

# OPE

B U S I N E S S

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## 2021 OPEB Movers & Shakers

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Welcoming our inaugural class of OPE industry leaders!



DENNIS BRAZIER



JASON HUBER



DAVE JOHNSON



JON MATSON



JORDAN REHA



ADAM SMITH

2021

# OPE BUSINESS MOVERS & SHAKERS

Welcome to this year's class of industry leaders making a difference in the OPE market.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce our inaugural class of OPE Business Movers & Shakers. The OPEB Movers & Shakers awards program recognizes leaders who have shown the vision and leadership to move the industry forward in the past year.

Nominees could be from any company, group or organization that does business in the OPE industry – including manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, dealers or others. The primary requisites: They haven't been afraid to take chances, they've embraced the many challenges facing the industry, and they have taken the opportunity to rethink the way they do business.

Drum roll, please – our 2021 Movers & Shakers are:

- **Dennis Brazier**, CEO/Owner, Altoz
- **Jason Huber**, Owner, Central Equipment
- **Dave Johnson**, OEM Solutions and Consulting, Constellation Dealership Software (Ideal Computer Systems)
- **Jon Matson**, Senior Director of Sales - North America, Briggs & Stratton
- **Jordan Reha**, District Sales Manager, Arrowhead Engineered Products/Stens
- **Adam Smith**, Territory Manager, Power Tool Company

In seeking nominations from across the OPE industry, we asked such questions as: How does the nominee demonstrate strong leadership skills? How have their efforts advanced their own company as well as the industry? What about OPE's next generation – do they proactively seek them out and mentor them? What specifically sets them apart from others in our industry? On the pages that follow, you'll find their answers to these questions and others. Enjoy!



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## DENNIS BRAZIER

CEO/Owner, Altoz



For Dennis Brazier, CEO and owner of Altoz, his company's culture is one of its most important characteristics.

"We care deeply about all of our employees. It's been a lifelong goal to build a company, and what that company is means a lot to my wife and I. The company culture means a lot and is more important than the bottom line. We are, of course, a very profitable company, but we've found that we can do both."

He initially brought his philosophy to corporate parent Central Boiler Companies when he started that business in 1984, and its migration to Altoz has been a natural transition. "The drive to do things is more than just profit – a passion to make a difference, to please the customer by making their lives better, styling. Our whole company is filled with people who want to do this. That same mentality holds true across all our departments and personnel."

### Pride and safety

Brazier's passion with lawn mowers and mowing technology began when he was a young man: "I had started Central Boiler but I was looking for another way to grow the company, and lawn mowers seemed like a perfect fit. I loved designing things and I loved the racing culture. At the time, the lawn mower industry was stagnant. We wanted to build something the industry had not seen, that people who have a passion for cutting grass would want – that's how Altoz came to be."

Altoz began producing wheeled zero-turns in 2013; in 2016, it introduced the first zero-turn mower with tracks, the TRX. "One reason we went down the tracked-machine path is because they can cut areas wheeled mowers cannot and are considerably safer. Six months ago, we introduced our TSX, the industry's first tracked stand-on mower, which brings a whole other level of safety and productivity. So, the OPE industry now has an excellent choice for a safer, more efficient way to mow compared to traditional equipment."

"Most companies were just producing functional machines," he continues. "When we came along, we opened eyes with what we could do with style, quality and functionality. We strive for differentiation and the highest quality in everything we do. We have transformed the industry."

### Stepping it up

As with most companies, the past 12 months have brought supply-chain issues. "The supply chain has been a real challenge this year," he says. "It challenges the purchasing people and planners, because delivery schedules are not being met, causing them to have to switch gears. But to this point we've not had to stop production due to any of these issues. Nor do we have excessive unfinished inventory. It helps that we have established very good relationships with our suppliers."

A related challenge, says Brazier, has been the result of introducing new models: "It adds to the workload – we have had to hire a lot of people to keep up with demand. Finding qualified employees is always key. We've been fortunate in that regard and we try to place employees in areas that complement their strengths. This is one of the reasons why we have such good employee-retention rates."

Meanwhile, Brazier and Altoz are also looking to the future workforce: how best to intrigue the workers of tomorrow about the OPE industry?

"This year, we really stepped it up by starting job shadowing and similar programs," he says. "When we hired interns in for the summer, we wanted to see what jobs they saw themselves in for the future. We let them shadow the positions they wanted, opening up their minds as to what might be available to them."

In addition, he says, schools will bring classes in to tour the Altoz factory, and the company donates equipment and supplies to local schools for use in industrial-arts classes.

### Positioning for innovation

Moving forward, Brazier is optimistic for the future of the OPE market. He believes that the industry will demand new products that further improve efficiency and productivity. To meet those demands, he's positioning Altoz to continue designing, developing and bringing innovative products to the market.

"We've achieved year-over-year growth since we started. A lot of people stick with something they know because it's safe [but] we've made great gains being innovative and different. We have a new, phenomenal product coming out in 2022 – stay tuned. We're working on shaking up the industry." **OPEB**