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Editorial and business office address:

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www.rrermag.com

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The *RER* Buyers' Guide | *RER* Reports[®] | *RER* ProductWire[®]

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(877) 382-9187, rermag@omeda.com

REPRINTS: reprints@endeavorb2b.com

ARCHIVES AND MICROFORM: This magazine is available for research and retrieval of selected archived articles from leading electronic databases and online search services, including Factiva, LexisNexis and Proquest.

Rental Equipment Register (USPS Permit 461-220, ISSN 0034-4524 print, ISSN 2771-6570 online) is published 9x a year (Jan, Feb, March, Apr/May, June/Jul, August/Sep, Oct, Nov/Dec) by Endeavor Business Media, LLC, 1233 Janesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538. Periodical postage paid at Fort Atkinson, WI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Rental Equipment Register, PO Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. SUBSCRIPTIONS: Publisher reserves the right to reject non-qualified subscriptions. Subscription prices: U.S. (\$62.50); Canada/Mexico (\$93.75); All other countries (\$122.50). All subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. Send subscription inquiries to Rental Equipment Register, PO Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. Customer service can be reached toll-free at 877-382-9187 or at rermag@omeda.com for magazine subscription assistance or questions.

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Luddites Unite! Bring on the IT Experts!

I have to admit it, I'm kind of a Luddite. You all know who the original Luddites were? Back in the early 1800s, there was a secret organization of textile workers in England who were opposed to technology. They had their own secret culture; they took oaths and went around destroying machinery in cotton and woolen mills because they believed that technology was threatening their jobs. The name Luddite came from a man named Ned Ludd who was a leader of this group.

Well, I'm not that kind of a Luddite! If I should ever have an occasion to visit your company, you don't need to guard your computer equipment. I promise you I won't be trying to destroy your software, nor will I ever knowingly send you an attachment that has a virus! You won't have to hire a special security detail to guard your data centers.

The modern definition of a Luddite is somebody who opposes the advances in technology, especially in IT. I don't fall into that category either, although I do cringe a little bit when I see the growing interest in robots to do the work that people do. I tend to think the same way – that robots will take over our jobs and what's going to happen to the displaced workers? Are they going to be standing on freeway offramps with signs saying, "I'll work for food?" Are they going to be panhandling in front of supermarkets asking for spare change? Believe me, I live in Southern

California, and I see homeless people everywhere. Some, you might say, don't really want to work, or have drug or alcohol issues, or mental illnesses. But many of them – and I do talk to some of them – have simply been displaced by automation or the offshoring of manufacturing. So, the trends towards robotics and artificial intelligence do concern me in some respects. In fact, there are even bots that can write articles now. I don't understand them very well, but I have visions of robots coming to take me away and replace me with one of them! I'm exaggerating and joking a bit, although these AI bots do exist!

In my case, it's not that I oppose technology at all, it's just that personally I don't have a very good aptitude for it. I'm just not wired that way. To a degree, it's partly my age. I didn't grow up with technology the way somebody 20 or 30 years younger than me did. But I have plenty of contemporaries who are great with technology and learn new processes easily and quickly. I just don't. I usually have to struggle to learn new technologies that plenty of people learn easily, it's just a matter of personality and aptitude.

The reason I bring this up is not to talk about myself, but because I know a number of business owners who are similar. And in this day and age, if you're running a rental business, or any kind of business really, you can't afford to be behind on technology. You need to automate

as many of your processes as possible, especially in an era like this when it's difficult to find workers. You need the help of software and technology when you have to organize your shop's workflow, for example, when equipment is returned after a rental and is then checked out and made ready for its next rental. You don't need robots to do it, but you should be using software – especially if you have more than one location – that immediately updates availability so when a customer calls and asks if you will have a mini-excavator available tomorrow, you don't have to go outside and walk around the property and ask three different workers, or you don't have to get on the phone and call three other branches to find out. Your software should be able to tell you, as well as the salesman in the field. You should also be able to let your customer know, through technology, when a piece of equipment will be delivered.

So if you're a semi-Luddite like me, make sure you have staff that can help you with this stuff. If you're a business owner, you don't have to be brilliant at everything. You just have to recognize what you don't know and make sure you've got people who can help. **RER**

Michael Roth, mroth@rermag.com



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H&E Equipment Services Grows Equipment Rental Revenue 35.3 Percent in Fourth Quarter

BATON ROUGE, La. – H&E Equipment Services posted \$275.7 million in equipment rental revenue for the fourth quarter of 2022, compared to \$203.7 million for the fourth quarter of 2021, a 35.3-percent year-over-year increase. Total revenue for the fourth quarter of 2022 was \$353.1 million, compared to \$281.3 million for the fourth quarter of 2021, a 25.5-percent increase. Used equipment sales increased 2.5 percent from \$29.5 million to \$30.2 million, while new equipment sales declined 4.4 percent from

the measure of 110 basis points when compared to the fourth quarter of 2021 and 130 basis points on a sequential quarterly basis. Rental rates, which exclude One Source, improved 10.6 percent compared to the same quarter a year ago and 1.8 percent on a sequential quarterly basis. Both measures remained among the best in our industry. Our fleet original equipment cost (OEC) closed the quarter at a record of approximately \$2.4 billion, with gross capital expenditures in the quarter of \$128.3 million and a record gross

investment of \$507.8 million for all of 2022. Finally, we opened two new branch locations in the quarter, closing the year with a total of 10 branch openings for the second consecutive year. We began 2023 with a network of 120 branches across 29 states.”

Continued optimism for 2023

Barber expressed strong optimism regarding 2023. “Favorable trends have emerged in the equipment rental industry and represent a promising outlook. We expect the robust business environment to persist through the year as strong project backlogs and accelerating federally funded programs escalate spending, particularly in the non-residential and industrial end markets. We

believe these positive trends are sustainable, due in part to a rise in federal programs addressing improvements in infrastructure that require extended periods to complete. In addition, we expect further growth in rental penetration to drive new demand for equipment as the combination of unfavorable fiscal conditions, including rising interest rates, and lingering delays in equipment deliverability encourage a shift by certain customers away from the ownership of equipment. These multiple catalysts for increased rental demand should maintain healthy equipment utilization and contribute to an attractive pricing environment characterized by modest sequential quarterly rate improvement.

“Numerous achievements in 2022, which included the completion of our transition to a



H&E is optimistic that its transformation into a “pure play” rental company will strengthen its performance in 2023.

Photo by H&E Equipment Services

\$22.5 million to \$21.5 million. Net income was \$51.2 million compared to \$21.7 million in the fourth quarter of 2021.

H&E closed the sale of the Komatsu earth-moving distribution business for proceeds of \$29.2 million. A gain of \$15.4 million was recognized on the sale.

“Our results showed solid fleet utilization, continued gains in equipment pricing, further fleet growth, and branch expansion,” said Brad Barber, H&E Equipment Services CEO. “In addition, figures for the quarter included the operations from One Source Equipment Rentals Inc. following the closing of our acquisition on October 1, 2022. Physical fleet utilization remained at a healthy level, averaging 72.0 percent despite pressure from typical seasonal factors that contributed to a decline in

pure-play rental business and 18-percent growth in our branch location count, have served to fortify a sound base for future operations and strategic growth. These achievements contributed to our impressive financial performance, including record revenues and margins, while adding greater scale after our expansion into new geographies and increased branch density in existing regions. We remain focused on further growth initiatives in 2023 and believe this fundamentally sound industry will continue to create opportunities. Growth initiatives for the year include further expansion of our branch network, with a revised range of 10 to 15 new locations, up from 10 new branches in each of the last two years. Also, we are targeting a gross fleet investment of \$500 million to \$550 million as we continue to support existing stores and the new branch locations with both a young fleet and

a diversified mix of equipment lines. Finally, attractive acquisition opportunities continue to appear in our industry and an evaluation of suitable targets remains part of our comprehensive growth strategy in 2023.”

For the full year, H&E posted \$956 million in equipment rental revenue compared to \$729.7 million in 2021, a 31-percent year-over-year growth surge. New equipment sales were flat, while used equipment sales dropped from \$135.2 million in 2021 to \$90.9 million in 2022 as many rental companies held on to their older units because of long lead times from manufacturers. Total revenue for 2022 for H&E was \$1,244.5 million, compared to \$1,062.8 million in 2021, a 17.1-percent hike.

Based in Baton Rouge, La., H&E Equipment Services is No. 7 on the *RER* 100.

Cooper Equipment Rentals Acquires Heavy Equipment Rental Specialist Hub Equipment

TORONTO – Cooper Equipment Rentals Limited, the leading Canadian-owned and operated construction equipment rental company, has purchased 100 percent of the shares of Toronto-based Hub Equipment. Established in 1946 in Moncton, New Brunswick, Hub Equipment moved its operations into Southern Ontario in the 1950s and is recognized today as a leading provider of specialized heavy equipment, offering brands such as Cat, Volvo, Hitachi, John Deere, Komatsu, and more.

“We are thrilled with the opportunity to be a part of the Cooper organization from coast-to-coast, and to grow our legacy with a diverse, larger and rapidly growing organization that shares our common values and vision,” said Hub president Tom Stevenson.

Hub Equipment will operate as a Specialty Division of Cooper under the leadership of Tom Stevenson, president, and Raegan Fatouros, general manager.

“Hub’s prime location and facility in Etobicoke intensifies our coverage in the important Greater Toronto market and their strong presence in Alberta enhances our ability to serve customers better in Western Canada,” said Darryl Cooper, president and chief operating officer, Cooper Equipment Rentals.

“We’re pleased to welcome Hub Equipment into the Cooper family,” said Cooper CEO Doug Dougherty. “The Hub family have built a fine business

with a reputation for quality and integrity in the construction equipment industry. Consistent with the growth vision for Cooper Equipment Rentals, this acquisition is a further step towards Cooper, firmly establishing itself as the only Canadian-owned, nationally positioned, rental company.”

Cooper Equipment Rentals is No. 17 on the *RER* 100, with more than 60 rental locations in six Canadian provinces. Cooper specializes in the rental of compact, aerial, heavy construction, pump and power, and trench safety equipment. Hub Equipment has branches in Toronto and Edmonton, Alberta.

Cooper Equipment Rentals adds Toronto’s Hub Equipment, a specialist in the rental of heavy construction equipment.

Photo by Cooper Equipment Rentals





A Magni telehandler, part of Able Equipment Rental's fleet, on a jobsite last year.
Photo by Able Equipment Rental

United Rentals Acquires New York-Based Able Equipment Rental

DEER PARK, N.Y. – United Rentals has acquired Deer Park, N.Y.-based Able Equipment Rental. Neither company has provided more details about the transaction. Able Equipment Rental is one of the largest and fastest-growing companies based in the New York metropolitan area. The company, with six branches, had recently expanded into the Philadelphia-South New Jersey area as well. Able has a broad mix of construction equipment for rent – earthmoving, aerial equipment, compaction and more.

Able was founded by Steve Laganas in 1996. In the past year, Able has made a few acquisitions of its own, including Extreme Rentals USA in July of last year, based in Manassas, Va., serving the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia markets. In June, Able acquired Elite Construction Rentals located in Wallingford, Conn., which enabled the company to broaden its footprint further into southern New England.

Able is No. 45 on the *RER* 100. United Rentals, based in Stamford, Conn., is No. 1 on the *RER* 100.

Leppo Rents Acquires Bobcat of Jacksonville in Florida

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Leppo Rents, a premier construction equipment dealer and rental company, has acquired Bobcat of Jacksonville in Florida. Bobcat of Jacksonville, will now operate as Leppo Rents – Bobcat of Jacksonville.

Founded in 1945, Leppo Rents is a full-line Bobcat equipment dealer offering sales, rental, service, parts, and training. In addition to Bobcat, Leppo carries JLG, will be the Bandit dealer in North Florida, and will also carry many other top brands. Equipment lines range from compact, heavy construction, and access equipment including track loaders, skid steers, tractors, mowers, excavators, wheel loaders, telehandlers, scissor lifts, boom lifts, and more.

“Tim Stokes, the previous owner, told

me the thing he will miss the most is the relationships he has developed at Bobcat of Jacksonville,” said Glenn Leppo, chairman of the board of Leppo Rents. “We are proud that Tim trusts us to take care of customers and staff both as he did and in ways the realities of today’s construction equipment industry did not allow him to do as a single-location dealer. We look forward to being the employer and equipment provider of choice for the greater Jacksonville market.”

“With tremendous support from our customers, my team has built something that we are very proud of over the past 13 years,” said Stokes. “With an amazing reputation, I am excited to see Leppo Rents take Bobcat of Jacksonville to the next level.”

Leppo Rents now has three physical locations in Florida – Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Panama City.

Leppo Group is No. 67 on the *RER* 100.



Leppo Rents now has three physical locations in Florida – Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Panama City. Photo by Leppo Rents

Terex Makes Equity Investment in Robotics Firm Apptronik Inc.

WESTPORT, Conn. – Terex Corp. last month announced it has made an equity investment in Apptronik Inc., an Austin, Texas-based company specializing in the development of versatile, mobile robotic systems whose goal is to bring forth the next generation of robots that will change the way we live and work. Separate from the equity investment, the two companies have entered into a co-development agreement to work together to create potential robotic applications for Terex products.



“Multiple trends are converging to drive adoption of human-centered robots in everyday applications and Apptronik is well positioned to capitalize on this emerging trend,” said Terex chairman and CEO John Garrison.

Apptronik’s co-founders have worked on some of the most advanced human-centered systems in the world. This includes the NASA Valkyrie Robot for the DARPA Robotics Challenge. Other Apptronik projects include Astra, an upper-body humanoid robot that has state-of-the-art actuation packed into a small form, enabling it to be placed on any mobility platform – and, most recently, Apollo, a NASA-backed versatile humanoid designed to scale and apply to numerous applications.

“We are at an inflection point in the robotics industry where, in just a few years, we expect to see general-purpose robots being adopted at scale across numerous industries,” said Jeff Cardenas, CEO and co-founder of Apptronik. “We are excited to be working with Terex Corp., as we blaze the trail for the robotics revolution that we anticipate will transform the way we live and work.”

Apptronik is a robotics company that has built a platform to deliver a

variety of general-purpose robots. The company was founded in 2016 out of the Human Centered Robotics Lab at the University of Texas at Austin, with a mission to leverage innovative technology for the betterment of society. Its

goal is to introduce the next generation of robots that will change the way people live and work, while tackling some of our world’s largest challenges. To learn more about careers at Apptronik, visit <https://apptronik.com/careers/>.

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Former NES Chairman Andrew Studdert Named Chairman of Europe's Renta Group

VANTAA, Finland – Renta Group Oy announced the appointment of Andrew Studdert as chairman of the board, replacing outgoing interim chairman, Alireza Etemad, who will continue to serve as a member of the board.

Studdert has been a member of the Renta board of directors since April 2022, following the acquisition of Renta Group by IK Investment Partners on February 4, 2022. Studdert is best known in North America as former chairman and CEO of NES Rentals, and chief operating officer for United Airlines. He is a past president and board member of IPAF.

Studdert is the founder and principal at Andrew P. Studdert & Associates, a private consultancy, focusing on operations, technology, and crisis management, which he established in 1994. He is also currently chairman at WASH, and a board member and audit committee chairman at Alta Equipment Group. Studdert has previously served on the boards of Target Hospitality, as compensation committee chairman, and international rental giant Cramo.

"We are really looking forward to continuing to work with Andy, whose broad experience in the rental sector will be greatly beneficial to the senior management team and the board of Renta," said Kari Aulasmaa, CEO of Rental Group.

Renta Group is a Northern European full-service equipment rental company founded in Finland in 2015. The company has operations in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, and the Baltics, with 135 depots and approximately 1,500 employees. Renta is a general rental company with a wide range of construction machines and equipment along with related services. In addition to operating a network of rental locations, Renta is a significant supplier of scaffolding and weather-protection services.

For more information, visit www.renta.com



Andy Studdert is best known in North America as former CEO of National Equipment Services.

Photo by Renta

Best Line Equipment Acquires Chesapeake Supply & Equipment Co.

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. – Best Line Equipment has acquired the assets and location of Chesapeake Supply & Equipment in Jessup, Md. This acquisition marks Best Line Equipment's 14th equipment location in three different states and its first in the Baltimore / Washington D.C. market. Best Line brings a reputation as a multi-year Top 100 Best Places to Work employer in Pennsylvania and intends to use best practices, top industry pay, and industry-leading benefits to the state of Maryland.

At the time of purchase on January 6th, 2023, all employees were invited and decided to join the Best Line team. At the same time, advertisements have been placed for additional sales, service technicians, professional drivers, customer service representatives, and management.

Chesapeake's success in recent years has been providing heavy construction equipment, Genesis and LaBounty

demolition & forestry-oriented attachments, and Crafcro and Etnyre asphalt equipment.

"We intend to keep Chesapeake's established brands while adding Doosan heavy equipment and JLG access equipment as our large dealership-oriented brands," said Adam Houseknecht, president of Best Line Equipment. "Like most of our other locations, we intend to lead the market in construction and industrial equipment rentals while also serving the market by providing dealership-oriented equipment for sale, service, and parts."

This acquisition allows Best Line to serve its long-term strategic goal of stability first and growth second. While considering Chesapeake as a partner for growth, it took into account the company's stability in the market and with its customers, having been in business for more than 85 years. Moreover, several Best Line locations exist within one and a half hours driving distance. Jessup, Md., is within immediate reach of extra equipment and mechanical support.

Armand Cencetti, vice president of sales at Best Line, said, "We are very excited to have the opportunity to have a larger footprint to serve our existing customers. We also want to connect with existing Doosan heavy equipment customers without a dealer for the past few years. Increasing the continuity of Best Line and Doosan's covered territory will give our existing and new customers a better experience."

Best Line Equipment is a leading equipment dealer and general rental, sales, service, and parts provider to the construction and industrial industries, in business for more than 35 years. The company is headquartered in State College, Pa.



A Best Line Equipment rental center in Pennsylvania. The company is expanding into the Baltimore-Washington D.C. area for the first time with its acquisition of Chesapeake Supply & Equipment.

Photo by Best Line Equipment

National Equipment Dealers Acquires Carolina Equipment Rental, Sales & Service

FAIRVIEW, N.C. – National Equipment Dealers LLC finalized the acquisition of Carolina Equipment Rental, Sales & Service, located in Fairview, N.C. Carolina Equipment began in the mid-1990s, originally doing business as Rent-It of Fairview. The owners, Peter and Ellen Jensen, purchased the business in the year 2000.

Under its new ownership and management, the company originally supported the Fairview, N.C., community with small equipment and tool rental. In 2004, the Jensens changed the name of the company to Carolina Equipment Rental, Sales & Service, in order to re-focus their business strategy away from “DIY” residential customers, and more toward small-to-medium sized contractors, site development companies, and municipalities.

Carolina Equipment started representing the Yanmar Construction Equipment line in 2002. Since that time, as it expanded, Carolina Equipment picked up additional compact equipment and forestry lines, including ASV compact track loaders, Fecon mulching attachments and others.

“NED is proud to welcome the Carolina Equipment family of employees to our growing organization,” said Jesse

Beasley, chief operations officer, NED. “This acquisition will further improve our ability to support our western North Carolina customer base.”

The new NED branch in Fletcher, N.C., will continue to represent Yanmar Construction Equipment, ASV, and Fecon, along with additional brands currently represented by NED in North Carolina, including Hyundai Construction Equipment, Bell Trucks, Dynapac, Sakai soil rollers, Manitou, Tana, XCMG, Prinoth, Barko and others.

National Equipment Dealers LLC is a large heavy equipment rental, sales, and services company. Now under one name, NED is represented across five states with 15 locations in Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. NED represents many brands of construction equipment, industrial equipment, and attachments. Some brands are represented across all locations, like Hyundai Construction Equipment and Bell Trucks and many other brands are represented in specific regions, including Manitou, Mustang, Gehl, Yanmar, Dynapac, Sakai, Kinshofer, Denis Cimaf, Werk Brau, Pemberton Attachments, Tana, Humdinger Equipment, Fuchs, Lamtrac, Builtrite Attachments, Rockland Attachments, Barko, Prinoth, CMI, K-Tec and others.



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Herc Rentals Revenue Jumps 36 Percent in Fourth Quarter

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. – Herc Rentals posted \$786 million in the fourth quarter of 2022, compared to \$578 million in the fourth quarter of 2021, a whopping 36-percent increase. The jump was primarily related to a \$170.7 million increase in equipment rental revenue with a 6.6-percent pricing increase and a 28.6 percent volume rise. Sales of rental equipment also increased by \$35.2 million during the period. Equipment rental revenue increased from \$542.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2021 to \$713.1 million in the recently concluded quarter, a 31.5-percent hike.

Dollar utilization decreased to 43.5 percent compared to 44.6 percent in the year-ago period, primarily because of the mix of equipment on rent.

Direct operating expenses increased 26.2 percent during the quarter compared to the previous year, primarily related to strong rental activity and increases in payroll and related expenses associated with additional headcount, plus higher maintenance costs, fuel prices and facilities expenses. Depreciation of rental equipment increased 29 percent or \$33 million to \$146.8 million because of higher year-over-year average fleet size. Non-rental depreciation and amortization increased 35.4 percent of \$6.8 million to \$26 million because of amortization of acquisition intangible assets.

For the full year, total revenues were \$2,738.8 million compared to \$2,073.1 million in 2021, a 32.1-percent incline, related to an increase in equipment rental revenue of \$641.1 million, reflecting a 5.8-percent pricing hike and a 31.8-percent volume climb. Dollar utilization increased to a record 43.5 percent compared to 43 percent in 2021. Depreciation of rental equipment increased 27.4 percent or \$115.2 million, to \$535.9 million during 2022 because of a higher year-over-year average fleet size.

“From beginning to end, 2022 was an exceptionally strong year for us, with record performance across key financial metrics,”



Herc CEO Silber says the company will continue strong investment in its fleet in 2023.
Photo by Herc Rentals

said Larry Silber, president and CEO. “Operating momentum and market share growth continued in every region driven by robust demand, improved pricing, strategic fleet investments, end market diversity, and greater branch-network efficiencies.

“Through the hard work of the last several years, we are better positioned than ever to capitalize on a variety of growth avenues, including local market penetration, increased rentals of higher-margin specialty equipment, and trends relating to the multi-year fiscal stimulus and re-shoring mega projects. As a market leader with a strong reputation, broad-based capabilities and service solutions, in 2023 we expect to continue to

outpace industry expansion and capitalize on operating leverage while laying a foundation for long-term, profitable growth.”

Boosting the capex

Herc nearly doubled its rental equipment capital expenditures in 2022, spending \$1,168.5 million to buy equipment compared to \$593.8 million in 2021. As of December 31, 2022, the company’s total fleet was approximately \$5.6 billion at original equipment cost. Average fleet at OEC in the fourth quarter increased year over year by 31.1 percent, compared to the prior-year period and increased by 30.5 percent for the full year. Average fleet age was 48 months as of Dec. 31, 2022, compared to 49 months at the end of 2021.

“As a leader in an industry where scale matters, we expect to continue to gain share by capturing an outsized position of the forecasted higher construction spending in 2023 by investing in our fleet, capitalizing on strategic acquisitions and greenfield opportunities, and cross selling our diversified product portfolio,” added Silber.

Herc Rentals is based in Bonita Springs, Fla. The company is No. 3 on the *RER* 100.

Volvo CE Invests in Battery Pack Production at Korean Excavator Plant

Volvo Construction Equipment has announced an investment into battery pack production at its excavator plant in Changwon, South Korea, signaling its ambition to drive industry transformation with sustainable solutions.

With the SEK 80 million (around \$7.8 million) investment from Volvo Group, a new production facility and equipment will be built at the Changwon plant in South Korea – which at around 1.1 million square meters is the largest excavator production site in Volvo CE, producing around 55 percent of its total excavator volumes.

The new facility at the Changwon plant will produce a wide range of common electric storage solutions (battery

packs) for Volvo Group and become a core competence center for electric elevators. This will enable Volvo Group to offer more sustainable solutions to its APAC markets in a more flexible, cost-effective and agile way and will include supply chain, manufacturing and logistics.

Andy Knight, head of operations excavator and managing director of Volvo Group Korea, said: “As the largest plant in Volvo CE and the core site for excavator development and production, Changwon is at the forefront of our shift to a sustainable future. This investment is an important milestone in our electrification roadmap and supports our recent

continued on page 34



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**Manufacturers
raise the bar
on safety to a
higher standard.**

BY MICHAEL ROTH

There are many kinds of bad news phone calls the owner of a rental company, equipment dealer, or equipment manufacturer could receive during a working day. The cancelation of a contract, a valued worker deciding to quit, a regular customer leaving to go with a competitor, equipment being damaged or stolen, a truck or piece of rental equipment in an accident on a jobsite, a lawsuit of some kind.

But the worst is a call that informs the business owner or manager of a fatal accident or serious injury – that a worker has fallen to his death from a mobile



elevating work platform. And with all the advances in machine diagnostics, improved performance on jobsites, safer equipment, better and safer accessories and training programs, falls from height are still one of the leading causes of death on construction jobsites, although electrocution has rivaled falls from platforms as the leading cause in recent years.

While the numbers of reported fatalities haven't strongly decreased in the past decade, there are

far more aerial machines in use and more entities reporting the incidents, leading to the sense that the aerial industry's overall safety record has improved and jobsites are significantly safer today than they were a decade ago. And recordable incidents have declined according to most rental companies and manufacturers.

"Many jobsites have improved their focus on safety and training, and some sites have fantastic

Updates, many stemming from ANSI changes, ensure that MEWPS are being used in a safer manner than they were a decade ago. Load sensing systems prevent normal machine operation when platform capacities exceed their load rate.

Photo by Skyjack

safety protocols in place,” says Scott Owyen, director of training, Genie Industries. “They have well-trained and knowledgeable safety officers and supervisors on site that enforce safety rules and manage their programs very effectively.”

“In the last 10 years, the focus on safety, not just in this industry but everywhere, has become even more so,” says Nate Hoover, director of product management – boomlifts for JLG Industries. “When you look at the automotive industry, for example, many safety devices now come standard in today’s cars, such as airbags, anti-lock braking systems and proximity sensors, to name a few, that were once just options. The same holds true for the aerial industry. MEWP designs not only have come a long way in utility and productivity but also as a safe alternative to other methods of working at height. The updated ANSI A92.20 and CSA B354.6 standards gave impetus for redesign and machine modification resulting in safety as well as productivity improvements. Enhanced stability, higher platform capacities and the inclusion of personal protection devices have been revisited to improve machine safety and efficiency. Today, having MEWPs on job sites is now considered an enhancement to worksite safety.”

Malcolm Early, vice president of marketing for Skyjack, agrees. “While MEWPS themselves have

generally always been statistically safe, the way we use MEWPS, and jobsites in general, are certainly safer than they were a decade ago,” he says.

“Updates, many stemming originally from ANSI changes, have ensured that MEWPS are being used in a safer manner than they were a decade ago. Load sensing systems, for example, prevent normal machine operation when platform capacities exceed their load rate. Wind force calculations have been expanded as of late, providing a more stringent application for testing. Changes to guardrail system requirements, including heights and solid rails versus hinges or chains, have improved general safety practices and MEWP development.”

“A lot of manufacturers follow jobsite trends, especially when it comes to safety protocols,” says Robby Hagan, senior vice president of sales, Xtreme Manufacturing and Snorkel. “We develop equipment to meet and exceed all safety rules and continue to consult with contractors to understand each application. Most MEWP suppliers also contribute to ANSI to determine safer practices that protect both life and property. Training programs are offered at every level from MEWP manufacturers to equipment rental companies to contractors. Safety is a priority to all, and improvements are shared freely within the MEWP industry.”

Improvements in safety have come about because participants at every level are contributing. The recent ANSI standards that have improved safety procedures were very much motivated by manufacturer involvement. Rental companies have made safety a much greater priority than ever before. Rental companies are far more diligent in making sure customers are thoroughly trained and ANSI standards require them to do site assessments and improve training and customer familiarization. Safer conditions require buy-in from all levels, such as drivers who deliver the machines to jobsites and often are trained to provide familiarization to rental customers. Drivers also are better trained in proper loading and unloading as well as how to secure machines safely for transport. Inspections of jobsites for hazards are now mandated by ANSI regulations.

In many cases, not all, the contractors themselves do a good job in assessing the risks at their jobsites.

“On some jobsites where it’s a national or even an international contractor, they have specific safety professionals who are very diligent in

Part of Skyjack’s digital product suite, ELEVATE Live brings interactive pre-use inspection lists and familiarization materials to jobsites through a simple QR code.

Photo by Skyjack



enforcing safety criteria above and beyond the standards of OSHA,” says Gary Crook, vice president of engineering, MEC Aerial Work Platforms. “They hold themselves to a higher standard. But we know there are smaller operations and subcontractors and they’re trying to keep their costs down and they don’t do the full amount of training for people or risk assessment that would otherwise avoid some dangerous situations. But a risk assessment and a pre-planning of the tasks to be done, mitigation of the hazards, the means to respond in the event of an emergency, all those activities can greatly improve the safety of the overhead job.”

New safety products and accessories

Manufacturers continue to make their products safer. Although RER was not able to reach every aerial manufacturer for this article, here is a look at what some manufacturers have done to make safer products.



Skyjack

“Safety has always been important to the Skyjack team,” says Skyjack’s Early. “For example, the XStep was developed to safely provide operators with an additional 19 inches (48cm) of jobsite access. The most recent IPAF Global Safety Report cited falls from the platform to be among the most common type of incidents leading to death – a finding that has remained consistent over the last decade.

Skyjack’s XStep was developed to safely provide operators with an additional 19 inches (48cm) of jobsite access.

Photo by Skyjack



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Paired with the relatively common practice of operators standing on railings to gain more height, it became clear that a tool to allow increased reach in a safe manner was needed. The design and height of the top railing on the XStep, as well as entry and exit via the locking gate, ensures operators have the same degree of security as a conventional platform.

“The changes required by ANSI 92.20 provided Skyjack with an opportunity to deliver greater insights on MEWP usage and utilization by providing richer and industry-specific data. As a result, Skyjack introduced its ELEVATE telematics solution back in 2018. Part of Skyjack’s digital product suite, ELEVATE Live brings interactive pre-use inspection lists and familiarization materials to jobsites through a simple QR code. No apps to install, no login credentials, just point and click. Through this, operators have all essential information about the machine they’re using right at their fingertips. Safety is everyone’s responsibility, and a large part of jobsite safety is education and ensuring operators, supervisors, and general contractors know what safe use looks like. We’re evolving how we get our message out to ensure easy access.”

Snorkel

“We have developed short MEWP ‘tailgate’ videos on our Snorkel website that are available to everyone for free,” says Hagan. “These videos are used often and are designed to be brief and to the point. We have an OEM service & support team that travels within their territories to visit with customers and assist with mechanical issues, as well as to conduct onsite safety and familiarization training. We

bring our safety culture to the customers to educate as many operators and mechanics as possible.”

Genie

“Safety is the most important thing we do at Genie, and it has been throughout our more than 55 years in business,” says Owyen. “If you look at our current machines, design enhancements such as platform load sense, dynamic terrain sensors, indoor/outdoor ratings, etc., will assist the operator by minimizing the likelihood of the operator reaching a condition of instability in certain situations. However, proper training is still crucial to the safe operation of any MEWP.

“Genie also has done a remarkable job of observing operators on the job and asking them what their biggest challenges are in getting the job done safely. The result has been a series of options and accessories that are designed to increase operator productivity while decreasing the possibility of the operator performing an unsafe act.

“For example, the Genie Lift Guard Fall Arrest Bar was designed to allow an individual to exit a Genie boom at height while being attached to a single lanyard anchor point that traverses the entire width of the platform, allowing the individual to move freely around outside the platform without the need to move the lanyard from anchor point to anchor point. This provides for 100-percent tie-off and enhanced freedom of movement.

“The new, extra-large 13-foot (4 meter) platform provides the ability to get more work done, faster and more comfortably by enabling operators to access a much larger working area quickly and easily, reducing the number of



Snorkel staff travels to jobsites to conduct familiarization training and provides video instruction.

Photo by Snorkel

times needed to stop and reposition the machine.

“The Genie Lift Tools Access Deck for booms and scissor lifts provides operators with a secondary surface to work from, elevating them 22 inches (0.56 meters) above the platform floor. Attached to the platform mid-rail, this additional access enables operators to get into restricted spaces to increase productivity.

“There are many other accessories available such as the Genie Lift Tools Panel Cradle, Pipe Cradle, Material Carrier and more that are designed to increase productivity and safety on the job. A full list of these can be accessed at <https://www.genielift.com/en/aerial-lift/boom-scissor-accessories>.

“Operator training also has continued to evolve, thanks in part to Genie’s focus on continuous improvement and the new ANSI and CSA standards. The new requirements set forth in the standards, such as the need for safe use plans, risk assessments, rescue plans, and supervisor training have enhanced the training content dramatically. All our training courses were updated to the new standards in 2019, including our Genie Lift Pro online operator training courses. Since their initial release, Genie Lift Pro online courses have trained over 100,000 individuals to safely operate MEWPs and telehandlers. Our classroom-based operator training and train-the-trainer courses trained nearly 1,000 individuals in 2022 alone and we are seeing an even bigger uptick in 2023.”

JLG

“We incorporate technology into our equipment and design our safety accessories and protective solutions to mitigate job site risks before they occur,” says Hoover. “And our solutions are designed to enhance safe work practices at height while maintaining productivity, especially for operators working close to objects or tight quarters.

“Here are some examples of our accessories and equipment improvements that contribute to safe work at height:

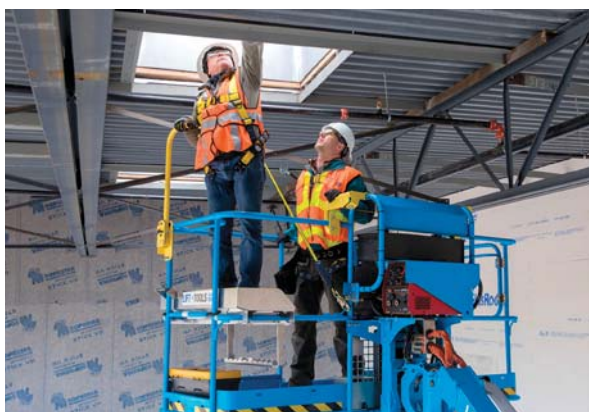
“JLG SkyGuard technology offers



Fall Arrest Bar was designed to allow an individual to exit a Genie boom at height while being attached to a single lanyard anchor point that traverses the entire width of the platform, allowing the individual to move freely around outside the platform without the need to move the lanyard from anchor point to anchor point. Photo by Genie

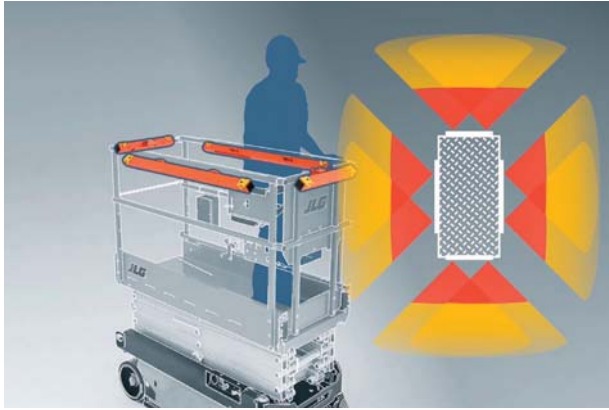


Training of operators and inspection of aerial units before usage are critically important aspects of aerial safety. Photo by Genie



The Genie Lift Tools Access Deck for booms and scissor lifts provides operators with a secondary surface to work from, elevating them 22 inches (0.56 meters) above the platform floor.

Photo by Genie



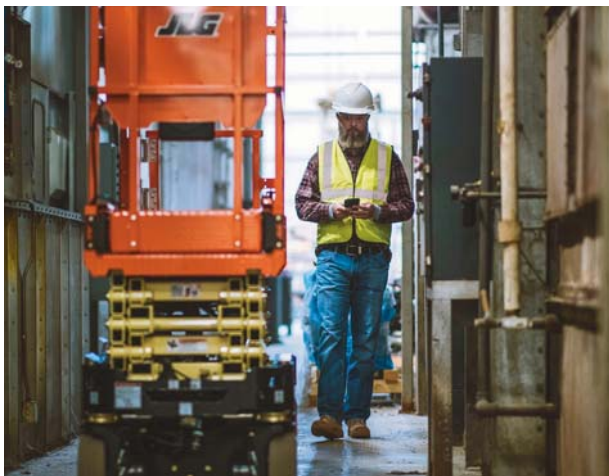
JLG's SkySense enhanced detection system uses strategically placed object detection sensors to provide operators with an added level of awareness of their immediate surroundings.

Graphic by JLG



JLG SkyGuard technology offers enhanced control panel protection to reduce the risk of being caught-between hazards on the job.

Photo by JLG



The JLG mobile control app offers users remote control of select model scissor lifts through their phones without tethering to the machine. This allows users to maneuver around obstacles while maintaining a safe distance from the machine.

Photo by JLG

enhanced control panel protection to reduce the risk of being caught between hazards on the job. The SkyGuard SkyLine, a slim design, is standard on most new JLG boom lifts.

"In North America, the ANSI/CSA standards require that MEWPs are equipped with load-sensing and tilt-sensing technology to make sure operators remain within the capacity limits of the machine. JLG machines have proprietary built-in sensor technology that is advanced enough to recognize when the machine is back within its rated load capacity, enabling operations to resume work. For tilt sensing, JLG machines are equipped with a system that disables boom and drive functions if the incline surpasses the rated operating incline limit.

"JLG's optional SkySense enhanced detection system uses strategically placed object detection sensors to provide operators with an added level of awareness of their immediate surroundings. When a machine is in use, the sensors establish warning zones and stop distances in the machine's direction of motion. As the machine approaches the zone limits, audible alerts notify the operator, increasing the protection of people and property.

"JLG also offers new technologies that enhance machine operation. For example, recent advancements in machine leveling technology have been developed to address safely working on uneven terrain. For example, self-leveling (for boom lifts) and variable-tilt and QuikLevel Advanced (for scissor lifts) are technologies designed to adjust the machine's chassis to the ground conditions, rather than prepping the ground conditions for the machine.

- With self-leveling technology, the JLG 670SJ self-leveling boom lift is engineered to continuously and automatically level itself on slopes up to 10 degrees, even when driving at full height.
- With variable-tilt technology on JLG slab scissor lifts, sensors monitor both the weight in the platform and the machine's tilt to determine the allowable work envelope. The machine then notifies the operator, before raising the machine, about how high they can elevate, removing the guesswork that often results in having to descend and try again.
- QuikLevel Advanced is an option on JLG rough-terrain scissor lifts. This feature allows the stowed scissor to level on side slopes up to 4.5 degrees, then elevate and drive at full height under certain conditions.

"Digital technologies also enhance job site safety, and the use of mobile apps is becoming more prevalent on job sites. Especially if they improve the operator's experience with the machine before work begins. An example of this is the JLG augmented reality app, which can enable users to scan the MEWP's safety decals to get the current information on ANSI standards' requirements, as well as to see an overlay of a specific machine's control panel with explanations of its functions before machine operation.

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“Another example is the JLG mobile control app, which offers remote control of select model scissor lifts through their phones without tethering to the machine. This allows users to maneuver around obstacles while maintaining a safe distance from the machine, position it into areas with low clearance and load or unload it from a truck without the need for an operator in the platform or walking next to the machine.

“In addition to our accessories and equipment advancements, training is essential to supporting the industry and for our equipment operators to be safe and successful on the job. We offer a variety of standards-compliant training, including:

- Service and equipment training online through JLG University or in person at the JLG training center and proving grounds;
- Train-the-Trainer courses to teach participants how to train MEWP operators;
- AccessReady e-learning modules for operators and supervisors;
- AccessReady XR virtual reality training that provides real-time interaction and true-to-life job site scenarios.

“We have also taken a couple of unconventional approaches to educating the industry. For example, we provide a full library of safety-related content on the JLG #DirectAccess education and information site, offering equipment owners and operators another resource to learn more about best practices

for safe work at height and to better understand the impact of safety on the industry.”

MEC Aerial Work Platforms

For MEC, the Extra Deck, which it introduced two years ago and the Leak Containment System, which it introduced about four years ago have been the most important safety launches, according to vice president of engineering Crook.

“With the Leak Containment System, it solves the problem of diapers that has been an industry headache,” says Crook, referring to the practice of wrapping diapers around engine parts to protect against leaks. “Diapers really are a band-aid to preventing oil leaks on the floor, particularly on sensitive jobsites. When they are first fitted, if well fitted, they might capture a few leaks, but after not many hours or days, they rub on the floor and they get torn. In reality, are they stopping an oil leak? The answer is mostly no. The real problem is when they wrap them up around the side of the scissors and they cover up the controls, which is the emergency stop, the normal lowering of the controls of the machine, and in some cases, they actually cover up the emergency lowering device. There are safety implications. The leak containment was an idea to integrate and have these self-contained stainless-steel trays.

“The LCS would not only capture the oil in the reservoir, but it would give you an early warning that a leak was beginning. Our thinking was that is almost invisible to the user, and they wouldn’t have to do anything special. They have a product that meets the requirements of guaranteeing no leaks on sensitive jobsites. But it doesn’t interfere with the machine, it doesn’t need maintenance or intervention by a technician under normal circumstances, unlike diapers that if they last a month, it’s amazing. It’s not that the diapers are an expense themselves, but it’s a waste of a skilled technician going to a jobsite and spending time and money on something that’s not really necessary.”

MEC also added its Extra Deck, which gives the worker an extra 20 inches of height enabling them to get inside ceiling areas and not have to stand on mid-rails to reach those areas.

“In most cases, workers who stand on mid-rails are well-meaning workers just trying to do their job as best they can and there’s this overhead area and they can’t get the whole platform up there and they just

Not only does MEC’s Leak Containment System keep any potential fluid leak in a contained compartment to avoid damaging floors, it reduces wasted technician time and costs.

Photo by MEC Aerial Work Platforms



want to get the job done so they stand on the mid-rails. Most of the time they get away with it, but when it doesn't work out, they can slip. It might lead to a lower leg injury from bruising or there's a real risk of a serious fall. The idea of the Extra Deck is that if the device can't be deployed and retracted inside 10 seconds, they're probably going to do what they've always done, which is to stand on the mid-rails. But it can be done within 10 seconds and it's safe and convenient. It can even be used as a workbench for them or even a safe seat when they take a break."

Equipment Safety Systems

"In recent years, the rapid integration of secondary guarding systems on booms lifts has been a significant advancement in MEWP safety," says Andrew Delahunt, global business development manager, Equipment Safety Systems. "However, the development of secondary guarding for scissor lifts has proved more challenging to find a solution that does not restrict the machine's productive purpose.

"In response to this challenge, Australia-based Equipment Safety Systems (EQSS) has developed and successfully introduced OverWatch, an industry-first, human-centric secondary guarding solution for scissor lifts. With a LiDAR sensor at its core, OverWatch detects the operator's position and movements, and then intervenes only when safety is compromised. It does not interfere with normal operation of the scissor lift, instead it continuously monitors the operator's position using an infrared light beam. The system can determine when an operator has moved abruptly or is in a dangerous position, either of which will immediately stop the lift.

"It features a small sensor that attaches to the scissor lift control box. This is paired with a powerful processor running advanced sensor AI fusion algorithms to track both operator movement and machine movement, to identify when a cutout is required.

"OverWatch is designed for the equipment rental industry and is quickly gaining traction in the U.S. and worldwide. It is a robust, unobtrusive, and cost-effective secondary guarding solution that fits any scissor lift and requires only a simple one-time calibration. It

With a LiDAR sensor at its core, OverWatch detects the operator's position and movements, and then intervenes only when safety is compromised.

Photo by Equipment Safety Systems



works on all jobsites and in all weather conditions and has been widely adopted in Australian rental fleets and on construction sites. Recently, Haulotte integrated OverWatch as an option on its latest generation of electric scissor lifts, available globally."

Don't forget telematics

While industry participants know well that spreading safety awareness has a long way to go, much progress has been made and efforts to improve safety practices are ongoing.

"Further developments will most certainly improve aerial safety," says Early. "Advancements in telematics will continue to improve safety as machine diagnostics and maintenance schedules can be further optimized and monitored. Telematics developments also allow rental houses to continue to ensure that machines are being operated in a safe manner." **RER**

MEC's Extra Deck provides workers with a safe way to access extra height and work in hard-to-reach spaces.

Photo by MEC Aerial Work Platforms

Interview with Simon Meester: Keep Ramping Up

BY MICHAEL ROTH

The Genie booth is usually one of the largest and most prolific every year at the ARA show and last month in Orlando was no exception. *RER* enjoyed the chance to sit down and talk for a few minutes with Genie president Simon Meester, who shared his enthusiasm about the company's new products, the booming interest in hybrid and electric aerial machines, the challenges of the supply chain, war in Europe, aerial safety, the economy's future, and more.

RER: What's new with Genie since the last ARA show?

Meester: Time flies! Always great to be in ARA and it feels like we are kicking off the season for real like we always used to do with the ARA show. I'm not going to lie, I'm incredibly proud of what we're showing here today and what it looks like. I know I'm biased saying that, but I'm really proud of the way our marketing team put the stand together, it looks really cool.

In terms of what's new at Genie, a lot of things have changed. We've announced a new facility that we're building in Monterrey, Mexico, and we've obviously announced a lot of products that we've launched. The operational reality is we're still very constrained on materials, which is unfortunate. I would have liked to go into this new season with more material availability so that we could build and ship more products, which we obviously still are going to try to do as much as we can. But we are still being constrained today and we still have a lot of disruption in our factories and our assembly lines and in our parts warehouses. The industry is still struggling quite honestly.

But I do believe that eventually free markets will balance themselves out so we will get into normalcy again at some point. When you think about all the investments that are being made in infrastructure

Hybrid machines are growing in popularity among Genie customers.
Photo by Genie

and the [CHIPS and Science Act] and what have you, we have to get our act together, we have to sort this out. Because customers have already aged their fleets and so we have to, it's really a supply game at the moment. We have to keep pushing and we have to keep ramping up. It's good to be at Genie!

As we began hearing about the shortage of chips, I kept wondering, "Is there some reason why here in the United States we can't make those?"



Photo by Michael Roth, RER

"There are about 250 chips in any of these machines that you see here, and that's only going to get bigger and bigger going forward."

Simon Meester, president, Genie

That's why we had the Chips Act, right?

There is no reason why we can't build those ourselves here in the United States. A lot of technology originates from the United States in the first place, I think it's the right thing to do to onshore that capability because quite frankly chip manufacturing is critical with the role they play in our machines. There are about 250 chips in any of these machines that you see here. About 250 microchips and that's only going to get bigger and bigger going forward.

I guess any aerial equipment manufacturer is pretty much in the same boat.

I can't really speak for the others but from what I hear it's really an industry phenomenon and the industry is struggling with the supply chain. It's certainly not unique to Genie and it's not unique to aerials. Any capital goods manufacturer is struggling with supply. It's something that we need to catch up on. It's obviously amplified by Covid and the Ukraine War and geopolitics, and that kind of extended this whole ordeal a bit more.

What are some of the other effects of that war? Obviously, fuel prices have been affected?

Mostly Europe and the supply chain in Europe. Obviously, the impact on energy is impacting us although most European governments have contingencies in place and have other ways to get their hands on energy. But we have a large facility in Italy, and we have a reasonably sized operation in The Netherlands, so we've been following the developments around energy availability quite extensively. Then also the refugee situation in Europe. There are a lot of Ukrainians looking for shelter and there's a humanitarian crisis going on as well. And then we had suppliers that were sourcing materials from Ukraine and then got into trouble and that led to extended lead times on materials. It's hurting us in many different ways.

Looking at the industry overall, is the aerial industry safer than it was 10, 15 years ago?

Absolutely, oh without a doubt. We've made tons and tons of progress. And I think the numbers speak for themselves. The numbers of recordable incidents have gone down. It's not just because we've moved from traditional conventional ways of working at height to aerial lifts, but it's also that we get smarter and smarter every year in managing and controlling them so the finesse at which our machines are controlled at heights in their envelopes and the closer you get to the jobsite and the work that needs to be done, you get a lot more electronics involved. It's almost like a digital twin to what's happening on the jobsite. We now have computers helping us with safety. It's not just the analog way of doing it in the past, it's the digital way as well so it's a continuous improvement. But it's miles better than it was 10 years ago.

You have multiple accessories to help with safety.

Yes. And our new 13-foot platform, I don't know if you've seen it. It provides more moving space. That, in itself, provides a safer working environment. We have the netting, which is important because all sorts of stuff falls out of platforms, that creates a hazard in itself. We have the anti-lift devices where the boom stops working the moment it senses any type of obstacle. There are a lot of accessories and features in our products today that have made us safer. We're in the safety business, that's what we do.

It seems the business is strong around the world?

Again, it's mostly a function of supply. This is not an industry that is currently struggling with demand or any problems from a growth perspective. Projects are still out there, there are a lot of investments coming our way, it's just our ability to produce the product at hand, including overseas.

Any particular areas of the world where they haven't really discovered aerials, that could be the next growth areas?

I'm thinking about Indonesia, India, Argentina. Those are still markets that are at the very very early stages of adoption and those are massive economies when you think about it, and they're not even using aerials today. So, the global adoption of this type of product still has many years to go. Look at what happened in China the last five years, how massively that market has grown. We'll see the same happen eventually in India and some of these other large economies.

I guess five or 10 years ago you'd walk around Shanghai and not even see an aerial.

Yes. And now China is one of the largest aerial markets in the world.

How about issues like inflation and high fuel prices? Are you concerned about those?

Fuel prices have come down a little. So that's good. Of course, we are concerned by inflation. When the Fed hikes interest rates, it's been a slow-down investment, which will cut down consumer spending, which might eventually lead to a recession. But we'll have to see how it's going to play out. Six months ago, we were worried about a hard landing. Then it became a soft landing, and now I was reading in the *Wall Street Journal* that there may not be a landing at all.

I actually think that there could be some sort of correction, some sort of dip. Will it be of material impact on our industry? I don't think so. We have enough work to do. And it's not that we are selling luxury goods that we can do without. These are products that we need to build roads and bridges and universities, so I'm not necessarily worried as a businessperson about inflation. But naturally you want the entire economy to do good, not just your own. In that respect, I hope we get the softest landing possible and find a way to keep the economy going as best as possible.

I've heard suggestions that perhaps a slowdown would allow the supply chain to catch up.

It could very well be. To your point I do believe that free markets will balance everything out eventually. That's exactly what we need is some sort of balancing.

Overall do you see this as a strong year in the rental market?

Yes. Our customers are very optimistic, and we are optimistic. We think that the whole infrastructure investment will kick in late this year or early next year. Together with the Chips Act so it will be a strong year and we believe 2024 will be a strong year, and we believe 2025 will be a strong year. We believe this industry is on a good run the next couple of years.

Will there be particular areas you can talk about that you'll be concentrating on?

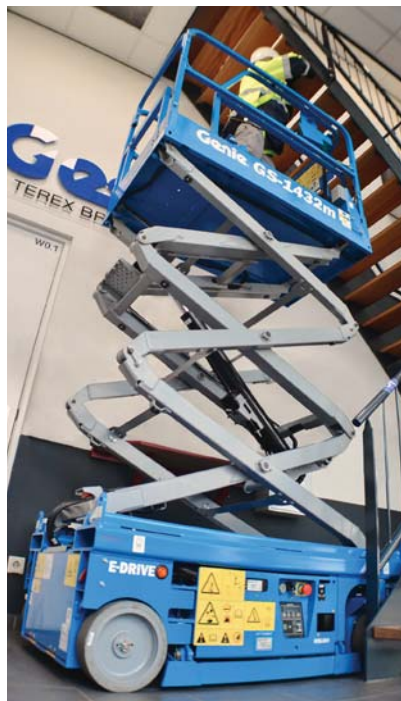
We're focusing heavily on electrification. We're very pleased with the investments we've made in Acculon Energy, and Aptronik Inc. Acculon will help us go to market faster from a battery systems standpoint. And the investment in Aptronik we are excited about because we think that labor will continue to be a scarce resource. Maybe not for the next year or two, but from the long-term outlook in this industry we do believe there is a space for robotics and automation, and we are excited about that investment.

You've invested heavily in electric equipment. Are customers coming to the booth and asking about electric equipment?

Probably the most popular products that people are asking for are our hybrid solutions because in many outdoor applications, we don't think the infrastructure is there to support fully electric solutions, so our customers are asking for hybrid solutions. And I've made that point a couple of times: Just because technically you can do something doesn't mean it's the right thing to do for your customers. So, we offer easily a full range of electrified products, which, by the way, 70 percent of our portfolio already is. We could say let's electrify the remaining 30 percent, but our customers are telling us they have much more use for hybrid solutions than fully electrified solutions, because the charging infrastructure is not there.

That will change eventually.

Eventually yes. The key is to make sure you do it at the right time for the customer. **RER**



Electronics continue to help the aerial industry's safety record.

Photo by Genie



Used equipment can benefit contractors' fleets as well as rental companies.
Photo by Finning Canada

Used Equipment Can Help End Users and Rental Companies

Right-size your fleet with a combination of equipment rentals, sales and purchases.

BY KIERAN HOLM

Current economic and supply chain challenges have greatly impacted markets around the world – and now there is the looming threat of a global recession with a stark comparison to the last major upheaval in 2008. The construction industry as a whole has a big job ahead of it, figuring out how to navigate this unpredictability while continuing to thrive in an increasingly competitive market.

While the road ahead has the potential to be a bumpy one, there are many lessons from past economic downturns that equipment owners can use to prepare their business to weather the storm. The first is when and how to right size your fleet using a combination of equipment rentals, sales, and purchases, to ensure that there is balance between capital and operating expenses. The second is in maintenance and repair — balancing scheduled and required investments in machine condition and uptime to ensure maximum profitability and market value. A third is having the flexibility to manage the sometimes difficult decisions that may become necessary if needed.

Lessons from 2008 taught us how financial flexibility and quick decision-making were key to survival for many

companies. When the global construction industry started to point negative, many equipment owners chose to hold off on making fleet right-sizing decisions, instead waiting to see if the markets turned around quickly. As a result, some missed the opportunity to harvest equipment equity, and in some cases were forced to take losses on equipment sales. The best performing equipment owners, contractors, dealers, and rental companies were those that made decisions quickly. They understood how the market may dictate the value, but they could control the timing.

Fast-forward more than a decade, and companies should be placing themselves in a position to make smart, agile equipment decisions as market conditions demand. We'd like to think we're better prepared this time around, but the challenge of knowing where to start remains. Better informed jobsite site planning begins with an understanding of market conditions, existing fleet inventory and how it correlates with upcoming project demands. Working with the right equipment dealer can help you craft the best solution for your fleet management strategy, and not repeat mistakes from 2008.

Find the right ownership strategy mix

Many equipment fleets are a combination of newer and older assets, some owned, some financed and some leased or rented. Fleet owners, their financial advisors, vendors and dealers, all need to work together to decide on the right ownership mix. A full-service dealer can be a critical part of this partnership by offering transparent advice on market values, machine condition and required maintenance, and ownership solutions. Conversations between the team can include harvesting equity from owned machines, adding used machines, rental purchase options and leases.

For contractors who typically plan out their workload month-to-month, ensuring you have the right fleet to do the jobs you have is critical. Your fleet is there to generate cash, but when workflow slows, you should be able to reduce your monthly expenses to free up cash flow by reducing your cost-to-own. That's where used equipment can come into play.

By replacing part of your fleet with used equipment you can better moderate cash flow and your overall expenditures. It also means not worrying as much about depreciation. Used equipment can often maintain its value better on your balance sheet, while getting the job done. But even at that, there's no blanket approach to calculating equipment depreciation. There are tools that

can give estimates, but actual valuation is dependent on many factors including equipment condition, maintenance history, market trends and supply and demand curves. Your dealer will be able to help you determine value, and overall market conditions, if you're thinking about selling.

The ability to remain adaptable to market fluctuations is probably the biggest advantage of incorporating used equipment into your strategy. Plus, with ongoing supply chain issues and manufacturing delays, new equipment can come with long wait times. It's often easier to find the right used equipment for upcoming projects and then resell it when you have completed your work. Partnering with a dealer can offer more support and advantages as they are often able to source equipment from other locations to meet your needs.

Balance your fleet with a trusted equipment dealer

With the right dealer by your side, you can work together to find the most cost-effective way to manage your fleet. Reputable equipment dealers aren't just out to sell you used equipment. Many will also purchase your old equipment in exchange for cash – which can help to support your business as you grow or if workflow is uncertain and you need immediate cash flow.

Just as a dealer can help you by validating your used equipment purchases, they can also help

No matter what 2023 brings us, the ability to access the right equipment at the right time, using a combination of new, used, leased and rental options will be a key part in responding to variable market demands.

Photo by
Finning Canada





with your equipment's maintenance schedule. An important part of keeping your own equipment's value is being sure that it's up to date with all necessary work. Deferring maintenance or repairs can save money in the short run but cost dearly when trying to sell or trade a machine. Owners who are considering selling surplus machines should consider investing a little money, making sure maintenance is current and the overall condition of the machine would stand up to their own high standards, if they were in the buyer's place. If machine availability becomes plentiful, then buyers will gravitate towards machines with a verifiable maintenance history.

Warranties are an important part of any large purchase, and used equipment is no exception. However, many equipment resellers and auction houses don't support the purchaser after the sale is made — providing either no warranty, or a warranty through a third party that has high deductibles with higher probabilities of having your claim denied. Full-service dealers can offer warranties and even certify the condition on some machines when they are confident in its history of use and care by the previous owner. Increasingly, the used equipment trends are following those of the used car trends with "Certified Used" becoming an attractive feature for prospective buyers.

Flexibility is key when adapting to changing circumstances

As a business owner, you understand how important it is to invest in the right equipment while managing cash flow. Past recessions and a global pandemic have taught us that we need to weigh decisions with a new level of caution. We can't always predict what business will look like in the future but partnering with a reputable equipment dealer who can support you through the ups and downs can help to remove risk. Your dealer can also help you keep up with advancements in the equipment market, including battery-electric equipment, which will eventually become more widely available as used equipment.

No matter what 2023 brings us, the ability to access the right equipment at the right time, using a combination of new, used, leased and rental options will be a key part in responding to variable market demands. The importance of creating a strong partnership with your equipment dealer cannot be understated – it's time to work together to develop an equipment strategy that can support your upcoming jobs, manage your overall costs while at the same time helping ensure your business' future success. **RER**

Kieran Holm is executive vice president, global used equipment, Finning Canada.

Dealers can help rental companies keep up with advancements in the equipment market, including battery-electric equipment, which will eventually become more widely available as used equipment.

Photo by Finning Canada



Atlas Copco

Atlas Copco's new electric self-priming dewatering E-pumps are designed for sewage bypass jobs, dewatering in mining, and urban construction projects with access to a power source. E-pumps manage demanding flows and large solids with

a reduced CO2 footprint and lower cost of ownership. The E-Pump range, which comprises the PAC High Head and High Flow models, is an alternative to diesel-powered dewatering pumps, allowing customers to reduce their CO2 footprint and operate in emission-restrictive areas with no fuel consumption. The PAC units are designed for easy installation, making them a "plug-and-pump" solution. The E-Pumps have been designed to enable operators to reduce energy consumption and noise generation under normal operating conditions.

Multiquip

The MQ Mayco LS300GK concrete pump from Multiquip is a compact, trailer-mounted pump with an output rated at 30 yards per hour, able to handle up to ½-inch aggregate. With a 6-inch material cylinder, the maximum piston face pressure is 800 psi. Multiquip engineers selected an 85-horsepower liquid-cooled Kubota WG3800 gas-line engine. The unit pumps a variety of concrete mix designs and is designed for slab work, block fill, shotcrete and more. It features a 10-cubic-foot capacity hopper easily removed for maintenance and accessibility to wear components.



Thompson Pump and Manufacturing

Thompson Pump and Manufacturing Co.'s 6JSVEE is a heavy-duty, cast-iron centrifugal pump with fast-priming capabilities. This solids-handling end suction centrifugal pump is designed for construction, industrial and municipal applications. The unit is designed for moderate flows up to 2,300 gpm, heads up to 95 feet, operating speeds up to 2,200 rpm, and 3-inch solids handling, good for sewage bypass pumping or general construction dewatering.

The pump includes a low HP engine for better fuel efficiency – a Tier 4 Final Isuzu engine with diesel oxidation catalyst after-treatment. It also features exclusive dry-running oil-less vacuum automatic priming. The JSVs are built for longevity and ROI.



Tsurumi

Tsurumi Pump is partnering with Briggs & Stratton to offer engine-driven trash and dewatering pumps to comply with California Air Resource Board's regulation on 2-inch and 3-inch centrifugal dewatering pumps and 2-inch and 4-inch trash pumps, for TE3-50V, TE3-80V, EPT3-50V and EPT3-100V models. Mounted safely on rubber vibration dampers within a rolled-steel frame, the EPT- and TE-series pumps and engines allow for maximum protection during transport and operation, while simplifying handling, with TE3 models light enough for UPS shipping. Pump features such as high-chrome or cast-iron impellers and casings, stainless-steel wear plates, galvanized steel hose couplings, and a silicon carbide mechanical seal combine to extend the pump's working life while decreasing maintenance requirements.

LIGHT TOWERS

Blue Vigil

Blue Vigil, a developer of tether power systems for commercial drones, presents the new Autonomous Aerial LED portable light aimed at making nighttime sites safer and more productive. The ALED is a compact area lighting system that mounts a high-intensity LED array on a tethered unmanned aerial vehicle, also known as a drone, positioning the light 40 feet up to 100 feet above a jobsite for as long as needed. The ALED puts more than 8,000 square feet of light on the ground, providing nearly twice as much coverage as traditional towed light towers. The ALED can be powered by wall/shore power; a smaller, quieter portable 3000 W generator; or a common vehicle inverter.



Lind Equipment

Lind Equipment's All-in-One Beacon LED Tower provides all the functionality of three separate lighting assets in a single package. A single unit can be used as a generator-powered light tower, a no-glare diffuser light tower, and as an electric-powered light tower. It features 30,000-lumen weatherproof light heads, AP65 wet-location-rated usability and fits through regular doors. Two towers can fit in the back of a pick-up truck. The unit takes the place of three separate machines. This full-powered light tower can illuminate remote construction sites with an onboard generator as small as 1,000 kw. For areas that require diffused, no-glare lighting, the All-in-One can do that with clip-on diffuser frames.



LAWN AND LANDSCAPE



Diamond Mowers

The Brush Cutter Pro X can thoroughly process small material such as thick grass and brush, and cut material up to 10 inches in diameter. Available in 60-inch, 72-inch and 84-inch cutting widths, this attachment has a continuous-cut capacity of four inches, a flow range of 16 to 46 gpm and is intended for 10-plus hours of weekly use, more than 500 hours annually. It is designed for heavy-duty suburban/rural environments, farms and ranches, and recreational properties. The unit is compatible with standard and high-flow skid-steer loaders. The model is equipped with four hydraulic motors that optimize blade speed for safe operations and perfectly cut vegetation.



Fecon

Fecon's compact excavator mulching attachment can mulch overgrowth, underbrush and small trees. It's a solution for clearing property lines, pastureland, real estate lots, ditches, trails, fencecrows, invasive species and more. Paired with 3.5- to 8-ton excavators, it is precise enough for vegetation management, enabling the removal of a single tree in a group or specific branches that need to be trimmed back from obstructions. The unit features a purpose-built designed and optimized for standard-flow excavators and can operate with as little as 12 gpm. It has an overall width of 40 inches and a working width of 28 inches. A variable displacement hydraulic motor optimizes rotor speed and torque for maximum production.

Honda

Honda offers a complete line of commercial and residential walk-behind lawn mowers with Honda engines, steel decks with reinforced guards and steel handles. MicroCut Twin Blades ensure fine clippings for mulching and bagging. The Honda HRC216K3HDA commercial walk-behind mower allows the user to save time by starting the engine while standing behind the mower and the flywheel brake safety system stops the engine and blades when the user lets go of the brake lever on the handle. The GXV160 commercial engine features noise control for operator comfort. The mower's hydrostatic transmission includes a heavy-duty automotive style shaft drive that eliminates the belt that can slip or wear out.



Ironcraft

Ironcraft's 2512 Series flex-wing cutter requires just 35 PTO HP and one hydraulic outlet to cut grass, weeds, and light brush up to two inches in diameter. The unit features a smooth top deck, spring suspension, and 12-foot working width. The cutter makes compact tractors more productive. The wings flex from 22° down to 87° up (22° down and 45° up wing free float), allowing it to tame slopes, gullies, ditches, and other tough topography. The 2512 Series has a cutting height range from ½ to 12 inches, making it good for cutting grass, weeds, and light brush on farms, in parks and recreational areas, on community green spaces, along roadsides, and more.



Continued from page 14

investments in production facilities for electric excavators. Changwon is ideally located close to battery module supply partners and other key suppliers in South Korea to meet the needs of customers in the future. We are also home to a highly skilled and motivated workforce who are fully committed to meeting our future environmental targets.”

The new production facility will be built inside the current component workshop at Changwon – without disruption to the existing operation. Once complete the facility will be approximately 2,500 square meters including assembly and logistics areas. The building work will begin in April 2023, with battery pack production expected to commence in June 2024.

Coming soon after an announcement to invest in the production of electric wheel loaders at its plant in Arvika, Sweden, and electric haulers from the company’s production facility in Braås, Sweden, this is another sign that Volvo CE is committed to becoming completely fossil free by 2040, in line with the Paris Agreement and as laid out in its science-based target goals. And it is taking another step forward in its ambition to transform the industry through electromobility and



Volvo is investing \$7.8 million to build a new battery pack production facility at the site of its excavator plant in Changwon, South Korea.

Photo by Volvo CE

other more sustainable solutions. Volvo’s targets include that 35 percent of its machine sales be electric by 2030.

Volvo CE has already successfully introduced compact electric excavators to the global market with the ECR25 electric, ECR18 electric, EC18 electric and the mid-size EC230 electric excavators. Together with its compact electric wheel loaders, Volvo CE has one of the largest electric ranges on the market.

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