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CASE STUDY

THOMASTON HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT THOMASTON, CONNECTICUT

Located in southern Litchfield County in Connecticut, the town of Thomaston is 12 square miles and has a population of 9000. The Thomaston Highway Department is responsible for maintaining 45 miles of improved roadway, including snow removal, pavement repair and maintenance, roadside mowing, and tree trimming.

During the winter, the department utilizes seven plow trucks to clear and treat all town-owned roadways, properties, and sidewalks. They maintain a “wet and bare” policy three hours after snowfall ends.

THE CHALLENGE

The Thomaston Highway Department’s greatest challenge is provided by the Naugatuck River, which lends to a vast elevation difference. With a highest point of 980 feet to the lowest of 440 feet, they can experience snow in the hills while it rains downtown.

When Paul Pronovost became superintendent of highways in 2005, he looked for a weather service that could provide his team with superior precipitation forecasting capabilities. He wanted to know not only when it would start raining or snowing, but ideally with a couple of hours advance notice for optimal preparation.

THE DTN/METEORLOGIX SOLUTION

Pronovost took advantage of a free trial offer from DTN/ Meteorlogix and found just what he was looking for to help him make better weather-related operational decisions. He was so impressed that he signed up for the MxVision WeatherSentry Online® *Transportation Edition* service.

The service is an Internet-delivered weather solution that provides real-time radar, accurate forecasts, and unique weather management tools to assist users in making informed weather-related decisions, cutting costs, and maximizing resources. The department also chose add-on solutions like RoadCast® pavement temperature forecasts, a future radar capability that projects storms up to 90 minutes into the future, and alerting tools — including customized weather notifications delivered via cell phone or PDA. These additional resources helped to further improve their operations by providing maximum lead time.



RESULTS

“When RoadCast became available I figure that I would try it for one year,” said Pronovost. “I had two spots for the RoadCast “stations” — one near the highest point in town and one near the lowest. The first time that road frost was predicted, I went out and checked...sure enough the road was slick. I dispatched a truck to treat the area and did not have any mishaps all season. Needless to say that one year will now be forever.”

Because the system does not need a dedicated station, Pronovost can check the information from his home, or any nearby computer. “I am a true believer in DTN/Meteorlogix and RoadCast,” said Pronovost. “I check the radar every morning before making assignments. Also with the future radar capability, we can send guys home for rest breaks and not keep them all night chasing flurries.”

THE CLIENT'S VIEW

“I even have supervisors from other jurisdictions calling me in the winter to ask about the radar. If that doesn't tell you something about the service, I don't know what will.”

Paul Pronovost, superintendent of highways, Thomaston Highway Department.

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