

# A CUSTOMER'S SUCCESS STORY

Volvo Construction Equipment

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## BUILDING UP & TEARING DOWN

Grant Mackay loves to create things. You can see it the minute you step inside his Salt Lake City headquarters. Colorful paintings hang on the walls in its three-story atrium, depicting life long ago in Salt Lake. An artist himself, Grant has done his fair share of painting, too. A sculpture, done by his own hands, sits in his office.

It is somewhat ironic then that a man who so loves the creative process would make his living tearing things down – and loving it. Since 1983, Grant Mackay Demolition Co. has grown into one of the largest demolition companies in the West.

Already, the company's resume is dotted with some of the highest profile projects in Utah history, most notably the demolition of the old Rice Stadium, which made way in 1997 for the facility that would hold the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2002 Winter Olympics. "We've been involved in some pretty high-profile jobs ever since," Grant says.

### Starting from scratch

Grant worked at his father's demolition company while growing up. He studied to become an artist while in college, but the pressure of deadlines and the prospect of little pay for his efforts drove him back to the demolition business. However, when his father sold out in 1983, Grant faced a choice. "I thought, 'Gee, I don't want to work for somebody for the rest of my life! So I went out and started my own company.'"

Grant Mackay Demolition Co. started small. Its first job was an interior demolition



Grant Mackay has an artistic side. You just can't see it at his demolition sites. That's exactly the way he likes it.

project in a Salt Lake City building that now houses the federal courthouse. Grant mortgaged his house to finance the project.

From 2005 to 2007, the company conducted its largest job, demolishing the Geneva Steel mill, which sat on 1,800 acres in Vineyard, Utah. The job called for the removal of 260,000 tons of steel. "We moved twice that in concrete," Grant says.

### 'The middle of a war zone'

Currently, Mackay's company is clearing nearly two city blocks in downtown Salt Lake City to make way for the mixed-use City Creek Center, a huge open-air mall that will feature condominiums and retail.

Deep down in that pit, a full two stories below street level, you'll find Grant's instruments of choice – his brushes, if you will. They are a

fleet of some of Volvo Construction Equipment's heaviest excavators, ranging from the 42-ton **Volvo EC360B** to the powerful 75-ton **Volvo EC700B**.



In the "war zone," Grant Mackay picked Volvos for their power and resistance to overheating.

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On this day, one of the latter effortlessly was loading a trailer with tons of concrete, sorting rebar from rubble as it worked. On the other side, a **Volvo EC360B** spent a few minutes dismantling an industrial-sized chiller, pushing it around like a tin can as it helped enable workers to salvage the thousands of dollars worth of copper contained within.

Grant Mackay Demolition Co. picked up its first Volvo excavator in 2000. "I haven't ever looked back," Grant says. "I really like the Volvos. I even like their paint jobs." But even with his artistic flair, this demolition contractor isn't concerned about looks. In demolition, you can't be. "What we do is like bringing a machine to Iraq or to the middle of a war zone, because that's really what we're doing," Grant says.

Project manager Joel Christiansen says he's thankful for the Volvos. "Me personally, I like them better than any of the other brands," he says. "This is a very hard business on an excavator. We've had much less breakage. Quite frankly, in eight months since we started this project, we haven't had a breakdown."

## Better than the competition

Grant Mackay Demolition Co. used Hitachi excavators for years until it came across a deal it couldn't refuse from Volvo in 2000.

"They had a better interest rate – zero – and the purchase price was low and the warranty was way better," Grant says. "Once we started using them, we liked them instantly better than Hitachi. It felt like they had more power and they didn't overheat."

Overheating can be a serious problem in demolition. The engine works hard, and heavy hammers and pulverizers need a lot of hydraulic flow to dismantle and process buildings. That's a big load on the cooling system, especially if coolers plug up in the dusty environment. It gets worse at high altitudes. "We'd have to shut down every half hour to let it cool down. In the course of a day, you would lose an hour of production time because you can't keep them up and running. That's a huge thing," Grant says. But these Volvos feature low RPM Volvo engines and a side-by-side cooling layout with dual cooling fans – a big plus in such conditions.

Grant says his operators were the first to offer praise. "They like them," he says. "They really think the cabs are very comfortable. That's one of the first comments that they made. Demolition is looked at as a really dirty job. But when you have a nice clean cab, with air conditioning or heat, it's like being inside playing a video game. Given a choice, they would prefer the Volvo cabs to others."



Joel Christiansen says he prefers Volvos for the hard work of urban demolition.

Operator Jeff Richards didn't disagree after he hopped down from his **Volvo EC700B** that was perched atop a pile of broken concrete at the City Creek Center project. "It's got a lot of power," said the nine-year veteran of the demolition business. "It's a big machine with a lot of power, but it doesn't feel bulky. It's got great visibility. It's the smoothest machine I've run."

Mackay's firm gets its service from Michael Holloway and Arnold Machinery Co. in Salt Lake City. "Michael's a wonderful salesman. We are very happy with Arnold," Grant says. Today, the Grant Mackay fleet includes two **Volvo EC700B**, five **Volvo EC460B** and two **EC360B** excavators. The firm also has a **Volvo G940** grader and two Volvo loaders – an L330 and an L90.

## Tough environment, tough machines

At Mackay's downtown project, the company has been charged with tearing down a range of high-rise structures. Piles of broken up concrete cover the inside of the hole that remains. The site also is littered with huge pieces of rebar, some of it an inch in diameter. "It's hard on a machine," Grant says. "Look at what we're doing. Look at what we're beating apart." The work is demanding, but the extra muscle in Volvo's undercarriage, boom, arm and under plating make a difference. "It's not easy on the machines," he says. "But there is an art to keeping them alive." Those are fitting words from the artist.



A **Volvo EC700B** makes easy work of the debris from the City Creek Center project in downtown Salt Lake.