

# PIONEER LANDSCAPING MATERIALS

## Arizona company continues to expand product and customer lists with unique offerings



Dave Sawyers,  
Vice President/  
General Manager

Drive the loop highways around the Phoenix metro area and you'll see a massive amount of decorative landscaping rock. Look at the playing surface in the new Arizona Cardinals football stadium and notice a unique blend of turf materials. If you've ever hit out of a bunker at an area golf course, you may find it too to be a product out of the ordinary.

The common factor in all these products is that the need came from area developers looking for materials that stand out from common specifications. In all instances, they worked closely with Pioneer Landscaping Materials' Arizona operations to fulfill their orders.

"In terms of golf course and landscaping products, we're the largest supplier in the state," said Pioneer Landscaping Vice President and General Manager Dave Sawyers, who oversees Arizona operations that include eight quarries and 13 retail locations in the southwestern part of the state. The company also does business in Colorado. "Golf course and landscaping are areas we specialize in, and we've been able to

thrive in a market that has seen many of our competitors come and go."

Other core products include a very long list of materials that include various types and sizes of decorative rock, sand, gravel, soil and soil mixes, river rock, riprap, boulders, flagstone and other landscaping products. Pioneer Landscaping Materials also markets its own custom line of pavers and concrete block, manufactured at its plant in Buckeye, Ariz. Pioneer has 85 trucks in Arizona to deliver materials, or customers can stop in one of its retail locations to pick up what they need.

"Our yards in the Phoenix and Tucson areas are located for quick and convenient access," said Sawyers, who noted that the Arizona operations are strictly geared toward material supply. "While we work with quite a number of small and large construction companies, builders and developers, Pioneer also serves the private individual who may only need a small amount of material. In all instances, we'll work closely with them to find the right product in the right amount to meet their needs."

### Committed to quality

That commitment has not changed since Pioneer Landscaping opened up its Arizona operations in 1984 with a handful of staff. It's grown to about 250 in the state, part of an overall staff of about 550 that make up the company's payroll. Pioneer is guided by owner and President Gary Schnurr. General Manager Joe Kraig oversees Colorado operations.

"One thing that stands is our commitment to customer satisfaction, and that goes from Gary all the way down to the newest employee," Sawyers emphasized. "Sure we have a diverse list of products, but that doesn't do us any good

A Pioneer Landscaping Materials operator uses a Komatsu WA200PZ-6 parallel tool carrier with forks to move flagstone at one of the company's Phoenix-area retail yards.



if we make a promise and can't keep it. When we take an order, whether it's for a single load of mulch for a homeowner or thousands of tons of gravel for a road project, we're serious about meeting the obligation to have it there on time. Pioneer won't settle for anything less."

In order to do that, Pioneer Landscaping Materials relies not only on a dedicated staff, but late-model equipment that's productive, efficient and doesn't cost the company lost time in breakdowns. For nearly 20 years it's turned to Komatsu wheel loaders to service its quarries and materials yards. Recent acquisitions, made with the help of Road Machinery, LLC Account Manager Wade Ritter, include new WA200PZ-6 and WA250PZ-6 parallel tool carrier models.

"Those size machines fit well in our material yards because their size allows for maneuverability in a relatively tight area, and they're good for loading any of our trucks or a customer's, including a pickup," said Sawyers, who noted that Pioneer uses larger Komatsu wheel loaders ranging from WA380s to WA500s in its quarries. "What really makes the loaders stand out is the hydrostatic transmission. It gives us the ability to inch up to a truck without putting stress on the braking system. That makes the brakes last longer and reduces our operating costs.

"The parallel tool carriers also reduce our costs with their versatility," he added. "In addition to loading trucks, we can put forks on for lifting pallets, and we even have specialty tools for lifting boulders. Having one machine that can do multiple tasks is an obvious savings over needing two or three machines to do the same work. In all applications, having an automatic reversible hydraulic fan is a nice feature. The wheel loaders give us power and productivity with low fuel consumption, so our operating costs stay low."

Maintenance Supervisor Tom Dillmore and his staff of mechanics maintain the Komatsu wheel loaders with parts from Road Machinery. Even though Komatsu extended the service intervals, he still does oil and filter changes every 250 hours. "I have no doubt we could do the routine work at Komatsu's



Pioneer Landscaping Materials likes the versatility its Komatsu parallel tool carriers offer. This WA250PZ-6 has a quick coupler for fast attachment changes from its specialty attachment for carrying boulders to a bucket for load-and-carry applications.



recommended hours and the machines would be fine, but in the conditions we're in, I believe it's better to be ahead of that," said Dillmore. "Doing the work is easy because Komatsu designed the loaders for convenient access to the parts. It makes our job easier."

Both Sawyers and Dillmore said they're more than happy with the service Road Machinery supplies as well. "A dealer that backs up its products is important to us," said Sawyers. "Road Machinery and Wade have always been honest to deal with and have quickly taken care of any issue we've had. That reinforces our decision to continue buying Komatsu."

## Poised for growth

While business has slowed due to the economic conditions, Sawyers sees it as an opportunity to put Pioneer Landscaping Materials in position to grow.

"We're looking beyond the current climate and poising ourselves to acquire other locations or build up the locations we have," said Sawyers. "The economic situation is what it is, but we see it in a positive light toward growth in the future." ■



Tom Dillmore,  
Maintenance  
Supervisor

