

CASE HISTORY

Webster, Mass.



WEBSTER, MASS. ELIMINATES SAND USE AND SAVES THOUSANDS WITH ENHANCED DEICER

Up until a few years ago, the town of Webster, Mass. utilized traditional road deicing methods such as sand and salt. When Kenneth Pizzetti took the reins as street superintendent, however, he was looking for more modern snowfighting practices. Soon the town's deicing strategy took a more innovative turn by implementing an enhanced deicing product and cutting sand completely out of their winter maintenance budget.

"With this deicer product we found we just didn't need the sand, so we didn't buy any," Pizzetti said. "Right out of the gate we came out with a \$30,000 savings."

Pizzetti discovered the enhanced deicer while attending a state and county highway association meeting. He listened to a presentation from a neighboring community that had implemented the product, which resulted in effectively clearing their winter roads and significantly reducing their salt and sand use.

"This new product really caught my attention because it was so modern – most of us in the area still used salt, sand, chloride and magnesium chloride," Pizzetti said. "This new product worked so much better than rock salt because it melted the roads faster."

The product implemented by Webster is called ClearLane® enhanced deicer. Produced by Cargill Deicing Technology, the enhanced deicer is a salt product that's different than regular rock salt because it contains a pre-wetting agent. Made with chemical and natural additives, the pre-wet feature helps clear roads by providing a faster reaction time and longer residual effects.

"We put that stuff on all the roads, and I tell you what, they're black," Pizzetti said. "We put it down and we don't have to come back because it's doing its job. We're not paying for sand, plus we're not paying for extra plowing. That means we're also saving on fuel and labor. It's huge."



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As well as budget, additional concerns for the town regarding modernizing their deicing practices included environmental impact. Operating a system of wells throughout the town and residing along the shores of Lake Chaubunagungamaug (commonly referred to as Webster Lake), preventing watershed contamination was a top concern for Webster residents and city officials.

"We have gravel pack wells, we have a street pump system, we have the lake, we have basins; we needed to make sure our water management practices weren't being compromised by our winter maintenance practices," Pizzetti said.

As an additionally appealing characteristic, the deicer recently received recognition from the U.S. EPA because it offers significant environmental benefits. Using the product at proper application rates results in reduced impact on watersheds, aquatic life and roadside vegetation when compared to other deicing methods.

"The deicer is more environmentally friendly and that's awesome for us," Pizzetti said. "It works great, our roads are black, none of them have ice pack, and it's better for the environment. Plus, we're saving a ton of time and money by not using sand."

Responsible for about 140 lane miles, Webster was the first town in their area to begin using the enhanced deicer. After about three years, six neighboring towns climbed on board and now order the product as a group each season, which garners an even greater cost savings.

"So many towns want to use the deicer, so we put our bid in together," Pizzetti said. "That means the overall price goes down because we buy bigger quantities. Combining that with not spending dollars on sand really shows up on our bottom line. We like that and our communities like that."

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