The future of Precision Construction

At John Deere, we’ve always been focused on providing equipment and support solutions designed to maximize customer uptime and productivity. This dedication to the products customers want and the services they need is an important way we stand apart in our industry.

Another way we continue to lead and grow is by leveraging the expertise of other esteemed machine manufacturers. As a John Deere company, Wirtgen Group has become a valued partner in the manufacture and support of some of the world’s foremost construction equipment. And as CEO of Wirtgen Group for the past four years, I have personally learned much about this business and our customers.

For example, our commitment to developing and providing smart technology solutions has been the foundation not only of our success but that of our customers as well. Especially in today’s world, technology is always evolving, and we pride ourselves on setting the pace.

A recent development is our expansion of John Deere WorkSight™ into the Precision Construction platform. Designed to resolve specific equipment issues, this new strategy is about connecting machines and solutions to help customers make better decisions, boost uptime, and work more efficiently and cost effectively.

A basic element of Precision Construction is John Deere Connected Support™. Built on JDLink™ connectivity, John Deere Connected Support helps customers minimize downtime through a range of machine-monitoring and fleet-management tools. Standard on most new models, JDLink connectivity delivers essential data and remote support to and from your machines via web or mobile access.

The Precision Construction technology suite also includes Grade Management, Payload Weighing, and Obstacle Intelligence capabilities to help optimize both your business and your bottom line. Our shift to Precision Construction lets us identify and incorporate technology solutions based on the unique needs of each customer. Because our goal is to keep your machines up and running.

We hope you enjoy this issue featuring examples of customers embracing Precision Construction technology to keep their fleets on their jobs — and taking them into the future.

Domenic G. Ruccolo
Senior Vice President, Sales, Marketing, and Product Support, Global Construction Equipment / Chief Sales Officer, Wirtgen Group
PRECISION CONSTRUCTION 101:
Optimizing your business with advanced technology solutions

John Deere has a proven history of innovative products, leading-edge technology, and dealer dedication. Building on our commitment to deliver smart technology solutions to maximize customer uptime and productivity, we’ve expanded John Deere Worksite™ into our new Precision Construction portfolio. With its customer-centric focus, this new strategy paves the way for the future of construction.

Each solution within Precision Construction is designed to resolve equipment problems. "If it doesn't work for our customers, it doesn't work," explains Andrew Kahler, manager, John Deere Technology Solutions. "The new platform was created to deliver more intelligent, connected machines and solutions to customers to make better business decisions, maximize fleet uptime, and complete more work more efficiently and economically.

Based on JDLink™ connectivity, Precision Construction technology features tools to manage maintenance, coordinate assets, track utilization, and boost productivity. Accessible on both desktop and mobile devices, JDLink provides essential information, when and where it’s needed.

Precise Construction also includes John Deere Connected Support™, Grade Management, Payload Weighing, and Obstacle Intelligence components.

"Since the beginning, delivering innovative solutions to our customers has been a core focus for John Deere, and Precision Construction is taking that commitment to the next level," says Kahler. "We’re moving the industry toward the next generation of smart machine solutions."

GRADE MANAGEMENT
With the most flexible grade management offerings in the industry, our Grade Management strategy ranges from JD Grade Guidance through SmarGrader™ integrated 3D grade control. This technology benefits operators at all skill levels. Our entry-level options can also be seamlessly upgraded to full-featured SmartGrade on dozers, motor graders, excavators, and compact track loaders—the most diverse product types of any equipment manufacturer.

PAYLOAD WEIGHING
Available for 744L, 824L, and 844L Loaders and 444, 644, and 844 Articulated Dump Trucks, Payload Weighing allows loaded materials to be weighed without interrupting workflow. Accurate payload data not only helps to improve productivity and eliminate rework or fines. Payload data also helps off-site managers monitor and analyze machine utilization, assess component productivity, and reference past results when bidding future projects.

OBSTACLE INTELLIGENCE
Digital cameras and high-resolution monitors display images of what is behind the machine for viewing from the seat of the cab. Radar or sonic detectors issue alerts of potential obstacles. Obstacle Intelligence technology is currently being evaluated as a potential optional feature for many John Deere machine forms.

To find out how Precision Construction technology solutions can help grow your operation forward, see your dealer or go to JohnDeere.com/PrecisionConstruction.

"WE'RE MOVING THE INDUSTRY TOWARD THE NEXT GENERATION OF SMART MACHINE SOLUTIONS."
—Andrew Kahler, manager, John Deere Technology Solutions
WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN A PRO MOTOCROSS RACER SHIFTS GEARS
Whether it’s the low growl of a determined diesel or the wound-up battle cry of a 250 two-stroke, there’s rarely a quiet moment at Moto Sandbox in Groveland, Florida. As an elite training facility for moto- and supercross racers from across the world, it’s no wonder these energy-drink-fueled daredevils are always on the move. From constructing 100-foot jumps and landings to launching off them without hesitation, this is where the future of the sport is born.

“We’re right here in the heartland of moto,” says Jason Baker, owner of both Moto Sandbox and Dream Traxx, the company that travels the world constructing and maintaining everything from simple pit-bike tracks to 100-acre world-record courses for the sport’s top athletes. “Welcome to my little slice of paradise.”

What you see now is far from where it all began, and Baker has been instrumental in that change. “This was nothing but a flat cow pasture since the late 1800s,” says Baker from atop a 60-foot tall booster at the center of the property, which really says something for a state not known for its elevation changes.

“I’ve been here since 2009 helping transform and shape the land — it’s been literal blood, sweat, and tears, but that’s what it takes in this sport.”

Baker joined racing relatively late compared to his peers. “When I started racing at 19, I was going up against guys who had been riding all their lives,” he explains. And though his career of five years was short, he made his way in a hurry, reaching the pro ranks before retiring due to injury. But Baker’s passion and unique capability kept him involved. “I come from a very do-it-yourself kind of family. I built my first track myself and gained more experience helping others maintain theirs.” His reputation grew as the go-to-guy for getting a track built right. “It takes a rider’s understanding to know what a track needs, and I can cater my courses to the rider’s weaknesses. Being able to build specialized courses with custom obstacles helps the riders progress immensely.”

In racing, pushing the machine to its absolute maximum performance isn’t just common, it’s critical for being competitive. The same goes for Baker and the equipment he uses to build tracks. “Most people expect a dozer to push a pile of dirt flat or a grader to fine-tune a slope — we’re a little different in what we’re trying to accomplish. We’re almost always pushing or grading at a slope and creating complex features with the dirt.”

“The John Deere machines I’ve run give me confidence to know I can work this thing hard. I can get in it, turn the throttle wide open, and just go to town. We’re out here daylight ‘til dark, and these machines are right here with us, working as hard as we do.”

“It takes one to build one

[Cover Story]
A FULL GARAGE
Baker has no shortage of tools to choose from, no matter the phase of the project. “The John Deere 260E Articulated Dump Truck gets our capping clay from the stockpile to anywhere needed on the property quickly and efficiently. On top of tearing down old jumps and loading trucks, the Deere 210G LC SmartGrade™ Excavator has really impressed me — I just added a new drainage feature using the technology and am amazed by how clean, consistent, and fast it was making that cut. There was no effort at all.”

The obvious leaders of the pack for Baker are the Deere 750L Dozer and 333G Compact Track Loader (CTL), each equipped with SmartGrade. “That 750L, man... that thing’s a beast. I’ve spent a lot of time in dozers, and the operator influence is immediately obvious. It’s very comfortable, it’s powerful, it’s smooth — I’ve been very happy with it.” Baker’s love for the 750L extends to its smaller cohort just as much. “The power of the 333G blows me away. With other brands, I’ve had trouble getting to the top of a takeoff with an empty bucket. The 333G walked right up the steep incline with a full blade of dirt, no problem. I’ve been very impressed.”

Last but not least, the Deere 672GP Motor Grader is a little unexpected on a motocross track, and so are its benefits. “Along with the track, we need access roads. If an ambulance needs to reach the far end, it’s critical they get there quickly and safely. With this grader, we have highways out there.” Of course, with Baker’s need to go big, making smooth and consistent surfaces with the motor grader wasn’t enough. “We wanted to push it — we had it out there grading the side of a jump and a section of whoops, and even using SmartGrade to do it! If the machine and technology can pull that off, they’ll handle the average parking lot or county road without issue.”

ALL CHECKERS
Baker’s excitement about and confidence in his John Deere machines is a big part of the equation, but that’s not all. As his work takes him across the country and around the world, he knows he’ll be supported. “Service behind equipment is probably an even higher demand for me. Downtime means extra days on site, hotels, rental cars, flight changes, and other headaches that affect profitability. Deere hands down makes a great, quality machine, but I think the level of support and excitement within — that makes me most excited about working with them.”

Moto Sandbox and Dream Traxx LLC are serviced by Dobbs Equipment, Orlando, Florida.
how your work is in site development, residential or commercial construction, or roadbuilding, you know how hard it is to deliver precise grades without wasting or reworking material. Maneuvering equipment in tight spaces and getting big results can be pretty daunting. And hauling several sizes of equipment to various jobsites can be time consuming. You need one machine that can do more than one thing.

The new John Deere 333G SmartGrade Compact Track Loader (CTL) is the first compact machine in the industry to feature fully integrated 3D grade-control technology. With our newly developed DozerMode control system, a push of a button activates the electrohydraulic (EH) control pattern for intuitive crawler operation and the capability of a larger machine in a compact package.

This SmartGrade model includes the Deere-designed and -built six-way SG96 Dozer Blade that’s tough enough to cut grade while smoothly spreading or fine-grading materials precisely where they need to go. Adding box ends or scarifier attachments to the SG96 enables grading to a defined width or cutting through tougher surfaces.

Being able to reliably grade in a wide range of settings while conserving valuable time and resources can produce big results. Bobby Lee Good is president of The Briar Team, a leading full-site-development general contractor based in Sanford, Florida. The 333G’s new SmartGrade capabilities have been a real boost for his operation of 100 machines and 350 teammates, according to Good: “Fewer passes. Less wasted material. It all adds up to more winning bids. And more profits.”

But this CTL isn’t just a one-trick grading pony. In roadbuilding applications, for example, the SG96 works with SmartGrade and the 333G’s durable rubber tracks featuring steel inserts to create finish grades without disturbing material like a crawler’s steel grousers. This savvy compact also excels at cleanup, making it a reliable support solution on larger jobsites for work from site development to construction to landscaping.

The 333G CTL’s Quik-Tatch™ and vertical-lift configuration equip this mighty workhorse to capably and confidently lift heavy loads, load dump trucks, stack pallets, or tackle myriad tasks using a variety of John Deere attachments. All this efficiency can help free up equipment and crewmembers for other projects.

To find out how to get great grades and work smarter for your business, visit JohnDeere.com/SmartGradeCTL or see your dealer.
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Awesome first impression

Casey and Ryan are still finding innovative ways to use motor graders more efficiently. In 2020, Wickens Construction purchased a John Deere 872GP SmartGrade Motor Grader. Before acquiring the 872GP, the company had always used competitor machines. “My grandfather always preferred a certain brand of equipment,” says Casey. “It’s hard to switch when you have a fleet using the same filters, parts, tires, and so forth.”

The 872GP would change his mind. He and Ryan were completing a small project outside of Lewistown using an old motor grader. The local John Deere dealer, RDO® Equipment Co., contacted them to see if they were interested in demoing a new 872GP SmartGrade machine that was traveling around the Western United States. The motor grader was the same machine Deere had displayed on the floor at CONEXPO-CON/AGG® 2020.

“It was my first time being on anything John Deere,” remembers Casey. “And after about two hours I was ready to buy it. It just clicked. I thought, ‘This thing is awesome.’”

Giant sandbox

Today Wickens Construction employs over 40 people. Ninety percent of the company’s work is highway projects for the Montana Department of Transportation. Typically, the company runs two crews, but beginning in March 2021, it combined crews to complete a seven-mile stretch of highway.

In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, creating a 41,000-mile national system of interstate highways. The bill was a boon to businesses such as Wickens Brothers Construction in Lewistown, Montana. Started by Thomas Wickens and his two brothers the previous year, Wickens Brothers built roads all over Montana until selling the company in 1982.

“My grandfather was always coming up with a lot of creative ways to find a competitive advantage and be more efficient,” recalls Ryan Durbin, who today runs Wickens Construction with his brother Casey. “For example, he’d add a disc in front of a motor grader and a roller behind it so he could use one piece of equipment on a small project.”

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Because the system is mastless, it is extremely reliable. “You don’t have to worry about components getting snapped off or wires hanging down,” explains Lutes. “Everything is tucked away so you have one less thing to worry about.”

Dead-on
Grade-control technology eliminates the need for surveyors, stakes, and grade checkers. “Everything is on the screen in front of the operator,” explains Lutes.

Chuck Herman has been an operator for Wickens Construction for around 20 years. “SmartGrade makes my job a lot simpler. It shows everything we need to build, with the grade, cut, and fill.”

Herman recalls what jobs were like before grade-control technology. For a half-mile-to-mile stretch of road, it would take a crew of eight laborers and a surveyor most of a day to pound stakes and take grade. “With grade control, we can skip the whole process. I can jump into the grader and start finishing.”

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Herman finds the 872GP SmartGrade Motor Grader easy to run. “It only took me a couple of hours with the machine to know I was really going to enjoy running it. The hydraulics are smooth, the joysticks are comfortable, and the visibility is phenomenal. You can sit back and SmartGrade does what it needs to do. And it’s really accurate, just dead-on.”

The machine has helped keep the company on track to complete the highway project before the snow flies and possibly by Thanksgiving. “I can’t wait to see the result,” says Casey. “I love seeing the before and after of a job. Moving over 800,000 yards of dirt is a tremendous change. To me, that’s the neatest part of the job.”

Wickens Construction, Inc. is serviced by RDO® Equipment Co., Great Falls, Montana.

Brothers Casey (left) and Ryan (right) Durbin have run grade-control systems on equipment since 2005, but the John Deere 872GP SmartGrade Motor Grader is their first fully integrated machine.

The precise factory calibration of Deere SmartGrade motor graders confirms grading consistency and accuracy. “We’ve had the system over a year now, and we haven’t had to worry about recalibration at all,” says Lutes. “It just stays dialed in. It’s pretty impressive the way it stays calibrated.”

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Brothers Tony, Joe, and Brian Dietz grew up playing in the dirt together. “We would literally play with Tonka® trucks on our father’s construction sites,” remembers Tony, president, Bob Dietz & Sons, Inc. “We’ve loved it ever since.”

Bob Dietz started the excavation company in 1976. His three sons would work after school, on weekends, and all summer. But for the siblings, the work has always really been play. Bob fostered a passion for the business in his sons rather than pressuring them. “Without even realizing it, Dad created a strong team that really works well together,” adds Joe, who is director of technology. “It has always been about enjoying the work. And because of that, we all developed our own talents and special abilities.”

At a 140-acre golf resort near New Paltz, New York, Brian digs trenches for utilities using a 210G LC SmartGrade Excavator while Tony grades with a John Deere 700K LGP SmartGrade Dozer. Joe uses a GPS rover with a satellite base station to quickly measure grade and monitor job progress as the two machines prepare the ground for an event barn and swimming pools. “Having the grade in the machine is so efficient,” says Brian, vice president. “There are no stakes, offsets, grade checkers, or waiting on surveyors. We can quickly go anywhere on the site and go straight to work.”

Bob Dietz & Sons began working at the resort in September 2019. In addition to the event barn and pools, the site work for the resort has included 28 cabins, a restaurant, a hotel, a pro shop, a maintenance building, and more. “Having the grade in the machine is so efficient,” says Brian, vice president. “There are no stakes, offsets, grade checkers, or waiting on surveyors. We can quickly go anywhere on the site and go straight to work.”

BOB DIETZ & SONS REVOLUTIONIZES THE FAMILY BUSINESS USING SMARTGRADE MACHINES

SMARTGRADE™ HAS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED OUR BUSINESS.

TONY DIETZ, president, Bob Dietz & Sons

SMART MOVES

TONY DIETZ, president, Bob Dietz & Sons

SMARTGRADE™ HAS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED OUR BUSINESS.
and a spa. It also has included roads, parking lots, and over five miles of water, sewer, and storm utilities.

The long-term project has provided the perfect testing and proving ground for SmartGrade technology. Tolerances are a little more relaxed than some of the commercial jobs the company is working on, allowing time to experiment and learn the system. “SmartGrade has completely transformed our business,” says Brian. “GPS technology gives us the confidence to know exactly where we’re at, and productivity goes through the roof. We’re seeing efficiency just blossom in areas where we struggled in the past.”

Revolutionary

Bob has mostly retired now. He began handing the reins over to his three sons in 2005, teaching them the business side, including estimating and billing. “He allowed us to grow.”

Growth has included embracing SmartGrade technology. “SmartGrade machines have revolutionized what we do,” says Tony. “As a small company, we can go in and do something we never thought we could do — we can really do anything we want.”

Raising the stakes

The two SmartGrade machines have created a stakeless job site. “The machine has the data already stored in it, so you can go up and dig a site without waiting for a surveyor or a layout crew,” says Brian. “Waiting on a surveyor can take two weeks. After September that may mean we miss an opportunity because the ground starts getting mushy. Being able to mobilize immediately is priceless.” It’s also a competitive advantage. “Contractors prefer companies with GPS capability,” says Tony. “They don’t want someone who can start digging a curb next week after a surveyor shows up. They want someone who can come out tomorrow.”

Instead of spending hours setting stakes, Joe uses a GPS rover to accurately measure features on a project site in minutes. “In the time it used to take me to figure out grades for one small work area, I can now calculate grades for several acres,” he says. “I spend more time on my computer now than with a shovel. It’s such a time-saver for me. I can upload a layout to a SmartGrade machine wirelessly or with a USB drive, and the operator is all set to go. I love that part of my job.”

When he first started the golf-resort job, Joe brought a few boxes of stakes. “I realized I don’t need them. I don’t even have to paint lines. We can just go dig. We had an operator dig 14 foundations in 20 minutes. Joe recalls doing a large 160-foot-by-200-foot parking pad. “The dozer operator had very little training and was down there for about five minutes, and it was dead-on perfect,” remembers Joe.

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New frontier

The efficiency resulting from SmartGrade has been “amazing,” according to Brian. “Jobs that took two days in the past take three-quarters of a day now. What used to take many passes we can do on the first pass — we can go right to grade the first time with no loss of accuracy. And we can now accomplish the same amount of work with 10 or 12 guys that used to take 20. Your crews don’t need to be as big. You can spread guys across multiple sites.”

And you don’t have to wait for the machines to be ready in the morning. Because the 700K LGP SmartGrade Dozer is fully integrated from the factory, components stay protected and securely fastened to the machine. There is no need to install or remove components every day. “I can start the machine and it’s ready,” says Tony.

“The Dirt on Bob Dietz & Sons

Bob Dietz & Sons, Inc. is serviced by United Construction & Forestry Citrus Park, New York, and DEERCo, Beacon, New York.

On your smartphone, visit Deere.com/dietz or scan the QR code, walk through the portal, and be immersed in the SmartGrade™ experience from the seats of a 700K LGP Dozer and a 210G LC Excavator.

WORKING THEIR CONNECTIONS

John Deere recently announced a global supplier agreement with industrial manufacturer engine*, allowing customers to purchase engine filtrators through Deere equipment dealers. Bob Dietz & Sons of New Palisade, New York, equips their John Deere 60G and 85G Excavators with new engine filtrators.

This is revolutionizing the dirt world,” says Brian Dietz, vice president of Bob Dietz & Sons. “When your bucket can go all the way around, you don’t have to keep repositioning the machine. The system really increases operating efficiency, and your bucket lives.”

JOBS THAT TOOK TWO DAYS IN THE PAST

TAKEN THREE-QUARTERS OF A DAY NOW.

— BRIAN DIETZ, vice president, Bob Dietz & Sons

STEP ON TO TODAY’S JOB

WITH BOB DIETZ & SONS

On your smartphone, visit Deere.com/dietz or scan the QR code, walk through the portal, and be immersed in the SmartGrade™ experience from the seats of a 700K LGP Dozer and a 210G LC Excavator.

I don’t have to calibrate the blade every time. Turn it on and I’m good to go.”

Tony calls Precision Construction solutions such as SmartGrade the “new frontier.” John Deere is a forward-looking company, and they’ve jumped in with both feet. They’re trying as hard as they can to be ahead of the market and have enabled us in our little realm to be in front of our market.”

Brian is excited about John Deere’s direction. “Deere has our best interests in mind, along with a dealer network providing the support we need to accomplish the work in front of us. We’ve got not only a manufacturer making equipment, but a team that works with us to help us become more efficient.”

Bob Dietz & Sons, Inc. is serviced by United Construction & Forestry Citrus Park, New York, and DEERCo, Beacon, New York.

Check out the video at: johnDeere.com/TheDirt
PREVENT DOWNTIME + BOOST EFFICIENCY

Build a better business with Expert Alerts

Expert Alerts are part of our proactive monitoring system that notifies dealers of potential machine malfunctions. When customers opt in for Expert Alerts, these advanced notifications allow trained dealer technicians to diagnose issues remotely and fix them before they become time-consuming problems. Proactive identification of necessary repairs can help you schedule them when it’s most convenient for you, causing minimal disruption to your operation — and your bottom line.

A feature of John Deere Connected Support™ and enabled through JDLink™ connectivity, Expert Alerts are created by Deere machine-health analysts monitoring equipment data for thousands of connected machines to identify emerging trends. Working directly with factory product teams, John Deere develops preventative-maintenance solutions and repair protocols to be used by our dealers and technicians. Expert Alerts also equip technicians with the information needed to bring the right part to your jobsite the first time so machines can be returned to work as quickly as possible.

In some cases, Expert Alerts are even leveraged to change the design of a machine or component to prevent problems on machines still to be manufactured. To find out more about how Expert Alerts can help keep your fleet running now and well into the future, contact your dealer or visit dealerlocator.deere.com today.

HOW EXPERT ALERTS WORK

Check out this real-world example of the power of Expert Alerts:

1. A customer cutting grade with an 850K Crawler Dozer didn’t have any indication of an equipment issue.

2. However, the customer’s John Deere dealer remotely received an Expert Alert indicating low engine oil pressure for that machine, but not at a level low enough to trigger a diagnostic trouble code (DTC).

3. The dealer contacted the customer and received permission to dispatch a technician to replace the pressure-regulating valve.

REAL-WORLD RESULT:

A proactive part replacement of less than $1,000 saved the customer a $40,000 engine replacement, excessive downtime, and a larger component failure. And sending the technician with the correct solution, part, and tools helped the dealer optimize support services and staff.

SHOP FOR QUALITY, USED JOHN DEERE EQUIPMENT AND FINANCING FROM JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL AT MACHINEFINDER.COM.
SMART. CHOICES.

INTRODUCING THE INDUSTRY’S MOST FLEXIBLE GRADE-MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS.

With John Deere, you can adopt integrated grade-management technology at your own pace. Choose from 2D Grade Guidance all the way up to SmartGrade™ 3D Grade Control. And upgrade at any time. So you’re free from stakes and strings, overdigging, and rework. And to build precise bids that win jobs, and deliver margins. All backed by John Deere’s legendary dealer network. It’s the smarter way forward.

JohnDeere.com/SmartChoices