

The Adams Equipment team includes (from left) Nick Boyles, Rachel Cruzado, Savannah Conger, Tim Conger, Gregg Fugatt, Zack Williams, Danielle Spiess and Mickey Reed.



GIVING CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY NEED

Georgia Vac-Con dealership uses unique perspective to get the right products in customers' hands

BY **CRAIG MANDLI** | PHOTOS BY **KAYLINN GILSTRAP**

If there's one thing Tim Conger hated about dealing with equipment companies in his previous career, it was the attempts to oversell. In fact, he got so fed up that he made a vow that if he were ever in that position, he'd do it the right way.

Conger lives by that philosophy as the owner of Adams Equipment Co., a supplier of sewer and road maintenance equipment, parts and services in Georgia and the Florida panhandle. Before he was hired at Adams, Conger spent more than two decades as a utility worker for a Georgia municipality, working his way up the ladder from a sewer cleaner to combo truck operator and finally department head in charge of equipment purchases for his department. In that role, he dealt with many manufacturers hoping to sell him equipment — some more pushy than others.

"There were always companies trying to sell us things we didn't really need in municipal work," says Conger. "You have to know what you're selling and be honest with your customers. I just think that's the best way to run a business."



CONTINUED LOYALTY

By the time Conger was hired by company founder Grady Adams in 2002, the dealership was already a long-time Vac-Con dealer, specializing in combination truck sales to Georgia municipalities. In fact, Conger had purchased several Vac-Con rigs from Adams in his previous role as a municipal department head. When Conger took ownership of Adams Equipment in 2009, that loyalty to Vac-Con continued.

"Vac-Con had the best combo truck on the market back

Customer service manager Gregg Fugatt (front) and parts associate Mickey Reed make sure everything is tightened down on a Vac-Con combination truck that just arrived at their shop.



LEFT: Customer service manager Gregg Fugatt (front) and sales associate Nick Boyles work through an error code on the operation panel of a customer's truck. BELOW: Adams Equipment owner Tim Conger with a Vac-Con demo truck outside the company's office in Austell, Georgia.

“VAC-CON HAD THE BEST COMBO TRUCK ON THE MARKET BACK THEN, AND THEY HAVE THE BEST ONE TODAY. THERE IS NO NEED FOR US TO LOOK AT ANY OTHERS. I’VE NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED IT.”

Tim Conger

then, and they have the best one today,” he says. “There is no need for us to look at any others. I’ve never even considered it.”

Conger estimates that 80 percent of the company’s sales are to municipalities, with the remaining to private contractors typically performing municipal work. He says the company prides itself on providing a quality product, but is equally dedicated to providing top-notch customer service after the sale.

“That’s the only way you get repeat customers in this business,” he explains. “I may sell a customer the first piece of equipment, but our customer service sells the second, third and fourth.”

Conger says Vac-Con conducts business the same way. He considers several Vac-Con employees to be friends, and doesn’t think twice about calling on them when he has questions, regardless of the time.

“The people I work with at Vac-Con are great from the top down,” he says. “They always step up to put their best foot forward. I like to think we do the same.”

ALONG FOR THE RIDE

Conger soon learned that, while he was very familiar with combination trucks, there was a big difference between trying to buy one and trying to sell one. Fortunately, Vac-Con was right there to help teach him the ropes.

“It’s just such a different perspective between buying and selling,” he says. “You need to be prepared for every question, and really know the product line backward and forward. The people at Vac-Con stressed the importance of making sure our staff was dedicated and knowledgeable, and I’ve taken that to heart. We strive to hire qualified people all the way down the line.”



Conger frequently takes advantage of Vac-Con’s training programs to make sure his mechanics and sales people are on top of new technology. Not only has Adams Equipment continued to sell Vac-Con’s combination machines, they’ve also sold several hydroexcavation units in recent years.

“Hydroexcavation really took off a few years ago,” he says. “We’ve gone out of our way to make sure our employees know Vac-Con’s hydroexcavation units up and down. The people who have bought them from us have had good experience working with them.”

Conger will continue to push the importance of customer service and product knowledge because, having sat on the other side of the bargaining table, he understands a satisfied customer often turns into a repeat customer.

“We aren’t selling something just to sell something,” he says. “Our people know the equipment, and can recognize the applications. We get them exactly what they need.”