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Komatsu PC360LCi Hydraulic Excavator

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The snow may be flying but action's heating up in the shop at Columbus Equipment Company! This is the time of year to take care of your equipment so it takes care of you as 2024 projects ramp up. In this issue, learn of the best way to do just that. Also, meet the fine folks at VTF Excavation, Robert Jacobs Excavating, and Katie Maassel, one of Ohio's exemplary *Women in Construction*. **We wish you a safe and productive 2024!**



Sincerely,

*Josh*

Josh Stivison  
President

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Operator Alex Goldman works a Houts two-stage ditch project in Mercer County. According to Kyle VanTilburg, cutting the ditch with a Komatsu PC360LCi allowed the operation to be a one operator, one excavator task. The two-stage ditch offers a normal flow line at the base of the ditch with an expanded, upper flow section for significant rain events.



# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

**KOMATSU**

For additional video coverage, visit [columbusequipment.com/news/videos](http://columbusequipment.com/news/videos) for more on and VTF Excavation LLC's experience with Komatsu equipment.

## VTF Excavation LLC EMPLOYS KOMATSU iMC TO SURGE FORWARD AND GIVE BACK

Kyle VanTilburg has been running VTF Excavation LLC for 20 years, but he still describes himself as “a fourth-generation farmer.” And it makes sense, because VTF Excavation is part of the family-owned VanTilburg Farms Inc., which has deep roots in Mercer County, Ohio. While Kyle manages the excavation company, his brothers Matt and Luke take care of the 4,500-acre farm that employs sustainable practices; MVP Dairy, a 4,500-cow, joint-venture dairy; and VTF-Sunrise LLC, a joint-venture, full-service ag retail company that sells and applies ag inputs and services.

VTF Excavation is part of the family-owned VanTilburg Farms Inc., which has deep roots in Mercer County, Ohio.

VTF Excavation grew out of VanTilburg's desire to buy a new tractor some two decades ago. He figured he could provide construction services during farming's off season to justify the tractor's expense and started doing pond work. “That has turned into a \$25-plus-million a year excavation company with over 50 employees,” he said. VTF provides services such as underground utilities, mass excavation, wetland projects, underground sewer and stormwater, and horizontal drilling, serving both the public sector and private customers. It is ODOT and INDOT prequalified.

“We see the benefits every day. The production you can get out of the i-machines is some days literally twofold versus a non-GPS piece of equipment.”

Kyle VanTilburg; Owner, VTF Excavation LLC

The company has grown to nine crews with in-house, design-and-build capabilities and primarily works within a 60-mile radius of Celina. Recently, for example, VTF worked on the Halifax subdivision in Troy, Ohio,

providing 250,000 cubic yards of excavation, an 80-acre SWPPP, 102 house pads and 54 pads for duplex/triplex housing, 9,500 feet each of sanitary sewer and water line, 16,000 feet of storm sewer, 10 ponds, and asphalt paving all within a six-month schedule.



Kyle VanTilburg is a fourth-generation farmer who likes to stay busy. VanTilburg and his family manage a group of construction and agricultural service companies.

VanTilburg has been a Komatsu user from the very beginning, starting with a used D41 he purchased shortly after the company opened. He also adopted GPS technology as soon as it became available. “Basically, every piece of equipment we utilize uses GPS in one shape or another” whether that's Komatsu's integrated Machine Control or an aftermarket system. VTF owns about 16 excavators, ranging from PC88 to PC490, and eight iMC dozers, from D51i to D71i.

“We see the benefits every day,” he said. With machine control, “the production you can get out of the i-machines is some days literally twofold versus a non-GPS piece of equipment.” For instance, a two-stage ditch project in Mercer County recently required just one operator and one iMC excavator to cut in the mile-long ditch. Without machine control, the job would require twice the resources—an excavator, a dozer, a laborer and two operators. “Between the speed and the reduced equipment savings, we had a 2.5-times savings on this section of the project, enabling our bid to be much more competitive.”



VTF Excavation Operator Jim Moehler at the helm of a Komatsu D51EXi on the Mercer County ditch project. Employing iMC technology, VanTilburg was able to save an entire crew, 50% dozer time, which resulted in 20-30% overall savings on the project. Plus, the mile-long ditch was accurately built, maintaining proper flow to the river outlet.

Machine Control also makes it easy to control quantities, especially of aggregates and stone. Before owning iMC machines, “we bid a job knowing that you’d have to put a pretty good fluff factor on your stone, and now we know we can be right down to the exact ton when we cut grade. That means savings for us and savings for our customers.” At the TekniPlex facility in Northwest Ohio—another six-month project—VTF installed more than 30,000 tons of stone, and they were within 1% of estimated quantities, thanks to iMC, VanTilburg said.

“We know we can be right down to the exact ton when we cut grade. That means savings for us and savings for our customers.”

Kyle VanTilburg; Owner, VTF Excavation LLC

The i-machines also ease the skills gap between seasoned operators and less experienced ones, resulting in similar performance and production, he noted. Newer operators benefit because “you can select subgrades, adjust the offsets. and the dozer is going to keep the grade on track.”

The machines also eliminate rework because they

dependably hit grade. VanTilburg used the example of a current project, anaerobic digesters. “They’re round holes in the ground. We can dig those with an i-excavator and put the footer design right into that plan. The excavator will cut down to grade and dig the footer in right as we’re making our excavation. We know it will be on grade the first time,” so there’s no need to send a laborer into the hole to check the grade, cutting labor and increasing worksite safety.



Beyond the iMC technology, VTF likes the quality and power of Komatsu equipment. “Operators really like the 228 with the zero swing, which provides the power and the speed without the hassle of the tail swing,” he said. Operators also praise Komatsu’s smooth operation, even with the 360s and 490s.

The company monitors fuel use and has found Komatsu offers the best fuel economy, VanTilburg





A Komatsu D61PXi is pictured on site work at the Mercer County Fairgrounds. Site work on a 100,000 sq. ft. event center was provided at no charge by VTF Excavation to benefit the local community. Project specifications included installation of 1,200 ft. of 8" waterline, 600 ft. of sanitary sewer line and 780 ft. of storm sewer.

noted. After noticing the fuel consumption of a competing brand it owned, VTF replaced it with a Komatsu. "There is a substantial fuel savings with Komatsu, especially when multiplied out over a year or a lifetime of use."

"The i-machines also ease the skills gap between seasoned operators and less experienced ones, resulting in similar performance and production."

Kyle VanTilburg; Owner, VTF Excavation LLC

VanTilburg values his 20-year relationship with Columbus Equipment Company, noting that sales reps Mike Early and Andrew Tolan are "very knowledgeable and dependable." He appreciates the dealership's ability to remotely access GPS-enabled equipment to troubleshoot or assist operators, and he likes the PM service Komatsu offers on new equipment, especially because Columbus Equipment is flexible about when the service is performed to limit VTF's downtime.

The VanTilburgs are preparing for the fifth generation to join the family businesses, and Kyle sees plenty of work available for VTF Excavation if they do. "The

infrastructure in this country needs to be repaired and there's tremendous demand if you're willing to put boots on the ground and go after the work and get the job done," he said.

"We're big believers in giving back to the community that's provided so much for us over the years."

Kyle VanTilburg; Owner, VTF Excavation LLC

VTF is also willing to put the work in to help Mercer County, where the family has a century of history. Recently, the family contributed and helped raise money for the Grand Event Center at the county fairgrounds, which will be a year-round venue for entertainment and trade shows. VTF Excavating is doing site sitework, including waterline and storm and sanitary sewer, working pro bono as it has on other community projects.

"We have deep ties to the community and, as an employer here, we want to give back to our employees. They are our most important assets and are generally from right here locally. We're big believers in giving back to the community that's provided so much for us over the years," VanTilburg said. ▶





# Komatsu iMC 2.0

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## Komatsu PC900LC-11 Hydraulic Excavator: A HEAVY-DUTY, HIGH-PERFORMANCE BEAST



Built for tough jobs that require high performance, the Komatsu PC900LC-11 excavator is a versatile machine. Designed for heavy construction, demolition, material handling, deep sewer, water, large mass excavation and mining/quarry operations, the 842-horsepower PC900LC combines exceptional power and digging capabilities.

The 842-horsepower PC900LC  
combines exceptional power  
and digging capabilities.

Based on the notably reliable and durable PC800LC-8, the PC900LC-11 offers major design enhancements. An 8-yard bucket creates impressive loading efficiencies. The new counterweight removal system helps make moving this large machine easier while the boom configuration reduces transport height. A new service pass through area allows easy access to filters, oil level checks and sample ports. The major structures, booms and arms, with a redesigned revolving frame, were specifically engineered to increase longevity.

The PC900LC-11 offers increased bucket and lifting capacity, higher performance and increased safety with:

- 25% more digging force

- 12% more swing torque
- Up to a 40% increase in productivity compared with similar models
- A boom configuration that reduces transport height
- The KomVision camera system, a 360-degree monitoring system that uses six cameras to provide a real-time view of an operator's surroundings
- Optional Smart Construction 3D guidance and payload monitoring

Consistency and cohesiveness in machine control systems across Komatsu's fleet of equipment also make an operator's transition from smaller models to the PC900 a smooth experience. No significant difference or parasitic drag operating the PC900 has been reported, with operators describing the PC900's operational input the same as running a PC360, for example.

The optional Smart Construction Retrofit—an affordable guidance kit that gives operators in the field and managers in the office access to both 2D and 3D design and payload data—drives greater accuracy, control of load volumes and operational improvements. Easily installed by dependable Columbus Equipment Company product support specialists, this technology upgrade is designed to improve grading performance and help drive productivity and profitability.

Komatsu's new, high-performance PC900LC-11 is moving material in Ohio today! Contact your local representative for more information on one of the mass excavation industry's latest and most impressive entrants.







# MATERIAL PROCESSING



## Robert Jacobs Excavating: PROOF POSITIVE OF CBI'S “OUTPERFORM, OUTPRODUCE” MANTRA



**A** “An incredible machine” is how Bobby Jacobs describes the CBI Magnum Force 6400CT Horizontal Grinder.

Jacobs is the manager of a 70-year-old family excavation business. Robert Jacobs Excavation began with Jacobs’ grandfather, Robert Jacobs and two machines. This year finds 17 people and 70 pieces of equipment working hard crushing aggregate, performing commercial and residential dirt work including, digging basements, hauling topsoil, developing building sites and clearing land.

“The CBI blows the Morbark out of the water, hands down.”

Bobby Jacobs; Manager, Robert Jacobs Excavating

“I owe much of our success to Columbus Equipment Company,” Jacobs stated. “It isn’t very often you find a company that delivers what they say they can and stands behind the equipment they sell.”

It’s even less frequent these days for companies to go above and beyond for their customers, notes Jacobs. “Columbus Equipment Company takes the time to understand my needs, recommend machines that can do the job, and are there whenever we have a

question or need parts and service,” Jacobs said.

With two large grinding jobs approaching, one at a landfill grinding yard waste and one clearing residential land, Jacobs called Columbus Equipment Company Sales Manager Jesse Garber for recommendations.

“Columbus Equipment Company takes the time to understand my needs.”

Bobby Jacobs; Manager, Robert Jacobs Excavating

Garber recommended the CBI 6400CT for both jobs. “The 6400CT is a rugged machine that can grind just about anything quickly,” Garber said. “CBI is an industry leader in grinders. Unique to the 6400 is a solid steel, brute force rotor designed specifically to handle contaminated material. It is versatile, with a change of rotors and screens it can transform from grinding construction debris to forestry products.”

This grinder is built specifically to withstand contaminated steel impact. “The downturn steel rotor strikes against the reinforced anvil area, making it ideal for applications where there might be steel contaminant or for grinding robust railroad ties used for





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biomass power plants,” added Garber.

For the landfill job, removing contaminants was paramount. Here again, the CBI 6400 performs exceptionally well. Green waste picked up from various municipalities is all dumped in one area of the landfill. The task before Jacobs was grinding leaves, twigs, logs, tree stumps, whole trees, and other items such as railroad ties and wood pallets, into material that is used for erosion control at the landfill.

“The 6400CT is a rugged machine that can transform from grinding construction debris to forestry products.”

Bobby Jacobs; Manager, Robert Jacobs Excavating

Understanding anything could be hidden in the enormous pile of green waste and make its way into the grinder, Jacobs needed a machine that could handle just about anything.

What makes the CBI 6400 so adept at preventing metal in the finished product? There are adjustable sensors within the hopper that identify metal and stop the machine. The machine can then be reversed to spit out the contents before the metal makes it to the mill.

“The machine has alerted us to everything from small metal fence posts to truck hitches. On older machines, metal would damage the machine or become wedged inside. You had to get inside and shovel everything out by hand,” Jacobs said. “I am not worried about unseen metal contamination because of the superior sensors. The CBI 6400 stops itself before any chance of damage. With one button, it ejects the material and we are up and running in a couple of minutes.”

In addition to the metal sensors, Garber noted this machine has a crossband magnet perpendicular to the belt that can catch small pieces of metal after processing. “CBI’s Metal Detection System is far superior to any other option on the market, being both adjustable and instantaneous. The airbag system and torque limiter that other brands use are far more complicated and less effective.”

“I owe much of our success to Columbus Equipment Company.”

Bobby Jacobs; Manager, Robert Jacobs Excavating

“I have a Morbark 6400, to me it is the closest competitor to the CBI 6400. Compared to using the CBI, the Morbark is like moving heavy equipment with a Cadillac car instead of a semi. When I began the landfill job, I thought we would be there for months because of the enormous pile of material we needed to grind. That is why I rented the CBI from Jesse; it was the workhorse we needed. Even knowing that I would have never dreamed we would be halfway done in two weeks.”

The ease of moving the CBI is another feature that has been handy for Jacobs. “A strong wind was making work difficult. But with the machine on tracks, we easily relocated the machine with the remote control and had it up and running in just a few minutes,” said Jacobs.

“The amount of material we are processing on a daily basis would have never been possible with a shredder or the Morbark. The CBI blows the Morbark out of the water, hands down,” stated Jacobs.





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## Feature: Katie Maassel ROCKING IT IN NORTHWEST OHIO!



Katie Maassel was following in her family's footsteps when she entered the construction industry straight out of high school. Her grandfather, father, and uncles have all worked in one construction sector or another, although she is the first female in her family to pursue a career in the industry.

"I graduated high school on a Sunday and started my construction job on Tuesday."

Katie Maassel; Assistant Project Manager, Vernon Nagel Inc.

Maassel, assistant project manager for Vernon Nagel Inc., has been in the industry for 17 years, with the last six and a half years at Nagel.

She was with her first employer, where she flagged traffic, for over a decade. However, the schedule wasn't compatible with having small children with Maassel working six or seven days a week and shifts stretching to 12 hours or more.

At Nagel, she works five 8-hour shifts a week and has some flexibility if she has to go pick up a sick child at school. Maassel has three children, ages 9, 7 and 5.

Originally, her responsibility at Nagel was MOT

(Maintenance of Traffic), which wasn't a full-time position. "They started giving me different tasks to do, and it built up to what I do now," she said. As assistant project manager, her tasks include training



new hires, picking up parts for the shop and different projects, marking underground utilities and handling MOT for new projects, arranging safety training, and planning company events such as golf outings. "It's never the same thing every day."



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Maassel believes there are plenty of reasons that construction is a great career choice. One is that it doesn't require a college degree, so there's no need to acquire student debt. "I graduated high school on a Sunday and started my construction job on Tuesday," she said. The pay and benefits are good, she added, and "I'm an outdoors person and I enjoy being outside when I'm working."

Contractors are becoming more interested in hiring women workers as they strive to meet female participation goals on federal projects or State of Ohio construction projects valued over \$10,000.

Aside from the non-family-friendly hours of her previous position, Maassel has run into a couple challenges that come with being one of the few women in her company. Some male co-workers automatically assume she was hired "because you're married to, or dating, a guy at the company" and she's run into men who "think that girls can't do what a guy can do." She's since overcome those misconceptions.

Additionally, she finds men communicate differently than women. "Men tend to be vague, whereas women are more detailed," she said. "Productivity wise, you can't expect me to do something if you didn't give me the necessary detail. If I didn't get enough information the first time, I just circle around and ask more questions."

More women are entering construction and now make up 14% of the workforce. Contractors are becoming more interested in hiring women workers as they strive to meet female participation goals on federal projects or State of Ohio construction projects valued over \$10,000. Ohio projects have a statewide goal of 6.9% female workers.

When individuals with a variety of experiences, communication patterns and thinking styles work together on a team, the team performs better.

Aside from meeting required goals, construction companies can benefit from hiring women. With some half-million job openings in the industry, widening the pool of candidates to include women increases a company's ability to attract quality workers. Additionally, labor experts say that when individuals with a variety of experiences, communication patterns and thinking styles work together on a team, the team performs better than when all members are similar. When everyone thinks the same way, it's harder to find a solution if the existing approach doesn't yield the desired outcome.

According to [constructionjobs.com](http://constructionjobs.com), women excel at communication and analytical thinking, making them an excellent addition to any construction company or team.







## Columbus Equipment Company Product Support: COMPREHENSIVE CARE FROM YOUR DEPENDABLE EQUIPMENT PARTNER



Columbus Equipment Company PM Technician Jeremy Fowler collects final drive oil samples for analysis as part of a Komatsu CARE 1,000-hour inspection on a D71PXi crawler dozer. This analysis helps extend the productive life of the machine.

Columbus Equipment Company is creating a central dispatch system for preventative maintenance technicians to reduce service delays that occur when techs at a specific branch are overloaded with work. “This will reduce response time for PM if local techs are busy, because we can now assign a tech from another branch,” said Matt McConnell, product support sales manager.

Regular PM care is the most cost effective and reliable way to extend the life of your construction equipment.

Aside from shorter lead times, the customer’s experience won’t change, he added. “Customers will receive the same service and won’t have to do anything differently. We’ll still be pulling data from MyKomatsu. They call still call their local branch for PM services, and the local technician will most likely be the one doing the work. But if your local tech is backed up or on vacation, your PM will still continue.”

Michelle Mollenkamp is the centralized PM manager

and Pam Badner is the regional PM manager. “Under the centralized system, our PM techs from around Ohio will concentrate on providing preventative service and not be assigned other tasks,” McConnell noted. Columbus Equipment Company has 11 certified PM technicians and is actively recruiting additional techs,

“When contamination is found, customers can save money on expensive repairs by addressing problems early.”

Matt McConnell, Product Support Sales Manager  
Columbus Equipment Company

Regular PM care is the most cost effective and reliable way to extend the life of your construction equipment. When you get a new Komatsu machine, Komatsu CARE covers PM for the first 2,000 hours. Once Komatsu CARE expires, Columbus Equipment Company offers the IronLife™ Program (see page 20) to continue PM services at manufacturer-recommended hours, or more frequently if you prefer.

“Many customers increase the frequency of PM



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One benefit to a Columbus Equipment Company preventative maintenance program is inspections can be scheduled on location after hours, leaving production uninterrupted and your equipment ready to roll at dawn.

from 500 hours to 250 hours, which allows us to find issues sooner because we're taking more oil samples," McConnell said.

When performing PM services, our technicians take oil samples, which are analyzed for signs of problems before they develop into major issues. "When contamination is found, customers can save money on expensive repairs by addressing problems early," McConnell said. For

"We see customers keeping equipment longer as they extend the traditional, productive lifespan of those machines."

Matt McConnell, Product Support Sales Manager  
Columbus Equipment Company

example, metal contaminants in the oil may indicate premature wear on a component. On HST machines, contaminants in the final drive can indicate a failed seal or other issue that could lead to tens of thousands of dollars' worth of service work if it isn't repaired.

Preventive services also include an annual clinic where technicians make sure the machine is still operating at factory levels. "We see customers keeping equipment longer as they extend the traditional, productive lifespan of those machines," McConnell said.

Columbus Equipment Company offers a variety of options for preventative maintenance services. Services can be performed in the field or in our shop, and you can request after-hours services. We monitor the hours on your machinery through the MyKomatsu

interface and let you know when PM is needed. Pre-paid or pay-as-you-go options are also available for continuing PM services.

"Customers are realizing that they are better off focusing on what they are good at – while letting us make sure their machinery investments continue to perform at the highest level."

Matt McConnell, Product Support Sales Manager  
Columbus Equipment Company

When Komatsu CARE expires, a product service representative will reach out to you and provide an estimate for IronLife services for the machine. If you have an older machine that's not covered, contact us about joining IronLife. Visit [columbusequipment.com](http://columbusequipment.com) to see what services are available and to schedule service.

More and more equipment owners are recognizing the value of the IronLife Program, McConnell said. "Customers are realizing that they are better off focusing on what they are good at – bidding and completing work, the things they got into business for – while letting us make sure their machinery investments continue to perform at the highest level. They bought that machine to do work, not to worry about oil changes."



## Enjoying and Creating Opportunity WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



### Richfield

The branch had an opportunity to loan a Komatsu PC88 to Local 18 Operating Engineers for Richfield SheDig 2023, an event that allows junior and senior high school girls to experience operating heavy equipment. The annual event introduces girls to career opportunities in the construction industry.



(Left to right): Kevin Shingleton, Evan Survance and Zach Sorrell.

Richfield has welcomed several new employees recently. **Kevin Shingleton** is the new service manager, replacing Pam Badner who is joining the regional PM team. **Evan Survance**, shop mechanic, and **Zach Sorrell**, lube tech, have joined the service department.



**Blayne Sheets** joined the branch as a parts CSR. **Shane Mervine**, **Chris Holmes** and **Shar Manley** (left) are new parts warehouse employees.



**Amberson Stone** has transferred from the Columbus branch to take a product support sales position.

### COMPANY EMPLOYMENT MILESTONES

Columbus Equipment Company is *Ohio's Dependable Dealer* largely because of our dedicated team. We're honored that so many of our employees have stayed with us for decades, building strong relationships with the customers they serve, and each other.

We salute these employees who marked employment milestones with the company in 2023.

- **45 years:** Ray Frase
- **35 years:** Bret A. Shaffer
- **30 years:** Patricia Dakin
- **25 years:** Douglas Dvorak, Todd Hornak, Alan Jackson, Jeffrey Reichert, Josh Stivison, Bob Weber
- **20 years:** Justin Barnes, Maurice Belle, Brian Napier, Jeff Richards
- **15 years:** Michael Cronlotac, Tim Kresowaty, Jason Lang, Tracy McConnell
- **10 years:** William Baisden, James Curtis, Mike Haney, Marcus McDaniel, Carson Myers, Kenneth Skinner, Jeremy Williams, Aric Woods

And these employees who will be celebrating similar milestones in 2024:

- **45 years:** Ernie Potter
- **40 years:** Fred Wahl
- **35 years:** Michael Harris, Al Shepherd
- **30 years:** Mark Swiczkoski
- **25 years:** Gary Huggins, Mark Klatt, Mike Montgomery, Miles Montgomery, Scott Parsons, Jonathan Rapposelli
- **20 years:** Byron Carmon, Jason Crain, Dale Curtis, Mark Francis, Gerald Kilgour, Luke Matheson, Dan Minnis
- **15 years:** Donald Cain, Chester Gowen, John Steinhauer
- **10 years:** Russell Bowers, James Cunningham, Mike Fenster, Mark Kennedy, Nate Koerper, Jamie McAfee, Brandie McGarvey, Dustin Reynolds, Greg Stiers, Cory VanHouten





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