



COLUMBUS

CONNECTION

Winter, 2009



Nick Savko & Sons, Inc.
"ON TRACK" TO
STAY AHEAD OF
THE COMPETITION

KOMATSU[®]

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Tom Stivison

The Products and The People To Serve You



Dear Valued Customer:

Time and again, we see that the most successful companies are the ones that seize an opportunity and run with it. In this issue of the *Columbus Connection*, we look at Nick Savko & Sons, a Columbus company that has recognized opportunities to grow, and met the challenges of growth, for more than 50 years. We're proud Columbus Equipment Company has been with them all the way, from the early days when Nick Savko needed a backhoe so he could expand into excavation work, to today, when the company is involved in extensive, cutting-edge projects such as the CSX trans-shipping yard in North Baltimore, Ohio.

We're also proud to be associated with manufacturers who are equally forward-looking. In this issue, you'll learn how Link-Belt is focusing on the transportability of cranes, and how Komatsu is increasing productivity in its wheel loader line.

Finally, we are excited to inform you of our own internal growth. With the creation of a consolidated Environmental Division, Columbus Equipment Company is now able to meet the expanding needs of customers in the forestry, recycling, biomass and aggregate processing sectors. We've also opened a new, full-service branch in Piketon to better serve customers in southern Ohio.

On behalf of the entire staff at Columbus Equipment, I'd like to wish you a happy holiday season and a prosperous 2010. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can do anything to help make it happen.

Sincerely,

Tom Stivison
President

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Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. "ON TRACK" TO STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

Today, Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. is a respected site development company throughout Ohio and one of the world's foremost specialists in roller compacted concrete (RCC). But the Columbus, Ohio-based company will never forget its roots, which trace back to 1946, when a young G.I. named Nick Savko started a small contracting business pouring concrete foundations for homes that would be purchased by other returning servicemen.

in central Ohio, working on a housing project," said Steve, who further commented, "Up until recently, we had as many as 20 crews a day working in housing subdivisions."

The company is one of the largest ready-mix users in central Ohio. In addition to residential and commercial site development, Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. works on specific bid projects for municipalities, including installation of water and sewer lines and roadway construction and repair.

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The company's move into roller compacted concrete (RCC) grew from the Savko's desire to be a steward of the industry. RCC, which uses a drier mix and compacts the concrete without joints or rebar (steel), utilizes a vibratory roller machine and is a more efficient way to place concrete pavement, said Marty Savko, who saw this cost-efficient product as a boon for the housing industry's need for subdivision streets. "If you evaluate the housing market in central Ohio, the major developers target the first-time buyers. If those buyers can't afford the home, they are not going to buy. If no one is buying, the development won't be built, so the street and utilities are not needed. In short, this simply means that there is no work for us," he explained.

Marty Savko first read about RCC in a trade publication in 1998. At that time, only two U.S. companies were using the RCC process. Savko contacted the companies, asked questions and was invited to visit RCC projects. For two years, Savko personnel made routine visits to RCC project sites to learn everything possible about the process. The company finally got the opportunity to try it in 2001, when it won the contract to repave a residential street, Landsdowne Avenue in Gahanna,



Early Savko Bros. ... Nick Savko (second from right) and his brother, Charley (far left), providing foundations for a housing subdivision (Circa 1949).

In addition to Nick and his wife, Gilda, the company had six employees the first year. By 1949, it was 20 employees. In the early 50s, Savko's largest customer—a major home builder in Columbus—mentioned he needed a new excavation contractor and Nick jumped at the opportunity. He immediately purchased a used Lima 34 cable backhoe for \$7,500 from Bill Early, founder of Columbus Equipment Company. Gilda Savko later recalled that her husband "ran it all day long and then worked on it all night."

The excavation side of the business really took off, according to Steve Savko, president and Marty Savko, vice president, the two sons of the company founder, who manage and operate the company today. "Almost every day since 1946, there has been a Savko crew somewhere

Ohio. "We were the low bidder with conventional concrete," Savko noted, "but once we had the contract, we made a pitch to try our new method (RCC)." Savko offered the City of Gahanna the opportunity to observe a test-run of RCC paving in the Columbus suburb, and promised that if they were unhappy with the RCC street work when completed, Savko would remove the RCC and repave the street with conventional concrete the next day at no cost.



The repaving of Landsdowne Avenue was a huge success—attended by many competitors who wanted to see the new technology, Savko recalled. The company immediately ordered new pavers, used in the RCC process, from Columbus Equipment Company. Savko's expertise in RCC has been a factor in two of its largest projects. In 2006, it was the low bidder on the Norfolk Southern Railroad's Rickenbacker intermodal terminal in southeast Columbus. The project called for 100,000 cubic yards of RCC to be placed on approximately 71 acres.

Savko employees persevered under very difficult conditions on the project. "We began on site in September 2006, and then experienced the wettest October on record. Savko crews fought the weather conditions to keep the project on schedule. There was one million cubic yards of dirt to move, and it rained every day until the middle of November," he commented. "When the weather improved our crews worked even harder, the soil had to be stabilized, and the site prepared for RCC." Even with all the adversity, Savko finished the project under budget, four months ahead of schedule, and Savko personnel had worked onsite over 90,000 man-hours without a single safety incident.

Norfolk Southern management was so impressed by Savko's performance that they recommended the company to CSX, when the railroad announced its plans to build a \$175 million, transshipping yard as part of its National Gateway project in North Baltimore, near Findlay in northwest Ohio. Savko competed with nine other companies for the design/build project, winning the contract in October 2008. Starting with blue prints that were only 30 percent complete, Savko's personnel completed the balance of the plans and mobilized 148 "lowboy" trailer loads



Pictured with a restored Unit cable backhoe, at Savko corporate headquarters: President Steve Savko (left), Vice President Marty Savko (right) of Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. with Bob Gregory of Columbus Equipment Company. The cable backhoe is similar to the first one purchased from Columbus Equipment (inset above) in the early 1950's by the late Nick Savko, company founder.

of equipment from its corporate headquarters in Columbus to the project North Baltimore site by April 2009.

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Today, Savko has approximately 225 personnel onsite working full time on this massive project, including 50 workers hired from the local North Baltimore area. "This is an exceptional all-American town, we have met some really good people here and have invited many of them to work with us on this project," said Savko.

The CSX site is one mile wide by seven miles in length. Serving as the general contractor for the project, Savko is moving three million cubic yards of dirt, hauling in a million tons of aggregates, laying 28 miles of railroad track onsite and placing 100,000 tons of RCC. Four Savko crews have worked on underground utilities for the site all year long and Savko is also constructing three buildings and offices for CSX. Marty Savko explained that, when completed, the CSX offices will have the most advanced fiber optic computerized controls available. "CSX personnel will be able to operate their North Baltimore facility from their Florida headquarters, if

today, many of their employees are also into their third generation with Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. "Without these individuals we would not be as successful," said Savko.

In some ways, the histories of Nick Savko & Sons, Inc. and Columbus Equipment Company are intertwined. Both compa-

Big job ... big equipment! A Komatsu PC800LC and a PC750LC loading 40-ton articulated trucks at the CSX site. A daily average of 35,000 cubic yards of dirt was moved, per shift, by Savko personnel.



(Above right): Savko's project management team on the CSX site in North Baltimore, Ohio. Pictured left to right are Robert Dodge; Martin Savko, Jr.; Steve Saunders; Jerry Ricketts; Brian Nelson; Ralph Polletta; Bill McCloud; Alan Schragel and Brandon Herdman.

(Bottom right): Aerial shot of the North Baltimore CSX trans-shipping yard under construction. The site measures one mile wide by seven miles long. Savko is the general contractor for the \$175-million project, featuring 28 miles of railroad track and RCC pavement when completed in 2011.

"Columbus Equipment service is the pinnacle of any equipment service you'll find in the state of Ohio."

Marty Savko; Vice President, Nick Savko & Sons, Inc.

necessary." Scheduled for completion in 2011, Savko is ahead of schedule on the CSX project.

"We are lucky and blessed to have this magnitude of a project during this unprecedented tough economic time," Savko said. "Our team worked hard to get this project for our entire company—they are all long-term, dedicated individuals who have been with us for years." Just like the Savko family, whose third generation (Martin Jr. and Nicholas) are working for us

nies started in Columbus, Ohio at about the same time and prospered by doing business with each other. Both companies have a reputation for the highest quality service and dependability. "Columbus Equipment Company is an extremely well-respected organization. They have fantastic personnel. I can't say enough about Bob Gregory, who has been our sales rep since at least 1977," Savko said. Gregory introduced us to Komatsu excavators, Savko recalls. "When the Komatsu excavator became avail-

able, it was so much faster than excavators of the time, and very reasonable to operate. We started to buy them, and now we exclusively own them. The machine has proven itself time after time. If we had to buy another excavator tomorrow, we would call Bob and get another Komatsu."

equipment superintendent, tells me we're having a problem with a machine and that he's speaking to Columbus Equipment about it, the only words out of my mouth are 'they'll take care of it,' and I don't worry about it," Savko said.

While Nick Savko & Sons' fleet consists of over 500 pieces of



Savko's RCC operations at the CSX North Baltimore site include: A portable RCC mixing plant; two Columbus Equipment Company ABG pavers and multiple Columbus Equipment Company IR vibratory rollers. Columbus, Ohio-based Scioto Readymix also erected two conventional concrete batch plants onsite, and mobilized a fleet of 20 concrete trucks, to handle the needs for the project.



The Earth Moves With Savko ... a Komatsu PC300LC loading one of 12 bottom-dump tractor trailers currently being utilized.

heavy equipment and trucks, and is well maintained, some pieces receive special attention. Marty Savko has had several old machines, including a Unit cable backhoe fully

"Our dad died at age 89 ... Without him, we wouldn't be where we are today."

Marty Savko; Vice President
Nick Savko & Sons, Inc.

restored to its original condition, as well as the actual bulldozer that Nick Savko purchased in 1948, an Oliver "Cle-Trac" that is still operational and in showroom condition.

"I'm sentimental," he said reflectively. "Our dad died at age 89 and its good sometimes to visit the building on premises that houses our private

"Columbus Equipment has an exceptional service department that takes care of their clients. Their service is the pinnacle of any equipment service you'll find anywhere in the state of Ohio. They don't give up; they stay on top of it. They take care of their product and they take care of their customers."

Marty Savko realizes equipment breakdown is inevitable, no matter the machine, but with Columbus Equipment backing up their machinery, it is not a concern. "When Charlie Wolfe, our

collection of restored trucks, cars, and equipment, and see his backhoe and bulldozer. Without him, we wouldn't be where we are today."