

Snowplowing tips from a couple of old hands

SNOWPLOWING TIPS and techniques were the focus of a panel discussion held at the Iowa Maintenance Training Expo in September. Bill Feldhahn, a panel representative and heavy equipment operator/foreman for the City of Bettendorf Public Works, offered these tips:

- For years I've noticed that our trucks had difficulty turning left when pushing a heavy accumulation of snow. If you turn your reversible plow in the direction the truck is turning (left), it suddenly turns easier. As soon as you've completed the turn, return your plow to its proper angle.
- Practice good housekeeping in your truck's interior. Try to secure all necessary items, such as tools, pens, pads, and lunch boxes. Get rid of the stuff you don't need. Clear refuse like pop cans and food containers immediately. These are hard-hitting flying objects if you have an accident.
- Most important, wear that seat belt. To properly control your vehicle, you must remain seated. When you come out of that seat in an accident, you become a hard-hitting flying object.

Denny Amoss, equipment operator for the Iowa Department of Transportation office in Albia, was also a panel representative at the expo. His presentation was on techniques for winging, the process of clearing snow from the road shoulders to make room for disabled vehicles and snow from the next storm.

Removing snow traps with one person and one machine

ONE PERSON and one machine can remove a snow trap more quickly and efficiently than five people using five machines, says Ray Scherrman, maintenance manager of the Dubuque County Highway Department. A snow trap is a road location that traps drifting snow.

Old method of eliminating snow traps

Scherrman says that when he began working with the department 18 years ago, it took five workers to

Amoss pointed out that this process requires two people in the truck because the passenger operates the wing, allowing the driver to concentrate on the traffic. Amoss offers the following suggestions:

- There are a lot of times you must move back onto the roadway to get around objects. Having a new operator operate the wing gives him or her a chance to learn how and to become familiar with the operations of the truck, so he or she can operate it when the time comes.
- Most shops will put some sort of shoe on the wing to keep it from digging into the shoulder. Just talking to operators after the presentation, I found there are a lot of good ideas out there. Some have even put a wheel on the wing to keep it at a certain level.
- A good way to learn the winging process is to ask any seasoned veteran operator in your shop. They are more than happy to teach you.

For more information about snowplowing techniques, a video called *Plowing Techniques* is an excellent resource. Developed by the Iowa Department of Transportation for its winter operations training program, this video served as a springboard for the panel discussion at the expo. The video is available for loan at the Center for Transportation Research and Education's (CTRE's) library. Contact Jim Hogan, library coordinator, 515-294-9481.

You can also contact Denny Amoss, 641-932-7171, or Bill Feldhahn, 319-344-4086. •

remove a snow trap. One person drove an excavator to dig the soil, three people drove single-axle dump trucks to haul the soil away, and one drove a road grader to straighten up the ditch.

Scherrman says that often the equipment operators would accomplish little in a day because of soil hauling problems. Back then, instead of being spread over the field, the excavated soil was hauled

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The people listed below help guide and direct the policies and activities of the Center for Transportation Research and Education's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). The board meets at least annually.

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