

TOPCON LEADS THE WAY ON HIGHWAY 63



TWINNING PROJECT



TOPCON LEADS THE WAY WITH INDUSTRY-LEADING SPEED, ACCURACY, AND PRODUCTIVITY.



HIGHWAY 63

PROJECT FACTS:

\$1 Billion
ESTIMATED PROJECT COST

240
KILOMETERS
GRASSLAND TO FORT MCMURRAY

46 DEATHS
IN THE PAST
5 YEARS

30% OF INDUSTRIAL
TRAFFIC LOADS
ARE OVERSIZED

Fall 2016
PROJECT COMPLETION DATE

The twinning of Highway 63 between Grassland and Fort McMurray is one of the most important highway projects happening in Alberta right now. Three of the project's key contractors – Prairie North, MCL, and Thompson Bros. – are relying on Topcon positioning technology from Brandt to get the job done.

The project is significant in terms of its scope, but also because of what it means to the province of Alberta. Highway 63 has become notorious for its high volume of traffic incidents and fatalities, making it a top priority for Alberta Transportation, and a meaningful project for the people who are working to make it safer.

"This twinning is way overdue. It's a dangerous stretch of highway," said MCL site superintendent Dave Elliott. "The work we're doing here is going to save lives."

"My dad is a truck driver," MCL operator Mike Wood shared. "He drives this highway twice a day. I like knowing that I'm helping save lives, and keeping my dad a little bit safer because of what we're doing here. This is going to be a great thing for Alberta."

Topcon is keeping the project on track

To meet the machine control and survey demands of this project, its key contractors are relying exclusively on Topcon – the anchor of Brandt's Positioning Technology Division.

"We started using Topcon last fall," said Prairie North vice president Alvin Spray. "The first project we used it on was a project that came out very late in the fall,

"THE PARTNERSHIP WITH BRANDT AND TOPCON IS SEAMLESS AND IT'S EASY TO DEAL WITH THEM."

and we were actually able to finish it before freeze up. Topcon was the major reason we were able to complete the project before the winter season – finishing it on time, and accurately."

MCL had a similar story. "We started using Topcon this past year," said Elliott. "We tried one – and we saw that we got more done – so we kept on rolling it out. Topcon is bringing our costs way down, and the GPS technology is low maintenance and self sufficient."

The result, according to these three companies, is a faster and more accurate path to project completion which ultimately means a more profitable project.

"We put grade control equipment on our dozers and graders to help us achieve final trimming at different elevations to the engineer's design, which has been uploaded. Using Topcon prevents us from double handling material and wasting time," said Prairie North project manager Brad Mertz. "We used to rely

on survey stakes, set up by humans, and as soon as we started working in the area, we couldn't count on seeing those stakes. It meant a lot of extra survey time, and non-productive material moving. With Topcon, we can keep our surveyors working on other things in advance of the grade control equipment."

Elliott reported the same kind of improvements. "Our grademen and surveyors aren't chasing around equipment all the time anymore, so we can actually use them where they're most needed."

"Topcon makes our work easier," said Prairie North superintendent Vince Simonson. "You can be confident in its accuracy, which makes it so much faster and helps to reduce stress. Topcon gives us an electronic measurement based off of GNSS satellites so we know we're accurate. And if something gets lost or knocked out, it's easy to re-establish. Topcon always gets us within guidelines. The most I've ever seen is 5 millimetres off." Jason Stephen, Brandt's northern Alberta sales manager, elaborated. "Topcon's MC2 is unequalled by any of our competition. The MC2 sensor provides position updates up to 100 times per second – measuring the X, Y & Z position as well as the roll, pitch, yaw, and acceleration of the dozer. The results are at least twice as fast and twice as accurate."

Easy to learn, easy to operate

In Alberta's competitive market, Topcon offers another unique advantage. Companies are finding that this technology can help them maximize their available labour force – eager workers who might come up short when it comes to long term industry experience, but are willing to learn.

"It's hard to find good people," said MCL owner Stacy Melnychuk. "This technology bridges the gap for us. It allows us to use people with less experience, but trust them to do a great job because the technology shows them what to do."

Mertz agreed. "There's a lot of competition here to get the best guys on the job. Technology can help to fill the gap between an available worker and their years of experience. One experienced person can train two or three others who have an aptitude for it and are willing to learn."

And Topcon is easy to learn, so even less experienced, or less computer-savvy, workers can master it quickly.

"WITH TOPCON I GET INSTANT FEEDBACK – INSTANT CONFIDENCE."

"I've been using Topcon for about six months now," said Wood. "I like knowing about my work. When you're operating machinery, you're always kind of guessing how you're doing. With Topcon, I have instant feedback – instant confidence."

Brandt is western Canada's Topcon reseller

Brandt is the exclusive Topcon construction and survey dealer for western Canada – a relationship that Brandt's customers are quick to call successful.

"The partnership with Brandt and Topcon is seamless and it's easy to deal with them," reported Simonson. That kind of partnership is critical for Brandt's customers, who often work in remote areas and

under intense pressure to keep the projects moving, with no time for downtime.

Elliott explained, "Some of the other companies we've dealt with don't seem to care about small businesses. Brandt isn't like that. They are always responsive. They'll get us parts, service, whatever we need – even if it's after hours. They understand that we need to have it."

The future of machine control

Talking to these contractors, deep in the middle of one of Alberta's most significant highway projects, it's clear that positioning technology is not going away. Quite the opposite, in fact. Both companies plan to invest in additional Topcon equipment and predict their competitors won't be far behind them.

"We have to be competitive," Mertz stated simply. "These projects all come down to properly handling material. Machine control helps keep us competitive. It lets us handle material in less time, without moving it back and forth. It shows when the project is completed and it's accepted by the engineers the first time."

Elliott concurred. "It seems like every year, there are more companies jumping into it [Topcon]. In the last two or three years, we're hiring on people who've used it before. Even the rentals now are showing up with the system on it. In the next three to five years, I expect to see the majority of our competitors using GPS systems, and I expect that half our equipment will be using this technology by then as well."

And that Topcon equipment will be coming from Brandt, a company that has built a reputation across Canada for providing great products backed by unsurpassed customer service.

"We deal with all the companies," said Elliott, "but we know that Brandt always comes through. We know we can depend on them. They get it."

Learn more about Topcon and Brandt at brandt.ca.





SPECIAL PACKAGE OFFERS:

DEERE 850K DOZER Fully equipped with the Topcon MC2 Machine Control System.

0%
36 MO.

3.5%
LEASE

Finance as low as **\$10,560/mth**
Lease as low as **\$7,990/mth**

DEERE 772GP GRADER Fully equipped with the Topcon MC2 Machine Control System.

0%
36 MO.

3.5%
LEASE

Finance as low as **\$10,340/mth**
Lease as low as **\$7,830/mth**

Above offers in effect until March 31, 2014. See dealer for complete details. Some restrictions apply.

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