

Automatic Grease Systems 'Never Have to be Retrained'

"Quality and timely service. It's your equipment, it's our reputation" is the working philosophy of FQS Bear Equipment Inc. The company was born out of two separate entities, "Frank's Quality Service," and "Bear Equipment of the Carolina's" which they merged in 2009.

With its home office in Lexington, S.C., the company offers a variety of services including cab air conditioning, fire suppression systems, safety equipment and operator training classes and videos.

FQS Bear also has specialized in the installation of automatic lubrication systems, colloquially known as auto greasing, since 2006 when it first offered Groeneveld automatic lubrication systems to its customers.

"We were already handling our customers' fire suppression systems and cab air conditioning needs and felt that an auto greasing system was a good fit to our line and services," said company president Frank Troglauer. "Almost everything needs to be greased and companies are always looking for ways to reduce their maintenance costs. An automatic greasing system will not only reduce your preventive maintenance costs, but also will extend the life of the machine components, which reduces costly downtime and increases resale values.

"Installation costs will vary depending on type of machine and location, but generally payback on a system is about 18 months," he added. "In addition, we offer Groeneveld grease and if customers use our grease it extends the warranty."

How do These Systems Work?

"There are several types of systems, the twin three system being most commonly used on heavy equipment. The system works by matching the proper injector to each grease point, allowing a timer to engage the pump putting just the right amount of grease to each point," Troglauer explained.

"We have found that once a equipment owner tries one system they will add it to all their equipment. For those who are hesitant to try a system we offer to install one and if after 90 days they are not happy with its performance we will take it back off. After six years we have never taken a system off," Troglauer went on.

Customer satisfaction with the systems is often reflected in testimonials, for example, Laddie Smith, president of Murray Sand Company Inc., Summerville, S.C., wrote that in 2006 his company, a bulk fill material and aggregate hauling trucking company and operator of fill dirt pits, purchased a Caterpillar 330 CL excavator equipped with a medium length stick and a three-and-a-half-yard bucket. FQS Bear subsequently installed a Groeneveld system and at the time of Smith's writing (2011) the excavator, after approximately 9,000 hours in service, had not needed bushing or replacement of a single pin.

Troglauer pointed out further benefits of these systems.

"Equipment owners are of the mindset that if their staff is not manually greasing a machine, they are not inspecting the machine, but the truth is that most machines are not greased as often as they should be and then, when they are greased manually, all grease points will be either over- or under-greased," he said. "Because each time they are manually greased you have to hook a grease gun to the grease point, dirt is pumped into the grease cavity causing wear and premature failure. With the automatic grease systems you are filling the grease cavity with a automatic grease system, so you are keeping that cavity full all the time preventing water and debris from entering the grease cavity. The days of the operator greasing his own machine are gone, and every time you have a personnel change you have to retrain the new person on how to grease each machine. Automatic grease systems never have to be retrained."



FQS Bear Equipment serves its customers fire suppression and automatic lubrication needs representing top manufacturers. Pictured are Vice President of Operations, Melanie Brown; and company Founder and President, Frank Troglauer.



Don Sneller, parts team member, is ready to make another delivery with his pickup truck. The company has more than 25 fully equipped service trucks that are strategically based throughout the southeast.

In addition to selling automated grease system equipment and supplies, FQS Bear Equipment also offers training in the use of the Groeneveld system at the time of installation as well as classes throughout the year held at the customer's work place or at centralized locations. Specialists and engineers from the manufacturer provide written material, demonstrate operation of the pumps and provide information on such topics as troubleshooting and reading error codes.

This training is essential according to Troglauer, because "there are several things that our system will not do. They will not refill themselves and they will not fix themselves, so we



Shannon Troglauer, administrative assistant (R); and Ashley Miller, accounts receivable, help customers with their billing questions and scheduling needs. They strive to give each customer the attention and support that they deserve when calling the office for their heavy equipment component needs.



Vicki Adams, parts team member, stands next to the Groeneveld automatic lubrication system display. One of FQS Bear Equipment customers noted that with the install of the Groeneveld auto lubrication system their machine has approximately 9,000 hours on it, and they have not had to replace a single pin or bushing on the entire machine.

teach our customers how to get the most out of their systems. Our systems have micro processors that store information that can be downloaded so they can tell if and when the system was running low or out of grease, along with a lot of other helpful data, and this can be tracked right down to the date and time of day."

The company finds its training further reduces customers' costs, given customers who have completed the class are able to identify any problem that might arise, saving the time a technician needs to correct it.

As Troglauer noted, "We are a heavy equipment component company and when it comes to protecting your machine against fires do you want a company that just does heavy equipment or a fire protection company where the heavy equipment is 10 percent of their business?"

"When we started this company, we had sixteen hundred dollars as startup capital and worked 10 counties in South Carolina. Now we are doing business in 15 states and we did not get here by doing bad work," he went on. "We work hard every day to earn the right to be the vendor of choice."

(This story also can be found on *Construction Equipment Guide's* Web site at www.constructionequipmentguide.com.) CEG