



Snow removal starts in summer

Ron Brubaker says that if you're in the snow removal business, you have to prepare for it. That's why he starts in mid summer to gather all that he will need to keep his clients happy for the approaching winter season. This includes lining up customers and drivers, and making sure that he'll have enough product, including ice melters, once the first snow or freezing rain fall.

"Typically I try to have my contracts

out right around the first of September," says Brubaker of Brubaker Maintenance, Columbus, Ohio.

Brubaker, who has been in the commercial snow removal business since 1962, secures the contracts from industrial and commercial clients, then sub-contracts the actual plowing to a network of other drivers. Most operate small seasonal businesses and appreciate the extra income. He can have 22 trucks on the road at one time.

While rock salt is Brubaker's product of choice for parking lots and other large areas, he stocks more specialized

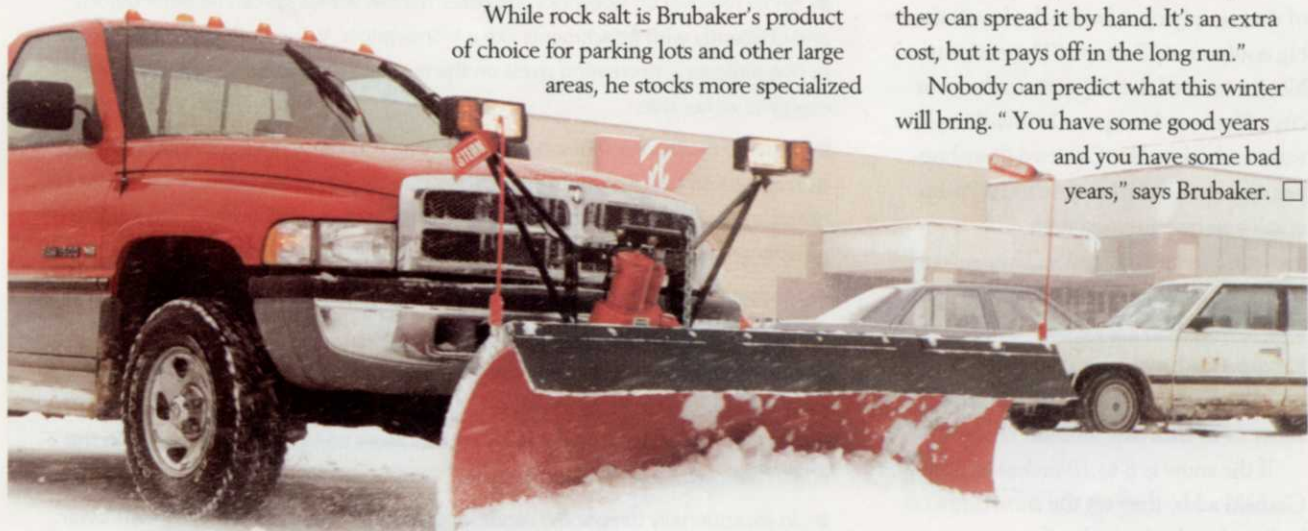
deicers for walkways or areas with decorative concrete.

"We have a lot of moisture and humidity in our area, and sometimes we get a black ice on sidewalks," he explains. Since his customers include banks and medical buildings, he has to have products that work without causing any additional problems.

For long sidewalks these deicers can be applied with a push spreader. Hand spreading from a 5-gallon bucket works fine in smaller areas.

"As a courtesy to some of the my customers, like banks, I'll put a bag of deicer in their foyers," explains Brubaker. "If I can't get there in time—like when it starts icing up and we're on the other side of town and can't get there right away—they can spread it by hand. It's an extra cost, but it pays off in the long run."

Nobody can predict what this winter will bring. "You have some good years and you have some bad years," says Brubaker. □



Snow equipment check list

EQUIPMENT

1. Check and change parts or fluids as needed:

- antifreeze
- radiator hoses
- air filter
- battery cables and water lines
- power steering fluid
- engine belts
- engine oil & filter
- brake fluid (if color has changed, replace)
- wiper blades
- top off washer fluid
- engine tune up
 - for gas engines: plugs & wires
 - for diesel engines: glow plugs.
- hydraulic oil, if applicable
- gear lube front and rear axles

2. Change, regardless of when changed last:

- fuel filter
- automatic transmission fluid and filter
- transfer case oil
- hydraulic filter if applicable

3. Front axle check

- inner spindle bearing
- U-joints (front axles, drive shaft, steering)
- wheel bearings, check and grease
- brakes and seals, adjust if necessary
- manual lockout hubs, clean and lube

4. Rear axle check

- U-joints, drive shaft
- brakes and seals, adjust if necessary

PLOWS

1. Check fluid in pump and rams, check filter
2. Mount plow and check for movement
3. Check hoses and seals for nicks or leaks
4. Check plows for cracks
5. Check cutting blade for amount of wear left and make sure bolts are tight
6. Check carriage bolts to make sure they are tight

SPREADERS

1. Mount on truck
2. Check drive chain or gears. Lube them. Chain should be lubed in spring when put away.
3. Check hoses for nicks and leaks.
4. Check and adjust pattern.