

Arlington overhauls its construction equipment fleet

*By Melissa Bohan
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Over the past two years, Arlington National Cemetery has been actively replacing its older construction equipment with new and less turf damaging equipment such as a new excavator, dirt transfer vehicles, new backhoes, smaller tractors and various turf conditioning attachments. The goal is to provide safe equipment that is not only easier to operate and maintain, but is more efficient and effective for Arlington's mission.

Arlington has about 66 pieces of construction equipment and almost half is now new.



Arlington employees get on-site training on the new backhoes that arrived at the cemetery this spring. *Photo by Warren Speight*

“This is the largest overhaul of equipment I’ve seen in my nearly 10 years of working here. We have turned in outdated equipment and have replaced it with newer, better performing and more flexible equipment. We are re-investing in the cemetery and it’s already paying dividends as we use this equipment to improve day-to-day operations and save energy. For example, our dirt reconditioning machine allows us to finely sift our fill dirt with far less debris and this is reducing the amount of ground sinkage we used to see when we filled new gravesites,” said Warren Speight, ANC’s fleet and equipment manager.

Employees are also getting specialized training to increase their skills and proficiency. Nine employees have completed operators training through a vendor-provided program in Illinois, and equipment training experts have provided on-site training to many more cemetery operators.

Other equipment investments include an upgraded fueling station, a renovated wash rack system for vehicles and equipment, and four new electric charging stations for the cemetery’s expanding electric vehicle fleet.