



Maine Drilling & Blasting Introduces New Equipment Allowing Remote Location Access & Efficiencies

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Maine Drilling & Blasting of Gardiner, ME has been faced with some large challenges in the past, but nothing as rugged as the terrain encountered at the Kibby Wind Power Project. Working alongside Reed & Reed and Sargent Corp. MD&B's workers have been carving roadways through the thick Maine woods and traversing the northern Appalachian Mountain ranges.

They quickly found it necessary to re-equip themselves for such isolated locations, not only in order to have a competitive edge, but also to grant their employees better working conditions and be more efficient on the job.

"Together, our ingenuity and our corporate culture have enabled us to succeed at projects with logistic challenges. We've developed the ability and equipment it takes to perform these isolated projects efficiently," said Bill Purington, MD&B President/CEO.

With an eye to increasing productivity and safety, MD&B investigated a more proficient way to get bulk emulsion, opposed to traditional explosive product, onto isolated sites and move supplies and workers on and off the jobs more quickly and safely. New equipment was determined necessary to transport supplies and workers more efficiently.

Purchasing and specially outfitting two Komatsu Crawler Carriers to the tasks, and utilizing in-house engineers to design a Bulk Remote Transportation Skid, MD&B put productivity on the climb.

Previous to this equipment, the blasting sites at Kibby were mostly inaccessible by truck. With the large amount of rain this past season, the roadways were muddy. Employees were using a snow groomer, often referred to as the "mud buggy" on site, to transport workers to the shots. One worker described the ride in the mud buggy as "pounding your teeth out of your head," and declared, "I would have rather walked."

In fact at times, walking, laden with materials, was the only way in. Crewmembers were also transporting equipment via 4-wheelers and 6-wheelers, which resulted in low productivity. Employees are now transported in one of the Komatsu Crawlers. When not loaded with employees, the Komatsu is also utilized as transportation for supplies.

With a solution to employee transportation difficulties, it was necessary to increase shot

efficiency on the job. MD&B's team knew they could increase efficiency exponentially by pumping bulk emulsion instead of hand-loading sticks or hauling tube. With a need for bulk on shots came a demand for a piece of equipment that could transport bulk on and off the shots in extremely isolated locations.

Maine Drilling's in-house engineers supplied the solution by designing a bulk emulsion transport pulled by a large dozer. This proprietary Bulk Skid is capable of holding and direct pumping up to 10,000 lbs. of explosives. The use of bulk allows for a more efficient shot by saving time, energy and manpower. In 2008, bulk could only be used once due to the inability of having a bulk truck on the shots. Last year 90% of shots were bulk, thanks to the Bulk Skid.

Nate Ayers, MD&B Project Superintendent at Kibby commented, "The Bulk Skid saved us. Decreasing the amount of manual labor was a big concern from both standpoints of safety and productivity. Previous to the Bulk Skid, employees were lugging bags all over the shot, up muddy, slippery hills causing potential slips, trips and falls. The Bulk Skid has greatly reduced the amount of safety hazards on shots. Along with the reduction in hazards, using bulk on the shots has allowed for bigger patterns, getting jobs done quicker and more efficiently with less labor."

Maine Drilling & Blasting's customer agrees. "The Bulk Skid is a lot quicker. There's been a big difference. Holes are being filled and shots are off in half the time at any point in the day. It's a case of having the right tools to get the job done, and Maine Drilling has certainly invested in the right



resources to help make this project successful," said Thomas Baker, Layout Surveyor/Foreman, Sargent Corp. at Kibby Mountain, ME.

With these new transport team members, Maine Drilling & Blasting is able to reach rock in the most unreachable locations, in Maine, or anywhere in the Northeast. Recently a second, differently adapted Komatsu was deployed as a means of efficiently moving large amounts of bagged and boxed explosives to remote areas of Vermont for construction of a transmission project from Vernon to Coolidge, VT. The explosives magazine holds 7,000 lbs. of product along with detonators. Equipped with a hydraulic lift-gate, employees can work at an ergonomic height, increasing safety and efficiency on the job site.

In recent years, Maine Drilling & Blasting has become a major player in the energy market providing d&b services for pipeline, transmission, and commercial wind farm projects. In addition to the corporate office in Gardiner, ME, Maine Drilling & Blasting has offices in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut. *P&GJ*

