



SKYLIFT

Enhancing Safety and Efficiency With the Skylift ML 53 Material Handling Machine

City of Oberlin boosts productivity with a best-in-class material handler.



When it came time to purchase a new easement machine, the City of Oberlin, Ohio, turned to Skylift for equipment that meets its unique needs. The small municipality chose Skylift's [ML 53](#) material handling machine, which features a vertical reach of over 50 feet, a 1,000-lb. material handling jib, and an articulated telescopic boom and bucket.

THE CUSTOMER

With a population of roughly 8,600, Oberlin is a municipality located in Lorain County, Ohio. Its electric department includes an electric distribution division staff of six linemen who are all journeymen.

“We are a little unique since we’re small,” said Guy Greszler, Oberlin distribution superintendent. “We do not have any apprentices. We don’t have to hold anyone’s hand; everyone is trained on everything.”

THE CHALLENGE

Within the city, the majority of electric lines are reachable from the roadway. New developments contain underground lines. However, the department does service a more rural part of town with older poles that are difficult to access.

During any service, including transformer replacement, crews had to manually climb poles with hooks, rope and tackle. Not only was it challenging, but it also created a safety concern, according to Greszler.

“There are transformers throughout the lots — and because it’s a residential area, the process was disruptive,” he said. “Prior to the purchase, we had been of the mindset to get primary wire underground. It doesn’t look like that will take place now, so it’s even more important that we have the ML 53.”





THE SOLUTION

When comparing machines, Oberlin staff considered Skylift's [MD 6000](#) digger derrick, as well as the ML 53, in addition to options from other manufacturers.

"Having been in the business for 35 years, I knew the other players in the market," Greszler said. "So I did online research, but once we visited Skylift's facility, it was apparent that nobody would measure up. Being able to see the manufacturing process from start to finish did it for us."

While he considered the digger derrick, in the end Greszler decided that Oberlin would use a bucket more often, resulting in the choice of the ML 53 material handling machine.

"Even with the MD 6000 having the buckets, the ease of the articulating boom is what made us choose the ML 53," he said. "Articulating with the material handler is so much better."

Training ended up being minimal since Oberlin's other trucks also use an articulating boom.

"There was little explanation needed for getting used to that," Greszler said. "We really just needed to know the drive system and setup. Then we could very easily operate with confidence."

THE RESULTS

Since purchasing the Skylift ML 53 material handler, Oberlin's crews are operating faster, safer, and with fewer people.

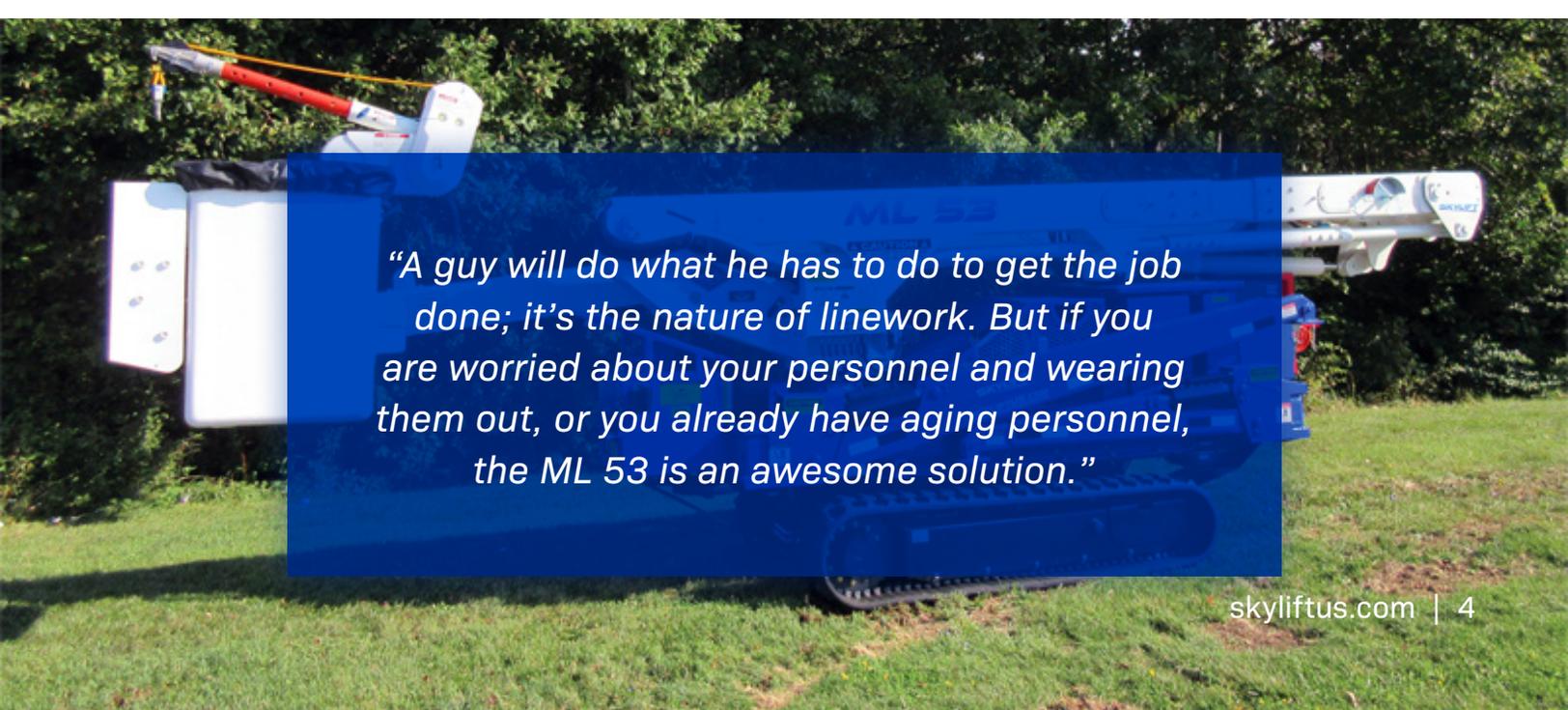
"To change a transformer, we used to need someone to climb the pole, put a transformer gin on the pole, have rope and tackle. We needed people on the ground to lift the 500-lb. transformer up and down," Greszler said. "A guy will do what he has to do to get the job done; it's the nature of linework. But if you are worried about your personnel and wearing them out, or you already have aging personnel, the ML 53 is an awesome solution."

The material handling machine not only provided a safer option for workers, but it also enhanced productivity significantly, according to Greszler, who noted that the machine is [durable and user-friendly](#).

In addition to its use in the city, the ML 53 likely will be used in surrounding communities as well, since Oberlin is a member of [AMP Ohio](#) (American Municipal Power).

"There are a handful of others near us, like Amherst, South Amherst and Grafton," Greszler said. "When we come across things we can't handle or they discover things they can't handle, we support one another. So this machine will also potentially help other surrounding communities.

"This is a very well-built machine," he added. "It's something a small community like Oberlin is going to use. We'll probably buy three bucket trucks in the time we're still operating this machine."



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