

Fully use your utility vehicle

BY STEVE RUDOLPH



All photos courtesy of Polaris Sales Inc.

Turf professionals have long used utility vehicles to safely and quickly get from point A to point B. Now some are finding it's also possible to get a little work done along the way.

"Today's utility vehicles are designed for so much more than just transportation," said Tony Wixo, product manager for the Polaris Professional Series line of commercial-grade vehicles and equipment.

One of the most versatile of the utility vehicle attachments is the power broom or sweeper. Affixed to the front of a vehicle, power brooms allow the operator to clean virtually anything from any surface.

On the turf, a utility vehicle equipped with a power broom can be used for dethatching, spring clean up or to clear debris following a storm. On sidewalks and parking lots, power brooms are ideal for removing dirt, sand, gravel and trash.

If you're located in an area where falling leaves are a precursor to falling snow, putting a power broom on a utility vehicle makes especially good sense.

"A power broom can clean packed snow right down to the surface or it can throw 6 to 8 inches of the fresh stuff nearly 15 feet," said Wixo. "It works better than a snow thrower."

If you plan to use a utility vehicle for snow removal, Wixo suggests selecting a model that can be equipped with a hardcab. "A hardcab and windshield wipers keep the driver protected from the elements and allow operation during even the nastiest of conditions," said Wixo.

A plow blade can be used in place of a power broom for heavy-duty snow removal. In the warmer months, the plow blade can also serve to move dirt and rock. To get the most use from any plow blade, it's recommended that it have heavy-duty wear bars and the ability adjust to different angles.

According to Wixo, one major factor to con-

sider when selecting any attachments for your vehicle is the ease of installation.

Choose attachments that can quickly be taken on and off by just one person. Also, be sure any connectors are weatherproof and of the highest quality to ensure years of successful operation.

Attachments aren't the only thing utility vehicles can be equipped with; they can also be fitted with add-ons, such as cargo and van boxes, that provide safe and secure storage for tools and equipment.

"You can even put a ladder rack on top of a vehicle or add a tool carrier and create your very own mobile work station," said Wixo.

With such a wide variety of accessories and attachments available, there's almost no limit to what utility vehicles can do. However, according to Wixo, before you run out and purchase an attachment, you should look at the specifications of vehicle.

"Not all vehicles are created the same," said Wixo. "Take the example of a pickup truck. A plow blade on the front of a compact pickup truck might work fine for clearing a driveway. But if you need to clear a whole parking lot or commercial properties, I'd bet you would rather be driving a half-ton or full-ton truck with four-wheel drive.

"The same is true of utility vehicles. For these types of applications, all-wheel drive is a must. Low-end power and torque are an integral part of maximizing the on-the-job efficiencies that attachments can provide. And if you're working on turf that you don't want to tear up, lockable differential is a must. With it you can flip a switch and the wheels will turn independently of each other, minimizing any turf damage." **ST**

Steve Rudolph is an account manager with Karwoski & Courage Public Relations.

