

# The new pick-ups:

## offices *on-the-go*

by Arthur Flax

■ Landscape managers shopping for new vehicles in 1995 will be pleased to find that truck manufacturers have responded to their needs with bigger, more powerful models, equipped with interior features that can turn their vehicles into mobile offices.

For example, John Kelley of Chevrolet says, "As a new feature, we have an (optional) pivoting writing desk in the center console of full-size pick-ups. Also, as standard equipment, we have a couple of 12-volt outlets for computers and cellular phones, among other things. Those were needs expressed by our commercial customers, and we addressed them."

Chrysler and Ford pick-ups offer similar interior features suited for landscape managers.

Among new trucks for 1995:

Chevrolet has a large selection of new models and improvements. GMC offers similar new models.

The all-new Chevrolet Blazer Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) is of interest to contractors who need personal transportation in addition to a work vehicle. Available in two- and four-door models with rear- or

four-wheel drive, the new Blazer has exceptional cargo capacity.

Driver's-side airbags are now standard on virtually all light truck models, with the exception of certain extra-heavy duty versions. Other safety features include standard four-wheel antilock brakes on many models. S-Series trucks also have daytime running lamps to make the trucks more visible.

The full-size K-Blazer SUV has been

renamed Tahoe and there is a new four-door version.

Ford has introduced a new diesel drivetrain that is of great interest to landscapers who typically haul heavy loads of soil or rock. You can now order F-250, F-350 and F-Super Duty pick-ups (or Econoline E-350 and Super Van models) with Ford's 7.3-liter direct injection Power Stroke turbo diesel, mated to an automatic trans-



Dodge Ram 3500 4x4



Mazda B-Series truck for 1995

mission. Previously, only a manual transmission was available for the 210 hp engine, introduced last year.

The Ford Ranger compact pick-up also gets a standard driver's airbag. A passenger airbag is optional. Four-wheel, antilock disc brakes are standard on Ranger models with the 4.0 liter V-6 engine.

All Ford light trucks have a driver's air bag as standard equipment and are covered by 24-hour roadside assistance.

Dodge has made a Club Cab available for its popular Ram pick-up, introduced in 1994. The Club Cab's interior adds 20 inches in length to the standard Ram cab, accommodating six passengers with a full rear bench seat.

The Ram Van gets a driver's airbag and optional four-wheel antilock brakes on the commercial version.

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Toyota's T100 is offered with an extended cab and more powerful engine than ever. The mid-size truck gets a 3.4 liter V-6 that boasts 190 hp, up 40 hp from 1994. A 150 hp, 2.7 liter four-cylinder engine is also available with a new four-speed automatic transmission.

Nissan pick-up trucks get new graphics (XE models) and a better integrated center high-mounted stop lamp on the back of the cab. Rear antilock brakes are now standard on all two-wheel drive pick-ups, and a limited slip differential is standard on the four-wheel drive SE V-6 pick-up, which also gets bigger tires.

Mazda's 1995 B-Series pick-ups get a driver's side airbag, a redesigned instrument panel and a more responsive 2.3 liter four-cylinder base engine with 112 hp, up from 98 hp.

**Popular stuff**—Truck manufacturers says the most popular pick-ups for landscapers are larger ¾-ton models like the Dodge Ram 2500, the Chevrolet C/K 2500 and the Ford F-250. A ¾-ton model can typically carry payloads of 3,000 lbs.

Large Chevrolet C/K 3500, Dodge Ram 3500 and Ford Super-Duty pick-ups are best if you typically carry topsoil, stone or other heavy loads. They can carry up to 5,000 lbs.

Compact pick-ups are often used for towing equipment of up to 3,500 lbs.

Dodge Dakota and Toyota T100 intermediate-sized pick-ups and the so-called ½-ton full-sized pick-ups, including the Dodge Ram 1500, Chevrolet C/K 1500 and Ford F-150, are suited for businesses that need a larger bed (eight feet) for equipment and a vehicle to do towing or light snow plowing.

**Incentives available**—Among incentives currently available, Chevrolet offers a choice of \$300 cash allowance on most light truck models; pick-up truck toolboxes or van storage bins from Adrian Steel or a free three-year/36,000-mile maintenance



Chevy's new 2500 4x4

plan (including frequent oil changes). Certain vehicles are excluded.

Ford offers incentives, as needed, to control its inventory of vehicles.

Dodge offers a \$500 incentive to Farm

used in businesses such as landscaping.

Dealers advise you to identify yourself as a business customer and ask for special rebates available only to businesses. All dealers can offer business rebates, but dealers that specialize in business customers are more likely to be aware of them.

Chevrolet, for example, has a select group of 500 "Commercial/Specialty Vehicle" dealers specially trained and equipped to sell and service small business customers. Ford's "Mainstreet U.S.A." dealers, with 1,100 outlets, can offer similar specialized service to landscapers.

**Prices up**—Incentives aside, truck prices have risen two to three percent on new domestic 1995 models. Prices can be compared with the following for regular, mid-size and compact pick-ups:

- Dodge Ram Club Cab 2500 (155-inch wheelbase)..... \$19,722
- Toyota T100 (with 3.4 liter V-6).....\$14,498
- Nissan Standard (compact pickup) .....\$9,929

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Mazda B-Series interior

Bureau members on select Ram and Dakota pick-ups and Ram vans.

Japanese manufacturers typically offer their dealers incentives to sell slow-moving light truck models. Also, Isuzu has traditionally provided dealers with substantial incentives to encourage the sales of vehicles



Nissan 4x2 XE



Ford 250 Series