



THE

SUMMER 2021

# DIRT

BUILDING BRIDGES IN MIAMI

## SIGNATURE Project

PAGE 6

# Planning for the long haul

*In this industry, predictable uptime is critical for maintaining a profitable operation. Unexpected breaks or maintenance costs don't just mean a hit to your productivity — they can also have a detrimental impact on monthly expenses and cash flow. The more you can control and plan for downtime, the smoother you can run your company and take care of your customers. Of course, not everyone has the luxury of an in-house maintenance team to care for their fleet, but when you team up with your John Deere dealer, you can find even more benefits.*

*Now available for construction and production-class equipment from participating dealers, the John Deere Protect™ service plan is designed to help keep your fleet where it belongs — on your jobsite, in action. In addition to concentrating on machine efficiencies and costs, it also removes your maintenance-planning burden, allowing you to focus on running and growing your business instead of having to put out preventable fires.*

*With a John Deere Protect service plan, preventative maintenance is performed by certified dealer technicians using genuine original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts and fluids, making sure the work is done to factory specifications. Regular inspections and fluid sampling also help protect your equipment for the long run, whether you plan to sell the machine for optimum return, keep it for its usable life, or take advantage of our remanufacturing programs. Lastly, machine monitoring and remote diagnostics through JDLink™ provide an always-on second set of eyes to catch and address any potential issues before they turn into big problems.*

*Of course, everyone's fleet is different and maintenance needs are not one size fits all. John Deere Protect builds on your extended warranty to offer additional ease and cost expectations. Collaborating with your dealer, you can tailor a service plan that achieves the highest impact with the resources you have available. Whatever your fleet makeup and maintenance budget, your John Deere dealer can create a service plan that maximizes your uptime, protects your equipment value, and provides you confidence and peace of mind.*

*In your world, getting the work done is enough work in itself. With John Deere Protect, you have a complete-system solution to help you run your business more efficiently and profitably.*

*David F. Thorne*

**David F. Thorne**

Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing  
Worldwide Construction & Forestry



## COVER STORY

### SIGNATURE PROJECT

#### PAGE 6

A joint venture of some of the biggest names in construction is using a range of John Deere iron to tackle transforming projects in the Sunshine State.

#### TALKING TECH | PAGE 3

Be sure to keep your fleet running strong with JDLink connectivity.

#### INSIDE DEERE | PAGE 4

Adopting technology solutions can be a smart and easy way forward for your operation.

#### A SOLID FOUNDATION | PAGE 12

Flexibility, endurance, and good old hard work have helped lay the foundation for a successful family business in Tidewater Virginia.

#### KEEP RUNNING | PAGE 16

Shift the burden of scheduled machine maintenance with a John Deere Protect service plan.

#### HOMETOWN HOMERUN | PAGE 17

Getting a small-town baseball field ready for a pretty important game has been all in day's work for an established local contractor.

*The Signature Bridge conceptual renders shown on the cover and pages 6–7 were generously provided by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority. We thank them for their use.*





# CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

JDLINK™ CONNECTIVITY KEEPS YOUR MACHINES FROM GOING DARK

Starting July 2021, John Deere is offering JDLink connectivity at no charge for all machines equipped with qualifying hardware. This means no activation fees, lapsed renewal dates, or lost machine data due to expired subscriptions. You can even enable all equipment acquired for your fleet in the future with automatic JDLink enrollment, so you never have to worry about missing critical machine data and alerts.



**3G SUPPORT STOPS AT THE END OF 2021.**  
**CONTACT YOUR DEALER TODAY.**

## Will my hardware qualify?

In recent years, major telecom companies have begun phasing out 3G connectivity within their networks in the United States. By early 2022, all 3G connections will move to 4G networks, enabling improved connectivity, speed, and reliability. John Deere will no longer support 3G service by the end of 2021.

With this change, all 3G devices must be updated with 4G compatibility in order to maintain the benefits of that technology.

That includes any machines like those in your fleet that take advantage of services like JDLink, whereby various equipment issues can be remotely monitored, diagnosed, and often corrected.

## How can I stay connected?

All it takes is a brief visit from a dealer technician trained to perform the necessary updates to keep you and your fleet operating at maximum efficiency.

## We know how important uptime is to you.

**Schedule with your dealer now** to make your switch from 3G to 4G so you can keep your fleet running at peak performance well into the future.

A SMARTER WAY

## FORWARD

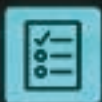
**MAKING TECH ADOPTION AN EASY TASK TO TACKLE**

*Ask any owner or operator who's been in the game for 10 or more years — the rate technology changes only seems to speed up. On top of that, the changes are bigger and have more potential to impact your operation. Keeping up with those*

*evolutions can be tough. That's why John Deere has made it as simple as possible to update your outfit with the tech you need, at the pace you're comfortable with.*



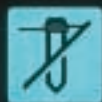
OVERDIG  
PROTECT



FLEXIBLE GRADE-  
MANAGEMENT  
SOLUTIONS



VIRTUAL FENCE  
BARRIERS



FREEDOM FROM  
STAKES & STRINGS



FULLY INTEGRATED  
FROM THE FACTORY



GRADE WITH  
PRECISION



Starting with 2D Grade Guidance all the way up to SmartGrade™ 3D Grade Control, you can choose the technology solution that best fits your needs. Taking advantage of these options can free you up from stakes and strings, overdigging, and costly rework on projects. On top of that, it also helps you build precise bids that win jobs and deliver margins.

It's the type of flexibility that has helped contractors like Gansen Excavating of Dubuque, Iowa, prepare their businesses for the next generation. "When we started with the technology, we knew the benefits," says Rich Gansen, founder and owner. "What we didn't know were all the capabilities. If we knew what we know now, there would have been no hesitation. We were taking on a big job with a small crew, and it was time. The initial investment paid for itself that year."

More companies are benefiting from technology solutions like SmartGrade every day. It all starts with a conversation with your dealer to discover the solution that best fits your operation and how to integrate it into your fleet.

***To give yourself a competitive advantage, reach out to your dealer today.***



***WE WERE TAKING  
ON A BIG JOB WITH  
A SMALL CREW,  
AND IT WAS TIME.  
THE INITIAL INVESTMENT  
PAID FOR ITSELF  
THAT YEAR.***

***— RICH GANSEN, FOUNDER AND OWNER,  
GANSEN EXCAVATING***



# SIGN



*Conceptual rendering of the Signature Bridge provided by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority.*



# ATURE *Project*

An aerial night photograph of the Miami Signature Bridge, a large arch bridge with illuminated steel arches and cables. The bridge spans a body of water, and city lights are visible in the background. Overlaid on the image is the word 'ATURE' in large, outlined, neon-style capital letters, and the word 'Project' in a blue, glowing script font.

Archer Western and The de Moya Group tackle Miami's **Signature Bridge** project with the help of John Deere equipment and dealer support

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ridges are among humankind's greatest architectural and engineering achievements. Some have become iconic, such as the Golden Gate Bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Tower Bridge in London, and Venice's Bridge of Sighs. In a few years, Miami's Signature Bridge will join this list.

The massive \$1.08-billion Signature Bridge project runs through the heart of Miami and is part of a major revitalization of the city. The centerpiece is the spiderlike bridge itself, with six enormous, sweeping arches that will transform the Miami skyline when it is completed. The project also entails extensive work on interchanges and double-decking sections of highway.

The Florida Department of Transportation needs this project to be done exactly right, which is why it selected one of the largest and most respected contractors in North America, The Walsh Group. Founded in 1898 in Chicago, the builder has grown from a small carpentry business to a multi-billion-dollar contracting operation, with more than 8,000 skilled tradesmen and professional staff.

One of The Walsh Group's companies, Archer Western, partnered with a Miami-based contractor, The de Moya Group, to work on the project, one of three the joint venture is taking on together in Florida. For the projects, Walsh has purchased over \$120 million worth of equipment, including more than 70 John Deere machines for the Signature Bridge project, the nearby I-95 3C project in Fort Lauderdale, and the Pinellas Gateway in St. Petersburg. "Our joint-venture partners appreciate how thorough, disciplined, and consistent we are in specifying the right machines and putting together the right financial packages," says Chris Stearns, senior manager, equipment division, The Walsh Group.

Walsh has used Deere equipment for decades. "Uptime is the name of the game," says Stearns. "Our equipment needs to do what it needs to do, day in and day out. In our experience, Deere has proven that they can produce machines that are reliable through their lifecycles."

### FLAGSHIP PROJECT

For the Signature Bridge project, Walsh works closely with John Deere and the local dealer, Dobbs Equipment.

"There's a natural desire for the team to make this a super-successful project," says Stearns. "It's a flagship job for Archer Western, de Moya, and Dobbs Equipment."

Deere makes great products, according to Stearns. "But what really differentiates them is their network of service and support. It's fantastic. As a nationwide contractor, our fleet is highly mobile. A machine could be in Indiana today and Florida tomorrow. If we need a solution, the John Deere Corporate Business Division (CBD) and Deere's network of local dealers are always there for us. That's an area where Deere absolutely shines."

Carlos Rodriguez, senior account manager, Dobbs Equipment, provides a key point of contact for the Archer Western/The de Moya Group joint venture. "I'll never forget the words of our owner, Edward Dobbs," says Rodriguez. "He said, 'We're going to make this the best experience Walsh has ever had. This has to be the best because my name is on that door.'"

Rodriguez provides assistance with any additional machine purchases, rentals, or attachments that are needed as the job progresses.

— continued



The Archer Western/  
Dobbs Equipment team.  
From left to right:  
Miguel Carballo Jr.,  
Baltasar Calafell,  
Javier Del Risco,  
Carlos Rodriguez,  
Chris Stearns, and  
Roberto Olivastri.



# UPTIME IS THE NAME OF the game.

— CHRIS STEARNS,  
senior manager, equipment division,  
*The Walsh Group*

**\$1.08B**

**SIGNATURE BRIDGE**  
will transform the Miami skyline  
when completed

**> \$120M**

**WORTH OF EQUIPMENT**  
purchased for the Miami Signature Bridge,  
nearby I-95 3C, and St. Petersburg's  
Pinellas Gateway megaprojects

**> 70**

**JOHN DEERE MACHINES**  
excavators / dozers / graders / backhoes /  
skid steers / wheel loaders /  
compact track loaders

**DEDICATED DEERE DEALER  
SUPPORT INCLUDES:**

- project manager
- two service technicians
- stocked parts containers  
on location

**< 2 HRS.**

dealer average  
service-response time goal



"We are very hands-on and committed to representing Deere well. Everyone who works at our company takes pride in the fact that when you drive down the highway by these projects, all you see is John Deere."

## BUILDING A LEGACY

Dobbs Equipment worked with the Deere CBD team on an all-inclusive package deal that supplied sales, service, and project support. The dealer provided dedicated resources including a project manager, two service technicians, and parts containers that are kept stocked at the jobsite to shorten response times in areas of heavy traffic congestion.

"Dobbs has been a great partner to work with," says Stearns. "We always say the true measure of a partnership is how quickly you can fix things when

they go wrong and how you make it right. I can tell you with this dealer, it's always the same response. They are always there."

Dobbs has a simple but very effective way of handling the project, according to Rodriguez: "It's all about communication, coordination, execution, and follow-up. We're in a metropolitan area with a lot of congestion, so we must constantly communicate and coordinate to minimize downtime. We have a great relationship with Walsh because everyone is working for the greater good of this high-profile project."

Local knowledge has been key to keeping the fleet up and running. "We're a nationwide fleet operating in different environments," says Stearns. "Even in the state of Florida, undercarriage wear is vastly different

in Miami than in Tampa or Daytona. Even though you are only working a couple hours apart, the terrain and how you set up your machine including what bucket teeth you use are completely different. Having your dealer provide that local expertise is huge."

Ultimately everyone associated with the project wants it to stand the test of time. "One of the core values of this company is quality," says Stearns. "The Signature Bridge will stand for decades. Quality is what we leave behind and the true measure of who we are. It is our legacy."

*Archer Western and The de Moya Group are serviced by Dobbs Equipment, Miami, Florida, on the Signature Bridge, I-95 3C, and Pinellas Gateway projects.*

 Check out the video at:  
[JohnDeere.com/TheDirt](http://JohnDeere.com/TheDirt)



OUR EQUIPMENT NEEDS TO DO  
WHAT IT NEEDS TO DO, **DAY IN AND DAY OUT.**

— CHRIS STEARNS, senior manager, equipment division, The Walsh Group



# SUPPORTING *a megaproject*

Baltasar Calafell, Dobbs Equipment's dedicated project manager for the Archer Western/The de Moya Group joint venture, has an important job. He manages all service support for the over 70 John Deere machines on the Signature Bridge, I-95 3C, and Pinellas Gateway projects. That includes a long list of Deere excavators, dozers, graders, backhoes, skid steers, wheel loaders, and compact track

day. "Dobbs helps us do our best," says Carballo. "The Signature Bridge is a megaproject. It's the new face of Miami and will be here for 100 years. We all work on this project with a lot of pride."

The two speak on the phone first thing every morning. "Miguel lets me know if any machines need repairs," says Calafell. "Often

and basic common parts to help reduce response time. "The biggest challenge on this project is to keep the average response time to less than two hours, which is our current goal," says Calafell. "I think we are doing really well toward reaching that goal."

If a service call is needed, Roberto Olivastri, service manager at Dobbs, dispatches the service technician as soon as possible. "John Deere Connected Support" provides Expert Alerts based on thousands of connected machines," says Olivastri. "It's very good information for handling common issues and expediting a repair. I like seeing customers happy with their machines. When they buy more machines because they are happy with your service, that's definitely the best feeling you can have."

Olivastri lives in downtown Miami. "On weekends, I go downtown with my wife and kids. My kids love it. They say, 'Hey, Papi, do you know what those machines are?' I do, and I know all the guys running them, too. I'm very proud of that and of the relationship between Dobbs and Archer Western/The de Moya Group. It's been amazing."

**“WE ALL WORK ON THIS PROJECT WITH  
A LOT OF PRIDE.”**

— MIGUEL CARBALLO JR., fleet manager, Archer Western



loaders. "We use John Deere JDLink" daily," he says. "It allows us to plan maintenance months in advance. It also allows us to track machine location, hours, utilization, and service codes so we can be proactive."

Calafell and Miguel Carballo Jr., fleet manager, Archer Western, are in constant contact every

I can see a failure on JDLink first, so I can ask him if we can send a technician out with the right part or if their mechanic can handle it."

One maintenance technician and one field service technician, each with a service truck, are dedicated to the project. Service containers are privately stocked with filters



# G

etting the day started at 5:30 in the morning isn't rare in the construction industry, but 3:30 indicates a passion for the job few others can match. For Jeff Tourault of Atlantic Foundations in Chesapeake, Virginia, it's an average day in the life. "When we have big commercial pours, everything has to be perfect before the trucks roll in, but I start every day that early to prepare and make the most of what's to come." As the epitome of a hands-on owner, there's plenty of variety in what the day could have on the docket, but with 36 years of experience, a reputation for impeccable quality, and the right people and equipment, Tourault hasn't had a challenge best him yet.

## STARTING STRONG

Growing to 150-plus employees, 60 machines, and 600-lot projects doesn't happen overnight, but it starts somewhere. For Tourault, it was in 1986 when he and his wife Susan decided to purchase a 310B Backhoe from Coastal Equipment Corp. "I am forever grateful to Bob Clay of Coastal," says Tourault. "He took a chance on a 23-year-old kid, and it's made all the difference in my life." Clay, past president and co-owner of Coastal, tells a slightly different version: "I saw potential. Sure, he wasn't proven yet, but there was no doubt in my mind he would be successful."

— continued



**A SOLID  
FOUNDATION**  
FAMILY VALUES AND ENDLESS WORK  
ETHIC IN TIDEWATER VIRGINIA







With that 310B, Tourault was able to take on the increasing challenges developers were throwing at him and really start to scale his business. "I was a mason to start but wanted to be a turnkey package for contractors. They said if I wanted the footings, I'd have to also be their slab guy, and if I wanted to do their slabs, I'd have to do the driveways. As a one-man crew with my wife running the office, it would have been impossible without some heavy equipment." Adding a backhoe to his fleet was the key, and Tourault hasn't looked back since.

base for our projects, so there's no shortage of ways to put these backhoes to use."

While the primary applications for Tourault and his backhoes haven't changed much over the years, the experience of putting them in action has. "The evolution of these machines from my first model to now is night and day. The precision of the controls, the creature comforts in the cabs, the technology — there's no shortage of improvements, and I know all my operators will say the same. I think

Just as important to Tourault are the things that *haven't* changed. "The power in these machines has always been exceptional, and so have the uptime and ease of maintenance. Not a single one of my Deere engines has burned excess oil between changes. I'm amazed by their efficiency. And I know I can rely on them — in my 36 years I've never missed a day of work due to a backhoe being down. That confidence in my equipment helps me take on whatever the day brings."



JEFF TOURAULT

SUSAN TOURAULT

CLAY TOURAULT

CLAY, SUSAN, AND JEFF TOURAULT HAVE FORMED A TIGHT BOND WITH THE CLAY FAMILY OF COASTAL EQUIPMENT CORP., INCLUDING THIRD-GENERATION OWNER JEFF CLAY AND HIS SON JEFFERY.



JEFF CLAY

JEFFERY CLAY

## DOING IT ALL

Working within a 150-mile radius of his company's home base, Tourault keeps a variety and steady stream of residential and commercial projects constantly in motion. "Our main job is digging and pouring the footings, foundations, slabs, and driveways for new developments," he says. "We also have our own sandpit to supply the

the biggest evolution for me was the addition of four-wheel drive. That made getting around jobsites so much faster and more efficient, as have the auto-leveling and ride-control features."

## FAMILY TRADITION

Another key part of the business is Tourault's oldest son Clay. Now a vice president with the company, he had to earn his keep like any other employee. "I started at age 12 with all the fun jobs," Clay Tourault jokes. "Now I'm lining up the work for our crews, running jobsites, running machines — wearing whatever

*Never one to sit still, Jeff Tourault of Atlantic Foundations is the living embodiment of a hands-on owner, always excited to pitch in and help his crews however needed.*





hat is needed. I've learned a lot from my dad in that way. You can't always predict the challenges, but when you work hard and take care of your people, the rest follows."

"It's a special thing, running a small company," Tourault adds. "Because Bob Clay took that chance on me, I look at young kids differently, and when you've been working with people 25 to 30 years, they're like family. I love my employees to death."

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

From his own employees to customers and suppliers, that tight-knit nature surrounds Tourault's relationships, likely an effect of the authentic enthusiasm he brings to every interaction. "You tend to do business with people who share your values," he explains. "I believe your reputation is worth its weight in gold, so working with people who also believe that means a lot, and that's exactly what we have with Coastal Equipment."

As luck would have it, Atlantic Foundations and Coastal have

quite a bit in common on top of their values. They're both multigenerational, family-owned companies with sons preparing to carry on the legacy. "Parts, service, anything I've needed — Coastal has been right by me like a brother," Tourault concludes. "It's been an incredible journey with them all this time, and knowing what each business has lined up, I know the future is bright for both."

*Atlantic Foundations is serviced by Coastal Equipment Corp., Virginia Beach, Virginia.*

 **Check out the video at:**  
[JohnDeere.com/TheDirt](http://JohnDeere.com/TheDirt)

## 50 YEARS AND COUNTING

Hitting its 50-year anniversary, the 310 Backhoe remains a multifunction master. Celebrate the evolution of the 310 Backhoe by visiting [JohnDeere.com/backhoes](http://JohnDeere.com/backhoes)



**"I'VE NEVER MISSED  
A DAY OF WORK  
DUE TO A BACKHOE  
BEING DOWN."**  
—JEFF TOURAULT, president, Atlantic Foundations





# John Deere Protect™

## lets you take control of machine maintenance

Downtime. It's one of the dirtiest words in the industry. If machines aren't running, you're not making money, and an unexpected break is the last thing your already-overloaded operation needs. On top of disrupting production, it can also wreak havoc on monthly expense budgets and cash flow. So, what's the best way to avoid these headaches altogether?



"Through the **John Deere Protect** program, they're able to shift the worry of scheduled maintenance to trusted and experienced dealer technicians."

— **MARK WAGNER**, manager, Service Business, John Deere Construction & Forestry Division

**Plan** your downtime with routine preventative maintenance. Eliminate the guesswork, achieve predictable performance and expenses, optimize machine performance, prolong the life of your equipment, and get back to focusing on what's most important — running your business.

Of course, not all operations have the resources for dedicated fleet managers or in-house mechanics, but that doesn't mean they can't adhere to best practices. With the help of their John Deere dealer, any equipment owner can achieve the peace of mind that comes with

knowing their machines are dialed in, ready to run every day.

"Our customers have enough to handle — through the John Deere Protect program, they're able to shift the worry of scheduled maintenance to trusted and experienced dealer technicians," says Mark Wagner, manager, Service Business, John Deere Construction & Forestry Division. "On top of avoiding headaches caused by downtime, a simple conversation with their dealer can lead to considerable cost savings over the life of the equipment. It all translates to more confidence and the ability to grow their business."



### MAXIMIZED UPTIME

Proactive maintenance performed by certified technicians using genuine original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts and fluids



### PROTECTED VALUE

Regular machine inspections and fluid samples can help protect your equipment for the long run



### TOTAL CONFIDENCE & EASE

Customizable support plans, remote monitoring, and fixed maintenance costs for whenever and wherever you're working





# HOMETOWN HOMERUN

## HOW A SMALL-TOWN CONTRACTOR KEEPS ITS MAJOR LEAGUE REPUTATION

The grading business is very competitive, but Jesse Steger knows that great service, quality work, and small-town tenacity are clear paths to standing out from the pack.

"If you do it in the dirt, we're interested in taking a shot," says Steger, president of Steger Construction in Dyersville, Iowa.

— continued







**"TO THINK THAT THE FIRST MLB GAME EVER PLAYED IN IOWA IS GOING TO BE ON DIRT MY CREW MOVED AROUND IS SOMETHING I'LL NEVER FORGET."**

— Jesse Steger, president, Steger Construction

"We've got more equipment than people at this point, and that allows us to put the most efficient machine for the job on that job and leave something else parked. We like to think of that equipment as a large toolbox to pull from."

This economical attitude and focus on the work at hand keeps Steger Construction lean and mean. The crew is currently finishing up a series of commercial-development lots that must be jigsawed together in concert with adjacent houses and streets. A John Deere 450D LC Excavator loads articulated dump trucks, replacing topsoil off piles before cooperative weather and a strong work ethic swiftly lead to the final street grading.

Steger's excavators see more use here as they load the reclaimed material in preparation of a John Deere 700K Dozer equipped with GPS making grade.

"The equipment is how we get this done, but the driving force is twofold," says Steger, referring not just to the current project but the entire ethos of Steger Construction.

"The first is that this is a family business that has the momentum and hope to continue succeeding, and the other is that the people who work here put their boots on the ground and do an incredible job day in and day out. That's so important in this business."

## ONE TO ANOTHER

Ownership of Steger Construction has changed hands periodically since its inception after World War II, but a Steger has always been at the helm. Jesse Steger himself has moved from operator to owner in his 45 years with the company, with his son Paul in the process of carrying on the legacy.

"There was never any question for me," says Paul Steger, vice president at Steger Construction. "I've always wanted to be part of this business and do my part to further it. It's a huge blessing to have the opportunity to carry on our reputation and continue providing jobs in our community."







He's not the only one looking forward to it, either. "I think the family aspect is something that only those who experience it really understand. If you work at something your whole life, you don't want to see it just end," says Paul Steger. "When the next generation wants to keep it going, it's a real source of satisfaction."

### STILL DREAMING

Steger's vision of keeping the business in the bloodline isn't the only dream-related work for the company lately. In 2020 the Steger Construction crew finished a new ball field in anticipation of hosting the state's first Major League Baseball (MLB™) game ever, right on the original *Field of Dreams* movie site four miles outside of Dyersville.

"It was a project that comes along once in a lifetime, if that, and we were very, very glad to have been a part of it," says Steger. For such an important, truly historic project to be awarded to a 40-person crew in the field's hometown is a well-deserved point of pride with Steger. "To think that the first MLB game ever played in Iowa is going to be on dirt my crew moved around is something I'll never forget."

Building that field in a cornfield on somewhat of a hillside required a reasonable amount of earthwork during the leveling process. MLB tolerances are extremely tight and geared towards perfection. Steger is quick to point out how it was all made possible.

"I don't know if we could have done it as fast and well as we did without modern GPS systems and John Deere equipment," says Steger. "Our grades are closer with GPS than they ever could be with the old-fashioned staking system, and it cuts our labor. Plus, Deere makes the best excavators out there. Put one on our team, and work gets done fast and done right."

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

The grading goal is simple in theory — get quality work done on time — but always much more difficult in practice. Thankfully, Steger is a man who knows how to get what he wants.

"The top three things I look for in a piece of equipment are dependability, dealer support, and price," he says.

"The fact that we've been running John Deere excavators since the 1980s speaks to all of those. Our dealer, Martin Equipment, helps keep our downtime to the bare minimum, and we've had a long relationship with their salesman, who started off as a mechanic."

Steger's level head and clarity when matching the tools to the task come in handy in northeast Iowa, where winter is typically a season of limited practical work that further elevates the need for reliable uptime.

"If our excavators stop, the whole operation stops. Thankfully, they're very durable and easy to maintain," he says. "It's easy to climb in the seat of a John Deere excavator and get the feel of the machine. I can go out on a site and pick out any operator I've got, and they'll tell you they love the Deere equipment."

*Steger Construction Inc. is serviced by Martin Equipment, Dubuque, Iowa.*

 **Check out the video at:**  
[JohnDeere.com/TheDirt](https://www.johndeere.com/TheDirt)







JOHN DEERE

# SMART. CHOICES.

INTRODUCING THE INDUSTRY'S MOST FLEXIBLE GRADE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS.

With John Deere, you can adopt integrated grade-management technology at your own pace. Choose from 2D Grade Guidance all the way up to SmartGrade™ 3D Grade Control. And upgrade at any time. So you're free from stakes and strings, overdigging and rework. And to build precise bids that win jobs, and deliver margins. All backed by John Deere's legendary dealer network. It's the smarter way forward.

[JohnDeere.com/SmartChoices](https://www.johndeere.com/SmartChoices)