

Western Equipment Solutions

Headquartered in Utah, this equipment supplier's presence in Canada is vast with clients ranging from Vancouver to Fort McMurray to Saskatoon

By Lisa Kopochinski

With more than 70 years of experience in the foundation drilling industry, Western Equipment Solutions continues its strong presence across both the U.S. and Canada with an extensive line of equipment.

Founded in January 2017 by Stephen Wilson, John Wilson and Craig Berninger, the company offers one of the most complete lines of foundation/ground engineering equipment and tooling available in the marketplace.

The company's main office in Salt Lake City, Utah sits on five acres of land with 20,000 square feet of warehouse space and 2,000 square feet of office space. North of the border, Western Equipment Solution's Canadian office is situated in Nisku, Alta., approximately 29 kilometres south of Edmonton. This site features approximately 1,500 square feet of warehouse and 1,000 square feet of office space and plenty of additional outside storage.

Within its two offices, there are 17 employees across four departments: administration, sales and marketing, service and spare parts.

"Although we are in a very technical world, my team and I strongly believe that there is nothing more important than being face-to-face with our clients. Customer service is our main priority," said Steve Wilson, Western Equipment Solutions' general manager and owner. "Along with my two sons – John and Matt – and also Craig Berninger, the company is continuing to grow."

Western Equipment Solutions carries a number of different lines of equipment, including:

- Soilmec, a leader in jet grouting, soil-mixing, continuous flight auger, displacement piles, large diameter shafts, micropiles, anchors, tiebacks, limited access, low headroom, diaphragm wall and many other technologies for improvement of ground around and for structures of all types.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WESTERN EQUIPMENT SOLUTIONS



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- Steve Wilson, Western Equipment Solutions

- TEI Rock Drills, a manufacturer of high-performance excavator drill attachments, drill components and limited access rock drill rigs. Western Equipment Solutions’ unique drilling platform incorporates innovative TEI drilling technology with the construction industry’s most rugged soil and rock drilling components.
- Leffer, a German company that manufactures oscillators, rotators, segmental casing, grabs, chisels and other tools to perform specific technologies.
- Wilson Drill Tools, which offers specialty large and small diameter tooling equipment, as well as high-end hydraulic oils and grease. WDT also has a comprehensive inventory of ground improvement equipment, tools and equipment available for rent.
- Junttan (piling rigs) – Western Equipment Solution’s territory for Junttan is the Western U.S. only. However, the company does offer rental rigs, hammers and power packs.

“Our client base depends on the product line,” said Wilson. “With Soilmec, we have an exclusive territory in the Rocky Mountains and Western Canada. TEI Rock Drills has agreed for us to represent them over all of the Western United States and Western Canada. And, for the Junttan line, we are an agent for the Western U.S. We have branded tools as Western Drill Tools and are able to sell in all regions of North America.”

Canadian presence

Western Equipment Solution’s presence in Canada is vast, with clients ranging from Vancouver to Fort McMurray to Saskatoon.

“We have a presence in every major city in Western Canada, and most of the small towns, too,” said Wilson. “Whether it is foundations for the new Rogers Place, a new power line, condos or even a Home Depot, you can find our equipment working to help build the foundation.”

The company has been integral in bringing new technologies into Western Canada. One prime example is continuous flight augers (CFA).

“For about 20 years now, our team has supported the development of CFA, giving ‘lunch and learn’ seminars and bringing in operational experts to work with our clients to ‘fine-tune’ their operators’ skills,” said Wilson. “We believe training and education are the keys of development for our customers’ staff.”

Once CFA benefits were realized, the technology grew in popularity until today, where more than 50 per cent of foundation construction is done with CFA. Maintenance and drilling seminars and training sessions are continuously being planned either locally or at the factories in Italy, Colorado and Germany.

“The Soilmec Flight (SF) line has dedicated CFA units with the potential to revolutionize the technique,” said Wilson. “We have also been on the forefront of oscillators and segmental casing work with the Leffer line, as well as limited access work with our TEI machines.”

When asked which Canadian projects the company has provided equipment for, the list is seemingly endless and includes many “big box” stores and industrial plants like Voyager, Suncor, Syncrude, Kerl Lake, as well as numerous power line projects, including the latest

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WFMAC line, Walterdale Bridge, Grierson Hill Light Rail project and airport expansions at every major airport in Western Canada.

“Our equipment has been a major contributor to infrastructure development on construction projects like the Calgary Ring Road and Anthony Henday Drive loop in Edmonton,” said Wilson. “Bridges throughout Western Canada have seen drilled shafts, anchors, micropiles, jet grouting, soil-mixing and other technologies performed using equipment sold and serviced by our company.”

Safety and education

When it comes to safety initiatives, Western Equipment Solutions is as diligent in this area as it is in every other aspect of its operation.

“Education is key,” said Wilson. “We have never had a ‘lost time’ accident in the history of our company. We strive to demonstrate safe practices in all aspects of our work. We buy the proper devices for lifting and ensure all our employees are properly trained to operate any of our equipment. We hold seminars where more than one of the speakers presents a job case history about an accident or how to remain safe and accident-free. This year, during our Phoenix Golf Seminar, we even brought an attorney to consult with our clients on how to handle accidents pre- and post-incident.”

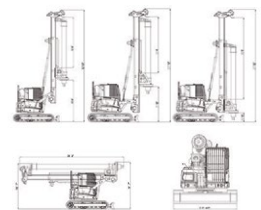
What's next?

As for what the next few years hold, Wilson says the company is growing at an exponential rate, with a plan that includes upgrades to its Canadian operations.

“Innovation is the key to success. We will continue to hire and train the best people to represent our products and services with pride and energy while focusing on customer service,” said Wilson. “We plan to look for opportunities with additional/complementary products and services. Our tool making operation is simple, but very effective. We call it distributed manufacturing. We design tools and enlist fabricators in various regions to manufacture the tools. The very well-designed tools now have a transportation advantage of being closer to the market.”

With its impressive longevity, when asked what the secret of Western Equipment’s success is, Wilson replies that there really is no secret.

“Essentially, we do our best to help our clients do a better job and make more money,” said Wilson. “Help your clients even when you cannot provide the correct tool or equipment and give them good, solid, technical advice. We believe that problems are opportunities in disguise. Think first and try not to waste anyone’s time.” 🍷



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