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## There are two things

a contractor needs to be successful: a qualified, dedicated staff and the right equipment for the task. Looking after the equipment portion of that equation is the Brandt Group of Companies, which actively services the oil and gas midstream sector across much of Canada.

From their headquarters in Regina, Saskatchewan, Brandt primarily services the oil and gas industry through its Tractor, Equipment Solutions and Positioning Technology divisions. Brandt Tractor is the largest privately held John Deere Construction and Forestry Dealer in the world, serving Western and Atlantic Canada from 27 locations. Through these dealerships (along with an additional location in Ontario), Brandt Trac-

# IPPING CANADA

## Working With Its Customers, Brandt Helps Pipeline Contractors Thrive

By Mike Kezdi



tor is also Canada's prime dealer for Ditch Witch and HammerHead - key product lines in the oil and gas midstream sector.

The oil and gas industry is critical to the economy in Western Canada, especially in Alberta and Saskatchewan. As such, it is the most important driver of construction equipment sales in the region and the biggest market segment for Brandt Tractor.

### The Right Equipment

"Our footprint includes all of the oil and gas pipeline work in Western Canada and we now look after Atlantic Canada as well," says Shane Mortemore, director of sales for Construction, at Brandt Tractor. In addition to construction equipment, Brandt is the exclusive dealer for Topcon machine control and positioning technology products — equipment that is already transforming the construction business.

As the industry begins to rebound from a three-year downturn, Mortemore notes that the company is now seeing strengthening demand in Fort McMurray, Alberta (the epicenter of Canada's oil sands development), as well as some improvement in the tighter oil and gas markets in northeastern British Columbia and western Alberta.

When talking about the big-inch pipeline work, Mortemore says that John Deere's 290G–470G excavators, 850K–1050K dozers, articulated dump trucks and 6-wheel drive motor graders are their biggest sellers.

It is key to match the right piece of equipment to the size of the right-of-way being cleared or the pipe being installed. "We like to get involved with the customers early on to identify the needs they have in remote areas to supply both parts and service support," Mortemore says. "That way, we can figure out what issues they may have before they have them and then be proactive with our approach to their project."

Though the larger John Deere equipment skews heavily to the bigger projects, when you get to smaller diameter pipe and local distribution work, the Deere backhoes, compact track loaders, skid steers and Ditch Witch equipment really shines.

"Just when we think the horizontal directional drilling (HDD) market has plateaued, it demonstrates continued growth. Increasingly, people are looking to drill first and that is likely to continue when you look at sensitive areas, weather conditions and liability issues; there are all kinds of circumstances that open the door for HDD and that points to ongoing growth," says Van Wall, director of sales for Worksite Products, at Brandt Tractor. "On the transmission side, we do get into some more significant shots with the larger Ditch Witch HDD rigs, but on the distribution side, HDD lends itself 100 percent to that business. Most jobs have a drill rig on them working alongside backhoes and compact excavators."

Wall notes that in the last 15 years, HDD tooling and technology has led the growth in that sector, allowing contractors in the oil and gas space to drill in places that they never have before. And, as Ditch Witch begins the rollout of its new JT40 drill rig — ideal for 8- to 10-in. product pipe — Wall expects it to fill a much-needed niche for many contractors in the midstream space.

Gaining favor in this sector, and showing no signs of stopping, are Ditch Witch's vacuum excavation offerings. Growth in this sector is directly attributable to the more stringent requirements surrounding underground utility location. "We see the vacs working alongside the traditional backhoe and HDDs on project sites," Wall says.

### The Right Attachment

As important as it is to have the right primary equipment for the job, it is just as imperative to have the right attachments. Shortly after Brandt's relationship with John Deere began in 1992 with the opening of the first Brandt Tractor dealership, their Equipment Solutions group began designing and manufacturing purpose-built attachments for

John Deere equipment.

“We are a diverse company and we have served the oil and gas market since 1992 — and in some instances earlier than that — through our manufacturing companies,” says Neil Marcotte, vice president of Sales and Marketing, at Brandt Industries Ltd.

“There are different attachment needs across the world that help make John Deere’s equipment perform better, and I think we do a good job of working with Deere to meet these needs,” Marcotte says. “We work closely with Deere engineers to ensure that our attachments are compliant with their platforms and that the equipment will perform well over time for our customers.”

Working closely with John Deere and its customers, Brandt manufactures an attachment for every piece of construction equipment manufactured by Deere. Though Brandt’s own locations are all in Canada, the company works with other John Deere dealer groups to make these attachments available to contractors worldwide. The company also creates custom solutions for customers when the need arises.

“Equipment Solutions started almost 11 years ago building attachments for John Deere equipment and we have designed many machine conversions including specialized rough terrain forklifts, specialized attachments, and long-reach conversions,” Marcotte said.

“We have more new products in the queue, and from a technology standpoint there will be innovations for years to come,” Marcotte adds. “Next, we are unveiling a revolutionary product design for the oil and gas pipeline industry: a sideboom attachment for Deere’s 1050K dozer.”

## Game-Changing Development

The John Deere 1050K, launched in early 2015, is Deere’s largest and most powerful dozer and has already become a stalwart on large-scale pipeline projects throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan. What oil and gas customers were looking for to complete the package was a robust sideboom conversion for the 1050K chassis.

The project began about two years ago, shortly after the 1050K’s release, as Brandt began active discussions with its customers about what they were looking for in a sideboom design.

“It was born out of extensive consultation with our customers to understand what they needed on the jobsite,” Mar-



Since its start in 1992, Brandt Tractor has grown to a 27-dealer network serving Western and Atlantic Canada. The Brandt Tractor division specializes in John Deere and Ditch Witch equipment, both of which play an integral part in the midstream construction sector.

cotte says. “Contractors know the needs of the industry better than anyone and with their input we were able to design a piece of equipment that is superior to the competition.”

Brandt offers two sideboom variations for the 1050K PL Pipelayer-Ready chassis: The BPL170K with a 24-ft boom and the BPL220K with a 28-ft boom. Also available are 32- and 36-ft booms, as well as custom options. Powering both units is John Deere’s PowerTech OSS 6135 EPA Final Tier 4/EU Stage IV diesel engine rated at 350 hp (261 KW). Other notable figures are the BPL170’s 120,221-lb operating weight and 177,000-lb lift capacity and the BPL220’s 134,127-lb operating weight and 220,000-lb lift capacity.

As noteworthy and important to contractors as those figures are, Marcotte praises Brandt’s SmartLift Dynamic Stability Monitoring technology as a true game-changer.

“We have created a major innovation with this pipelayer and the way it manages lifts,” Marcotte says. “Using hardwired sensors, mounted to the dozer rather than the boom, the system continually analyzes total load, distance from the machine and slope the machine is working on; the three key variables that affect machine stability.”

“In other words, the operator will always know in real time what percentage of maximum capacity the machine can lift, given the current circumstances,”



The Brandt BPL170K and BPL220K pipelayers provide oil and gas customers a robust sideboom conversion for the 1050K chassis.

Marcotte says. “This improves operator feel and gives contractors a new tool that will help daily lifts to be safer and more productive.”

The SmartLift system meets all OSHA 1926.1401 standards for sidebooms in the United States and delivers its information to the operator via an in-cab 7-in. color monitor.

“Brandt Equipment Solutions manufacturers attachments and machine conversions that help our customers to be more competitive in the industries that they serve,” Marcotte says. “In this case, with the Brandt sideboom and the SmartLift system, in combination with the 1050K from John Deere, which is a great base chassis, we were able to design a sideboom attachment that will lead the way in the market. It will make a big difference to our customers in the pipelaying business, delivering improved safety, stability and productivity.”

As he noted earlier, working with customers is always key to Brandt’s success; a cornerstone since the company’s early days of building equipment for the agriculture industry and blossoming through all of the company’s divisions.

“We pour a lot of energy and resources into understanding the needs that our customer has in the different terrains and different jobs,” Marcotte says. “Any time we develop a new piece of equipment, we spend as much time as possible in the field with the customer, working hard to understand their needs. That way, we can deliver exactly the product that they need, because when all is said and done, the reason Brandt exists is to help make contractors productive and profitable.”

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