood Co., Inc.



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Dear Equipment User:

As we approach the end of another year, it's a good time to assess where we are and where we're going. For the construction industry in general, 2003 has been okay. Not great, but certainly not terrible. Of course, that's on average. Individual contractors, as always, may have done very well or somewhat poorly.

In short, the construction economy seems to be more or less a continuation of what we've experienced the past few years. While it's a far cry from the rapid growth that occurred throughout much of the 1990s, it's also not the disastrous construction cycle that sometimes occurs when the general economy struggles.


So, what about the future? There are some encouraging signs. Productivity is increasing and the stock market has rebounded nicely. Interest rates remain low. These factors may well spur developers and project owners to move some long-planned private jobs off the drawing board and into the field.

On the public side, by all accounts, there's a tremendous amount of new and replacement infrastructure work that's needed (see *Industry News & Notes* article in this issue of WOOD WORKS). The big question, as always, is where to find the money to fund these major projects.

In some ways, the government is taking steps to help (see *Guest Opinion*), but it's not enough. We encourage you to work through your industry associations to bring information to politicians at all governmental levels, explaining the importance of what we do for our society as a whole.

As always, all of us at C.N. Wood are here to help you in any way we can. Please don't hesitate to call or stop in regarding equipment, parts, service or just to say hi. We'll be glad to see you and look forward to working with you as we move forward together. May you have a safe and happy holiday and a prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,
C.N. WOOD COMPANY, INC.


Robert S. Benard
President

**Encouraging
economic signs
may spur
development**



WOOD WORKS

THE PRODUCTS

PLUS THE PEOPLE TO SERVE YOU

In this issue . . .

EASTERN CONTRACTORS, INC.

Find out how one man fulfills his dream by building the largest institutional contracting company in the U.S.

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Learn how Komatsu upgraded the D65-15 mid-size dozer to improve both productivity and operator comfort.

UTILITY PRODUCTS

Take a look at the SK1020-5 skid steer loader, Komatsu's newest addition to its growing utility product line.

MORE NEW PRODUCTS

Read how Komatsu's new wheeled dozer can reduce costs in certain dozing applications.

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A panel of civil engineers details concerns about American infrastructure and the critical need for improvement.

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EASTERN CONTRACTORS, INC.

Immigrant fulfills dream by building largest institutional contracting company in U.S.



Ramesh Motwane, CEO
Eastern Contractors, Inc.

Ramesh Motwane arrived in the United States from India in 1972 with \$8 in his pocket. Today he is president and CEO of his own company, Eastern Contractors, Inc., a diversified enterprise that does a half billion dollars in business annually. The Framingham-based operation has established itself as the largest institutional contractor in the country, having captured the majority of the school and college construction market in Massachusetts.

"We do our own site, foundation, electrical and mechanical work, as well as rough and finish carpentry," said Motwane. "Because we do about 50 percent of a job, it helps our profitability and gives us a lot of control. If a subcontractor is not performing on schedule, we try to buy out that job in order to get it done on time. Many school projects are fast-track jobs and we have to push so kids can go to class. We have an excellent track record of doing quality work and getting it done on schedule."

This track record has helped Eastern Contractors cash in on what has become a very lucrative market.

In Massachusetts, school and college construction and renovations can run as high as \$75 to \$100 million per project.

The largest school project the company currently works on is a \$75 million dollar fast-track project at Lincoln Sudbury High School in Lincoln. The project includes \$4 million in site work. A major renovation project is also underway at Algonquin Regional High School in Northborough. The \$62 million project includes construction of three major additions. Once completed, the students will move into the new buildings and the old classroom spaces, some only a foot off the new structures, will be demolished. Another recent school project, totaling \$52 million, was an extensive renovation at Framingham High School. Crews did interior demolition, constructed two additions and installed new utilities, new curbs and sidewalks.

Eastern Contractors does not limit itself to institutional jobs, but focuses on public projects in Massachusetts, successfully bidding on bridge and housing projects, as well as sewer and water jobs. In 1992, the company was one of about 20 contractors involved in a \$13 billion, five-year project to construct a water and sewage treatment plant for the National Water Resources Association (NWRA). Eastern Contractors' portion of the project totaled \$214 million.

Little cash, big dreams

Motwane has come a long way since he came to the United States at the age of 27 with a small amount of cash, but with big hopes and dreams. "Before I came to this country, I was told that money grows on trees here," he recalled. "I had difficulty locating those trees, but I must say this is the only country in the world where you can fulfill your dreams. If you are not able to, something is wrong with you and not with the country or the system."

Motwane attended Northeastern University, graduating in 1977 with a degree in civil engineering. He went to work for a very small contracting company



Eastern Contractors recently completed work on this parking lot at Algonquin Regional High School. The \$14 million project in Northborough, Mass., included three major additions and demolition of old buildings.



Based in Framingham, Mass., Eastern Contractors has grown to become the largest institutional contractor in the country. Here, an Eastern Contractors crew excavates the site for one of three new additions to the Algonquin Regional High School in Northborough, Mass.

in Revere, where he says he worked long hours for little money. But the experience taught him many aspects of the business and motivated him to start his own general contracting company.

Motwane and his brother-in-law, who had degrees in electrical and chemical engineering, formed Eastern Contractors on July 14, 1978. The two later decided to dissolve their partnership and Motwane bought his brother-in-law's share of the company.

As he reflects on his company's 25 years in business, he notes that success didn't come easily. "As a first-generation immigrant from a third-world country, I go through a scrutiny beyond what any other contractor would go through every time I'm a low bidder," he observed. "But because of hard work and a great job record, the company is able to grow. This speaks of how beautiful the system is that we have here in the U.S. I really did not look for the moon when I started my business," he added. "But I kept working hard and the moon and the stars fell into my lap."

It does appear that heaven smiled down on Eastern Contractors. Today, the general contracting division is doing \$300 million in business. The company added a heating and air conditioning division in 1993 and an electrical division, started in 1998, is now doing a volume of nearly \$20 million.

Just a year and a half ago, the company initiated a site division to give it more control over the fast-track



Eastern Contractors relies on Komatsu equipment to help meet demanding fast-track school construction schedules. This Komatsu WA380-5 wheel loader is at work filling in low spots in the parking lot at Algonquin Regional High School.

institutional projects. The site division started with six employees, but already has expanded to a workforce of 45 with \$20 million worth of business on the books.

Expert staff

In addition to hard work, Motwane credits his knowledgeable staff and workforce for contributing to the company's success. He praises Steve Kehoe, vice president of site work, for the rapid growth of that division. Other officers Motwane depends on include Pat Manzo, vice president of the heating and air conditioning division; Sunil Lulla, vice president of the electrical division; Raju Calla, chief financial officer; Frank Marino and Suresh Bhatia, P.E., corporate vice presidents; and Joseph Licciardi, who is a 25 percent partner and executive vice president.

Continued . . .

Hard work, dedication build company

... continued

"I am lucky to have a fine staff dedicated to serving our clients," said Motwane. "We're a hands-on operation as opposed to working like a 'briefcase' contractor, who only manages subcontractors doing all the work. We work together like a family. Anytime there's a problem, we sit around the conference table to discuss and resolve it."

Another element Motwane believes is critical to Eastern Contractors' success is his philosophy of reinvesting in the company. "Over the years I always put as much money as possible back into the company, including dividends, bonuses, and even my paycheck," he said. "So even in today's tough economy we can bid on a single project as big as \$150 million, whereas some other contractors have half the bonding limit they used to have."

Komatsu all the way

When Eastern Contractors needed to invest in new equipment for the site division, Motwane and Kehoe did a lot of research on different brands and dealerships. In the end, they turned to C.N. Wood and sales representative Brian Doherty in Woburn.

Kehoe, who has more than 20 years experience in site work, knew the kind of machines his crews needed and he liked what C.N. Wood and Komatsu had to offer. "Komatsu is excellent — the efficiency and serviceability of the equipment is superior," he said. "And the machines are priced extremely well."

As the site division has expanded, the company has added new Komatsu machines and plans to purchase more in the future. The fleet of excavators currently includes two Komatsu PC300-7 machines, a PC200-6, a PC200-7, and a PC20MRX, which performs well in tight work spaces. Other Komatsu machines include two D39EX-21 dozers, two loaders (a WA380-3 and a WA380-5) and two loader backhoes (a WB140 and a WB150). Eastern Contractors crews also have two Komatsu skid steers (an SK815 and an SK1020) and two Hypac C840C rollers from C.N. Wood.

With each Komatsu machine, Eastern Contractors also purchased a four-year extended warranty and a maintenance contract for jobsite service. The extended warranty greatly reduces downtime because C.N. Wood provides a replacement machine while a broken one undergoes repair. Under the maintenance agreement, C.N. Wood service personnel come to the jobsite to service and take oil samples on each machine every 250 hours.

"All I have to do is make a phone call to C.N. Wood and there's a service guy at the jobsite at our convenience, usually after 3:30 p.m. or on Saturdays, so we're not hurting the job," said Kehoe. "We want these machines to last for a good many years, so upkeep is very important. We feel the maintenance contracts are worth the investment."

"The service and sales people at C.N. Wood are available anytime we need them, especially Brian," added Motwane. "He's doing a marvelous job for us."

Successor already named

In the next five years, Motwane believes his company will grow from a volume of a half billion to three-quarters of a billion dollars. He has no plans to pursue work outside of Massachusetts because he says staying local will ensure better quality control and profitability.

In planning for the long-term future of his company, the 58-year-old Motwane has already taken the unusual step of naming his successor. He believes that move sends a message that Eastern Contractors will continue to be a major player in future generations. In about three years, he will begin turning some CEO responsibilities over to 33-year-old Emilio Licciardi, an engineer and project manager. Licciardi first started going to jobsites at Eastern Contractors around the age of 14 when he accompanied his father to work. Motwane has also selected 39-year-old Sunil Lulla, a graduate of the



Eastern Contractors' large fleet of Komatsu machines includes this WB140-2 backhoe loader. Company owner Ramesh Motwane says he turned to Komatsu equipment because of its excellent serviceability, efficiency and pricing.



Eastern Contractors covers all its Komatsu equipment with extended warranty and maintenance contracts. "We want these machines to last for a good many years, so upkeep is very important," said Steve Kehoe, vice president of site work for Eastern Contractors.



Steve Kehoe (left), vice president of Eastern Contractors' site work division, confers with C.N. Wood sales rep Brian Doherty at the Framingham High School jobsite.

Wharton School of Business to be the next CFO. Motwane will remain a stockholder and owner of the corporation.

Reducing his role in the company will not diminish the value Motwane places on life-long learning. Every day he is eager to learn from others and share his knowledge too. One way he has been able to do that is as a charter member of TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs), an international organization that fosters entrepreneurship. Charter members are successful entrepreneurs, many of whom became billionaires.

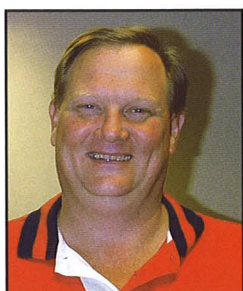
"I've learned a lot from that group," Motwane said. "I've also learned from other contractors and tried to emulate those who are larger and more successful. Likewise, we hope smaller contractors can learn from us. I really believe in sharing knowledge and that we've been rewarded for that," he concluded.



An Eastern Contractors operator uses a Komatsu D39EX dozer for grading at Framingham High School. The \$52 million project included two building additions, utilities installation, a new parking lot, curbs and sidewalks.

NEW DEPRECIATION BONUS

How it can save you thousands of dollars in current-year taxes



Wally Savage,
Komatsu Financial

In May, the federal government passed the Jobs Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003. This new legislation creates some very attractive incentives for contractors and other equipment users. Generally speaking, the measure allows you to write off (depreciate) the cost of new equipment much faster than you could previously. This substantially lessens the amount of taxes you're going to pay during the first year of ownership.

There are two primary provisions of the act. One is an acceleration of the Capital Depreciation Bonus that was originally enacted in 2002. Under the 2002 rules, companies could take a first-year depreciation bonus of 30 percent. Under the 2003 Act, that amount

increased to 50 percent. (See the chart below for an example of the impact of the accelerated bonus.)

The other provision, the Section 179 Expense Deduction, is designed to assist companies with smaller amounts of capital to invest. For companies that would prefer to expense rather than depreciate their equipment, it significantly increases the amount of a purchase they can expense during the first year. Under previous law, the maximum amount a company could expense was \$25,000. Under the 2003 Act, this amount increased to \$100,000. It's important to note that this \$100,000 applies only to the first \$400,000 of capital investment. For every dollar over \$400,000, the amount eligible to be expensed is reduced by \$1, therefore, if the capital investment exceeds \$500,000, nothing can be expensed.

As with all tax matters, you should talk to your accountant or tax advisor for more detailed information on how these provisions might benefit you in your specific situation.

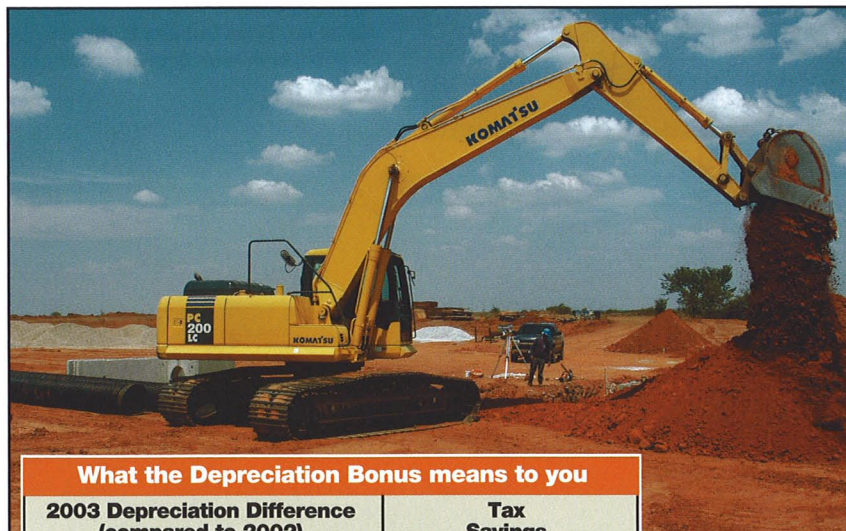
Step in right direction

There are a couple of things you should be aware of. One, because Congress passed the legislation to help stimulate the economy, the bonus depreciation applies only to new (not used) equipment you purchase. Two, neither the Bonus Depreciation nor the Section 179 Deduction actually lowers the amount of taxes that you will eventually pay.

But the measures do provide an immediate tax break that leaves a lot of money in your pocket the first year, thereby improving your cash flow. And when combined with today's low interest rates, this may be one of the most favorable times ever for you to buy new equipment.

The law covers new equipment you purchase and put into use between May 6, 2003, and December 31, 2004.

This Guest Opinion was prepared by Wally Savage, director of marketing & administration, Komatsu Financial.



What the Depreciation Bonus means to you

2003 Depreciation Difference (compared to 2002)	Tax Savings
Year 1. \$24,000	\$9,600
Year 2. (\$9,600)	(\$3,840)
Year 3. (\$5,550)	(\$2,220)
Year 4. (\$3,960)	(\$1,584.)
Year 5. (\$2,910)	(\$1,164)
Year 6. (\$1,980)	(\$792)

Example based on asset value of \$150,000 assuming a 40 percent tax rate

The new depreciation bonus, which allows you to write off the cost of equipment faster than in the past, only applies to new (not used) equipment you purchase.



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THE NEW D65-15

Komatsu upgrades popular mid-size dozer to boost productivity and improve comfort

For many years, contractors have turned to the Komatsu D65-12 for great performance in a mid-size dozer. Now, Komatsu has updated and upgraded the popular 190-horsepower machine to a Dash-15 model. The new model features a number of improvements that boost on-the-job productivity and comfort.

"The Dash-12 was very good for its time, but the new D65-15 improves upon it significantly," said Komatsu dozer product manager Ed Warner. "The new model has a larger, quieter cab for greater operator comfort. We've also increased hydraulic flow for better steering and improved multifunction capability (using both blade and steering at the same time). What's more, in addition to the standard EX and wide PX tracks, we now also offer the D65-15 in a new WX track style, which provides some of the benefits of both other versions."

Improvements to the D65-15 were obvious to Donald Polasek, plant manager for Texas Aggregates, an Austin-based sand and gravel producer. "We tested it against three other mid-size dozers and it was the best of the bunch. Rippers,

blade, cab and the overall balance of the machine — this was just what we were looking for. The Komatsu gives you a great feel for the ground. In 20 years of running this size of dozer, I'd say this is the best one I've come across."

At a little more than 20 tons, the D65-15 is big enough to do substantial work, small enough to transport fairly easily and agile enough to work in relatively tight quarters. The machine is well-suited for work in small mines and mid-size quarries as well as all construction and landfill applications.

Maneuverable and productive

The D65-15's improved productivity is due primarily to a substantial upgrade of the Hydrostatic Steering System (HSS). "We increased oil flow to the steering pumps, which gives faster, more precise response, and allows the operator to use the blade more effectively while steering," said Warner.

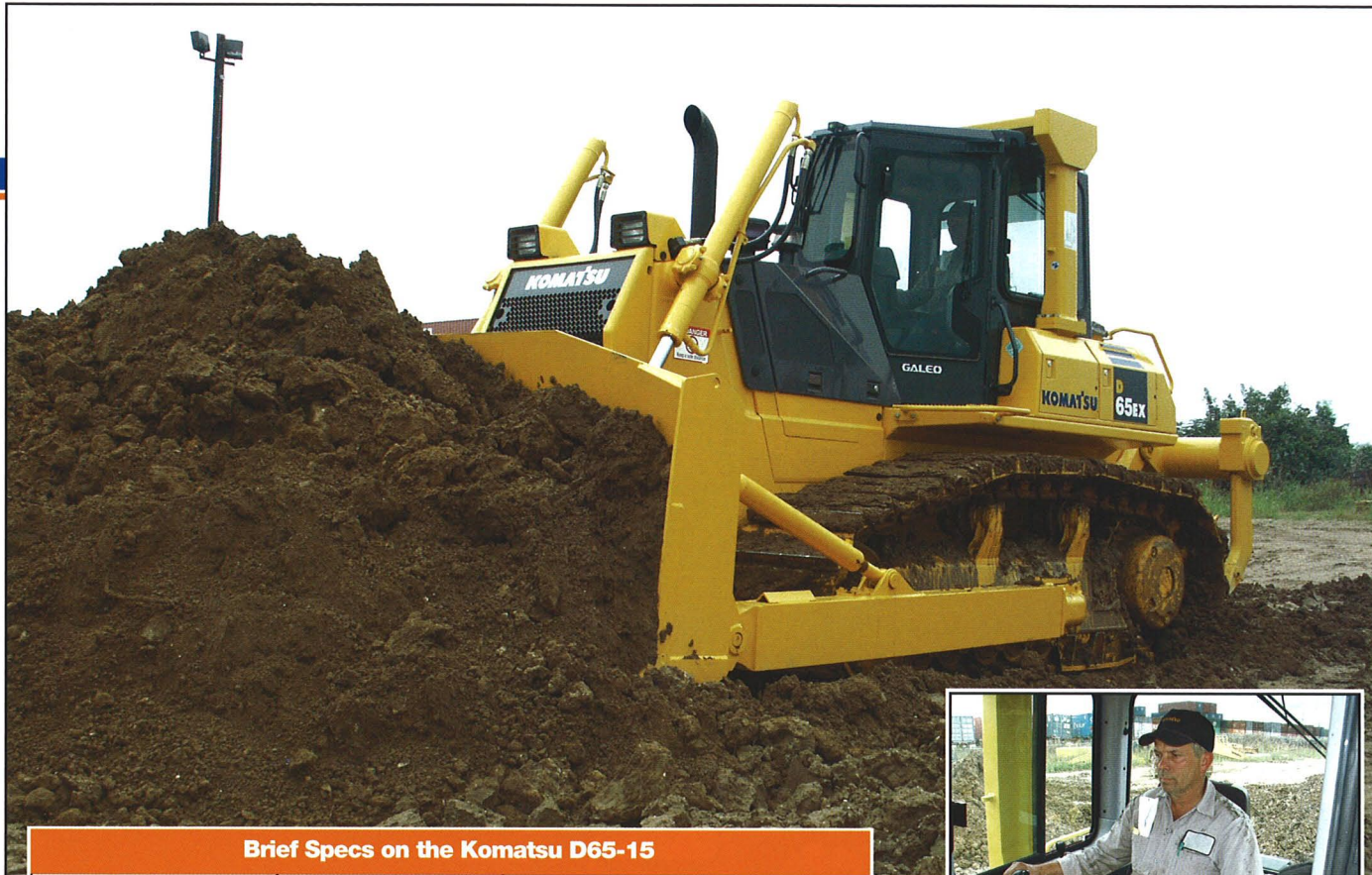
An independent hydraulic pump transmits engine power to both tracks, which enables the outside track to move faster than the inside track. This provides smooth, continuous turns and keeps more material on the blade. "Operators will also find they can turn in a tighter radius and can counterrotate under certain conditions. Competitive machines with conventional steering still rely on the back-and-forth method of turning," noted Warner.

Komatsu also enhanced electronics on the new D65-15. A preset, forward-reverse auto-shift feature monitors engine speed and travel speed to automatically find the right gear and speed for optimum efficiency.

Other features new to the D65-15 are Komatsu's Palm Command Control System (PCCS) and the Electronic Controlled Modulation Valve (ECMV). With PCCS, the travel and blade control joysticks are both ergonomically designed for maximum operator comfort and efficiency. ECMV is a transmission control that automatically adjusts each clutch engagement for a smooth, shockless shift, which



With increased oil flow to the pumps, the D65-15 features greatly improved hydrostatic steering, which significantly boosts productivity.



Brief Specs on the Komatsu D65-15

Model	D65EX-15	D65PX-15	D65WX-15
Output	190 hp	190 hp	190 hp
Operating weight	44,270 lbs.	45,360 lbs.	46,160 lbs.
Blade type	straight/semi-U	straight	semi-U
Blade capacity	5.9-7.34 cu. yd.	5.09 cu. yd.	7.34 cu. yd.



The new D65-15 has a much quieter cab than its predecessor, along with enhanced electronics.

lengthens component life and provides a smooth operator ride.

Operator comfort and easy maintenance

The new hexagon-shaped cab is eight inches wider than its predecessor, so even large operators will be able to comfortably handle long work shifts. Visibility is better from the front, side and rear, which improves both operator performance and safety. Komatsu markedly improved the ventilation system for more efficient cooling and heating. New cab damper mounts suppress noise and vibration, while a hydraulically-driven engine fan lessens noise inside the cab and helps reduce fuel consumption.

An onboard diagnostic system gives operators immediate access to critical information that helps prevent serious problems and unnecessary downtime. Conveniently located maintenance points enable quick and easy service and inspections. Komatsu also increased engine oil and filter change intervals to 500 hours and extended hydraulic oil and filter changes to 1,500 hours.

Best of both worlds

The new WX version of the D65-15 is a hybrid between the standard EX and the wide-track PX models. "It's sort of a cross between the other two models, which gives you the best of both worlds," said Warner. "Essentially, the D65WX-15 is an EX tractor with a PX track gauge. It gives it a wider stance for better flotation in marginal areas where the ground may be soft, but where you don't require a true wide-track or swamp dozer."

The main benefit of a WX model over the PX, according to Warner, is greater productivity. "The WX comes standard with a high capacity semi-U blade rather than the PX's straight blade, which means it can carry more dirt," said Warner. "But, some dealers are ordering the WX with a straight-tilt blade because they have customers who want to use it for grading."

"We see the D65WX-15 as ideal for slope work," he added. "But it may also perfectly fit the bill for someone who has only an occasional need for a wide-track machine and can't really afford two separate dozers. For those contractors, this is like having two tractors in one."

For more information on how the new D65EX/PX/WX-15 can help boost your dozing performance in any application, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch sales department today.



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PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY

Komatsu's newest skid steer loader delivers both

As an equipment user, you demand high performance and productivity from your large excavators and wheel loaders — so-called “production” machines. When it comes to your skid steer loader, you may be less demanding, but with Komatsu's new SK1020-5, you don't have to be, according to Bob Lessner, Komatsu utility product manager.

“We think performance and productivity are important, even in a utility machine,” he said. “That's why we designed all of our skid steers, including our newest and largest model, the SK1020-5, to industry-best specifications. Drawbar pull, bucket breakout force, ground speed, yards per gallon, yards per hour — we beat the competition in virtually every category and we're price-competitive. Regardless of the application, why would any equipment user not want that?”

The SK1020-5 is a 7,525-pound unit that runs 70-hp (or a turbocharged 83-hp) at 2,500 RPM. Performance-enhancing features include:

- Automatic Power Control that enables full power at all times, eliminating engine stall-out.
- HydrauMind™ hydraulics to allow simultaneous machine functions at maximum power.
- Standard auxiliary hydraulic circuit with a flow of 21 gpm (optional 34 gpm unit).
- Standard two-speed transmission that produces 10 mph travel speed and 6.5 mph work speed.

Ease of operation

“This is Komatsu excavator technology in a skid steer,” noted Lessner. “From the HydrauMind™ hydraulics, to the Proportional Pressure Control joystick levers, to an optional fully enclosed and air-conditioned cab, operators will love the SK1020-5.”

Operators have the choice of three control patterns in the SK1020-5, from traditional hand and foot controls to two variations of the increasingly popular all-hand controls. All three control patterns are fully hydraulic, adjustment-free and maintenance-free.

With a rated operating load of 2,000 pounds, a tipping load of 4,000 pounds (2,220 pounds and 4,400 pounds respectively with optional counterweight) and the ability to load trucks 10 feet and lower, the SK1020-5 is capable of doing some very serious work. Komatsu offers more than 40 attachments for maximum versatility.

“We honestly believe this is by far the best skid steer in the world,” said Lessner. “We invite any contractor who's in the market for such a unit to try one out and see for himself.”

For more information on the SK1020-5 or any Komatsu skid steer model, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location.



Brief Specs on the Komatsu SK1020-5 Skid Steer Loader

Operating Weight	7,525 lbs.
Output	70/83 hp
Capacity	2,000-2,220 lbs.
Breakout Force	short-lip bucket 5,038 ft./lb. long-lip bucket 4,279 ft./lb.

The new Komatsu SK1020-5 leads its class in both speed and power features.



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When it comes to pushing power, through any and all types of ground conditions, it's tough to beat the traditional tracked dozer. But on some jobs, even some large ones, speed and maneuverability are more important than maximum traction, and if the ground conditions are suitable, you might be better off with a rubber-tired dozer, like the new Komatsu WD600-3.

"In addition to speed and maneuverability, the main advantage of the WD600-3 versus a comparably sized tracked dozer is lower operating costs," said Komatsu product manager Lee Haak. "These lower costs result from increased fuel efficiency and reduced maintenance associated with rubber tires, because typically the tires last longer than tracks and undercarriage.

"The other big plus is that rubber tires provide greater compaction, which is very beneficial in some applications like woodchip or coal stockpiling," Haak added. "The extra compaction significantly reduces the likelihood of spontaneous combustion, which is always a concern in coal and woodchip environments."

Stockpiling is just one application where the WD600-3 excels. According to Haak, it's also ideal at mine and large quarry dump sites to push spoil material over the edge and in general earthmoving jobs to push scrapers. "It's a big machine with a lot of power and therefore capable of doing substantial work," he noted.

Powerful and comfortable

The WD600-3 pushes with 485 horsepower at 2,000 rpm and offers maximum rimpull up to 94,300 pounds for added pushing force. It features a fully automatic shift transmission system, a fully hydraulic wet-disc braking system, and several blade options (10 cu. yd. straight blade is standard). According to Haak, the new unit also shares many common parts with Komatsu's WA600-3 wheel loader and includes many of that machine's production and comfort features.

The operator's cab, one of the largest in the industry, sits on a viscous damping mount system, which reduces noise and vibration. The operator's seat features an air suspension design, allowing it to immediately adjust to any operator's size. Joy stick steering is an option. Dual doors allow entry from either side of the machine.

Haak notes that Komatsu designed the new wheeled dozer with several simplified maintenance features. "An onboard monitoring system evaluates operating conditions for the WD600-3 on three levels: pre-start level checks, cautions and warnings. This system notifies the operator of machine problems before a costly failure occurs." For easy maintenance, Komatsu increased oil and filter service intervals from 250 to 500 hours for the WD600-3 and made major engine and service components easily accessible.

For more information on the new Komatsu WD600-3 wheeled dozer and how it can help you improve productivity on certain jobsites, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch location.



Brief Specs on the WD600-3 wheeled dozer

Operating weight	94,580 lbs.
Output	485 hp
Blade capacity	10-29 cu. yd.

Komatsu's new WD600-3 wheeled dozer can do much of the same type of work a crawler dozer can do, but with greater speed and maneuverability and lower operating costs.



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QUALITY WITH SPECIAL FEATURES

Komatsu demonstrates utility line at ICUEE show

The International Construction and Utility Equipment Exposition (ICUEE) is a biennial event designed to let utility equipment users do some hands-on machine testing. An estimated 15,000 contractors and others attended ICUEE 2003, held in late September in Louisville, Kentucky.

The show gave Komatsu's Utility Division an opportunity to showcase its growing line of utility equipment. "Although we've been around for a number of years, many people still equate Komatsu only with big equipment," said product manager Bob Lessner. "We want them to understand that the same quality we put into those big construction and mining machines also goes into our utility products."

Komatsu Utility had three machines (the SK1020 skid steer loader, WB140 backhoe loader and PC45MRx compact excavator) in operational areas where contractors could dig or lift dirt. In addition, Komatsu had other skid steer loaders and hydraulic excavator models for customers to examine.

"We have some unique machines and some unique features on machines that set us apart from the competition," said Lessner. "For example, rear visibility in our skid steers is unmatched in the industry. Some models, like the SK820, also feature vertical lift loader arms, which add about 10 inches of extra reach at full height, thereby improving a contractor's ability to load trucks.

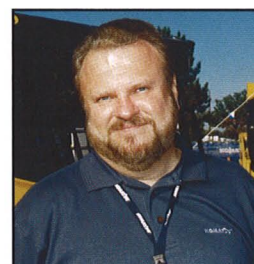
"Komatsu compact excavators also have special features," he added. "All our excavators are tight-tail-swing models so they fit better in confined areas. Our smallest excavator, the PC09, comes with a variable undercarriage that users can retract to allow passage through narrow doorways. To my knowledge, it's the only excavator with an integral hydraulic breaker, making it ideal for demolition work inside a building."

Backhoe loader improvements

All Komatsu backhoe loaders are now built at Komatsu's new plant in Newberry, South Carolina.

They are designed specifically for the North American market. "We've made some changes that U.S. customers told us they wanted," said Lessner. "We lengthened service intervals and reduced noise levels. We improved visibility by mounting the exhaust stack on the upper right post. We also moved the air intake from the front to the top of the engine for cleaner, cooler intake air. And we've added an integral grill guard to protect both the machine and the side of a truck during a loading application."

Continued . . .



Bob Lessner, utility product manager, Komatsu America Corp.



(Above) Komatsu's exhibit area at the ICUEE show in Louisville featured numerous pieces of utility equipment. (Left) Contractors check out the vertical lift SK820 skid steer loader.

Komatsu shows utility line at ICUEE

... continued



The WB140 backhoe loader was one of three Komatsu utility machines set up in an area where customers could get inside the machine and see how it performs "in the dirt."



These equipment users checked out the integral hydraulic breaker on Komatsu's smallest compact excavator, the PC09.

Customers who tried out Komatsu's utility units at ICUEE were impressed. "It seemed like a really good machine," Travis Endlich of Little Acres Excavating and Hauling in Newcomerstown, Ohio, said of the WB140 backhoe loader. "I liked the power and breakout force." After spending some time on the PC45 excavator, Brian Mackie, fleet specialist with Avista Utilities in Spokane, Washington, said "It's very smooth and has good power. I like how you can dig right alongside the fence with the machine positioned 90 degrees up against it."

Lessner says Komatsu's goal in manufacturing utility equipment is to produce machines of the highest quality. "We emphasize that they're safe, they're user-friendly and they deliver the industry's best owning and operating costs. We certainly invite all equipment users to try our units out to see how we compare. We're quite confident they'll like what they find."

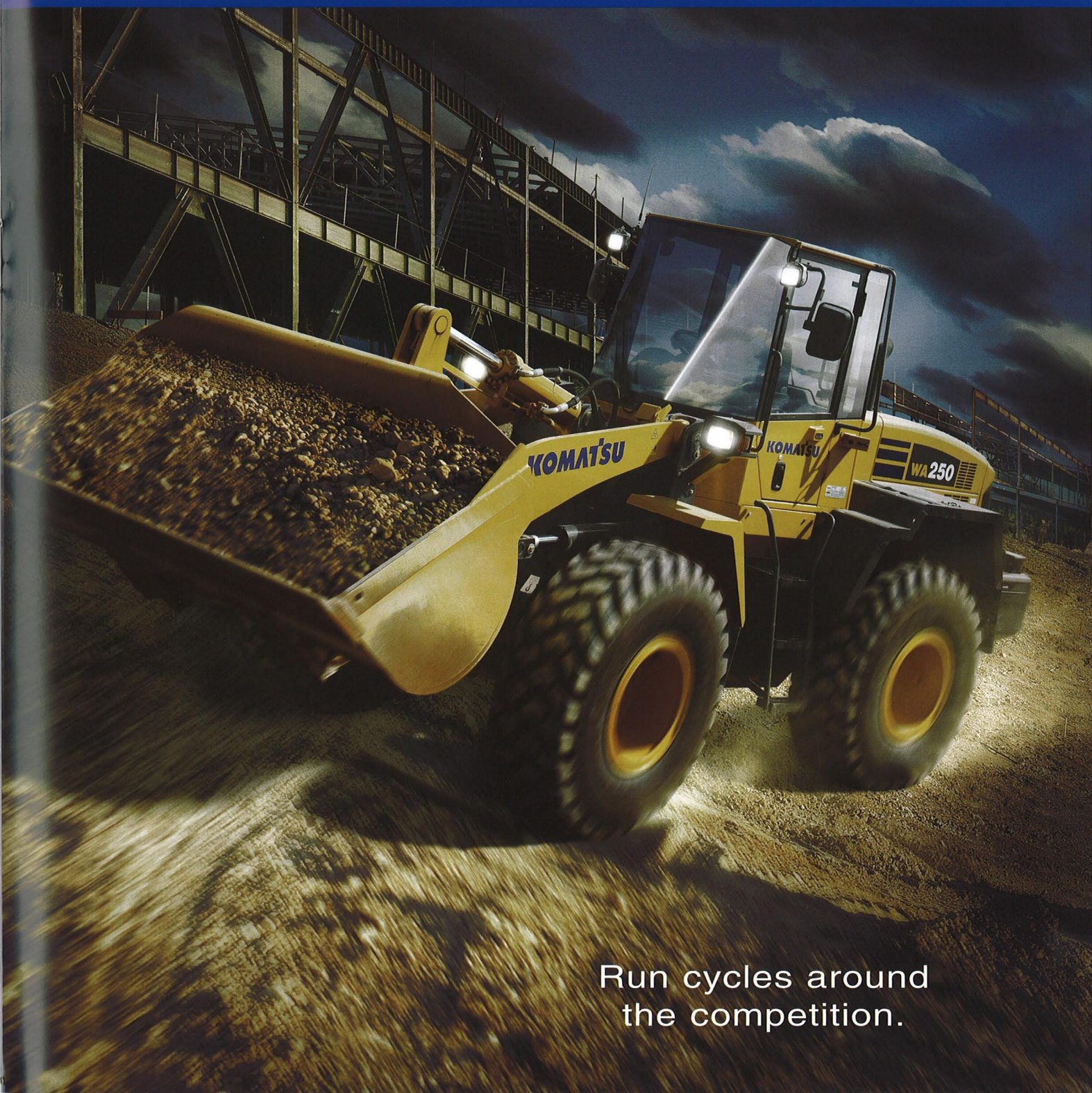
For more information on Komatsu utility equipment, call your sales representative or our nearest branch office today.



This fleet specialist liked the way that the tight-tail-swing Komatsu PC45 was able to hug the fence and work right up against it.



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NO IMPROVEMENT

Panel of civil engineers issues progress report on American infrastructure

Two years ago, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) produced an in-depth study of the nation's infrastructure and issued a report card that no student would have wanted to take home to his or her parents. Grades ranged from a high of "C+" for Solid Waste to a low of "D" for drinking water, wastewater, dams and aviation. Overall, the panel of 20 eminent civil engineers gave American infrastructure a grade of D+ and estimated that it would cost \$1.3 trillion over five years to bring conditions to an acceptable level.

What's happened since then? According to ASCE, which recently produced a progress report on that study, our infrastructure is actually in somewhat worse shape today than it was in 2001. The panel concluded that seven of the 12 categories studied had deteriorated, while five stayed the same. They pegged the current five-year cost to improve conditions at \$1.6 trillion, which is \$300 billion (a 23% increase) more than it was just two years ago.

"Time is working against our nation's infrastructure," said ASCE president Thomas L. Jackson. "Since we graded the system in 2001, our roads are more congested than ever, the number of unsafe and hazardous dams has increased and our schools are unable to accommodate the mandated reductions in class size."

Millions remain "in the dark"

Jackson pointed to the failure of the electrical grid in the Northeast and Midwest last August as an example of what happens when infrastructure deteriorates. "While millions of Americans struggled to live without electricity for three days, millions more are still figuratively in the dark about the shaky state of our nation's infrastructure. Our transportation, water and energy systems haven't been maintained, let alone updated, to supply our ever-increasing demands."

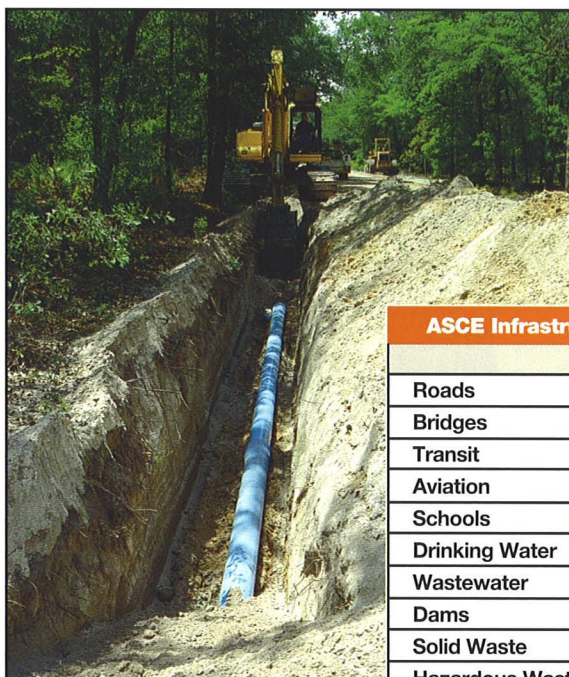
ASCE cited a number of factors contributing to the nation's infrastructure problems. Among them are population growth, budget problems at all governmental levels and the threat of possible terrorist attacks, which

has diverted money into security measures rather than maintenance or growth of systems.

"Americans' concerns about security threats are real, but so are the threats posed by crumbling infrastructure," Jackson said. "It doesn't matter if the dam fails because cracks have never been repaired or if it fails at the hands of a terrorist. The towns below the dam will still be devastated."

ASCE called for a renewed partnership between citizens, the private sector and local, state and federal governments to address the infrastructure issue and come up with methods to provide the critical funding needed to repair the nation's transportation, water and energy infrastructure.

This article is based on the 2003 Progress Report for America's Infrastructure, released in September by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).



According to ASCE, not a single infrastructure category improved over the past two years.

ASCE Infrastructure Progress Report		
	2001	2003
Roads	D+	↓
Bridges	C	↔
Transit	C-	↓
Aviation	D	↔
Schools	D+	↔
Drinking Water	D	↓
Wastewater	D	↓
Dams	D	↓
Solid Waste	C+	↔
Hazardous Waste	D+	↔
Navigable Waterways	D+	↓
Energy	D+	↓

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Komatsu V.P. announces program to expedite replacement parts to equipment users

QUESTION: Quick access to replacement parts is critical to an equipment user. What is Komatsu doing to improve parts availability?

ANSWER: We're in the middle of an enhancement program called "parts reform" that's designed to significantly improve our performance regarding parts availability. We've talked with all our distributors and hundreds of end-using customers, from the very large to the very small, to learn not only their parts expectations, but also what they'd like to see in a perfect world.

Customers are realistic. While they'd love for the distributor to have every part they might ever need, they know that's cost-prohibitive. But they do rightfully expect the distributor to have all common repair and consumable wear parts on hand and they expect all parts to be available next day.

QUESTION: Have Komatsu and its distributors met those expectations in the past?

ANSWER: For the most part, I'd say yes, and we're going to do even better. Parts have a predictable life expectancy. This can vary somewhat based on application, maintenance, ground conditions and how an operator handles the machine. But, within certain parameters, we know when in a machine's life, it's going to need a part. The problem is that neither we nor our distributor always knows exactly how many hours are on each machine a customer has. Part of our parts reform program deals with improving the hour-tracking of machines, which we can do very well through our Komtrax GPS machine tracking system. This will certainly help ensure outstanding parts availability.

QUESTION: What else is Komatsu doing to move closer to the ideal parts availability situation you referred to earlier?

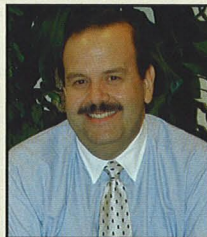
ANSWER: Probably the most significant item has to do with overnight or next-day service. We've found that Komatsu dealers within overnight driving distance of our master Parts Distribution Center (PDC) in Ripley, Tennessee, do a very good job meeting their customers' parts needs. That's largely because they run trucks to the PDC each night to pick up emergency parts.

Now, we're taking that concept nationwide by establishing an emergency parts depot system (see the

Parts Update article in this issue) with seven regional locations across the country. These depots will be within overnight driving distance of all our distributors.

Therefore, if a customer calls the distributor before the close of business one day, we'll be able to have the needed part at the distributor's branch, not at 10 a.m. — as would be the case with air freight — but at 7 a.m. the next morning. It will cut a customer's downtime significantly and we think it gets us much closer to that "ideal" scenario.

Continued . . .



Steve Day,
vice president-parts,
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.

STEVE DAY

A native of Maryland and engineering graduate of the University of Maryland, Steve Day joined Komatsu in 1978 after a stint in the U.S. Navy. Now approaching his 25th anniversary with the manufacturer, Steve said he is one of the "old-timers" there. "Komatsu was still very new to the U.S. when I started. But it was clear that everyone involved with the company was passionate about their product and aggressive about wanting to grow in the U.S. and worldwide."

Steve started as an inside sales coordinator in Atlanta, then took a field sales position in Tennessee and Kentucky. In 1983, he became the Southern region sales manager. From 1992 until 1998, he headed up Komatsu Parts in Ripley, Tenn.

In 1998, Steve moved to Vernon Hills, Ill., to run Komatsu's service operations. For a period of time, he ran both service and sales until Komatsu reorganized its internal structure last year. Steve then returned to parts as vice president.

"Product support, whether it's parts or service, is at the top of everybody's agenda here," he said. "Every Komatsu manager from the chairman and the president on down has the same chart in his office, which is a statement of our mid- to long-term strategy. Nowhere on it do we talk about selling more machines. It's all about how we can help customers get the most out of their equipment. We call it improving the customer's equipment life-cycle costs. That's our number one goal because we know if we're successful at that, more machine sales will naturally follow."

Quality parts, true overnight delivery

... continued

QUESTION: More and more customers are using the Internet in many aspects of their business. Does that include parts?

ANSWER: Certainly, and we have what we think is the most user-friendly, complete and up-to-date online parts ordering system in the industry. It's www.epartscentral.com, which can also be accessed through www.komatsuamerica.com. We've had e-parts for a few years, but we've enhanced the system significantly recently. For the customer, it's like having a continually updated parts book. It also lets a customer check parts availability from his local distributor and from Komatsu's PDC, as well as price everything and actually place the order himself.

QUESTION: Customers can get parts from numerous sources. Why should they turn to their Komatsu dealer?

ANSWER: For the same reason they bought Komatsu in the first place — quality. Our parts are manufactured to make our equipment work at an optimum level. The only way to ensure you're going to continue to get that is by buying Komatsu OEM (original equipment manufacturer) parts.

QUESTION: You've been in a number of different positions at Komatsu including machine sales, service and parts. In your opinion, why should equipment users buy Komatsu?

ANSWER: Reason number one is that nobody can touch our engineering. In terms of productivity, reliability, serviceability and longevity, we're building products that really have no rivals in the marketplace.

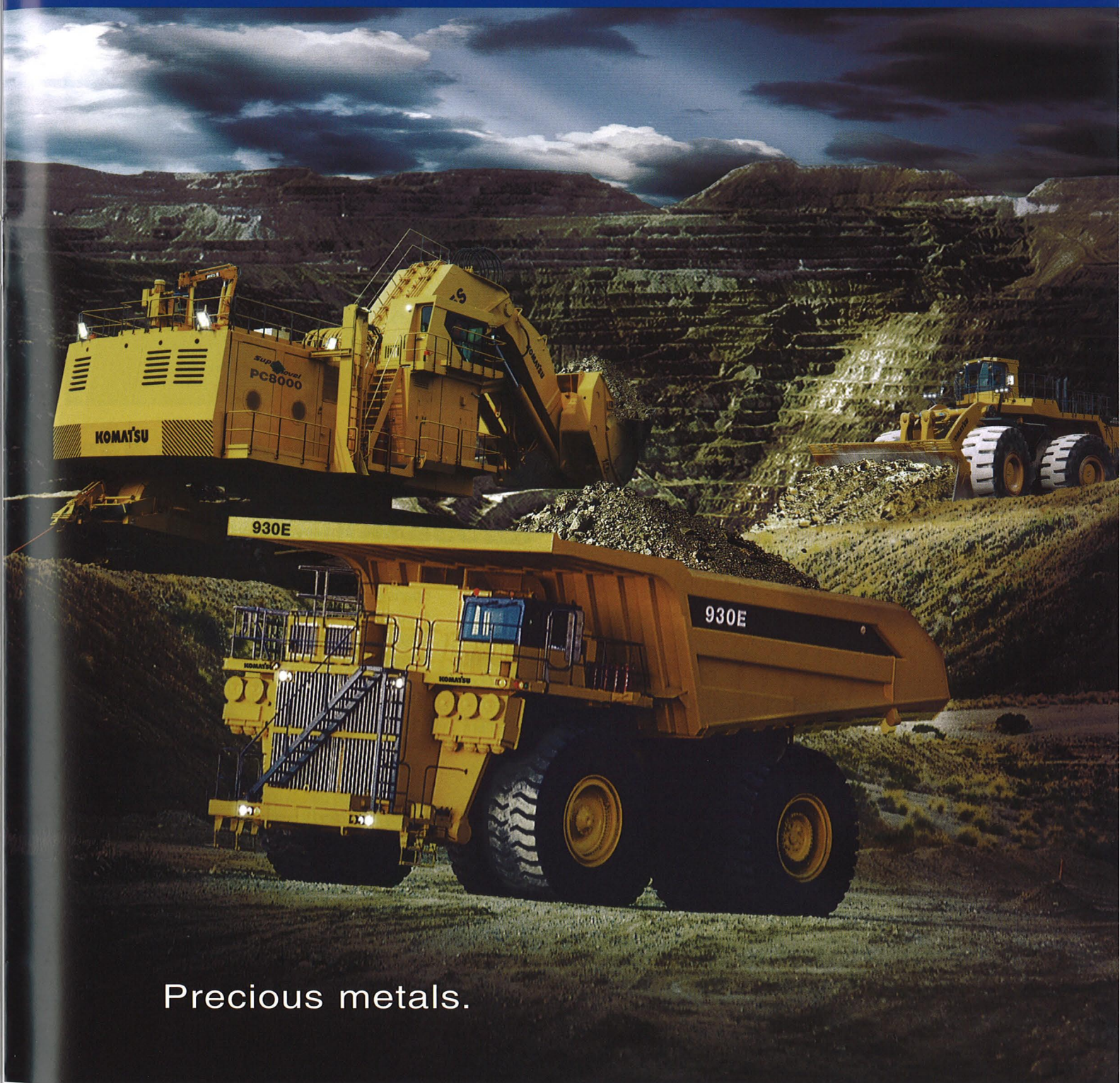
Beyond that, it's Komatsu's attitude. We're the number two manufacturer of construction equipment in the world. That's really good and it's something we're proud of. But it's also kind of like the old rental car commercials — because we're number two, we try harder. We're working very hard on the product support side to try to reach industry-leading levels and we think our parts reform program is a big step in the right direction.

Lastly, from top management on down, we understand our customers have equipment for one reason and one reason only and that's to make money. At Komatsu, everything we do is aimed at helping them do their jobs more cost-effectively than anybody else.



Currently, Komatsu sends parts from its national Parts Distribution Center (PDC) in Ripley, Tennessee, to distributor branch locations across the country. In the near future, that will change as new regional PDCs are completed. It's all part of a Komatsu effort to ensure faster delivery of replacement parts to customers.





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REGIONAL PARTS DEPOTS

Komatsu to improve parts availability by opening centers closer to customers

In a construction world where bids are close and margins are tight, contractors look for any edge over the competition. Equipment uptime can be one such edge, and a key element in improving uptime is having quick and easy access to replacement parts.

In order to ensure you have the parts you need when you need them, Komatsu is instituting a new regional parts depot system. Depots will be located in Pittsburgh, Denver, Minneapolis and Dallas, along with two still-to-be-determined cities in the western U.S. and one in the Southeast. The Komatsu Parts Distribution Center in Ripley, Tenn., will continue to serve as the manufacturer's nationwide parts hub.

"Regional parts depots will help us put replacement parts closer to our distributors and our end-using customers," said Steve Day, Komatsu vice president-parts. "The benefits are twofold. One, it should help our distributors improve their on-site parts availability for customers, and two, it will get emergency parts to distributors first thing in the morning." That's significant because technicians load up their trucks early in the morning to head out into the field on repair calls.

True overnight delivery

"Many manufacturers and distributors say they have overnight delivery of replacement parts, but what they really have is 10 a.m. delivery," said Day. "With our conveniently located regional parts depots, we will make nightly parts runs to the distributor. That means emergency parts will be at the dealership before it opens its doors at 7 a.m. the next morning. It's "true overnight delivery" that will benefit the customer whether he picks up the part himself, or the technician takes it with him to make the repair. In many cases it will save a full day of downtime because most service is scheduled first thing in the morning and if a part is not there the service doesn't get done until the next day," he explained.

Komatsu expects the Regional Parts Depot system will help some distributors improve their fill rate (how quickly they can fill customer orders) by as much as 15 percent. Day noted that will keep Komatsu distributors "right up there with the best of the competition."

Day says he expects dealers to continue stocking commonly used repair parts — what he calls "embarrassed-not-to-have" parts like hoses, filters and pumps. But he says they'll no longer have to stock those parts that might be needed just once a year.

"Many of our dealers are very aggressive and try to have any part a customer might need," said Day. "While that's admirable, it's probably not an efficient use of their money, space or manpower. Because each regional depot will serve multiple dealers, each of which may have the same once-a-year need for a slower-moving, larger or more expensive part, it makes sense for the depot to stock it. Essentially, that part is almost as readily available to the customer as it would be if it were at the dealer's own store."

Komatsu expects to open a regional parts depot in Pittsburgh and two in the western U.S. late this year or early in 2004. Other locations will open every couple of months with most, if not all, expected to be up and operating by the end of next year.



To expedite parts delivery to customers, Komatsu is opening regional parts depots in Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh, as well as two locations in the western U.S. and one in the Southeast.



INDUSTRY UPDATE

Vehicles with cleaner-burning engines have contributed greatly to a substantial decrease in carbon dioxide and particulate matter emissions over the last 30 years. The improvement comes despite the fact that the number of vehicle miles traveled has increased almost 150 percent over that same time period.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

Transportation sector played major role in documented improvement

Over the past 30 years, the U.S. environment has improved dramatically. According to a new publication from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the transportation industry has been the driving force behind much of this improvement. The publication, documented with recent federal government data, cites high technology, innovative project design and construction, cleaner-burning fuels and intensive waste material recycling as primary reasons for a cleaner environment.

"The good news in this publication, *Transportation & the Environment: Perspectives in Progress*, is going to surprise many people," ARTBA president Pete Ruane says. "The facts about transportation and the environment just don't back up the world view that no-growth advocates continue to feed the media, government officials and the general public."

Ruane says federal data make clear that adding needed road capacity to America's transportation system is compatible with continued air and water quality improvements.

"Extraordinary progress"

According to U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) data, motor vehicle emissions have dropped significantly since 1970. Carbon dioxide emissions are down 43 percent, volatile organic compounds have dropped 59 percent, particulate matter emissions are 42 percent lower and lead emissions have been virtually eliminated.

"This progress is extraordinary given that over the same period the U.S. Gross Domestic Product increased 161 percent and energy consumption

increased 42 percent," Ruane noted. "It's even more impressive when you also consider that the U.S. population grew 33 percent and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased nearly 150 percent, while new highway capacity increased only 6 percent."

The publication documents causes of unnecessary air pollution, including: traffic congestion caused by failure to add road capacity to keep pace with population growth, a growing economy, public transportation needs and certain demographic trends.

Wetlands and recycling expanded

A Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) report cited in the ARTBA publication shows that in 2002, the federal Wetlands Mitigation Program created nearly 2.7 acres of wetlands for every acre of wetlands contributed to road and transit improvements.

Additionally, during this same time period (since 1970), according to Ruane, all objective measures show the quality of the nation's rivers, lakes and streams has either been maintained or improved.

Yet another FHWA report details the transportation industry's commitment to recycling. It shows more than 80 million of the 100 million tons of asphalt pavement removed each year during resurfacing and widening projects is reused — a recycling rate of 80 percent. By comparison, the annual tonnage of post-consumer recycling (i.e., paper, glass and aluminum) is only 60.7 million tons. In addition, roadbuilders recycle more than 200 miles of concrete each year, according to an FHWA and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report.

For a copy of the full report, *Transportation & the Environment: Perspectives in Progress*, go online at www.artba.org or contact ARTBA's Sara Dix at (202) 289-4434.

Continued . . .

More improvements needed

... continued

Transportation investment pays dividends

Increased investment in federal transportation programs over the past decade has paid dividends for the environment, according to government sources documented in the ARTBA publication. From 1992-2000, state and local groups spent \$547 million in federal highway funds on transportation-related landscape improvements and roadside beautification projects. During that same eight-year period, federal investment in bike paths and pedestrian projects increased twenty-fold, from \$23 million to nearly \$416 million.

U.S. air and water quality will improve even more as newer vehicles with cleaner-burning engines replace older, "dirtier" ones in the American motor vehicle fleet, the association says. Under recent EPA-issued regulations, diesel engines and fuels will become even cleaner, further helping reduce emissions.

What we still need to do

America must have a dynamic transportation network to meet the needs of a growing population

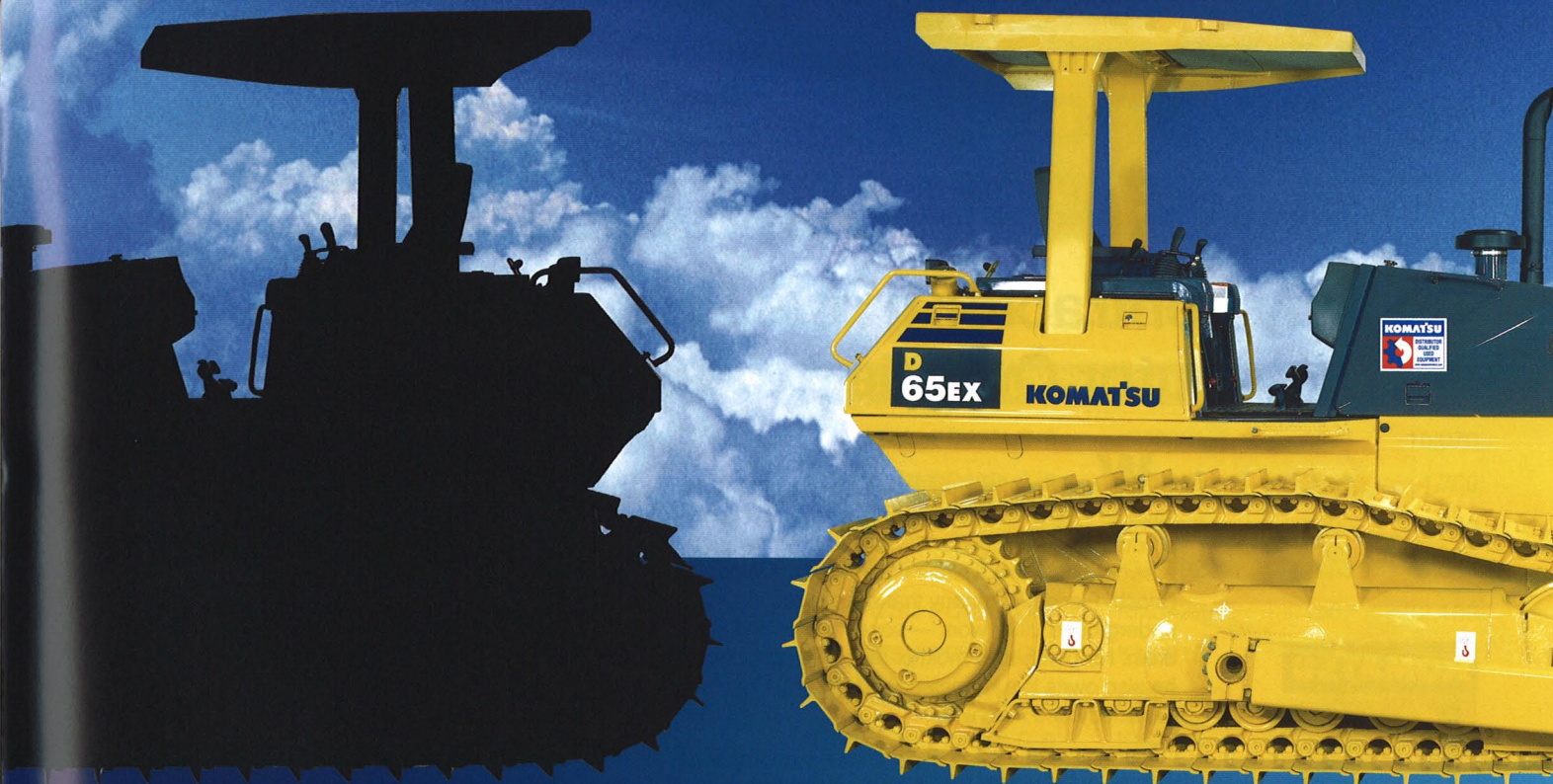
and economy while allowing people to choose their means of travel, ARTBA says. According to the group, the nation's future transportation plans should include:

- Adding road capacity where appropriate and desired by the majority of local citizens. This is a key to reducing traffic congestion and unnecessary auto, truck and bus emissions. Enhanced road capacity is also essential to maintaining time-sensitive ambulance, police and fire emergency response service. In the era of e-commerce, the speed and convenience of purchasing goods via the Internet is of little use without an efficient road network for delivering them.
- Improving local management of traffic incidents to clear roadways quickly.
- Boosting use of synchronized traffic signalization and other "smart road" technologies to increase traffic flow.
- Improving public transportation systems, including bus, van pool, car pool and demand-response networks that handle nearly two-thirds of all public transit trips in America.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association argues that building additional highway capacity would further improve the environment by lessening the amount of time vehicles spend on the road, stuck in traffic.



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“GOOD PRODUCTIVITY FOR THE DOLLAR”

Why contractor trusts Komatsu ReMarketing Distributor Qualified Used Equipment

When Paul Watterworth buys equipment, he says he's looking for value, or in his words, "good productivity for the dollar." Watterworth is owner and president of Foster Marine Contractors, a West Palm Beach, Florida, company that specializes in underground utility work — sewer, water and storm drain. He purchased most of his equipment new, but he also owns five Komatsu ReMarketing Distributor Qualified used machines.

"When we buy used equipment, it's usually more of a specialty piece than a true production piece, so it's nice to save some money by buying used," said Watterworth. "But just because we may not be using it day-in and day-out, doesn't mean we lower our standards when it comes to used equipment. Just like everybody in this business, we can't afford downtime. So whether we purchase a machine new or used, we

have high expectations and requirements regarding reliability and performance."

That's why Watterworth turns to Distributor Qualified used equipment from Komatsu ReMarketing. Foster Marine's Komatsu ReMarketed equipment fleet includes three hydraulic excavators (two zero-tail-swing PC128UUs and a compact PC60) and two WA180 wheel loaders.

Equipment you can trust

"With Komatsu ReMarketing machines, I have a high level of trust that they're going to do what they're supposed to do," said Watterworth. "I like that they've been inspected, and if necessary, have been reconditioned. I like the warranty because it's an extra level of security and comfort. Most of all, I like that I'm buying from my Komatsu dealer because I know he's going to stand behind the equipment if I do have any problems."

In fact, one of Foster Marine's PC128UUs did develop a problem after five or six months. "The dealer took it back and made the repair, no questions asked," said Watterworth. "If I had bought that same machine at an auction, I would have been out the repair money."

"I used to go to a lot of auction sales and I still go to some just to see what's out there, but I haven't bought at an auction in a long time," he added. "I don't see a lot of value there, plus you're never sure exactly what you're getting. For me, there's just too much risk for the dollar spent. By my way of thinking, Komatsu ReMarketing machines are a much safer investment and represent a better value. I certainly feel like they've helped us."



Using a detailed reporting procedure, trained and certified technicians fully inspect all Komatsu ReMarketing Distributor Qualified used machines.

For more information on Distributor Qualified used equipment from Komatsu ReMarketing, contact your sales representative or our nearest branch office. You can also view all Komatsu used equipment at www.equipmentcentral.com.

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