

Purpose Contracting Weighs in on Skid Steer Selection

Asphalt contractor points to control options, lift pattern, auxiliary hydraulics and larger tires as important selection factors.

By Warren Anderson, brand marketing manager, CASE Construction Equipment

Having a strong base is important in asphalt and in life. For Purpose Contracting, of the Town of Norway, Wisconsin, it's their motto. Founded as a landscaping company 18 years ago, the company evolved into a full-service asphalt and concrete contractor with 12 employees and 15 pieces of equipment.

"We take our job seriously and we install – whether it's concrete or asphalt – a good solid base. The base is everything," says Randy Larson, president, Purpose Contracting. "It doesn't matter how much concrete or how much asphalt you put on top of it, it's all about the base."

A strong base is also required for the ground engaging tools and attachments that go into building the base and laying asphalt in both commercial and residential sites. With that in mind, Larson replaced aging and inefficient skid steers with two new vertical-lift models – SV280s from CASE Construction Equipment – to serve as their primary workhorses.

Larson worked with Sussex, Wisconsin-based equipment dealer Miller-Bradford & Risberg to customize two new models to meet his daily demands, including hand and foot controls, larger tires, a vertical lift and high-flow hydraulics to manage their heavier attachments.

Control Options Meet Operator Preference and Demand

One of the primary purchase drivers was the ability to order the machines with optional hand and foot controls – a design that many manufacturers have moved away from, but one that CASE and Miller-Bradford & Risberg have retained as optional equipment as the configuration still has enthusiasts.

"The hand and foot controls just make flow so much easier, so much easier for grading, and so much easier for scooping out of the trucks," says Jake Olson, asphalt foreman, Purpose Contracting.

Operator Matt Smith reports that the skid steer operates more smoothly than other models they've tried.

"There are certain [machines] out there where you get in one and it just jerks you all around," says Smith. "It doesn't matter how smooth your hands are, how smooth your feet are, it just jerks you everywhere. This one doesn't jerk at all."

Lift Pattern, Larger Tires Provide Greater Reach and Stability

The large-frame platform with vertical-lift pattern and high hinge-pin height were important factors for Larson and his crew.

“We chose the vertical lift over the radial lift because the vertical lift allows us to get up higher and dump into the quad-axle dump trucks safely,” Larson says. “You can't have a load of concrete in the bucket and have too small of a machine raising that bucket up that high. So, from a safety standpoint, this was the right machine.”

That access to the back of the truck is also important for taking material *out*. In residential applications, where they can't dump hot asphalt directly from the truck into the paver, they rely on a skid steer to scoop the asphalt out of the back of the quad axle and deliver it to the paver.

In addition to the vertical lift allowing his operators to reach further and deeper into the truck, Larson also outfitted each machine with over-sized 14-by-17.5 inch tires to give the machine that much more reach.

“I see two big benefits with the larger tires,” says Larson. “Number one, they raised the machine up a little bit higher. Number two, they're heavier tires, which adds a little bit more weight to the machine, so when we're tipping our bucket, we've got more stability.”

High-Flow Auxiliary Hydraulics Provide Attachment Flexibility

When it came to hydraulics, Larson outfitted his machine with a high-flow package so that he could have enough power to run his high-flow milling machine. The SV280 boasts standard hydraulics of 24.2 gallons-per-minute (gpm), and a 36.7 gpm with the high-flow option. They also use augers and trenchers. Larson views the high-flow package as a way to help keep costs down.

“The high-flow package really gives you a lot of diversity,” Larson says. “You don't want to have a need to run a certain machine and not have the capability to do so. It's going to come in handy and then you won't have to go rent another machine that has it.”

Windows, Lights and Low Entry Threshold = Excellent Visibility

The CASE SV280 also offers excellent 360-degree visibility with a cab-forward design, skylight and ultra-narrow and wide side screens. New heavy-duty front and side lighting provide further visibility improvements when operating at night.

“[It's] good visibility to the rear in the CASE,” says Olson. “A lot of the other machines will have bars back there blocking your view, really good visibility to the sides. Also, what I really like is the side-mounted headlights. Some of our older

machines we've literally used duct tape and old truck headlights and mounted them on the sides to see what we're doing. [With the CASE headlights] on the side, when we have an early morning job or a job that goes late at night, it just makes safety and visibility way better.”

CASE SV280 skid steers also offer the industry’s lowest entry threshold, which helps improve visibility down to the bucket and attachment, and is easier for operators getting in and out of the cab.

“The low threshold lets me hop easily in and out of the machine. A lot of skid-steers, you have to be very careful jumping in and jumping out. This makes it so much easier,” says Smith. “Also, I can see the grade a lot better with the low entry than I can with a standard one.”

Easy Tier 4 Final, Strong Relationships Make Service Simple

The two SV280s operated by Purpose Contracting feature a particulate matter catalyst, a maintenance-free Tier 4 Final solution that requires no diesel particulate filter (DPF) regeneration or maintenance, and requires no additional fluids to be added.

“We’re very concerned about our environment,” says Larson. “And one of our other buying decisions was the fact that this unit comes with the Tier 4 Final engine. And the fact that the Tier 4 Final engine does not need any additional maintenance or other containers filled up with other solutions and stuff like that – it just starts up and runs and it’s not something that we have to watch and have to maintain.”

One of the reasons Larson strayed from his older machines was a heavy maintenance workload required to keep them on the job. Working with Miller-Bradford & Risberg and CASE, he’s discovered that he won’t have to deal with those issues again.

“If we ever need any servicing at our shop, Miller-Bradford & Risberg will send their mobile service truck to our shop and service our vehicle there. Or even if we're at a jobsite and we needed something replaced, they will dispatch their repair truck to the jobsite,” Larson says. “When you have a good relationship with a dealer that stands behind their service, that really makes it an easy choice and a good buying decision.”

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