

Haul roads lead from Rome

Ga. contractor fights rough weather, terrain to build new bypass



Motor Graders
Caterpillar
12M2

Floyd County in northwest Georgia features a little bit of everything the state has to offer: rocky hills, murky swamps and green forests.

While scenic, this variation can make life difficult for construction crews, as Atlanta-based contractor C.W. Matthews is finding out during its portion of the West Rome Bypass project.

C.W. Matthews' leg of the larger bypass—which will ultimately connect U.S. 27 and S.R. 20—covers 4.5 miles through that fluctuating terrain. Building a new road and 10 bridges through this area means moving 2.3 million cu yd of material, some of which has to be hauled from the site. Since the bypass

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itself is brand new and not a rebuild, this meant building brand new haul roads as well.

And if the terrain itself wasn't enough of a problem, the winter of 2012 was a particularly wet one for Georgia. It's not an uncommon phenomenon, but the previous few winters had been relatively dry, so the C.W. Matthews crew was in for a bit of a shock.

"With the large amount of material we're moving—using up to eight off-road trucks at a time—those haul roads are a priority; keeping them clean, keeping the grass off of them and keeping them graded so the trucks can move efficiently," Kevin Eubanks, roadway division manager for C.W. Matthews, told *ROADS & BRIDGES*.

To help keep those haul roads clean and smooth, C.W. Matthews employed a pair of Caterpillar motor graders: the 12H, and the brand-new 12M2. Once it stopped raining, they would let the road

dry for a day or so and then send in the motor grader. "Within a day, they'd have the roads back in shape and they could get back to hauling," he said.

The 12 Series had been the go-to for motor graders throughout Eubanks' tenure and beyond; he saw no reason to change now, pointing to their ability to tackle any job, big or small. The 12M2 revitalizes the series by introducing dual-joystick controls, putting everything immediately in the operator's reach. Eubanks noted that this alone was enough to win over his crew.

"They seemed a little apprehensive at first, especially some of the older guys that have been around a long time. But once they've been on them for a day or two, they love them," he said. "They're not having to take their hands off the wheel to 'play the pianos' all across the column; they can keep their hands on the joystick." They also liked the improved visibility from the cab. **R&B**