



WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN FINDS BRINE MAKER THAT'S SIZED AND PRICED JUST RIGHT.

A few years ago, the City of Wauwatosa implemented a brine program for anti-icing and pre-wetting salt. As a pilot program, city officials were cautious when it came to investing in the upfront costs for an in-house brine maker without first seeing the results. Rather than batch their own brine, the Milwaukee suburb instead bought brine from neighboring communities.

"We had equipped a couple of our trucks with the brine tanks, and we bought the brine from Milwaukee County, which is down the road from us," said Marion Sodnik, public works management analyst with the City of Wauwatosa. "It worked well for a time, but when they were no longer able to provide brine for us, we then went to Waukesha County to purchase our brine."

While Milwaukee County was just a short jaunt down the road, Waukesha County was more than 20 minutes away, and soon the purchasing arrangement proved too costly for the city in terms of both time and budget.

"We would drive our fleet 20 to 30 minutes, sit there and wait, load up with brine, then drive back to Wauwatosa," Sodnik said. "It ended up tying up a lot of staff time and being more of a hassle than it was worth."

That's when the city started looking at in-house brine makers for their operations. Unfortunately, the only options they found were either fully automated systems that were out of budget range or equipment that required manual labor that often proved tedious and could result in inaccurate salinity concentrations.

"We looked at a large brine-making system, but it was cost-prohibitive, and we really didn't need that much volume," Sodnik said. "We have 14 trucks in our fleet, so we go through a fair amount of brine in a season, just not as much as the large systems produce."

That's when Sodnik came across a brine maker that offered automated features, and fit the city's production needs and budget restraints.



A Cargill Deicing Technology Product



"It has all the Cadillac features of the larger brine makers, but in a much smaller package," Sodnik said. "With the cost right where we wanted it to be, it almost seemed too good to be true. We were soon convinced there wasn't a catch, so we bought it. And sure enough, it has delivered as promised."

The system the city purchased is called the AccuBatch® brine maker, which is produced by Cargill Deicing Technology. The system provides brine with accurate, automated salinity concentration and offers operators easy installation, operation and cleanout features. Sized to produce up to 800 gallons of brine per batch – compared to 5,000 gallons per hour, which some of the larger systems produce – the AccuBatch® brine maker allowed Sodnik and his team to make and store brine at the volume that worked for their anti-icing and pre-wetting needs.



"We load the hopper with salt, turn on the machine and it gives us a load of brine," Sodnik said. "Then we fill our 14 tailgate tanks, anti-icing tanks and 5,000-gallon storage tank. This usually takes the better part of a day, but the technician can start the machine and walk away – he doesn't need to babysit the machine all day."

Sodnik credits the success of the new system with team effort and departmental support. Snowplow drivers, technicians and electricians all play a part in making sure the system runs flawlessly and produces effective brine so the city can create safer roads during the winter.

"Our drivers believe in the product, and implement plowing and salting techniques that maximize the brine," he said. "Our technicians maintain and calibrate the truck equipment to ensure it works properly and that we're ready for every event. Our skilled electricians and technicians customize the electrical and plumbing work necessary so the system performs flawlessly everyday. We are fortunate to have this skill and dedication on our staff."

Not only is Sodnik and the city pleased with the production capabilities of the new system and staff support, they're seeing results on the 200 lane miles they service and on their bottom line.

"Anti-icing and pre-wetting with brine has been very effective," Sodnik said. "The results on the roads are excellent. Plus, producing brine costs us about 8 cents per gallon, and we were paying around 40 cents per gallon when we bought it from the neighboring counties. In our analysis we calculated that we would pay for the briner in one season."

Cargill Deicing Technology
24950 Country Club Blvd. Suite 450
North Olmsted, OH 44070

866-900-SALT (7258) • www.cargilldeicing.com



A Cargill Deicing Technology Product

Providing customers with deicing solutions that save lives, enhance commerce and reduce environmental impact.