

FOCUS

WINTER 2020



Hitachi ZW80 The perfect snow machine!

- Hitachi launches ZW30 T4F that's compact, easy to operate and safe
- Seward Township depends on Hitachi ZW180-6 wheel loader for snow removal
- Haley Construction expands with Hitachi ZW180 and ZW220
- Sy-Klone's RESPA CF-2 filters meet jobsite air quality head on

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Welcome to our winter edition of *FOCUS* magazine

FOCUS magazine, first published in 2003, was inspired by a team of Kawasaki dealer personnel, satisfied customers and an eager Kawasaki marketing team who wanted to bring compelling stories, tips and industry news to wheel loader users throughout North America. Fifteen years later, our goals remain the same, our focus renewed with the global vision of Hitachi.

Just in time for snowy weather, Hitachi's ZW80 provides the "perfect snow machine" for Reliable Plowing Specialists Inc. The Macedonia, Ohio-based company services 450 commercial properties, and President Norm Detrick says the snow removal business requires total customer satisfaction — something the ZW80 helps achieve. Read about their business success on **page 3**.

When Seward Township in Illinois needed to replace their motor grader, they chose a new Hitachi ZW180-6 wheel loader for its versatility. Now, they can offer snow removal, light earthmoving applications and even a rescue operation. Read about the way Hitachi makes their jobs safer and easier on **page 6**.

Hitachi debuts its new compact wheel loader ZW30 T4F, an easy-to-operate, safe and productive model that offers tremendous visibility. See the details of the new ZW30 T4F on **page 8**.

The dangers of dust and airborne debris is harmful to the health and safety of your operators. Hitachi, in partnership with Sy-Klone, is adding the RESPA Cab Air Quality System that can be installed on any machine with an enclosed cab. Find information about the RESPA kits for select Hitachi wheel loader models on **page 9**.

J.D. Raymond Transport wanted to expand into the concrete market. They bought Haley Construction and leased the Hitachi ZW180-6 and the ZW220-6 after testing them in the new operation. Follow their decision-making process on **page 10**.

LET IT SNOW!

Story and photos by Therese Dunphy



For more than 30 years, Macedonia, Ohio-based Reliable Snow Plowing Specialists Inc. has served the commercial snow removal market. The company services 450 commercial properties from its headquarters and 50 satellite locations throughout the northern half of the state. In an intensely competitive business, its success is based upon a simple premise: living up to its name.

“What’s important is taking care of customers and getting the results that you promised for each customer,” says Norm Detrick, the company’s president. “It’s all about customer service.”

In addition to their contractual obligations, Detrick says he believes the company has a moral obligation to protect the people walking in and out of customers’ businesses. “There are over a million lives that we impact with each storm,” he adds. “We take it seriously.”

In turn, Reliable Snow Plowing depends on a fleet that can deliver uptime, as well as a dealer who can deliver on its

maintenance needs and a manufacturer who ensures a high-quality product and parts availability.

Building partnerships

To promptly service their 450 commercial customers, Reliable deploys a varied equipment fleet that is evolving through a key partnership with RECO Equipment Inc., its area Hitachi dealer. Over the past several years, Detrick has worked with Dave Ferroni, RECO’s territory sales manager, to determine how Hitachi loaders could best serve the company’s snowplowing needs.

"The partnership started off small and grew as the trust grew," Detrick says. It began with short-term rentals to meet temporary needs created by large-scale storms. Last winter, Reliable expanded its rental program using more than a dozen Hitachi loaders in various sizes from late October until early April. As it evaluated the loaders, Reliable also eyed its relationship with RECO and Hitachi to see if it was a good fit.

"Dave circled the wagons and got everyone talking about our unique needs," Detrick says. Through a series of meetings, Ferroni shared his vision of what the partnership could look like in the future. "Their work culture is remarkable," Ferroni says. "They all understand that the goal of the company is total customer satisfaction."

Expanding the fleet

Ultimately, Detrick opted to lease 21 ZW80 loaders in the first phase of a multiyear, multiphase fleet expansion. Two factors drew him to the model: its dependability and its ability to work in cold temperatures. "It's a cold-blooded machine; that really appeals to us," he

explains. "We knew this size works really well for us. We call the ZW80 the perfect snow machine!"

The 12,220-pound ZW80 boasts 8,280 pounds of breakout force, with access to extra torque via its manually locking differential — perfect for lifting wet, heavy snow. The center-pin area has robust support structures as well as large pins and bearings. This ensures a steady bucket lift. The fastest machine in its class, the ZW80 can also zip around a jobsite with a top speed of 21.1 mph.

Building a matched fleet creates a strategic advantage for the business for several reasons, Detrick says. Most importantly, equipment operators can get into any one of the loaders and get straight to work. In a market where the operator hops into the cab at 2 or 3 a.m., intuitive operations are particularly important for optimizing safety. The fully enclosed cab is sound insulated to provide a quiet, distraction-free environment, and floor-to-ceiling tinted glass windows — with a pillarless design — provide the clear lines of sight needed for plowing during snow squalls.



Norm Detrick, president of Reliable Snow Plowing Inc., monitors storm conditions in the company's command center.

Expanding the fleet with ZW80s also streamlines maintenance. "The learning curve that goes into supporting and maintaining a fleet is drawn down when you're dealing with a matched fleet," Detrick adds. From a serviceability perspective, it also minimizes stocking requirements. He and Ferroni methodically reviewed which components should be kept in stock. Both Reliable Snow Plowing and RECO stock a backup unit while RECO maintains inventory of necessary maintenance items to ensure that Reliable can always meet its customers' needs.

"We went through this and took a real-world approach," Detrick says. "Hitachi delivered a turnkey solution and have supported it with multiple branches and multiple mechanics in the field. That was a strategic advantage they brought to the field."

Mixing high- and low-tech strategies

Meeting customer needs demands strong communication among Reliable Snow Plowing's multiple locations and staff. That communication includes a mix of high-tech and low-tech strategies modeled after first responders such as police and fire departments. For example, most communication between snow fighters is via two-way radios and pagers. "People laugh at us, but you know what? The doggone things work," Detrick says. In fact, pagers allow him to contact one



“ We call the ZW80 the perfect snow machine! ”

– Norm Detrick, President of Reliable Snow Plowing Specialists Inc.

employee or 800 within seconds. He appreciates that efficiency.

From a high-tech perspective, snowplows are equipped with plow cams that allow the business to track weather conditions in real time. At the company's command center, a grid-like display showcases the view from 150 cameras placed across Reliable Snow Plowing's entire market. This helps the company track lake effect storms — which can change at a moment's notice — as they move through the area. "It gives you a situational awareness of how a storm is coming in and what the conditions are on pavement," Detrick says, explaining that no two lake effect storms are the same.

This storm tracking ability is so valuable that it led to an innovative partnership between Reliable Snow Plowing and Channel 19, northeast Ohio's CBS affiliate. Through that alliance, the television station has access to more than two dozen of Reliable's snowplow cameras. "It gives them a tremendous amount of shot diversity and a different way to tell the weather story," Detrick explains. "The flip side is they give us an open door to their meteorologist."

“Hitachi delivered a turnkey solution and have supported it with multiple branches and multiple mechanics in the field. That was a strategic advantage they brought to the field.”

– Norm Detrick, President of Reliable Snow Plowing Specialists Inc.

When a storm front moves into the area, it's not unusual for Detrick to talk to the meteorologist throughout the event and get up-to-the-minute pinpoint forecasts. These forecasts help the company provide the best possible service to its customers by allowing it to move plow trucks and sidewalk shovellers to the areas of its market that most need them during each storm.

Planning for the future

Through strategic partnerships and savvy business practices, Reliable Snow Plowing enjoys its reputation as the premiere service provider in its market and intends to stay on top. The second and third phases of fleet expansion will each add another 21 ZW80s to the fleet over the coming years.

"This product is very, very dependable," Detrick says. "It's not only a high-quality product that works well, but also at a price point that is favorable. The value makes a lot of sense."

"Going forward, we have the solutions to build this into something great," Ferroni adds. "It's a win-win partnership for Reliable Snow Plowing, RECO Equipment and Hitachi wheel loaders." ■

Reliable Snow Plowing Specialists Inc. is located at 8020 Highland Pointe Parkway, Macedonia, Ohio. For more information, call 330-467-7273 or visit reliablesnowplowing.net.

Snow Fighters!

Innovations in training and retention

To ensure its employees have the operational and equipment knowledge needed to be highly effective, Reliable Snow Plowing created an internal training program called Snow Fighter University. "Our core processes are very different from the rest of the industry," says Norm Detrick, president of Reliable Snow Plowing Specialists Inc. "It's a very refined system."

The program combines classroom and hands-on training. Interactive digital training modules are followed by proficiency exams. Trainees run loaders and trucks in the yard well before the snow season begins, and a mentor driver is paired with each trainee. The mentor works with the trainee until they reach proficiency and begin operating independently.

“In these difficult times of COVID, paying the next day helps minimize economic stress for our team members.”

In addition, Reliable exceeds industry employee retention rates by offering rapid compensation. The company recently shifted from weekly pay, which was already faster than industry standards, to next-day pay. They invested approximately \$1 million in hardware and software, including custom programming, to exceed market expectations for compensation. "In this labor market, it's a differentiator," Detrick says. "To make that work, it takes a tremendous infrastructure of technology and systems to pay 800 snow fighters the next day. In these difficult times of COVID, paying the next day helps minimize economic stress for our team members."



MACHINE VERSATILITY ENHANCES SEWARD TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS

From snow removal to rescue missions, new loader demonstrates wide range of capabilities

Seward Township, located in the state of Illinois, has replaced their motor grader with a new Hitachi ZW180-6 wheel loader.

“We bought the Hitachi loader last summer after months of researching what our needs and budget would fit,” says Anne Vickery, highway commissioner for Illinois’ Kendall County.

Jason Vickery, the township’s road supervisor (and Anne’s son), says the decision to dispose of their motor grader and replace it with new equipment was driven by the loss of gravel roads in the township.

“When we bought the grader, we had more than 36 miles of gravel roads that needed attention. Now, we have only one. The grader got a lot of use for a

while. However, in 2003, our township experienced significant growth and we began to pave our roads. Grader use fell year over year,” Anne says.

In winter 2018, the township began searching for a more versatile piece of equipment. They put out a request for a quote to four heavy equipment manufacturers. “We reviewed specs and demo’d the loaders when possible. Numerous times, features that came standard on the Hitachi were add-ons on competitive equipment,” Anne says. In the end, they purchased a Hitachi ZW180-6 wheel loader from Illinois Truck and Equipment located in Morris, Illinois.

“We appreciate the size of the bucket; we can now load salt into trucks more quickly. Its power allows us to lift heavy culverts, rocks and mounds of dirt with ease. Our other equipment doesn’t have the power or capacity to perform

some of the jobs we need completed. Oftentimes, we found ourselves having to rent larger equipment or borrow from another township to complete a project. Overall, the Hitachi loader makes our jobs easier and safer,” Anne says.

■ Hitachi to the rescue

Seward Township uses the ZW180-6 for snow plowing, truck feeding, lift and carry, and light earthmoving applications. A hydraulic quick coupler allows for the quick exchange of attachments. “With the loader, we also remove and replace large culverts, move huge rocks, remove fallen trees and other debris from the road after floods and major storms,” Anne says.

However, shortly after acquiring the ZW180-6, the township added another and unexpected application to the machine’s repertoire: rescue.

Flood waters swept a car and its driver into a creek. “The young man was standing on top of his car while it was still moving through the water,” recalls Anne. “Our township’s Emergency Services contacted Jason, who was able to pluck the young driver off the top of his car with the bucket. Now that’s versatility!”

■ Increased power and fuel efficiency

“The machine’s new Tier 4 Final Cummins engine does not require a diesel particulate filter, thereby reducing fuel consumption and maintenance costs,” says Nick Stipanovich, sales representative for Illinois Truck and Equipment.

The machine’s selective catalytic reduction system uses a simple diesel exhaust fluid system for efficient operation without high engine temperatures. Eliminating the diesel particulate filter components with the SCR system also opens working space in the engine compartment for easier access.

An automatic power-up function responsively increases engine RPM when the loader slows down due to uphill travel. An auto shutdown feature provides fuel and emissions savings. Overall, the Dash 6 model boasts a 7% fuel reduction in V-shape loading and 5% fuel cost in load-and-carry operations.

The transmission is automatic and features a proprietary excavator style load-sensing system. This feature, coupled with a work mode selector, helps deliver the right amount of power for the application. A shift-to-hold switch provides extra traction or torque by overriding automatic transmission settings to maintain the current gear until the switch is pressed again.

“A standard limited slip rear axle helps the operator maintain constant control of the machine and focus on the task at hand,” Stipanovich says.

■ Cab enhancements

The loader features a rollover protection system, enclosed cab with sound suppression, great visibility, market-leading technologies and intuitive controls.

“Rear-view cameras on equipment is essential nowadays and we appreciate the productivity and safety advantages we gain from having 360 degrees of visibility courtesy of the expansive glass and rear-view camera,” Jason says. “The camera pans out wide and lets us see objects and people located close to the rear of the machine and low to the ground. Lines on the in-cab screen mark out every five feet, which aids in safer and faster machine positioning.”

A proximity detection system also provides audible and visual alerts for stationary and moving objects up to 20 feet away from the loader.

The single, pilot-assisted control lever and an auxiliary function lever plus the in-cab operator-friendly LCD color monitor provide intuitive controls. The monitor displays useful information at a glance, such as fluid levels, oil temperature, power mode and images captured by the rear-view camera.

■ Technology reveals hidden data

To help maximize productivity, Hitachi provides ZW180-6 owners with a lifetime subscription to Hitachi’s Global e-Service remote monitoring solution. It allows for remote monitoring of the equipment via Owner’s Site, which provides 24/7 online access and ConSite, a precise asset management suite of tools that helps owners extract maximum value and peak productivity on the job. Detailed data reports on working hours, fuel consumption, operating mode ratio and maintenance scheduling are immediately available. With this real-time data, owners can make more informed decisions, especially when it comes to:

- smart machine deployment
- identifying cost savings opportunities
- identifying equipment operator training

opportunities

- maintenance planning and prolonging machine life
- project management

■ A winter warrior

Snow removal is the wheel loader’s primary task, so it is essential that the machine be optimized for working in the snow.

The Hitachi ZW180 comes equipped with a strong heater, an optional heated seat, and optional cold start feature via an air intake heater. Front and rear wipers and washers keep glass clean in snowy weather. “Plus, large, heated mirrors give a better view even in winter,” Jason says.

Machines engaged in snow removal applications work morning, noon and night. Seeing and being seen are essential to safe, efficient operation. “We added additional lighting for safe operation at night and in low light environments. Drivers and pedestrians need to be able to see us, and extra lighting is a great help,” Jason says.

To clear roads of snow, Illinois Truck and Equipment introduced the township to AMI Attachments’ Reactor Wing Blade. The attachment features a quick attach on both the front angle blade and wing blade so each blade can be used in tandem or individually — an industry first.

“The Hitachi ZW180 in combination with the AMI Reactor Wing Blade is essentially two valuable machines in one,” Stipanovich says. The ZW180 performs as a conventional wheel loader during the mild season but transforms to do the plowing work previously required of a grader. The Hitachi ZW180 open center load sensing hydraulic system along with standard third valve hydraulics made the integration of the AMI wing very straightforward.

“We have yet to test it in a major snow event but have no doubt with the power of the machine and the plow attachments, it will be more than adequate for the job,” Anne says. ■

INTRODUCING THE HITACHI ZW30 T4F COMPACT LOADER

A Simple, Safe and Productive Solution

Hitachi Construction Machinery Loaders America Inc. (HCMA) recently announced the debut of the ZW30 T4F compact wheel loader. The Hitachi compact loaders have earned a reputation for being easy to operate and safe. “I am very happy that we made the investment to have a closed cab. I am sure I will appreciate it even more as winter settles in. The cab is very comfortable, yet still offers tremendous visibility,” says Carmine Capobianco of Glen Head, New York-based Big Valley Nursery.

The ZW30 features an even half-cubic-yard bucket, making it ideal for landscape supply operations, nurseries and other applications calling for precise measurements. However, like its larger Hitachi loader counterparts, the ZW30 handles snow and cleanup operations equally as well. The Kubota engine is powerful and reliable. In conjunction with the responsive hydrostatic transmission, limited slip differentials and rear axle oscillation, this compact loader handles and travels well, no matter how tough the terrain.

In addition to the smooth operation, operators will appreciate the cab environment, which offers excellent visibility, standard air conditioning, adjustable suspension seat and an easy-read dashboard monitor panel.

Additional standard equipment includes a universal quick coupler, sliding windows on both doors, access on both



ZW30 T4F

Basic Specs

- 0.5-cubic-yard bucket capacity
- 25 hp Kubota engine, T4F
- 7,310-pound operating weight
- 4,630 pounds of breakout force

sides of the cab with easy access steps and automatic parking brake system.

Overall, the ZW30 T4F provides a powerful and light footprint with basic specs that include .5 yd³ bucket capacity, 25 hp T4F Kubota engine, operating weight of 7,310 pounds and breakout force of 4,630 pounds.

Simple and seamless solutions

Importantly, all the Hitachi compact wheel loaders are Tier 4F certified with only a diesel oxidation catalyst to control emissions. This sets Hitachi apart from many other compact loaders by offering a simple operation with no complex and expensive emission diesel particulate filters to plug, regenerate, maintain or replace. There's also no selective catalytic reduction to feed with diesel exhaust fluid. Plus, longer maintenance intervals with standard

500-hour engine oil changes and Hitachi's patented HN oil impregnated bushings offer forgiveness if the operator misses a pin greasing service.

Cost savings

The Hitachi compact wheel loaders can offer as much as 10 times the tire life of skid steers and track loaders. Furthermore, these compact wheel loaders save a third on fuel cost and will continue to be productive and long outlive those other machines – in some cases by a factor of two or three times. All that cost savings goes directly to your bottom line. Hitachi delivers dump heights, bucket loads, travel speeds and visibility that other machines cannot touch. With all these benefits, Hitachi compact wheel loaders will pay for themselves in fuel, tire and life expectancy many times over. ■

Avoid the Dangers of Dust

Introducing RESPA-CF2 kits with MERV 16 filters

Dust and airborne debris may be small, but they can cause big problems on construction, aggregate, mining, and other job sites with extreme dust conditions.

When dust enters the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system, it clogs the evaporator core, resulting in expensive repairs, unexpected downtime and warranty claims. When operators in the cab breathe in harmful contaminants such as asbestos, diesel particulate matter, coal dust and silica, lower lung diseases such as mesothelioma, silicosis, black lung disease, and COPD may result. Lung cancer deaths are 50% higher among construction workers than the U.S. population, even when adjusted for smoking, according to the Center for Construction Research and Training.

Hitachi is committed to providing dealers and end users with state-of-the-art solutions to address these critical worksite issues. Sy-Klone's RESPA® Cab Air Quality Systems, which protect both the HVAC system and the operator's air quality, are now available via the Hitachi distribution system.

Preventing dust and debris from impacting your business

The RESPA-CF2 combines a precleaner, pressurizer and high-efficiency filter in one compact unit, providing clean, fresh air inside the operator cab. The RESPA precleaning technology ejects over 90% of the largest dust and debris before they reach the filtration stage, leaving only the smallest particles to be addressed by Sy-Klone's self-cleaning, MERV 16 filter, which is more than 95% efficient in removing respirable particles from 0.3 to 1 micron in size. RESPA's patented filter and filter housing continuously eject dust and debris out of the system, resulting in longer filter life. Providing clean air

to the machine's HVAC system keeps the evaporator core clean, reducing maintenance and repairs.

Improving air quality for your machine operators

RESPA's precleaning and filtration capabilities dramatically reduce operator exposure to harmful microscopic contaminants that are more likely to enter the lower lung and may cause permanent damage. On the job site, the operator enclosure is one of the easiest and most cost-effective environments in which to control air quality. In regulated industries such as mining, exposure levels are averaged over an operator's shift, not just during time in the cab, so providing clean air in the cab can balance exposure elsewhere for acceptable outcomes. RESPA has a demonstrated track record of maintaining conditions under Permissible Exposure Limits on extreme work sites across the world.

Expanding Hitachi's clean air options

For years, Hitachi has partnered with Sy-Klone to provide clean air to engines with the Series 9000 Air Precleaner. We are proud to extend that partnership by adding the RESPA solution to provide clean air to the cab. The RESPA Cab Air Quality System can be installed on any machine with an enclosed cab. RESPA kits with model-specific adaptation parts are now available for select Hitachi wheel loader models.

Sy-Klone is the world leader in precleaning and air filtration for heavy equipment. With over 30 years of experience and more than 100 patents and trademarks, Sy-Klone had developed a suite of solutions to help address the most challenging work environments around the globe. ■

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Four Benefits of Clean Air for Your Fleet and Operators

Sy-Klone's RESPA keeps your operators safer and more comfortable, while keeping machines running longer.

- 1. Improved operator health and safety:** reduced risk of lower lung disease caused by harmful respirable dust
- 2. Increased operator comfort:** well-running HVAC systems improve the operator environment and support employee retention and recruitment
- 3. Reduced HVAC maintenance costs:** evaporator core remains clean
- 4. Improved machine uptime and productivity:** machines meet HVAC service intervals; cab electronics remain clean

Contact your local Hitachi Dealer today for more information on the Sy-Klone RESPA System.





HALEY'S CRUSHES IT WITH HITACHI WHEEL LOADERS

J.D. Raymond Transport expands into concrete market

Story and photos by Aaron Marsh

When J.D. Raymond Transport acquired Haley Construction, they needed dependable, rugged equipment to expand into the concrete crushing market. They chose to replace the existing equipment with Hitachi wheel loaders, a decision based on the breakout force, visibility and operator comfort of the Hitachi ZW180 and ZW220. But it was the strong dealer relationship that sealed the deal.

THE HISTORY

In 1999, John Raymond founded J.D. Raymond Transport with a single truck and trailer. He began by hauling sludge and waste from Massachusetts to Maine. In the years that followed, he grew the business by adding trucks and owner-operators and expanding the field of materials they produced.

Today, J.D. Raymond Transport is focused on producing and transporting

its own materials such as bark chips, mulch and firewood. Raymond was looking to expand the business again in early 2020 and set his sights on acquiring Haley Construction, a Maine-based transit mix concrete manufacturer. He was particularly interested in one of this 85-year-old business' divisions, Redi-Rock of Central Maine, which produces small and large wall blocks that are all approved for municipal construction by the state Department of Transportation.

In April 2020, J.D. Raymond Transport acquired Haley Construction, now known as Haley's. The three Haley's concrete plants in Sangerville, Farmington and Hartland, Maine, were recently supplemented significantly with the purchase of another plant in Monmouth, Maine. Raymond brought on Tyler Erickson, a friend of the family, as general manager of Haley's, and a few months into the acquisition it was time to replace the three wheel loaders used to move materials for concrete production.

CHANGING GEARS

"These were our mainline loaders for plants in Monmouth, Farmington and Sangerville," Erickson explains. The company was considering Hitachi and two other competitor products before purchasing the loaders.



“ The Hitachis offer great visibility. It's a good, comfortable cab, there's plenty of power, there's great controls, and I like the speed of the hydraulics.

— Tyler Erikson, general manager of Haley Construction. ”

Haley's first demo'd the Hitachi ZW180-6 and, because they wanted a larger machine for the Sangerville plant, they also tried out the Hitachi ZW220-6. Erickson says operators leaned toward Hitachi; in particular, the operators said they appreciated the comfort and feel of the machines. The final decision came down to the Hitachi's excellent access to the engine and service points and good visibility from the cab.

"I like the way they dig. It goes right into a pile of stone the same as sand — it slides right in, smooth and easy," operator Reginald Page says. "You just fill the bucket and back away. It has really good traction; it's heavy and balanced enough to hold the back end down when the bucket is full. And it's got great visibility."

Erickson says the operators reported that the Hitachis had better breakout force and more engine power. "And we actually saved money by going with Hitachi. It was a no-brainer at that point."

With some of the competitor machines, "you always felt like you were going in blind. You can't see what you're doing very well, especially loading trucks," Erickson says. "The Hitachis offer great visibility. It's a good, comfortable cab, there's plenty of power, there's great controls, and I like the speed of the hydraulics," he adds.

Raymond also got in and tried out the Hitachi wheel loaders to give his stamp of approval. "I liked the visibility, I liked the power, I liked the ergonomics and the way it felt — it's a pretty rugged

machine. It's a really nice machine," he says. Ultimately, Haley's opted to lease two Hitachi ZW180s and one ZW220 specifically for Sangerville, which is the company's only rock-crushing operation.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

In this case, the decision to go with Hitachi wheel loaders was also dependent on the service provided by the dealership, Frank Martin Sons, which has branches in Fort Kent and Madison, Maine.

That service is supported by ConSite, Hitachi's reporting and analytics system that monitors operational performance of the loaders. "ConSite allows us to be proactive on the service side," says Kris LePage, manager of the Frank Martin Sons Madison branch and an outside salesman. "We can see hours on machines, and we can see trouble codes sometimes even before they know about them."

"Service is the name of the game," he continues. "I always say that I make the first sale, but it's parts and service that come behind me and sell the rest." The dealership handles all scheduled maintenance and any problems that arise utilizing their mobile service trucks.

"Sales-wise, Kris put more into this than any other salesman," Erickson says. "The service and the work that these guys put in has been second to none, including anybody I've dealt with in any area of this industry. Kris followed up, was here to answer questions and was all over it, so the service side of Frank

Martin Sons was great from the start."

LePage — who started out as a heavy equipment operator and then worked as a technician before getting into sales — spends much of his time on the road traveling out to see customers, many of them remote. "I have a beautiful office where I get to work," LePage says about the company truck where he traverses the Maine countryside on his way to see clients.

FORGING AHEAD

"We're very happy with the Hitachi machines. We'd certainly consider Hitachi if we need more," Raymond says. Haley's, which produced 60,000 yards of concrete in 2019, easily surpassed that amount for 2020.

The Hitachi loaders helped support that increased productivity.

Haley's recently installed a parking lot wall at Puritan Medical Products, which produces COVID-19 testing swabs. "We just did a big wall for Puritan. It was a huge project, and we sold all the blocks for this one wall and it wraps all around the parking lot. We've had some awesome work this year," Erickson says.

Even in a difficult economy, it's all that Haley's can do to keep up with demand. "Right now, our inventory for our blocks is across the board in the red," Erickson notes. "I have salesmen that I basically can't let them go out and sell because we can't keep up with the orders that they've already taken. We're extremely busy. Good news, for sure." ■

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