



# Heavy-Metal THUNDER

**B**OOM! RRRRRRRIP!  
WHOOMP! Who's making that melodious racket in the 'burbs of Salt Lake City? Listen in as Grant Mackay Demolition and Hitachi crank it up to "11."

Much like their favorite son and daughter, Salt Lake City is a little bit country and a little bit rock-and-roll. For country fans there's Salt Lake's famed Temple Square, all done up like a downtown Christmas tree on

this brisk December morning. For rock-and-rollers there's Grant Mackay Demolition Co., tearing the roof off the joint since 1973.

## **OUR APPOINTMENT WITH DR. DEMO**

When Grant Mackay pulls into Mo's Place, his vanity plate announces his arrival: DR DEMO. As we ponder what medical school Grant attended, he tells us about his company — the

largest demo contractor in Utah with the biggest machines. In January 2004, Grant Mackay Demolition won the largest contract in all demodom, the dismantling of Geneva Steel in nearby Orem, Utah. Geneva is an aged metropolis of 1,800 acres of gray- and rust-colored metal, concrete, and I-beams approximately the size of Rhode Island. Over Mo's celebrated "2 eggs, 2 meat, 1 toast" breakfast, we develop an appetite for destruction

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as Grant tells about his relationship with Hitachi excavators, particularly the two 1100s, and the 750, 800, and 1200 currently lowering the booms at Geneva Steel.

“Honestly, the main reason I go with Hitachi is — well, when it comes to machines big enough for this kind of work, they’re the only game in town,” Mackay says. “Having said that, we have had great luck with Hitachi. They’re comfortable, productive, and efficient. Having the big Hitachis — especially the mining excavators — lands our company the big jobs. In this business, the big machines win the big contracts.”

And with that Grant calls his brother and Hitachi EX1200 operator, Josh Mackay, to warn him a Hitachi writer, photographer, and major snow-storm were headed toward the demo site at Geneva Steel.

#### “A JOB WORTH DOING”

The former Geneva Steel Works is now a ghost town, where the spirits of the industrial golden age rattle their

chains with abandon. Solemn 1940s postwar buildings are lined up in rows throughout the complex. Signs abound, some instructional: “Hard Hats To Be Worn At All Times.” Some identifying: “Building 73.” Others, like



Josh Mackay, Operator

the 100-some-odd-yard-long motto on the derelict Administration Building, are inspirational: “A Job Worth Doing Is A Job Worth Doing Well.” So inspired, we follow the ground-shaking din to see the good job Josh Mackay is doing from the cab of his Hitachi

EX1200. As Josh brings down the house with his performance, we quite literally cool our heels chatting with machine “spotter” Jason Cobb.

“I spot for Josh to make sure the 1200 is always clear of debris that could damage the machine or injure someone,” the intrepid spotter says, “and I care for it — that 1200 is the Mackays’ baby. I wipe her down each night, wash and wax her once a week, and do body and paint work as needed.” In addition to keeping the machine clean, Jason is in charge of keeping it greased. “That’s the easy part — there’s a central greasing station, and the machine automatically sends grease to different points all over the 1200. There’s also a separate electric lubricator for the bucket and swing gear. All I have to do is keep the grease station full.”

#### T-WRECKS

The Giant EX1200 is small for a mining excavator, yet large for a battleship. Watching it tear through these buildings is a surreal scene



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reminiscent of one of those “Jurassic” sci-fi flicks. This big orange beauty packs 671 ponies (500 kW) and weighs in at a hefty 244,800 pounds, or 111,000 kg for the metrically inclined. While upgrading the former EX1100, Hitachi engineers delivered a 30-percent increase in productivity, thanks to the more powerful engine and refinements in hydraulics and controls. As a result, the machine moves with a fearsome elegance on this day as it uproots an entire two-story office right off its footings and tosses it aside like a rag doll. Cool!

### **JOSHING**

Taking a break from all the carnage, Josh Mackay takes five with us. We ask, “Is the 1200’s cab comfortable, Josh?” “I miss it already,” he jokes. “Seriously, the cab is great. Ten-percent larger than the old 1100, and it’s suspended on shock-absorbing mounts that keep vibration to a

minimum. There are shock absorbers on the boom, too. That’s important in demolition because vibration really wears an operator down. The machine’s more productive because it keeps me more productive.” And Josh should know — Mackay runs a very industrious ship. One of their Hitachis is fitted with a shear to weaken a building’s structure so the grapple and thumb on the other machines can tumble walls down at will.

“This is a dangerous work environment,” understates Mackay, “but I feel confident in the EX1200. It’s powerful and sure-footed on slopes. We spec’d the machine with the optional heavy-duty cab for additional protection from falling debris. We have an Hitachi 800 Excavator equipped with a shear to soften the buildings up, but with the 1200 you don’t need as much preliminary shearing. It picks everything up easily and without a lot

of prep work. When it has to pick up particularly heavy items, I just flip on the heavy-lifting-function that boosts hydraulic power about 10 percent. Works like a charm. It’s also quick for its size, and that’s great when you’re working a site of this magnitude.”

### **AND, FINALLY, A CAR COMMERCIAL**

Before slip-sliding our way back to the Salt Lake City airport, we asked Josh about the differences between the new EX1200 and the prior model. “The 1100s are great and have made this company a lot of money, but the 1200 has them beat. The EX1200 is a Lexus to the EX1100’s Corolla.”

Rock on, Grant Mackay Demolition Co., rock on.

*Grant Mackay Demolition Co. is serviced by Scott Machinery, Salt Lake City, Utah.*



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