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CHANGING THE CURBING GAME

Contractors can now compete with big machines for bigger jobs

Q&A with editor-in-chief, Donna Campbell, and pioneering inventor of the Phoenix Curb Machines, Ed Taylor

Editor's Note: I met Phoenix Curb Machines inventor Ed Taylor at the recent World of Concrete in Las Vegas. Struck by the look and features of the machines—resembling something out of a *Mad Max* or *Batman* movie—I asked Taylor to explain how his newest inventions may forever change the way contractors do their jobs.

Q: The design of the Phoenix 7500 caught my eye. What was your inspiration?

A: We chuckled when we overheard someone say, "That looks like a batmobile!" Actually, my inspiration was from *The Road Warrior* and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* movies, and

same insurance, or a mechanic to tear it down and set it up. It's less than 8-feet wide in its normal pouring configuration, so it arrives to the jobsite ready to rumble.

Q: In the video, the finishers were having a hard time keeping up. How fast does the 7500 move?

A: In that demo, we were pouring around 30 feet a minute, which is as fast or faster than most of the big machines. We can actually pour up to 50 feet per minute when using less technical, shorter molds—like Hollywood curb, V-Gutter, Roll Curb, where you can pour much wetter concrete.



Phoenix 2500



The 2500's tight 27" radius; the 7500 pours 48" radius



Phoenix 7500

that old John Wayne film, *War Wagon*. With the 7500, we are declaring war on poor profits for many contractors. We believe these are game changing machines, giving contractors the ability to make big money in a short time.

Q: Please explain how the 7500 is the culmination of your 40 years in construction.

A: As technology changed and more products and advanced components became available, I was able to make the machines do just what I always wanted. It is the culmination of all my experience, and if I had it years ago, I'd be retired by now (*laughter*).

Q: Let's talk about the features of the 7500. Your Web site demo video (www.phoenixcurbmachines.com) shows how easy the 7500 is to transport, practically driving itself off the truck.

A: Yes, it's less than 10,000 pounds, which means lower transportation costs. You don't need a Class 1 driver, or the

Q: Labor costs are always a concern. How many people are needed to operate the 7500?

A: Basically, just one person can run the machine, chute, add water, regulate all functions of the pour, and stop and start with just a few switches.

Q: One of the really unique features is the tight radius the 7500 can grade and pour on automatic.

A: I'm glad you mentioned the automatic part. That's one of our patents and one of the many features that make it unique. The 7500 can easily grade and pour a monolithic curb up to 24-inches high around a 3-foot radius. Most machines can't do that; they have to come in with another piece of grading equipment to grade around the radius to allow a pour. In a big parking lot, that's another truck, with another piece of equipment, and another operator, which in many cases there is no room for, and the costs go on and on. In situations like a parking lot configuration, it's absolutely mandatory to make

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INFORMATION

For more information about Phoenix Curb Machines, call 530.365.7620, email solutions@phoenixcurbmachines.com, or visit www.phoenixcurbmachines.com.

the tight radius, stay out of the way of a ready-mix truck, and still have room to lift up and back over what you just poured.

Q: Explain the control system.

A: It's very important to control the height and cross slope. The proven ability of the Topcon System 5 has been tested by us for 15 years, and it's a dependable system for our applications. Our propriety control system, designed over the last 30 years, allows the best solution for front and rear steering, tight-radius applications, and backing down string lines.

Q: What drives the machine?

A: An 85 horsepower, Kubota engine.

Q: What are the benefits of the 7500 to a contractor looking to expand operations and bid on the entire job?

A: In a nutshell, the 7500 lets you complete about 95 percent of the project rather than 60 percent or less. It cuts down on having to bring in a secondary crew to do the tie-ins. Many subcontractors who own larger machines tell us they've had to subcontract—in one year, that's close to \$800,000 worth of work the contractor could have completed.

Q: What is the cost of the 7500 and what's the return on investment?

A: At \$155,000, the investment is far less than for the bigger machines. We have a return on investment (ROI) calculator on our Web site and our team—several of them contractors—will help you determine what you can save. Basically, a contractor

working 40 weeks a year on the 7500 could pay for the machine in 1 year.

Q: What kind of projects can the Phoenix 7500 tackle?

A: Anywhere there are curbs and gutters—parking lots, subdivisions, industrial and commercial work, motels, shopping centers—these are places we really shine. The big machines can't play in our sandbox, but we can play in theirs. We can do their mainline work like subdivisions, streets, industrial parks, and more, at a greater profit.

Q: You've also had a lot of interest in a smaller version, the Phoenix 2500. How is it different, besides size?

A: Having designed many of the smaller machines on the market over the last 30 years, we wanted the 2500 to be the most advanced and efficient machine of its size. It has a wider stance, bigger tires, and more advanced electronics. It can pour wider applications, be fitted with the Topcon System 5, and it has the expandable hopper. It can actually pour over formed rebar, negotiates a tight radius, and can pour tack-on curb to asphalt. It's an advanced entry-level machine. Because of its narrow width, under 6 feet depending on the mold, it allows for much more efficient traffic control in crowded metro areas.

Q: It sounds like you've finally created your masterpiece. How does it feel?

A: We have a wonderful team. We're all passionate about helping contractors rise like a Phoenix, bigger and better out of this economy. We really want to help make their lives easier, and more fun. ■

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