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EMERGENCY SITUATION MODE

Answering the calls for more equipment, more equipment, more equipment.

George Maggiolo, president of Hitachi dealership Formula Equipment in Rock Tavern, N.Y., was in his office working on Sept. 11 when one of his sales reps called to ask how his day was going. After he said that it was going just fine, the sales rep told him--in a somber tone of voice--that some people were having a very bad day.

That's the call that introduced Maggiolo to the concept of Ground Zero.

First, however, Maggiolo called another Manhattan-based sales rep to make sure he was OK. He was, as was a service technician at JFK International Airport. Maggiolo then asked his service manager to check on all field service personnel. Formula Equipment has many customers in New York City, so one of its field service technicians easily could have been near the site of the attacks. Luckily, they weren't.

Soon, customers--Tulley Construction, Safeway Environmental, Gateway Demolition and Mazzocchi Demolition (see photo)--began calling looking for more equipment. Within minutes of the first attack on the World Trade Center, police had come to their jobsites, imploring operators to lend their machines to the rescue effort. They were literally rolling excavators through lower Manhattan to the World Trade Center campus.

"It was like nothing I've every experienced," says Maggiolo of the 16-acre area of destruction. "There are buildings with as little damage as broken windows. There are buildings with beams from the WTC towers stuck in like harpoons. One beam went through a sewer main that was 37 feet under ground.

"Everything was pulverized and twisted beyond recognition."

He spoke to workers on the scene, some of whom are Vietnam War, Desert Storm and even World War II vets. "They say it's like nothing they've ever seen," he reports.

Formula Equipment employees have been working around the clock to service the equipment customers have bought and rented. They've been ordering grapples and shears, and vendors have been bending over backward to make parts and attachments available with very short lead

times. One vendor is working with the dealership to design a shear to cut steel at the clean-up site.