

POWER PROFILE

Customer: America Free Zone

Location:

Heredia, Costa Rica

Customer Business Issue:

Standby power

Solution:

Two Cat® 1500 kW 3512 diesel generator sets
Three Cat 1000 kW C32 diesel generator sets
Three Cat 750 kW C27 diesel generator sets
Two Cat 600 kW 3412 diesel generator sets
Two Cat 500 kW C15 diesel generator sets
Two Cat 300 kW 3406 diesel generator sets
One Olympian™ GEP150 diesel generator set
One Olympian GEH220 diesel generator set

Cat® Dealer:

MATRA



Established in 1999, America Free Zone (AFZ) is a group of fully equipped, technologically advanced buildings available for companies to rent on 75 acres (30 hectares) of land.

POWER NEED

Established in 1999, America Free Zone (AFZ) is a business project developed in Costa Rica, which is owned by the Víquez family. The organization is committed to providing each client with excellent services they have come to expect throughout the years.

AFZ is considered a business city, which is composed of several buildings that are fully equipped with the latest technology. Each facility includes an auxiliary power source, highly efficient structural and mechanical systems, elevators and air conditioning systems. AFZ is home to corporations that may or may not be affiliated with the free zone regime. Those who are can enjoy tax privileges. Through this set location, companies can also rent nearly 75 acres (30 hectares) of land. Unlike the eight other active zones in Costa Rica, AFZ is a top ranked zone, as dictated by the standards of its market segment, infrastructure and top business teams.

Currently there are 16 companies in AFZ including Hewlett-Packard, Intel, IBM, Dell and many others, which only covers a little more than 40 percent of the total area available. This operational concept provides a range of complementary facilities to its customers such as a gym, a food court, banks, a medical center and a convenience store.

To keep buildings fully operational for their customers at all times, it is important to ensure that there will always be electricity available to power lights, air conditioning units, computers and technical areas. And since AFZ prides itself on having the most superior technology available in its buildings, the company requires advanced backup power units to meet this claim.

Although the Costa Rican power grid is 98 percent stable, AFZ wanted to guarantee that their buildings would be protected 100 percent of the time. So when AMCO Construction, a private company and an AFZ strategic ally, began working on the business center plans in 2000, standby power was a concern. "America Free Zone set a goal for creating highly sustainable, sophisticated building operations,

so we knew we needed to outfit the buildings with a reliable backup power supply in case of emergencies," said Eladio Bolaños, AMCO general manager.

SOLUTION

Bolaños began to analyze Cat generator sets to use for standby within AFZ buildings. In the past, AMCO had great experiences using Cat machines and generators and had a solid existing relationship with local Cat dealer MATRA. "Many brands come into Costa Rica, sell generator sets for a few years and then leave," explained Bolaños. "Caterpillar is not like that – the peace of mind in knowing that the brand and local dealer support will always be there is invaluable."

Since 1951, MATRA has been working to strengthen the infrastructure within Costa Rica by offering new and used equipment, parts and full service support. With seven different branches throughout the country, the company does not merely just sell machines; its highly trained staff is behind every sale to provide full service, technical support and field visits.

Since 2006, 14 Cat and two Olympian diesel generator sets have been installed. The units are operating in redundancy to ensure a stable power flow at all times. Because Costa Rica receives heavy amounts of rain, MATRA designed special enclosures for the units that are located on the exterior perimeters of the buildings in 2012. These enclosures resist rust and corrosion from the elements. Since the generator sets are in plain view to the public, AFZ makes sure they are kept clean and painted frequently so their grounds always look well maintained.

"It makes it much easier to sell a building having backup power included up front, especially when we tell our customers that we use Cat generator sets," said Carlos Víquez, president of AFZ. "It gives our customers confidence, knowing that they can rely on the product. We simply cannot afford to have low quality products for our customers."

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RESULTS

To service the 16 generator sets installed within the business center, AFZ employs two onsite, MATRA-trained technicians to conduct basic maintenance on the generator sets.

The company also has a Customer Support Agreement (CSA) with MATRA that includes a monthly visit to perform routine checkups and services like scheduled oil samplings that help keep the units working at optimal conditions.

"When you buy a Cat product, it isn't just the equipment you receive," said Bolaños. "You acquire full dealer support, unmatched quality and part availability."

Viquez understands that purchasing a Cat product is an investment. "I know that the Caterpillar brand is not the cheapest, but it is an investment in a well-known brand worldwide," said Viquez. "In the end, it's not a matter of cost. It's the excellent service and preventative maintenance that MATRA provides that gives me reassurance, knowing that our generator sets will power up."

AFZ analyzes the service contract every five years upon renewal and has always renewed. "With the level of important customers we have in our free zone, we need to give them the best service available at all times," said Viquez.

Construction on additional buildings in AFZ has already begun, and Cat generator sets are currently installed. Even with these new buildings there is still a great deal of room to expand within the property, and AFZ plans on putting in a Cat generator set with each new build.

"It's really a win-win situation for us and Cat," said Viquez. "Our customers receive sophisticated equipment, superior technology and backup power. Cat and MATRA receive repeat business with our expansions and service contract renewals. We are very pleased with the Caterpillar brand and we are confident that we can always rely on our local Cat dealer."

For more information, please visit cat.com/powergeneration



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