

Year of the Gator

John Deere Launches Its Next Generation of Work and Recreational Utility Vehicles

By Keith Gribbins

Moving past golf carts into all-terrain transportation, John Deere was one of the first companies to truly launch a go-anywhere utility vehicle back in 1987 with its AMT — a three-wheeled UTV perfect for “all material transport.” By 1993, the AMT had evolved into the company’s famous green Gator utility vehicles, which found a warm welcome in the municipal and park industries, where the 4x2 and 6x4 Gator models are still a staple today.

For 2007, John Deere has new plans to re-invent that UTV product line, utilizing the same core values that made the Gator so popular.

“John Deere has a long-standing and trusted reputation for producing rugged, reliable and hard-working machines,” says Kevin Lund, John Deere product marketing manager — Utility Vehicle Group. “Today the company offers the broadest vehicle lineup in the industry. The needs of our customers are the inspiration behind every new model that comes to market.”

For customers needing a heavy-duty hauling machine, Deere created the newest addition to its Traditional Series Utility Vehicle offering — the Gator TH 6x4 Diesel, which delivers big work performance in a stable, turf-friendly, 6x4 configuration. For owners and operators who enjoy working as much as playing, Deere has fashioned its new XUV Series — reliable, durable UTVs engineered for exceptional cross-over work and recreational capabilities.

“The XUV is designed to deliver outstanding performance at the jobsite and on the most challenging off-road trails,” explains Lund. “The XUV offers the extreme performance customers demand and the work capability they need.”

Work and fun — UTVs can handle both applications with a tough, hard-working, go-anywhere, safety-focused, bring-a-friend package. It doesn’t matter if your day calls for hunting elk or hauling worksite debris, Deere has designed a new generation of all-terrain chariots that can handle the rigors of recreation and labor.

The true work vehicle in this lot (and one of the top workers in the entire industry) is the TH 6x4 Diesel. Deere’s newest 6x4 has the look of ye old traditional Gator of yore, but with improved power, speed, hauling and styling. First off, the 2007 Gator TH 6x4 is built with an 854-cc, Yanmar, liquid-cooled diesel Tier II engine — the same engines used in the Military Gator. This machine also offers 20 percent more torque than the

previous power train, so customers can work harder, haul more faster, climb hills better and get to more out-of-the-way places.

Along with increased power comes more heat, so improved cooling was a must to help customers work harder in hotter conditions for longer periods of time. The TH 6x4 utilizes two radiators — one under the seat and one under the hood. For added convenience, there is a single fill point located under the hood for the entire cooling system. More power and better cooling leads to increased speed and hauling capabilities.



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“Improved speed improves work efficiency. The speed increased 11 percent from 18 mph to 20 mph from the previous model,” says Lund. “The cargo box capacity was increased 20 percent from 1,000 to 1,200 lbs, making the Gator 6x4 Diesel the highest cargo box capacity for any diesel UV on the market.”

Additional enhancements on the TH 6x4 Diesel include a reinforced frame to support extra cargo capacity, the reinforced hitch channel and a new heavy-duty drive chain. Improved styling offers more comfort and convenience and now matches the rest of the Gator lineup (high-backed seats, expanded operator station, 12V outlet, fuel gauge and integrated cup holders).



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Styling and comfort are important to both professionals and consumers. When it comes to a sharp design with work and play in mind, Deere's new XUV Series looks to be a driving force in both industries. In spring and summer 2007, Deere will release the XUV 620i (gas — green and yellow), XUV 620i (gas — olive and black), XUV 850D (diesel — green and yellow) and the Limited Edition XUV 850D (diesel — olive and black).

"When we considered the design of the Gator XUV, we took a hard look at customer needs. We realized that customers looking for a UTV want it to be capable of putting in a hard day's work, but they also want to be able to turn it loose trail riding, hunting or fishing on the weekend," says Lund. "They're looking for a vehicle that combines the ability to do work and the capability to operate in all types

of terrain. The XUV provides the ideal mix of power, acceleration and stability to handle a wide range of projects."

The XUV has a different look than previous Gator models. The XUV has a sporty, high-clearance, off-road design with bucket seats and a roll over protection system (not unlike a Kawasaki Mule or Polaris Ranger) and it goes faster than any previous John Deere UTV at 30 mph.

"We've also increased acceleration by 45 percent compared to the Gator HPX," explains Lund. "This gives customers the acceleration they need to climb hills and the speed to herd livestock or cover a field faster."

The XUV also brings electronic fuel injection (EFI) to John Deere's utility vehicle product line. EFI offers umpteen benefits for both trail riding and intensive jobsite labor: better starts in deep cold without a choke; more efficiency and greater throttle response; optimized fuel burns; reduction of plug fouling, optimizing fuel economy; and an industry-exclusive electronic governor and throttle body (this system allows the vehicle to auto-compensate for belt wear — thus allowing the operator to have power and speed under heavy loads).

Other big selling points of the new XUV Series include four-wheel drive with an on-demand locking front differential that provides greater operator control than competitive products. A ground clearance of 11 in. helps the Advanced Suspension System provide a comfortable ride (the suspension has been optimized to handle everything from light or no-load operations to maximum cargo capacity, which is 1,000 lbs for the cargo box, 1,400 lbs of total payload capacity). And the Advanced Vehicle Systems on the new Gator XUV deliver the acceleration and power to better handle increased loads.

All of these new models come with more than 180 attachments and accessories to choose from — from cab enclosures to snow blades. Customers can create the ultimate UTV, designed for their needs and desires.

"With the addition of the new TH 6X4 and XUV Gators, John Deere now offers the widest range of utility vehicles on the market today — from 400 to 1,200 lbs in cargo box capacity, from 9.5 to nearly 25 hp. Whether you use your UTV for trail riding, hauling loads, chores around the farm or all of the above, you get the durability and reliability that John Deere is famous for, and the expertise and dedication to customer service of the John Deere dealer organization," says Lund.

Keith Gribbins is managing editor of *Compact Equipment*.

Check the Specs:

John Deere Utility Vehicles

Model	Engine Power	Towing Capacity	Payload Capacity	Cargo Box Capacity	Weight	MSRP
John Deere Gator TH 6x4 Diesel	20.8 hp	1,400 lbs	1,600 lbs	1,200 lbs	1,310 lbs	\$10,299
John Deere 620i XUV 4x4	23 hp	1,300 lbs	1,400 lbs	1,000 lbs	1,383 lbs	\$9,499
John Deere 620i	23 hp	1,300 lbs	1,400 lbs	1,000 lbs	1,383 lbs	\$9,599
John Deere 850D XUV 4x4	24.6 hp	1,300 lbs	1,400 lbs	1,000 lbs	1,532 lbs	\$10,599