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# SEVERE DUTY REPORT

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HOT TOPIC

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## WILD WEATHER DEMANDS EXTRAORDINARY EQUIPMENT

In Wagoner County, Oklahoma, road equipment is expected to meet extreme weather head on. Wagoner County is just east of Tulsa, in an area known as Tornado Alley, and frequently experiences severe weather.

James Hanning, Wagoner County commissioner, explains: "It's not unusual to see thunderstorms with large hailstones, damaging winds and the occasional tornado. Temperatures here can range from 105 degrees to below zero. We sometimes get seven- to nine-foot snow drifts, with everything from dry powdery snow to wet snow that turns into a sheet of ice. During the 2010-11 winter, we had record snow with temperatures down to 24 degrees below zero. In 2008-09 and again in 2010-11, we had floods that washed out bridges. This last year, we had a mild snow season, but summer temperatures exceeded those in Baghdad and Death Valley."

That wild array of weather can put extraordinary demands on Wagoner County's limited road equipment resources. Fortunately, the county's 16-truck fleet includes ten Freightliner® trucks, the newest of which are a M2 106 and a 108SD, both upfit as spreader/snowplows, that are used after snow season as dump trucks in road construction work. The spreader and plow were upfitted by Tulsa Freightliner, the local dealer.



Wagoner County has upfit the new 108SD as a spreader/snowplow that is used after winter as a dump truck in road construction work. It can be converted in a day, so no matter what the conditions, this truck can keep on working.

“These trucks are our lifeline, and no matter what the conditions, these trucks keep on working.”

— James Hanning,  
Commissioner,  
Wagoner County

"These trucks are our lifeline," says Hanning. "When road conditions change, we can take off the plows, add spreaders, haul rocks from the quarry and transport silt and sand. They can be converted in a day, with a minimum amount of downtime. No matter what the conditions, these trucks keep on working. We need trucks that are reliable. We can't afford to be doing repairs in an emergency situation. We haven't had any major mechanical issues, no matter how extreme the conditions."

Steve Lee, who's the lead man on the Wagoner County road maintenance crew, says the difference between the new trucks and the older non-Freightliner trucks in the county fleet is "the difference between driving a tiny car and a luxury SUV." Lee especially appreciates the bigger, more comfortable cab of the 108SD, with its best-in-class visibility.

Wagoner County maintains about 220 miles of county roads but, in a driving snow event, says Hanning, "We don't turn around at the county line. Every major highway, arterial and interstate connection is vital to the citizens in our district. And, late this summer, the 4,000 gallon water truck we use for road projects helped create a firebreak when the Oak Grove fire department had an out of control fire in the woods."

Wagoner County equipment is used in such a wide variety of applications, so how does it hold up to corrosion? No problems with either old or new Freightliner trucks. Hanning admits that Wagoner County babies its fleet, power washing off the salt and sand mixture used on icy roads and storing the trucks inside, where they're parked on concrete. "We keep these trucks in excellent condition," he says. That makes the trucks last longer, and it means that the resale value is very good. Wagoner County typically replaces its trucks about every five years.

"We don't have to worry about these trucks," says Hanning. "They deliver everything we need, from mechanical reliability to hands-on support from the dealer. Erick Fairchild at Tulsa Freightliner is part of our team. We get topnotch service. And these trucks do their job, no matter what the Oklahoma weather has in store."



The Wagoner County road maintenance crew appreciates the bigger, more comfortable cab of the 108SD, with its best-in-class visibility.



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