

What's Happening in Masonry

by: Gary Porter



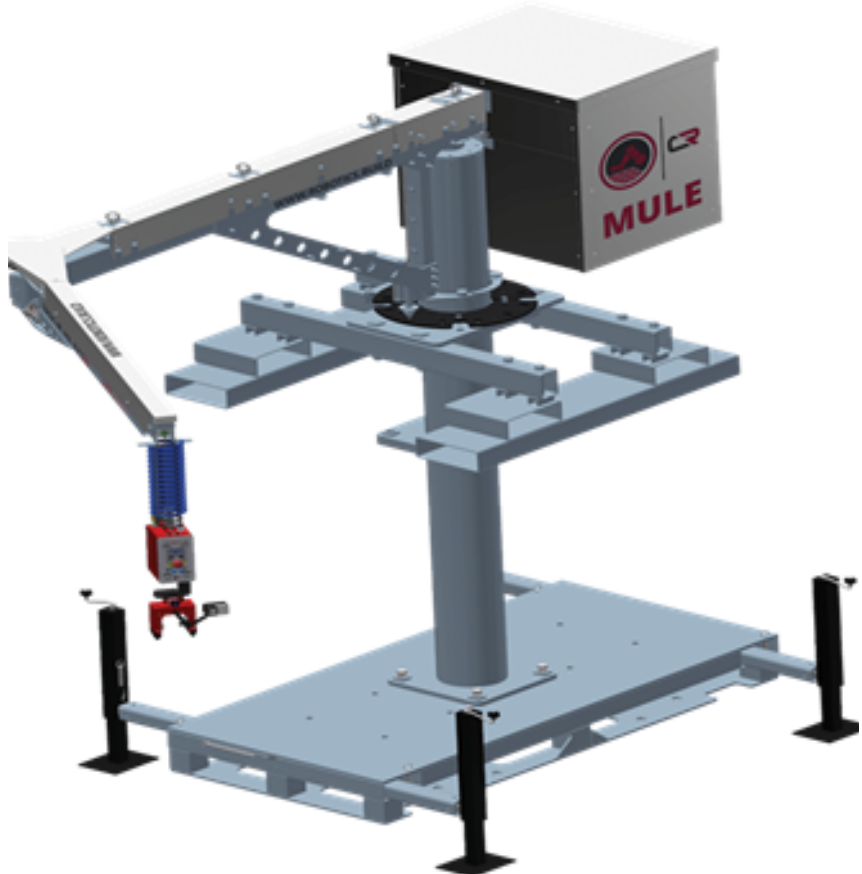
The Mule

The Masonry Advisory Council is known for promoting the use of masonry. Here is an example of some new technology that is promoting the use of masonry and more.

There is a company out there that can be credited with a tool that can save the mason's back.

That company is called Construction Robotics and the tool they have is the MULE. MULE stands for Material Unit Lift Enhancer. This tool sits on the scaffold or a base unit on the ground and can assist the mason by making the concrete blocks they are laying "weightless" as he lays them. The tool has a gripper that is air actuated and can lift to 135 lbs. Over the course of a typical day a mason would lift between 6,000 -7,000 lbs. of concrete block. With the MULE he will be lifting next to nothing.

The MULE costs \$70,000.00 and rents for about \$6,000.00/month. One back injury with workman's compensation, could easily escalate into over a hundred thousand dollars. With a shortage of new masons into this trade and many nearing retirement soon, the MULE could be the answer to helping solve this issue by encouraging a new generation of masons that will not have to lift all those heavy concrete block.



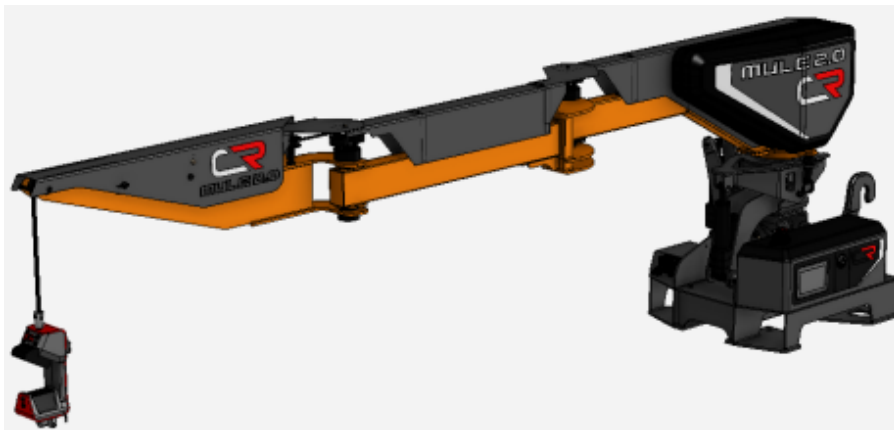
What's Happening in Masonry



The Mule (cont.)

So, is this really the future? Is this tool really that great?

Construction Robotics is partnering with JLG, a company that makes boom lifts and telehandlers to make the next generation of MULEs. A prototype of this new MULE, the MZ100 has been exhibited at CON EXPO in February. This tool is like the existing MULE 135, but is a little lighter, will be lifting 100lbs, battery powered and have a new gripper to lift with. This tool should be available in early 2021.



Several masonry projects are either finishing or in progress using concrete block that are 32" long. Laying one of these 32" concrete block is like laying two blocks at once. These blocks have been ASTM certified and meet all the requirements of typical sized concrete block that are typically 16" long.

The MULE is the right tool for lifting these heavy blocks, making them weightless and assisting the mason to lay them. Using the 32" concrete block and a MULE, the amount of square footage installed per day is almost doubled in most cases. The 32" block is readily available and effective as an alternative to waiting for precast walls.

This would be a good way to promote more masonry!

You can see pictures and videos of the MULE at: <https://www.robotics.build.com>