



# UPDATE

*A publication for and about Waukesha-Pearce Industries LLC customers | [www.WPIUpdate.com](http://www.WPIUpdate.com)*

## Universal Land Clearing LLC

East Texas contractor focuses on providing quality work and good service



Brad Haley,  
President/Owner



## A Message from the Vice President



Bruce Truesdale

**2022 looks  
bright for  
construction**



Dear Valued Customer:

We hope your 2022 is going well!

This year looks like another good one for construction. Industry economists and experts seem to agree that there will be growth overall, and the supply chain issues plaguing material acquisitions and driving up costs will ease in the latter half of 2022. They also believe that's when the impacts of the new infrastructure bill, which Congress passed in late 2021, will begin to take effect. We've highlighted some of the benefits of the bill, aka the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, inside.

A couple of our wonderful WPI employees are also featured in this issue. Get to know Beaumont Branch Manager Joey LaBouve on page 29 and Regional Operations Manager Paul Vacek on page 31.

Historically, construction and working remotely have not gone hand in hand. After all, dirt work doesn't get done and structures can't be built without workers on-site, right? In some cases, that's evolving. Learn about how remote operations are changing the landscape in today's — and especially tomorrow's — construction industry.

Komatsu is already at the forefront of this change with solutions such as Smart Construction Remote and Smart Construction Dashboard. Inside, you will find more information about these products and how they help save time and reduce costs. Our Smart Construction experts can show you the advantages and help you implement these solutions into your operations.

There are several other interesting and informative articles to help your business, including tips on preparing your staff and equipment for the upcoming busy season.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please call one of our branch locations.

Sincerely,



Bruce Truesdale

Vice President of CMD Operations



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## East Texas contractor Universal Land Clearing LLC continues to build a diversified list of services and success



**Brad Haley,**  
President/Owner

Some businesses thrive on doing one thing. Others believe diversification is the key to success. Then, there are those like Universal Land Clearing LLC, which seems to be a hybrid of both camps.

“Obviously, land clearing is a part of everything we do,” said Brad Haley, President and Owner. “Early on, that was our sole focus, but we have sought out other opportunities. That’s helped us expand. Not only are we doing additional types of land clearing, but we’re offering other services too, such as site work. In some cases, those two aspects of the business are being done on the same location.”

In addition to its home state of Texas, the San Augustine-based company has completed work in New Mexico and Oklahoma. Haley considers the Southern United States as Universal Land Clearing’s territory.

With a staff of about 20, Universal Land Clearing typically has two or three projects in the works at any one time. In its earliest days, right-of-way clearing for pipeline companies was Universal Land Clearing’s bread and butter. It continues

to offer the same service and more to those customers, as well as to others.

“During the past couple of years, we expanded to clearing for power companies who are installing power lines across the country,” Haley explained. “In addition, we are doing more site clearing for renewable energy projects such as solar and wind farms. A heavy percentage of our work still involves clearing rights of way for pipeline contractors, but it’s decreased quite a bit from 100% early on.”

Universal Land Clearing also added general site work, pad construction and right-of-way access locations to its services.

“We clear, strip the topsoil, bring in necessary fill, install base material, and compact,” said Haley. “Installation of culverts, laying mats, and installing fences and gates are part of our offerings. I believe this was a natural extension of what we were already doing, plus I had experience in that type of work. I spent about three years in West Texas prior to starting Universal Land Clearing doing projects like that.”



Foreman Brent Oliver moves timber with a Komatsu PC240LC-11 excavator equipped with a grapple. “We have three Komatsu excavators of varying sizes, and we match them to the task,” said Oliver. “They all have good power, and the production is outstanding.”





▶ VIDEO

Operator Will Gatwood uses a Komatsu XT430-5 tracked feller buncher with a Quadco 22SC high speed saw to remove trees and cut them up on a highway right-of-way clearing job. "The XT430 is super-fast, so I can take down sizable timber fairly quickly," said Gatwood. "The visibility is outstanding, which is good because it lets me see right where I need to position to be the most efficient and productive."

### Road projects

Recently, Universal Land Clearing has taken on general right-of-way clearing for roadwork contractors. It recently cut trees and removed vegetation along a 6-mile stretch of County Road 2022 near Crockett, Texas, in preparation for road widening.

"It was a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) project where we subbed our services out to the prime contractor," said Haley. "We had to clear back to 50 feet from the existing centerline of the road. It was fairly straightforward. We have the experience and capability to do this type of work, so it fits right in as an add-on to our services."

### The right machines backed by outstanding service

Haley has added equipment to his fleet to meet Universal Land Clearing's varying types of projects. He works closely with Waukesha-Pearce Industries LLC (WPI) and Sales Representative Clint Woodcock to ensure the company completes each job efficiently.

"I look at several factors when buying equipment, with service being at the top of the list," said Haley. "Clint and WPI provide expertise. They know what the right machines are for our needs. For instance, we were working on a big job in wet ground conditions, so we needed a machine with good reach that takes down trees quickly and has relatively low ground pressure so that it can track over the same ground without rutting and sinking. Clint said an XT430 would be ideal."

Universal Land Clearing used the 331-horsepower Komatsu XT430-5 tracked feller buncher with 8.5 psi on that job and several more since, including the County Road 2022 project. Universal Land Clearing mainly runs a Quadco 22SC high speed saw with the XT430, but the company also equips it with a mulching head as needed.

"We were looking for a smaller machine, but after talking with Clint, we knew this was the right fit," said Haley. "He looked beyond that initial job and saw the long-term value of being able to use it for a wide range of applications."



Discover more at  
[WPIUpdate.com](http://WPIUpdate.com)

*Continued...*

# 'Quality work and good service'

... continued

"We really appreciate that level of service, including after the sale. Our jobs take us to remote locations, but we are confident that if there is an issue, WPI will take care of it quickly. A lot of our work is in East Texas, and WPI has several locations that are relatively close. If we need parts, they usually have them in stock, and if not, will get them to us by the next day in most cases."

In addition to the XT430-5, Universal Land Clearing uses Komatsu PC210LC-11,

PC240LC-11 and PC290LC-11 excavators; D61PX-24 and D65WX-17 dozers; and a WA320-8 wheel loader.

"We want to be the most efficient as possible at all times, so we match the piece of equipment to the task," said Haley. "If we need to move sizable trees from a right of way and load them onto a truck, the PC290 is great for that. Lighter jobs require the PC210, for example. The dozers are great for clearing brush and doing site prep. We put some specialty items on for the clearing. The loader is just an all-around, good, versatile machine. Across the board, Komatsu has been dependable and reliable in the tough applications that we put them in. We are extremely happy with the production Komatsu gives us."

## Don't lose sight

Moving forward, Haley wants to continue diversifying Universal Land Clearing.

"We have done some residential subdivision site work, and I can see us moving into doing more of those types of projects," said Haley. "What we do actually translates very well into that market because we can take a piece of property from clearing to finish grade. We are also doing some clearing for private landowners now who want 20 to 50 acres cleared and cleaned up for replanting.

"The possibilities are fairly endless as long as we don't lose sight of what's made us successful — providing quality work and good service," he added. "That's really what got us to this point, along with a willingness to take on some new opportunities, and I see that continuing." ■



WPI Sales Representative Clint Woodcock (left) talks with Universal Land Clearing President/Owner Brad Haley on a project in East Texas. "I look at several factors when buying equipment, with service being at the top of the list," said Haley. "Clint and WPI provide expertise. They know what the right machines are for our needs."

Universal Land Clearing uses Komatsu dozers, often with some specialty equipment, to clear brush and prepare sites.





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# KOMATSU

## My Komatsu

# Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act brings historic investments

The recently passed \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), aka the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, will reauthorize surface transportation programs for five years and invest \$110 billion in additional funding to repair America's aging roads and bridges. With nearly \$40 billion dedicated to the latter, that is the single biggest investment in bridges since the construction of the interstate highway system in the 1950s, according to the Biden administration.

Transportation safety programs will see \$11 billion in funding, including \$5 billion for the new Safe Streets and Roads for All program, established to help states and localities reduce crashes and fatalities in their communities. Another new program provides grants to community-owned utilities to replace leaky and obsolete cast iron and bare steel natural gas pipelines. In total, the infrastructure bill is projected to more than double funding directed to programs that improve the safety of people and vehicles.

### Largest outlay for water systems

The spending package also includes the largest investments in other infrastructure

systems. To expand access to clean drinking water for households, businesses, schools and child care centers all across the country, \$55 billion will be dedicated to address water contamination and the replacement of lead pipes.

IIJA sets aside \$50 billion to protect against droughts, floods and wildfires, as well as weatherization, in an effort to increase the resilience of physical and natural systems from extreme weather events.

### Modernizing for the 21st century

With major investments to connect rural areas, low-income families and tribal areas, \$65 billion will be dedicated to expanding broadband internet access. The bill includes provisions to make internet service more affordable and easier to compare prices.

An additional \$65 billion will modernize the nation's power grid and build thousands of miles of new, resilient transmission lines to facilitate the expansion of renewable energy.

Updates to the nation's power grid should allow more electric vehicles to be charged, and IIJA provides \$7.5 billion to build the

**Airports are to receive \$25 billion to address repairs and maintenance backlogs, reduce congestion, and drive electrification and other low-carbon technologies. Ports, rail and buses are among the other public transportation sectors seeing significant funding for modernization.**





Roads and bridges receive the largest amount of funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act at \$110 billion; nearly \$40 billion of which is dedicated to bridges. Transportation safety is to receive \$11 billion.

first-ever national network of electric vehicle (EV) chargers in the United States. This funding includes the deployment of EV chargers along highway corridors to facilitate long-distance travel, and within communities to provide convenient charging where people live, work and shop.

### Updating public transit

In total, the new investments and reauthorization in IIJA guarantee \$89.9 billion in funding for public transit over the next five years — the largest federal investment in public transit in history. The legislation will improve accessibility to all users, bring transit services to new communities, and replace thousands of deficient transit vehicles with clean, zero-emission vehicles.

The legislation also invests \$66 billion in rail funding to eliminate the Amtrak

maintenance backlog, modernize the Northeast Corridor, and bring service to areas outside of the northeast and mid-Atlantic. Airports will get \$25 billion to address repairs, reduce congestion, and drive electrification and other low-carbon technologies.

### Job openings

Additionally, the infrastructure bill will drive the creation of well-paying union jobs and grow the economy sustainably and equitably. Combined with the president's Build Back Better framework, it is estimated that, on average, 1.5 million jobs per year will be added for the next 10 years.

Opportunities for construction workers, truck drivers, architects, mechanical engineers and cybersecurity analysts, among others, are likely to increase. ■

# Your busiest time of the year is near. Make sure equipment and personnel are ready for maximum production

**D**uring the winter months, your machinery may have sat for a long period of time, or you may have kept working and just had routine services done during that time. Either way, it is vital to take steps to ensure your equipment is ready for the busy summer days that lie ahead.

### Don't wait

If you have any outstanding work orders or operator repair tickets, finish them as soon as possible. Thoroughly inspect machines a few weeks before the schedule really heats up, and if you find any issues, address them right away. Remember, larger items such as undercarriages take more time to repair, so inspecting them well ahead of time is vital.

Buckets, blades, cutting edges and ground engaging tools such as teeth require attention, too. Make sure there are no cracks, chips or excessive wear that could affect safety and performance; replace if needed. Check that your attachment hoses and connectors are in good working order and ready for hydraulic fluids. Hook them up briefly, and run them to see if they are working properly.

### Prepare staff members

Make sure employees are aware of schedules, procedures, emergency protocols, and

the dangers and signs of heat-related illnesses. Employees should also know how to report maintenance items, the functions of new machines, and how to use them to maximize production and efficiency. Plus, make sure they have all the necessary personal protective equipment and that it is in good condition.

### Stock up on parts

You should have an easily accessible store of basic maintenance items on hand such as grease, fluids, filters and belts. Having these on hand will save you from making frequent trips to the store, and decrease your overall downtime.

### Clean the machine

Have you heard the adage that a clean machine runs better? True or not, you should wash your equipment to remove any dust and/or dirt buildup from storage or from use during the winter months. Cleaning can help you spot potential issues. Remove any debris, including from the engine compartment. Look out for rodent and/or bird nests.

Don't overlook the inside of the cabs — clean the glass, and dust the consoles and dashes. Replace missing or damaged safety decals.

### Charge batteries

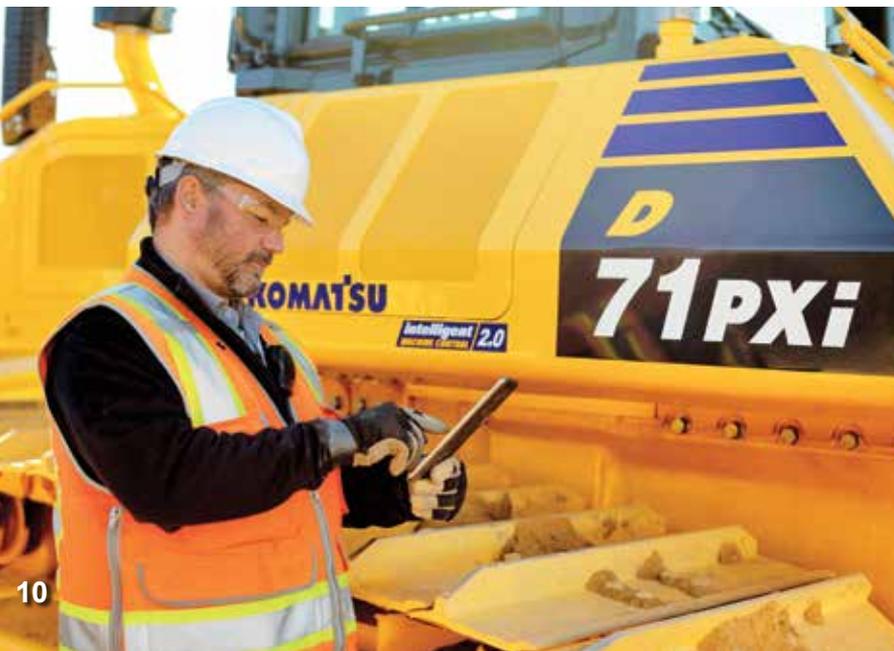
If you stored batteries, be sure to check them. Before using them, ensure proper water acid levels and fill, if necessary. Batteries that were not charged during storage should be. Coating battery connections with an anti-corrosion spray can prolong system life. Replace batteries if you believe there is any doubt about their safety or reliability.

### Check fluid levels

It is essential to keep fluids at proper levels. Make sure there is an operating and maintenance manual available in your machine year-round, and refer to it for guidance. Be sure to grease any points that require it.

As temperatures rise, you should switch to fluids that properly match the ambient temperatures. If the machine requires diesel exhaust fluid, draining it and refilling it with new fluids to maintain purity and concentration is highly recommended, regardless of if you used the machine during

**Thoroughly inspect your machinery before the busy construction season starts to ensure it is ready for maximum performance. Make sure everything is in working order and fluids are at their proper levels. Don't forget to check technology.**





During the busy season, your machinery and personnel work hard, so make sure both are ready ahead of time. Check your equipment's undercarriage, ground engaging tools, fluids, components and other critical items. Make sure staff members have all necessary personal protective equipment and that it is in good condition.

the cold winter months or not. Switch fuel to a summer blend such as No. 2 diesel, and drain the lines of any condensation.

### **Pay attention to hoses and filters**

If fluids are the lifeblood, hoses are the arteries that carry it. Check them for abrasions and leaks; replace immediately if any are found.

Cold can affect filters, so consider replacing them with new ones, including air filtration and air conditioner filters, so operators have a cleaner, more comfortable environment. Dust and contaminants affect filter performance, so keep a close eye on them, and change them as often as necessary.



### **Don't overlook technology**

Check the connections on your aftermarket GPS systems, as well as those that go with removable monitors. Turn the machine on, and test telematics systems to make sure you can monitor machines through your computer or smart devices. ■



## Have you seen what's **new** in My Komatsu?

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# KOMATSU

## My Komatsu

# Contractor reaches target elevation faster with new auto tilt bucket control that can follow unique design surfaces

**B**obby and Allen Tripp spent countless hours running drag lines and operating dozers for their uncle while growing up on their family's farm. In 1997, the brothers transitioned from farm work when they established their own company, Tripp Bros Inc., which has steadily grown into a turnkey site development operation.

The firm's projects range from installing new construction infrastructure to resurfacing city and town streets. For maximum efficiency, the firm completes all aspects of a project in-house. To meet tightened grade tolerances and compensate for the declining number of experienced operators, the company has turned to GPS-equipped machines.

"The knowledge and skill lost from older operators leaving the industry — and with younger operators replacing them — GPS technology has become essential to our business," stated Bobby. "We rely on the technology to help our operators reach grade. Without our GPS-equipped machines, it would take us three times as long to complete the work."

At its residential jobs, which comprise 75% of the firm's current workload, creating as-built storm retention ponds is a challenge.

"The ponds are an environmentally conscious way to treat water before it's released from the site," noted Bobby. "Because each pond is unique, you can hardly dig them without diverting extra labor and equipment to keep it within tolerances."

Bobby continued, "We've found that with our Komatsu PC210LCi excavator with the new auto tilt bucket control, our operators can build the pond to grade more accurately than they could with a person shooting grade or checking them with a rover."

## Maximum efficiency with iMC 2.0 with auto tilt bucket control

Bobby said that the new intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 technology on the PC210LCi-11, with the optional auto tilt IMU sensor, makes grading the ponds more efficient. By using Komatsu intelligent excavator auxiliary hydraulics, the auto tilt IMU sensor enables automatic control of the bucket/attachment angle to match the cutting edge of the surface.

Like all iMC excavators, the full bucket profile protects against over-excavation — even when the machine is not facing directly toward the target surface. With iMC 2.0 and the IMU sensor, the full bucket edge stays on the surface and automatically returns the bucket to a horizontal position for unloading.

"The machine is set up to tilt the bucket on its own and match a swale based on the design," explained Bobby. "We call it a 'one and done motion' because you don't have to go back and regrade the surface. The tilt bucket slopes, shapes and takes the pond to grade as you go."

"The auto tilt bucket control increases the machine's versatility and removes the need for an iMC dozer to check grade," added Alan Yoder, Superintendent. "You're able to tilt the bucket instead of moving the machine to get the correct angle. Even our inexperienced operators find it easier to understand and control."

Bobby notes that the iMC 2.0 PC210LCi excavator improves Tripp Bros' efficiency contouring and crowning roads as well. "When we're undercutting a section of road, we can undercut the surface at a 2% fall and shape a crown in the road. The precision means we don't have to touch material twice. I haven't seen anything on another machine that compares to what this excavator can do." ■



**Bobby Tripp,**  
President



**Alan Yoder,**  
Superintendent



Watch the video

**Superintendent Alan Yoder excavates a storm retention pond using a Komatsu intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 PC210LCi-11 excavator with auto tilt bucket control. "The auto tilt bucket control increases the machine's versatility and removes the need for an iMC dozer to check grade," said Yoder. "You're able to tilt the bucket instead of moving the machine to get the correct angle."**

▶ VIDEO



# Technology is changing the construction landscape

Have you ever been pulled over for speeding because a law enforcement officer “clocked” you over the limit? Did you know that the same technology used in the officer’s scanner helps build today’s construction sites?

“We use lidar (light detection and ranging) scanners on tripods or drones to shoot out about 1 million points of light per second. Whenever a laser touches something, its light bounces off the surface and back into the scanner,” explained Ken Smerz, CEO of Zelus, a firm that specializes in building information modeling (BIM) and virtual design and construction (VDC). In the article “Here’s how advances in technology are transforming construction industry,” Smerz continues, “It’s the same technology that police officers use to see if you’re driving too fast, but it’s just recently been used in the construction field.”

Drones equipped with lidar can fly over a site and collect data that can be used to build 3D models. This fast and accurate way of surveying a site provides several benefits, according to Dustin Price, a licensed Land Surveyor and Operations Manager at Landpoint LLC. In his blog post “Lidar Inspections Improve Construction

Safety,” Price points out lidar is beneficial because it:

- Delivers accurate surveys quickly at the beginning of a project
- Provides information for simulation and analysis when developing a project
- Identifies maintenance and repair requirements on the project as needed

### Tech strategy adoption

Lidar is just one of many technologies trending today in construction. To gain efficiency and increase productivity, companies across the world are adopting technology as they look to lower owning and operating costs.

An analysis and outlook by construction software company InEight Inc. found that 96% of respondents believe technology can improve productivity, and 71% believe it’s already improving the industry. Nearly 100% of contractors said they had a strategy that considered the adoption of technologies for data analytics, project management software, artificial intelligence and machine learning, among others.

According to a recent article, “Construction technology funding skyrockets to record levels” in ConstructionDive,

**To gain efficiencies and increase productivity, while lowering owning and operating costs, construction companies across the world are adopting technology. Drones equipped with lidar (light detection and ranging) can fly over a site and collect data that can be used to build 3D models. Lidar is just one of many technologies trending in today’s construction industry.**





Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) headsets are being used throughout the construction industry for operator training. Until they gain some proficiency, these high-tech devices allow a wearer to mimic the movement of construction equipment without having to be on an actual job site.

U.S. construction technology investor funding reached a record \$2.1 billion in early October 2021 — more than a 100% increase from 2020.

While those are common to most in today's construction industry, there are other technologies gaining prominence that you might not currently be aware of, but will probably know in the future.

### **BIM for collaboration**

Owners, architects and contractors use BIM to collaborate on design and construction at each phase of the project. According to Whole Building Design Guide (WBDG), which is managed by the National Institute of Building Sciences, BIM is a digital representation of physical and functional characteristics of a facility. It serves as a shared knowledge resource for information and provides a reliable basis for decisions during a project's life cycle.

Commonly listed advantages from experts who use BIM include improved communication and coordination, cost and resource savings, higher quality results, early identification of potential problems, and increased safety.

### **Don't be intimidated**

Adopting technology may seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be with the right approach, according to Damon Haber, Co-Founder and Chief Revenue Officer at Record360, which helps businesses add the latest products to their operations.

"I was an operator before I became a tech guy, so I understand how it is affecting companies and individuals," Haber said. "Like equipment, devices and apps don't create outcomes; however, they can be valuable tools that help achieve them. Failures often happen when companies try to do too much or have no clear objectives as to why they want to implement certain solutions."

Haber said there are some best practices for introducing technology: start small, set measurable goals and outcomes, and secure commitments from end-users.

"You can always get bigger," Haber emphasized. "Before full implementation, it's wise to do a pilot study, and do it well. You should also look at today's modern solutions, and see how they can flex to match desired goals." ■

*Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from a longer piece. To read it in its entirety for additional information about technology trends and how they are playing a role in today's and tomorrow's construction industry, visit <https://www.komatsu.com/blog/2022/technologies-changing-the-construction-landscape/>*



# Smart Construction Remote helps you support your machines from anywhere, saving you time and expense



**Mike Salyers,**  
Senior Product  
Manager, Komatsu  
Smart Construction  
Solutions

With Smart Construction Remote, construction site managers can help operators troubleshoot issues in real time by viewing the same data they do. New files can be added and design files can be transferred to multiple machines on-site with one click — without allocating valuable resources and hours to get the machine up and running, according to Mike Salyers, Senior Product Manager for Smart Construction Solutions.

**D**o you need to get data to your machines? Want to help your operators troubleshoot? If you have connectivity and Komatsu's Smart Construction Remote solution, you can do both from anywhere, optimizing your time and making workflows more efficient.

With Smart Construction Remote, construction site managers can help operators troubleshoot issues in real time by viewing the same data they do. Managers can add new files without the time commitment of traditional methods, and transfer design files to multiple machines on-site with one click.

"In today's world, we live by emails, text messages and live chats to get things done quickly, and visualize what needs to be accomplished," said Mike Salyers, Senior Product Manager, Komatsu Smart Construction Solutions. "Smart Construction Remote gives you similar capabilities. It's like a live support system for the machine and its operator, allowing you and the operator to make necessary adjustments while making sure the machine has the current information needed to complete a job — without allocating valuable resources and hours to get the machine up and running."

Salyers added that Smart Construction Remote has the capabilities to connect to all types of machines, including Komatsu intelligent Machine Control (iMC) equipment, machines equipped with select Topcon aftermarket systems, and select Topcon data collectors utilizing Pocket 3D field software.

### Easy to get started

To get started using Smart Construction Remote:

- Visit Komatsu's My Komatsu webpage and login, or set up an account

- Navigate to the Smart Construction Marketplace (<https://smartconstruction.mykomatsu.komatsu/products>)
- Click on 'Smart Construction Remote' and add it to your shopping cart
- Input payment information when you're ready to check out

Once activated, click 'My Subscription.' When you open the application, the Smart Construction Remote screen will appear after logging in. Begin the activation process to add the machines you want connected to Smart Construction Remote. A red bell will appear on screen, and you can simply follow the prompts from there.

Once a machine has been activated, it can receive files and information remotely. Multiple files can be sent at one time and downloaded from the machine. If necessary, files can be deleted from the machine's control box.

If the operator needs assistance understanding if they are in the correct file or on the correct surface, or if there are issues that prevent them from working properly, Smart Construction Remote can be deployed, and managers can access the monitor and remotely correct machine settings or resolve issues.

"Smart Construction Remote's remote-control function is just like sitting in the cab of the machine, but in the comfort of your office, home or location," said Salyers. "A remote user can navigate the on-screen menus and make the necessary adjustment to the blade control's point

of emphasis, surface offsets, dozing modes and many more. Smart

Construction Remote can also be used as a training tool to show operators how they can perform desired operation by executing functions in front of them, so they can actually see what they need to do." ■



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# Remote job site management and operation are changing the construction industry landscape

Could one person control all the earthmoving on a job site from a remote location? While the idea may seem far-fetched, it's closer to reality than you think.

"The market sees this possibility evolving and coming to fruition at some point down the road," said Komatsu's Jason Anetsberger, Director of Customer Solutions. "Mining has had autonomous trucks hauling billions of tons of materials for quite some time, which gives us an indication of what's possible."

Anetsberger added that remote operation, or teleoperation as it's often called, and autonomy on construction sites are "assets that customers continue to express interest in, especially considering the shortage of workers in the construction industry. Having one or a few people controlling large numbers of machines from an off-site location has the potential to lower costs and increase safety."

To a degree, the construction industry has already been using remote operation. Several manufacturers offer remote-controlled equipment that allows operators to run machines from outside

the cab. These have generally been used in highly sensitive and/or dangerous areas — such as cleaning up land mines or moving contaminated soils — but require operators to be on the site, albeit at a safe distance.

### Simulators as a prep tool

There are already tools that can help prepare operators for remote operation. Sophisticated training simulators use virtual reality to bring the look and feel of a job site task to operators and potential operators — all without stepping a foot on-site.

During an educational session (Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and the Future of Work: Are You Ready for the New Realities?) at CONEXPO-CON/AGG in 2020, Jim Colvin, President and CEO of Serious Labs Inc. — which offers virtual reality training solutions — said simulators continue to gain popularity in construction. He said they are more effective than on-the-job training and a good way to build skills faster, and more safely.

"There are ways of training nowadays using VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) that are more engaging, immersive, interesting and effective than traditional training methods," Colvin said.

**Remote control machines have been available for several years. Typically deployed in highly sensitive or dangerous environments, they are gaining prominence as production machines in construction applications.**





Simulators can help trainees understand how to operate machinery before they get in the actual cab and may also be a way to prepare for remote machine operation.

### Seeing projects from a distance right now

While the construction industry takes initial steps toward fully automating and teleoperating machines, projects can be managed remotely. In the past, project managers often had to drive from one location to the next, but now they can check on multiple sites from their office, vehicle or job site trailer.

Cell phones and computers ushered in the ability to communicate faster between the office and field personnel, and smartphones are making it even easier with applications designed for timecard management, productivity tracking, job site management and planning, and more.

"There are a multitude of apps available that let project managers view the job site in real or near real time right now," said Bryce Satterly,

Komatsu Smart Construction Solutions Manager. "With digital plans and satellites, they can view an intelligent machine's monitor and see exactly where it is on a site and its relation to the final elevations. It lets project managers see productivity remotely and make adjustments faster. That can save time and money, and increase productivity."

According to Anetsberger and Satterly, virtually managing operations is a gateway to machine teleoperation and ultimately the autonomy of construction equipment.

"Virtual, or remote, machine management is a step in the right direction toward one day having fully-remote or autonomous job sites," said Satterly. "Understanding how to use that information and apply it to equipment operation and overall job site management is invaluable. It could be a key factor in full autonomy and remote operation." ■



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# Visualize what's happening on your job sites in near real time

Gaining insight into your job site's progress at any time and from anywhere reduces guesswork and enables faster decision making. Designed for daily use, Komatsu's Smart Construction Dashboard combines data from multiple sources to give you one comprehensive picture.

With Smart Construction Dashboard, contractors have a 3D graphic visualization of all design, drone and machine data to measure cut/fill, quantities and productivity. Site progress can be viewed with the timeline function (including playback) in terms of whole-site visual, cross-sections and individual measurements. You can confirm if a pre-bid topographical map is correct, track job site progress in near real time, document site conditions as evidence for change orders, and quickly and easily measure stockpile quantities.

"The 'data layers' option allows you to upload any design and drone files," said Yoetzin

Diaz, Komatsu Smart Construction Solutions Manager. "The measurement tab lets you create different measurements such as cut/fill, stockpile measurement and line measurements, including 2D cross sections to investigate specific areas of the site.

"There is so much more you can do with Smart Construction Dashboard to manage job sites," she added. "We highly suggest setting up an account and contacting your distributor's sales or Smart Construction representative to help guide you so that you get the most from this solution."

To get started, you'll need a My Komatsu account; set it up online (<https://smartconstruction.mykomatsu.komatsu/products>) or through your distributor. Once you have a verified account, sign in, find Smart Construction Dashboard, purchase it and click 'My Subscriptions' to begin. ■



**Yoetzin Diaz,**  
Komatsu Smart  
Construction  
Solutions Manager

**Smart Construction Dashboard lets you visualize a job site's progress at any time, from anywhere. With Smart Construction Dashboard, contractors get a 3D graphic visualization of all design, drone and machine data to measure cut/fill, quantities and productivity.**



# Get real-time insights straight from the field

Learn more about this and other Smart Construction solutions at <https://www.komatsu.com/en/site-optimization/smart-construction/#tab3>



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a connected system to analyze your costs against your bid.

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- Track job site daily activity
- Make better business decisions

**Insider Tip: "With Smart Construction Field you can quickly see if you are ahead, on schedule or behind to give you the ability to make faster decisions that affect production," said Bryce Satterly, Komatsu Smart Construction Solutions Manager. ■**

# A smoother approach for better productivity



See more productivity features of the WA900-8 at <https://www.komatsu.com/en/products/wheel-loaders/surface-mining-wheel-loaders/wa900-8/>

A new modulation clutch in the WA900-8 surface mining wheel loader enables the operator to perform smooth approaches when loading trucks. This feature can also help reduce shock when shuttling between forward and reverse, which is particularly beneficial in v-cycle applications.

Automatic dig, semi-automatic approach and dump systems can reduce fatigue

and allow operators to focus more on the path of machine travel.

Throttle lock allows operators to set engine speed. When enabled, auto-deceleration automatically decreases the engine speed to low idle when no operator inputs are applied to the controls and the transmission is in neutral.

All of those features can help improve your production and lower fuel consumption.

**Insider Tip: "A high-lift configuration to pair with 150-ton trucks is available, as well as optional add-ons that include KomVision with radar object detection for a bird's-eye view of the machine and its surroundings," said Sebastian Witkowski, Komatsu Product Marketing Manager. ■**



# New feature reduces operator fatigue



Learn more about tilt steering control and other technological advances in iMC 2.0 dozers and Smart Construction solutions at <https://www.komatsu.com/en/site-optimization/smart-construction/#tab5>

Want to reduce operator steering input by 80%? Tilt steering control on Komatsu intelligent Machine Control (iMC) 2.0 dozers maintains power to the tracks and

automatically tilts the blade for straight travel during rough dozing.

Additional benefits include:

- Reduced operator fatigue
- Greater reduction in track slip
- No surface undercuts

**Insider Tip: "Use tilt steering control during heavy cutting applications and when simple grading is off," said Ron Schwieters, Komatsu Senior Product Manager, iMC and Hardware. ■**



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# 2022 construction industry outlook is positive, according to contractors and industry forecasters' surveys

Contractors are generally optimistic about 2022, according to a recent survey from the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) and construction technology company Sage. Respondents said that they expect a boost in work from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed into law in November, as well as “broad-based private-sector demand,” according to AGC.

The outlook survey of more than 1,000 AGC members showed that contractors expect an increase in the dollar value of projects. They were most optimistic about roads, bridges and other transportation work such as transit, rail and airports, much of which is tied to IIJA. They expect most building segments to rise, except for retail and office-space projects.

“While contractors face challenges this year, most of those will be centered on the need to keep pace with growing demand for construction projects,” said AGC CEO Stephen E. Sandherr.

During a recent Dodge Construction Network (Dodge) OUTLOOK conference, Chief Economist Richard Branch said the dollar values of construction starts

could increase by as much as 6% in 2022. He emphasized that while residential construction will continue to play a large role in the growth, a more balanced recovery in the nonresidential sector will begin — particularly as funding from the infrastructure package begins to enter the market.

“We expect starts to be above 2019 levels in 2022, mainly due to the residential sector,” said Branch. “Quarterly growth rates will be slow over the course of the year; however, it represents an economy that is getting off a sugar high and getting into a more sustainable growth pattern.”

### Cautiously optimistic

Wells Fargo’s Optimism Quotient, which is based on surveys of contractors, showed that nonresidential contractors are positive about increasing profits. Wells Fargo said a number above 100 on its U.S. National Optimism Quotient indicates strong optimism, and the most recent report showed a score of 112.

However, all did caution that while the outlook is favorable, there is still concern about supply chain issues and a lack of skilled labor, which could temper overall growth. ■

**The construction industry’s outlook for 2022 is mostly positive, thanks in part to the passage of an infrastructure package late last year with major funding for roads and bridges.**



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# New harvester, forwarder enhance forestry operations' productivity in most terrains

Forestry equipment operates under difficult and demanding conditions. Engineered for the rugged terrain of forestry and logging work, Komatsu now offers two new machines, the 931XC-3 8WD harvester and the 855-3 forwarder.

### 931XC-3 8WD harvester

Designed for extreme conditions (XC) from smarter thinning to heavy-duty felling, the 931XC-3 harvester is exceptionally maneuverable in most types of forests and terrains. It has been optimized for low working speeds, including a broad powerband and high torque backup for challenging operations.

Among the 931XC-3 features:

- **Unique 8WD system**

For excellent handling, the 8WD double Komatsu Comfort Bogie drive system

follows the terrain more closely than other 8WD machines with a fixed rear-axle design, greatly reducing rear ground pressure. It offers high ground clearance and enhanced traction; hydrostatic transmission matching power and traction; and automatic cab/crane leveling.

- **Powerful parallel crane**

Promote enhanced production with a single control lever movement that extends the boom/arm on a parallel path. The three-pump hydraulic system enables simultaneous slewing, feeding and maneuvering, as well as a  $\pm 180$ -degree cab/crane rotation with automatic four-way cab/crane leveling.

- **Modern, large, spacious cab**

Critical to productivity are operator comfort and visibility. The automotive-quality cab on the 931XC-3 8WD harvester includes a giant front window, ergonomic seat, automatic climate control, sound-deadening measures, and heated and cooled meal storage, as well as an easy-to-understand machine interface.

Designed for extreme conditions from smarter thinning to heavy-duty felling, the new 931XC-3 8WD harvester is exceptionally maneuverable in most types of forests and terrains.



► VIDEO

A state-of-the-art MaxiXT system on the new 855-3 forwarder gives operators the ability to monitor and control everything from the engine and crane to the transmission and service ladders.

### 855-3 forwarder

The 855-3 forwarder helps your operators deliver productivity day after day in the 14-metric-ton class, working with them to offer power, smart features and nimbleness.

The 855-3 forwarder includes:

- **Machine and crane control**

Operators can monitor and control everything from the engine and crane to the transmission and service ladders with the state-of-the-art MaxiXT system. All operator-specific functions can be fine-tuned to achieve the sensitivity and speed each individual operator prefers.

- **Smooth and fast transport**

Chassis and suspensions are designed to maneuver through even the most rugged forests when fully loaded. Komatsu Comfort Bogie axles with a high portal offset and V-shaped frames provide high ground clearance.

If your operation requires ground or stump leveling on tough terrain, an optional heavy-duty stacking blade is available for the 855-3. Mounted with a high angle of departure for climbing obstacles, there's no interference between blade, battery boxes or hood guard. ■

For more information about Komatsu's line of forestry and logging equipment, go to <https://www.komatsu.com/en/industries/forestry/>.



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## Branch Manager Joey LaBouve enjoys building relationships with staff and customers, ensures their needs are met

Joey LaBouve can't believe how fast 22 years with Waukesha-Pearce Industries LLC (WPI) has gone by. "I don't know where the time went," claims Joey. "I guess it goes fast when you enjoy what you do."

Joey is currently the Branch Manager of WPI's Port Arthur (Beaumont) branch, a position he has held for the past 11 years. He has been with the company since it opened that location in Texas.

"I worked for the Kansas City Southern Railway Company before WPI, working my way up from purchasing to Terminal Manager," Joey recalled. "I was actually a customer of WPI's because I used Komatsu dozers to move petroleum coke at the terminal I worked at. Scott Smith, who was Branch Manager at the time, told me WPI was building this new location in Port Arthur, and there were opportunities. I saw firsthand how well WPI treated customers and imagined it was the same with employees. When Scott offered me a job, I took it right away. It proved to be a great move."

### Worked his way up

Like with his previous job, Joey worked his way up. He started doing warehouse work in

the parts department, then was promoted to Parts Manager. After several years as a Product Support Representative, he was offered the Branch Manager position when Smith was promoted and moved to WPI's Houston headquarters.

Joey's responsibilities include overseeing day-to-day operations and making sure each department has what it needs. He also works with customers to ensure their needs are being met.

"I enjoy the daily interactions with my co-workers as we work together to meet customer needs," said Joey. "We have a great team here. A lot of our new customers have told us that they decided to work with WPI as a direct result of the service and the support we offer. That's very gratifying to me. This is a fast-paced business at times, and it can be very intense, and to me, that's great. There is a lot of growth in this area, so the activity level is high. I really like the interaction and relationship building with staff and customers."

Outside of work, Joey enjoys traveling, vacationing and spending time with his wife, Jana, and their children, David and Emma. He also likes to fish every chance he gets. ■



**Joey LaBouve,**  
Branch Manager,  
Port Arthur, TX  
(Beaumont)



Discover more at  
[WPIUpdate.com](http://WPIUpdate.com)

Branch Manager Joey LaBouve (left) talks with Service Technician Jimmy Hight in WPI's Port Arthur, Texas, shop. "I enjoy the daily interactions with my co-workers as we work together to meet customer needs," said Joey. "We have a great team here. A lot of our new customers have told us that they decided to work with WPI as a direct result of the service and the support we offer. That's very gratifying to me."

### ▶ VIDEO





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## Regional Operations Manager Paul Vacek sees positive changes in service with technology, opportunities for techs

**P**aul Vacek has seen numerous changes in the construction equipment industry — most notably, the way technology plays an ever-increasing role in service.

“Today’s newer machines can tell you when they have an issue,” said Vacek, Regional Operations Manager for Waukesha-Pearce Industries LLC (WPI). “They will send an alert to a company’s fleet manager and to us. A service technician knows what the code is and what will be needed to address it before they ever see the machine. It reduces downtime because you are not spending a chunk of time diagnosing the issue. Further technology such as our Service Pro app makes scheduling, tracking and documenting services easier than ever.”

If a technician does need to make a diagnosis, they can often plug a laptop into the machine’s system and identify the issue within minutes.

“Spending time tracking down the source of a code is pretty much in the past,” said Vacek. “Today’s technicians need computer skills as well as the ability to turn a wrench. Fortunately, there are programs available through WPI and the technical schools we partner with that can give them the skills, including a new Fast Track for Komatsu equipment.”

Fast Track is a condensed program that is completed within a few months as opposed to the traditional two years. Students are taught at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and return to WPI as higher ranked technicians. WPI also partners with Texas State Technical College in Waco, where Vacek earned his degree.

### Variety of days

“My career started as a welder for an aggregate company, and that experience got me a foot in the door with WPI,” said Vacek. “The equipment and how to take care of it has changed considerably from when I joined WPI in 1985, but the family atmosphere and philosophy of doing what it takes to meet customers’ needs hasn’t. It’s a great place to build a career, with lots of opportunities to grow and advance.”

Vacek began working at WPI as a fabricator, then moved into electrical work on Waukesha

engines. He eventually moved to the company’s Construction Machinery Division as a shop technician and worked his way up from that to his current role, which involves helping with dealership development.

“I grew up in an agricultural community and learned to work on equipment and blacksmith at an early age,” recalled Vacek. “It’s in my blood, and that’s why I decided to pursue a career around that. I love the industry, and I particularly like that no two days are ever the same.”

Outside of work, Paul Vacek and his wife, Patrice, raise cattle on their ranch. Paul also enjoys hunting and fishing. ■



Discover more at [WPIUpdate.com](https://www.wpiupdate.com)

**Regional Operations Manager Paul Vacek (left) talks with Service Technician Chris Ritchson about a machine repair and documenting it on WPI’s Service Pro app. “The equipment and how to take care of it has changed considerably from when I joined WPI in 1985, but the family atmosphere and philosophy of doing what it takes to meet customers’ needs hasn’t,” said Vacek. “It’s a great place to build a career, with lots of opportunities to grow and advance.”**



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