

On the Right Track

Grindstone Landscaping made the switch to Cat several years ago and hasn't looked back

Innovative Enterprise

Amalgamated Mining and Finning have a one-of-a-kind partnership

Mining Milestone

Syncrude's Cat 797 hits an historic landmark

PLUS:

Finning and the 2015 Canada Winter Games

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BY HILARY ANAKA,
FINNING EDITOR

Difference Makers

Acts of kindness help ease the pain of flooding tragedy

▶ The images of flood-ravaged southern Alberta sent shivers down my spine. Watching the news, I just couldn't believe my eyes. The captions had to be wrong. This destruction had to be somewhere else but, unfortunately, I was mistaken.

From the first signs of trouble, customers inundated our power systems and Cat Rental Store branches with urgent calls for equipment and service support. In true Finning style, our employees quickly adapted to the situation – extending hours and staying open through the weekends to meet demand.

The beauty of the dealer network and the link between Finning and The Cat Rental Store was highlighted through this natural disaster. Branches from across western Canada sent employees and equipment to southern Alberta to help meet the needs of our customers.

Calgary Cat Rental Store branch manager, Scott Bishop, was in the thick of things and recalls his staff pulling together during the crisis. “We unloaded dozens of trailers of equipment from other branches and moved as fast as possible to get the stock out the door. When you're equipping emergency measures organizations, as well as powering municipal buildings, data centres and seniors' housing complexes, time is of the essence.”

In addition to going the extra mile for our customers, the Finning family banded together to support employees who were evacuated from their homes. Graeme Towers, a Finning apprentice mechanic in Calgary, and his wife elected to stay with relatives so that an evacuated co-worker and their family could stay at Graeme's house rather than a hotel.

It's these acts of kindness – big and small – that ease the pain of tragedy. John Malinowski, a 42-year employee with Finning, was working in the oil sands when he got the call from his wife to hurry home. “I didn't think much of it at first, but quickly learned the extent of the devastation. Our house was spared,



EVERYDAY HERO: Finning employee John Malinowski took time to help out local High River businesses.

but my daughter and her family lost their home.” As one would expect, John still chokes up when he talks about his daughter's loss. But what one may not expect is the emotion in his voice when he speaks of the calls he received from across Finning. “Countless people phoned to ask me how my wife and I were doing. That meant a lot to me and reminded me why I work here,” says John.

In a story on page 16, Amalgamated Mining's Tom Flanagan speaks of the community spirit he encountered when he came to Canada from Ireland. A spirit so strong it convinced him to not only stay in the country, but to pay it forward. A spirit that was no match for the flood waters this summer.

If you've got a Finning story of strength, spirit and support you'd like to share, please email me at hanaka@finning.ca. ☺

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DEAR TRACKS & TREADS:

I thought last issue's Finning Focus was very well written, and on a very important issue no less. I've been a gravel truck driver since the early 1990's and I drive a 2005 Peterbilt with a 550 Cat. Although I learned to drive with a different brand and was always dedicated to that engine, I tell you: that 550 is a great pulling engine and I love it. I recently bought a 94 T-800 with a mechanical 425 Cat engine, and it too is a sweetheart.

I can relate to the author of the last Finning Focus, as I too grew up on a farm. I have dealt with the wrath of combines, haying and silage equipment (and let's not forget the occasional angry cow during calving season). It seems like growing up on a farm gives you a great perspective of how to work safely around machinery. I know when my father told me to stay away from the forage harvester during knife sharpening, I certainly listened. But, unfortunately, I have seen a lot of change in industrial safety over the last 22 years as it seems the pendulum keeps moving in the wrong direction.

I don't know exactly what the problem is; perhaps there's a lot of naive people entering the workforce. Whatever the reason, most kids these days don't even know how to operate a lawnmower, let alone large machinery. I guess some of the trouble stems from the fact that everyone is in such a hurry. I see this in companies all the time. "We want you to drive safe, but we also need 10 loads hauled here before 6 p.m." This is a slight exaggeration, but the main idea is true and I'd just like to thank *Tracks & Treads* for bringing safety to everyone's attention.

Sincerely,

Dean Jacobs**Tell us what you think**

Tracks & Treads would love to hear from you. Tell us what you think of the magazine's stories, columns and look, so that we can improve it and make it a more interesting read.

Send your comments to editor-in-chief Hilary Anaka by email at hanaka@finning.ca or the old-fashioned way to: Hilary Anaka, *Tracks & Treads*, Finning Canada, 16830 – 107 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5P 4C3

www.finning.ca

History Lesson

The map of British Columbia is dotted with towns where mining has been a major industry. Still, we take a simple fact for granted.

"If it can't be grown," says Deanna Bell, the director of sales and business development for the Britannia Mine Museum, "it must be mined."

Bell is eager to spread the word about the important role mining plays in our lives. And there's no better place to learn than at the museum.

There you'll learn about Britannia, a town that – in the 1920's – was home to the biggest copper mine in the British Empire. The facility has a comprehensive school program, a gold-panning pavilion, a tunnel behind the mill building complete with a mine train and a variety of touch screen displays that document not only the history of mining in Britannia but also how the influential industry has evolved.



"The goal is awareness," says Bell. "The message we try to convey here is a complete one that addresses the historical and modern changes to mining."

On May 4, the museum did precisely that on its inaugural Family Fun Day. Almost 400 people came to celebrate the day and Caterpillar and Finning were front and centre. One of the main attractions was a Caterpillar wheel loader that Finning loaned out for the occasion. Kids were fascinated by the inside of the cab as they got an up-close look at the controls and the operator's viewpoint. Children also got a hands-on extraction experience by "mining" M&Ms from a substrate of macarons in a candy mountain.

"It turned out to be a fantastic event," Bell says. "I know the kids had a lot of fun and it was great to celebrate this important part of our province's history."

Full Throttle



Rain doesn't stop the mailman. Nor motivated motorcycle riders raising funds for United Way. Finning's 5th annual Motorcycle Event, held on May 25, was a huge success despite Mother Nature's best efforts. Seventy riders took to the streets on their hogs and raised \$16,500 for United Way. That money pushed the event's five-year total to an impressive \$65,000 in donations.

But, you can never give too much. That's why event coordinator and Finning customer service advisor Candy Norman has raised the bar for next year's event. The goal is to raise \$30,000 in 2014.

Visit www.ride.finning.ca for more details.

Let the Games Begin



With a population of close to 80,000 people, Prince George is a mid-sized community by most Canadian standards. But in 2015, the city will be a much talked-about destination on the national map – and not just because of the arrival of the same-named Royal Baby.

Prince George will host the 2015 Canada Winter Games from February 13 to March 1. The story of this unique sporting event has yet to be written but the groundwork for leaving a significant legacy behind is already underway.

And Finning was more than eager to get involved.

“We knew we could play a role,” Don Gowan, Finning’s general manager in the Prince George

region, says about the company’s sponsorship. “We are going to be able to help out in a huge way.”

Finning Canada, Finning power systems and The Cat Rental Store will all do their part over the 18 months leading up to the event and then throughout the duration of the games. Finning is currently up to bat in the construction phase, taking part in numerous projects. The company sent a D4K tractor to Tabor Mountain Ski Resort last year, where a half-pipe, cross course and slope-style areas, aerial course and mogul site are under construction. According to Gowan, a 320D excavator, a D8T and a D6N tractor, will all play a part. At the Otway Nordic Centre, Finning loaned out a 545 skidder and another 730 rock truck for stadium widening and trail development.

There are also plans for an alpine course at Purden Ski Village and track development and berm construction at the Prince George Outdoor Ice Oval.

“They are literally sculpting the hills,” says Gowan. “The half pipe, as an example, will be a big part of the Games but also a legacy piece that people will use for years to come. It’s something that we are very proud to be a part of.”

When the Games actually get underway, Finning power systems and The Cat Rental Store will chip in, providing power, heating and lighting for various venues.

“Finning and The Cat Rental Store commitment to providing power generation and heavy equipment for the 2015 Games means that, for example, snowboarding athletes in Prince George and the north central region will have a top-notch facility for training,” Canada Winter Games CEO Stuart Ballantyne said in a release. “And visiting athletes from across Canada will experience that snowboarding course at Games time. Legacies will be built from the investment that Finning is making in the 2015 Games.”

A Driving Force

During the fall of 2012, Finning held a contest where every customer that bought a new Cat machine between September 1 and December 15th was entered in a draw. The winner of that draw could then select any GM vehicle they desired with a retail value up to \$100,000.

Suncor of Fort McMurray was chosen from the brimming list of contest entrants. As part of their ongoing commitment to the Fort McMurray community, Suncor partnered with Finning to donate the prize vehicle to the Victim Services Unit (VSU) of Fort McMurray.

Victim Services is a not-for-profit organization that was established in 1987 and is funded by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and The Office of the Solicitor General to provide advocacy to victims of crime and tragedy. The agency provides support to victims from the time of crisis through and beyond conclusion of the court process 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The organization provides immediate emotional and physical support during an event, as well as

confidentiality and anonymity from non-judgmental, respectful, empathetic professional individuals, who are culturally sensitive and don’t discriminate against any demographic.

Suncor’s executive vice president of oil sands and in-situ, Mark Little, and Finning’s oil sands vice president, Brent Davis, officially presented a 2013 Chevy Tahoe to Victim Services during a local community event on June 20. Vehicle shipping was generously provided by The Cat Rental Store.



WHEEL DEAL: From left, Brad Price (Finning), Michelle Velez (VSU), Marlene Proctot (VSU), Laura Barnes (VSU), Anne Marie Toutant (Suncor) and Brent Davis (Finning).

Don't RIP Through Construction Zones

In 2011 alone, there were more than 1,000 collisions in construction or maintenance zones throughout Alberta. It's a sobering statistic, especially when you consider how short the road construction season is. That's why Finning took part in a campaign held by Partners in Road Construction Safety (PIRCS) to bring awareness to that number and more importantly, to help reduce it.

PIRCS launched its annual Don't RIP Through Construction Zones campaign on May 15 with an event at Olympic Plaza in Calgary. Finning was there to show its support at the launch, positioning two Cat skid steers beside a large white wreath with a "Don't RIP" ribbon on it.

"Road building season has a short window," says Finning customer service representative Jay Ross. "There's a lot of construction going on so we all have to be conscious that there are delays. It's for the betterment of all businesses and travellers."

"Calgary is proud to participate in an initiative to improve road safety in our city



and across the province," Mayor Naheed Nenshi (pictured above) said at the event. "Something as simple as reducing your speed through a construction zone may mean another safe day on the job for someone."

A Night at the Aquarium



PHOTO BY: LEETOOP

Of all the exhibits at the Vancouver Aquarium, the famous otter pool is always a favourite among patrons. It is home to three stars: Elfin, Tamu and, most recently, the Alaskan-born Catamei, who was rescued earlier this year.

The Aquarium, which opened in 1956, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the trio's home, the Finning-sponsored otter pool that opened in 1973. Many may recognize the otter pool from the famous YouTube video, featuring two sea otters holding hands, that garnered nearly 20 million views. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=epUk3T2Kfno)

To commemorate the pool's ruby anniversary, the Aquarium went all out for this year's A Night at the Aquarium event on June 14, and once again Finning showed its support. Sponsors, including Finning, helped raise a staggering \$380,000, all of which will go to fund conservation, education and research programs at the Aquarium.

"We conduct extensive research on key issues in the aquatic world, as well as deliver many programs that bring our conservation message to life," says Sharon Butler, the Aquarium's director of partnerships. "Our message is to connect people to the natural world."

The gala's 400 guests were treated to an assortment of sustainable delicacies prepared by 16 of B.C.'s top Ocean Wise restaurants and chefs. Guests also bid on adventures such as a sturgeon fishing trip with Canadian hero Rick Hansen, an extravagant Langara Fishing Adventures excursion in Haida Gwaii, and a 10-night Antarctic voyage. (This Antarctic trip is probably quite different from Finning tech Spencer Smirl's Antarctic adventure. See page 30.)

Finning's Way of Life

When Lana Luchenski started at Finning

10 years ago, the company's United Way campaign consisted of a hope-for-the-best approach of handing out pledge forms. In the decade since, the heavy equipment giant and global charity have developed a synergy and raised an eye-popping number of dollars annually.

"The effort and passion that goes into United Way campaigns each year is a reflection of Finning's leadership and culture," says Luchenski, regional sales and operations planning manager. "United Way makes it easy for any employee to give a gift to charities and organizations that they care about. The fact that Finning matches that donation makes it a no-brainer."

The donations were particularly bountiful in the oil sands region last year. Finning received a prestigious Millennium Award for donating \$622,539 in 2012. Finning's continued success with United Way campaigns is important to the organization, according to United Way executive director Diane Shannon.

"We are in awe of what they do," says Shannon. "That's people making the decision to invest in their communities as a family. For every donation an employee makes, the company matches it, which doubles the impact. As a good corporate citizen, that's absolutely tremendous."

Finning has been creative in its campaigns, engaging the employee base with fun events like tossing pies at managers, dunk tanks, pizza dinners and barbecues, including the annual Leader's Event hosted by general manager Larry Gouthro and his wife Darlene. Gouthro has also been recognized by the United Way individually, receiving the United Way's Blueprint Award in 2009.

But, there is no "I" in team and Finning's continued success for United Way is a direct reflection of the company's charitable culture. "They are leaders in so many ways," says Shannon. "Not just from a cheque-writing perspective but also in really committing to the campaign and doing a lot of leadership training to equip the employees to talk about the United Way in an educated and meaningful manner."

Luchenski, herself a recipient of the United Way's Pillar Award in 2009, says that Finning has created a year-round conversation and effort for United Way, making it part of the fabric of Finning, rather than being a yearly two-week blitz. "It's a great source of pride to be recognized in the same category as some of the largest companies operating in the oil sands," she says. "And it drives us to get bigger and better."

Rookie Red Riders



It was a tough group to miss. On May 27, a group of 29 Finning employees from Edmonton, decked out in bright red t-shirts and yellow hardhats, put their feet together to ride a vehicle known simply as the Big Bike. The colourful clan was participating in the annual Heart and Stroke Big Bike team event, which is geared towards various community organizations, companies and groups to raise funds to support heart disease and stroke research.

"This was the first year that Finning had done a Big Bike ride," says procurement and vendor management director Doug Pettapiece. "But based on the response and the support, it won't be the last."

Finning's entry – a group that included vice presidents, general managers, account reps and systems analysts – made quite the rookie splash, raising \$7,054 for heart and stroke research in Alberta. Facilities project manager Mark Beger raised the biggest chunk, \$665, for the Finning donation pool.

The 29 riders (plus a driver from the Heart and Stroke Foundation) pedalled a stretch of two kilometres, past Edmonton's head office annex building and back to the main head office building. In Finning fashion, the emphasis was on safety.

"We had Finning pilot trucks with beacons flashing, driven by Wes Rains and Denis Charest, situated in front of and behind the Big Bike during our entire ride," Pettapiece says. "Finning is providing leadership and support to the community through fundraising efforts like this."

New CEO Takes the Reins

Finning International has a new president and CEO. On June 17, Scott Thomson officially came on board in the company's top position. He brings to Finning broad financial capabilities, considerable strategic acumen and an international understanding, with experience in the resource sector. Prior to joining Finning, he was chief financial officer at Talisman Energy Inc, and he holds a BA in economics and political science as well as an MBA. He replaces Mike Waites as the outgoing president and CEO who elected to retire after five successful years at the helm of Finning.





By the Numbers >>

4

Number of divisions in the NHL's new format



170

Barrels, in billions, of oil estimated to be in Alberta's oil sands



100-1

Las Vegas odds that the Calgary Flames will be the 2014 Stanley Cup Champions

70

The approximate number of countries where oil sands deposits are found across the world

1

Minimum number of games that each team will play in every arena under the new schedule

54,000

The number of square miles Alberta's three main oil sands deposits cover



12

Will and Kate, Prince George's parents, are 12th cousins, once removed

340 million

Number of tweets on Twitter each day



8.375

Birth weight, in pounds, of Prince George of Cambridge



3RD

Prince George's current position in the line of succession to the British throne

36

Average time, in minutes, spent on Twitter after logging in

The Storied Salesman

Famed fictional heavy machine salesman came to life through a former Caterpillar employee

➤ Few fictional characters become as real to their readers as Alexander Botts did. William Hazlett Upson brought the heavy-equipment salesman to life in his long-running series in the *Saturday Evening Post*, appearing from 1927 to 1975. At the height of his fame, Botts was the main character in a 1936 Hollywood film titled *Earthworm Tractors*, starring comedian Joe E. Brown as Botts. But, despite its fictional presentation, Upson's character is based on fact. Upson's first job after graduating university was in Caterpillar's service department at Peoria, Illinois.

Upson's character Botts was an Iowa farm boy who applied for a job with the Farmers' Friend Tractor Company in 1920 in Earthworm City, Illinois. His application letter to the company showed his enthusiasm for the industry, even if some facts may have been embellished. "I have decided you are the best tractor company in the country, and consequently I am giving you first chance to hire me to sell tractors in this region," Botts said in the letter. "I am a natural-born salesman ... I have already had considerable experi-

ence as a machinery salesmam." He later revealed that prior to landing this job with the Farmers' Friend Tractor Company, Botts' previous experience was

limited to selling razor blade sharpeners.

Every Botts story consisted of a series of memos between Botts and his boss in Earthworm City. Botts' blundering nature caused one disaster after another but he always made amends and developed sales leads. Botts faced seemingly impossible situations, but in the end he always succeeded in a sale – like the time he arrived at a farm to demonstrate a tractor. The farmer's truck was stuck in a swamp. Botts seized this heroic opportunity and hitched the truck to the tractor to extract it. Just as the tractor started to move forward, the wind blew off Botts' hat, and he jumped off the tractor to

retrieve it, knocking the clutch lever into engagement. The farmer, still in his truck, was towed by a driverless tractor chugging across the swamp and into the woods. In the end, the farmer bought the tractor after seeing how well it traversed the soft ground.

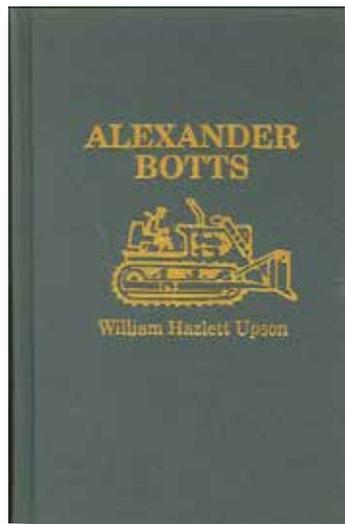
Another story had Botts' company merge with another to form the Earthworm Tractor Company in 1928. A director of the new company chose Botts to go to Europe to expand the business. The boss wrote, "Up to this time our European business has been practically nothing. Economic conditions since the war have made it almost impossible to sell tractors either in England or on the continent. Our plan is to send you over to test the market. Your salary will be \$500 per month plus expenses." Botts replied positively but had two conditions, "(i) Mrs. Botts will go with me and the expense account will cover both of us. (ii) There must be no hollering, yawping, or nagging about small sums on my expense account. If I am to be at my best on this trip, I must not be hampered by petty money considerations. All trifling amounts must be passed without question and in a gentlemanly way."

Eight crawler tractors were to accompany Botts on the passenger ship to Europe. He found out that a delegation of French grape growers would be returning to France on the boat so, knowing that tractors were not yet being used in French vineyards, he persuaded the captain to place one tractor on deck for demonstration to these potential customers. Unfortunately, before the tractor demonstration, a drunken passenger got on the tractor and flattened most of the chairs and furniture. The next day, fully sober, the reckless passenger turned out to be a contractor from Iowa. He apologized profusely and paid for all the damage. Furthermore, he ordered two Earthworm 60 tractors for delivery to his farm. It was yet another triumph for William Hazlett Upson's Alexander Botts.

Like Caterpillar, the Earthworm Tractor Company's equipment wowed its potential owners. And if Alexander Botts' sales techniques were – ahem – unusual, it's worth remembering that, while Upson gained inspiration from real life, his salesman was quite fictional. ●

Note: We dedicate this column to the late Trav Booth, legendary Finning sales trainer and a huge fan of Alexander Botts.

Botts' blundering nature caused one disaster after another but he always made amends.



Lighten Up

Operators are trained to respond to any blinking lights in their cab – but not every alert requires action

BY LISA RICCIOTTI

She's an operator's dream – a fresh-from-the-factory, paint-barely-dry piece of yellow iron. You slide onto the seat, savouring the new Cat smell and take the controls. Suddenly an unfamiliar orangey-amber light appears on the left side of your dash. Panic grips your heart. Brand new and you already broke it? How are you going to explain this one to the boss?

Breathe easy and take a closer look at that unfamiliar indicator light. You haven't done anything wrong, it's just the cleaner, greener Tier 4 Interim engine talking, letting you know everything is copacetic. Now you notice the handy quick-reference card in the cab, and match one of its symbols to the mysterious light still glowing on your dash. "Active regen in progress," it explains. "No action required."

Whether it's an excavator, grader or wheel loader, all new Cat Tier 4 Interim engines (750 horsepower and under) now have technologies designed to progressively reduce emissions to levels currently required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Tier 4 regulations are the toughest yet, calling for a dramatic 90-per-cent reduction in particulate matter. Cat Tier 4 Interim engines achieve this in large part due to two aftertreatment components: 1) a ceramic diesel particulate filter that traps soot, and 2) a new system that automatically kicks in to burn off accumulated soot in a process called regeneration.

The key word here is "automatically." Tier 4 technology is cleaner and smarter. Your machine decides when regeneration is needed, then goes ahead and does it. The regen light is intended to be reassuring. Unlike most indicator lights, its purpose isn't to warn operators that something is wrong. Instead it signals that everything is fine; your engine is just taking the initiative to turn polluting particulates into harmless ash with its regeneration process.

Initially that's a hard concept to grasp, says Brad Nunn, Finning's application trainer. "It goes against operators' natural instincts. They're conditioned to think it's a bad thing when a light comes on but the regen light is the exception that means just the opposite. The hardest part is teaching operators to do nothing when the regen light goes on."



An unfamiliar indicator light appears on the left side of your dash. Panic grips your heart.

Nunn says a briefing in the regen function is time well-spent. "We've had equipment brought in for repair, but it turns out that the only problem was a lit-up regen light. Or, operators will shut their machines off at the jobsite until a mechanic comes along, thinking they're going to cause damage because a warning light came on."

It leads a person to wonder: why bother having an indicator light that's just to say everything's working? Finning client Mike Wadsworth, a heavy duty mechanical foreman in Whitehorse for the Yukon Territorial Government can answer that. He says many of Finning's competitors asked themselves the same question and chose not to include a regen indicator on their Tier 4 Interim equipment, but the omission has created problems.

"When the regen process is activated, a machine makes a different sound and there may be some hesitation on the throttle. But if there's no light to show what's going on, operators either don't know why, or they can't be sure whether their machine was regenerating or not," he says. "So there are still machines ending up in shops unnecessarily."

Wadsworth prefers Caterpillar with its regen light because he says it lets operators make informed decisions. "I like to understand exactly what my machine is doing at all times and an indicator light eliminates doubt about whether a regen is in process or not." So breathe easy. ●

Advertise Online for Less

You don't have to choose one or the other, websites and social media accounts work best together

BY CAITLIN CRAWSHAW

Earlier this year, entrepreneur **Stu Younger** decided it was time to upgrade his small company's online presence. "Whether they're looking to buy or it is just for interest's sake, these days the first thing people do is go online," says Younger, president of Western Gasco Cylinders Ltd., a company that sells industrial gases and welding supplies. While the Surrey-based business had a website for the previous six years, Younger admits the company had done very little with it. "It was pretty static and we wanted it to be a little more dynamic," he explains. On top of this, the company had yet to venture into social media.

Younger hired an online marketing coordinator to manage the website redesign and social media efforts. Since February, Western Gasco Cylinders has created accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and (because social media is ever-changing) there are plans to set up a Google+ account soon.

With customers ranging from 18 to 75, it was important to Younger that they use a variety of platforms to appeal to all generations. Where younger customers gravitate to Facebook and Twitter, older clients, who may still think of a tweet as a sound a robin makes, still prefer websites. "You get people of my generation who don't use Facebook," Younger explains. As a manager, it's important that you aren't alienating any demographic. Be sure your website clearly lists your contact information, including telephone number and address.

A company should use its social media accounts to direct visitors to its website, the home base for its marketing materials.

Dana diTomaso, CEO of Edmonton digital marketing agency Kick Point, agrees that small companies need both a strong website and a social media presence to market themselves well. "Don't put all of your eggs in the Facebook basket," says diTomaso. While you may be able to attract plenty of people to your Facebook page, it's less likely to convert visitors into paying customers than a proper website is.



Instead of seeing social media as an alternative to a website, companies should use their social media accounts to direct visitors to their site. "The idea is to have a website as the home base for all of your marketing pieces," she explains.

The cost of a website can range from about \$2,000 to \$50,000, based on the company and the bells and whistles desired. But ideally, companies should budget at least \$5,000 for an effective website, says diTomaso. When hiring a web developer, companies should be upfront about their budget, demand full administrative control of the site (even if they're not sure how to manage it yet), and ensure they're clear on everything included in the web developer's price.

While social media accounts may be free, diTomaso points out that they're only effective when they're maintained. "There's nothing worse than a Facebook page that hasn't been updated since the day it was launched," she says. Rather than signing up for everything, only pick what you can manage on a regular basis. "Don't try to overextend yourself," diTomaso explains.

Younger says his company's decision to create a more engaging website and an active social media presence is paying off. He reports more visitors to the website and more online interest in the company overall. He agrees that in order to be working at maximum capacity, a company's online presence must be fresh. He says he thinks his company's online success has a lot to do with hiring an employee to keep the website and social media accounts as up to date as possible. "It's easy to slap something up on the web, but if it's static, people will lose interest." And, as any manager knows, a loss of interest can equate to a loss of business. ●



MODIFIED MINING: Tom Flanagan's Amalgamated Mining modifies Cat equipment bought from Finning, and then rents the equipment to mining companies around the world.

A NEW MODEL

Amalgamated Mining saw a niche need in the underground mining sector and provided an innovative solution

BY JIM KERR PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLY REDINGER

Tom Flanagan is in the business of underground mining, but it doesn't take much digging to realize why his company, Amalgamated Mining Inc., is a success. Partnered with Finning, Amalgamated Mining provides solutions for underground mining projects and is one of only a few companies on the planet to employ a particular business model. Amalgamated purchases Caterpillar equipment from Finning and then rents that equipment to mining companies in Canada and around the world, while Finning provides service on those machines wherever they end up.



UNDERGROUND NETWORK: Since 2007, Amalgamated has purchased 38 underground machines from Finning.

But, Flanagan's original business model differed greatly from how Amalgamated works today. When the shop Flanagan was working for closed its doors in 1990, he and two of his coworkers decided to embark on their own mining rebuild venture. Based in Edmonton, Amalgamated had some success in its first decade and a half but it wasn't until 2007 that the company evolved into what it is today, all because Flanagan noticed that a lot of mining companies weren't getting the most out of their machines.

"Tom saw other companies using personnel carriers as the main transportation for people at these underground mines," explains Gordon Finlay, vice president of coal and metals with Finning. "He also saw that these machines just weren't lasting."

That's when Flanagan had his eureka moment and Amalgamated Mining put in its first order for Cat underground loaders and trucks.

"How our relationship started, was Tom started buying our loader backhoes and converting them into personnel carriers, configuring them so they had the right braking system and all the right qualifications, only now they were durable, customized personnel carriers," explains Finlay. "Tom was modifying them to meet the needs in the underground mining world."

At the time, Caterpillar had a new line of underground equipment on the market and Amalgamated was looking to start a joint venture with Finning as its main dealer. "We went with Finning from the outset," Flanagan recalls. "We placed our first order for a variety of new underground loaders and trucks and started to offer them for rent and rental purchase."

This order was the first of many in what turned out to be the beginning of a long-standing partnership. "Tom came in and was really looking for a way to do something different, and he saw an opportunity in the rental business," Finlay says. "Since our partnership began back in 2007, he's purchased somewhere in the neighbourhood of 38 underground machines, or about \$33 million worth of equipment from us, so he's been a big player for Finning and is by far the largest underground customer that we have."

But, according to Flanagan, it's definitely a mutually beneficial relationship. He says Cat's global brand and network allow him to operate around the world. Good thing, too, in a business as vast as underground mining. "This partnership works best for us because, rather than having to follow equipment all over the world, it allows us to build our business in Canada while, with the Cat network, we sustain our market throughout the world," Flanagan says. "Even though we buy the equipment from Finning, it's rare that it stays in western Canada. It ends up in Africa, Europe, South America, North America – we send it everywhere. That's just something that goes with the territory of underground mining and tunneling."

Flanagan's familiarity with Caterpillar extends back to his childhood in Ireland. His family's business was in road construction and that meant that yellow iron was never

WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS

Through his company, Amalgamated Mining Inc., Tom Flanagan is able to make the world a better place. Whether it's charitable donations to Edmonton organizations like the Youth Empowerment Support Services (YESS) or lending a hand in a developing country, Flanagan says it's vital that those who are fortunate help others around them. "It's incumbent on all of us to give back," he explains. "Some people are lucky enough to make some extra money; money is just money and it's there to be used."

Flanagan comes from a large family in Ireland and attributes that upbringing to his philanthropic mindset today. And it's important to him to instill that attitude in his family as well, so when the opportunity arose for him to travel to Guatemala through a business venture, he brought his wife and daughter along with him. Together with his family and some friends, Flanagan used his mining expertise to help drill water wells for communities in the country's northern region. "It was a very humbling experience," he recalls. "I wanted to show my daughter that not everyone is as fortunate as we are. And that money isn't everything, even though the people in these communities had very little material items, they were happy. They were just as happy as anyone I know, maybe even more so."

Helping out around the globe is important to Flanagan, but he also believes it's just as important to take care of your own backyard. That's why Amalgamated Mining donates to several charities each year in Edmonton, a community that Flanagan fell in love with when he first arrived. "When we came to Canada we really had no intention of staying but I just couldn't get over the amazing community spirit here," he says. "I was given the opportunity, without any question, to get into a business that's been so great for me and my family. If you can't return the favour and give back after that happens, then there's definitely something wrong."

far from sight. "As long as I can remember there was always Caterpillar equipment around," Flanagan recalls. "I grew up with Cat equipment and have always had an affinity for it and the way it's built; it's just built stronger."

While Flanagan brings a lot of business to Finning, he also brings a wealth of knowledge from years in the underground mining industry. He's more than happy to share it with the company that he's built such a strong rapport with. It's a true partnership, and both companies are better for it, Finlay says, as Flanagan's expertise includes underground mining and Finning's primary focus has been on surface mining in the last several years.

"Tom's been a great conduit for us to dig in and understand how underground mining works," Finlay explains. "It's been a great way for us to learn more about the underground business. Working with someone who is really connected to all aspects of the industry has been very beneficial." ●



HAPPY 100: Syncrude's 797 became the first in the world to hit 100,000 hours of operating.

TOP of the World

Caterpillar's 797 has been a hit around the world since its inception in 1999, but one machine at Syncrude rides above the rest

BY ROBIN SCHROFFEL

At Syncrude's Aurora Mine in northern Alberta, a Caterpillar 797 haul truck unit 17-100 is part of a fleet that runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, hauling up to 360 tons of oil sands at a time to feed the company's production plant in a steady stream. The 797 is a vital piece of equipment for Syncrude's operations, but the machine recently earned itself a rare break – and a barbecue thrown in its honour – when it hit 100,000 hours of operating time the night of May 31.

The Caterpillar 797 mining truck was designed in the late 1990's to change the face of oil sands mining. The result of a collaborative effort between Finning, Caterpillar, and Syncrude, the truck was created to haul large loads while withstanding the unique and difficult conditions of temperature and terrain encountered in the oil sands. Unit 17-100 was the very first 797 delivered, arriving at

Finning's Mildred Lake facility for assembly in May 1999 and going to work at Syncrude's North Mine around June of that year. In 2007, it was moved to Syncrude's Aurora Mine where it has operated ever since.

According to Greg Fuhr, Syncrude's vice president, production mining, the invention of the 797 was vital in allowing the company to leave behind the old style dragline bucket wheel method of oil sands mining. To say the least, the 797 ushered in a new era for the company. "If this truck had not existed, it would not have been economical for us to move into a truck



ONE OF A KIND: The Cat 797 is the world's largest mechanical drive haul truck. The 797 weighs over a million pounds and can haul over 360 tons.

and shovel operation. It was a key component in ensuring long-term viability of oil sands mining,” explains Fuhr.

Brent Davis, Finning’s vice president, oil sands, has been involved with the 797 since the earliest stages. He was present in Arizona in 1998 when a team of Syncrude executives watched a prototype 797 in action, and was part of the team that sold the very first one in the world. According to Davis, the machine’s potential was obvious from the beginning. “It was a purpose-built oil sands truck. The larger payload capacity helped to reduce cost-per-ton, it had the ability through its mechanical drive to work through the really high rolling resistance we subject these vehicles to with the big loads, and we were able to make it productive in all sorts of conditions,” he explains.

But, despite all of the potential everyone saw in the revolutionary machine, no one anticipated that a 797 would one day be celebrating the 100,000-hour

“You could see the pride in the operator and he thought this was the greatest truck he’d ever had the chance to operate,” says Davis. “That pride goes a long way toward why this truck is still operating today.”

benchmark due to the extreme conditions the machine faces. “When we first got together to talk about the truck, we talked about it lasting around 50,000 to 60,000 hours and that would be really good in a tough environment,” says Davis.

That’s not all: though the 17-100 was the first, it’s not the only 797 marking the operational milestone. Six 797s were delivered to Syncrude that first year and, one by one, they’re all breezing by that mark. Together, the 797s in Syncrude’s fleet have helped extract more than 12.6 million barrels of oil during their time in service. The machines have exceeded everyone’s expectations, especially considering that even the 17-100 itself shows no sign of slowing down. “I have a feeling it’s going to still

be working long after I’m done,” Davis says.

According to Fuhr, it’s a regimen of routine maintenance that keeps the 17-100 going and going. With its durable steel frame and replaceable components, there’s not much that can keep it down when it stays on its preventive maintenance schedule and components are replaced according to their anticipated lifespan.

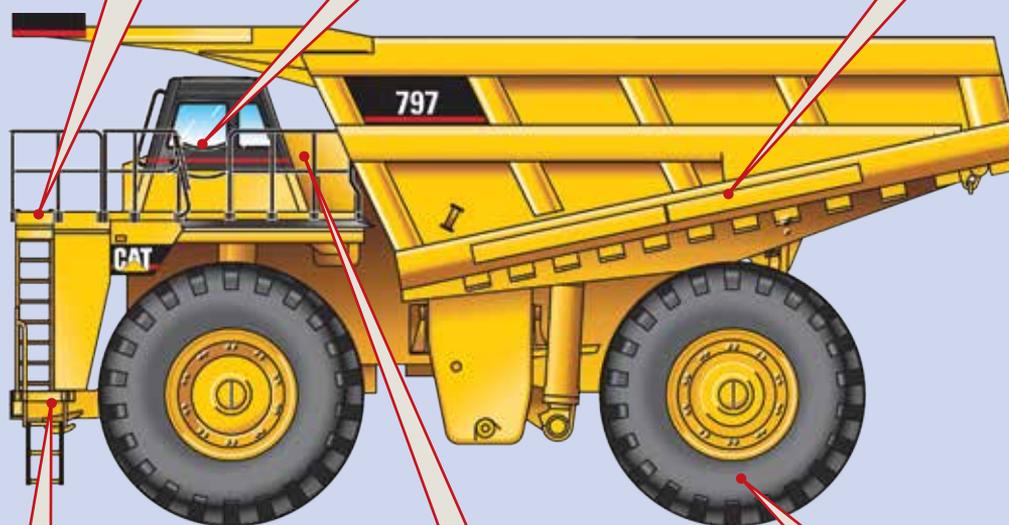
The 17-100 has gone through seven engines to get to the 100,000-hour mark and is still operating with a mechanical availability over 83 per cent, thanks largely to the ongoing partnership between the maintenance group at Syncrude and Finning. Davis agrees with Fuhr that the partnership between their companies has been incredibly important to the success of Syncrude’s 797s. “The key is the superior product support capabilities of Finning – our ability to solve technical issues,

Caterpillar 797

SURFACE SAFETY: All walkways on the machine feature slip-resistant surfaces to ensure the safest conditions for operators.

CLEAR PATH: An optional system monitors haul road conditions by measuring frame rack, bias and pitch to improve cycle times, frame life, tire life and fuel efficiency.

HAUL THE WAY: The 797's maximum payload capacity of 360 tons is due in part to the machine's two V-12 engines.



MAGIC BOX: The 797 features an isolation box on the front bumper with an engine shutdown switch and a transmission lockout.

SCOREBOARD: External payload indicators signal loader operators when the machine has hit optimal payload capacity.

ROUND UP: The 797 uses six 59/80 R63 radial tires and is 30 feet wide from tire to tire.

have components on the shelf, all those sorts of things," Davis says.

But Davis also speculates that regular maintenance isn't the sole reason behind the success of the 797. He recalls making a visit to a Syncrude mine years ago, where he had the chance to ride in a 797 for the first time, and he vividly remembers the operator's excitement. "There were only a few of them at the very beginning. You could see the pride in the operator and how he thought this was the greatest truck he'd ever had the chance to operate," says Davis. "That pride goes a long way toward why this truck is still operating today: the pride that Syncrude had in it, the pride that Finning had in making it successful, and the pride that Caterpillar had in making it successful."

That Syncrude operator who took Davis for a spin is just one of the few characters whose efforts helped the 797 hit its 100,000-hour milestone. Retired Finning technician Bill McDougall is another whose contribution can't be forgotten, nor underestimated. According to Davis, McDougall's input on technical issues is a huge part of why the 797 works as well as it does. "This was a developmental product when we first introduced it. The respect that Caterpillar and the customer had for Bill's knowledge was a big part of this thing being successful," Davis says.

Jim Carter, president and CEO of Syncrude at the time of the 797's development and now a member of Finning's board of directors, was also essential in making the 797 a reality. "He had the vision and drive that we needed to have this type of hauling unit in the oil sands. He helped Caterpillar to visualize and design the 797. All that hard work and thoughtfulness led to the 797's fruition," Davis says.

Since selling the first 797 to Syncrude, Finning has delivered more than 280 of

the mining trucks to customers in western Canada, most working in the Albertan oil sands.

Davis attended the June 6 barbecue at Aurora in celebration of the 17-100's milestone. Among the guests were representatives from Syncrude, Caterpillar and Finning, all had played a part in the 797 story somewhere along the line. For Davis, being there to celebrate the milestone was a rewarding experience. "What we've delivered is outstanding, and we should all be proud that we had a part in it, everybody along the way."

At the end of the day, the 797 mining truck is representative of the kind of success that can happen when groups collaborate to reach a common goal: a superior product that meets the needs of the customer. Davis summarizes, "I am very proud to be part of the Finning and Caterpillar family. When you see something you had a small piece in still working 14 years later – if you really think about it, it's quite humbling. It just goes to show, this product support capacity and the value proposition of Finning and Caterpillar, it's something we should all be proud of and never take for granted." ●



THE NEW STANDARD: The new 988K gets its power from a Caterpillar C18 ACERT™ engine. The six-cylinder, fourstroke design meets US EPA Tier 4 Final /EU Stage IV emission requirements.

FEEDBACK FUELS EFFICIENCY

The new Cat 988K features a variety of upgrades, just in time for the 988 model's 50th anniversary

BY CAT MAGAZINE

In 2013, it will be the 50th anniversary of the Cat 988 model.

Caterpillar first started producing the wheel loader in 1963. Today, more than 20,000 units have been sold. Over the past decade, however, little has changed on the platform in terms of structures and linkage. But this model's changes are substantial.

If we could only pick one attribute to describe the new, streamlined 988K, it would be efficiency. "After hearing feedback from our customers, one thing was clear. They wanted a more efficient machine, especially when it comes to fuel consumption," says Todd Tuntland, product application specialist.

The machine's fuel efficiency is the result of a culmination of modifications made from the bucket's cutting edge to the rear bumper and everything in between.

Z-Bar Linkage

Currently, the 988H uses a boom system, which is a box section structure. On the 988K, that will be changed to a z-bar linkage with two, solid steel lift arms, similar to the 988F. This was done to increase application flexibility. Going back to the z-bar design shortened the machine, gave it more dump clearance and improved centre visibility.

Much more went into that design change.

"We also used software to optimize the linkage pin layout even before iron was cut. The goal was to help decrease fuel burn, enhance fill factors and add to the machine's efficiency," adds Todd. Carried over from the 988H are the performance series buckets. "The same profile and volumes will be available on the 988K."

Fuel Efficiency

Efficiency is the name of the game with the 988K, so Cat made significant changes and improvements to lower fuel consumption. In fact, Caterpillar was able to





SMOOTH RIDE: The 988K boasts a completely redesigned cab that is quieter than the 988H and more comfortable.

reduce consumption by 15 per cent, compared to the latest 988H. In certain applications, that number goes up to 20 per cent. One factor contributing to those numbers is engine speed, or revolutions per minute (rpm). For example, high idle has been dropped more than 200 rpm while still maintaining performance. Low idle rpm was also reduced by 100 rpm. Another big contributor is Economy Mode. “The great thing about Economy Mode is that an operator can still use throttle lock but achieve the efficiency of manual throttle. The operator controls desired engine speed with the left pedal and implements. That leads to significant fuel savings,” says Todd. The 988K has another fuel-efficiency enabler – hydraulic flow sharing. The system, called Positive Flow Control can produce maximum hydraulic flow at much lower rpm. “Imbedded into the hydraulic system are an implement pump and a steering pump. If the operator isn’t using the steering, hydraulic flow is ‘borrowed’ from the steering pump so lower engine speeds, along with cycle times, can be maintained,” says Todd.

Cat made significant changes and improvements to lower fuel consumption.

Fuel efficiency vs. the competition

When it comes to fuel consumption, Todd admits the 988K has the advantage. Thanks to numerous improvements on the 988K, the machine is just as fuel-efficient as any in its class. “Against the 988H, we’re 15 per cent better with fuel economy and we’ve eliminated any of the competition’s fuel advantage,” Todd says with confidence.

Additional Improvements

Many other improvements also grace the new 988K. The cab is quieter and completely redesigned including seat-mounted controls to decrease operator fatigue and improve comfort. The overhead controls have been repositioned to the right hand console. “On the control panel, there is a real-time fuel display so the operator can see fuel consumption in terms of litres per hour (gallons). Or, if using a payload control system, the operator can look at tonnes per litre,” explains Todd.

Grand introduction

The Cat 988K goes into production in 2013. According to Todd, “We’re estimating August is when we would load the line in Aurora, Illinois and start building the machines. We plan to ship in September.” Todd also says Caterpillar had a 988K on display at the international construction machinery trade fair, bauma 2013, in April. The event was the first true public appearance for the machine and effectively acted as the worldwide launch. As far back as May 2012, Caterpillar was conducting 988K demonstrations to get exposure and additional customer reaction. “So far customer feedback has been very positive. Operators have said it’s quicker, smooth, powerful, fast and quiet,” says Todd. With the majority of the 988K improvements coming directly from customers, we’re sure the new front loader will be a big hit. 🎯

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Empowering your success

Skillful Support

The northern region of Vancouver Island is home to a variety of heavy equipment operations and Finning resident service technician Dave Maundrell is up to the task

BY ROBIN SCHROFFEL

Dave Maundrell will tell you he's a lucky man.

As a resident mechanic for northern Vancouver Island, he has the challenge of keeping a very busy and diverse population of heavy equipment operating at top calibre. But the rewards are many: he's doing a job he loves, all while surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in Canada.

Based in Port Hardy, a town of 4,000 on the northern tip of Vancouver Island, Maundrell is responsible for Finning's service in the geographical area north of Woss, 128 kilometres north of Finning's nearest branch at Campbell River.

Aboard his well-equipped service truck and backed by Finning's well-established support network, Maundrell makes service calls to places like Port McNeil, Port Alice, Winter Harbour and Beaver Cove. "Geographically, it's not that far, but a lot of the spots are fairly remote – there's not a lot of good road access," he says.

Still, Maundrell's "community" is relatively small and everyone knows each other; customers typically contact their trusty heavy equipment technician directly. Dave's wife is an integral part of the operation, keeping everything organized. "The position of resident mechanic offers a guy a lot of freedom if you're responsible with your time," he explains.

Business is brisk these days. Finning customers in Maundrell's area are involved in everything from forestry and gravel to wind energy and the coast guard. "My rule of thumb is to try and treat your customers' equipment like it's your own," he says.

His goal is to provide service efficiently and effectively and to keep his customers' machines productive. "I usually get to whoever's broken down first and then whoever's next in line – and then try to respond to calls on a first-come-first-serve basis," Maundrell explains.

Maundrell grew up around heavy equipment in Lillooet, B.C. – his parents were both involved in the forestry industry – so after high school, choosing his career path was a no-brainer. "I wanted to stay in the



When we saw the job opening on the Island, it was the best of both worlds: we'd be able to get back to the coast and keep working with Finning.

industry, so I got into the heavy duty mechanic side of it," he says.

He joined Finning in 2006 as a resident mechanic in Merritt. When an opportunity opened up on the Island in 2011, Maundrell and his wife jumped to take it; they'd previously lived in Haida Gwaii and wanted to raise their three young daughters somewhere similar.

"We always wanted to come back to the coast in some capacity. When we saw the job opening on the Island, it was the best of both worlds: we'd be able to get back to the coast and keep working with Finning," he says.

The decision was definitely the right one. Shortly after relocating, the two were walking their girls to school when they spotted a whale in the bay. Add to that the year-round fishing – ("We filled the freezer last year fishing from the dock in Port Hardy," Maundrell says) – and he knows he's got it made. "I'm right where I want to be. I love my job and I love the community up here," he says.

In fact, when he considers his job and the amount of responsibility Finning has placed in him as well as where he gets to hang his hat at the end of the day, Maundrell can't ask for much more – except maybe a boat. "That's next on the list," he says. ●

Tree of Life

Best practices to decrease equipment-related incidents in the forestry industry

➤ **Only six months into 2013, the forestry industry** in B.C. had already experienced an unusually high number of fatalities. Many of these incidents involved mobile equipment. Reducing such incidents is clearly a priority for the industry and especially so for workers and their families.

“Every time I hear of a fatality I feel ill. Our customers in forestry need resources to prevent these incidents from happening, and we want to help,” says Brian Mulvihill, director of forest products with Finning.

Reynold Hert, board chair and CEO of the B.C. Forest Safety Council, says that part of the problem is that forestry has recently increased its volume of production and hired people who are new to the job or who have been away for a while. They may not be familiar with the equipment they are using or with the circumstances in which they’re working. In other cases, people get too comfortable with equipment and the kind of work they’re doing and forget the importance of, as Hert puts it, doing the basics properly.

Here are four best practices Hert has provided to help decrease the risk of injuries or fatalities due to machinery. While Hert takes a forestry perspective, these safety practices apply to any industry that operates heavy equipment.

Keep a safe distance from operating equipment.

Some of this year’s fatalities involved people outside the cab who were in the danger zone of an operating piece of equipment. They were struck by either the equipment itself or whatever it was handling. This can be avoided by clearly defining the working zone and avoiding that zone whenever a piece of equipment is operating.

Establish rules and procedures for communication.

Sometimes people need to be within the working zone - for instance, when maintenance is performed. To eliminate risk on these occasions, clear procedures must be in place for notifying the operator and for communicating with the operator as maintenance proceeds.



Always lock out and de-energize.

If someone has to be within the working zone of an operating piece of equipment, lock out and de-energize the equipment. If you have to leave the equipment running, stay out of the operating area. In addition, always lower hydraulic attachments and set the parking brake, if equipped, so there is no chance the equipment will suddenly move.

Think about safety before you buy.

A piece of equipment can be modified to make it safer for a specific application. Take the operator’s manual and have someone physically go through all the daily and weekly routines that need to be performed on this piece of equipment while another person supervises. If something looks like it will be risky, talk to the manufacturer or the dealer about installing footing, handholds, grips, or whatever you need to make it more secure. You’ll reduce the risk and workers will actually get their tasks done quicker in the field, so you’ll also become more efficient. ●

Log In

For more information and strategies for keeping everyone safe when equipment is operating, visit www.bcforestsafesafe.org. The website has information specific to forestry, but also some good advice that applies to other industries as well.



THE RIGHT MOVE: Dave Dueck (left), owner of Grindstone Landscaping, never owned a Cat before meeting Finning sales rep Roy Cooper (right). Now, thanks to Cat's ingenuity and Finning's customer care, Dueck owns a whole fleet.





CATERPILLAR CONVERT

Once a devotee of another brand, Dave Dueck made the switch several years ago and hasn't looked back

BY SCOTT ROLLANS PHOTOGRAPHY BY BUFFY GOODMAN

Three years ago, Finning sales rep Roy Cooper spotted a pickup truck driving down an Edmonton street. The company named on the truck, Grindstone Landscaping, was one that Roy had yet to do business with.

To a salesman like Cooper, there are only two types of construction workers in this world: customers, and people he hasn't met. So, naturally, Cooper followed the pickup to its destination and introduced himself to the truck's driver, Grindstone owner Dave Dueck.

Cooper laughs, recalling the reception he received. "Dave said to me, 'Don't talk to me about skid steers, because I'm never going to change.'"

Dueck remembers the exchange even more starkly: "I said it'd be a cold day in hell before I'd buy a Cat skid steer!" he laughs.

Dueck enjoyed a strong relationship with the sales rep at a competitor, and had an almost religious devotion to that company's foot-controlled skid steers. "I told Roy, 'I'm a diehard and I always will be. If I ever need something bigger, I'll call ya.'"

That time arrived sooner than expected. A couple of years later, Grindstone had grown into a much larger operation (and continues to grow today) and Dueck had launched a second company, Mountaintop Stone Sales, supplying landscape stone and rock to the public and to landscaping companies through wholesales. These days his fleet consists of about a dozen pieces of equipment. And, most of that iron is Cat, particularly 252B3s.

Dueck's success is a classic tale of elbow grease and chutzpah. He started Grindstone seven years ago in Winnipeg. "I was just a guy with a wheelbarrow and a trailer," he recalls. On a vacation to Edmonton, he borrowed a buddy's car and drove around town. When he stumbled across one high-end neighbourhood, his entrepreneurial instincts kicked in. He started ringing doorbells and handing out business cards. It wasn't long before he landed his first Edmonton customer.

Dueck laughs, recalling his own naiveté. "I actually gave him a napkin drawing of what we could do, and I gave him a price. I didn't know this at the time, but I was 50 per cent lower than his first landscaper, who was based in Edmonton. But, I thought I was making money!"

In any case, Dueck now had his foot in the door. That first job turned into another, and another. Before long, a wheelbarrow and a trailer weren't enough. "I bought my first machine and that's all I had for the longest time," says Dueck. "I was a one-man show. Then, I started hiring guys, and I started buying more machines. In 2010, I bought eight or nine more."

Then, last year, when Dueck's operations grew to the point where he needed something larger, he called Cooper, who after reviewing Dueck's situation pointed him in the best direction for his business. After a handshake and some paperwork, Dueck made his first Finning purchase, a Caterpillar 907H compact wheel loader.

Within days, Dueck was blown away by his new 907H. "Anything we needed it to lift, anything we needed it to do, it was the perfect machine," he marvels. "So, I ended up buying another one, and now I've got two. They're incredible machines."

Dueck also uses the 907Hs on snow removal and has come to prefer using the 907Hs to his previous skid steers. "I drive it myself across the city to various sites," he explains. "It's as fast, or faster, than having to load up a skid steer on a truck and haul it around. There is a lot more room in the cab and I can see all around me. The best part is that it can move more snow and clear a parking lot quicker than I could with my old skid steers."

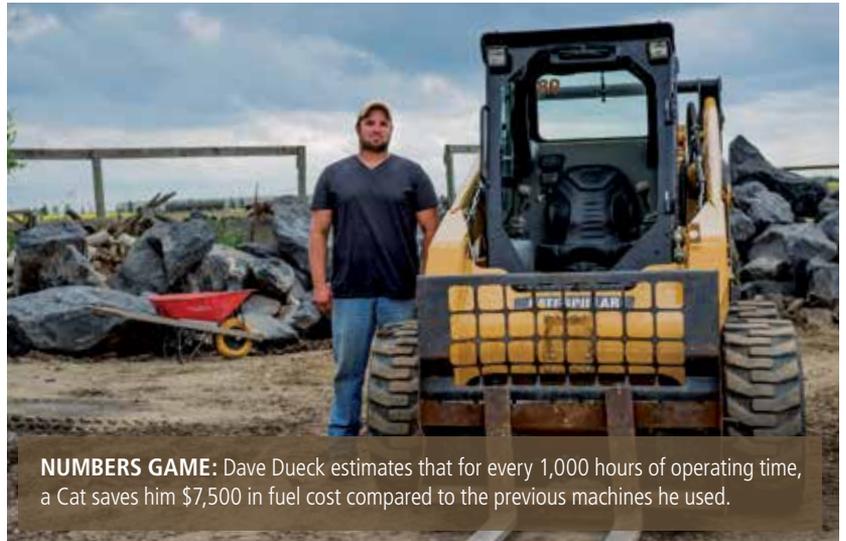
Based on that experience, Dueck reluctantly agreed to take a look at Caterpillar's skid steers as a replacement for his old ones. Last winter, he tried out a couple of Cats alongside his former favourite brand (like many landscapers, he does snow removal in the off-season). Operating the Cat's full foot throttle, Dueck burned less than half the fuel he did when using the competing brand.

Dueck just had to run the numbers to comprehend the savings potential in front of him. And, the numbers didn't lie: for every 1,000 hours of operating time, a Cat would save him \$7,500 in fuel costs. He told Cooper, "For every five Cats I buy, every year I get a free one in fuel savings."

Dueck still keeps his original machine in the yard, but he reserves it for small jobs. Now that he's used to a Caterpillar joystick, he finds the other machine's foot controls too taxing. "If I'm running for more than an hour in that thing my knees ache, and I don't even have bad knees. Also my calves are sore and the same goes for my shins. The Cat is just more comfortable, no question about it."

Although Dueck had been a hard-core foot-control guy, he was surprised at how quickly he adapted to the Caterpillar skid steers. "Within the first 20 minutes, I knew what I was doing. And within the first hour, I was comfortable."

Looking back, Dueck says he was silly to resist change. "A lot has to do with being stubborn, and not wanting to learn something new. The older I get, the more I learn that you need to be more open to things.



NUMBERS GAME: Dave Dueck estimates that for every 1,000 hours of operating time, a Cat saves him \$7,500 in fuel cost compared to the previous machines he used.

You can't have tunnel vision, because you're not going to be successful that way."

Throughout the transition, Dueck was struck by Cooper's depth of knowledge. Cooper can't take all the credit though, and attributes his knowledge to the training provided by Finning and Caterpillar. "We know our machines from top to bottom, but we're also trained on our competitors' machines," he observes. "The guys in our branch and in the general construction division of Finning probably know more about the competitors' machines than the competitors' own salesmen do. And that gives us a distinct advantage."

Dueck has also been amazed at Finning's post-sales service. On December 23, for example, he called Cooper, who in turn called his service department at Finning's dedicated general construction division. They sent out a mechanic late at night to fix an O-ring issue. For a guy plowing 40 parking lots a night, the prompt assistance was a lifesaver, says Dueck. "Ultimately, you're trying to keep the customer happy. And they don't want to hear excuses. Just get the job done."

Service like that also makes a salesman's job easier, says Cooper. "I'll sell the first one, but my service department sells the rest."

In contrast, one of Dueck's remaining original machines is currently out of service, and he has been waiting over four weeks for a replacement cylinder. "It's apparently on order," he grumbles. "Meanwhile, we're down a machine. The payments don't stop. And I want to make money. Over four weeks at \$100 per hour in lost revenue, well you do the math; it adds up. I only have from May to November, if I'm lucky, and we all know how soon Edmonton's winter comes."

Although Finning works with the biggest players in the construction industry, Cooper and the entire general construction division take pride in delivering the same level of service to smaller companies – not just outfits like Grindstone, but single-person owner-operators as well. "Dave has a fleet, but a lot of our customers only have one machine. So, if we have an owner-operator down for three weeks, he's going to suffer."

On top of that, says Cooper, you can never tell which small operations will grow into bigger ones. "Dave arrived here with a pickup truck in 2007. And now he has a dozen machines, and a dozen or so employees. You have to get in on the ground floor with guys, and treat them right from day one."

Dueck agrees. "I remember, even now, who wouldn't give me the time of day back when I started, and who would. Dueck may always have a soft spot for his original machines because of the role they played in his early days, but, as his businesses continue to grow, he realizes that those days are behind him. "Cat's purchase price may seem higher at first, but they actually cost a lot less in the long run," he explains. "I'm not going to buy another brand, I'll tell you that right now. I like Cat. I like the service. On the skid steer and loader side, they're everything I could expect from a machine and more. Then add to that the best service support, why would I go anywhere else?" ●

The SITECH Advantage

BY DAVID DICENZO

Okanagan Aggregates took an opportunity to explore a new technology that paid off quickly

➤ **Road grading has never been a big part of the portfolio** at Okanagan Aggregates Ltd., an Armstrong, B.C.-based aggregate and paving company that has been in business since 1983. So when general manager Russell Crawford received word that the company landed a contract to work on the Trans-Canada Highway in Banff National Park, he sought some technical help.

As Crawford says, “It was time to take the plunge.” So the company invested in an assortment of Trimble equipment to use with two Cat machines, a 140H grader and a 328D excavator.

This contract gave the management at Okanagan Aggregates the opportunity to explore the new technology they’d been hearing about. The company had been considering making a technology investment from SITECH Western Canada (Finning’s distribution network for Trimble technology) for quite some time. Finning’s Vernon branch manager, Lee Callow, connected Okanagan with SITECH to complete the sale of a package that offered GPS-based machine control, paving control, a site positioning layout tool and software solutions.

Crawford knew that bringing his company up to date with the latest technology was the right move, but what shocked him and his staff was just how quickly the modernized system began to pay for itself. “In the past, we contracted out surveying,” he says. At a rate of \$130 an hour, a surveyor was expensive. Acquiring the Trimble technology opened the door to doing things new ways. “We put a civil tech grad out there with the Trimble survey equipment to work in conjunction with the contract surveyor. Pretty quickly, the contract surveyor told us, ‘I don’t need to be here. His equipment is newer and faster than mine already.’ We were expecting to save some money on surveying but we were not expecting to eliminate the need for a contract survey crew immediately.”

No stakes, no contract surveyors and less fuel consumption lead to significant savings and efficiency.



SITECH’s Ed Picher helped convince Crawford to give the Trimble system a shot, but the sale is just one small part of the equation. SITECH also holds training sessions to school customers on how to maximize the benefits of their equipment and software. Crawford recognized the potential in these training sessions and sent brothers

Mike and Josh Verhage (quality control coordinator and surveyor, respectively) to a four-day course and presentation session SITECH held in Surrey, complete with staff from Trimble to explain the software and its uses. But Okanagan Aggregates wasn’t the only business that saw the potential in these sessions, recalls Picher, as SITECH

customers showed up in big numbers.

“It was standing room only – the second-highest attended event like this in North America,” says Picher. “We’re really proud of this.”

After the training, the benefits of Trimble systems become even clearer to those in attendance.

“With 3-D machine control, you eliminate rework because your blade always knows where the grade is,” explains Picher. “There is no overcut and no undercut. The smoothness is greatly improved because of hydraulics initiating the function of the blade.”

No stakes, no contract surveyors and less fuel consumption because of the improved accuracy lead to significant savings and efficiency. Crawford can relate. The Verhage brothers returned to their company armed with confidence and energy.

“It’s very much like a new toy,” says Crawford. “They came back really excited and had learned quite a bit. They got a chance to play with the software and see everything it can do,” he adds, noting that Mike used the technology to do his own topographical study of the company’s yard for a report required by the Ministry of Mines.

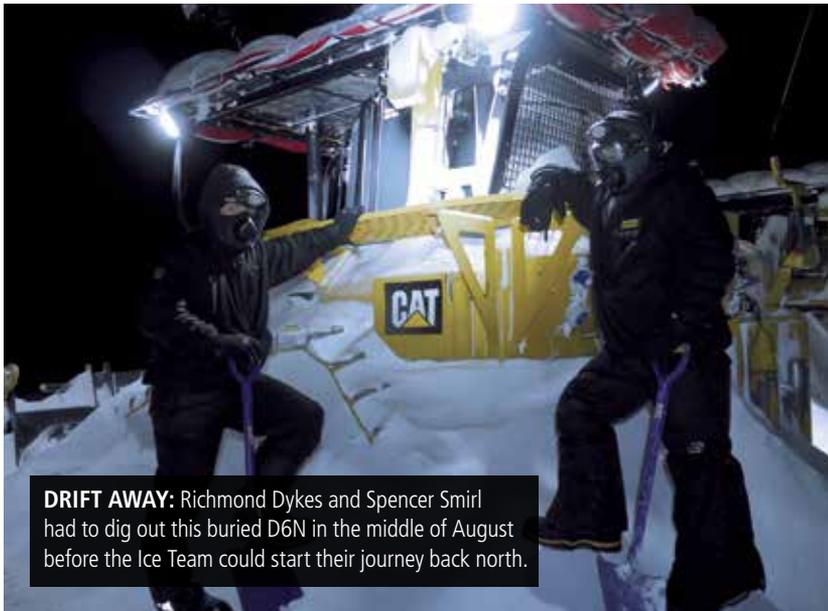
According to Finning’s Callow, these systems, which have numerous applications in civil construction, are the future in the industry. “It improves the contractors’ efficiency and their ability to bid on jobs, so much that if you don’t use this technology, it will limit what you do moving forward,” he says. “People that were successful in the past still have to keep up.”

From Crawford’s side, taking the plunge has been well worth it. “It was a great decision,” he says. “We’ve had no second thoughts.” ●



Out In the Cold

The Coldest Journey didn't go as expected, but Spencer Smirl and the rest of the Ice Team have no regrets



DRIFT AWAY: Richmond Dykes and Spencer Smirl had to dig out this buried D6N in the middle of August before the Ice Team could start their journey back north.



ON THE HORIZON: When the wind died down and visibility returned, the Ice Team witnessed spectacular, although limited, colour in the sky.

I was disappointed in our failed traverse, but relieved that I wasn't going to battle another 100 kilometres of unknown crevasse territory every day for three months.

May 14 was a very difficult day for the Ice Team of The Coldest Journey.

For those of you reading this, it was likely just another spring day, but for the five of us clawing our way toward the South Pole, it was far from ordinary. We had been battling our way through extremely hazardous, crevassed terrain for three weeks, in what was the worst weather imaginable. The temperature wasn't the worst we'd faced, ranging only in the mid -40°C range, but winds fluctuated between 70 km/h and 100 km/h, creating wind-chill temperatures around -80°C. With this wind chill, and visibility less than a few metres, it was very dangerous to go outside. However, there were a few daily tasks to complete each day that require some time out in the elements. The human body wasn't designed to cope with such extreme conditions and neither were the heating and defrosting capabilities of a Cat bulldozer cab. I think I used the ice scraper on the inside of the windows as much as on the outside. That particular afternoon was one of only a few that month where the horizon was actually visible. It was also the last day we would see the sun.

It had been three months since we watched the *S.A. Agulas* sail away, leaving us on the shores of Crown Bay. Watching the sun set for the last time, knowing it would be another three months before we feel its warmth again, left me more alone and isolated than I had been at any point of our adventure.

The difficulty of saying goodbye to the sun, coincidentally, came the same day we made our hardest decision yet as a team. Due to the unforeseen terrestrial difficulties along our selected route, we were forced to abandon our record-breaking traverse of the Antarctic continent. Being a mere 350 kilometres inland of Crown Bay, where this epic adventure began, made this a very disappointing decision. The frequency and the sheer magnitude of the crevasses reached a point where the risk to both man and machine was far too great to continue. Furthermore, the difficulty we had with this terrain over the previous three weeks had massively depleted our already strict fuel rations. Our assumptions, based on limited satellite surveillance available in this part of the world, were that we would have approximately another 100 kilometres of similar terrain before any extended improvement in travel occurred. It was already guaranteed we would not have the time to successfully complete the crossing in

winter by the spring equinox. Our battle against the crevasses meant we would not have enough fuel either.

We had decided that the latitude 75 degrees south was to be our PNR (point of no return). A point where we would assess our fuel usage and the amount of fuel left to determine if we could reach the other side. If not, we would turn back. We were still 200 kilometres north of that location when we decided to turn back. Our PNR was chosen because, at just slightly higher than 3200 metres, it was to be the highest point of elevation along our route. From that point on we could anticipate a massive increase in our fuel economy as all future travel would be essentially downhill. We all knew that if we continued on at the current pace, not only would it take us until mid-August to reach 75 degrees south, we would have to turn back regardless due to fuel consumption. Knowing this, we felt that to continue to venture south would be incredibly irresponsible. Not only would the science programs suffer because every waking moment was spent pawing our way south, leaving little time to conduct and contribute to the various programs, but the possibility of condemning a Cat D6N or a caboose to a seemingly bottomless crevasse would put us in a dangerous position. This would cost millions in evacuation and recovery as well as create an embarrassing situation for the team

WASTE NOT: To be as fuel efficient as possible, the Ice Team used a D6N to tip over the fuel scoot in order to recover every last drop.



WINTER TAN: Spencer says he will have a different outlook on summer when he returns from the Antarctic.



and the various organizations we represent.

Turning around and heading north was a huge blow to the morale of the team. We spent the next two weeks carefully navigating our way out of that particular crevasse field. The depressing blow of the decision, coupled with the fact that Richmond and I hadn't had a day off in over six weeks, made for a tense living environment during our retreat. Finally, we arrived at our current location, on the southern edge of what we know to be five kilometres of safe terrain. Then we got a day off; actually, we took two. It felt so good to finally relax. Although I was grossly disappointed in our failed traverse, I was relieved that I wasn't going to have to battle another 100 kilometres of unknown crevasse territory every day for the next three months.

Our commitment to our science program has dictated that we stay at this altitude as long as we can. Our intention is to camp at this location until sometime the beginning of September. When we first arrived at this location we had almost a full week of beautiful conditions. We escaped the wind and temperatures climbed as high as -25°C . It made for the best weather we had seen since the beginning of our expedition back

DEEP FREEZE: During the expedition, the Ice Team regularly faced wind chill temperatures of -80°C .



in March. This unusual bit of good weather made it much easier to complete some cargo rearrangement as well as some minor repairs to the two Cat D6Ns before we entered hibernation mode for the winter. After my daily rounds, I have some free time. I usually spend it lying in my bunk watching movies or surfing the web. I was also lucky enough to have Axe Music sponsor me a Rain Song Carbon Fibre acoustic guitar. The rest of the guys haven't complained yet so my skills must be improving.

A year ago I would have admitted that winter was my favourite season. Nothing beats a blue bird powder day, whether you're shredding down through the trees of your favourite mountain or planting that first high mark in a back country bowl, I lived for winter. This expedition has been an amazing experience. I feel very grateful to Finning for allowing me the privilege. However, I think that after 18 months of winter, I will have a completely different outlook on summer.

Both of the Cats we brought with us have proven to be extremely reliable and very resilient to the climactic conditions of the Antarctic. Due to fuel constraints, the machines had to be shut down at night, and that always made me a little nervous. After testing the vehicle tents in Northern Sweden in January 2012, I was satisfied enough to shut them down in any temperature, so long as they would spend the night under the tents. With the use of the Webasto heating system I was positive we would have no problems starting these units in any condition with the help of these insulating aids. But, in the Antarctic nothing goes as planned. Due to the high winds we were constantly subjected to during our traverse, we were never able to safely deploy these tents. In temperatures as low as -50°C , with wind-chills approaching -80°C , the Cat machines still started up every morning. During a discussion I had with the lead equipment tech at the Belgium research facility, he was extremely surprised that we had no intentions of blending a Cetane booster into our fuel for operating the D6Ns at altitude. With the JP-8 aviation fuel we were running in the D6Ns, and the altitudes we would be climbing to, this technician was very skeptical of our ability to re-start the machines. Morning after frigid morning, the D6Ns never let me down. Currently the D6Ns lay dormant, buried under six weeks of snow along with all our fuel scoots and the sledges we use to ride the cabooses.

The past five weeks have been the worst weather of the entire expedition. Temperatures as low as -55°C , winds gusting up to 120 km/h and enough blowing snow in the air to reduce the visibility to a few metres. I hope that sometime between now and the end of August the weather will improve enough for me to get everything dug out of the snow so we can prepare for our 350-kilometre trek back to the coast. The air traffic resumes at the Princess Elisabeth Research Station in early November. On one of those planes there's a window seat with my name on it. ☘

Portrait: *Les & Linden Lokos*



For the last 41 years, Les Lokos has been part of Finning's branch in Inuvik, one of the company's smallest. Two years ago the branch doubled in size when he brought an apprentice into the Finning family to share the workload and transition for his eventual retirement. New to the Finning family but not to Les, that person is his son, Linden Lokos.

The sole Finning representative in the community, Les has his hands full taking on several different roles within the company depending on customers' needs. When he's not in charge of parts and inventory, he has been

the region's service specialist drawing on his experience as a heavy duty mechanic.

Les has seen great change to the company's parts systems he has used during his four decades on the job and recalls how different things were before computers. He admits he isn't as comfortable in front of a keyboard as he is working on a Cat, but luckily, that's where Linden comes in. "I'm teaching him the parts end of things and he's really catching on," Les says. "If I wasn't preparing to retire in the next year or so, he'd probably be teaching me a lot on the current software system."

Finning is all about customer relationships

and Les knows this as well as anyone. He's spent decades with some customers who have become like a second family over the years. He recognizes the challenges that his retirement may bring for Finning regarding those long-term relationships, but if you ask Les, there's no one better to take his place than his own flesh and blood. "I think there will definitely be an adjustment period when I leave because I've worked with customers for so long and I know their machines," Les explains. "But Linden is coming along great; the two of us are quite alike so I think he'll manage just fine." ●

BILL'S BUSINESS FITNESS PROTECTION!



Ohhh that can't be right.

Honey! This scale is waaaaay off. Also, I think these pants shrunk.

Nothing wrong with the scale OR your pants Bill.

I've been noticing that you're putting on a few pounds lately.

But I work at a physically demanding job!

Which part? The sitting at a desk or the sitting in the cab of a dozer?

Uncle Bill ...

... why don't you use that pedometer app I installed on your phone? It'll track how many steps you take in a day!

The next day ...

Hey, uncle Bill! Let's see how you did yesterday!

512?? You only took 512 steps the entire day?

Is that bad? Is my phone broken like the scale is?

Look, you should be faking at least 10,000 to help maintain a healthy weight. Why don't you try my Zumba class? I'm going tonight!

You mean like that aerobics guy Pritchard Fitzsimmons? No way, I'm not prancing around in spandex!

It's not like that! It's a great workout and you can wear whatever makes you comfortable.

Later ...

Uncle Bill, are you ready? Where's your workout gear?

What? This makes me comfortable!

At the class ...

Is ... this your first time?

(huff, puff) H-how'd you ... (wheeze) know?

The work boots are a dead giveaway.



➤ FINNING FIRST

These Finning service trucks took part in the National Forest Products Week parade in Kamloops in 1963. The handpainted signs declared "Finning First" in Kamloops and all of B.C. when it comes to Cat parts, service and sales. Though the trucks look a bit different today, Finning is still first when it comes to all things Cat in western Canada.

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