PRIVATE UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND NEWS

WINTER SPECIAL EDITION 2025
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POWERING THE CAMPUS LANDSCAPE
HOW MODERN GROUNDS EQUIPMENT IS REDEFINING EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

STEEL WINDOW THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
AN INTERVIEW WITH HOPE'S WINDOWS MARKETING MANAGER ANDY CAMAY

2025 EQUIPMENT EXPO OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT
PRODUCT ROUNDUP

WHEN WINTER ARRIVES
SMART, SAFE SNOW REMOVAL STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGE CAMPUSES

EXTERIORS & LANDSCAPES

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ARCHITECT: David M. Schwarz Architects, Inc.
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UNIVERSITY CAMPUS EXPANSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

At a major university residential expansion project in the Southeast, collaboration and cooperation among the construction management firm, window and door manufacturer, and installation contractor resulted in a several stunning projects recreating the look of the surrounding century-old buildings. All totaled, Hope's Windows, Inc., supplied over 1,200 unique windows made from custom hot-rolled steel profiles and nearly 100 high traffic and fire-rated door assemblies made from 10 and 12 gauge cold-rolled steel.

According to Sean Farrell, senior project manager at Layton Construction, establishing collaborative relationships is key to successful construction projects. One of the best examples of this maxim is a multi-phase university project for which Layton Construction is serving as construction manager. Layton, part of the STO Building Group, is a nationally-ranked commercial contractor with ten offices around the United States. The firm specializes in healthcare, industrial, warehousing, and higher education projects. As construction manager, Layton hires the sub-contractors and manages and oversees the project as part of a team.

> "Since we were building windows and doors to make a brand new college, we needed a company with the methodology to produce the product like it was done 100 years ago."
>
> *— Sean Farrell, Sr Project Manager*
> *Layton Construction*

Hope's Brian Whalen, Vice President of Sales, acknowledges that the project was a real test of Hope's capabilities. He is especially proud that they Hope's was able to expedite the schedule even in the face of design changes and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The shop drawing approval process – including preparation of blueprints of windows and doors with all setting conditions, sizes, customized designs, and required testing – took longer than normal. Changes were made along the way that might have pushed back the delivery schedules for some, but Hope's made adjustments during the production process to deliver all materials on time. Whalen gave a nod to Joey Riggan and the team at Alexander Metals, the frame and glass installer team, saying the overall project went extremely smoothly once the frames were on site.

Says Whalen, "It was a fantastic collaboration among all the parties. Hope's worked closely as the manufacturer to fulfill the architect's design vision, and then the installer worked closely with us to make sure everything was installed executed properly."

PHOTOS: Steve Hall, © Hall + Merrick Photographers

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Hope's® Windows, Inc., is a business based on 100 percent customized work design and manufacturing, Hope's provides a specialized skillset to assist clients in design and production of unique window and door assemblies. Meeting the expectations of Layton Construction in combination with the aesthetic vision of the client and architect was definitely a challenge. The overall experience was a testament to the quality standards of the university and an honor to be a part of. In business since 1912, Hope's had the global experience to make it happen.

Visit HopesWindows.com.

Editor's Letter

WINTER SPECIAL EDITION 2025

A Love Letter to Lawns, Quads, and Curb Appeal

There are two undeniable truths about elite private college campuses. First, they are breathtaking. Second, they do not look that way by accident.

This special edition of Private University Products and News exists because you asked for it—and when facilities leaders ask, we listen. Over the past year, many of you told us you wanted a deeper dive into outdoor landscaping equipment and the exterior elements that define the first impression of your campus. Not the glossy brochure version (although we appreciate those too), but the real, behind-the-scenes work that keeps quads pristine, pathways welcoming, and turf competition-ready.

Let's be honest: students may choose a college for its academics, but parents absolutely notice the landscaping before they ask about the library. A perfectly edged walkway, a lawn striped like a baseball field, and trees trimmed just right quietly say, "This institution pays attention to detail." And we all know that detail requires the right equipment, the right planning, and a grounds crew that probably deserves more applause than they get—especially at 6 a.m. on a humid August morning.

In this issue, we celebrate the unsung heroes of campus curb appeal. We explore the latest outdoor power equipment designed for large, complex campuses where historic brick paths coexist with modern green spaces. We look at how institutions are balancing sustainability goals with performance demands, because elite campuses don't just want to look good—they want to be responsible stewards of the land they manage.

You'll also find insights on maintaining exteriors that reflect tradition without feeling frozen in time. Stone façades, iron gates, and carefully planned landscapes don't maintain themselves, no matter how many times someone says, "But it's always looked this way."

This edition is for anyone who has ever rerouted foot traffic because fresh mulch was down. For those who know the difference between "good enough" and "tour-ready." And for the facilities and grounds professionals who understand that a campus exterior is not just scenery—it's part of the institution's identity.

Thank you for asking us to create this issue, and thank you for the work you do every day to make campuses places people are proud to call home. Just remember: if no one notices your work, that usually means you did it perfectly.

Ed Bauer

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When snow and ice arrive, the campuses that thrive are the ones that planned for it long before the forecast appeared. We've broken down the most effective equipment options, checklists that leave nothing to chance, and staffing scenarios.

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CAMPUS CLEAN-UP TIPS

Smarter equipment choices can dramatically boost cleanup efficiency and reduce crew fatigue. Learn how walk-behind blowers and modern vacuum systems outperform traditional tools—saving labor, improving ergonomics, and keeping campuses clean, safe, and impressive year-round.

Powering the Campus Landscape

How Modern Grounds Equipment Is Redefining Efficiency, Sustainability, and First Impressions

by Ed Bauer

On a college campus, the landscape speaks long before anyone does.

Before a prospective student steps inside a residence hall, before parents sit down with admissions, and before alumni gather for homecoming, the lawns, walkways, and green spaces are already telling a story. That story reflects care, investment, and pride—and for private universities, it matters more than ever.

Grounds and landscaping teams today are tasked with far more than basic maintenance. They are stewards of first impressions, contributors to campus safety and accessibility, and increasingly, partners in sustainability initiatives. Their work touches nearly every corner of campus life, from academic quads and athletic fields to wooded perimeters and event spaces.

Fall is the season when those responsibilities become most visible. Leaves accumulate quickly, foot traffic increases, weather patterns become unpredictable, and campuses prepare for high-profile events. It is also the time of year when equipment performance is tested daily. The tools used by grounds teams must deliver reliability, efficiency, and flexibility under pressure.

Modern grounds equipment has evolved to meet these demands. Today's commercial mowers, blowers, brush management tools, and utility vehicles are no longer single-purpose machines. They are integrated components of a strategic grounds fleet—one designed to align with institutional values, staffing realities, and long-term budget planning.

Built for Campus-Scale Demands

Large private campuses place unique demands on mowing equipment. Grounds crews may move from expansive athletic fields to formal courtyards to sloped green spaces within a single shift. Terrain varies, usage patterns change, and expectations for appearance remain consistently high.

Modern commercial mowers are designed with this complexity in mind. Zero-turn mowers continue to serve as the backbone of campus turf management thanks to their speed, maneuverability, and ability to efficiently handle large acreage. Expanded deck width options allow teams to tailor equipment to specific zones, reducing passes and saving time. Advances in cutting systems help ensure consistent results across different grass types and conditions.

While power remains important, operator comfort and control have become equally critical considerations. During peak growing seasons, long mowing days are common. Fatigue can slow productivity, affect safety, and contribute to long-term physical strain. Manufacturers have responded with improved seating, smoother ride systems, and intuitive controls that reduce physical stress and enhance precision.

For private universities managing extensive green space with limited staff, these improvements can translate into measurable gains—fewer hours per acre, better results, and improved morale among grounds professionals.

Operator Comfort as a Strategic Advantage

Operator comfort is no longer viewed as a luxury. It is increasingly recognized as a strategic advantage.

Grounds professionals often spend hours at a time operating mowers and equipment. Excessive vibration, poor ergonomics, and awkward control layouts contribute to fatigue, which can impact focus, increase the risk of injury, and shorten careers. Over time, fatigue also leads to higher turnover and increased training costs.

Modern equipment designs address these challenges directly. Suspension systems help absorb uneven terrain. Ergonomic seats reduce strain on the back and joints. Improved visibility and refined control layouts enhance responsiveness and awareness—especially important in pedestrian-heavy campus environments.

For institutions competing for skilled maintenance staff, equipment that prioritizes operator well-being supports retention and productivity. Crews can work longer without sacrificing efficiency, maintain better focus around students and visitors, and take pride in the tools they use every day.

Managing Leaves, Debris, and Campus Life

Fall cleanup is one of the most visible aspects of campus grounds management. Leaves left on walkways can create slip hazards, obscure signage, and detract from the overall appearance of the campus. Efficient debris management is essential—but so is sensitivity to campus life.

Commercial blowers continue to deliver greater air volume and velocity, allowing crews to clear large areas quickly. Backpack designs distribute weight more evenly, improving comfort during extended use. Features such as cruise control and vibration reduction are now standard in many professional-grade tools.

At the same time, noise and emissions are growing concerns for private universities. Battery-powered blowers have emerged as a practical complement to traditional gas-powered equipment, particularly in areas near classrooms, libraries, and residence halls. Their reduced noise levels allow maintenance work to occur without disrupting academic activities, while lower emissions support sustainability goals.

Rather than choosing one technology over the other, many campuses adopt a mixed approach. High-powered gas blowers are deployed for large, open areas and heavy debris, while battery-powered tools are used in noise-sensitive zones. This balanced strategy provides flexibility while aligning operational efficiency with campus values.

Beyond the Lawn: Managing Campus Edges and Undeveloped Areas

While manicured lawns define the campus core, many private universities manage far more land than visitors ever see. Fence lines,

For institutions competing for skilled maintenance staff, equipment that prioritizes operator well-being supports retention and productivity.

drainage areas, wooded property edges, and future development sites all require regular attention.

Compact brush mowers and flail mowers allow grounds teams to manage these areas efficiently without relying on full-size equipment or outside contractors. Designed to handle thick grass and light brush, these tools offer a balance between power and maneuverability, making them ideal for campus perimeters and hard-to-reach areas.

Mini skid steers equipped with brush-cutting attachments further expand in-house capabilities. Their compact footprint allows access to tight or uneven spaces, while interchangeable attachments support year-round use—from land clearing and grading to snow removal and material handlin`g.

For institutions focused on cost control and flexibility, investing in compact land management solutions can significantly reduce reliance on outsourced services while improving response times and consistency.

Utility Vehicles That Work Across Campus

Utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) have evolved into indispensable assets for campus operations. No longer limited to grounds work, they support facilities maintenance, event setup, and seasonal tasks across large properties.

Modern UTVs offer impressive payload capacity, towing capability, and a wide range of accessory options. Dump beds, tool racks, sprayers, and snow attachments allow a single vehicle to serve multiple departments throughout the year. Their compact size and maneuverability make them well-suited for navigating pedestrian-heavy areas while still transporting meaningful loads.

For private campuses balancing efficiency with safety, UTVs fill the space between full-size trucks and hand carts. They improve response times, reduce manual labor, and help departments operate more efficiently with fewer resources.

Sustainability and Smarter Procurement Decisions

Sustainability initiatives are increasingly shaping equipment purchasing decisions at private universities, and grounds fleets are no exception.

Battery-powered tools reduce emissions and noise. More efficient engines lower fuel consumption. Durable equipment with longer service lives minimizes replacement cycles and waste. Together, these factors help campuses reduce environmental impact while maintaining high standards of appearance and safety.

Procurement teams are also taking a closer look at total cost of ownership. Purchase price is only part of the equation. Maintenance requirements, energy or fuel costs, parts availability, warranty coverage, and local dealer support all influence long-term value.

As campuses plan for fall and beyond, equipment decisions are often evaluated through a broader institutional lens—considering not just immediate needs, but long-term goals related to sustainability, staffing, and campus growth.

Choosing the Right Equipment for Your Campus

There is no single solution that fits every private university. Each campus brings its own mix of acreage, terrain, staffing levels, and institutional priorities.

The most successful grounds programs take a holistic approach, selecting equipment that works together as a coordinated fleet rather than in isolation. Mowers, blowers, brush management tools, and utility vehicles each play a role in maintaining a campus that is safe, welcoming, and reflective of the institution's values.

As fall unfolds and campuses put their landscapes on display, the right equipment ensures that first impressions remain strong—long after the leaves have fallen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He worked on the staff at Mount Union College.

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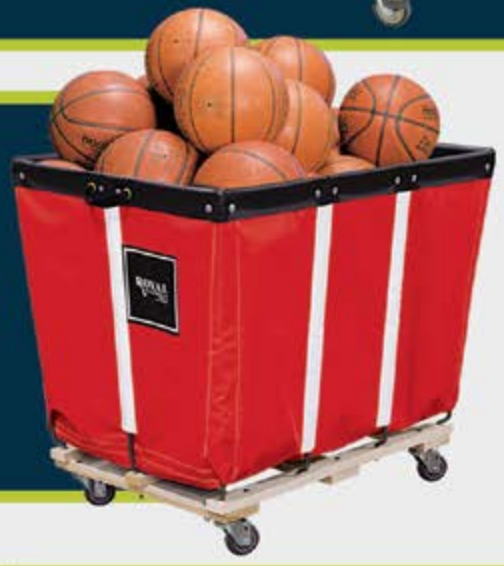

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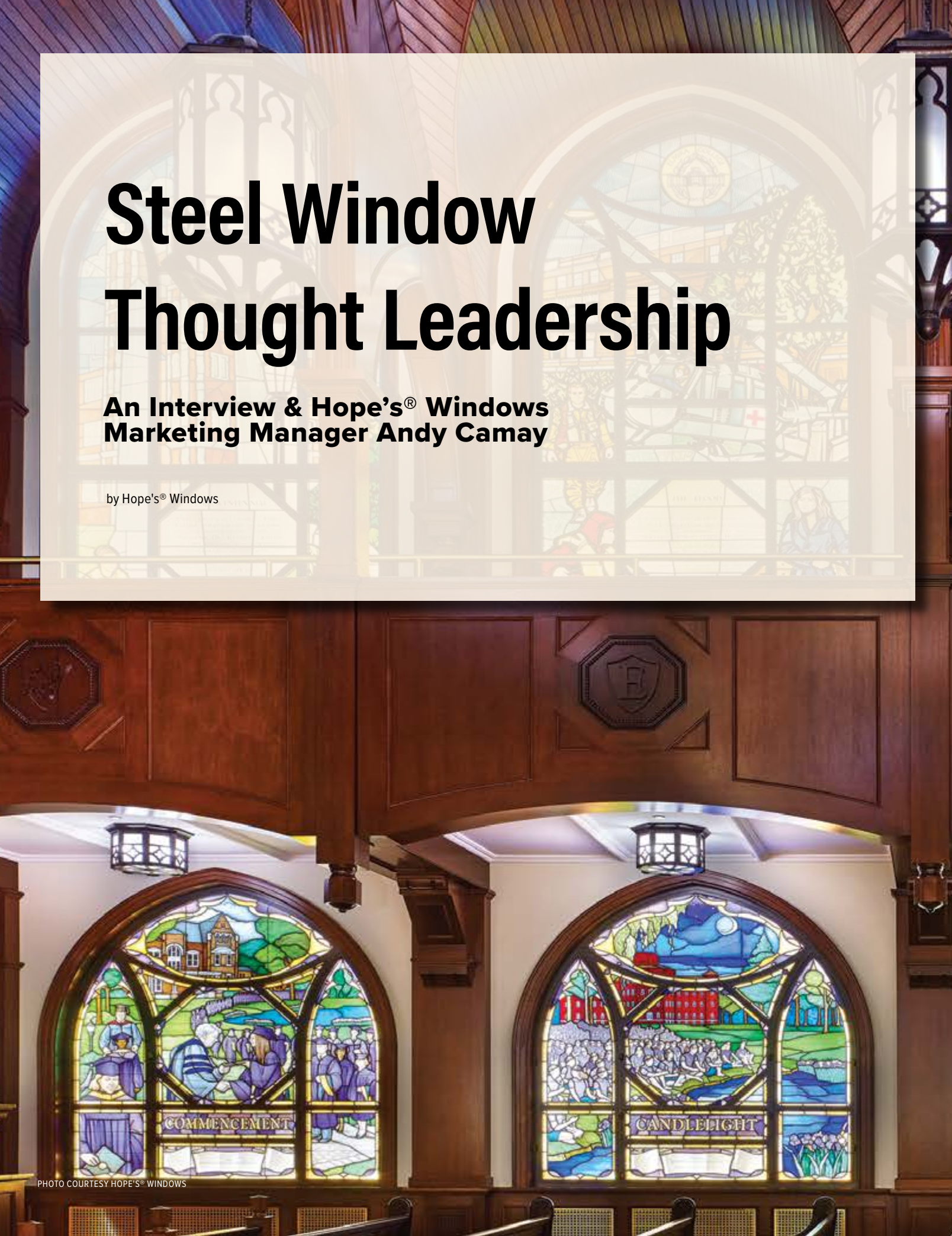
Steel Window Thought Leadership

An Interview & Hope's® Windows Marketing Manager Andy Camay

by Hope's® Windows



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MAY DAYS
SINGING

PHOTO COURTESY HOPE'S® WINDOWS

Interview: Preserving History, Advancing Performance — A Conversation with a Steel Window Expert

Q: Modern thermal-break technologies have transformed steel windows. How have these advancements changed what's possible in historically accurate campus restorations?

A: Twenty years ago, if you wanted true historical authenticity, you typically had to sacrifice thermal performance. Today, thermal-break technologies allow us to "decouple" the interior and exterior steel surfaces, dramatically reducing heat transfer. The result is a window that maintains the slender profiles of early 20th-century steel but performs to modern energy standards. This means historic campus buildings can retain their architectural identity while delivering comfort and efficiency comparable to new construction.

Q: When collaborating with historic preservation teams, what challenges arise in matching century-old steel window profiles while meeting today's energy-efficiency requirements?

A: The most significant challenge is dimensional fidelity. Original steel windows often used very narrow profiles that modern materials struggle to replicate. We use advanced hot rolling techniques and custom tooling to match sightlines, shadow lines, and muntin widths—down to the millimeter. The second challenge is integrating high-performance glazing without altering the visual balance of the window. It's a careful dance between aesthetics and physics, but modern steel systems allow us to achieve both.

Q: How do steel windows allow universities to enhance thermal performance without compromising the character of older academic halls and libraries?

A: Steel's greatest advantage is strength. Because it's so strong, you can support high-performance insulated glass in extremely thin frames. This retains the graceful, historic look while drastically improving comfort. Students and faculty feel fewer drafts, temperature swings are reduced, and energy consumption drops—all without altering the building's architectural DNA.

Q: What advancements in glazing, coatings, or insulation have contributed most to the thermal efficiency of steel windows in historic renovations?

A: Low-E coatings and warm-edge spacers have been game changers. Low-E coatings reflect heat back into the room, improving winter performance without tinting or altering appearance. Warm-edge spacers reduce condensation and energy loss along

PHOTO COURTESY HOPE'S® WINDOWS

the perimeter of the glass. Combined with argon-filled insulated units, these elements make a massive difference.

Q: How do you evaluate whether an existing steel window should be restored, retrofitted, or replaced—especially in historically significant buildings?

A: We start with a thorough condition assessment: corrosion, operability, glazing integrity, and thermal performance. If the frames are structurally sound, restoration or retrofitting might be the best path. But if there's severe rust, deformation, or lead-paint concerns, replacement with historically accurate replicas becomes the most responsible choice.

Q: What are some common misconceptions about the thermal performance of steel windows?

A: The biggest misconception is that steel windows are inherently inefficient. That was true decades ago, but modern steel systems—especially those with thermal breaks—perform on par with high-quality aluminum or even wood-clad windows. Another misconception is that steel "sweats" more than other materials. In reality, with proper glazing and airflow, condensation is no more likely than in any other high-performance window.

Q: Can steel windows help universities meet or exceed sustainability benchmarks like LEED or WELL while preserving historic facades?

A: Absolutely. Steel windows contribute to lower energy consumption, improved natural daylighting, and long-term lifecycle durability. Because steel is highly recyclable and incredibly long-lasting, it aligns perfectly with sustainable design principles.

Q: How do narrow sightlines and authentic steel profiles impact both the aesthetic and energy performance of restored campus buildings?

A: Narrow sightlines create that timeless, elegant look associated with heritage architecture. But they also maximize the glass-to-frame ratio, improving daylight access and reducing reliance on artificial lighting. This enhances well-being, reduces costs, and creates more inviting spaces.

Q: What innovations are emerging that will further enhance thermal performance without altering the traditional appearance of steel windows?

A: Vacuum-insulated glass is one of the most exciting developments, offering remarkable thermal performance at a fraction of the thickness of insulated units. Advanced powder coatings that reflect solar heat while retaining historic finishes are also evolving quickly.

Q: For universities striving to balance historic preservation with rising energy costs, what advice would you offer regarding steel window solutions?

A: Start with a long-term vision. Steel windows are an investment in durability, authenticity, and sustainability. Choose a partner who understands both the architectural and technical aspects of historic work. With today's technology, universities no longer have to choose between heritage and high performance.

Strategic Q&A: Hope's® Windows Perspective

Q: Many companies today are promoting "new" thermal steel systems or stainless-steel window products. How does Hope's® view this surge of newcomers and rapid claims of innovation?

A: We welcome innovation, but in our industry, true performance is proven over decades—not a single product cycle. Many systems entering the market today are untested and haven't endured real-world weathering or building movement. Hope's® engineers with a century-long perspective: every material, process, and test is designed for generational performance.

Q: With stainless steel being promoted as a "revolutionary" alternative, why has Hope's® remained committed to solid, hot-rolled steel windows?

A: Stainless has its uses, but for structural integrity, precision, and historic sightlines, solid hot-rolled steel remains unmatched. Its strength allows for elegant profiles without compromising stability. Stainless systems often rely on built-up sections that cannot replicate historic authenticity or long-term rigidity. With that being taken in to consideration, Hope's® has been actively working towards developing a new stainless (and bronze) thermally broken system to provide a well built and trusted option to accommodate an even greater variety of of projects.

Q: Some manufacturers claim to offer "thermal steel breakthroughs" that outperform traditional systems. What is Hope's® perspective on balancing thermal performance with authenticity and lifecycle value?

A: Thermal performance 100% matters, but it's only one aspect of a successful window system. Many "breakthroughs" emphasize lab numbers rather than long-term integrity. Hope's® focuses on holistic performance: structural stability, airtightness, and longevity. Our steel systems incorporate advanced glazing to meet demanding performance goals while ensuring the windows remain beautiful and functional for generations. There's only ONE Hope's®.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Throughout its long history, Hope's® steel windows and doors have been synonymous with longevity and quality. From the development of truly visionary design concepts through an unparalleled finishing process, Hope's® is the first choice in premium quality steel and bronze windows and doors.

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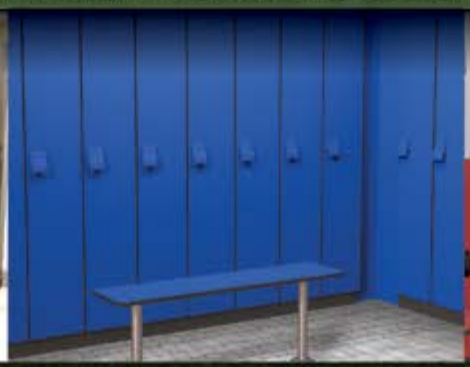

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2025 Equipment Expo Outdoor Power Equipment Product Roundup

TORO GRANDSTAND® MULTI FORCE® EVO

Category: Commercial Mower

What's New: Redesigned for pros with a Kawasaki EVO 34.5 HP engine and broad seasonal capability. It's engineered to power through mowing, tall grass, and even snow with available attachments.

Why It Matters: Provides versatility and power year-round — ideal for campus teams maintaining large lawns, athletic fields, and open landscapes.

BOBCAT ZERO-TURN MOWER LINEUP & ZT6200 AUTONOMOUS ZERO-TURN

Category: Zero-Turn Mowers (Gas, Electric, Autonomous)

What's New:

- ZT6200 Autonomous Zero-Turn — operates without an onboard operator via smartphone app.
- ZT6000e — emissions-free electric unit.
- ZT5000, ZS4000, WB700 — updated walk-behind and zero-turn options. Bobcat

Why It Matters: Offers a spectrum of mowing options from traditional to zero-emission to autonomous — valuable for campuses with diverse turf needs.

2025 Equipment Expo Outdoor Power Equipment Product Roundup

BOBCAT MT120 MINI TRACK LOADER & MT100

Category: Compact Equipment

What's New: The MT120 offers a 1,200-lb capacity and smooth pilot controls with over 50 compatible attachments. Bobcat

Why It Matters: Flexible for light land clearing, site prep, trenching, or utility tasks that complement landscaping and grounds maintenance work.

GREENWORKS® COMMERCIAL OPTIMUS CREW SOLUTIONS

Category: Battery-Powered Tools Package / Giveaway

What's New: Greenworks Commercial spotlighted its OPTIMUS Crew battery ecosystem with a major giveaway and display of high-performance commercial battery tools at the show.

Why It Matters: Highlights the shift toward fully electric crew solutions — zero emissions, lower noise, and reduced operating costs — valuable for sustainability goals on campuses.

OTHER NOTABLE EQUIPMENT & INDUSTRY TRENDS AT EQUIP EXPO

These weren't always detailed in dedicated press releases but were widely covered as key product unveilings at the 2025 show:

Robotic and Smart Mowers

Robotic mower lineups — including large-area autonomous units from multiple brands — were spotlighted during the event, showing growing automation trends in professional landscape management.

Quick Summary Table — 2025 Equip Expo Products

Product	Category	Key Feature
Toro GrandStand MULTI FORCE EVO	Commercial Mower	High-power, versatile cutting
Toro PROLINE AMI	Autonomous Mower	GNSS/RTK auto mowing
Bobcat ZT6200	Autonomous Zero-Turn	Remote operation
Bobcat ZT6000e	Electric Zero-Turn	Emissions-free operation
Bobcat MT120 / MT100	Mini Track Loaders	Compact versatility
Greenworks OPTIMUS Crew	Battery Crew Platform	Commercial battery ecosystem

2025 Equipment Expo Outdoor Power Equipment Product Roundup

GRASSHOPPER – 2025 MOWERS & MODELS

Grasshopper's lineup for 2025 continues to center on commercial-grade mowing solutions that balance performance, durability, and operator comfort. While Grasshopper doesn't publish a dedicated press release page for each model year, their equipment was highlighted in Equip Expo exhibitor lists and dealer inventories showing new or key 2025 models at the show.

2025 Grasshopper Highlights

- **Grasshopper 623T Zero-Turn Mower** – A robust 52″ commercial mower, ideal for mid-sized turf areas and professional landscape use. Starr Lawn & Garden
- **Grasshopper 440 (72″ Vanguard EFI)** – Large deck option for high-area productivity. Starr Lawn & Garden
- **Grasshopper FrontMount™ 725KT 52″** – Front-mount configuration for maneuverability and visibility in tight campus spaces.
- **Grasshopper 932 Kubota 962cc** – Heavy-duty powertrain for demanding commercial cutting tasks.

Trend Note: Grasshopper products at Equip Expo 2025 were featured in show summaries as part of the OutStander® and suspension-focused mower series, addressing operator comfort and long-hour productivity — key for professional crews. rurallifestyledealer.com

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GRAVELY – NEW & UPDATED 2025 MODELSS

Gravely, under AriensCo, used the 2025 Equip Expo to reintroduce and expand its commercial mower portfolio, including return of legacy models and new stand-on platforms. Lawn & Landscape+1

Gravely 2025 Product Highlights

- **Gravely Pro-Turn 200 Commercial Zero-Turn** – This classic workhorse returns to the lineup with 52″ and 60″ decks, strong chassis, Kawasaki power, and a focus on durability plus comfort through features like a cut-and-sew suspension seat — ideal for fleet buyers. Lawn & Landscape
- **Gravely ZT X 52 Kawasaki Zero-Turn** – Durable pro mower with welded tubular frame and comfort-oriented cockpit — useful for campuses with mixed turf maintenance needs.
- **Gravely Pro-Stance® Ultra Stand-On Mower** – Commercial stand-on platform with 52″, 60″, and 72″ deck options emphasizing comfort, stability on slopes, and quick entry/exit. AriensCo
- **Gravely OVIS-X Remote Brush Mower** – Advanced remote-control mower designed for steep slope and high-grass jobs, expanding Gravely's capability beyond flat turf. Total Landscape Care

Industry Context: Gravely also announced enhancements to its commercial spindle design (for improved reliability) and expanded its stand-on mower segment, reflecting rising professional demand in 2025. AriensCo

2025 Equipment Expo Outdoor Power Equipment Product Roundup

ARIENS – BRAND UPDATES & RELATED PRODUCTS

Ariens (the parent company of Gravely) has been promoting enhancements tied to the 2025 model year and Equip Expo, particularly around reliability and expanded offerings: Lawn & Landscape+1

- **Fleet Program Enhancements:** AriensCo expanded its fleet program for landscape professionals, offering up to 20% off commercial Ariens and Gravely products when buying two or more machines — a notable dealer-level product support update that can impact purchasing decisions. AriensCo
- **Ridgeline Stand-On Mower (Ariens Brand):** A new stand-on mower designed for reduced operator strain, precision cuts, and surface maneuverability — shown at Equip Expo 2025 and generating industry interest. Landscape Management+1

While specific Ariens brand press releases on 2025 zero-turn products (beyond the Ridgeline and fleet program updates) were limited in the latest public feeds, **product news and equipment showcases at major dealer inventories and expos confirm lineup evolution** for both commercial and residential segments. Landscape Management

Summary of Verified 2025 Product Releases

Brand	Product / Series	Category	Notes
Grasshopper	623T 52″, 440 72″, FrontMount 725KT	Commercial mowers	Featured in Equip Expo exhibitor roundups; focused on comfort & productivity. rurallifestyledealer.com
Gravely	Pro-Turn 200, ZT X 52	Commercial zero-turn mowers	Pro-Turn 200 returned with classic reliability. Lawn & Landscape
Gravely	Pro-Stance Ultra	Commercial stand-on mower	New premium stand-on platform expanded in 2025. AriensCo
Gravely	OVIS-X	Remote brush mower	Advanced terrain mowing capability. Total Landscape Care
Ariens	Ridgeline Stand-On`	Stand-on mower	Residential/commercial crossover product spotlighted. Landscape Management
AriensCo	Fleet Program	Purchasing support	New 20% commercial fleet pricing for professionals. AriensCo

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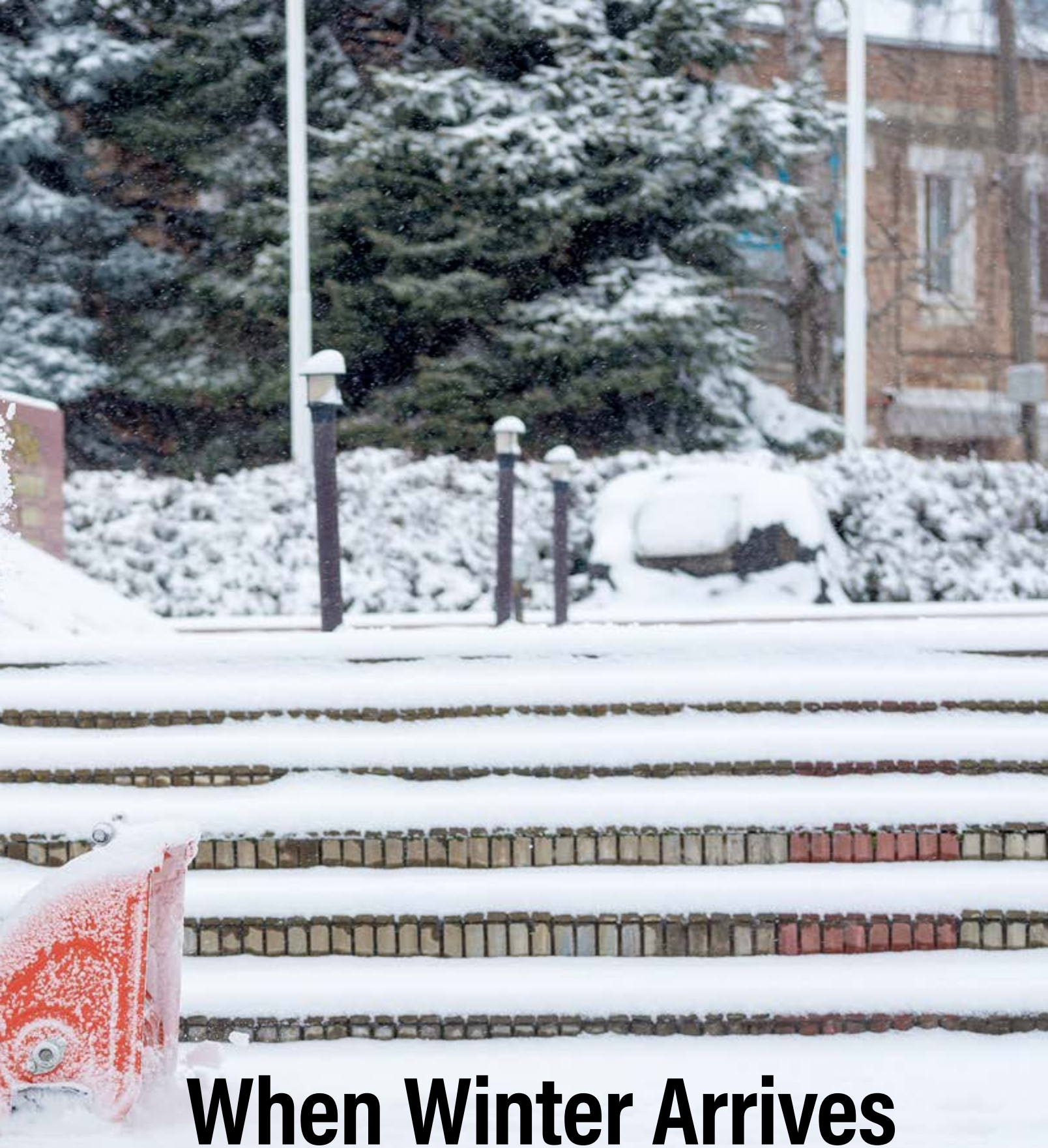

When Winter Arrives

Smart, Safe Snow Removal Strategies for College Campuses

by Ed Bauer

Snow removal on a college campus is not just about clearing roads. It's about protecting people, preserving infrastructure, managing budgets, and maintaining the reputation of the institution. In many ways, a campus's snow removal plan is one of the clearest examples of how well outdoor environments are managed under pressure. The best programs are proactive rather than reactive, flexible rather than rigid, and rooted in both technology and experience.

Why Snow Removal Matters More on Campus

Unlike municipalities that focus primarily on roads and emergency routes, college campuses are a patchwork of environments. Pedestrian-heavy walkways, ADA-accessible routes, residence hall entrances, loading docks, athletic facilities, parking structures, historic brick paths, and modern concrete plazas all coexist—often within a few hundred feet of one another.

On a winter morning, students still expect to make it to class. Faculty still expect safe access to academic buildings. Parents still arrive for campus tours. And if even one person slips, the consequences can be costly—financially, legally, and reputationally.

Effective snow removal plans balance safety, speed, sustainability, and stewardship of campus assets. It's a tall order, but one that successful institutions approach methodically.

Start With a Plan—Not a Forecast

The most successful snow removal programs begin long before winter weather is predicted. A written snow and ice management plan is essential and should be reviewed

annually. This plan should outline priorities, responsibilities, equipment inventory, communication protocols, and decision-making thresholds.

Key questions every plan should answer include:

- What areas are cleared first, and why?
- What snow depth triggers action?
- Who authorizes overtime or contractor deployment?
- How are students and staff notified during major events?
- How are ADA routes prioritized and maintained?

Many campuses create tiered priority maps that designate high-traffic pedestrian areas, emergency access routes, residence hall entrances, and academic cores as first priority. Athletic facilities, peripheral lots, and secondary walkways may follow in later phases.

The goal is not perfection—it's predictability. When everyone knows the plan, execution becomes far smoother.

Equipment Options: Matching Tools to Terrain

Snow removal equipment on college campuses must be as diverse as the terrain it serves. Gone are the days when one plow truck could handle everything.

Plow Trucks and Utility Vehicles

For main roads and larger parking areas, traditional plow trucks remain essential. However, many campuses also rely heavily on smaller utility vehicles (UTVs) or compact tractors equipped with plows, blowers, or brushes. These vehicles offer better maneuverability in tight pedestrian spaces and reduce damage to curbs, landscaping, and historic hardscapes.

Snow Blowers

Walk-behind and ride-on snow blowers are invaluable for sidewalks, stairs, and narrow paths where plows can't reach. Electric and low-emission models are increasingly popular, especially on campuses committed to sustainability goals.

Snow Pushers and Box Plows

For large surface lots and service roads, box plows can dramatically improve efficiency by moving large volumes of snow quickly, reducing labor hours during heavy storms.

Brine and Deicing Sprayers

Pre-treatment equipment, including brine sprayers, has become a cornerstone of modern snow management. Applying liquid deicers before a storm can prevent snow and ice from bonding to surfaces, making removal faster and reducing overall chemical use.

The Human Element: Staff, Training, and Fatigue

Even the best equipment means little without trained, well-supported staff. Snow events rarely happen on a convenient schedule, and overnight storms often require long shifts under difficult conditions.

Cross-training is a growing trend on campuses. Grounds crews, custodial teams, and even maintenance staff may be trained to assist with snow removal during major events. This flexibility ensures adequate coverage while preventing burnout among core teams.

Equally important is safety training. Operators should be trained not only on equipment use but also on situational awareness, pedestrian interaction, and fatigue management. Rotating shifts, scheduled breaks, and access to warm shelters can make a significant difference during extended storms.

In-House vs. Contracted Services: Finding the Right Balance

Many colleges rely on a hybrid approach that blends in-house teams with contracted snow removal services. This model offers flexibility and scalability, particularly during major storms.

In-House Advantages

- Greater familiarity with campus layout and priorities
- Faster response times for smaller events
- Better integration with campus communication systems

Contracted Services

- Additional manpower and equipment during large storms
- Reduced capital investment in specialized equipment

For institutions competing for skilled maintenance staff, equipment that prioritizes operator well-being supports retention and productivity.

- Predictable costs when managed through seasonal contracts

The key is clarity. Contracts should clearly define trigger points, response times, liability, and communication protocols. Facilities leaders emphasize that contractors should be treated as partners, not outsiders, and included in preseason planning meetings.

Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility

Snow removal doesn't have to conflict with sustainability goals. In fact, many campuses are rethinking traditional practices to reduce environmental impact without compromising safety.

Reducing salt usage is a major focus. Over-application can damage turf, trees, hardscapes, and nearby waterways. Pre-treatment with brine, calibrated spreaders, and weather-based application rates help minimize waste.

Some campuses are experimenting with alternative deicing materials, including organic or less corrosive products, especially near sensitive landscapes or historic structures.

Electric snow removal equipment, while still emerging, is gaining traction in pedestrian zones where noise and emissions are concerns. These investments align well with broader campus sustainability initiatives and demonstrate leadership in responsible operations.

Technology and Data: Smarter Winter Operations

Technology is playing an increasingly important role in snow management. GPS-enabled equipment tracking allows supervisors to monitor coverage in real time, ensuring priority areas are addressed and providing documentation if incidents occur.

Weather monitoring software tailored for facilities teams can offer hyper-local forecasts, helping managers make informed decisions about staffing and treatment timing. Some systems integrate with work order platforms, automatically generating tasks when conditions meet predefined thresholds.

Data also supports post-season analysis. Reviewing response times, chemical usage, labor hours, and incident reports allows teams to refine plans year after year.

Communication Is Everything

One of the most overlooked aspects of snow removal is communication. Students and staff are far more understanding of winter conditions when they know what to expect.

Clear messaging about cleared routes, delayed openings, and ongoing operations builds trust and reduces frustration. Many campuses use a combination of email alerts, campus apps, social media, and digital signage to keep the community informed.

Internally, communication between facilities, campus police, housing, and administration ensures that decisions—such as delayed classes or building closures—are made collaboratively and quickly.

Planning for the Worst (and Hoping for the Best)

Extreme weather events are becoming more common, and campuses must plan accordingly. Heavy snowfall followed by freeze-thaw cycles can create hazardous conditions that last for days. Ice storms, in particular, challenge traditional removal methods.

Contingency planning should address scenarios such as:

- Extended power outages
- Equipment failure during peak events
- Limited access to deicing materials
- Staffing shortages during holidays or breaks

Regular tabletop exercises and post-event debriefs help identify gaps before they become problems.

Winter as a Reflection of Campus Care

Snow removal may be seasonal, but its impact is year-round. Prospective students notice whether sidewalks are clear during winter tours. Faculty remember whether or not they felt supported during a storm. Trustees and administrators take note when operations run smoothly despite challenging conditions.

In many ways, winter operations reflect the broader culture of campus care. A well-executed snow removal plan signals that safety, planning, and stewardship are taken seriously—even when conditions are less than ideal.

As one veteran facilities director put it, "Anyone can manage a campus on a sunny day. Winter is when you find out how good your systems really are."

Looking Ahead

As campuses continue to evolve, snow removal strategies will evolve with them. Advances in equipment, materials, and data will offer new efficiencies, while sustainability goals will continue to shape decision-making.

What won't change is the importance of preparation, people, and partnership. When winter arrives—and it always does—the campuses that thrive are the ones that planned for it long before the forecast appeared.

And when the snow finally melts, those quiet, behind-the-scenes efforts will have made all the difference—leaving a campus that feels safe, accessible, and ready for whatever season comes next.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He worked on the staff at Mount Union College.

Campus Clean-Up Tips

by Pierre Pereira

Blowers and vacuums have become ubiquitous in the equipment sheds of most university campuses today. We see these pieces of equipment in use for seasonal leaf, bloom, and seed clean up in spring and fall as well as litter clean up throughout the year and following events. They are often used for the seasonal chores to productively clean up sports field turf as well as the pedestrian and parking areas throughout the campus, to keep them looking their best. We're rounded up top productivity tips to consider when buying blowers and vacs.

Blower Productivity and Tips

When looking at blowers, planners need to consider walk-behinds. Backpack blowers often require too much labor, and a walk-behind can accomplish just as much work and more, with less labor. Planners should consider that one 18 hp walk-behind blower can do as much work as up to seven laborers with backpacks! A 13 hp blower may be the most productive for the money, with the equivalent output of six backpacks. In addition, push blowers are often quieter than two-cycle backpacks and require no mixed fuel. Ergonomically, with walk-behind blowers, there is no weight on the back of the crews, and today's walk-behind blowers offer an optional single speed self-propelled feature that eliminates the fatigue associated with pushing units on turf or in hilly conditions. This feature leads to even better productivity.

The self-propelled feature also comes in handy when loading a truck, as ramp loading can be done with no lifting. Lastly, directional air discharge is available on demand, allowing the operator to come on and off work as required by the job for precise control. For larger areas or sport fields, stand-on, zero-turn blowers offer exceptionally fast clean-up, seamless maneuverability, and less fatigue for workers. Compact units will fit through gates, and these blowers are great on turf or hard surfaces.

Vacuum Productivity and Tips

When looking at vacuums, key things to consider are whether the device is push or self-propelled, how easy the bag handling is, the width of the intake and ease of adjusting the intake; the ease of installing and using an optional hose kit, and the need of dust control. For mostly hard surfaces and small amounts of time spent on clean-up, an entry level push model would be best. If the crew is using vacs often—or using the vacs on turf—then a wider model is best. Self-propelled systems, easy slide out bags, and simple debris loading and unloading make for the most productive models.

If the crews are frequently using the optional hose kit to clean up in hard to reach areas, then models which allow the system to easily shift between vacuum and hose kit are preferred. Also, buyers should look for systems that have height intake doors that are

adjustable from the operator station to easily handle different size debris such as larger bottles or cans. Lastly, in the case of dusty conditions, new dust socks are available to keep the dust to a minimum. These dust socks wrap around a standard turf bag. Planners should remember, however, that these bags can only be used in dry conditions. If they get wet, they will not work because water knocks out the static charge in the material that helps the bags attract the dust.

Maintenance crews who use these tips will be able to keep their campuses looking great in all seasons.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Pierre Pereira has a fifteen-year background in the lawn and garden industry as Sr. Director of Sales for North America at Billy Goat / Briggs and Stratton, LLC and previously as Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Billy Goat Industries. Pierre's industry background encompasses a wide understanding of customers' needs, products and markets and includes his own experience as a landscaper in his earlier days, earning his way through college. Pierre has served on the board of directors for the American Rental Association and received his MBA from NYU.

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