

Love What You Do

A Profile On Heavy Equipment Operator Lucas Degagne



Working in the construction industry is not for everyone, but when you love your job, it shows in everything you do. Heavy Equipment Operator Lucas Degagne is one

such example of someone who has totally changed careers, and ever since then has never looked back.

Lucas grew up in Southern Alberta for most of his childhood. As a teenager he moved with his family to Manitoba and started working for a manufacturing company. There he was employed as a CNC Operator (Computer Numerical Controller) where he did a lot of machining and maintenance. He worked there for a number of years before he decided he wanted to do something totally different.

As a young boy, Lucas grew up on a farm where he was exposed to a lot of Heavy Equipment. He was very inspired by his Dad who was a jack of all trades, and he taught Lucas and his brother all that he knew about operating equipment. Operating was something that Lucas always wanted to do.

Finally, in the spring of 2013, he decided to make a drastic career change. He registered for the Heavy Equipment assessment and orientation with OETIM where he got a passing mark and was accepted into the May Heavy Equipment Operator course.

Lucas was a natural when it came to operating the equipment, and he did exceptionally well on his marks.

Once he graduated, the first job he got as an HEO was at Chabut enterprises. There he worked part time as a Grader operator doing snow removal and the following spring it became a full time job. He worked on the number one highway east towards Kenora. On that project he operated the dozer, packer and loader. He got the opportunity to do a lot of multi tasking which kept him busy all the time. Lucas loves being an HEO because he can be

independent and likes to just get the job done.

“I don’t have a boss looking over my shoulder every day at every moment. That’s what’s great about being a Heavy Equipment Operator...you have a specific job that you’re supposed to be doing so there’s no confusion.”

A few months ago Lucas had been working on the pipeline as an oiler for a company in Virden, Manitoba. He was there for a little over two months operating a skid steer, and excavator. He also got the opportunity to operate graders and half tons, including bulldozers which he very much enjoyed.

Lucas says when he was new to the job site, there were a lot of things that he hadn’t done before. He found that there were many people in the industry that were willing to help him out if he wasn’t sure about something.

“Many of the senior guys that are experienced are quite readily available to help you out when you have questions. You can say ‘hey, can you come here for a minute’ or ‘I’m having trouble doing this, I don’t understand how this goes’...that was really helpful!”

When Lucas worked with the other guys on the project he learned how to keep on grade. He also got to familiarize himself with the finishing freight which is something he always wanted to learn on the grader. Lucas believes that Grading is a dying art, and that there are very few people that are really good at it. He wants to advance himself so that he too will one day become a top operator in his field.

“I worked with a gentleman on a project that was very good at grading. I picked up a lot of tips from him, and he became my mentor.”

In the future, Lucas would like to further himself and keep moving forward until he reaches his goal. He’s looking forward to operating the excavator next, but he says his favourite jobsite to date was working on the pipeline.

Lucas is grateful that he’s chosen a field where he can advance himself, and has finally found something that he loves to do.