

## Idea Exchange

### Recycling antifreeze

What do you do with 100 gallons of used antifreeze? That's how much antifreeze the City of Milwaukee fleet service has to handle every month. These days the fleet service is recycling and reusing their antifreeze, and saving money too.

One company comes out to the repair shop and recycles the material on site. Another company hauls the used material away to recycle it in their facility.

"Before the recycling program we tried another vendor. They were charging about 50 cents a gallon at that time to remove it. Now we pay about \$2 a gallon to have it recycled," says Dave Rochester, Milwaukee DPW fleet service inventory control clerk.

Not only does recycling keep the propylene and ethylene glycol out of the environment, says Dave Jensen of Jensen Environmental Management in Muskego, it also removes impurities in the water that was used to dilute it initially. Iron, for example, can build up sludge deposits in the vehicle engine and damage it. It is not necessary to have antifreeze to exchange; Jensen also hauls excess material and sells the recycled product as needed. The cost varies by quantity but averages around \$1.65 a gallon, Jensen says.

*For more information contact Dave Rochester, Milwaukee DPW Fleet Services, at 414/286-2734. Mention of a commercial business does not imply endorsement.*

### Leaf collector saves labor

The large hose out front makes it look like an elephant, but Ripon's leaf collector saves more than peanuts for the city. One person can operate the equipment alone, cutting manpower needs by two-thirds. It also saves on back injuries, according to Richard Fenner, Ripon's Public Works Operations Superintendent.



The first leaf collector was specially modified for Ripon by American Roads of Ohio. A pull-behind leaf loader was set on a custom-wheeled frame and had hydraulic cylinders installed to move the hose. It cost about \$20,000 in 1987. In 1992, using city forces, they modified a second one using an older pull-behind leaf vac. The cost was just under \$8000.

The leaf vac attaches to the front of the truck using snowplow mounting hardware and the hose that vacuums up the leaves is operated with the joystick that is also used for



the plow wing. A 25 yard bulk box slides inside the truck's dump body to hold the chopped leaves. The box is covered by 1/4 inch mesh to keep the leaves from blowing out.

"The operators thought it was a good idea because nobody wanted to be dragging the hose around," says Fenner. Ripon operates two "leaf suckers" for \$456 a year for gas and an average of \$618 a year in labor and repair parts. Each unit collects 520 tons of leaves a year in the same number of days as it previously took for the old three-man crew system.

*For information and general specs contact Richard Fenner at 920/748-4910.*

*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.*

### Crossroads

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