

Snow equipment smarts

There are so many different types of equipment for snow and ice removal that a contractor may feel like he's skidding into an icy slick zone coated with choices none of which he can quite get a grip on.

Rick Coolman, advertising and communications manager for Douglas Dynamics, Milwaukee, parent company of Western Products, Milwaukee and Fisher Engineering, Rockland, Maine, says the potential plow buyer needs to ask himself several questions:

1. What type of plowing will he be doing?
2. What kind of a truck does he have or is he looking to buy?

3. What kind of a plow does he need?



Dan Bousman, product manager with Western Products, says, "In the buying process, too many times, the contractor will buy his truck knowing that he wants to plow with it, but he doesn't get the truck specked out properly. In other words he'll buy the truck thinking he can put an eight-foot plow on. What he finds when he gets to the distributor to have this plow installed is that his truck can't handle the plow that he wants."

Both Western and Fisher offer plows ranging from 6 1/2 feet to 10 feet. The size of the plow a customer needs depends on whether it is to be mounted on a vehicle such as a sport utility vehicle or a heavy duty truck.

There are several different types of plows:

- most common is a reversible plow-operator can angle right, left or straight;
- adjustable V-plow, -hinged in the middle and can go from a V-position to a scoop position and anything in between;
- plows with polyethylene blade—the snow doesn't stick to that surface.

Adjustable V-plows such as Western's MVP Multi-position plow, page SR 17, and Fisher's EZ-V, left, are hinged in the middle and can go from a V-position to a scoop position and anything in between.

What the customer wants

A customer/service provider relationship can dissolve almost as quickly as snow and ice during a spring thaw.

Kevin Richardson, superintendent/facilities-central region, of Niagara Mohawk Power Corp., Syracuse, has direct responsibility for 54 facilities in the central New York area. The electric and gas utility in New York state incorporates some 24,000 square miles. He oversees 25 service centers which are anywhere from 3 to 50 acres and 75 substations which are anywhere from 1/3 of acre to 1 or 2 acres.

Richardson does not want "trouble calls. The contractor gets there and the job is completed. In the spring there is no damage that has to be repaired because of the snow removal operation. As we get more and more competitive in our industry we expect the more service for the same kind of money or if not less money," Richardson says. "Not only do we expect them to plow the driveways and parking lots we expect them to sand, shovel sidewalks and open doors to the building." •

SC

"Another common mistake they may make is most trucks require ballast in their rear end which many times is not used to counterbalance the weight of the snowplow that's added to the vehicle. . . Sometimes equipment that you put on the back of the truck helps to counterbalance," says Ben Stenman, product service manager for Western.

Both Western and Fisher have insert hopper type spreaders that can be put in the bed of pick-up trucks. They also offer a line of tailgate spreaders that can hang off the back of a truck to spread salt or similar materials.

One manufacturer offers a multi-purpose unit that's effective in numerous applications. Grasshopper, Moundridge, KS, offers a 48-inch and 68-inch dozer blade. It also offers the 48" snow thrower for its 600, 700 and 900 series of

Grasshoppers and a 60" snow thrower for its 700 and 900 series.

"(Snow throwers) are very useful because you



Snow throwers are very useful because you can preset the height adjustment by hand easily. And, the discharge shoot is mechanically controlled from the operator's seat.



can preset the height adjustment by hand easily. And, the discharge shoot is mechanically controlled from the operator's seat. It can throw the snow anywhere in 180-degree arc. It can be drawn to the left or right.. That's one of the good things about a Grasshopper is that it has a lot of attachments that make it a year-round machine—from de-thatching in the spring to leaf disposal in the fall and mowing in the summer and in November the combo mulching pack which is very easy to change from vacuum to side discharge to mulching," says Ruth Anne Stucky, marketing director for Grasshopper.

Grasshopper's rotary broom is used in the Midwestern states for small amounts of snow. "The Sweepster Rotary Broom comes in 48" that angles up to 25 degrees and clears the debris to the right, and 60" inch that angles up to 25 degrees and clears to left or right. •

Best service you can buy

Not all parking lots can get the same treatment. The type of facility will dictate how often and quickly the parking lot needs to be plowed. For instance, a busy shopping mall is a challenge due to the high amount of traffic. For example, the Christmas season presents a challenge because of the longer shopping hours.

David Venditti, vice president of Clifton Property Services, Syracuse, NY, does nothing but shopping centers and says the biggest challenges are the sidewalks and the large parking areas.

"We're always working around obstacles in shopping centers. Safety is obviously a number one concern especially with the size of equipment we have. It's easy to do a lot of damage to people or property. Workers have to slow down and take their time. You can't rush through it."

Lawsuits for slip and fall cases are always a risk in snowplowing. Venditti says, "We try to limit our exposure as much as possible but in reality you are always subject to the shotgun approach of lawsuits. Nowadays everyone is sued whether you're responsible or not. You're always sued for slips and falls."

"Vendetti recommends not signing a hold harmless clause meaning that you are responsible and that you're going to defend the property owner from slips and falls. His company carries a \$3-5 million policy. •



Calcium chloride and urea combined

Dow Chemical Co. and Ossian, Inc. introduced a new product on the market this year called LANDSCAPE Ice Melter, a combination of calcium chloride and urea developed specifically for the landscape market. The manufacturer claims that the combination of the two is safer for plants. The result being healthier plant life in the spring.

Rick May, marketing manager, of the dry calcium chloride group Dow Chemical Co., Luddington, MI, says the company produces calcium chloride in flakes and pellets.

There are five common types of deicers, according to May: the four halides mentioned above and urea.

"For an ice melter to work it has to undercut the ice, turn into a solution and lower the freezing point of water. Once it has undercut the ice, it spans out over the surface of the pavement. It breaks the bond between the pavement and the ice, and then it should be removed from the sidewalk through me-

chanical means. In other words, you get your snow shovel out and scrape off the slush," says May.

Another salt application procedure that is in use is called presalting or anti-icing. The idea is to apply deicing salt to the surface prior to the storm. An application of deicing salt 20 minutes before a snowfall replaces the initial application of salt during the snowfall and can ultimately eliminate the final application of salt, thereby reducing product and labor costs.

Circle No. 101

Two-stage tailgate spreader from Western

The new Western PRO-FLO 2 Two-Stage Tailgate Spreader spreads all types of material to remove snow, including wet sand. The two-stage design features a belt conveyor to assure positive feed with all types of materials. The hopper assembly is easily removed from the vehicle without the use of tools.

Features include :

► high strength poly hopper with 1200 lbs. capacity.

- ▶ adjustable spreader height, deflectors and feed gate
- ▶ 1/3 hp, 12V DC motor
- ▶ center high-mounted stop lamp CHMSL is standard
- ▶ in-bed truss mount or under-bed frame mount
- ▶ choice of on-off blast toggle switch or solid state variable speed control.

For more information, write to Western Products, 7777 N. 73rd ST., Milwaukee, WI 53223 or visit the website: <http://www.westemplows.com>, or check your local yellow pages for nearest Western distributor. Circle No. 102

Three plows in one from Fisher Engineering

As a trail breaking 'V' blade, the EZ-V plow from Fisher is perfect for punching through drifts and snowbanks to get you started on those big jobs.

In the 'Scoop' position, the plow cradles and controls the snow in crowded locations, like tight parking lots, where you can't cast it to the side.

When a Straight or angled blade is needed for windrowing, the 8-1/2 feet EZ-V plow adjusts



quickly and easily.

The best part about this new snowplow from Fisher that sets it apart from the competition is the convenient, easy-to-use hand-held Fish-Stik control. All functions—raise, lower, moving the wings in or out either simultaneously or separately—are right in the palm of your hand. The Fish-Stik puts the easy in EZ-V plow!

The Insta-Act Hydraulic System gives state-of-

the-art power source that allows you to hydraulically lock the blade wings to act as one.

As with all Fisher plows, the EZ-V plow incorporates the well known, Fisher trip-edge design to keep plowed snow out in front of the blade and make stacking easier.

For more information, write to Fisher Engineering, 12 Water St., Rockland, ME 04841, or visit the website at <http://www.fisher-plows.com> or check your local yellow pages. Circle No. 103

