

Retreads an option for truck tires

TIRE COSTS ARE GOING UP

along with petroleum prices, and the largest tire sizes are in short supply. Meanwhile, local budgets are squeezed so tight they squeak. Have you thought about your tire program lately? What about retreads?

Retreads can save money. Prices are as much as 50% less than new tires. Commercial truck fleets know the benefits. Almost half of the 37 million replacement tires purchased by fleets in 2004 were retreads, says a fact sheet from the Tire Retread Information Bureau (TRIB).

Municipal fleets can also realize cost savings, even over reduced government tire prices. "We use recaps on the rear axles of almost all of our single axle, tandems, and quad trucks," says Dave Lyga, Shop Superintendent for the Trempealeau County Highway Department. Retreads of the type they use cost \$116 to \$130—about half of the \$240 for a comparable new tire.



One reason the cost is lower: retreading uses only a third as much oil as a new tire. That means retreads are more environmentally friendly. In addition to conserving natural resources up-front, they also reduce the volume of worn out tires at the disposal end.

What about performance? These days quality retreads



The largest tires are in short supply. A retread on your casing can avoid the problem.

perform as well as new tires. The technology has improved significantly and major retread suppliers continue to invest heavily in research and development. Consolidation and competition are also pushing the industry to deliver high quality.

The industry recommends keeping new tires on the steering axles and using retreads on rear or trailer axles. Some municipalities save money by putting retreads right on new equipment. "They spec all steer tires on new school buses," says Larry Lampe of Pomp's Tire Service in Green Bay. "Then they buy retreads on our casings for the rear axles. They store the original equipment steer tires in the tire rack and in most cases never need to purchase new tires."

How do you find a good retread tire? Deal only with reputable companies, advises the TRIB. You can use the TRIB's Web site to locate dealers near you. Wisconsin municipalities can find out about suppliers, services, and contract prices for new and retread tires through the state Bureau of Procurement's VendorNet System.

Get your own tire casings retreaded, if possible, says the TRIB. That way you know its use and maintenance history. This is also a way around the supply shortage of large tires for loaders and other heavy equipment.

"My tire man says he can get a tire recapped three times off the original new tire," says Dave Lyga of Trempealeau County. "Most major tire companies use an X-ray process to make sure the casing is in excellent shape for retreading. That guarantees the customer a better product with little or no chance of a failure."

If you do buy a cap and casing from a reputable dealer remember you get what you pay for. Better quality retreads will be priced accordingly. Also, inspect the casing. Check the date. Look for marks that show how many times it has been retreaded. And look for signs of excess repairs. One nail hole is not a concern, but reconsider if you spot a lot of them.

The bottom line is: quality retreads can deliver safety and performance on your equipment along with savings for your bottom line.

These days quality retreads perform as well as new tires.

Wisconsin Bureau of Procurement
VendorNet System
<http://vendornet.state.wi.us>

TRIB Web site
www.retread.org