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CAT[®] EQUIPMENT



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On the JOB

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Versatile compact track loaders reduce hand work on landscape jobs. **Read the story** on page 16.

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The Trifecta

THIRD GENERATION CONTRACTOR DEDICATES EFFORTS TO HORSE RACING PARK



Ron Masone (L) and son, Bud

MASONE BROTHERS, INC.

Employees: 9

Location: Inwood, New York

Cat® equipment: 226B3 Skid Steer Loader, 259B3 Compact Track Loader, 259D Compact Track Loader, 277C Multi Terrain Loader, Mini Excavators: 303E, 305.5E2, 308E2 CR; 312C L Hydraulic Excavator, Wheel Loaders: 938G, 950, 950F, 950G; Dozers: D3B, D4H

As a third generation business, Masone Brothers has been a steady presence in the Five Towns area of western Long Island since 1955.

Led by brothers Frank and Andy Masone, six brothers went into business in the mid-50s doing excavation and demolition work with a Cat® D6 Dozer, a 977 Crawler Loader and a crane.

At the end of 1971, Andy and Frank parted company, but remained close as brothers. Andy continued the business, and was joined by sons Ron and Richard doing excavations and demolition, along with drainage work and land development. In 1988, Andy had passed away, leaving his two sons to run the company. In 2000, they were joined by Ron's son, Bud.

"We wouldn't be here for all these years if my Dad hadn't taught me and my brother well," Ron says. "I still live by everything he taught me, and I teach my son the same things. We take pride in our work, and the equipment we run."

Five years ago, Masone Brothers began working exclusively for Belmont Park, which is operated by the New York Racing Association. Belmont Park is best known for hosting the Belmont Stakes—the third and final leg of the Triple Crown, horse racing's most prestigious title.

Before going to work for the park full-time, Masone Brothers had performed grading work at the track dating back to the mid-1970s.

Among the specialties the nine-employee firm performs at Belmont Park, Masone Brothers does asphalt paving, including parking lots and roads. In addition to excavating and grading projects, it also does concrete foundations and flatwork, installs water mains and also constructs drainage basins.

"That's what we've done since I first came in here in 1976," says Ron Masone, whose brother passed away in July

"Whether it's parts, service or machine performance, our Cat® equipment is well worth the investment."

—BUD MASONE
VICE PRESIDENT

2015, leaving him and his son to run the company. "It used to be that we came in here and did the work, and then went back to our other jobs outside the park, and then they would call us back. But in recent years it has been so busy here that there's enough work for us to just stay here."

Making the grade

Masone Brothers does various types of finish grading at the park, including asphalt and concrete.

"You have to know how to grade because everything on the track has to be level to within a certain tolerance," says Ron Masone, president of the firm based in Inwood, N.Y. "We rely on our know-how and all of our Cat equipment to get the job done."

Last year, Belmont Park saw a number of general improvements, including a newly renovated and greatly expanded training track that opened after Labor Day. This expansion allows the track to safely accommodate more horses in the mornings after widening the stretches by nearly 17 feet and the far turn by 18 feet.

The project was completed in just 52 days, which meant the training track was ready by the time racing resumed at Belmont Park for the fall meet. Masone Brothers further contributed to the effort by reshaping and crowning the base of the track, which is adjacent to the main track.

Bud depends on the Cat 259D Compact Track Loader to perform a majority of the grading work.

"We do a lot of work on the track in the summer—I did the entire shoulder of the

track with the 259D," he says. "I love that machine and the options that come with it. The D model has a creep mode option—you retain full power in the hydraulics, but the tracks slow down—you can adjust the speed. In essence, it acts like a bulldozer. When you have to push through a pile, it handles it with no problem."

Last summer, a Cat 308E2 CR Mini Excavator was used to lift concrete blocks and set them in place as part of a retaining wall constructed next to an outer service road.

"We have deadlines to meet here at the park, and because we can't start work here until 10:30 a.m., it means we have to get our work done quickly and efficiently," Ron says. "We can always count on our Cat machines to help us complete the work on time."

Masone Brothers has a leg up on other contractors due to their ability to perform work without disturbing the horses. It's a big reason why they became a contractor of choice at Belmont Park.

"My father, and grandfather have been horsemen their whole lives," says Bud, a vice president who represents the third generation of the business. "So just understanding how to work around horses and being safe around them is a big deal, because we wouldn't have a job here without the horses."

"These race horses are high strung, so you have to be careful when you are working around them," Bud adds. "You just need to take your time and go slow. My guys all know that. And the fact that

(Continued on page 6)



WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT CAT® EQUIPMENT

“We’ve never really had problems with our Cat equipment,” says Ron Masone, president of Masone Brothers, Inc. “And we still don’t—even our older machines are very dependable.”

“On the other hand, with the foreign-made machines, it seems like there’s always a problem with them, and then you can’t get parts anyway. So, we have stuck with Cat machines, and they have been good to us from the standpoint of reliability and performance.”

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT HIS CAT DEALER

“We go back a long way with H.O. Penn,” Masone says. “My father dealt with them when he started the business in 1955, so I’ve been around them my whole life. They’re like family with us. We have known Charlie Johnson (V.P. of machine sales) for a long time, and we’re still good friends.”

“And if we have questions about a product and need an answer, our new rep, Vito, gets back to us right away.”

our Cat equipment is smooth and runs quietly is a big plus in that regard.”

Banking on Cat equipment

Ron Masone has been a proponent of Cat compact equipment from the beginning.

“We recommended Cat Skid Steer Loaders to local contractors we know in the Five Towns area in the ‘90s, and they’re still running them today,” Masone says. “Most of my friends who are in the business bought a lot of Cat equipment through the years by listening to me and my brother, and they are glad they did.”

Attachments help the contractor save time. That includes a hammer for breaking concrete, an auger for drilling postholes and a variety of bucket sizes for various tasks around the track.

The Product Link™ feature installed on Masone’s newer Cat equipment helps the contractor keep track of the location and condition of its equipment, which helps in the large 430-acre expanse of Belmont Park. Utilizing the VisionLink® interface, Bud Masone is also able to monitor machine hours, which tell him when scheduled maintenance is necessary.

Masone typically purchases new equipment through Cat Financial, a process the father and son say is easy. As part of the transaction, they also insure the machines through Cat Insurance. This came in handy when Masone Brothers lost a machine that was flooded during Hurricane Sandy.

“There was no problem whatsoever,” Ron Masone says. “They took the old machine and eventually we got a check that paid for the cost of a new machine we bought to replace it.”

The trifecta of readily available parts, excellent customer service and reliable



Belmont PARK

Belmont Park is a major Thoroughbred horse-racing facility located in Elmont, New York. The 430-acre racing, training and barn complex is located on the western edge of the Nassau County region known as the Hempstead Plains, just outside the New York City limits.



It is widely known as the home of the Belmont Stakes, regarded as the "Test of the Champion," the third leg of the Triple Crown. Almost every major champion in racing history since the early 20th century has competed on the racecourse—including each of the 12 Triple Crown winners.

Belmont Park is operated by the non-profit New York Racing Association. It is typically open for racing throughout May and June and into late July, and again from late September through late October.

Belmont Park's main track, nicknamed "Big Sandy," is the longest dirt racecourse in North American thoroughbred racing—at 1.5 miles.

The Belmont Park grandstand opened in May 1968 and is the largest in Thoroughbred racing. It has a total attendance capacity of more than 100,000, with the adjoining backyard being able to accommodate more than 10,000. The seating portion totals nearly 33,000.

Belmont's backyard is well known as a gathering place for racing fans to get close up and see the horses saddled before they hit the track. The center of the paddock is dominated by a white pine that predated the track itself—it turned 180 years old in 2006. A stylized version of the pine has been the centerpiece of Belmont Park's corporate logo since 1968.

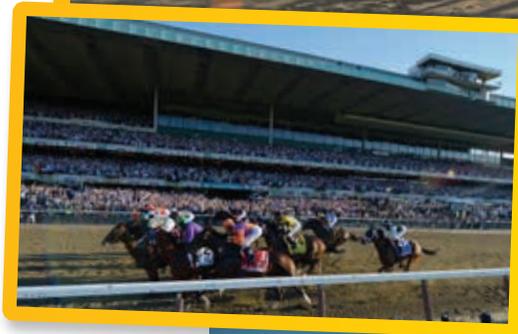
The paddock area also serves as a picnic area for the increasing numbers of fans who make Belmont Stakes Day—the Saturday that falls within the range of June 5 through June 11—a tourist attraction.

machine performance has kept Masone coming back for decades.

"It's incredible how many parts they have at the H.O. Penn branch in Holtsville," Bud says. "We get parts the same day or the next day—and time is money."

He also appreciates the prompt service he receives when a piece of equipment requires service in the field.

"Unlike other brands, when they send a technician out to fix your machine, it's going to get done on the spot," Bud says. "Our Cat equipment is worth the investment." **OTJ**



GREENER PASTURES

FARMER FINDS NICHE AS RURAL EXCAVATION CONTRACTOR

Rodney Beer was in search of greener pastures and a return to his farming roots when he folded up his 23-employee excavation business in eastern Pennsylvania 10 years ago.

Ultimately, the search led him to a farmstead in southern Minnesota, 35 miles south of Rochester, where he settled in doing a mix of farming, hauling feed commodities, and a little excavation work on the side. Currently, Beer Farms is an equal mix of farming, trucking and excavation contracting.

Ten years after the move, Beer is gravitating back to his hard-earned expertise as an excavation contractor as he and his two sons seek to balance the ups and downs of farming.

“Farming is tougher business right now,” says Beer, who operated the excavation business for 21 years in Pennsylvania out of necessity after new developments in the Philadelphia suburbs allowed no room for growth on his dad’s farm. “So we’ve gone back to what I know best, and that’s running bulldozers.”

Beer and his son, Matt, perform a majority of their work for farmers and

residential homeowners. This includes digging waterways, drain tile repair, roadbuilding, excavating ponds, building large retaining walls, septic systems, and building demolition.

“We’re capable of doing anything that has to do with moving dirt and laying pipe,” says Beer, who operates from a 320-acre farm in Preston, Minn.

Across the street from Beer Farms, the father and son team is serving as the general contractor for the construction of a 160-acre private family resort that includes five large ponds. Initially, Beer constructed the septic system for the project and figured he was done. When the private landowner asked him to coordinate the entire project, Beer declined several times before finally relenting.

“My wife reminded me that I always say ‘Think outside the box,’ so I decided I would take it on,” Beer says.

The project’s main challenge consisted of building a raised access road between two large ponds, and running all the utilities beneath the access road.

“Initially, it was an old iron ore wash plant,” Beer says. “We basically took nothing and made it into something without the owner having to pay big engineering and design fees. He had hired someone else initially, and waited a year and one half, but nothing was getting done.

“Nobody knew how to get the pipes from point A to point B basically,” Beer says. “Once we took on the project, I was able to get the necessary permits in less than three weeks.”

The majority of excavation contracting work comes through word-of-mouth referrals, based on the quality of work performed by Beer Farms. In many cases, Beer is approached by someone with an idea that requires creative earthmoving work.

“I can take their idea and put it on paper with drawings and sketches and give them prices and ideas, yet I’m not a designer nor an engineer, Beer says. “So I shoot elevations with a laser system—you have to shoot grades and figure your grades because it all starts from there.”

**BEER FARMS
TRUCKING &
EXCAVATING**

Employees: 4

Location: Preston, Minn.

Cat® Equipment: 289D Multi Terrain Loader, 420F Backhoe Loader, 320E L Hydraulic Excavator, D6 Dozer, 963C Crawler Loader, Challenger MT865 Tractor

(Continued on page 10)



WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT CAT® EQUIPMENT

"I like how Cat equipment is built—they just stay on top of things," says Rodney Beer, owner of Beer Farms Trucking & Excavating. "They're always upgrading and keeping up with new technology. Caterpillar listens to equipment owners, and they make design changes based on their input. They are continually making advancements in how the equipment works."

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT HIS CAT® DEALER

"When we need service, with any other brand when you call, they might tell you a week or two to get a machine or a truck in," Rodney Beer says. "Every time you call Ziegler Cat, it's 'How soon can you get it here?'"

"And if we go down while we're on a job, they get us a machine right away," Beer continues. "They bend over backwards to provide you with a replacement machine and keep you working, and that's huge for us. Downtime is the bane of any contractor, and we know we can count on Ziegler to keep us up and running."



Matt Beer (L) and father, Rodney



Cat® Power

Dating back to his time in Pennsylvania when he had 40 machines, Beer is a proponent of Cat equipment. His current fleet consists of a 289D Multi Terrain Loader, 420F Backhoe Loader, 320E L Hydraulic Excavator, D6 Dozer, 963C Crawler Loader, and a Challenger MT865 Tractor.

The equipment is used in a variety of ways, including loading corn for shipment and moving pallets of seed. On

the 160-acre family development, Beer uses the 289D for rough grading and finish grading. Beer likens the power of his 289D to that of a D4 dozer.

"You're taking a compact machine, and being able to do just unbelievable big work with it—and that's huge for us," he says. "We just love that machine because it can push big piles of dirt like a small dozer, yet it's a compact machine and very maneuverable."

Matt Beer says what he enjoys about running the 289D is the ease of operation and less noise.

"The way it rides is pretty nice compared to some other brands," Matt says. "And the visibility from the cab is better."

One of the features he likes on his 420F Backhoe Loader is user-friendly joystick controls, which are similar to those found in other Cat machines.

When it comes to adding time-saving attachments, Matt Beer likes to utilize a roller attachment to the 289D for soil compaction.

"For backfill and inside small buildings where you're in tight quarters, you wouldn't necessarily want a big vibratory roller," Matt says. "So the smaller attachment comes in handy for us."

Forks are used for daily farm chores such as moving pallets of seed corn, and also carrying large rocks when building retaining walls.

A quick coupler makes fast work out of changing attachments.

"It saves time, you just push a button and switch attachments like nothing," Matt says. "It's a heck of a lot nicer than getting out on the older ones and flipping the levers up. I wouldn't want a machine without it now, that's for sure."

Rodney Beer appreciates the reliability and consistent uptime he gets from his Cat machines.

"With farm equipment you work, you fix, you work, you fix..." he says. "With our Cat equipment, we work and then take fluid samples to ensure we keep running. If it goes down, it's big money and I don't like that. So we stay on top of the machines as far as maintenance and repairs, because I can't afford downtime."

Dealer Commitment

Beer counts on the support he receives from his Cat dealer to help maintain his equipment. Ziegler Cat takes care of the preventive maintenance and also the larger repairs as part of a Customer Support Agreement. Beer has also been utilizing S•O•SSM fluid sampling to head off potential problems.

"To me it's more the peace of mind if anything when we have the oil changed and I get that piece of paper back and it says everything is good," Beer says.

He counts on Ziegler to resolve some of his more specialized needs, whether it be properly installing a laser on his 320 excavator or outfitting a trailer with an extra axle.

"My Ziegler rep, Chad, is super," Beer says. "And I had the same experience with my Cat dealer rep back in Pennsylvania. When we need help, they do exactly what they say they are going to do. It's just amazing, because so many people want to sell you a piece of equipment, walk away, and that's it."

"At Ziegler, they do their job, and they care about tomorrow and being with you every step of the way," Beer adds. "You take a guy like Chad, he's there for us—he's doing his job. And we really appreciate that." **OTJ**



SPEED UP LANDSCAPING JOBS

USE THE RIGHT MACHINES AND COUPLERS

From clearing land, to digging irrigation trenches, to drilling planting holes, to sculpting golf courses, mini excavators are utilized for a variety of jobs across the landscaping industry.

While some companies focus on a specialty niche, others perform a wide range of landscaping projects.

Evaluating how often you have to change out attachments and researching coupler options can play a significant role in helping companies increase efficiency on the jobsite.

Coupler Options and Assessing Your Needs

In the past, changing out machine attachments was a time-consuming, manual task that involved an element of risk, as the operator had to get out of the machine and use hammers to pound pins on and off the attachment. Now, with advancements in coupler technology and options, operators can spend more time on the tasks at hand and less time changing out attachments.

MANUAL COUPLERS require the operator to exit the machine to switch out attachments; however, when compared to a “pin-on” arrangement, they reduce the amount of labor involved and can save approximately 30 minutes for each attachment change. Manual couplers are a good option for companies that typically change attachments three to four times a week. This could reduce up to two hours of downtime per week.

HYDRAULIC COUPLERS enable operators to change out attachments using controls from within the cab and in a shorter amount of time than with manual couplers. Hydraulic couplers are an ideal option for companies that must change out attachments several times throughout the day in order to complete the work. For example, if an operator is changing out attachments three times a day, a hydraulic coupler can reduce the amount of time spent on this process by close to a half hour when compared to machines with manual couplers. Hydraulic couplers can also help reduce operator fatigue.

TILT COUPLERS allow 180-degree rotation and give operators the ability to get in places they usually couldn't with a normal coupler or pin-on arrangement. These are an ideal and almost essential solution for companies that regularly perform sculpting and shaping jobs, such as golf course landscaping. Tilt couplers are used in a lot of high-end landscaping work, especially when it involves creating shapes or contouring hills. Without a tilt coupler, grading work would take more time.

Taking the time to evaluate how often you are changing out attachments throughout the work week/workday and considering which coupler option best suits your needs can be the key to increasing efficiency this season and being able to expand your workload capacity.

*To learn more about the latest advancements in machine, coupler and attachment technology designed for the landscaping industry, check out www.cat.com/en_US/by-industry/landscaping.html. For additional information, contact our dealership. **OTJ***

FIRST RESPONDER

CONTRACTOR MOBILIZES
QUICKLY WHEN
CUSTOMERS CALL



When Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards declared a public health emergency in December for the town of St. Joseph, prompt action was required.

Tests by state officials found elevated levels of lead in the water at the town hall, as well as several residences that were sampled in the northeast Louisiana town of 1,100. The advisory from the Louisiana Dept. of Health warned residents against drinking tap water from the town's deteriorating cast iron water pipe system.

The solution was a full-scale replacement of water mains and lines, including laying 72,000 feet of PVC pipe. The contractor tabbed for the job, Womack & Sons Construction Group, not only has expertise in laying underground utilities, but also possesses a reputation for having the ability to mobilize quickly once they are called.

"Womack & Sons is known above all else for fast, reliable help and an almost immediate response—a customer calls and within the next day or two we are on it," says project manager Lee McGuffee. "With the strong background we have with tenured employees in the utility sector, we're bidding jobs and doing it more proficiently than the competition."

The Harrisonburg, La. firm has 35 to 40 men and 10 mini hydraulic excavators working on the St. Joseph project, which is expected to take eight months to complete. Womack crews are working six days a week and 10 to 11-hour shifts to effectively replace the town's entire water distribution system.

Cat® E2 Mini Excavators

Crews are utilizing nine nimble Cat 305.5E2 CR Mini Excavators to perform the majority of the excavation in the heavy clay soil of St. Joseph. Working in pairs with two machines, and five-man teams in the trench, crews methodically moved street-by-street digging trenches, and removing small manholes and sections of broken pipe.

"We get good performance and high uptime with these machines, which is critical on a project like this where we are working to restore the town's water service," McGuffee says.

The ROPS and FOPS-certified cab has a wider entrance for easy access, a high back suspension seat and adjustable armrests for superior comfort. The E2 series of Cat mini excavators also has 100 percent joystick pilot controls for reduced fatigue, and excellent visibility to provide the best-in-class operator station experience.

The High Definition Hydraulic system paired with full pilot controls ensures responsive and effortless control of the E2 series.

Robert Chaudoin, a 72-year-old operator for Womack, likes the ease of operation of the Cat mini excavators.

"We lease Cat® machines because it's more economical for us that way and it gives us more flexibility with our equipment fleet."

— LEE MCGUFFEE
PROJECT MANAGER

(Continued on page 14)



WOMACK & SONS CONSTRUCTION GROUP

Employees: 125

Location: Harrisonburg, La.

Cat® equipment: 289D Multi Terrain Loader (2), 303E CR, 305D CR, 305.5E2 CR (9), 316E L Hydraulic Excavator, 326F L Hydraulic Excavator; 336E L Hydraulic Excavator, D5K2 LGP Dozer

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT CAT® EQUIPMENT

"The Cat machines are performing great for us," says Lee McGuffee, a project manager for Womack & Sons Construction Group. "We have almost no issues with them.

"Our operators really like running the Cat machines," McGuffee adds. "They have great power, and the operators say they have good vision from the cab, and they like the overall functions and ease of operation."

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT HIS CAT DEALER

"I've had a good experience with parts from Louisiana Cat," McGuffee says. "Most of the time they have it in stock. If it's not in stock, then they can have it there the next morning at 8:00, and I really like that.

"We have several other pieces of equipment that use Cat engines, and I can always call Louisiana Cat and get the parts that I need for them in a timely manner."

“With the joystick controls and the hydraulic power and smooth operation of this machine, I can go all day and come back the next day ready for more,” Chaudoin says.

Timely dealer support

The mini excavators are leased from Cat dealer Louisiana Cat’s Alexandria store, and financed through Cat Financial. Womack will keep the machines anywhere from one to three years before turning them in on newer models.

“We lease Cat machines because it’s more economical for us that way and it gives us more flexibility with our equipment fleet,” McGuffee says.

Because it performs work around the state, Womack & Sons frequently rents equipment to fulfill short-term needs.

“People will call asking us to perform work and everything we have is tied up on different jobsites, so we may rent a Cat machine for a week or two,” McGuffee says. “A lot of times, two or three skid steer loaders are being used on other jobs, so we need a machine and we rent from one of Louisiana Cat’s convenient locations.”

“Louisiana Cat makes it possible for us to do lots of things,” he continues. “They have a large inventory, so when we call them and need a piece of equipment, they usually have it or can get it for us quickly.”

All 17 of the Cat machines in Womack’s fleet are set up on a Customer Support Agreement with Louisiana Cat, equipped with Product Link™ and monitored for machine health via the VisionLink® interface. This helps keep them up and running on the job with little to no downtime.

“They use it to locate their machines, monitor hours to notify us when it’s time to service the equipment, and also to troubleshoot any codes that alert us to potential problems,” says Louisiana Cat sales rep Chris Snow.

In a rare instance where one of its machines had an issue in the field, Louisiana Cat responded promptly and supplied Womack & Sons with another machine to replace it. This prevented downtime and loss of revenue.

“Our dealer rep, Chris, is a great guy—he helps us any way he can,” McGuffee says. “Usually if we have any kind of equipment issue, I have our mechanic call the techs at Louisiana Cat, and they are always there to help.”

Adds co-owner Chase Womack: “We particularly appreciate the effort Chris Snow and Louisiana Cat have made in recent years to save our company thousands of dollars through the use of aggressive lease rates on various Cat machines.” **OTJ**



As the company’s most experienced unit, the utility division of Womack & Sons Construction Group consists of underground water, sewer, and gas piping. Projects range from a few hundred feet to over 90 miles of pipeline mains—from small to large diameter.

Womack also constructs water and sewer treatment facilities for cities and municipalities across the state of Louisiana, some of which are responsible for treating millions of gallons of water and sewage per day. Many contracts consist of ground water storage tanks, booster pumps, variable frequency drives, SCADA and telemetry controls, chlorination points, sludge chambers and underground lift stations. The contractor also has 24-hour maintenance crews that respond to emergency situations and outages all over the state.

Other divisions include agricultural services, trucking/hauling, directional drilling, civil and commercial building.

Founded in 1983 by current president, Glen D. Womack, in its early years the company focused primarily on utility construction and completed small water projects in rural areas.

In time, the utility construction jobs became broader to include small volumes of site work, concrete, and building construction. In 2001, oldest son James Womack began working fulltime and cultivated new ventures in the utility industry. In 2008, a younger son, Chase, received a bachelor’s degree in construction management from the University of Louisiana-Monroe and started work full time focusing on commercial building and civil industries.

By 2010, G.D. Womack Trenching had diversified into all aspects of construction, and changed the company name to Womack & Sons Construction Group to reflect the broader general construction services it currently offers.

Most recently, James and Chase’s younger sister, Paige Barbo, began working full time in the home office after receiving a bachelor’s degree in business management from the University of Louisiana-Monroe.





VIA REMOTE

REMOTE CONTROL SYSTEM

NOW AVAILABLE ON CAT® D SERIES COMPACT MACHINES

Enhanced operator and jobsite safety is the number one purpose and benefit of the new RemoteTask™ system, which is now available as an option for select Cat® D Series Skid Steer, Multi Terrain and Compact Track Loaders.

In the construction industry, certain projects are associated with greater accident or injury risk, such as demolition and roadside or highway construction. With the RemoteTask system, operators can just as effectively utilize the machine to complete tasks while standing up to 1,000 feet away from the site—and out of harm's way. Imagine the peace of mind this can provide when doing road maintenance along a busy interstate or demolishing a parking deck.

This system serves as an extension of a machine operator's skills. With this system, operators control the machine with a remote controller (also known as the belly box) instead of from within the cab. Every control function and feature in the cab is also on the remote controller. This means you can operate all attachments, including hydro-mechanical tools, as well as activate helpful features, such as the work tool positioner and creep mode.

This system is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, making the learning curve minimal. Once you learn how to start up the machine from the controller, everything else is intuitive. Installation takes less than three hours at your local dealer, and the system can actually be transferred from one compatible machine to another.

Control response time is the same on the remote controller as it is from within the cab. Therefore, you are able to operate the machine just as precisely and efficiently with this system. All warning signals are also engineered into the controller so the operator will be alerted to any machine issues, such as an engine overheat, just as quickly as they would inside the cab.

Visibility can actually be improved using the RemoteTask system. Standing away from the machine can provide an improved line of sight and perspective of the entire work zone. This visibility advantage is especially helpful in applications that normally require a spotter, such as unloading pallets of rock, sod or other materials from a truck or trailer. With the RemoteTask system, you can position yourself to have a full line of sight from the trailer to the machine.

In addition to demolition and/or highway construction applications, there are several other common uses for these systems—especially when operator safety is a concern. Some of these applications include hazmat clean-up or container truck spills, material handling in steel mills, unloading cargo from ships or barges, and projects that must be completed in potentially harmful weather conditions, such as extreme heat.

To learn more about the RemoteTask remote control system now available on select Cat® D Series Skid Steer, Multi Terrain and Compact Track Loaders, contact our dealership. OTJ



THE NEED FOR SPEED

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR WORKS FAST WITH HELP FROM CAT® EQUIPMENT

For landscape contractors, speed is critical. The ability to make money is based on the volume of projects and how quickly and accurately they can be completed.

Reed Landscape is successfully applying this formula, as it juggles six to eight jobs at a time across the Valley of the Sun with four work crews. With a history of completing jobs on time, the landscaper has a well-earned reputation that ensures a steady flow of work.

Currently in its 23rd year, Reed Landscape works primarily on large commercial building lots in the greater Phoenix area, installing irrigation systems and landscaping. Reed is capable of performing all types of tasks, from small repairs to installing large projects.

“We like to meet deadlines, which helps us secure new work because general contractors know they can rely on us,” says vice president of operations Jason Allen.

“One of our main strengths is the communication among our crews and our suppliers,” Allen says. “We try to keep everybody happy and keep our contractors in the loop with any issues or problems so we can meet those deadlines and promote our company to get more work.”



Jason Allen

REED LANDSCAPE

Employees: 23

Location: Phoenix, Ariz.

Cat® equipment: 216B Skid Steer Loader, 236 Skid Steer Loader, 249D Compact Track Loader, 303.5C CR Mini Excavator

“Caterpillar and Empire have just been great to us over the years. We started switching to Cat® equipment 14 years ago, and it’s been our number one tractor ever since.”

– JASON ALLEN
VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

While mainly a commercial installation company, Reed Landscape has successfully performed installation work on numerous residential sites. Its maintenance division maintains many sites from 15,000 sq. ft. to 15 acres.

Versatile machines

To complete jobs in a timely fashion, Reed crews utilize Cat® Skid Steer Loaders and a 303.5C CR Mini Excavator. Crews perform regular maintenance to keep the machines in good operating condition.

“We take good care of them so they last a long time,” Allen says. “We have 2,500 hours on one of our skid steers, and we like to use them a lot. They’re easy to run. I think the productivity is better because of their reliability. They’re not in for service and we have them working longer.”

The machines save time and manpower when paired with Cat attachments.

“The Cat Skid Steer Loaders are very versatile machines when paired with the attachments,” Allen says. “We put on trenchers and augers. The same applies to our Cat Mini Excavator. We use the auger a lot on that machine to help us dig tree and plant holes. It’s been a great machine for us overall.”

Reed buys its Cat machines outright, having recently purchased a 249D Compact Track Loader at zero percent interest through Cat Financial. Before making the purchase, Reed looked at some larger machines. But after demo’ing the 249D and meeting with their

Empire representative, Mark Snow, the landscaper realized that the 249D Compact Track Loader was exactly the right machine with its size and power-to-weight ratio for the type of work it routinely performs.

The rubber tracks and low ground pressure minimize disruption to lawns, curbs and pavement.

“It’s very good feature for crossing any type of terrain,” Allen says. “When grading certain jobs with the 249D, we’ve noticed that it’s almost like a bulldozer with a bucket on it. It can push a lot of dirt and it can cross over any type of surface condition.”

With a lift capacity of 4,500 pounds, the 249D is very capable of hauling plants and trees that are ready for planting along with brick, stone and hardscape pavers for patio installations, Allen adds.

“We can also move very quickly around the jobsite, and we can tow it with a ¾-ton tractor on one of our smaller trailers,” he says. “We don’t necessarily need a dump truck to transport it to a jobsite.”

With highly versatile, transportable machines with uptime in the mid-90s, Reed Landscape is sold on their Cat equipment and the support it receives from its Cat dealer.

“Caterpillar and Empire have just been great to us over the years,” Allen says. We started switching to Cat equipment 14 years ago, and it’s been our number one tractor ever since.” **OTJ**

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT CAT® EQUIPMENT

“The reliability of the Cat machines is an essential part of our overall success,” says Jason Allen, vice president of operations for Reed Landscape. “We were just checking hours early this morning on both of our skid steer loaders. They have accumulated 2,500 to 2,800 hours each, and other than normal maintenance and a few normal things we’ve repaired, they’ve been really great machines for us.”

WHAT HE LIKES ABOUT HIS CAT DEALER

“Empire Southwest has been a great company to partner with over the years,” Allen says. “They like to take care of their clients, and are really great to work with and knowledgeable about their machines. Mark, our sales rep, is always on call if you need him—he’ll come to the jobsite whenever we have any problems or concerns.”

Parts availability is another strong point cited by Allen:

“They almost always have the part we need in stock. And if not they always give us the chance to have it directly flown in overnight.

“And if we have any questions about maintenance, the technicians at Empire are always there to answer any questions or fix anything as needed.”



PLAN TO PROFIT

EFFECTIVE ESTIMATING CAN IMPACT YOUR BOTTOM LINE

As the construction economy continues to trend upward and you're able to bid on more jobs, each project is an opportunity to improve your margins. The estimating and bidding process is your profit plan and will have a significant impact on how healthy your bottom line is at the end of the project. That's why it's critical to avoid mistakes that can cost you. Here are five key points to consider:

1. START FROM THE TOP.

The tendency is to begin the process by plugging in line items and numbers for each part of the work process. However, this approach keeps you from looking at the project holistically and strategically. It's usually more efficient to think about how costs are distributed from start to finish. Where will your crew really rock? Where are you at the greatest risk for cost overruns? This way you can make adjustments based on how they are going to affect overall profitability, not just one part of the project.

2. SPEND YOUR ESTIMATING TIME EFFECTIVELY.

Bidding and estimating can be time consuming. Whether you use estimating software or electronic spreadsheets, you want to create consistent estimating processes that give you the best results. You should revisit your bids at the end of every project and determine where you excelled and where you could have done better. The best rule for managing estimating time—spend the most time in the areas of the project that contribute the greatest amount of cost to the project.

3. ALIGN YOUR PROFIT CALCULATION WITH YOUR COSTS.

Some companies base their profitability on a consistent rate applied across every aspect of the project. While this is consistent, it is not the most effective way to maintain adequate margins. Instead, determine how much each of the critical factors such as labor, materials and equipment costs contributes to the overall project and then assign profit in that area based on that percentage. For example, if labor is 40 percent of the cost and materials are 10%, the profit margins should vary with those percentages based on your strategy for that project.

4. USE PROJECT HISTORY FOR RISK ESTIMATION.

To determine the most likely risks and minimize the impact of what you can't always predict, analyze what has happened on other projects and what impact it had on costs and profit. Also be sure to set milestone parameters throughout the project, so you can be aware of how unforeseen events are impacting your bottom line.

5. BE TRANSPARENT.

Your estimate and project plan should provide a complete overview of the project as well as each line item's details and costs. This way, your entire team can easily understand the process and the most critical phases of the project from start to finish. This kind of transparency invites collaboration and sharing of ideas throughout the team.

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