



Color Me RED and ORANGE

There's a saying among Malphrus Construction employees: "If it's red, it's ours." That's because the company's massive fleet of crimson trucks and support vehicles are omnipresent throughout the Hilton Head/Bluffton, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, area. With more than 800 employees and annual project work in excess of \$150 million, Malphrus is the preeminent specialist in residential and industrial construction.

These days, some of that red fleet is turning orange as the company shifts from multiple excavator brands to one — Hitachi. With almost 60 Hitachi machines already in their fleet — and more on the way — a lot of Malphrus folk are saying, "If it's orange, it's ours."

FULL-SERVICE EXPERTISE

Founded in 1940, Malphrus Construction does industrial and residential infrastructure work in the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia. "Our construction group tackles almost anything," says Vice President Todd Malphrus. "Airport construction, highway work, distribution centers, motor speedways, industrial parks, you name it. Our Malphrus Golf Division also does golf-course construction and renovation from Maryland to Florida."

Malphrus notes that an affiliate company, Malphrus International, is currently performing marina excavation, airport construction, and underground utility installation in the Caribbean.

"Growth was fairly steady for decades, but it's really taken off in the last six or seven years. This area has just boomed, and our equipment list is a reflection of that. We currently run more than 80 excavators."

RECOGNIZED VALUE

While the company has used excavators from just about every major manufacturer, it decided several years ago that Hitachi would be their machine of choice. Malphrus says this decision was based on a number of factors.

"We purchased our first Hitachi in 1992, and immediately liked what we saw. Hitachi continues to offer us the best mix of what we need: good production rates, solid durability, excellent

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There is no vacation time for this EX1200 working on the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean.



reliability, and an outstanding resale value. That's why we've replaced most of the other machines with Hitachi."

Malphrus closely monitors the reliability and resale values of all of its equipment. According to equipment manager Winston Murrey, the firm decided to replace most of their excavators at 6,000 hours. "We're so confident in our monitoring process that we ran several older EX400s out to 10,000 hours," says Murrey. "It was amazing how productive they were — even at those higher hours. We were also impressed by their high resale market value. That's a sign of a good machine."

KEY PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Malphrus stressed that the level of support his company gets from his Hitachi dealer overshadows all of these factors.

"Their support is the most important piece of this whole equipment puzzle," notes Malphrus. "The excavator is the key to a crew's productivity. If one out of ten off-road trucks goes down, there are still nine others to back it up. But if the excavator loading those ten trucks goes down, those ten trucks are idled along with the dozer, the water truck, the drag tractor, and so on. Sixty of our people do service work, but if they need help, Burrell, our Hitachi dealer, is always very responsive."

Malphrus says their dealer has also stepped up to help find equipment for their Caribbean work. "Off-shore purchases and deliveries are a whole new ball game. Because of their efforts, we quickly had an EX1200 heading up that operation. I can't say enough about Hitachi equipment and our dealer."



**Todd Malphrus, Vice President,
Malphrus Construction**



**Winston Murrey, Equipment
Manager, Malphrus Construction**

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TALL ORDER TO FILL

Very little about Malphrus Construction is conventional, and its approach to growth is no exception. Faced with a booming market in nearby Charleston, the company geared up for expansion and never looked back. Getting there presented some sizeable challenges.

“Growth in the Charleston area exploded, so we’ve established a branch office there,” says Murrey. “We started out renting equipment to get projects going, then purchased machines to replace the rentals. In one 90-day period, we placed orders for a Zaxis 135US, two Zaxis 270LC-3s, eight

Zaxis 330LCs, 17 Zaxis 350LC-3s, three Zaxis 450LC-3s, a Zaxis 600LC, a Zaxis 650LC-3, and an EX1200.”



Although Malphrus has logged as many as 10,000 hours on some of their Hitachi excavators, most are traded at 6,000 hours.

(Do the math, folks — that’s 34 Hitachi excavators ordered in a single three-month period!)

The fact that more than half of those new excavators were new Dash-3 machines was not lost on Malphrus’ operators. Longtime operator Murray Nettles likes the speed, the smooth and quiet operation, and the improved visibility of the new Dash-3s. He summed up his satisfaction by saying, “This is the machine I’ve waited 40 years for.”

Malphrus Construction is serviced by J.W. Burrell, Charleston, South Carolina.

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