

CANADIAN

# RENTAL

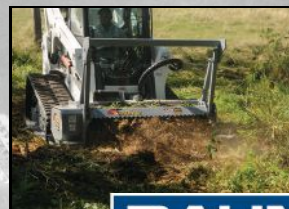
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TEN

UNDER 40



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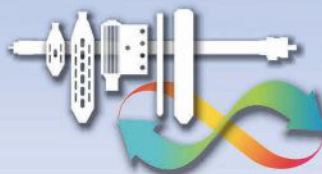
### Canadian Representatives

#### Mfg. Reps for Western Canada:

M.S. Sales Ltd.  
Tel: 1-800-451-2537 (office)  
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Drew Wood Cell: 604-760-9120  
Fax: 1-800-665-0597  
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#### Mfg. Reps for Eastern Canada:

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**Annex Business Media**  
P.O. Box 530,  
Simcoe, Ontario N3Y 4N5  
(800) 265-2827 or (519) 429-3966  
Fax: (519) 429-3094

**EDITOR** | Patrick Flannery  
pflannery@annexbusinessmedia.com  
(226) 931-0545

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER** | Danielle Labrie  
dlabrie@annexbusinessmedia.com  
(226) 931-0375, (888) 599-2228, ext 245

**ACCOUNT COORDINATOR** | Barb Comer  
bcomer@annexbusinessmedia.com  
(519) 429-5171, (888) 599-2228, ext 210

**MEDIA DESIGNER** | Brooke Shaw

**CIRCULATION MANAGER** | Aashish  
Sharma  
asharma@annexbusinessmedia.com  
416-442-5600 ext 5206

**GROUP PUBLISHER/VP SALES** | Martin  
McAnulty  
mmcanulty@annexbusinessmedia.com

**COO** | Scott Jamieson  
sjamieson@annexbusinessmedia.com

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email: rthava@annexbusinessmedia.com  
Tel: 416-442-5600 ext. 3555  
Fax: 416-510-6875 or 416-442-2191  
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Toronto, ON M2H 3R1

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industry for 43 years.



# CANADIAN RENTAL SERVICE

AUGUST 2019 Vol. 43, No. 6



**4**  
**EDITORIAL**  
*How else can we help you?*

**28**  
**POWERING UP**  
*Advances in lithium-ion  
batteries are making new  
applications possible.*

**11**  
**CROSS-CANADA  
RATE REPORT**  
*Q2 rental rates from  
EquipmentWatch*



**6**  
**INDUSTRY NEWS**  
*AGF building bridges...  
Meyer top salesman at  
Genie...Montreal Tractor get  
Minnich...more...*

**36**  
**RISE OF THE  
MACHINES?**  
*We can see a future of  
automated construction  
equipment, but it isn't here yet.*

**26**  
**AT YOUR SERVICE**  
*Customer service awards are  
common, but should be taken  
with a grain of salt.  
by Russ Dantu*



**12**  
**CANADA'S TOP 10  
UNDER 40**  
*The next generation of rental  
people continues to impress with  
dedication to the industry.*

**42**  
**SAFETY FIRST  
AND LAST**  
*When and how you are  
required to tie off on MEWPs.  
by Jeff Thorne*



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- ☐ Party Rental Store
- ☐ Hardware/Building Supply Dealer
- ☐ Wholesale
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Supplier
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RENTAL  
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# Expanding the zone

*Canadian Rental Service is looking for new ways to help you.*

The mission here at *Canadian Rental Service* is to provide you with information that helps you in your business. That's pretty broad, so we need to narrow it down a bit. First of all, we define "you" as the owner or manager of a Canada-based rental store. "Information" is therefore restricted mostly to content aimed specifically at the rental sector – you can find general economic, technical and business information in lots of other places. When we publish in those topic areas it's with a particular slant toward rental operations. Technical articles about equipment address the particular equipment in your fleet (or that you might consider for your fleet). Economic information is about rental rates or issues affecting small and medium-sized businesses with a customer-facing service focus. And news content about American or international matters is usually only included when there is potential relevance for a Canadian rental store. Not that U.S. stuff isn't interesting, but, again, there are other sources where you can find it that are better at covering it because that's their focus. We don't think anyone else does a better job of covering the Canadian rental industry than we do.

One of the reasons we are able to do this is because of history. As of this year, *Canadian Rental Service* has been in continuous publication for 43 years. Over that time, we've built up a reservoir of stories and contacts that put us in touch with Canadian rental operators in a way no others are. I know from my conversations across the country that *Canadian Rental Service* is viewed as the official magazine of the industry, and that you at least flip through every issue when it arrives. We have you and your predecessors in



## ON THE WEB:

### Order extra issues

We're always happy to hear that readers want extra print issues of *Canadian Rental Service* to share with staff or family and friends. You can order additional copies of any back issues at [canadianrentalservice.com](http://canadianrentalservice.com) > View Digital Magazine > Order Back Issues

### Top 10 Under 40 online

Recognition of our Top 10 Under 40 nominees doesn't stop when the magazine mails! You can see all our latest and past nominees at [canadianrentalservice.com](http://canadianrentalservice.com) > Top 10 Under 40 > Past Honorees



# EDITORIAL

by Patrick Flannery



the industry to thank for the strength of our brand, and we take our responsibility to reward your trust and attention over the years very seriously.

And trust is a big part of our brand strength. While *Canadian Rental Service* works closely with our supplier and advertiser friends, just as you do, our commitment is to always provide accurate, unbiased content that isn't pushing any particular agenda, product or service. There is only one way this magazine has survived and will continue to survive and that's by retaining your trust in what you read here. If there's ever a question in your mind about something you read in *Canadian Rental Service*, we want to be the first to know.

Another point of strength for this brand is our reach. *Canadian Rental Service* goes to about 4,000 (it fluctuates) rental stores across Canada. We work on our circulation list constantly and we think we are getting to everyone who would potentially want to read us. Our list is our lifeblood. We want each issue to be an event that every store in every part of Canada shares together. In fact, tying the Canadian rental industry together as an industry, instead of just a bunch of companies, could be seen as a secondary mission for the magazine. It's one of the reasons that almost every issue starts out with a rental company profiled right on the cover. We think we play an important role in helping you know each other and to understand what works and what doesn't in this business.

We've been thinking a lot lately about what we could do to be even more effective in our missions. As a communications channel, our super-power is to get a consistent message out across this industry. What is that good for? Why, bringing people together. We think there is space in this country for more opportunities for rental people to get together for socializing and networking, with perhaps a smidgen of education thrown in. Of course, we have done that for years at the Rental Mart, but we think there are ways to expand and enhance the show, and possibly take it to other parts of the country. We also think there is more we could do to generate and share critical information for this industry and to perhaps connect you to valuable contacts and services.

I want to hear from you. What do you think *Canadian Rental Service* could do for you? **CRS**



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# Brandt



## AGF LANDS MAJOR TEXAS BRIDGE PROJECT

Montreal-based AGF Access Group has been selected by Ship Channel Constructors (SCC) to provide access equipment for the construction of the massive, new twin-span stay-cable Sam Houston Ship Channel Bridge in Harris County, Texas. AGF Access Group's major projects team, along with its Hydro Mobile and Winsafe manufacturing divisions, developed a variety of standard and customized access solutions to be used during the next six years of the bridge's construction and demolition. Hydro Rents, a company within the group, will supply 1,000 feet of stairs to access both main pylons and the road deck at different locations; two Raxtar temporary elevators, 525 feet high, for pylon and form work access; four 90-foot custom-designed Hydro Mobile traveling gantries for under-bridge deck operations including stay-cable installation and finishing works; and eight specially adapted Winsafe suspended platforms for pylon construction activities and stay cable installation. The access equipment will improve the efficiency and safety of all workers during the construction of the bridge. The current Ship Channel Bridge will be replaced by two one-way bridges of four lanes each. The new Sam Houston bridge will be 500 feet high, 1,300 feet long and have a total of 128 stay-cables, making the bridge the sixth-longest main span in the U.S. and the second-longest in Texas.

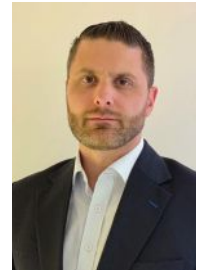
"Given our track record, and most recently with the execution of several high-profile bridge projects including the new Champlain Bridge in Montreal and the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, we were in a competitive position to offer these solutions under a single roof," said Alex Di Domenico, vice-president of major projects. "The ability to supply access solutions from one source is both economical and efficient for the customer's overall project management."

"We are proud to fulfill the access needs for the Sam Houston replacement bridge project," said Rick Harland, regional manager of Hydro Rents. "We have provided equipment to major projects in Texas before and fulfilled their needs with the same focus on safety and on time execution true to the Hydro Rents reputation."

AGF Access Group's deliveries are scheduled for July 2019 through February 2020. The bridge will take six years to be completed with the southbound bridge set for completion in 2021 and the northbound bridge in 2024.

## MEYER TO LEAD GENIE SALES

Terex AWP has announced the appointment of Joshua Meyer to the role of Genie vice-president of North American sales. Meyer is tasked with developing



and executing short- and long-term sales and business-growth strategies. He also will manage, develop and train the company's North American sales teams including both the regional sales teams and national account teams in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. Meyer has broad experience and demonstrated success in leading, directing and integrating multinational organizations. He comes to Genie from Metso, where as senior vice-president of Africa, the Middle East and Turkey he led a team of more than 400 professionals in 13 locations in executing sales, commercial and technical support as well as manufacturing for capital equipment, complex projects, services and parts. Prior to Metso, he led teams and oversaw business activities in a number of regions and roles with increasing responsibility during nearly 20 years with Caterpillar. Meyer has a bachelor's degree in business administration/marketing with a minor in international finance from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"I am pleased to join the Genie team in a role that focuses on our customers' needs, and look forward to working closely with them to enhance our added value and to drive their business growth," Meyer said. "As a leader in the aerial industry for more than 50 years, and serving global rental markets for decades, Genie understands rental fleet needs and partners with our customers to address their business goals. As we continue to develop and offer products, services and programs designed to meet customers' needs, I will be working to strategically grow and position our sales team in North America to communicate and deliver that value to the industry."





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Offer valid at participating dealers from 1 April, 2019 until 31 October, 2019, and is subject to John Deere Financial approval. <sup>1</sup>Offer based on a 3.50% APR/ACR, monthly lease payment is \$511.98 for a 3-year lease on a new John Deere 314G Skid Steer canopy unit with 10x16.5 tires, 51 mm (2") seat belt, and 1676 mm (66") construction bucket with a selling price (including attachments) of: \$39,663.8. Advanced lease payment of \$4,478.37 is required (excluding taxes). <sup>2</sup>Offer based on a 3.50% APR/ACR, monthly lease payment is \$564.98 for a 3-year lease on a new John Deere 314G Skid Steer cab unit with 10x16.5 tires, 51 mm (2") seat belt, and 1676 mm (66") construction bucket with a selling price (including attachments) of: \$43,849.43. Advanced lease payment of \$4,949.92 is required (excluding taxes). <sup>\*</sup>For commercial use only. Monthly payments may vary depending on trade-in. Lease terms include an excess use charge which varies by product and is based on number of hours of use of 600 per year. The charge for amounts past due is 24% per annum. Taxes, set-up, delivery and freight charges, lease licenses and additional dealer fees may apply. Some restrictions apply. Dealers free to set individual prices. See dealer for details. May not be combined with other offers. Offer subject to change, without notice, at any time.

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50<sup>th</sup>  
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— John L. Grove, Founder, JLG Industries



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See how at [jlg.com/jlg50](http://jlg.com/jlg50)





## RENKEN REPRESENTING BOMAG

Bomag Americas has introduced Cole Renken as vice-president of sales and marketing. Renken will be responsible for developing and executing short- and long-term growth strategies to better optimize the sales and customer support for dealer- and rental-channel partners. Renken brings more than 20 years of construction equipment sales, business development and sales management experience to this position. Prior to joining Bomag, he spent 10 years with Volvo Construction, with his most recent position director of government and key accounts involved in dealer development, regional sales and product management. Additionally, Renken worked for CNH in dealer sales management and government and military sales and marketing. Renken has a bachelor's degree from Iowa State and an MBA from Marquette University.

"We are excited to have Cole join the Bomag team. He brings with him vast knowledge of our equipment industry as well as a great track record in sales leadership, customer support and motivating teams to exceed goals and objectives," stated Rob Mueckler, president of Bomag.

"I am pleased to join the Bomag team in a capacity that focuses on our customers' needs and to work closely with them to enhance the value that Bomag products and services can add to their respective businesses," said Renken. "As a leader in the compaction business for more than 60 years, Bomag understands the importance of providing solutions to customer requirements. I look forward to working with our sales team and business partners to strengthen our leading position in compaction and capitalize on our growth opportunities in paving, milling and reclaiming."

## MINNICH JOINS MONTREAL TRACTOR AND HMA

Minnich Manufacturing has expanded distribution in eastern Canada through authorized distributor Montreal Tractor and its sister company, HMA Equipment. Montreal Tractor and HMA Equipment now offer sales, service and exchange of Minnich equipment for the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Headquartered in Montreal, Montreal Tractor opened HMA Equipment in Toronto in 2013 to better serve Ontario customers. Across eastern Canada, Montreal Tractor and HMA Equipment will support the complete Minnich lineup of on-grade, on-slab, machine-mounted and utility concrete dowel pin drills, along with dust collection systems. In addition, they will sell, service and exchange all Minnich concrete vibrators including high-cycle, paving, flex shaft and monitoring units.

"Minnich is excited to grow our partnership with a distributor that's very highly respected in the Canadian concrete industry," said Todd Jurjevic, president and CSO of Minnich Manufacturing. "Their team shares our focus on providing the highest-quality equipment and putting customers first. Eastern Canadian contractors will benefit from the deep knowledge and outstanding service that Montreal Tractor/HMA Equipment brings."

For nearly 40 years, Montreal Tractor has provided new and used equipment, parts and components to customers in a variety of industries including construction and road building. A Minnich distributor since 2015, Montreal Tractor previously covered Ontario and Quebec for the manufacturer.

"Minnich is very easy to work with, and fully dedicated to meeting the unique needs of the Canadian market," said Maxime Petrin, product manager at Montreal Tractor. "As we grow to serve more construction and road-building contractors, offering the high-quality Minnich line across eastern Canada was common sense."



## BRANDT NOW CARRYING AMERICAN AUGERS

American Augers has announced that it has named the Brandt Group of Companies the exclusive dealer for American Augers and Trenchor products across Canada. American Augers has been a fixture in the underground utilities and pipeline industry across North America for over 50 years. Adding the full line of American Augers and Trenchor products to Brandt's existing underground equipment offering improves Canadian support and distribution for a complete line that covers all sizes of equipment.

"Brandt's strong infrastructure makes our premium equipment much more accessible to the Canadian market," says Joe Smith, American Augers' director of sales and marketing. "It's an exciting opportunity for contractors and American Augers."

Canadian contractors will now have easier access to the largest equipment available, from auger boring machines with up to 1.2 million pounds of maximum thrust, to industry-leading directional drills with up to 100,000 foot-pounds of maximum torque. The two companies' shared commitment to maximizing customer uptime has resulted in a 24/7 support network. With American Augers' and Trenchor's premium-quality products and Brandt's exceptional dealership and parts warehouse infrastructure, Canadian contractors can expect better-than-ever uptime to keep them digging, even in the toughest conditions.

## SCROGGINS SELLING SOLESBEE'S

Solesbee's has announced the appointment of Lane Scroggins as outside sales manager. Scroggins will be responsible for bringing the brand's years of global product expertise to local customers. He will continue to oversee the sales department and will also manage dealer relationships across the country. Scroggins brings more than 15 years of industry and sales leadership experience. Early on in his career, he led inside sales with Solesbee's, where he established relationships with a long list of customers and dealers in the southeast U.S. Scroggins' knowledge of the Solesbee's brand and products is especially valuable as he transitions to his new position. Customers and Solesbee's team members will benefit from his understanding of compatible carriers, machines and attachments.

"I'm looking forward to making face-to-face connections with customers and dealers, some of which I've had a phone relationship with for years," Scroggins said. "I enjoy helping customers find the right solution for their challenges."

Scroggins' experience will help expand the dealer network to serve the range of markets where Solesbee's attachments are valued, such as construction, demolition, forestry and other land clearing industries. Solesbee's brings a worldwide, experienced brand to local customers, offering insight and support for individual applications. They deliver worldwide experience under the Kinshofer global brand with localized, relationship-based support.

"Lane has such a great passion for the industry and Solesbee's products," said David Jenkins, Solesbee's president. "This is just the kind of energetic leadership that customers will appreciate. Our products have been popular over the years in the southeast, and Lane is a great asset to help expand that proven technology to other regions of the country."

## SMITH TO HANDLE BIG ACCOUNTS FOR TAKEUCHI



Takeuchi-US has named Austin Smith national account sales representative. Smith's main responsibilities include sales and support of national account customers across the U.S. and Canada. He has a decade of experience with compact equipment in the landscape industry. Most recently, he worked as the sports turf manager at Precision Turf, where he was since 2014. In his previous role, he managed over 60 acres of athletic fields in the metro Atlanta area. Additionally, Smith established and maintained relationships with clients, wrote proposals and pitched services to current and prospective clients.

"Coming in with a great deal of in-the-field experience and knowing and operating compact equipment firsthand made it an easy choice to bring Austin onboard," said Scott Place, director of national accounts. "Austin is a go-getter and very knowledgeable, which will be a perfect fit to call on our national account customers. We are excited to welcome him to our team."

## KEELING TO GROW BROKK



Brokk, a remote-controlled demolition machine manufacturer, has appointed Jeff Keeling its first business development manager. Keeling transitioned from the role of Brokk's midwestern regional sales manager to the new position earlier this year. He works closely with regional sales managers to develop and grow the Brokk brand in key segments across the United States and Canada. He is also responsible for educational initiatives aimed at helping customers maximize their Brokk machines' potential.

"Brokk's continued growth in North America is thanks in large part to our team of dedicated, knowledgeable professionals," said Peter Bigwood, Brokk vice-president of sales and marketing. "For six years, Jeff has fostered relationships with customers in the midwest, helping Brokk grow into new markets and territories. Now, we are excited to have his energy and industry experience to provide support for our customers and sales team on a national scale."

In addition to his six years at Brokk, Keeling has long experience in the concrete cutting and construction industry, including experience with Husqvarna, Volvo Construction Equipment and Hilti. He served as executive vice-president for Magnum Diamond and Machinery, his family-owned concrete saw and diamond blade manufacturing business, where he gained an in-depth understanding of the concrete cutting and demolition industry. After the family manufacturing business was sold to Dimas (now Husqvarna), Keeling worked with his father in their own heavy equipment sales business, Precision Demolition. It was there that Keeling was first exposed to Brokk machines, serving as a distributor of the equipment. He holds a bachelor's degree in personnel administration from the University of Kansas.

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to share the power of Brokk demolition robots with a larger audience," Keeling said. "I have always enjoyed the diversity of projects I'm exposed to working with Brokk — one day it's a steel mill or foundry, the next a mine or chimney stack tear-down. As business development manager, I get to see how people use Brokk machines all over the country. I'm also excited to help support Brokk customers across the country and build customer relationships." Keeling resides in Olathe, Kansas with his family.





# Cross-Canada Rate Report

## A look at average national rental rates

The Cross-Canada Rate Report is provided to Canadian Rental Service as a free service to the Canadian rental industry. Rates data shown are national averages generated by quarterly surveys of 441 Canadian rental stores. Rates shown are reported list rates and may not reflect the actual charges to any particular customer. For in-depth analysis and a chance to interact with EquipmentWatch researchers, register for the quarterly webinar at [canadianrentalservice.com](http://canadianrentalservice.com) > Webinars.

Number of rental companies:

**54**

Number of stores:

**441**

Number of rates collected for the 10 subtypes:

**55,220**

Crawler Mounted Hydraulic Excavators



4-WD Articulated Wheel Loaders



Standard Crawler Dozers



Telescoping Boom Rough Terrain Unit



### HIGHEST RATES

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
DAILY	847.17	▲ 852.61
WEEKLY	2852.97	▲ 2881.83
MONTHLY	7296.29	▲ 7355.11

### 2<sup>nd</sup> HIGHEST

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
D	765.34	▲ 769.31
W	2249.82	▼ 2248.73
M	6098.12	▲ 6124.45

### 3<sup>rd</sup> HIGHEST

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
D	734.82	▲ 737.60
W	2311.67	▼ 2303.11
M	6018.51	▼ 6008.33

### 4<sup>th</sup> HIGHEST

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
D	603.66	▲ 604.83
W	1654.94	▼ 1642.07
M	4084.09	▼ 4035.26

Single Drum Vibratory Compactors



I.C. Pneumatic Tire Lift Trucks



Crawler Mounted Compact Excavators



Compact Track Loaders



Skid Steer Loaders



Electric Self Propelled Scissor Lifts



	Q4 2018
D	494.12
W	1645.67
M	4644.69
	Q1 2019
D	▼ 491.61
W	▲ 1646.78
M	▼ 4634.82

	Q4 2018
D	390.43
W	1111.17
M	2832.53
	Q1 2019
D	▲ 390.99
W	▲ 1117.89
M	▲ 2844.47

	Q4 2018
D	384.97
W	1322.59
M	3349.30
	Q1 2019
D	▼ 384.93
W	▼ 1320.37
M	▲ 3352.85

	Q4 2018
D	380.89
W	1270.38
M	3303.49
	Q1 2019
D	▼ 377.54
W	▼ 1261.61
M	▲ 3329.55

	Q4 2018
D	257.11
W	906.55
M	2430.64
	Q1 2019
D	▼ 255.72
W	▼ 903.72
M	▲ 2470.44

	Q4 2018
D	213.96
W	516.63
M	1205.45
	Q1 2019
D	▲ 214.16
W	▲ 521.93
M	▲ 1229.53

# CANADA'S TOP 10 UNDER 40

These dynamic young rental people are our future.

by CANADIAN RENTAL  
SERVICE

**R**ental store owners can be a bit like parent moms when it comes to their favourite young staff. One of the things we hear the most at industry events is “Hey, are you looking for someone for the Top 10 Under 40 this year?” And why not. Canada’s energetic young leaders are inspiring and innovative and make us all feel hopeful about the future of the rental business. Here is the 2019 crop.

## TECHNOLOGY TITAN

by Andrew Snook



There are two things Jason Cunningham has always loved: the world of retail, and tools. So when he had the opportunity to join Home Depot overseeing 177 rental centres, Cunningham jumped

at the opportunity.

“I’m a big tool guy, love tools. My grandfather was a master carpenter, and my father was a carpenter, so I was always around tools,” he says, adding that even when he was growing up his jobs would often involve building barbecues, bikes and working on small engines. “After I graduated university, I got a job working for a retailer where I was in the tool business basically buying, and I’ve always loved it.”

After working for multiple retailers in merchandising as a buyer for close to 14 years, the opportunity came up to run Home Depot’s rental division. Cunningham was interested in the role, so he did some research to learn more about what it entailed.

“It brought me back to my tool days,”

he says. “Going into the rental area and seeing all the great tools that they had, I thought it was an amazing opportunity. I jumped at the chance and joined Home Depot three years ago to run their rental division and it’s one of the best things I’ve ever done.”

Cunningham says his favourite thing about his role at Home Depot is dealing with the vendors.

“Everybody that I’ve dealt with on the rental side of the business has been extraordinary,” he says. “They’ve welcomed me into the business with open arms, and they’ve helped me understand what renting is versus the core merchandising capabilities of other retailers. And everybody is straightforward about equipment on what you need to buy, what you need to stock, and what the customers want.”

Cunningham really enjoys the friendly atmosphere that comes with being in the rental industry.

“When we come together at CRA meetings or at events, everybody is welcoming and always wants to chat about the business. That’s one of the reasons that I love the rental industry: the tight-knit community,” he says.

When it comes to the equipment side of the business, Cunningham is fascinat-

ed by the latest battery technologies displacing gas in much of the equipment.

“Multiple vendors have brought up battery technologies on certain pieces of equipment where you would never think a battery could generate as much power as an engine would. To make those pieces of equipment just as efficient is definitely a change in the direction of where they want to go. The new tools that are going to come out in the next three to five years that are going to be powered by those batteries is going to be unbelievable. You’re talking from small tampers to large excavators that are running off battery power. It’s just the way of the future.”

Cunningham has enjoyed witnessing a great deal of change over his time in the industry, not just on the technologies for the equipment but on the technologies for the operational side as well.

“There’s technology on the operation side that is making it way easier for customers to shop at rental centres,” he says. “And also digital media – YouTube, social media, those types of things. Customers are becoming more comfortable with doing bigger projects and that’s going to increase in growth in the next five to seven years.”





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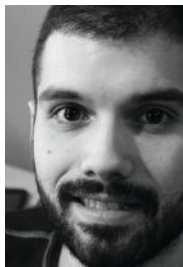
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## DRUMMING UP BUSINESS

by Jack Kohane



Dancing to a different drummer makes Joel Deslauriers a beat above the rest in live production equipment rentals. “I love the live concert side of the business and putting on a fantastic show for people to enjoy, whether it’s for a corporate event, music festival or private party,” says the production manager for Ottawa Special Events, a leading supplier of products for indoor and outdoor events in the nation’s capital.

Once a powerhouse drummer in a local band, equally adept as a folk or heavy metal percussionist, Deslauriers knows what it takes to put on a memorable show. “Striving for the best quality of production truly enhances the experience for the guest. Being a festival/concert attendee myself, I appreciate a great lighting show and superb sounding speakers. Allowing all your senses to be triggered, changes the experience for the better.”

Changing his career plans from banging drums to drumming up business for Ottawa Special Events came at a crucial time in Deslaurier’s life. He was working multiple jobs to support his growing family, as well as attending Ottawa’s Algonquin College’s Music Industry Arts program

in 2014. That’s where he met Michael Wood, a professor and co-owner of Ottawa Special Events. Wood hired him on the spot. Deslauriers brought his musical and audio-visual background, and quickly learned more about live event production, first as a general labourer, moving to warehouse manager and now, at 24, managing \$1 million in accounts every year for Ottawa Special Events.

“Joel has built a reputation for himself as one of the top production managers in Ottawa,” lauds Wood, pointing out that he manages all of the production requirements for Capital Pride, Canada Day Barrhaven, Sens Soiree (The Ottawa Senators Foundation). Deslauriers also helps raise the pulse of Glowfair, the city’s premier arts and cultural diversity spectacle that closes down much of downtown Bank Street for two days each year. “Joel never fails to wow clients with his three-dimensional renderings of his shows,” Wood gushes.

Deslauriers believes pre-planning is the key to event success. He uses notation software, 3D Design software, and a Macbook to stay organized. “I can pull out the CAD drawings for Glowfair in 2015, reference them to look at different things we have proposed in the past, quickly edit them, and send them out to whoever needs them. Luckily, I have a great team to lean on when I do have too many projects on the go.”

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## FROM THE BOTTOM UP

by Andrew Snook



Wess Ettorre has been involved in the equipment rental industry since he was 16 years old, when he worked part-time for extra money at Stephenson's Rental.

"I was working on Saturdays, putting equipment away, loading equipment," Ettorre recalls.

He worked there until he finished high school and moved to London, Ont., to attend Western University where he obtained a bachelor's degree in business. While there he continued to immerse himself in the industry, working at a small mom-and-pop shop to pay his bills. At no point during his time in post-secondary school was Ettorre deterred from building his career in the equipment rental sector.

"Even when I was there, I knew what

I wanted to do," Ettorre says, referring to his passion for equipment rental industry. "I couldn't wait to get back into the industry."

After finishing school he returned to Stephenson's Rental and worked there until joining Strongco in Burlington, Ont. for one year. From there he went to work with Volvo Rents for five years before joining Skylift Equipment in Oakville, Ont.

Ettorre took the experience and knowledge he gained in the aerial work platform and construction equipment rental markets, and used them to start his own equipment rental business. In 2008, he founded GTA Equipment Rentals.

The company started with one Bobcat 763 that Ettorre rented out to customers. "I bought it on a credit card with 18-per-cent interest," he recalls.

Fortunately his friends and former customers spread word of the quality of his work and customer service, so his business got busy relatively quickly. Ettorre

added new inventory as the demand came for certain types of equipment.

"Guys that I was dealing with in the past kept calling me saying, 'Wess, I need an excavator, I need a Bobcat,'" he says.

Presently, GTA Equipment currently owns about 70 pieces of equipment, and the company continues to track the needs of its customers closely. Ettorre says that conversations about purchasing new equipment are far different these days compared to when he first started out.

"A conversation used to be two hours, now it's about 15 minutes," he says. "It's been quite the journey."

The company currently employs five people in total, including his brother, Achille, who came on board full-time two years ago to run the administrative and financial aspects of the business.

Ettorre enjoys attending association events organized by the Canadian Rental Association and the American Rental Association, as well as travelling to Europe to see some of the latest technologies firsthand.

"We're always looking for new equipment," he says, adding that finding the technology is only half the challenge. Convincing customers to embrace new types of equipment is the other half, but being a rental company helps. "For a lot of people with new equipment, the best way to get it into people's hands is to rent it."

In the future, Ettorre would like to eventually expand to a second location, but says he'll take that kind of growth based on levels of increasing demand.

"We're taking it organically slow and steady, focusing on building relationships," he says. "It's easier to keep your existing customers happy, than trying to have 1,000 customers – service the hell out of them."

Although Ettorre currently has future goals that include expansion, his original reason for starting up the business was far different.

"I started this whole thing because I thought it would give me more leisure time," he says while laughing. "I appreciate everything that has happened. It's a great feeling."

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## THE TECH WATCHER

By Treena Hein



For Joey Kennedy, assistant manager at Nor-Val Equipment Rentals in Vernon, B.C., it's all about inspiring by doing. "I would hope I'm a good example for my staff," he says. "I

demonstrate a good work ethic and a good attitude towards the public, which makes [staff] want to work harder and make customers happy. That's the main goal at the end."

Kennedy, 35, has worked in rentals since he left high school. He started at United Rentals in Surrey, B.C., in 2005, where his brother, Shawn, helped get him hired as a driver. After about two years, a health challenge led him and his young family to Salmon Arm, B.C., where Kennedy worked at Cardinal Rentals as a driver and in customer service for about eight years. At that point,

he had a feeling that Cardinal might be having difficulty, and, sure enough, it was bought out not too long afterwards. So before then Kennedy explored his options. "I knew the owner at Nor-Val, Jim [Clipperton], because we'd rent items from Nor-Val sometimes, and I reached out to him because I heard he was looking for workers," he says. "It was a good move."

It was a good move – and a bit of a daring one. At the age of 30, Kennedy went from driving and serving customers to being the manager of Nor-Val's Armstrong store, albeit a small one with two full-time employees.

Four years later, about two years ago, the opportunity came to move to the Vernon store as assistant manager, a position which involves helping to manage 15 employees in a much busier operation. Kennedy also oversees the computer and phone systems for all four Nor-Val stores (the latest was added in west Kelowna, B.C., last fall), and is responsible for supervising all his store's deliveries (the trucks

carry GPS beacons). "GPS is probably most useful for being able to tell customers exactly when a delivery will arrive if they need to know," Kennedy says. "I watch the GPS like a hawk and I'm always making sure we're maintaining our schedules."

Kennedy says he's learned "tons" moving from Armstrong to the larger Vernon, particularly the skills needed to manage staff. "You have to figure out who wants to do what," he notes, "and play to their strengths."

Of the entire firm, Kennedy says Nor-Val plans to go after more commercial business but still look after the homeowner too. "We don't want to exclude any group of renters," he says. "And I think we're following the right path. We've bought a lot of every piece of equipment, from small hammer drills to 125-foot lifts and we are always running short of everything."

Kennedy doesn't plan on leaving the rental business anytime soon, as he really likes the variety of things he gets to do. Every day is different.

## MR. POSITIVE

By Treena Hein



Thirty-four year-old Kalan Mason started in the rental business with Westminster Equipment Rentals in Penticton, B.C., in 2006 as a yard hand. By 2008,

he'd moved to Westside Rentals in Kelowna, B.C., (an affiliated company), where he was quickly moved into the maintenance bay. "I was always mechanically-inclined, and the boss noticed that I was solving problems in the maintenance bay and offered me a mechanic position full-time," Mason says. "I like it because there's always something different that you're working on. You have to learn all the time." At the same time, Mason was always willing to fill in whenever and wherever needed – at the counter, with equipment delivery, employee training

and more.

In November 2017, Westminster Rentals was amalgamated with Westside into West Equipment Rentals and Mason got a big surprise. "I got one call seeing if I was interested in working for somebody else and then the calls kept coming from small engine shops and the other rental businesses in the Valley here," he explains. "I began to feel like a bit of a hot commodity. But I believed we have a good thing going here and I like the people I work with, so I stayed."

Co-worker Andrew Naaykens notes that at that point "throughout the trials and tribulations of a stressful year of new people, systems and processes, Kalan's skills were continually shining through." Mason says he approached every situation with a good attitude and tried to make the best of it.

His employers saw his value and in early 2019, Mason was made co-branch manager of the Kelowna store and, in addition, company maintenance

manager for all three stores: Kelowna, Oliver, B.C., and Penticton. He now puts in busy days co-managing the store, dispatching personnel when needed to deal with a complicated issues, implementing long-term maintenance schedules and servicing equipment out on long-term rental.

In terms of future goals, he says, "I want to operate my own branch and just keep growing with the company. We're growing because we are killing the competition with service, expedient repairs and expedient delivery, and a personal experience when you come in the door."

When asked what advice he'd give to someone entering the rental industry – someone who wants to work his or her way up the way he has – Mason advises a strong work ethic, thinking outside the box and a positive attitude. "You can't let things get you down," he says. "You have to keep going. I have a 'never give up' attitude and I don't like when things beat me, so I don't let them."





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## ALL IN THE FAMILY

by Andrew Snook



The rental equipment industry was bred into second-generation owner André Moureau from a very young age.

"I've been here since I was a kid, seven or eight years old. My kid

(Benjamin, 7) is doing the exact same thing now," he says. "I started like everybody else, at the bottom of the ladder."

André started his career at Location Moureau as an employee and learned everything he could about the business from his father, who started up the business in 1975, which started with humble beginnings as small repair centre for power tools.

The company currently employs six people: André, four employees, and his sister, Valerie, who joined the business

a few years ago as a co-owner. André bought the business from his father in 2001.

"We run it together full-time," he says. "We complete each other. She's the brains."

Valerie runs the administrative side of the operations as well as other components of the business, while helping out with whatever needs to be done, including making deliveries and cleaning up the shop when needed.

The brother and sister one-two punch has done well over the years, growing and improving the family business. In 2018, Location Moureau was presented the Rental House of the Year Award in Quebec. The company services a large area on the coast of the Gaspé Peninsula.

When it comes to his favourite aspects of running the business, it's definitely the problem-solving aspect that André enjoys the most.

"It's just giving a chance to people to do the right thing with the right tool. Sometimes they come here with an idea but it's not quite on point. It's helping them with being productive," he says. "When you work with the right tool, you work safer. Sometimes it's a little bit expensive but if it goes well, you come back and do something else."

When André and Valerie took over the family business, they spent time working on smooth succession planning.

"We hear about next generations taking control [sometimes] and it's a damn mess," he says. "Lack of preparation, lack of an idea... it's like being in the same car and not going the same place."

André feels very lucky to be able to work closely with his family.

"Dad is still around working on special projects," he says. "My mom used to work here a long time in administration. We're a pretty close family, we don't fight each other."

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## INFINITE WISDOM

By: Jack Kohane



He was barely into his teens when Colin Simmoneau found his life's calling. "I love the event equipment rental business because it's unlike any other," says the savvy 21-year-old operations manager of

Edmonton-based Infinite Event Services. "Everything in this business is constantly evolving. One day I'm out guiding a crew on tent installation, the next day I'll be setting up staging and running sound for a festival in a park. I've even been a barista when we needed one in a pinch." He fast-tracked his knack of coffeemaking by watching YouTube videos. A quick study, he never shies away from learning some-

thing new, evidenced by his resume which includes being an audio-visual technician, a stage lighting tech (a certified operator of the Stageline SL50 and SL100 mobile stages), a dynamic DJ, and a truck driver. "It's great to be able to learn something new about every piece of equipment we send out," he enthuses.

Company founder, Sheldon Fingler, sings Simmoneau's praises, proud of the fact that he recognized his protégé's potential even as young as 14 when Colin worked weekends at Infinite Event Services. At 15, he was taken on full-time for a summer job, where he got a taste for the business. Upon graduation from high school, Simmoneau was snapped up. "His leadership and work ethic were immediately noticed," lauds Fingler. "From setting up concert stages to wedding decor installs and everything in between, his willingness

to complete any task given and his ability to figure things out with little guidance made it easy to give him more responsibilities, from sales to scheduling and employee management."

Fingler, who started Infinite Event Services from his basement 15 years ago and now occupies three warehouses and 19 storage containers, notes Simmoneau's assets. "Colin brings unwavering commitment to us. He always works to get the job done no matter what it takes. When it comes to employees that means so much to me. I never have to worry about letting a customer down."

Certainly wise beyond his years, Simmoneau attributes his joining the Royal Canadian Army Cadets earlier on (rising to the rank of sergeant), for teaching him a lot about leadership and respect. And gru-

## DYNAMO JR.

by Andrew Snook



For Pierre-Shawn Turcotte, being in the rental business is a long-time family affair. His father, Jean-Marc Turcotte, was a founder and former president of the regional association, the ALQ,

and one of the founders of Quebexpo.

"He was very much a top leader," says Pierre-Shawn. "We've been here for more than 25 years."

Jean-Marc started up Location Turbo in Montreal in 1980, the year Pierre-Shawn was born, so to say he was immersed in the business his entire life is not an overstatement.

"I grew up in the industry," he says. "It was like my little brother growing up."

Pierre-Shawn started helping out around the business when he was 10 years old and worked his weekends and his summers from the age of 12 until he finished high school. After deciding post-secondary school wasn't for him, Pierre-Shawn went to work with another company at his father's request.

"If I wasn't going to school I had to go work elsewhere, to see how it is to work for someone else," he recalls.

Pierre-Shawn ended up getting his first job out of high school with Lou-Quip, a Groupe Lou-Tec company. He worked there for two years before returning to the family business at the age of 21.

"I did everything that is imaginable from mopping the floors to deliveries, working the counter and working in the office," he says.

In 2011, Pierre-Shawn started buying shares from his father, who was planning out his retirement and succession plans. By the age of 34, Pierre-Shawn was starting to oversee the operations of the business. Today he is the sole owner of Location Turbo.

"During all that time in the industry, I was my dad's shadow," Pierre-Shawn recalls.

Since his father's passing, Pierre-Shawn has certainly followed in his footsteps, positioning himself as a leader in the industry. Pierre-Shawn has been working tirelessly with the local association and is the current president of the ALQ. He regularly meets with rental centres across the province.

"I know most of them personally," he says.

In addition to his work with the ALQ, Pierre-Shawn put together publications to help keep industry members informed for 12 years and is also a national director on the Canadian Rental Association's board of directors.

"I'm pretty much touching everything in the industry," he says, adding that his own business has been keeping him plenty busy as well. "Turbo has been in business 38 years this year."

The company does the majority of its business in Montreal. Between 60 and 65 per cent of the company's business is with homeowners, with contractors making up about 15 to 20 per cent of the business, and the remaining business coming from propane refills.

Although the company specializes in all kinds of rental tools, it has also expanded to include a party goods rental division.

"We've been growing so much in the past five years we needed an extra 4,000 square feet of space," Pierre-Shawn says. "We do about 45,000 transactions per year. We're on Le-Plateau-Mont-Royal, which is one of the most densely populated areas in Montreal. We have 15 employ-



elling boot camp workups for giving him the grit and determination to accomplish a goal. "Everyone has specific things that they're good at and I learned how to implement that in a team to delegate tasks to individuals. With leadership, it goes back to treating people how you would want to be treated, but at times knowing when to motivate to get stuff done. Cadets shows you that you can achieve much more as a team. Doing something where everyone benefits gives a greater feeling of accomplishment when that goal is completed."

Besides pursuing his passion fishing for rainbow trout and northern pike, Simmoneau intends to cast his lot with Infinite Event Services for the long term, possibly buying into the company when the opportunity is right. "By then I'll have a strong team behind me ready to keep the company growing," he says.

ees – 12 full-time and three part-time – and two delivery trucks we manage to do everything with, which is quite surprising."

Pierre-Shawn says his favourite part of being in the business is witnessing the evolution of the industry.

"It's really amazing, the new tools we have now, the technologies coming in," he says. "What's fun is the industry can be together. We communicate. It's a nice big family. The sharing between us... it's a beautiful competition. Independently, there's a lot of support on that side, seeing how we can make someone else's life easier."

Pierre-Shawn says its very fulfilling to be able to share his knowledge of tools to help out a customer in need.

"A client comes wanting a tool, leaves with another tool and comes back with a thank you. It's amazing," he says, adding that he brings his nine-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter to the shop with him now, continuing the family tradition.

"They come and work in the shops," he says. "They go to school with the Turbo cap on."



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## THE ORGANIZER

By: Jack Kohane



Bringing people together is mission critical to Kayle Turpin. As branch manager for Robertson Rent-All in Ottawa, he believes there's nothing more important than making every-

one feel that they're part of something special. "That's the fun thing about this job. It's not only that I get to learn about equipment, new ways of completing projects and newly introduced regulations. It's that I get to learn about customers and fellow employees as well."

Case in point: recently, Turpin teed up a team bonding event by hitting the greens with his work colleagues. When he found out that many of his staff enjoy playing golf, he saw an opportunity to bolster the company's team spirit. "By doing social events like this, we are able

to strengthen our team and create a more inclusive work environment," says Turpin, who at 26 has nearly a decade under his workbelt with Robertson Rent-All, a family-owned and operated rental specialist founded in 1992 (and the 2012 ROOTY winner as Canadian Operator of the Year). "This affects many areas that are crucial to a company's success: team efficiency, employee retention, employee acquisition and overall business morale," he continues. "The best part about learning new things about employees is being able to use this information to better their experience at the workplace."

Co-owner D.J. Robertson (with brother, Cameron, the sons of company founders Don and Netta Robertson) likes the new ideas, dedication and work ethic Turpin exhibits every day. "He works every day, never complains about anything and has a genuine interest in growing our business. His organizational skills are outstanding and is a major reason why we are able to scale our

business year-over-year. He is a great person to work with and gets along with everyone."

Turpin especially enjoys sharing what he learns with those around him. "When I was young, I was taught that it's very important to use your experience and knowledge to help others. Working with the Robertson family has helped me stay true to those words."

Given the wide range of equipment that today's top-notch rental service offers, it's a calling tailor-made for Turpin. "I learn new methods for completing projects every day. By seeing how customers go about their projects and hearing about how it went every step along the way, I can then share these methods and tips with future customers. Being able to help others is probably the thing that I value most about working at Robertson Rent-All."

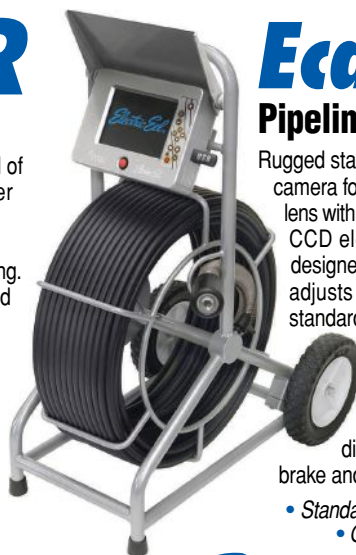
CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

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# Awarding mediocrity

by Russ Dantu

**W**inning an award for customer service is always nice, but sometimes you wonder how these things are given out. I remember, years ago, a customer of mine nominated me for a Consumer Choice Award for Business Excellence. I was thrilled that they thought my customer service was at that level. Shortly after, I received a call from the company that handles all the details of these nominations. What was really sad was that it felt like a sneaky sales call where this company was really just trying to sell you something. Their first move was to offer me the award if I used their “cutting edge marketing initiatives” to attract more nominations. I turned down the award instead, but had to put up with marketing calls for the next year asking me to nominate other businesses. I guess that was their way of obtaining a slightly warm lead.

So why do I bring this up? Well, I just received an email from Air Canada bragging how they have just won Best Airline in North America for the eighth time in the last 10 years by Skytrax, “an independent research firm that uses over 41 different aspects of customer satisfaction to rank airlines’ product and service standards.” I’d sure like to see these 41-plus aspects. I struggle to say much of anything good about Air Canada and a lot of people I know also struggle with them.

I just flew them again this past weekend and their “service” was adequate at best. I almost always fly WestJet over Air Canada for domestic flights. My wife travels a fair bit, too. On the past four Air Canada flights my wife has taken they have lost her luggage twice and postponed flights twice. She even said to them on a flight from Calgary to Vancouver, “Please don’t lose my luggage like you did last time. It’s a one-hour flight and I really need my bag to arrive with me.” They lost the luggage and it had to be sent on a later flight. The last postponement was less than an hour before her flight, after she checked her baggage through, and her Air Canada app still to this day never showed the postponement. It meant she missed a connecting seaplane flight, only recovered 50 per cent of the fare and had

to pay for a new flight. When she went to the Air Canada “customer service” desk, she was expecting some compassion, some empathy, some help. She got this: “Well, sometimes these things happen. There is nothing we can do to help you now.” Less than an hour before her flight was scheduled to leave and you can do nothing? There was a WestJet flight that had seats on it but they wouldn’t work with my wife on that. They offered no compensation for their error, no “Sorry for the inconvenience,” or even, “I can see that this is very frustrating for you and I would be frustrated, too.” All she got was someone working there who didn’t seem to like their job and didn’t appear to care about the customer. They offered no true customer service.

Now, we all know that the more you fly, the bigger the chance that something will go wrong. It’s inevitable. What we do as companies when things go wrong is paramount in our customers’ eyes. That is what we can control.

When things go wrong, there are a few simple steps to follow. Apologize for the inconvenience the situation has caused even if you are not in the wrong. Listen intently to the customer’s problem and write down notes, if necessary. Repeat back the customer’s complaint to be clear you have all the facts correct and then ask more clarifying questions if needed. Do your best to solve the issue as quickly and efficiently as possible. Let your service representative bring in a supervisor if they are not authorized to solve the problem in a satisfactory manner to the customer. Compensate if you are at fault. It doesn’t always have to be a large form of compensation; give what you feel is warranted for the situation. Thank the customer and apologize again when problem is solved to the best of your ability.

Who knows? If you look after your customers well to start with and even better when things go wrong, you too may end up with an award. **CRS**

Russ Dantu is a 30-year veteran of the rental industry and has been delivering workshops, seminars and keynotes on customer service for over 15 years. For more information, visit [russdantu.com](http://russdantu.com) or email [russ@russdantu.com](mailto:russ@russdantu.com)





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# POWERING UP

More lithium-ion battery-powered equipment is coming.  
Here's what you need to know.

**B**attery-powered equipment of any size, from screwdrivers to tractors, is becoming more common in every sector of our economy. One of the drivers in advancing battery technology of all kinds is the desire to replace fossil fuel-based energy (diesel and gas engines) with cleaner energy (renewably powered electrical engines). Ditch Witch product manager, Chris Thompson, points to Europe as a hotbed for battery development, where both subsidies and regulations have spurred R&D. Now, he says, interest in battery-powered equipment is “expanding rapidly all over the world.”

by TREENA HEIN

For customers of rental companies, battery-powered equipment provides a number of benefits. Obviously, first of all, it's more convenient than equipment that has to be fueled up or powered by electrical cords (as long, however, as recharging is easy and isn't required too often).

Battery-powered equipment can also shine in the rental industry, says Thompson, because it's “very quiet, so customers can use it during hours when noise restrictions are in place.”

Fred Paul agrees. Battery-powered equipment, says the sales and engineering manager at Wacker Neuson, can be used not only on projects with strict noise guidelines such as hospitals, schools and residential areas, but on projects where there are emissions restrictions or require a non-spillable fuel source (risks abound with onsite storage and handling of diesel and gas). With the increase in more battery-powered offerings, Paul predicts that “rental companies will gain greater access to

**RIGHT:** That's right, it's a battery-powered trencher. Advances in the amount of power lithium-ion batteries can store and deliver are making them feasible in applications never before thought possible.





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## TECH TIPS

interior construction or indoor renovation projects and poorly-ventilated areas including trenches and tunnels.”

Rental companies, he adds, can also market these machines as extremely simple to operate. In addition, the maintenance-free electric motor dramatically reduces service time, contributing to the low cost of ownership.

Indeed, Jon Williams believes rental companies will see much higher rental revenue from battery-powered equip-

ment in comparison to that which uses gas or diesel. “It has a higher purchase price but a much lower operating cost,” explains the CEO at Green Machine Company, which designs and builds patented lithium-ion-powered drive systems and markets battery-powered products in the construction market under its own brand (the Green Machine light tower and two mini excavators) and other brands.

“As an example, if a diesel machine

rents for \$2,500 per month and the customer buys another \$2,000 per month in fuel, oil and engine maintenance, the cost to the user in total is \$4,500 per month,” Williams notes. “The electric machine has virtually no maintenance and the fuel cost (electricity) is about five per cent of the fossil fuel cost. So, the rental company charges the full \$4,500 per month, and the customer has the same cost of use – with a much more versatile machine.”

For all these reasons, interest in battery-powered equipment in the rental industry and beyond has risen sharply. “Everyone asks us about it now,” says Thompson, “whereas five years ago it was a novelty.”

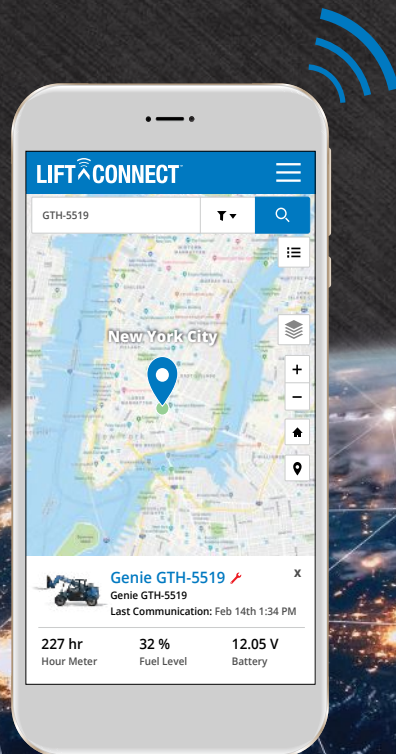
### BATTERY EVOLUTION

Historically, lead acid batteries have been the industry standard for battery-powered construction machines, but Chad Hislop, senior director of product management at Genie, notes they have lots of limitations, including power output, charging speed and battery life. He says now, due to R&D and use in the automobile industry, lithium-ion batteries have dropped “considerably” in price and are starting to become “a viable solution” for aerial work platforms.



Aerial equipment is a great application for lithium batteries because the motor isn't running the whole time the lift is in use.

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Hislop uses the word “significant” to describe the number of charge cycles a lithium-ion battery can achieve over its life-time, in comparison to a lead acid battery. “Initial testing we have performed shows these batteries could last longer than seven years in a product like a slab scissor lift,” he reports, “as opposed to the typical two- to three-year life of a lead acid battery in a rental situation.”

Want to run a rammer in a hospital? It better be quiet and not put out noxious emissions. Interior work is where lithium-ion equipment really shines.

In terms of run times before charging and how long charging takes, two companies weighed in. Ditch Witch’s prototype trencher can run for about four to five hours, then be charged over the lunch break and used again before charging overnight. Green Machine’s lithium-ion pack size is 100 kilowatts, which allows all their machines to run a full shift with a recharge time of six to eight hours.

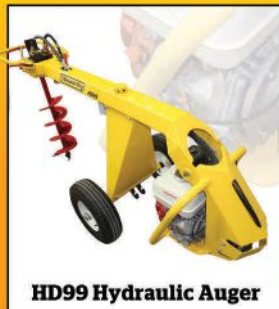
## WHAT’S BEST AND WHY

Which pieces of equipment are best suited to battery power is “a really big question” for the industry right now in Hislop’s view, and at this time all that he and other experts can do is speculate.

“In the past, we were really limited by the power output of the battery and total power density of the battery,” he notes. “It was tough to match a 58-kilowatt diesel engine [in that equipment size category] with lead acid batteries. They simply could not charge, store or dispense power at the rates our large aerial work platforms needed to meet the required duty cycles. As we see in the auto industry, these established barriers are breaking, and we can expect to see electrification of machines we never thought possible before.” However, Hislop cautions that creating lithium-ion battery-powered equipment has to be done for the right reasons. “Doing it just because we can isn’t enough,” he says. “Like the slab scissor lift example, true adoption will happen when it brings more value to the owner or user of the equipment.”

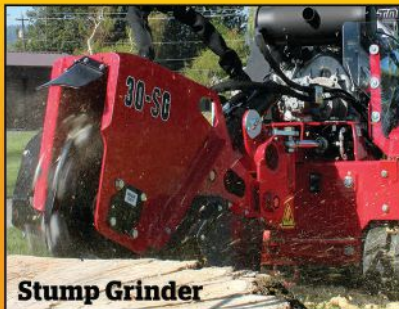
Thompson notes that with compaction equipment and on skid steers there will be a bit of added weight due to a large battery, but at the same time battery technology is getting smaller.

In Williams view, compact equipment will be the first



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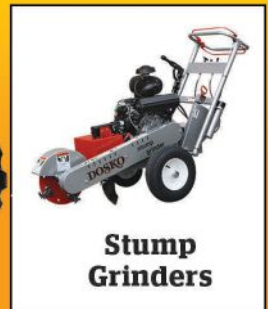
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Lithium batteries are no more susceptible to damage from vibration and impact than NiCad or lead-acid. And since battery-powered equipment has fewer moving parts than combustion engines, the maintenance load is lower.

focus, given that the demand for battery power has stemmed from avoidance of noise and emissions which are most pronounced on congested work sites with lots of workers. He adds that any machine platform that is powered

hydraulically will be most simple to convert to a battery-powered version, along with any machine platform that uses up to an 80-horsepower internal combustion engine.

Paul agrees that we will begin to see a

variety of light to compact battery-powered construction equipment options in the near future. He adds that the number of these products, no matter the type, “will increase as long as the battery fits within the package and delivers the necessary power to run the product for an entire shift with minimal down-time for charging.”

## SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE

For his part, Thompson expects that maintenance of battery-powered equipment won’t be as high as their diesel/ gas-powered counterparts. “The terminal connections would have to be maintained,” he says, “and the battery checked periodically to make sure it is holding a charge.”

Hislop advises following the manufacturer’s instructions closely for use and maintenance, as makers of this equipment have designed and tested it based on those recommendations. “Make sure to take the maintenance of the batteries seriously,” he says. “Leaving them at a low state of charge or letting things like the water level get low can have serious effects on life of the battery and performance of the machine. Charge profile matters, depth of discharge matters and whether the battery sits for a long time full or empty matters.”

As a first step in selection of battery-powered equipment, Hislop suggests that rental company owners make sure to choose that which carries the best brands of batteries and chargers. “Aftermarket or off-brand replacements don’t always offer the same level of performance or longevity,” he notes.

In Paul’s view, rental company owners should proceed with selection of battery-powered equipment as they would with any other purchase.

“Know your customer base and local market conditions,” he says. “Rental companies in areas where considerable interior renovation work is scheduled will be sure to benefit by adding battery-powered light equipment to their fleet, and increase their appeal to contractors who perform that work. Battery-powered products offer less complexity than engine-driven products so they will be a hit with the DIY weekend warriors too.” **CRS**

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TECH TIPS

# RISE OF THE ROBOT

## Self-driving construction equipment? Not yet.

by ANDREW SNOOK

Hasta la vista, operators? Not yet.

It's been decades since the original Terminator movie launched, scaring people into thinking an army of autonomous machines would soon be knocking down their doors and taking over the world. A funny thought when you take a look back at the "advanced" technologies that existed in 1984 (the original Nintendo game console hadn't even been released yet). Although we are far closer to creating these





types of fully autonomous machines for many aspects of our lives than ever before – and some autonomous machines are in their testing phases – the construction equipment world isn't quite there yet.

"We're not seeing autonomous technology because autonomous implies decision-making and no operator input, where machine automation is what we're doing in construction now. There is still always an operator there," says Kyle Burch, Canadian national sales manager for Leica. "Autonomous is a catch word, and they're working towards autonomous cars and such, but really it's machine automation in the construction world at this point."

Scott Crozier, general manager for Trimble's civil engineering and construction division agrees that the industry isn't quite there yet, but that it's definitely the direction the industry is headed towards.

"At the moment, full autonomous machinery, or an autonomous machine in construction doesn't exist outside of proof of concepts, prototypes and demonstrations," he explains. "I think what is happening is levels of automation of machines are increasing, which is tipping towards an autonomous solution. The autonomous machines that do exist have been done underneath a manufacturer's guidance as proof-of-concept type solutions in the development process. We've seen that with compactors, dozers, excavators and skid steer loaders."

Crozier says that autonomous machines should not be confused with remote-controlled machines.

Pre-wiring equipment so it can be outfit later with automated features, and other upsell opportunities when the demand is there, gives rental houses additional opportunities to rent out their fleets.



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## TECH TIPS



Autonomous compactor and dozer prototypes were on display during the Trimble Dimensions user conference.

“A remote-controlled machine is man-less, but someone is operating every element of it remotely,” he says.

Trimble is currently working on autonomous technologies for dozers and compactors. Prototypes were on display at the Trimble Dimensions user conference last November in Las Vegas, Nev.

“That was really the first demonstration and, of course, the next step is going from demonstration to something that is purchasable by a customer,” he says, adding that Trimble is currently working with OEMs developing after-market solutions that will be designed to work with specific machine makes and models. “At this stage we have our machine control and hot swap technologies. We automate elements of machines, but we do not remove a man from the machine today.”

Although truly man-less machines are not available in the marketplace today, Crozier says they are definitely coming to market in the near future.

“You can expect to see them in the coming two or three years. You’ll see these types of solutions delivered into the market that are purchasable by customers,” he says. “It’ll start with incremental elements that will continually improve the level of automation on a machine and then will get to a point where there’s a perception system that means the machine is safe to stop if it identifies something that





was unexpected, and that machine will stop and wait for some user interaction that will be local or remote – not on the machine but monitoring the jobsite.”

## RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

As new autonomous technologies make their way into the construction equipment market, there will definitely be new opportunities opening up for rental equipment houses, according to Crozier.

“I do see the rental companies as being a good path for contractors to get started when the technologies become available,” he says. “Renting for the right project is a good path to get started in using this new technology. You don’t have to have full commitment, you get to trial it out and see if it works for you for your specific kinds of projects without necessarily having a significant investment up front.”

One type of equipment with increasing demand for automation is excavators. Burch says one of the biggest changes that Leica has seen happening in the Canadian marketplace is the move towards more excavators with automated features.

“That’s really happened more in Canada than in the States. I know what we sell in the U.S. and in Canada for machine breakdown, and most of Canada is a heavier excavator market than the U.S.,” he says, adding that Canada in the last five years has been moving to more automation in excavators than dozers. “Originally people would put automation in graders because it was a finishing tool, then it

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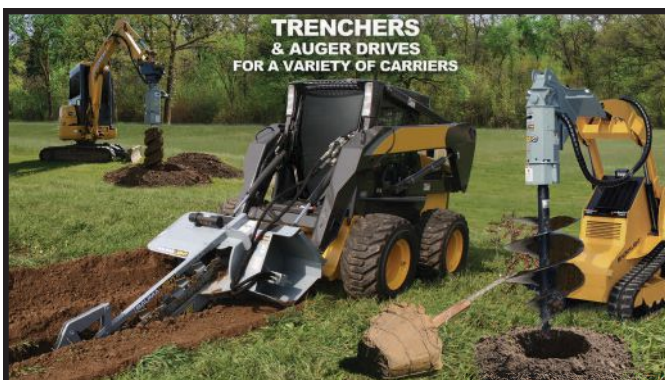
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## TECH TIPS

moved over to the dozer – it was easy to visualize for people – now it's excavators.”

One example of increased automation in excavators is the increased adoption of automated tilt rotators.

“It's here now, and it's becoming more and more adopted,” Burch says.

Pre-wiring equipment so it can be outfit later with automated features, and other upsell opportunities when the demand is there, gives rental houses additional opportunities to rent out their fleets, Burch says.

“There's potentially a premium there and the potential to not lose out on business,” he says. “If you get spec'd for a GPS dozer and you don't have a GPS dozer, for example, not only do you not get the premium for renting the GPS, you don't get the rental for the dozer itself, so it might be sitting in the yard.”

### TRAINING REQUIRED

As new automated and autonomous technologies enter the rental equipment market, additional training will be required.

“There will be some significant training and there will be an element of support,” Crozier says. “You're going to need someone capable in communications and electronics to help support these machines. It will be more of an I.T.-type person as opposed to a mechanic, so there will be a transition in the level of support for these machines.”

To help with this transition, Trimble has SiTech, a construction technology distribution partner that has been trained and has the experience in supporting industrial technologies on construction sites.

“So potentially you would then have a provided supplier being the support for the rental house,” Crozier explains.

### ONE STEP AT A TIME

As we move towards a more autonomous future, Crozier says the key thing to remember is that there will be a progression of the kinds of tasks machines will be capable of, and a progression of workflows on a jobsite.

“So when machines are interacting with each other – like an excavator interacting with a truck, dozer or compactor – there will be a continuing evolution of capabilities for autonomous machines,” he says, starting with basic machines with basic applications moving to complex workflows. “You're not going to have an autonomous excavator [first time out] where you can give it some plan and then it knows exactly how to do it. It will be able to load a truck, or dig a trench, or do these very specific tasks.”

Burch agrees that the steps taken towards full autonomy at a jobsite will not be rushed due to the nature of the work being performed.

“Construction sites are a dangerous place,” he says. “In order to have more autonomous machines, you need to have everything on the jobsite accounted for. You'll start to see wearable technology for construction workers so machines are able to sense where they are. It will become the norm. **CBS**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

## SURGING UPSTREAM



By Treena Hein

"A savvy head for business."

"Constantly puts herself and her many skills to the benefit of all."

"A social media giant."

These are the ways that Alexis Earl is described by her colleague, Rachael Caron.

These words ring true when you understand that the 26 year-old manages both locations of First Stop Tool & Equipment Rentals in Kemptville and Winchester Ont., and is part-owner as well.

Earl got her start in the rental industry by helping her father Neill at his main Kemptville location when she was about seven. It was in 2012 when Earl was 19 that her Dad opened the Winchester location and her industry involvement took a giant leap forward. "I had started showing interest in his business and so he offered management of that location to me," she explains. "He created a sink-or-swim situation and I swam hard. I was still growing up and I learn a lot about different aspects of the business. Most of all, I came to realize the value of the company and its potential, and that made me put my 'all' into it."

About a year later, obviously very impressed, her Dad made her manager of both locations and part owner of the business. Earl says working together has been "great," and that she and her Dad always find the solution to every problem – and grow from it too.

Along the way, Earl has taken some financial management courses and learned small engine repair. She's also found a lot of

useful information in business success books. "I have the confidence to succeed in what is still a male-dominated industry," she says. "I actually like that, because I've gained so much confidence interacting with contractors over the years that I've built amazing business relationships with them and strive to do so everyday. I've managed to impress them with what I know and it feels great doing that."

In terms of HR, she likes the challenge of influencing staff members and motivating them to succeed at work and in their private lives. She's also reaped the benefits of recruiting employees with "the right personalities to represent the company." Earl also enjoys creating policies and procedures for the two branches and honing her time-management skills. But her favourite thing of all is to help clients succeed. She says their business tagline is, "We've got great advice for your projects with equipment that won't let you down."

It's all working out well. The three other competitors from the surrounding area of Kemptville have all closed over the years. Earl has just been named a director-at-large at the Ontario Canadian Rental Association and won the North Grenville Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. She will fully take over the business in four years, at the age of 30.

As the business grows, Earl wants to enlarge its already-significant social media presence. "I post pictures of our staff working on equipment and of our equipment in action in order to educate our audience and clients. I'll also do photoshoots of willing clients and especially contractors when I can and post those pictures and stories," she says. "It's win-win, as the contractors get exposure too. It's all about helping each other as much as we can." **CNS**

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# Don't be left hanging

by Jeff Thorne



**W**hen it comes to operating a mobile elevated work platform there are common questions that get asked and common misconceptions about the type of lanyard that needs to be used and when to use it. Something that seems to deserve a simple answer is influenced by several different factors.

There's a lot of confusion about a number of issues. Workers don't know if they can use a lanyard with an energy-absorber, or a self-retracting lanyard, and if so what type to use. People are unclear about when to be tied-off in a self-propelled MEWP. What if it's not moving? These are all very good questions with very different answers, so let's break it all down.

Skyjack states that "the guardrail system of the aerial platform provides fall protection. If occupants of the platform are required to wear personal fall-protection equipment, occupants shall comply with instructions provided by the aerial platform manufacturer regarding anchorage(s). If additional fall protection is required, by an employer or the authority having jurisdiction, Skyjack recommends the use of a travel-restraint system to keep the occupant within the confines of the platform and thus not expose the occupant to any fall hazard requiring a fall arrest." Genie also states that personal fall protection is not required when operating their machines.

Essentially, both Skyjack and Genie are saying that the guardrail provides adequate fall protection and I agree. However, if your employer or legislation requires additional fall protection, they recommend travel restraint. This would be achieved by using a six-foot non-energy-absorbing lanyard or a self-retracting device (SRD) that has been manufactured to be anchored below the D-ring of the worker. Not all of them are, so buyer beware.

It's important to note that CSA Standard Z259.2.2-17 Self-Retracting Devices has been updated with major revisions and requires SRD's to be returned to the manufacturer or manufacturer-approved agent no more than two

years after the date of manufacture for inspection and maintenance, and annually thereafter. Additionally, the former types 1, 2 and 3 have now changed to SRL, SRL-LE (leading edge) and SLE-LE-R (leading edge retrieval).

The main reason for the SRL or the non-energy-absorbing lanyard in a scissor lift is so that the operator remains within the engineered guardrail as per the manufacturer, hence meeting the travel restraint requirement. Although not all manufacturers specifically recommend travel restraint, it's the most logical option if additional fall protection is necessary.

Answering the question of maintaining tie-off while in this type of platform while stationary depends on a few factors. This mainly comes down to legislation, site or company rules. For example, in Ontario, according to Regulation 213/91 for Construction Projects, an elevated work platform shall not be moved unless all workers on it are protected from ejection by being attached to an adequate anchorage point on the elevating work platform by a method of fall protection. So, in other words, if you're not moving on a scissor lift you do not need to be tied off. However, most constructors and employers will require an operator of any elevated work platform be tied off and maintain that tie-off to the manufacturers engineered anchorage point at all times.

When it comes to self-propelled boom-supported elevated work platforms, it's a different story. Use the shortest energy-absorbing lanyard possible and remain tied off to the manufacturer's engineered anchor points at all times. This sentiment is consistent in legislation throughout Canada. All too often, operators will tend to use the most common lanyard available: a six-foot energy-absorbing lanyard. It's not sufficient. Too much lanyard slack combined with uneven surface conditions can launch the operator out of the platform. **CRS**

Jeff Thorne is manager of training at Occupational Safety Group.

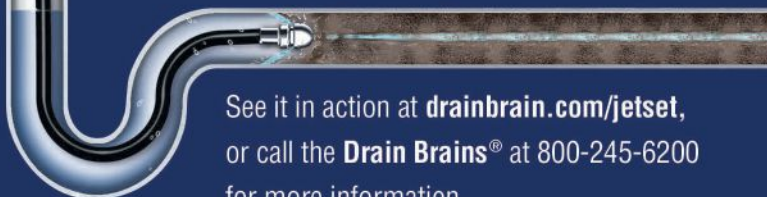


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