

SNOW+ICE

GUIDE



Snow tech, down cold

New sprayer designs allow the flow rates to be adjusted from the cab.

PHOTO COURTESY: SNOMEX, A DIVISION OF TRYNEX INTERNATIONAL

TO A SNOW AND ICE management contractor, a truck is like a second home. Fifteen-hour workdays aren't uncommon, so having a comfortable, reliable vehicle is crucial. And, let's face it, equipment that allows the operator to spend a bulk of time inside the warm cab — and not out in the cold — is extremely valuable.

Just as trucks have evolved and become more durable, efficient and ergonomic over the years, snow and ice management equipment has improved as well. In recent years, plow, spreader

New designs to winter maintenance equipment keep contractors productive — and in the cab.

BY **BARRY TRUAN**

and sprayer manufacturers have implemented several new features, designs and upgrades to existing equipment. Here's a look at some of the most significant developments and how they are having a positive impact on contractors' day-to-day operations.

Lighten up

Perhaps the biggest advancement in recent years has been constructing equipment with lightweight, yet durable materials to reduce weight concerns. These significant weight reductions are beneficial to both the operator and the truck: Less weight from equipment equals reduced stress on the truck's ball joints and the vehicle itself, resulting in a truck that will last longer and require less maintenance. A contractor can spend more time in the cab — plowing snow and spreading or spraying deicing materials — and less time outside repairing the truck.

One example is the use of a material called Lexan. Originally used in the visors of space helmets, Lexan has

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Wings are standard on many new models of plows. They are available as simple attachments for contractors who would like to implement them on existing plows.

1990s. Its main function is to lower the impact force to the plow and eliminate potential damage to it and the truck when a trip hazard (such as a sewer cap or speed bump) is encountered. The unit features spring mounting, which tips the plow forward — also called “tripping over” — to avoid a hazard. A 4- to 6-in. cutting edge is attached to the bottom of the snow plow to further lessen impact.

This technology originally came with a drawback: The entire plow would engage in the tripping action. The bottom portion of plowed snow would be left behind, and the contractor would have to go back and replot. With newer advancements on some plows,

just the cutting edge folds under when a trip hazard is encountered. The snow pile stays with the plow and the contractor doesn't have to go back and reclear lost snow.

This simple enhancement greatly improves efficiency during the workday. But the jobsite isn't the only place efficiency is important. For many, a work truck doubles as an everyday vehicle, so the ability to attach and

remove equipment easily is imperative.

Easy on, easy off

Roughly 10 years ago, a plow, its lights and hydraulics all needed separate mounting. If a contractor wanted to use the truck for a quick trip to the supermarket, he or she would have to remove the plow, as well as the lights and hydraulics. Not only that, the process was time-consuming and very difficult for one person.

With today's newer mounting brackets, plow mounting and dismantling is faster and easier. The plow and its accessories are attached and removed as one unit.

This process has also been improved with current spreader technology. Consider a contractor who frequently needs his pickup for towing purposes.

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become a popular material in plows for good reason: It weighs much less than traditional heavy-gauge steel.

Consider the effect on a 7.5-ft. plow. A steel-constructed unit of this size would weigh roughly 850 lbs. A Lexan-constructed model could weigh up to 90 lbs. less — approximately 10% lighter — than a similar sized, steel-built snow plow.

Many manufacturers are also trending toward polyethylene, another lightweight, yet durable material. For a typical salt and sand spreader, polyethylene construction can reduce its empty weight by as much as 40% when compared with a similar steel-built model.

These significant weight reductions not only increase the truck's longevity, but also give the operator more flexibility in terms of the amount of equipment he or she can carry or attach without exceeding the gross vehicle weight rating.

Spreading their wings

Speaking of lighter weight, imagine being able to add 20 in. of blade width to a snow plow, while still keeping its weight to a minimum — all while pushing snow more efficiently. Thanks to the launch of plow wings in the past five



To expose the truck's hitch, the spinner can be quickly removed on some of today's spreader models.

years, this is now possible.

Plow wings eliminate the need to angle a plow in deep snow by “cupping” the ends of the unit, which encourages snow to roll off both sides. A contractor doesn't have to spend time angling the plow, and the added length means the unit can clear more snow per pass, further increasing efficiency. In fact, it's estimated wings can reduce plowing time by up to 50%.

While wings are a perfect illustration of one of the more recent developments in equipment, this next feature is an example of a newer enhancement to an established plow technology.

Road trip

Plow manufacturers have been including a feature called a “trip edge system” on plows since the mid-

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With some models, the spreader assembly must be unbolted — or the entire spreader must be removed from the truck's bed — before accessing the receiver hitch. Many manufacturers offer new designs to make this process easier. Some new systems mean a snow and ice contractor now only



Ergonomic, easy-to-operate control pads have replaced older toggle-switch models.



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has to remove one pin and the spinner assembly to expose the truck's hitch. The conversion takes place in seconds and can be done by one person.

These features are extremely beneficial for the many contractors who have multiple uses for their trucks. However, contractors still spend countless hours in these vehicles, so many demand a higher level of comfort.

Stay in control

Think of setting up an office or home workspace for ultimate comfort and productivity. Adjusting a chair to a certain height or ideally positioning a computer monitor and keyboard are examples of ways to make a workspace more ergonomic. For a winter maintenance contractor, the truck's cab is the office. So it's no wonder that plow, spreader and sprayer manufacturers have designed new control options to let users customize and make their workspaces more comfortable.

First, being able to control all equipment from inside the cab is a major benefit. Take sprayers, for example. Previously, a contractor would have to park, exit the truck, and venture out in the cold to manually activate or adjust the sprayer. But today's new in-cab control systems allow the operator to set liquid flow rates and activate the sprayer, all from the warmth and comfort of the cab. In-cab controls are also available for plows and spreaders.

Second, when in-cab controllers were first introduced, they weren't very user-friendly; many were only offered in the form of toggle switches. After several hours of flipping the switches,

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operators would be left with sore fingers and indents from the repeated on-and-off motion.

Fast-forward to the present, when one can choose from several easy-to-operate controllers. Options include joysticks, pistol-grip pads or simple rect-

angular pads that can be mounted to a dashboard or attached to the driver's leg. All of the available options let a contractor personalize his or her control set-up, resulting in the most comfortable, productive "office" on four wheels.

For as much time as snow and ice maintenance contractors spend with

PROTECT THY TRUCK

Whether you're getting into the snowplow business or spending this winter's blizzards indoors, make sure you have the right insurance for your truck. Commercial auto insurer Progressive offers these tips.

» If you're planning to plow, call your agent or insurance company to make sure your truck is fully insured for its value, including the cost of a plow or other equipment. If you have a full coverage policy, you should be ready for the snow — but check with your agent or insurance company to make sure.

» If you're planning to store your trucks and want to save money on your insurance while you're not driving them, consider switching to a comprehensive-only policy. This coverage protects your vehicles against incidents like vandalism or hail that can happen when they're sitting for long periods during the off-season.

» If you decide to cancel your liability insurance, check with the department of motor vehicles first. There may be some additional steps you need to take to comply with the insurance laws in your state.



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their trucks, improvements to the equipment — no matter how small — shouldn't go unnoticed. As engineering becomes more advanced, new features will continue to be implemented. Combine the aforementioned developments with inevitable future enhancements, and the day-to-day operations of these professionals will keep improving.

It's not a minute too soon. When a work environment includes below-zero temperatures, dangerous wind chills and unpredictable drivers, every extra minute spent inside the cab — and not outside working on the truck and its equipment — is extremely valuable. **LM**

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PRODUCTS

Fully hydraulic

Available in two models — the 6.5-ft. Power-V XT and the 6-ft. Poly Straight-Blade Snowplow from **The Boss** — these new UTV plows feature a high-performance, fully hydraulic system. The hydraulic pumps are fully enclosed to protect against corrosion and hydraulic freeze-up for unmatched durability. Operation of the hydraulic and electrical system is done with the touch of a button from inside the cab, making lifting, lowering and angling the snowplow fast and easy. In addition, the sloped-profile undercarriage does not hinder ground clearance or inhibit trail riding when the snowplow is detached. BossPlow.com



Snow and ice melt

With a complete line of ice and snow melters, the Vaporizer name has become synonymous with environmentally responsible and effective ice melting products. Its manufacturer/producer, **Gro-Well**, is centrally located in the northeastern U.S. and offers pick-up and delivery options. Gro-well.com



On-road rock star

After five years in development at Custom Chassis Inc., **GVM** will begin producing the PowerPlatform — a multi-purpose machine offering high speed, maneuverability, a large cargo capacity and excellent operator visibility, while still maintaining a road-legal 102-in. tire width — in December 2010. The first units will be ready for delivery in early 2011. The four-wheel-drive municipal machine can reach road speeds up to 45 mph. It features three steering modes: front steering, coordinated steering and crab steering. The frame design allows it to turn with a 9-ft. shorter radius than a pickup truck. This capability allows the vehicle to turn around on a two-lane road intersection and maneuver through cul-de-sacs. GVMInc.com

Go iSNOW

Measure with accuracy

The user-friendly and secure Web-based **Go iSnow** program helps accurately measure properties from up-to-date, high-resolution aerial photos, allowing for more accurate bid creation. Measure — and color-code and label to your custom specifications — parking lots, sidewalks, loading docks and other areas to give customers a professional and realistic idea of what your services can entail. GoiSnow.com

Pivot point

The heart of the Ice Breaker is the trip design. Traveling unsafely over manhole covers at any speed can be devastating. The **Degelman** Ice Breaker was designed with one of the highest pivot points in the industry that geometrically minimizes tractor shock. The coil springs themselves never hit dead bottom and wrap round 1.75-in. solid steel shafts. The spring return is even dampened by specially designed urethane donuts to reduce shock. Degelman.com



Garage melter

According to **Snow Dragon**, the SND580 is the first snowmelter that can be used on the top deck of a parking garage, as well as for standard snowmelting applications such as shopping plazas and parking lots. The dual-axle unit weighs approximately 10,000 lbs. filled with fuel and water and 6,500 lbs. empty, allowing it to be towed by a properly sized Ford 150, Dodge Ram 1500 or higher. It measures 16 ft. in length, 6 ft., 3 in. in width, and 6 ft., 2 in. high at its tallest point. The melt rating on this 5.8 million snowmelter is 18 tons/hr (75 to 175 cu. yds.). SnowDragonMelters.com

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Blade III

Earth & Turf introduces three new easy-to-install, clamp-on snow blades for Compact Tractors. The SC series available in a 60- and a 72-in.-wide, 19.5-in. high blade designed for compact tractors under 35 hp. The S series is a 90-in. wide, 26-in. high, clamp-on blade for tractors 35 hp and over. All three are full featured blades with manual angle 30 degrees left or right, full blade spring trip that can be locked out for light grading jobs and bolt on reversible cutting edges to save money. EarthAndTurf.com



Compact units

SnowEx's new SR-110 and SR-210 utility spreaders are equipped with wireless controls, which eliminate the need to route an electrical harness to the cab and allow plug-and-play operation. Both models attach to a variety of vehicles, including pickups, SUVs, cars, utility vehicles and ATVs. Both feature a 3-cu.-ft. capacity hopper. The pocket-sized wireless remote controls the rate of the two-speed spinner and toggles the electric motor on and off. The SR-210 (pictured) spreads up to a 25-ft. range and features a vertical high-flow auger that works in conjunction with the spinner; the SR-110 spreads material up to a 20-ft. range and uses a gate feed system, allowing it to handle small calcium chloride pellets or bagged ice melters. TrynexFactory.com



Stake your claim

By using **Discount Snow Stakes'** strong, yet flexible fiberglass composite snow stakes, you will efficiently mark off properties — minimizing any damages that may occur during the snow removal process, and lowering all your overall costs. DiscountSnowStakes.com



Quick-change blade

Designed for use with articulated four-wheel drive **Ventrac** compact tractors, the new 55-in. KV552 V-blade snowplow maximizes efficiency with the ability to quickly change from V plow to scoop to straight blade, all from the convenience of Ventrac's exclusive S.D.L.A. control system. Standard features include a 48-in. V width, hydraulically activated wing cylinders, mechanical trip, adjustable cast iron skid shoe discs, reversible high carbon hardened steel cutting edges, and a center shoe for gliding over rough terrain. Ventrac.com

High efficiency

The **Manplow** Pro 36 features an extra-wide, 36-in. blade and the exclusive EZ Glide Edge, both of which increase efficiency. Spend up to 75% less time shoveling. Your 9.5-lb. Manplow will arrive with the EZ Glide Edge already attached to the blade. Simply tighten the four bolts, and you're ready to go. Hardware and wrench are included, and replacement EZ Glide Edges are available. Manplow.com



Patented process

H & H Processing is a manufacturer of high-performance ice melter products. They offer on-site salt stockpile treatment and ready-made ice melt products in bulk for roadway and parking lot anti/deicing. Its Winterguard Pro blended ice melt is available in bags by the pallet and truckload delivery. Its patented manufacturing process delivers both product performance and value. handhinfo@aol.com

Tapered blade

Meyer's second-generation V-plow, the Super-V2, features a 70-in. attack angle and a blade that tapers from 38 to 30.5 in. to provide snow rolling and throwing action similar to that of a highway plow. The Super-V2's bottom-trip design holds most of its load if an obstruction trips the plow, reducing the number of passes required to finish a job. The bottom-trip design also

allows the plow to trip, regardless of how the wings are configured. Components of this new Meyer plow are interchangeable with the standard Meyer Super-V plow. MeyerProducts.com

