

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Twenty-Eight-Unit Komatsu Grader Fleet Heads To Kwazulu-Natal

Komatsu South Africa has dramatically increased its share in the local grader market following the delivery of 28 GD675-5 motor graders to the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Transport. The fleet represents the biggest single sale of this particular product in southern Africa and one made against stiff competition from several rival manufacturers.

According to Komatsu's General Manager: Sales and Marketing, Mike Helm, a number of key factors contributed to the success – not least Komatsu's ability to tailor products to meet specific customer requirements.

"The department stipulates that a second seat be fitted to all graders to accommodate a driver's assistant or lookout as a safety precaution. Close cooperation between Komatsu's factory in Japan and local technical specialists ensured that we could produce a product that is fully compliant with the department's specifications."

Helm adds that while price was undeniably an important consideration, Komatsu was able to offer a competitive, high specification product with the added benefit of KomCare, a maintenance and service package.

"In our dealings with our customers we identified the need for specialist packages that would deliver exceptional standards of servicing, but at the lowest possible cost. The KomCare specialist maintenance and service package is unique to Komatsu and is tailored to meet individual customer needs.

"While other manufacturers offer outwardly similar plans, they are restricted to specific time periods and other constraints. The KomCare facility is structured into the purchase price and remains in force for as long as the machine is retained and this certainly had a major influence on the department's buying decision," he says.

The sale was finalised late in December 2016, and saw a great deal of activity at Komatsu's Isando-based headquarters through Christmas and into the new year. Pressure was intense as the department was not only keen to replace its existing and aging fleet of graders, but to accommodate as many units as possible before the end-March closure of its financial year.

The delivery of the entire fleet, complete with modifications, began in March and was completed by mid-April to four different locations across the province. The graders' primary task is the creation and maintenance of rural gravel roads. Eight were shipped to Empangeni, a similar number to Pietermaritzburg, 10 to Ladysmith and a further couple to Durban. They will eventually work the length and breadth of KZN, from the border of Mozambique to the north, as far down as the Eastern Cape and inland toward the Free State and Lesotho.

The acquisition gave Komatsu an opportunity to demonstrate the attention to detail it devotes to aftermarket activity, something that was not lost on the Department of Transport's Sizwe Ndlovu who oversaw the specification aspects of the tender.

"One of our requirements is that machines be supplied fully registered, and Komatsu ensured that every vehicle arrived with the correct plates fitted accompanied by the relevant documentation. The process was faultlessly executed, which is not always the case with a delivery of this size."

Another point that impressed was the way in which Komatsu implemented the mandatory addition of a second seat.

“It is rare to see an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) comply with a supplementary item in a way that suggests it is supplied as standard rather than as an extra bolted on before delivery,” says Ndlovu.

Spokesperson for the department Nathi Sukazi fully concurs, and adds that other specified extras, including a centralised lubrication system and road sign carrier, were incorporated in a thoroughly professional manner.

‘In addition, Komatsu supplied the department with a feature over and above specification. The KOMTRAX remote machine monitoring and tracking system was provided as standard and I believe it will prove to be very useful,” says Sukazi.

KOMTRAX is a remote machine monitoring system that offers users the ability to access information on the performance of their equipment. They can download information relevant to the efficient running of their operations, including data on running hours, fuel consumption, operator information and the general condition of machines. This includes warning of imminent service intervals and the need to change out components.

Helm is naturally upbeat about this major fleet sale as the brand will inevitably gain even greater exposure across the province.

“The acceptance of the Komatsu GD675-5 by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport as its grader of choice is a very positive development and as a result we hope to gain additional business, not only for the grader range but construction equipment from provincial municipalities and contractors.”

GD 675-5 UNIQUE FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New 163Kw Tier 3 emissions rated engine• High pressure common rail fuel injection system delivering outstanding fuel efficiency• Equipped with an 8 speed fully automatic transmission with a standard torque converter and lockup clutch• A hydraulic driven cooling fan with reverse function for ease of cleaning of the all new aluminium coolers• An updated and refined hydraulic system offering exceptional load sensing hydraulics ensuring accuracy and precision while grading• Fitted with Komtrax which is Komatsu’s remote equipment and fleet monitoring system.• Comes standard with KomCare – service and maintenance programme

Captions of images:

Image 1: Komatsu Motor Grader comes standard with KomCare-A service and maintenance package.

Image 2: Mike Helm Komatsu South Africa GM Sales & Marketing (left) handing over keys to Lawrence Mtambo Director from DOT Empangeni.

Image 3: Komatsu's Jacques van der Sandt, Operations Manager (KZN) handing over the keys of the Komatsu GD675-5 grader to Bongiwe Ntombela Director Pietermaritzburg (DOT).

Image 4: Fleet of 10 Komatsu Motor Graders handed over to DOT Ladysmith.

Image 5: 28 GD 675-5 motor graders were sold to the KZN Department of Transport.

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