

WHAT OUR USERS ARE SAYING

Larry Bauman is a busy man. As the grounds maintenance supervisor at Aims Community College in Greeley, Colo., he is responsible for keeping the college's grounds and hardscapes in immaculate condition for students, staff and visitors.

The job is not easy, with a five-man crew maintaining more than 60 acres of turf across three locations with more than 250 total acres of grounds every day throughout the year.

"We're mowing, edging, renovating, sweeping, irrigating, installing landscapes during the warmer months, and then clearing snow in winter," says Bauman. "We're never short of work to do around here."

With the range of tasks to complete on a regular basis, Bauman requires versatile equipment to maximize his team's efficiency.

"We use Grasshopper mowers specifically because of the versatility we get with all the implements," he says. "One mower does lots of things, so our equipment doesn't sit idle months at a time."

Aims has a fleet of Grasshoppers — one 322D, one 721 and two 928D models — and a full lineup of implements to go along with them: an AERA-vator™ for relieving compacted turf, a dozer blade for pushing snow from smaller walks, an Edge-EZE™ edger to maintain 5 miles of curbs and walks, a PowerVac™ collection system for fall leaf collection, a rotary broom for brushing lighter snows and clearing parking lots, a snowthrower to remove snow from congested areas and a turbine blower for clearing curbs of debris.

The department also has two winter enclosures for the 928D models to protect the crew members from the harsh mountain winters. It isn't uncommon for the snow to drift more than 3 or 4 feet in places, which Bauman says isn't a match for the snowthrower.



"The snowthrowers can go through those big drifts with ease, and they are especially good for getting the snow up and over planting beds," Bauman says. "Otherwise we would have to remove snow around those beds manually."

Not only do the Grasshoppers and implements help reduce the time necessary to complete each task (as opposed to manual methods or more cumbersome stand-alone equipment), they have also helped reduce the department's direct expenses.

"We don't have to buy more pieces of expensive equipment to suit specific purposes when one mower can serve multiple purposes," he says.

"The versatility we get from our Grasshoppers helps us keep our costs low."

The diesel engines also help keep Bauman's costs low, as the mowers have greater longevity and better fuel efficiency. The diesels also require less maintenance overall, which further reduces their cost investment.

In addition to the versatility and efficiency of the mowers, Bauman lauds their maneuverability and clean cut as well.

"We can mow almost anywhere, anytime, because the mowers are easy to maneuver around intricate areas where other machines can't go," says Bauman. "Even the big diesels get in and out of tight places. That and the large cutting decks help us reduce our mowing time."

The crew is out mowing 20 hours each week, from April through September. Even high-traffic pedestrian areas on campus are less of a concern, he says. The 4X Rear Discharge™ deck on the 322D has excellent airflow keeping clippings and debris behind the mowers and evenly distributed on the turf.

"The cut quality is just perfect," says Bauman. "The Grasshoppers give us a great finished cut that we want to keep the grounds looking good."

The even distribution pattern also eliminates the need to remove clippings, which in turn reduces the need for supplemental fertilization throughout the year, further reducing the labor and material investment of caring for the grounds.

Bauman couldn't ask for a better combination of versatility, durability and performance.

"We just love these machines," he says. "They've taken good care of our grounds and our budgets. We couldn't be happier with them." ~