

Idea Exchange

Air powered endgate release

Spreading gravel means managing several operations at once. An air system for tripping the endgate would make the process easier and safer. The Valley City, North Dakota, highway department has built a release mechanism for less than half the cost of a commercial device.

A single-acting air cylinder is mounted under the box. The end of the endgate trip handle shaft is modified to hold the end of the cylinder. A 1/4-inch hose connects to the air switch which is mounted in the cab adjacent to the box lift lever. The air source can be tapped at the air seat supply or wherever it is convenient. The endgate is closed manually after the box is lowered and the truck has stopped.

According to John Windish, Valley City Highway Supervisor, materials cost about \$70 and labor is estimated at \$100. He indicates that the system works very well and is easy to install.

For more information contact Windish at 701/845-8508.

Retreading tires can save money



You may save 30%-50% over the cost of new truck tires by buying retreads. The key is quality, which has improved dramatically in the last decade. With poorer operations quitting business the number of shops has now dropped from nearly 10,000 to about 1350.

"It costs around \$150 to have each tire capped compared to \$300 for a new tire" says Gordy Paprocki, who manages over 100 trucks as equipment superintendent for the City of West Allis Department of Public Works. They put recaps on all their Class 7 and 8 garbage and dump trucks.

"We had some problems a few years ago, using non-OEM capping companies, before Goodyear got up to speed," he says. West Allis buys only Goodyear tires and returns the casings to the distributor which runs a capping plant nearby.

Retreading your own worn casings ensures that you know the tire's wear and care history. If you plan to retread, keep the cases properly inflated throughout the tire's life and retire the tire with 4/32-inch of tread remaining. Ninety percent of all problems with tires occur within this last 4/32 of tread. It also provides more surface for retreading.

Other operations prefer not to use retreads. "We get a really good deal on our new tires through net state pricing," says Bill Fischer, Outagamie County Highway Superintendent. "We found that selling the casings back to the recappers was more cost effective." In addition, the last time they tried retreads two or three years ago, they had problems

with sizing. The circumferences were not standard and the tires didn't mate well with other tires.

Clearly retreads can be a good deal if quality can be assured.

A portion of this article was adapted from "Maintaining a Healthy Tire Inventory" in the Winter 1997 issue of **Road Business**, the newsletter of the New Hampshire T2 Center. You can reach Gordy Poprocki at 414/302-8809 and Bill Fischer at 920/832-5380.

Do you have an idea to share with **Crossroads** readers? Let us know what it is and we'll contact you for details. Use the form on page 7.

T.I.C. joins the
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Check out the brand new Wisconsin Transportation Information Center web site at the following world wide web address:

<http://www.engr.wisc.edu/centers/tic>

You'll find a variety of information there, including copies of the **Crossroads** newsletter from 1996-98. New material is being added regularly, so come back often.

Crossroads

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Wisconsin Transportation Information Center, UW-Madison Department of Engineering Professional Development, 432 N. Lake St., Madison, WI 53706

Phone: 800/442-4615 Fax: 608/263-3160, or e-mail to individuals below.

Don Walker, *director*
Steve Pudloski, *staff*
Mercy Ranum, *program assistant*

donald@engr.wisc.edu
pudloski@engr.wisc.edu
ranum@engr.wisc.edu

Lynn Entine, *writer and editor*
Susan Kummer, *graphic artist*

Lynn Entine Writing & Editing
Artifax