

WEB Title: 921F Tackles Busy Concrete Plant

Larger Wheel Loader Keeps Pace with Plant and Haul Trucks at Augusta Ready Mix

Family-owned company in Augusta, Ga., sees increased on-site efficiency with the recent addition of a CASE 921F wheel loader.

By Andrew Dargatz, brand marketing manager, CASE Construction Equipment

Augusta Ready Mix has been in the concrete business for more than 30 years, and has grown along with its hometown of Augusta, Ga.

“I started Augusta Ready Mix with my dad in 1985. We were in the dump truck business before that,” explains Terry Davis, owner and co-founder. “We try to be a complete service for home building construction. We’ve got dump trucks. We’ve got concrete trucks. We provide concrete, fill material and mortar sand. We pump concrete. We've got front dischargers, rear dischargers, little 4-yard mixers. We have tried to innovate in this town with new ideas in construction.”

One can sense Davis’ pride as he stands before his central plant in Augusta, with concrete trucks being loaded at a constant pace in the background. The company has made a name for itself throughout the region for its service, responsiveness, and ability to deliver concrete in batches large and small to contractors in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA).

“This is my main plant. I have several plants in different areas for different locations. This is a central mix plant and a dry batch plant. There's a big difference in the two. With the central mix plant, we can actually batch a load of concrete every 90 seconds. We can do 300 yards an hour if need be.”

In the fall of 2015, Davis identified a need to work with a larger wheel loader at the main plant to fully keep pace with the needs of concrete production and truck loading of raw materials. In a production environment such as a concrete plant, where downstream processes are at the mercy of the raw material being fed in a timely manner, [the new CASE 921F](#) with its 4.5 cubic yard bucket has not only been able to keep up with production and help better stockpile materials at the land-locked facility, but it’s offered a noticeable increase in fuel efficiency.

“It gets better fuel mileage – not near as much fuel as the other ones did,” says Davis. “The operator is telling me he's fueling up once a week instead of twice a week. Fuel is a big deal.”

New Wheel Loader Improves Total Plant Efficiency

Augusta Ready Mix’s main plant is the heart of the business, and Davis knows that he’s got to keep materials moving in order to meet the growing needs of his customers. He’s also challenged with meeting those needs while keeping the plant

bound within its current footprint, so he needed a machine that could do more in the same amount of space. To meet these challenges, Terry worked with David Johnson at Border Equipment in Augusta.

“Everything in a town like this is about relationships,” says Davis. “I learned a long time ago that a warranty isn't any better than the guy you buy it from. I know David and they've been really good to work with. They've lent me loaders when they were working on mine. We've got so many mixers and dump trucks that we don't have time to work on the equipment, so I've always let them do all the maintenance on them. I got a real good relationship with these people. That's why I went with CASE.”

“I wanted this machine because we're toting material. If you're making trips all day long, why not take twice as much? It's cut down on the actual hours that we're using the machine because the operator can carry so much more.”

“We've grown and this piece of land that we're on is getting tighter and tighter. With this loader here, as the material comes in we can stack it higher and get more in here, which is a big, big advantage to us. The ability to tote it farther and quicker and stack it higher are big pluses for this machine.”

In addition to stacking aggregate and loading the belt, Terry's 921F is increasing efficiency throughout the facility.

“During the day, trucks come in to get loaded with other products, the operator can run down there and load them quicker. It only takes two buckets to load a dump truck, where it used to take three. So, the operator can go down there and load a truck and [then get back to feeding the plant]. If he has to go do something, clean up under the plant or load a truck or something like that and he gets behind here feeding the plant, then he can come back and catch up in a skinny minute [because of the size of the machine].”

Power and Fuel Efficiency

The 921F wheel loader delivers best-in-class horsepower with a 6.7-liter Tier 4 Final certified engine that provides quick throttle response and impressive torque. The machine also features heavy-duty axles with auto-locking front and open rear differentials for optimal traction and reduced tire wear.

At first, operator Leroy Lewis was unsure about making the switch from his previous wheel loader.

“Power-wise, I'm used to running [a competitive machine] and I was kind of apprehensive about getting off it,” says Lewis. “The boss had to make me get on the CASE, but I grew into it, and as I ran it awhile, I began to like it. The CASE was an upgrade. Overall, the performance is good. One to 10, I'd give it a 10.”

“With the volume of material that we use and the size of the bucket, it's less trips to the bins. It's got good strength. I have no problem with getting the material to the bins or pushing up the material.”

In addition to the power and overall performance of the machine, Lewis is also impressed with the 921F's Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) Tier 4 Final solution and the fuel efficiency it provides. By focusing on treating the exhaust after it has left the engine, it ensures that all of the machine's fuel is being put towards powering the machine and not towards raising engine temperatures to burn off accumulated particulate, such as equipment with a diesel particulate filter (DPF).

“It performs well. Fuel efficiency is good. You get good fuel mileage. On the average, I would go two trips a week with [the previous machine]. This one, I'm going once.”

Comfort and Visibility Improved; Ride Control Provides Smooth Ride

The 921F offers one of the industry's quietest and most spacious cabs with class-leading visibility thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows, a low rear hood and an optional rear-view camera. Loading bins and keeping the belt fed at the plant, Lewis spends long hours in the cab performing repetitive, low gear tasks – so cab comfort is very important to him.

“The cab is roomy, very spacious. Nice comfortable space. The seats, everything is comfortable. It's like riding in a Cadillac. That's my office. Out of 10 hours a day, seven hours I'm in that machine.”

Lewis also states that his comfort and performance have been further aided by the machine's Ride Control functionality. Ride Control helps the 921F ride smoothly in rough environments and minimizes operator fatigue by dampening the movement of the loader arms, helping to reduce spillage and provide a smoother ride.

“As far as bumps, you don't feel them. You know? It just flows with it. The [competitive machine] was a little bit hard. If you hit a bump, [the operator is] going to absorb that bump. You know? With this one here, you kind of float. Overall, it's a good riding machine.”

Lewis also mentions the importance of a well-sealed cab when operating in such a dusty environment. “It's good and tight. You rarely get any dust in the cab.”

In a busy environment, with material trucks and personnel coming and going all day, it's important for an operator to be aware of his surroundings at all times. Lewis notes that the 921F provides excellent visibility to all sides of the machine.

“It's important that you be able to see everything around you. Everything around here is moving. You got trucks coming in, trucks going out all day long, so visibility is

key. The amount of glass, the backup camera, the mirrors and everything, it's all well adjusted."

The CASE 921F comes standard with a fully adjustable suspension seat and articulated power steering. Overall, Lewis appreciates the ergonomics and layout of the cab.

"The features are set up good. Everything is in good reach. Everything is at a good level. Your armrest and everything is set up so there's limited movement. Everything is right there where you need it."

"It's great performance," concludes Lewis. "It's an easy operating machine. It's effortless. You just get in there and do your job."

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SIDEBAR: Augusta Ready Mix Gives Back

Having grown with the community for more than 30 years, Augusta Ready Mix shows no signs of slowing down. Terry Davis' attitude towards growth, innovation and the community itself ensures that the company will remain as the leaders of the ready mix concrete business in Augusta and the surrounding Central Savannah River Area for many years to come.

"We aim to please. We're a hometown, homegrown company," Terry says. "I love this country, I love this town and we just want to be there for it."

His patriotism is evident when you see his concrete trucks rolling through town. Many are impressively painted and wrapped to support local community initiatives, as well as the Wounded Warrior Project and the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard.

"I'm a patriot. I love this country. I get chill bumps when they play the National Anthem. I appreciate what our military is doing for us," he says. "We've painted trucks for all five different branches. My son was a captain in the Marine Corps and he's back now working for me. He was in Afghanistan and I'm very proud of him for that. I just wanted to give back to the community a little bit. We're a homegrown company. We're not a corporation."