



Flying High

Contractor watches productivity take off with help of Hitachi excavators

Brad Huston, President

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Site Prep/Mass Excavation

Each week, hundreds of planes arrive and depart from Dane County Regional Airport (DCRA) near Madison, Wisconsin. Traffic has increased almost 20 percent since 2001, making the airport one of the fastest-growing small hubs in the country.

Planes aren't the only things around the airport known to fly. Dirt's been flying too, thanks to a \$26-million safety-improvement project. And with the help of Hitachi excavators, R.G. Huston, one of the project's contractors, has seen productivity — and profits — take off.

"Margins are thin, so we need the fastest, most reliable equipment," says President Brad Huston. "If there's downtime, it's going to cost us money. We use Hitachi excavators because they are the best. They are the most productive, yet cost the least to run and maintain."

BREAKOUT FORCE HELPS PRODUCTIVITY SOAR

The DCRA project extends the safety area around runway 14/32, in the event a plane needs extra room. To create the necessary space, a highway, rail line, and creek near the airport are being rerouted. The project is funded by a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration and is expected to take three years.

During the first phase of the project, R.G. Huston excavated marsh-

land to make room for a 3,000-foot railroad bridge and the relocated highway. During the last phase, R.G. Huston will extend taxiways and runways, install storm sewers, and perform sanitary work. When the project is complete, the company will have moved almost 400,000 yards of material.

Currently, R.G. Huston is excavating the new location for Starkweather Creek. One-hundred seventy-thousand yards of dirt are being moved to relocate the creek. To complete the task, a Hitachi Zaxis 450 Excavator and a Zaxis 600 Excavator continuously load a seemingly endless procession of haul trucks. Five are currently being used — up to nine haul trucks have been used at one time on the project.

The main reasons R.G. Huston chose Hitachi excavators are breakout force and reliability. "Breakout force

is just superior on these machines," says Huston. "And they are absolutely reliable. We've had very few breakdowns on them — and we simply can't afford to have breakdowns."

NO JOB TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL

Started in the 1950s as a landscaping company, R.G. Huston is now one of the Midwest's fastest growing contractors. The company landed the airport job — forgive the pun — because of its reputation for providing high-quality, professional construction services.

"We can compete with anybody," says Huston. "We have the skills and expertise to take on very tough projects. Owners like us because we really hit the project hard using high-production, low-maintenance equipment. We are proud of our men and our equipment. We believe they are the best."

Company projects range from small commercial sites to multimillion-dollar



Hitachi excavators help expand the safety area around Dane County Regional Airport. Almost 400,000 yards of material will be excavated by project's end.



Hitachi machines are extremely fuel-efficient, which keeps daily operating costs down. That's very important to a company that uses an average of 5,500 gallons of fuel each day.

subdivisions and commercial sites, such as the new Northwestern Mutual campus in Franklin, Wisconsin.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

R.G. Huston maintains a massive fleet of construction equipment. The company offers its crews a wide range of excavator sizes to handle a variety of applications, ranging from

the EX35U Compact Excavator to the Zaxis 800. The company owns three Zaxis 225s, a popular choice in residential areas.

“We used them on one of the most opulent neighborhoods in Madison — where the governor’s mansion resides,” says Huston. “With zero-turn radius, the 225 could work right up next to houses and fences, and around mailboxes and statues that are worth thousands of dollars. We didn’t have to worry about the counterweight hitting anything.”

In recent years, R.G. Huston has standardized its stable of excavators to Hitachi on the advice of its mechanics and shop managers. “We listen to them because they are the backbone of this company, the ones who keep the machines up and running every day,” says Huston. “They like the Hitachis because they are easy to work on. Standardization allows everyone to use the same filters and parts and so on.

“And our guys have had nothing but good things to say about customer support,” he adds. “It is outstanding — right at the top. We can get the parts we need within a day.”

Over the years, R.G. Huston tried every different kind of excavator before they began using Hitachis. “When we started, we’d buy the cheapest machines possible because we didn’t have the capital to buy equipment like Hitachi,” Huston recalls. “We went through a lot of brands not knowing what we wanted — we tried everything. But we know now that those machines cost too much to fix, and they aren’t as productive as Hitachi. In a tight market, we need to have the highest production, so we settled on the best — Hitachi.”

R.G. Huston Inc. is serviced by Brooks Tractor Inc., Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

Hitachi excavators and off-road haul trucks are an integral part of R.G. Huston’s sewer and water main crews. Here, Hitachi excavators help complete a pipe job that had been estimated to take 60 days in 45 days.



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