

continued from page 29

formed; length of time the project took to complete; materials used; obstacles; accomplishments; all correspondence; and everything in between.

Recordkeeping doesn't start and end with administrative assistants, Allin cautions. Everyone is responsible for documenting information, he says, "from the person answering the phone and keeping track of incoming calls, to the plowers and salters and sidewalk crews at the site."

But as vulnerable as lax documentation makes contractors to a payout, no mistake is more egregious than failing to follow the language in a contract, Allin says. He reminded the audience they have the ability to change a contract's language, and that they absolutely should if they're uncomfortable with the contract.

"Do the job you were hired to do," he said, nothing more, nothing less.

"Have a process, document it and do it," Allin continued. The problem is, few snow contractors actually have formal procedures in place. And contractors who don't have them better implement them, he says.

"By far and away, most snow contractors have an 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality about 'process,'" he says. "If they think 'I have not been sued ever, so it will not ever happen,' this is foolish, shortsighted and an avoidance of responsibility."

In all his years consulting as an expert witness in snow-and-ice lawsuits, Allin says he has observed one universal flaw in the way snow and ice companies operate: Attention to

A vehicle toppled into a parking garage that collapsed from a bad plow job.

If they think 'I have not been sued ever, so it will not ever happen,' this is foolish, shortsighted and an avoidance of responsibility."

— JOHN ALLIN

detail is nearly always lacking.

Such carelessness has the same effect as contaminants rising up the food chain; problems intensify the farther contractors advance in the project.

Moreover, "a lack of attention to detail and proper documentation eventually retards progress and growth to a point where the company begins to fold under its own unorganized weight," Allin says.

At the seminar, Allin displayed photos of snow and ice work gone awry. One was a shot of piles of snow plowed up against a man's front door and across the front walk. The man had no way to leave his house, and when he tried, Allin said, the homeowner slipped and fell.

The other photo featured a collapsed parking garage. A snow plower pushed so much snow up against the

parking garage, a wall collapsed, Allin said, adding a vehicle later drove right into the abyss.

The audience laughed at the images' absurdity. But bad plow jobs are no laughing matter, Allin says. So, when snow and ice contractors find themselves embroiled in litigation, they should take control and "participate in the lawsuit," Allin says. Contractors can't afford to sit idly by and hope their lawyers take care of everything, he says.

"Once you are notified of the suit filing, sending it to the insurance agent and then forgetting about it is tantamount to misconduct," Allin asserts. "You need to supply the lawyer with documentation that can aid in their defense of your position. You need to ask to participate, and then actually do so. The insurance carrier's defense is only as good as your records." LMI

Beet it

As snow pros seek greener deicing methods, the sugar beet is stepping up. **BY BETH GERACI**



WHILE ROCK SALT IS earning a dubious reputation as a killer of plants, grass and infrastructure along highways, the friendly sugar beet is gaining cred as its viable, more environmentally sound alternative.

Not only are sugar beet-derived deicers more ecological; they also are effective thawing agents, say winter product manufacturers, government officials and distributors.

Cheap and effective, rock salt (sodium chloride) traditionally has been the thawing agent of choice on U.S. bridges and roads. But economical or not, there's a price to pay for using it in concentrated amounts, snow and ice professionals like Jay Walerstein say.

Walerstein is vice president of sales and marketing for Road Solutions, a manufacturer, blender and distributor of green deicing products such as Univar's liquid Ice Bite — which is among the most widely used sugar beet-based deicers on the market.

"When a salt spreader releases rock salt, it bounces all over," Walerstein says. "And then cars disperse it. And then the salt ends up in the medium, in the ditches, in the grass on the side, where it does absolutely nothing but kill the grass and shrubs with concentrated levels of rock salt and deteriorate the concrete."

Likewise, because of rock salt on its roads, "Minnesota is having its streams and lakes filled with so much saline that it's killing the fish," says Chris Wehri,

chemical sales manager for Fargo, ND-based Prairie Supply, a Midwest distributor of Univar's Ice Bite.

Sugar beet-based deicers aren't salt free. Rather, they're blended with salt products to enhance their effectiveness. That's because sugar beets alone are ineffective melting agents, Walerstein says.

Sugar beet-based deicers can be a combination of one of many blends: calcium chloride and beet juice; magnesium chloride and beet juice; potassium acetate and beet juice; or rock salt brine and beet juice. Of those, the rock salt brine and beet juice blend is the most cost effective, Wehri and Walerstein assert.

Rock salt stops working at about 15 degrees Fahrenheit, meaning it won't melt ice at temperatures below that, they say. Sugar beet derivatives, however, work even in sub-zero temperatures, lowering water's freezing point, Wehri says.

Galen Kauzlarich, Geomelt 55 sales manager for Iowa's Smith Fertilizer and Grain, says beet-based deicing products enhance the effectiveness of chlorides, making the roads less slick, for longer periods of time, with less corrosive runoff.

Geomelt 55 is a liquid sugar beet-based deicer consisting of 70 percent salt brine and 30 percent sugar beet byproduct. In its first year of business — 10 years ago — Geomelt sold 20,000 gallons of Geomelt 55, Kauzlarich says; today he sells exponentially more than that annually in his region alone.

More and more Midwestern and Eastern states are testing sugar beet-derived deicers on their roads, including Kansas, the Dakotas, Ohio, Illinois and a growing list of others. Last winter, the New York State Thruway Authority tested a beet-brine solution on Albany and Syracuse highways with positive results, says Betsy Feldstein, the Authority's public information officer.

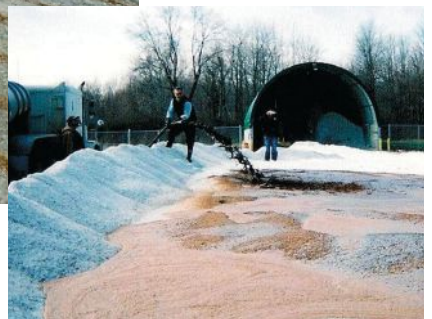
Slick pavement wasn't reported at any temperature, she says, and "the beet-brine mixture is organic and environmentally friendly." The beet solution also reduced refreezing on Albany highway ramps, Feldstein says, and "will not stain cars or roads, because so little of it is used and what is used is absorbed by salt and snow."

Walerstein's worked in the business for 11 years. "Let me tell you," he quips, "you can't beat the beet." **LM**



◀ A spray truck disperses a sugar beet-based deicer on the highway.

▼ Road Solutions employees treat 400 tons of rock salt with Ice Bite.



PHOTOS COURTESY: JAY WALERSTEIN (FAR LEFT); JAY WALERSTEIN (LEFT); STOCK/INTERNATIONAL INC.



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“The very first time I ran my new WIDE-OUT was at Walmart. It normally took me 3 hours to finish, and with the WIDE-OUT, it only took me about an hour and a half – the very first time I ran it. **I had never run the plow before, and got done in about half the time.**” *JOSH WILEY* Wiley Snow Ice Management, Birmingham, IA

“Moving more snow per hour means getting done faster, so I can actually take on more accounts. **Lots that used to take an hour are now getting done in 30-40 minutes,** and they look better! It’s one way to combat all the low-ballers out there.” *MARK WEAVER* Weaver Lawn & Landscape, South Bend, IN

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PTO-driven DriftBuster snowthrowers for **Grasshopper's** full line of True ZeroTurn mowers deliver "no-clog" performance, even in deep or heavy, wet snows. A discharge spout controlled from the operator's seat rotates a full 180° to deliver snow up to 30 ft. away. Available in 48- and 60-in. models, the units feature heavy-gauge welded steel construction, a high-speed 12-in.-diameter auger and a heavy-duty replaceable scraper blade. An optional steering lever-mounted joystick control allows easy lifting of the auger and rotation of the chute from the comfort of the winter enclosure. ThrowMoreSnow.com



Busy bristles

Pro-Tech introduces five new Sno Broom attachments for skid steers and compact tractors. Sno Brooms minimize the potential for damaging surfaces and easily remove snow against curbs and walls. Skid steer models are available with 60-, 72- and 84-in. broom widths. They include a universal coupler for attaching to equipment with various hydraulic flow ratings and can be hydraulically angled 30° left or right. The PTO-driven tractor model is designed for machines with at least 30 hp. ProTechCorp.com



Quiet power

Ariens' AMP 24 Sno-Thro is an all-electric two-stage snow thrower with a 24-in. clearing width. The machine runs between 45 and 60 minutes on a single charge, depending on snow conditions, and provides a quieter alternative to traditional gas-powered snow throwers. The AMP 24 Sno-Thro is powered by a 4-hp brushless DC electric motor and energized by two 48-volt AGM Valve Regulated battery packs. Advantages include an easy start, reduced service requirements because there is no gasoline engine — and no associated gasoline costs or special storage requirements during summer months. Ariens.com

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Compatible with small skid steers, compact tractors and small wheel loaders, the new Compact-Duty plows from **Arctic Snow and Ice Control Products** are designed for clearing small parking lots, sidewalks and larger driveways. The CD plows reduce fuel and salt usage by increasing pushing efficiency and eliminating follow-up



plowing. Unlike traditional one-piece moldboard plows, the Sectional Sno-Plows feature a sectional moldboard design. Each 24-in.-wide section is also equipped with a spring-loaded trip edge and polyurethane cutting edge for precision plowing. The plows are outfitted with Sectional Sno-Plow's patented Slip-Hitch system, providing faster, easier and more efficient operation. The system allows the plow to adjust and readjust to the pavement grade, resulting in fewer missed areas and less follow-up plowing. *Sectional-Plow.com*



ATV attachments

The **Meyer Path Pro** is designed for clearing snow from sidewalks or other tight areas not suitable for a plow truck. Paired with the Meyer Base Line-125 spreader, an ATV turns into the perfect snow and ice management vehicle. Path Pro, a commercial-grade, full-trip plow available in 50- or 60-in. widths, features highway-inspired flared wings that scoop and funnel snow faster and farther. The BL-125 tailgate spreader's low profile allows salt, calcium chloride, fertilizer and seed to disperse closer to the ground, providing better control of material output. At the heart of the BL-125 is an elevated heavy-duty electric motor, built to withstand the harshest winter conditions. *MeyerProducts.com*

Flare flair

The new VF series trip-edge V-plows from **Hiniker** feature deep-curl flared wings, providing the capacity to cast deep snow far and high. Double-acting hydraulic cylinders provide positive hydraulic control of moldboard positioning, whether plowing forward or back-dragging. Super-bright quad halogen headlights have up to twice the power of typical sealed beam lamps. Independent high-clearance trip-edge design provides smooth operation and enhanced protection. *Hiniker.com*

plowing. Unlike traditional one-piece moldboard plows, the Sectional Sno-Plows feature a sectional moldboard design. Each 24-in.-wide section is also equipped with a spring-loaded trip edge and polyurethane cutting edge for precision plowing. The plows are outfitted with Sectional Sno-Plow's patented Slip-Hitch system, providing faster, easier and more efficient operation. The



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Get the drift

The FFC Snow Blower by **Paladin Construction Group** turns a skid steer into a mini snow-plowing machine for small to medium snow-removal jobs. This two-stage hydraulic blower is available in both standard and high-flow models that range between 4 and 8 ft. wide, with shroud openings of 25 or 36 in. The 18-in. auger cuts as deep as 36 in. into snow and drifts, and then throws it up to 45 ft. away from your clearing surface. Choose from an electronic or electro/hydraulic powered, poly-lined chute and deflector that reduces clogging and makes direction adjustments quickly. High-flow models never require a case drain. To ensure a cleaner and safer surface, FFC Snow Blowers have replaceable, wear-resistant hardened

edges that can be changed when they become dull. *PaladinConstructionGroup.com*



Clean machine

The **Gravely** Power Brush 28 features a 28-in.-wide head for fast clearing work, and the height adjustment system accommodates various surfaces and optimizes brush wear. The brush head also rotates 40°, with an operator-controlled pivot lock. Powered by a 169cc all-season EX 17 Subaru engine, the unit features an electric start and an automatic traction control system. It can be used year-round for snow removal, lawn de-thatching and clearing sand, dirt, grass clippings or other debris. *Ariens.com*



To the max

Offering a 2-cu.-yd. hopper capacity, the V-Maxx 8550 High Output spreader from **SnowEx** features a new transmission with a gear ratio of 40:1. This allows the unit to spread 295 to 680 lbs. of material per minute (3.6 to 8.3 cu. ft. per minute), which triples the rate of the comparable V-Maxx 8500 model. Designed to spread sand, the V-Maxx 8550 comes standard with a patented multi-angle hopper, an inverted-“V” baffle and an attached vibrator. For reduced maintenance, the spreader’s hopper is made from corrosion-resistant polyethylene. Plus, there are no engines, pulleys, sprockets, belts or chains to maintain. The unit is completely electric-powered with a high-torque, 0.5-hp motor, and all electrical components are fully sealed for weather protection. *TrynexFactory.com*

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Spread success

The new SS575 salt spreader, for the **Ventrac** 4000 series, is for winter services and spreading materials such as bagged rock salt and calcium flake. With the optional gate installed, the SS575 can also spread bagged ice melters and calcium pellets. An optional vibrator kit also allows for bulk salt to be spread. The SS575 spreader features a 5.75 cu. ft. hopper capable of carrying 460 lbs. A see-through weather cover for the hopper comes standard. An electronic control box also comes standard, and features an electronic speed control and on/off switch. An optional drop curtain is available for spreading material in tight quarters such as sidewalks, parking garages and more. *Ventrac.com*



End of Season Review - 2011

Customer

Lot Size

Challenges

Grocery Store



2.5 acre

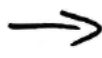


Many obstacles
Sidewalks

Hospital



7 acres



24 Hour traffic
Zero tolerance

Corporate Office Park



15+ acres



Sidewalks
Little room for
snow piling

Possibilities



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MAINTENANCE: HARDSCAPE ESSENTIALS

Belgard Hardscapes by Oldcastle



This spring, Belgard Hardscapes by Oldcastle participated in Project NOLA, a community outreach project designed to help rebuild New Orleans' homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. It sponsored two of the five homes to be renovated, donating products (including its Eco Dublin permeable pavers, pictured) and sent a team of

employees to help with installation. The permeable pathway was chosen for one of the homes, which belongs to a legally blind resident, because it will not allow water to puddle on the surface and instead will provide a sturdy path for the resident to easily follow. Learn more about the project on the Belgard Hardscapes blog at BelgardHardscapes.wordpress.com. OldcastleAPG.com

Pine Hall Brick

The Plaza at Kenan Hall/Flagler College in St. Augustine, FL, recently won a Brick Industry Association Silver Award for paving and landscape architecture. The 5,300-sq.-ft. plaza used Pine Hall Brick StormPave permeable pavers in accent gray and autumn. The pavers effectively picked up the colors of the nearby building, in line with local historic-district guidelines. It also provided an effective way to drain away stormwater. PineHallBrick.com



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Techniseal

Newly introduced NuLook is a tinted sealant made from acrylic, urethane and nanocrystal pigments. This semi-transparent coating is designed to change the color of pavers and poured concrete — ideal for rejuvenating older pavers that have suffered the effects of time and neglect. Available in four colors, NuLook is part of the ProSeries line of products. Techniseal.com



Concrete Stone and Tile Corp.

Munich Green Permeable pavers provide an aesthetically pleasing MONO-CAST paver without sacrificing properties to promote quality stormwater runoff. The pavers' design encourages admission of water into the ground and the natural re-charge of the aquifer. Additionally, CST's permeable pavers protect the environment from the

malignant pollutants emitted by runoff. Color options for the 6x9-in. Munich Green pavers include hickory blend, antique gray and butternut. CSTPavers.com/permeable.php

Fiberon

The strong, rigid core of new Pro-Tect decking is encased on three sides in a patent-pending, non-organic surface material that is resistant to staining, fading, scratches and mold. This protective surface preserves the enduring beauty of two rich colors, canyon brown and harbor gray (pictured), and natural-looking graining that offers the appearance of real wood to complement any architectural style. Deck boards are available as grooved (GV) in .935 in. x 5.4 in. x 12-, 16- and 20-ft., and square edge (SE) in 20-ft. boards. The product is backed by a 20-year stain, fade and performance limited warranty. Fiberon-Decking.com



continued on page 42