

# WOOD WORKS

A PUBLICATION FOR AND ABOUT C.N. WOOD CO., INC. CUSTOMERS • 2007 No. 1

Featured in this issue:

## CORLISS CONSTRUCTION

Hard work pays off for D.J. Corliss  
as he builds Attleboro, Mass.,  
company to new heights

See article inside...



D.J. Corliss,  
Owner



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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



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Dear Equipment User:

Each new year brings with it new opportunities, and 2007 will certainly be no different.

Except for housing, almost all other sectors of the construction and related economy remain strong and should provide a healthy amount of work for contractors this year. There's also a realistic hope that interest rates have peaked and may start falling this summer. If that happens, the excess housing inventory should begin to disappear and housing construction could start to come back as early as this summer.

At C.N. Wood, we're optimistic about 2007. We're gearing up for a substantial year in order to be ready to provide the reliable equipment and responsive service you need, when you need it.

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Sincerely,  
C.N. WOOD COMPANY, INC.

Robert S. Benard  
President



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# WOOD WORKS

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## A SALUTE TO A CUSTOMER

# CORLISS CONSTRUCTION

## Hard work pays off for D.J. Corliss as he builds Attleboro, Mass., company to new heights



D.J. Corliss,  
Owner

D.J. Corliss has seen all the late-night infomercials claiming to make people rich by buying and selling property. He's never been impressed with the systems advertised or the claims of riches made by the spokespersons.

"They really don't give you enough information to make an informed decision," said Corliss, Founder and Owner of Corliss Construction Corporation, a division of Corliss Development Group, LLC. "It looks easy on the commercials, but buying and selling properties takes a lot of time and hard work. Most people don't want to put the necessary energy into it, and they end up failing."

Like the people in the commercials, Corliss had no experience when he began buying and selling properties. In fact, he had no intention of going that route when he graduated college and began working in the biotechnology field about a decade ago.

"I was looking for an apartment, and the realtor suggested I look into buying a property," he recalled. "After about a year of paying rent, I decided there had to be a better way. So I sold

off parts of an old Mustang I had and got the capital together to put a down payment on my first rental property. The plan was to buy it, live in one unit and rent out the rest."

That first property was a four-unit building in North Attleboro — near where Corliss grew up — that needed a complete cosmetic rehab. Corliss worked nights renovating, while keeping his day job. That wouldn't last for long.

"I really enjoyed the renovation, but what I really fell in love with was the idea of being my own boss," Corliss said. "So I started buying more properties, usually one about every two months. I was generating enough cash flow from them that I could keep buying. Within two years I had more than 100 units, and I continued to do the renovations. There were times when I would work all night then go to my job. That got tedious, so in 2000, I quit the biotech field and went full time into my own business."

### New developments take shape

Not long after he nearly doubled his number of properties, he came to the realization that doing rehab work wasn't necessarily the best long-term plan for him. He liquidated everything he had in the rental market and began developing new residential properties in southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The first was a 2.7-acre site in Attleboro that previously housed a car dealership bordered by three rivers. He quickly came to see that the process wasn't as simple as tearing down the old and putting up the new. After getting the property rezoned and cleared for construction, he began the building process, which involved installing more than 350 rammed aggregate piers.

For grading and backfilling, Corliss Construction relies on this D39EX-21 dozer. "For its size, it will push a lot of material," said Project Manager Maan Sinno. "It moves around the site more easily than a larger machine would. It's perfect for us."



"I was as green as they come going into it, but like buying and selling properties, I learned quickly," Corliss said. "There are many issues to deal with: zoning, environmental, putting in utilities, deciding on floor plans and the list goes on and on. That first project was unique because of the piers, which were something new in the industry. It saved us from taking out about 10 feet of old silt deposited there by the rivers and then replacing it with new fill."

The 20-unit project is nearing completion, and is one of several Corliss has in planning stages or under construction. "I've only been at this a couple years, but my name's getting out there," he said. "The more I do, the better every part of the process seems to go. Now I have people calling me to look at land they want to sell, with the idea in mind I can develop it. If it's a good location, I'll consider it. One thing I'm very specific about is doing homework and knowing the market. Just like the old saying, this business is all about location, location, location."

### Own site-work company pays dividends

It's also about being as productive and efficient as possible, according to Corliss. That's why in 2006 he made the decision to start Corliss Construction Corporation. The business exclusively handles the site work for Corliss Development Group.

"I was having trouble with projects falling behind schedule because I couldn't rely on the site work getting done on time," said Corliss. "The site contractor really sets the stage for whether or not a project is going to run smoothly. It made sense to do it myself, so that everything falls to me. Now our projects are running ahead of what we had planned."

Corliss' path to site construction is similar to his foray into real estate. Maan Sinno, who now works as Project Manager for Corliss Construction, prodded him into making the leap.

"He saw the projects I had coming up and approached me with the idea that there was a better way," Corliss said. "I was skeptical at first, but after I saw some of the potential



Corliss Construction uses several Komatsu excavators, including this rented 71,647-pound PC308USLC-3. "The zero tail swing allows us to work in tight places," said Project Manager Maan Sinno. "It has great power."



problems he pointed out come to fruition, I figured he was right. The only way to eliminate those problems was to do the work ourselves. With his help, it got off the ground. He hired the employees, who are a great group of guys with a lot of experience, and it's working very well."

Corliss plans to eventually expand Corliss Construction's service beyond just meeting his own needs.

"I didn't start the company for that reason, but it will eventually happen," predicted Corliss, who also noted that Sinno will become a partner in the construction business in the near future. "We're getting requests now to bid on projects. I believe that's due in large part to what we've accomplished in such a short time. People see our work, our experienced guys and our topnotch equipment, and they want to do business with us."

*Continued . . .*

Equipped with a quick coupler, Corliss Construction's WA380-5 wheel loader offers versatility. "We can easily switch attachments to do a variety of different tasks," said Project Manager Maan Sinno. "It has good power and stability."



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# Continued growth in the plans for Corliss

... continued

## Komatsu from day one

For equipment, Corliss and Sinno chose Komatsu machines rented or purchased from C.N. Wood with the help of Sales Representative Dan Ibbitson. Corliss Construction currently uses two PC300LC-7 excavators, a WA380-5 wheel loader, a WB150PS-2 backhoe loader and a D39EX-21 dozer. They've also rented a PC308USLC-3 excavator and an HM300 articulated haul truck.

"From day one, I told D.J. that Komatsu was the way to go," confirmed Sinno. "I had experience working Komatsus with another company and found them to be much more reliable and fuel-efficient than the competition. We never had problems with Komatsu equipment."

Sinno said the 73,210-pound PC300s have proven to be extremely productive and fuel-efficient under a variety of conditions. "We really like the PC300s because they're the right size for just about anything," he noted.

C.N. Wood Sales Representative Dan Ibbitson (left) meets with Corliss Construction Project Manager Maan Sinno.



Corliss Construction's WB150PS-2 backhoe loader takes on small utility projects in confined spaces.



"I can walk the machine inside a building to work, and when I'm done, walk it out and dig a 23-foot trench with no problem. They hold their power in every situation. We've also used them for mass excavations, pairing them with the articulated trucks. It's a perfect combination. When we're ready to move to another site, they're easy to transport."

"We've found similar characteristics in the PC308," he continued. "The added advantage is it has zero tail swing, so we can work it in tight places. For its size, it has great power."

For smaller utility jobs, Corliss Construction turns to its 94-horsepower WB150 backhoe loader. "It's great in confined spaces," Sinno reported. "It's very mobile and agile, but has good power. It works with maximum efficiency, and the same can be said for the D39 dozer. For its size, it will push a lot of material, and it moves around a site more easily than a larger machine would. It's perfect for us."

The 187-horsepower WA380-5 wheel loader, equipped with a JRB quick coupler, handles moving pipe, loading trucks and backfilling trenches. "Versatility is a big plus for us," said Sinno. "We can easily switch attachments to do a variety of different tasks. It has good power and stability."

In addition to Komatsu equipment, Corliss purchased a Hypac roller and a Kent breaker from C.N. Wood. Strict maintenance keeps the machinery in good working order, according to Sinno and Corliss. For additional parts and service needs, Corliss Construction turns to C.N. Wood. "They have been fantastic to work with," stated Corliss. "If we encounter an issue, they are right there to help or provide a machine until it's fixed. Dan and the folks at C.N. Wood have gone above and beyond what we expected of an equipment dealer. They take excellent care of us."

## Executing the plan

With roots established, Corliss is looking to the future with expansion beyond the immediate area in mind. "I've scouted locations outside this market," he explained. "Now that I feel more comfortable with my operation, I'm ready to expand. I have a plan in place; it's just a matter of timing and execution from here." ■





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# NEW CONGRESS

## What does the Democratic takeover mean for the construction industry?



Christian A. Klein

*This Guest Opinion, which first appeared in the newsletter, **Washington Insights**, was prepared by Christian Klein, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Associated Equipment Distributors. Mr. Klein can be contacted at [cklein@potomac-law.com](mailto:cklein@potomac-law.com).*

With Democrats in control of both the House and Senate for the next two years, there are bound to be some changes coming out of Washington that will impact the construction and equipment industries. Here is some of what we think might happen.

Our association (Associated Equipment Distributors or AED) has long been recognized as a leading advocate for increased highway, airport and water infrastructure investment. Generally, Democrats have been more willing than Republicans across-the-board to support infrastructure programs and the user-fee increases necessary to pay for them. Democratic control of Congress may present an opportunity for an honest debate on crafting a new user-fee structure to pay

for the highway system and to develop a consistent funding mechanism for water infrastructure, among other things.

Additionally, Democrats have generally supported capital investment incentives such as the depreciation bonus. If there is a drop-off in business investment in the next two years, we may find Democratic support for accelerated depreciation.

However, one of AED's biggest issues, the death tax, doesn't face a bright future under the new regime. Democrats have by-and-large opposed efforts to permanently repeal the death tax. While it is possible that Democrats will accept scaled-back death-tax relief to take the issue off the table for the 2008 elections, this is highly speculative. Other industry-specific tax priorities are not generally as partisan and will likely depend on the desire of lawmakers to delve into broader tax and budget issues.

### Watching the "Blue Dogs"

There is much speculation about the role the "Blue Dog" Democrats will play in the new Congress. Blue Dogs generally support pro-growth tax and regulatory policy, limited government, fiscal responsibility and infrastructure investment. During the last two years, AED has worked aggressively to build relationships with members of the Blue Dog coalition.

We're hopeful that given the relatively slim Democratic margin of control on Capitol Hill, Blue Dogs will be able to temper the Democratic agenda and remind their colleagues in leadership that policies that hurt America's family businesses ultimately wind up hurting the people those companies employ. ■

Associated Equipment Distributors says Democratic control of Capitol Hill might mean some good and some bad for the construction industry.







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## INDUSTRY EVENT

# MASCON 2007

## Annual show provides excellent opportunity for equipment users to view latest products and technology



(L-R) Mario Micozzi with P. Gioioso & Sons, C.N. Wood President Bob Benard, Gino Gioioso Sr., Marco Gioioso and Gino Gioioso pause for a photo at C.N. Wood's MASCON display.

This Komatsu PC200LC-8 excavator and Hypac C747C compactor were just two of the machines C.N. Wood featured at its large MASCON exhibit.



Once again, contractors throughout the Northeast had the opportunity to view the latest equipment, products, tools and services during the 18th annual MASCON show. This year, the exhibition, which took place February 28 and March 1, featured more than 200 exhibits and attracted in excess of 5,000 visitors.

C.N. Wood was a prominent presence at MASCON, with a display that featured three new pieces of Komatsu equipment: the PC200LC-8 excavator, the WA500-6 wheel loader and the CK35 track skid steer. This was the first opportunity many attendees had to view these new units and they drew a lot of attention, according to C.N. Wood officials. Also on display was a Hypac C747C three-ton, double-drum vibratory compactor.

A large contingent of C.N. Wood management, sales and support staff were on hand to meet and greet customers, including President Bob Benard and Vice President Paula Benard.

"The annual MASCON show is always a great opportunity for C.N. Wood to connect with customers," noted Paula Benard. "We enjoy talking with longtime customers and meeting new people. It's a good time to show off our capabilities and showcase the outstanding lines of equipment we carry. In the relaxed atmosphere of the show, customers feel comfortable asking questions and taking a close look at Komatsu equipment."

Many people who stopped by the C.N. Wood booth have made a tradition of attending MASCON every year, just like C.N.

*Continued . . .*





Dan Struck, VP of Struck, Inc., won C.N. Wood's second annual KMAX tooth competition by removing and reattaching four bucket teeth in 48.3 seconds.



Joe Petrucci, President of Petrucci Construction Inc. (left), and C.N. Wood Sales Rep Bob Rosa look over Komatsu literature at the C.N. Wood booth.



C.N. Wood Sales Rep K.C. Causer (left) and Ken Steadman, President of Barlett & Steadman Co. Inc., share a laugh at MASCON.



(L-R) C.N. Wood Sales Rep Bill Mallard met up with Chris Siamos of PKM and Bryan Whittemore of Whittemore Septics at C.N. Wood's MASCON display.



MASCON 2007 was held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the largest convention center in the Northeast.



(L-R) Anthony Cardillo Jr., Anthony Cardillo and Joe Cardillo, all with Anthony Cardillo & Sons, visit with C.N. Wood Sales Rep Brian Doherty.

Enjoying MASCON were (L-R) C.N. Wood President Bob Benard, Rosewood Construction President Bill Depietri, C.N. Wood Sales Rep Ben Edwards, Rosewood Equipment Manager Eric Jakubowicz and C.N. Wood VP Paula Benard.





# C.N. Wood's MASCON display draws crowds

... continued



C.N. Wood Sales Rep Bob Rosa (right) is with his son, Rob, a Senior Surveyor at Northeast Engineers and Consultants.



ATS Equipment President John Connolly (center) enjoyed visiting with C.N. Wood VP Paula Benard and Kent Demolition Tools Regional Sales Manager Fritz Muench.



Hypac Northeast Territory Manager Bob Sanderson answered customer questions at C.N. Wood's booth.



(L-R seated) Nicholas Pasquale (age 4), his brother, Matthew (age 6), and Jake Marshall (age 8) came to MASCON with their fathers, John Pasquale and John Marshall, both with Viking Tree.

ET&L Corp. Equipment Manager Fred Dutile (center) looked at the new Komatsu WA500-6 with C.N. Wood's Product Support Rep Ron Leblanc (left) and Sales Rep Alan Austin.



Wood, which has participated in MASCON since its beginning.

"We really look forward to this show every year," concluded Benard. "We like being able to display new products that our customers are interested in and that can benefit their businesses. We want them to know that our main goal is to provide them with quality products and outstanding service, which can help them do their jobs faster and more profitably." ■



C.N. Wood Sales Rep Bill Mallard (second from right) met with (L-R) Robert B. Our Co. Project Manager Abigail Our, VP John Our and Parts and Purchasing Manager Robert Thompson.



(L-R) C.N. Wood Sales Rep Bill Mallard, Rego Contracting Owner Mike Rego and Diversified Developments General Manager Joe Lemieux looked over the Komatsu PC200LC-8 excavator.



Warren Brandano, with The Warren Company, and his son, Matthew, give the Komatsu PC200LC-8 a big "thumbs up."





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## EQUIPMENT DESIGN BENEFITS

# TOP GRADES

## Visibility, blade geometry and ease of operation help set Komatsu motor graders apart

When it comes to operating heavy construction equipment, proficiency does not happen overnight. According to many industry experts, that fact applies to motor graders more than any other machine.

While wheel loaders and dozers use essentially one control stick to manage all functions of the machine, motor graders have more than a dozen different controls to monitor while moving at different speeds in forward and reverse.

"That's why, for many contractors and many government entities, getting a good blade man is so important," said Jenkins Davis, Director of Sales & Marketing Development for Komatsu America. "Many times, they will cater to grader operators because they're so valuable. It's very hard to replace somebody who's a good blade man, due to the operational skills it takes to do the job."

### Direct drive and torque converter

With skilled operators in such demand, it makes sense to reduce the complexity of motor grader operation. Davis said the unique dual transmission of Komatsu motor graders helps do just that. At the flip of a switch, operators can go from Mode One, which is the direct-drive transmission, to Mode Two, which utilizes Komatsu's unique torque-converter transmission. The top four gears in Mode Two offer automatic shifting, making the machine easier to manage.

"It just simplifies the whole operating process," Davis described. "The best comparison I could make would be the difference of going from a stick shift to an automatic transmission in a car. Using a clutch and shifting in a car is somewhat similar to Mode One, which is the direct-drive concept. Mode Two, which is a torque converter, is similar to a regular power-shift car. It's easier

to operate and that's especially beneficial for younger and less-experienced operators."

The current dual-transmission line of Komatsu motor graders has been out for several years now and, according to Davis, is tested and proven. "We were very successful with our previous line of motor graders," Davis noted, "but as we looked at the evolution of the product, we believed some major design changes would make the product even better. That's really what led to the development of our current line of graders."

### Other Komatsu advantages

In addition to easier operation, Davis said Komatsu graders feature an advanced hydraulic system, excellent visibility and superior blade geometry, all of which combine to provide improved power and performance at a jobsite.

The hydraulics help maximize speed and responsiveness. A closed-center system of valves allows fluid to flow to each individual implement, providing outstanding operator "feel" and unmatched implement control.

*Continued . . .*



Jenkins Davis,  
Director of Sales  
& Marketing  
Development,  
Komatsu America  
Corp.

The GD555-3, with a 140- to 160-variable-horsepower engine, is Komatsu's smallest motor grader.



# Grader design features help boost productivity

... continued

"Operators want an instantaneous response from the blade when they hit that lever," Davis explained. "We think the hydraulics on our machine are superior to anything else on the market."

The operator's ability to clearly see the work underway is essential in grade work, too, and

the visibility of Komatsu graders sets them apart from competitors. The large front glass helps provide an unobstructed view of the moldboard and front tires. In addition, angled front and rear glass prevents dust buildup.

"The visibility to the blade is crucial," concurred Bob Lessner, Product Manager, Motor Graders for Komatsu America. "That's the working end of the machine and our visibility is probably equal to or better than any other manufacturer in the market today."

Blade geometry is also an important design advantage of Komatsu motor graders. The unique blade-suspension system improves reach and allows a wide working range, including true 90-degree bank sloping.

Another design feature is parts commonality. "Many parts used in our excavators, wheel loaders and dozers are incorporated into Komatsu motor graders, so parts are readily available and technicians are knowledgeable about the product," Davis pointed out. "That's a tremendous benefit if a part needs to be replaced."

Here's another benefit of Komatsu motor graders: the GD655-3 and the GD675-3 machines are now equipped with a Tier 3 engine, which offers greater horsepower and improved fuel efficiency.

"We increased engine horsepower slightly by 10 horsepower," Lessner said of the GD655. "It now has 180 to 200 horsepower with the Tier 3 engine. The other changes we made are in the cab. We have an electronic hand throttle now, whereas before it was a lever, so it's more user-friendly."

## Operating options

Governmental work, including road maintenance and repair jobs, ditching and slope work, makes up 50 percent of motor grader sales in some areas of the country. "We have a motor grader to fit any job," confirmed Davis. "Komatsu is very committed to the North American market and the motor graders are a big part of our product line, along with dozers, excavators and wheel loaders. We want to do everything we can to promote this product line because we think we've got something very special here." ■

### Brief specs on Komatsu Motor Graders

Model	Operating weight	Output	Overall Length
GD555-3 (Tier 2)	30,950 lbs.	140-160 hp	30'10"
GD655-3 (Tier 3)	33,069 lbs.	180-200 hp	32'4"
GD675-3 (Tier 3)	34,855 lbs.	180-200 hp	32'4"



Bob Lessner, Product Manager, Motor Graders, Komatsu America Corp. (left) stands in front of a Komatsu GD555-3 motor grader with Komatsu Motor Grader Consultant Jim Terrell.

The GD655 is slightly larger than the GD555 and is the biggest seller in Komatsu's grader line. The GD655 and the GD675 are now available with a Tier 3 engine.











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## UTILITY MACHINES

# WORKING A NEW ANGLE

## How feedback from contractors helped improve these popular compact excavators

In the 21st century, compact excavators are what skid steer loaders were in the late 20th century: highly maneuverable and versatile tools for the construction and landscape trades.

As is typically the case when a new piece of machinery is introduced into the market, contractors provide manufacturers with feedback that makes the machines more user friendly and productive. Komatsu relies heavily on customer feedback to engineer machines that meet the ever-expanding requirements of its customers. The Komatsu compact excavator line is no exception.

The market for compact excavators has grown more than 250 percent since 2002, and has exceeded the market for backhoe loaders. Part of the increase is due to economics, but a big part of the growth for these powerful products is the recognition by contractors that compact excavators are for real; they're productive, flexible and can do jobs and go places that larger machines can't.

### A vast assortment of features

Komatsu compact excavators continue to advance by introducing features that contractors appreciate. To meet the wide range of customer requirements, Komatsu offers 10 models ranging from the 1,960-pound PC09 to the nearly 18,000-pound PC78MR. Features include:

- Pilot proportional joystick controls and load-sensing hydraulics that make operation smooth and effortless;
- Control-pattern changer that allows either backhoe or excavator operators to use the operating pattern they're most comfortable with;
- Boom offset that permits machines to work in very tight spaces;
- Three track options that allow customers to choose what's right for their business — standard rubber tracks, optional steel tracks for work in abrasive conditions, or optional Komatsu Road-Liner tracks that are ideal for work on pavement;
- A four-way, power-angle backfill blade option on PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 models that improves flexibility and backfilling productivity;
- A standard thumb-mounting bracket on the dipper arm (available in early 2007) that allows installation of a hydraulic thumb attachment without the need to weld on the arm;
- A significantly expanded range of attachments through a cooperation with Werk-Brau, a major manufacturer of excavator and backhoe attachments, will also be available in 2007.

With everything they have to offer, there's another reason to check out the lineup of Komatsu compact excavators. Now is the time to take advantage of Komatsu's zero-percent retail finance plans. ■



In 2006, Komatsu introduced the four-way, power-angle blade option on its PC35MR-2 and PC50MR-2 compact excavators to improve flexibility and backfilling productivity. This year will see the introduction of a standard thumb-mounting bracket on the dipper arm, as well as an expanded range of attachments.





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# CONSTRUCTION REMAINS STRONG

## Housing starts are down, but other segments keep the industry moving forward

From 1992 through 2005, construction had a stunning run of steadily increasing volume. During half of those years, construction volume grew at or near double-digit levels. When the final numbers are in for 2006, it's expected they will show yet another gain, but only about 1 percent, making it the smallest increase in the last 15 years. The question is whether the streak will continue in 2007.

Almost all construction economy forecasters agree that the level of activity this year will be just about identical to 2006. Some are predicting a 1 percent or 2 percent increase while others forecast a 1 percent or 2 percent decline.

Regardless of which way the figures fall, they say a lot about the strength of the industry when overall activity is projected to remain at such a high level in the face of a housing slowdown. With the National Association of Homebuilders projecting housing starts will be down about 12 percent this year (on top of an 11 percent drop in 2006), one might have expected a larger drop in construction. Why? Because housing is responsible for 54 percent of the dollar volume of all U.S. construction, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

But almost all other markets remain strong, led by office and other commercial buildings, manufacturing and education. Many forecasters also expect highway and bridge work to grow in 2007, although the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) expects it to level off in 2007, then resume a solid growth pattern in 2008 and 2009.

### Going up?

When the final numbers are in, the U.S. Commerce Department expects total construction to be \$1.17 trillion in 2006, and is projecting an increase, albeit a small one (less than 0.5 percent) for 2007.

While those of us in the business always want to see strong growth, it can be comforting to note that even if all we do is hold steady this year, we're doing so at an incredibly high level historically. To help put it in perspective, when the current boom began in 1992, total construction put-in-place was a little more than \$400 billion. In other words, the total value of construction activity has almost tripled in the last 15 years. ■

Although housing construction has slowed, other market segments, including commercial buildings, manufacturing and education, should be strong enough to keep overall construction activity at a healthy level, according to most industry economic forecasters.



## KOMATSU &amp; YOU

## REALISTIC BUT OPTIMISTIC

Komatsu America President believes 2007  
could start another upturn in construction

Ted Ohashi, President and COO,  
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.*

Since graduating from the University of Tokyo in 1977, Ted Ohashi has worked for Komatsu in increasingly important positions. He's now beginning his fourth year as President and COO of Komatsu America Corp. and he's not looking to leave anytime soon.

"North America is the world's largest market for construction and mining equipment and as such, is very important to Komatsu," said Ohashi. "Being President of Komatsu America is certainly a challenge, but it's one I enjoy and I want to stay in the position as long as Komatsu wants me to be here."

With a strong background in engineering, including a master's degree from Stanford University, Ted understands the nuts and bolts of the equipment industry. He also understands what equipment users want and need. "Our customers want reliable equipment and they want outstanding support. Komatsu and our distributors are committed to providing both."

Ted's wife remains in Tokyo with their three sons, two of whom are in college, while the third is finishing high school. "It's an accepted part of life in Japan to go where your job takes you, so the long-distance marriage is not a major issue," said Ohashi. "Besides, I travel so much in my job that we would spend a lot of time apart even if she lived here in Chicago. As it is, she visits relatively frequently and I can plan my schedule to be home when she's here."

In his free time, Ted enjoys attending the Chicago Opera and playing golf. "On Christmas Day 2005, I hurt my back in a rather serious bicycle accident, so I wasn't able to play as much golf last year. But I hope to make up for it in 2007."

**QUESTION:** Following three years of extraordinary growth in the construction economy, there are questions about 2007. What is Komatsu expecting this year?

**ANSWER:** I would say we're realistic but optimistic about what 2007 is going to bring. Certainly, demand for equipment leveled off in 2006, largely because of about a 25 percent decline in housing starts compared to 2005. Our hope and belief is that the bottom of the housing market has been reached and that a rebound could well begin this year.

Of course, much depends on what happens with interest rates. Our hope is that interest rates are through climbing and may actually start inching back down in 2007. If that happens, the current excess housing inventory should get used up, which means more houses will need to be built.

**QUESTION:** Beyond housing, what's the construction economy like?

**ANSWER:** Remarkably strong. Non-residential building, highway construction and mining all had excellent years in 2006 and we expect more of the same for 2007. As always, the level of activity will vary region by region, but overall we are optimistic about the construction economy and Komatsu's place in it.

**QUESTION:** What is Komatsu's place as an equipment manufacturer?

**ANSWER:** We are the world's second-largest manufacturer and supplier of utility, construction and mining equipment. In North America, my goal as president is to help Komatsu America achieve steady and sustainable growth each and every year, and so far, we've accomplished that.

When you look at where we started from — a sales and marketing company that simply imported dozers to sell in the U.S. — our





Komatsu is taking steps to improve product support by increasing service personnel to aid distributor technicians as necessary. Komatsu is also working to certify all distributor technicians.

growth in and commitment to North America is remarkable. We now offer a full range of products and services, and have several manufacturing plants here. Significantly, we also recently added the important R&D function for mining trucks and many dozers, which, in essence, makes the U.S. the center of the Komatsu universe for those products. So, although we are a foreign company, we also consider ourselves to be increasingly American, and I think our North American customers see that and appreciate it.

**QUESTION: Speaking of customers, what are American equipment users looking for from Komatsu?**

**ANSWER:** Equipment users are very smart. They know that the cheapest price doesn't necessarily mean the best value. At Komatsu, we've always emphasized the life cycle of a machine. What's important is the production you get compared to operating costs throughout the life of the machine, which takes into account repairs, downtime and resale value. Komatsu customers understand that concept and understand that Komatsu provides it as well as, if not better than, any other manufacturer.

**QUESTION: What is Komatsu doing to improve customers' experience with Komatsu products?**

**ANSWER:** Our products have always been well-received and well-accepted by customers. Much of what we're emphasizing now is support related.

For example, we've opened six regional parts depots to complement our national parts distribution center to help us get parts to customers more quickly. We're taking steps to help our dealers improve their service technicians by training and certifying them based on their level of expertise. We've also increased the



A slowdown in housing starts impacted construction in 2006. Komatsu America President Ted Ohashi is cautiously optimistic that the bottom of the housing market has been hit and that 2007 could start a new upturn.



number of Komatsu service personnel to help our dealers out as needed. And we've put our GPS-based KOMTRAX monitoring system on all Tier 3 machines, which we constantly track right here at Komatsu America headquarters to help us support our dealers and our customers much more proactively.

**QUESTION: When an equipment user hears the name Komatsu, what do you want him to think?**

**ANSWER:** Solution provider. More than just a manufacturer of equipment, we want our customers to think of us as a partner who can help them succeed in their business. Our Working Gear Group, with its focus on developing equipment and attachments for specific industries, such as material handling or demolition, is a good example of our commitment to being a solution provider. In conjunction with our excellent nationwide distributor network, we believe we can help customers solve their problems, and in turn help them be more productive and more profitable. ■

Komatsu has four manufacturing plants in North America, including this one in Candiag, in the Canadian province of Quebec. "Although we are a foreign company, the fact that we have a large factory presence, and have even moved some product R&D functions to the U.S. and Canada, demonstrates that we are becoming increasingly American, and I think North American customers appreciate that," said Ohashi.

# New Alert for "Gray Market" Machines

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a new "gray market" enforcement alert, according to Associated Equipment Distributors. Gray market machines are imported from other countries and may not meet U.S. emissions or safety standards.

Under the Clean Air Act, the manufacture or importation of any nonroad engine is prohibited, unless the EPA certifies it and the engine displays the required EPA emissions label.

In the late 1990s, a gray market enforcement program was established by EPA and the Customs Service to combat a flood of illegal equipment imports. The latest alert is the first such action since that time. It is in response to a recent increase in imports of smaller equipment from Asia with illegal engines.

Imported equipment with engines that fail to meet EPA requirements is subject to seizure and exportation. The importers of such illegal equipment or engines can be fined as much as \$32,500 per engine. ■



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## PRODUCT SUPPORT

# CUSTOMER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

## Proactive product support can extend equipment life and save you money

If you're looking to get the most out of your equipment for the longest time, you might want to consider Komatsu Customer Support Programs (CSP). Komatsu distributors offer cost-effective CSPs to cover a full range of maintenance services, all designed to improve equipment productivity and reliability.

CSPs include Komatsu Oil & Wear Analysis (KOWA), which uses independent labs to test oil for wear metals and contaminants; PM-PRO, which is a planned maintenance program in which a distributor technician comes to your jobsite to perform all routine maintenance procedures including oil sampling; and Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI), which consist of a walk-around inspection and diagnostic tests to measure engine speed and hydraulic pressure to ensure your machine is working up to its capabilities.

Also offered is a repair and maintenance (R&M) program that uses machine histories and a proactive "before failure" approach to changing out parts and components. With an R&M agreement, you can schedule and budget all repair and maintenance items in advance.

Komatsu's Track Management System (TMS) helps you get the most out of your undercarriage. This CSP manages undercarriage wear to help you maximize usage and avoid costly downtime.

Also available is Komatsu ADVANTAGE Extended Coverage, which is a warranty that will take over when your initial new-machine warranty expires. It allows you to choose from full-machine or powertrain coverage, and select from among a number of options for the time period, hours and deductible.

### Lower O&O costs

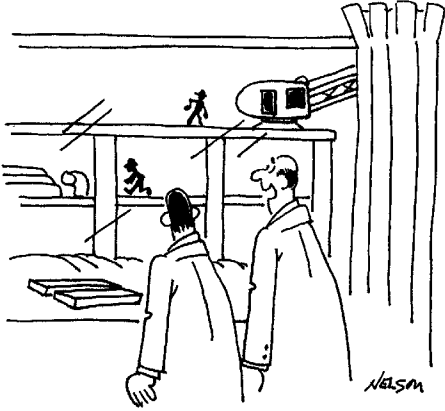
All Komatsu CSPs are designed to help you lower your owning and operating costs, improve equipment uptime and provide the longest productive life for your Komatsu machines. They also improve the resale value of your equipment by providing proof that the machine has been well maintained.

Feel free to talk to our service manager or a product support representative to learn more about Komatsu Customer Support Programs and how they can help you benefit your operation. ■

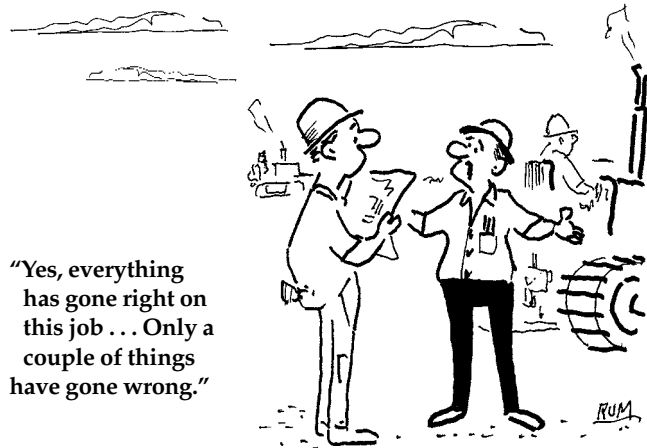
Oil sampling through the Komatsu Oil & Wear Analysis (KOWA) Customer Support Program is one of the best ways to reduce unexpected and costly equipment downtime and repairs.



# ON THE LIGHT SIDE



"Costs are up, profits are down ... but as an industry, we're still booming."



"Yes, everything has gone right on this job ... Only a couple of things have gone wrong."



"Take good care of that old dozer. It's made a lot of money for me ... I used its serial number to win the lottery."



"So the safety rules really are carved in stone."



"No, it's not a new requirement that we camouflage the machine in its natural environment."



"This isn't a new repair manual. It's an encyclopedia ... I'm using my breaks to study for the 'Millionaire' show."



## MORE INDUSTRY NEWS

# Construction price increases remain a threat

Although the cost of construction materials is moderating somewhat in comparison to a year ago, it's still problematic for contractors, according to Associated General Contractors Chief Economist Ken Simonson.

Simonson attributed the recent improvement in prices to a naturally expected drop from the post-Hurricane-Katrina period, as well as lessening demand from homebuilders. But aside from wood products and diesel fuels, he says most construction material prices are still up considerably from a year ago. For example, late last fall, copper and brass mill shapes were up 64 percent; asphalt paving mixtures and blocks were up 30 percent; steel-mill products up 21 percent; and gypsum products up 15.5 percent.

What's more, Simonson says future construction cost explosions remain likely. He is forecasting a 6-percent to 8-percent increase in construction material costs in 2007, compared to a 2-percent to 4-percent inflation rate for the economy as a whole. ■

# Parts availability is No. 1 concern

In a recent survey, equipment users overwhelmingly agree that parts availability is the most important factor for them when it comes to deciding where to buy new equipment. The figure is a near-unanimous 97 percent.

That's one of the findings of AED's "Construction Equipment Market Study," which also revealed that 95 percent of respondents said service and product support are "very important" or "important" to them in the selection of a source for purchasing new equipment. ■

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## THE PEOPLE INSIDE

# JASON LEE

## Komatsu Finance Representative helps C.N. Wood customers with financial options

As Finance Representative, Jason Lee oversees contracts for C.N. Wood customers who use Komatsu Financial to finance their equipment purchases. At times, it's a job that can be challenging, but Lee enjoys every aspect of it.

"It's a customer-service position," Lee said. "I don't arrange the financing up front. My role is to work with customers once the financing is in place. If they have questions or want to explore options such as auto pay, I'm there to help them."

That's just a portion of his duties. Lee describes his job as a Finance Representative as twofold: "I work in wholesale and retail," he explained. "On the wholesale side, I do inventory audits once a month for the distributor. On the retail side, I mainly work with customers who, for one reason or another, have fallen past due on their contracts. My focus there is how to help them get current with their account."

"Our aim is to do everything we can to ensure the customer can keep the machine and work it, while at the same time getting their payments back on track," he continued. "Communication is key. The most important thing for the customer in those situations is to talk to us and explain what's going on in terms of not being able to make a payment. We want to work with the customer to understand his situation, and see how we can best resolve it for everyone involved."

Lee said the solution is often easy. "Usually it's a small matter, such as waiting to get paid for work they did, so they can make the machine payment. If that's the case, there are options we can explore that allow the customer

to keep using the machine, which is the best scenario."

### Helping improve business

Lee has been in the position a little more than a year. Prior to joining Komatsu Financial, he spent a short time as a bond trader in Chicago upon graduating from the University of Illinois-Chicago in 2004. He enjoys traveling to meet with distributors and customers.

Helping distributors and customers remain productive and profitable gives him a great deal of satisfaction. "It's always gratifying when you do something that's going to help improve a customer's business. That's what it's all about." ■

As a Finance Rep, Jason Lee works with customers who have financed equipment through Komatsu Financial.



## DISTRIBUTOR CERTIFIED

# QUALITY USED EQUIPMENT

## How Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines have helped this utility contractor grow



Since starting an underground utility company in Fort Myers, Fla., about ten years ago, Jim Murphy has seen the firm grow from a handful of people to about 60 today. Certainly, some of that growth is attributable to a Gulf Coast economy that boomed during that period, but equally important is the quality of work that J.P. Murphy, Inc. is known for doing.

"Our philosophy is to get the work done fast and give the customer top quality for the dollar," said Murphy. "Whether

it's commercial work, residential work or municipal work, we believe in providing value for the developer or municipality that hires us."

### A perfect fit

As his company has grown, so has his equipment fleet, most of which consists of Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines.

"We probably have at least 15 Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines," reported Murphy, whose fleet includes half a dozen Komatsu WA320 wheel loaders, numerous Komatsu excavators ranging up to a PC600, and a couple of small dozers. "I've always preferred to buy slightly used equipment to let somebody else pay for the initial depreciation, so the Komatsu Distributor Certified used program was a perfect fit for us. We get high-quality used equipment that's been inspected and certified, and because of that, we know our Komatsu distributor is going to back it up."

"The other thing that's important to me is the Distributor Certified pieces we buy tend to be very good, low-hour machines, so they qualify for extended warranties and special rates from Komatsu Financial," he added. "The low interest rates make an affordable machine even more affordable, and as a result, I've gotten some very good deals."

Murphy says most of the Komatsu Distributor Certified machines he owns were less than a year old and had fewer than 3,000 hours when he bought them. "I believe in buying good machines, maintaining them well, and holding on to them for the long term. With these Komatsu Distributor Certified pieces, I expect to get five to eight years out of them, at least." ■

Jim Murphy, Owner and Founder of J.P. Murphy, Inc., owns more than a dozen Komatsu Distributor Certified used machines, including numerous WA320 wheel loaders. "With Komatsu Distributor Certified Used equipment, we get high-quality used equipment that's been inspected and certified, and we know our Komatsu distributor is going to back it up."



Among J.P. Murphy's Distributor Certified Used machines is this PC600LC-6, which is the company's mainline utility machine.







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