

Versatile equipment helps plow in profit

John Gerosa, president of ProLawn, Inc., Elmgrove, WI, has been profiting from snow removal since 1990.

A lawn care professional for 25 years, Gerosa found he could use existing equipment to plow in some extra cash from snow removal.

“Since we were using Grasshopper zero radius turn mowers, in 1990 we put a new snowthrower on a five year-old 1985 model Grasshopper and it was a perfect fit, mechanically and operationally,” says Gerosa. That kind of year-round versatility is the answer.

Gerosa uses the models 721, 721D and 720K to remove snow on sidewalks. All are equipped for year-round operations with interchangeable attachments. Each unit uses a Combo Mulching Deck which can quickly reconfigure for side-dis-



Grasshopper units have heated cabs that enable crews to stay on the job even in the most severe weather conditions.

charge, collection or mulching during the spring, summer and fall and for winter operations, each unit's Quick-D-Tatch Mounting System allows the operator to easily switch attachments to the 48-inch Snowthrower or Rotary Broom.

The team at Greenlawn Landscaping Maintenance of Farmington Hills, MI, uses four Grasshopper Model 721D diesel units, all equipped with 60-inch Combo Mulching Decks which are interchangeable with three 48-inch Grasshopper Snowthrowers and four 48-inch dozer blades.

Each unit is also equipped with heated cabs that enable the crews to stay in operation even in the most severe weather conditions.

“We handle 22 apartment complexes and several other commercial properties on a year-round

contract basis," says Brian Fraser, owner of Greenlawn. "When it snows, we have about eight hours to have it completely cleared. Without our zero-radius units, we wouldn't be able to pull it off. They give us the maneuverability and snow-clearing power to stay on schedule."

Fraser teams up the Grasshoppers with nine or 10 trucks with plows and about 30 men with shovels.

"We have rigged a calcium chloride spreader on a couple of the Grasshopper units and that allows the operator to clear the snow and drop deicer as he goes," explains Fraser. "That has worked out amazingly well and saves a lot of time. It's safer too; there is no chance for ice to form after the majority of the snow has been moved. Zero-radius units and shovel crews is very efficient." •

—by Sharon Connors

Are you ready for winter?

Western Products advises contractors go through this checklist to make sure their plow is ready for the winter time challenge:

Blade Assembly

- If disc shoes are being used, adjust shoe to attain a 1/8-inch to 1/4-inch air gap between road surface and cutting edge.
- Inspect the cutting edge and tighten carriage bolts. If material is unevenly worn, remove carriage bolts and reverse cutting edge end for end.
- Tighten trip springs until coils just begin to separate. Over tightening will damage the spring.
- If blade is equipped with shock absorber (pro plow), detach shock at blade and manually extend and collapse shock assembly. If shock easily collapses, assembly should be replaced.
- Inspect all welds and material for cracks and yielding. Reweld if necessary.

A-Frame, Quadrant & Lift Frame

- Inspect pivot bolt at the A-frame to quadrant connection. Bolt should be tight but allow the components to swing freely.
- Check to see if angle stops on quadrant are making contact when plow is fully angled in both directions. Rebuild angle stops with extra material if contact is not being made.
- Lubricate all the pivot points. This will reduce wear and extend the life of the components.
- Check the lift chain bolt on the A-frame for tightness. Replace bolt if bent or cracked. Replace the lift chain if wear is apparent.
- Thoroughly check all fasteners for tightness and wear.
- Inspect all welds and materials for cracks and yielding. Repair or replace if necessary.

Hydraulics

- Drain, flush and add new oil in the hydraulic system. Recommend (ATF) Dextron III. *Helpful Hint: To remove all hydraulic fluid, position blade to full angle right and collapse lift ram. Drain oil out of reservoir by removing drain plug. Reinstall drain plug and refill reservoir with fresh hydraulic fluid. Disconnect left cylinder hose*

and direct to drain pan. Power angle left to remove oil from left cylinder. Reconnect hose and top off reservoir with hydraulic fluid.

- Check lift ram and angle ram packing nuts for tightness. Packing nuts are to be adjusted 1/4 turn beyond hand tight. *Loose packing nut will cause oil leakage, over tightening will cause premature wear and high electrical AMP draw.*
- Lubricate the chrome rod plunger on the lift ram and angle rams with oil.
- Inspect hydraulic hoses for leaks, chaffing and cracked or worn surfaces.

Electrical

- Inspect, clean and tighten all electrical connections.
- Apply dielectric grease to all electrical connections paying special attention to:
 - motor connections (positive and negative)
 - light relay terminals
 - park/turn bullet connectors
 - coil/cartridge terminals
 - 9 and 12 pin grill connectors
 - cable assembly connectors
- Inspect all headlights for proper functioning (high-low beams, park/turn signal)

Vehicle inspection

- Inspect and test your battery. Recharge or replace as needed. (Recommended vehicle electrical system: 700 CCA battery and 70 AMP alternator.)
- Check windshield wipers and fluid, heater/defrost operation, radiator coolant, vehicle headlights and appropriate fuses feeding plow accessories.
- Inspect tires for tread condition.
- Consult the current Western Products Selection List for the specific vehicle ballast requirements. Ballast should be secured behind rear wheels. •