

Zaxis 600LC Anchors Effort for Wisconsin Utility Contractor



Conventional wisdom says a 60-metric-ton excavator is a tad large for utility work. A 45-metric-ton excavator or smaller is more customary for underground work. But for one Wisconsin firm, the Zaxis 600LC's size, reach, and power is just right for all kinds of jobs, which is why it's the flagship of Carl Bowers & Sons' fleet of seven Hitachi excavators.

Besides the 600LC, the Kaukauna-based outfit owns three 450LCs (mixed bag of EX and Zaxis), a Zaxis 225US LC

reduced-swing unit, and one each of the EX200LC and Zaxis 330LC.

GETTING DOWN IN THE VALLEY

Fueled by the growth of area paper plants and an influx of supporting industries, the Fox Valley region of east-central Wisconsin is enjoying robust growth.

"I started this business with three others in 1957," says founder and president Carl Bowers. "We started out doing small underground utility projects geared toward the private sector.

Gradually we shifted to more commercial and municipal utility work.

"Today, we have more than two dozen employees, and I've brought all three of my sons into the business. Al and Carl Jr. handle most of the field-work for me while Bill runs the office side of things.

"We are always doing utilities for Lowe's®, The Home Depot®, or some other large chain," continues Bowers. "We get a lot of the bids because we get projects done on time, at competi-

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“We get a lot of the bids because we get projects done on time, at competitive prices.”

— Carl Bowers, Founder and President, Carl Bowers & Sons



Bill Bowers



Allen Bowers

tive prices. A lot of our success can be traced directly to the job our Hitachi excavators do for us. Hitachi is the single most important reason we’ve been able to build and maintain a competitive edge.”

FORGONE CONCLUSION

Bowers says it was the ability to tackle bigger projects that made them realize the benefits a larger machine like the Zaxis 600LC could bring to their operation.

“We were laying a 27-inch line in nearby Darboy, Wisconsin. It involved a lot of deep work, so we contacted our dealer about a 600LC. We were already a dyed-in-the-wool Hitachi believer, so size — not manufacturer — was our only consideration. The 600LC was excellent on that job. Vern, our operator, was so good with it, we decided to use it on subsequent utility projects. It was one of the best moves we ever made.”

Bowers says the Zaxis 600LC’s size and reach make it ideal for some of the more challenging jobs they tackle.

“Vern gets an additional 10 feet of reach with the Zaxis 600LC. That’s a big plus when you’re digging in soft or unstable soil. You don’t notice it much at 5 to 10 feet, but it really shines at 18 to 20 feet. It’s nice to be able to sit back on firmer ground and still get those depths. Plus, the longer reach means he can set the pile further away from the bank, which improves the overall efficiency of the job. On many of our projects, the 600 handles all the main work, while we rely on our EX450s for most of the feeder work. It’s a nice advantage to have.”

STAYING WITH A WINNER

Bowers’ commitment to Hitachi goes back to 1982 when he bought his first unit — a UH122. It proved such a solid performer that a year later he bought a second. He’s been into orange ever since.



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“Hitachi was fantastic to deal with from the start,” notes Bowers. “Back then, interest rates were in the 17- to 18-percent range. Hitachi was working to gain a foothold in this area, so they really gave me a good deal. Our current relationship with Brooks Tractor really rounds out the relationship. They’re excellent and make sure we have what we need.” Bowers cites an example of how his early Hitachi excavators performed.



The company owns seven Hitachi excavators.

“We kept one of the UH122s around even after we moved into the newer Hitachi machines. We had more than 24,000 hours on it, and the only thing we ever did was pack the cylinders. We never changed a pump, we never switched out a valve — nothing. That’s pretty amazing. Hitachi has always been there for us and helped get us where we are. Why would I go with anyone else?”

Carl Bowers & Sons is serviced by Brooks Tractor, De Pere, Wisconsin.



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