

# SITE DEVELOPMENT GROWS HARTFORD COUNTY BUSINESS

"It's the small details, down to the durable heated seats, that Volvo engineers design into their machines that add hours of productivity,"

Glenn Korner, Owner, Midstate Site Development

Site development is often an unseen and unsung job, but it forms the bedrock of every construction project.

Expert site work can add thousands of vehicle miles to roadways and shore up structures and extend the life of underground utility lines for several decades.

"What we do every day no one ever sees, but if you look down one of our pipes they are straight. If the job calls for six inches of stone, you know you are getting six inches of stone. It's not worth cutting corners. When you hire Midstate Site Development, you know we have a standard. And it's based on safety, knowledge and innovation," says owner Glenn Korner, of the Bloomfield, Connecticut full service site contractor.

Safety. Knowledge. Innovation. These three words pepper Glenn's conversation. They are the guiding principles for the business he founded in 2000 and symbolize his approach to how he delivers projects and the equipment he chooses.

Hartford County, Connecticut, is Glenn's home and the epicenter of Midstate's jobs. Neighbor ESPN contracted with Midstate to lay miles of duct banks, drainage, and raising grades and install the athletic field seen on Sports Central. MSD also tackled site prep for new studios for the local NBC affiliate, including blasting and re-routing all communication and electrical duct banks, without any disruption to on-air broadcasting from its existing studios connected to the construction.



For the New Windsor magnet school project, MSD was contracted to build a 30' deep retaining wall, foundation excavation, install water/sewer/storm drainage, and slab and pavement prep.

As private construction slowed following the 2008 recession, MSD gravitated to bidding public works, taxpayer-funded projects that directly benefit his community, his 32 employees and their families. Today, the core of MSD's jobs is in industrial projects; heavy highway site prep; and sewer, water and utility construction.

To walk Glenn's job site, you see firsthand the changing demographic of his fleet and how he analyzes his equipment choices. He prefers

to purchase rather than lease equipment, so reliability and residual value stay top of mind. A dependable Volvo fleet factors largely in MSD having near 100% machine availability. He realizes how the design of his machines means reduced maintenance, extended operator comfort and faster cycle times.

The cost and time savings this translates to the customer plus a proven track record of safety have factored in MSD being named one of Hartford County's fastest growing private companies.

Starting with his first Volvo, an EC340 crawler excavator, Glenn eyed how he could maximize potential from a single machine.

"Having Volvo equipment on the job makes a big difference. We were bidding a school job in Canton where we needed to pour a foundation wall down 26 feet to virgin ground. We won the bid because we chose to use a slide rails system instead of driving sheet pile. This saved the customer \$250,000 and we were in and out in two months because we had the EC340. It could easily lift the 30' slide rail beams then push them into the ground. When the other contractors saw the power of that excavator, their jaws dropped to the floor."

Doug Ryan is Glenn's dealer representative from Tyler Equipment, the local Volvo Construction Equipment dealer based in nearby Berlin. He adds, "The availability of lifting capacity and attachment versatility you have in just one piece of equipment gives extreme flexibility. You do not have to move multiple machines on and off site."

Today MSD's fleet includes 8 Volvo units, ranging from a 2000 L90 wheel loader to the newest, a 2013 short radius excavator ECR235D and a 2013 L50G compact wheel loader. These two later generation models combine stout lifting capacities with streamlined body styling so they are better suited for the range of MSD's applications. The same machine that fits snugly in a single lane of traffic has the heavy-duty breakout forces demanded of general excavation.

As Glenn considers fleet replacement, the decisions are not simple. The dependability of Volvo machines makes his choices more strategic than tactical.

"Our fleet is a mix of Volvo and a competitor brand, but we are migrating to Volvo due to the ease of maintenance, the great support we receive from Tyler Equipment, and the quality and longevity you get from the machines," says Glenn. "Especially those excavators – there's no pin wear. We have an EC240 with a hammer attachment with 5000 hours. The pins are still tight!"

He adds, "I'm in the unique position that all of my equipment, with the exception of the ECR235D and L50G, has between 6,000 to 12,000 hours. With the economy still lagging it is a tough decision which pieces to update. I've had great assistance from Doug and Volvo in looking at my options.



Glenn Korner founded Midstate Site Development in 2000.

Tyler Equipment has been an asset to me from the beginning. I've worked with a couple generations of salespeople at the dealership. 90% of every interaction a customer has with the dealer is actually about the relationship. Tyler always facilitates that relationship."

#### Knowledge

MSD is currently prepping the site of the future Capital Region Education Council (CREC) magnet school in New Windsor. The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering, when complete in 2015, will accommodate 735 students in grades six through 12. The school will offer enhanced curriculum to students pursuing careers in the engineering and aerospace fields. Construction broke in early October. It's the second CREC magnet school project for Midstate Site Development.

MSD was contracted to build a 30' deep retaining wall, foundation excavation, install water/sewer/storm drainage, and slab and pavement prep. They expect to be on site through spring 2014.

The school project is expected to be completed 4 ½ months ahead of schedule, due in large part to the speed of the preliminary site work by Glenn's crew. "It's about being organized with having the right people and the right equipment on the site when you need it," he says.

The workhorse of Glenn's fleet is his 2002 EC460B crawler excavator. "The 460 is the patriarch of our company. It works every day,

starting in near-zero degree temperature, and we've never had to do anything to it but change the oil. Other than the body styling, it's just like new. It has 12,000 hours and the heated seats still work! How important is that in New England? It's the small details, down to the durable heated seats, that Volvo engineers design into their machines that add hours of productivity," he says.

The EC460 is doing double duty, trenching out the sewer drain, then in less than 10 seconds disconnecting the standard bucket and expertly craning a 6' diameter concrete manhole section into position.

Taking advantage of the fast cycle times of the short radius excavator, Glenn explains "When we built the retaining wall we mined down with the EC460 excavator and used the ECR235 to load the haul trucks. The short radius allowed us to turn and load in a limited space, 30 feet down."

On another job MSD installed a 24-inch water main on Farmington Avenue in the middle of the main thoroughfare connecting Hartford to West Hartford. "The operators were crossing an average of 15 utilities per day. The consistent hydraulics of the ECR235 makes for smooth lifting and lowering without any jerking action. That really ups productivity when working in a highly congested area," he says.

Shortly after taking delivery last fall of a new L50G compact wheel loader, MSD began a water main installation job on Oak Street in East Hartford.

"The L90 we had on the job that was too wide for the travel pattern so it would take extra time to load, dump, and then backfill the material. The only change we made was to take the operator out of the L90 and put him in the L50G. We were able to up production by 100 feet a day. It was so easy to maneuver and stay in the same work lane. And low profile tires give it more stability," he says.

The L50 carries a static tipping load of 16,186 lbs. and features Volvo's Torque Parallel (TP) linkage, which gives high breakout torque and parallel movement through the entire lifting range. The L50G is still smaller in size than many competitor machines due to a shorter frame due to a transversely mounted engine.

### Innovation

When Glenn needed a solution to make his Volvo ECR58 compact short radius excavator compatible for underpinning work, Tyler Equipment recommended the universal quick fit (UQF) system. Universal quick fit couplers allow use of a wide variety

of buckets from many manufacturers and operate the bucket in face shovel position.

"We do a lot of underpinning on jobs, where we need to give additional support to an existing foundation before pouring an adjacent footer. We dig out and under the current footer then backfill with concrete at spaced intervals, creating a checkerboard pattern. "Lots of contractors do this work by hand, but we can do it with the ECR58. Our operators spin the buckets for additional reach under foundations. With the universal quick fit coupler, the ECR58 is as versatile as anything out there."

### Safety

Safety is a red thread that runs deep throughout the company and its employees. Midstate's stance with safety rivals that of a construction company three times its size. The Safety Management Team has more than 25 years of construction safety experience, and includes a full time safety officer. "Human nature is the biggest threat to safety," says Glenn, "You have to have a culture of safety where everyone is on board and you have the right safety equipment on the job." He is adamant that every employee has access to proper safety gear on every job site. No excuses. No shortcuts.

This culture is enriched by employee involvement. "MSD has a safety committee comprised of a foreman, laborer and operator. They share employee ideas about what we could be doing to better improve safety. We also have a safety incentive program incentive that rewards employees for sticking to our safety policies and staying accident-free."

The degree of safety Glenn expects for his employees goes ditto for his equipment. "Think of the visibility of these new excavators. Rear cameras come standard. If you are working on a road you can see any cars directly behind you and that not only helps you work safer but you are more productive."

Glenn points to the Volvo steps on the side of the tracks. "Because they are hinged instead of fixed, if you hit a stump it pushes back and does no tear off. This allows you to keep the three point approach to accessing the cab to reduce fall hazards. That's one small thing that makes a big difference."

In site development as in construction equipment, it's this close attention to the details that forms the foundation for a legacy of quality and trust with the end customer. - June 2014



The workhorse of Glenn's fleet is his 2002 EC460B crawler excavator, seen here placing a concrete manhole section at the New Windsor magnet school project.