



## BRINE MAKER HELPS FORT COLLINS, COLO. STAY AHEAD OF FICKLE WINTER WEATHER

A premier outdoor recreation destination, the Colorado Rocky Mountains can unleash dangerous winter snowstorms, below freezing temps and warm, wintertime sunshine – all within the same day. Municipalities like the City of Fort Collins, which rests against the foothills, often have their hands full when it comes to extreme, capricious weather and providing effective winter maintenance.

“When you look at storm conditions, especially with Colorado’s unpredictable weather, we need to have a number of things in our toolbox to make sure we’re properly treating winter roads,” said Larry Schneider, street superintendent for the city.

In an effort to round out their toolbox, Schneider began looking into using brine for anti-icing and deicing roadways. Soon, he discovered a brine maker that allowed the city to batch thousands of gallons of brine at their facility and experiment with different brine solutions.

“I looked at a number of different brine-making systems, did some research, talked to other agencies using the systems and found out how well they were working for them, and then made a decision,” Schneider said.

What he decided on was an AccuBrine® automated brine maker produced by Cargill Deicing Technology. The brine maker is a state-of-the-art system that can produce approximately 5,000 gallons of brine per hour. Using a fully automated process, the system rapidly produces brine with accurate salinity concentrations all at the touch of a button.

“The system is very simple to operate,” Schneider said. “And we’re doing more anti-icing now that we’re making our own brine. When we pre-treat with brine the roads don’t get slippery even if a storm doesn’t materialize and the temps drop below freezing. Overall, the friction is much better.”



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Working with the uncertain conditions of the Rockies, the city discovered the benefits of using salt brine for deicing as well as anti-icing. When a sudden, unforeseen storm comes along, clearing snow-packed, icy roadways becomes easier for plows after using brine.

"It's easier to plow off the roads when we use the salt brine," Schneider said. "And helps cut our costs in the long run because we're not chiseling packed ice or snow off the streets."

The city has acquired additional cost savings simply by purchasing the brine making system and making their own brine when compared to purchasing a brine product. As a result, Schneider estimates the system has paid for itself in a period of just two years.

"It wasn't too expensive to set up and there's significant cost savings when you make your own brine," he said. "You're basically paying around .70 - .75 cents per gallon for the product, but you can make it yourself for more like .20 - .30 cents per gallon."

On average, the city produces around 100,000 gallons each season to treat approximately 2,100 lane miles.

"After two years we still have to perfect our brine usage, but we're getting the hang of it. We like the product and we like the brine-making system," Schneider said. "It's a key product in our toolbox to make things work with our Colorado weather."



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