

Starfish Adds Mauldin's Mid-Sized 1750-C Paver to Fleet

By Jeff Cronin, CEG SENIOR EDITOR

With the equipment world all within walking distance at this year's ConExpo-Con/AGG, Lew Najor went hunting for a new paver.

Najor and his wife, Leigh, own Starfish Inc., a site development firm in Brewton, Ala.

He found what he was looking for at the Calder Brothers Corp. display.

The company showcased its Mauldin 1750-C paver, a mid-size machine powered by an 80 hp (60 kW) John Deere diesel engine that provides a paving width of 16 ft. (5 m).



It turned out that Najor's local Caterpillar dealer, Thompson Tractor, was about to bring on the Mauldin line, so he'd have a local tie to the machine. A deal was made and Starfish became the first contractor in Thompson Tractor's territory to own a 1750-C.

Thompson has officially represented Mauldin since June. Cat produces larger highway class pavers, so the smaller more versatile machines have opened up options for parking lot contractors and municipalities, said salesman Rucker Brown.

Najor had owned a larger paver before. But since his company performs all of the site work, including underground utilities, base and subgrade, there is plenty of downtime for the paver on Starfish's job sites.

The larger machine had become a burden — it required an eight- or nine-man support crew and generally was just too much machine for the work it was doing.

Hiring a paving subcontractor is out of the question, as its jobs are too small to pique anyone's interests.

The 1750-C was delivered to Starfish in July to the future site of a Target Supercenter in Pensacola, Fla.

In addition to delivering the paver to the job site, three Calder Bros. owners, David Calder and Adam and Trevor Thielbar went along to help train the Starfish crew on its operation.

“They spent a whole day out there paving with us,” Najor said. “They worked with our guys on a one-on-one basis.”

“Whenever Mauldin Paving Products signs up a new dealer, we assure the dealer that we will participate in every startup and/or demonstration of a Mauldin product until the dealer tells us they are comfortable doing it without our support,” Trevor Thielbar said. “We felt it was very important that Lew see the kind of support that both Thompson Tractor Co. and Mauldin Paving Products were capable of based on his expectations of meeting with us at ConExpo.”



The learning curve wasn't a tough one, Najor said, and, within 20 minutes, it was set up and ready to work.

The Calder Bros. representatives also completed service training. Both Starfish and Thompson Tractor had technicians at the job site.

“With these people near the machine, we took advantage of some down time between trucks to make sure the service guys understood the machine, how it worked and understood the normal service intervals,” Thielbar said.



Najor said the 1750-C has provided exactly what he's needed on the Target job, which should be finished by the end of the year, well ahead of the March 2009 deadline.

“We jumped on it pretty hard even though we've been fighting off hurricanes,” he said.

Starfish Inc. employs approximately 70 people and is currently working on six projects. It has been in existence for a little more than a year. Najor was previously part owner in his family's company, Advance Construction, for 17 years. CEG

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