

TECHNOLOGY & ISO CERTIFICATION TOP PRICE TAXPAYERS WIN AFTER LOW BID DOESN'T



Jim McCurdy (left) Vice President of Maine Commercial Tire, and Eugene Bishop have found the Gripper tread not only eliminates the need for chains, but it wears much better.

Taxpayers in the State of Maine are enjoying major tire savings on the state's highway maintenance fleet because the lowest initial purchase price is no longer the only consideration in awarding a state bid.

Eugene Bishop has been the Maine Heavy Vehicle & Equipment Supervisor for Tire Technology for the past 16 years. With his extensive tire knowledge, Bishop knew that lowest initial purchase prices don't always translate into the lowest operations or life cycle costs.

He said, "With the help of the state purchasing agent, we were able to rethink our bidding process and give consideration to cutting edge technology and **ISO Certification**, as well as price. I was sure this new approach would result in savings for our taxpayers, but even I was surprised by how big those savings were going to be."



He continued, "Our highway maintenance fleet includes 600 road maintenance trucks, 50 front end loaders, 90 trailers and 45 graders. The 600 road maintenance trucks are used in a number of applications, from snow plowing in the winter to asphalt hauling in the hot summer months."

Bishop said, "In either of those applications, dependability is critical. If you have a tire failure when you're pushing 16 tons of hot asphalt down the highway, you could end up paying big dollars to chip the asphalt from the truck if it sets up during downtime. It is also critical that we don't have a truck down for a tire failure when the taxpayers are waiting to have their roads plowed in the winter months."

"It is critical that we don't have a truck down when taxpayers are waiting to have their roads plowed."

**Eugene Bishop,
Maine Heavy Vehicle & Equipment Supervisor**



TAXPAYERS WIN AFTER LOW BID DOESN'T

Jim McCurdy, Vice President of Maine Commercial Tire, agrees with Bishop on the importance of dependable tires, but felt the best total solution he could offer his fellow Maine taxpayers was to provide them with quality rather than low initial purchase price. For that reason, McCurdy refused to bid on the state business until 2004, when the bidding process included consideration for ISO Certification and superior technology.

The Maine Commercial Tire bid was about 12 percent higher than the low bid. However, they were awarded the contract based on the state-of-the-art technology Bishop wanted in his tire program.

Bishop said, "A number of people from our office, including our purchasing agent, took a plant tour of the Maine Commercial Tire retreading facility before the bid was awarded."

With over a year of data gathering since accepting the 12 percent higher bid, the folks at the Maine Department of Transportation Fleet Services are smiling. Despite the higher initial purchase price, the fleet was able to **save \$175,000 in tire costs** on the road maintenance trucks alone.

Better casing asset utilization is credited for a portion of those savings. Although the department is challenged with the same mission with the same amount of equipment, this past year, new tire and retread purchases were down because the tires in the fleet were performing better.



**The Bandag 7400 Insight®
Casing Analyzer**

The Bandag 7400 Insight® Casing Analyzer is also a key in the success of this solution for the State of Maine. The state's tire program calls for retreading a casing twice and removing it from the fleet after six years of utilization. The 7400 Insight has made casing utilization much easier.

Under his previous contract, about 33 percent of the fleet's casings were rejected when they were sent in for retreading. Under the new contract, that rejection rate has been reduced to 6 percent.

One might make the assumption that utilizing more casings rather than purchasing new tires would result in more tire failures, the data proves that isn't true. Bishop said, "Our tire failure rate has been reduced from 20 percent to less than 1 percent under the new contract."

"Our tire failure rate has been reduced from 20 percent to less than 1 percent under the new contract."

Eugene Bishop, Maine Heavy Vehicle & Equipment Supervisor

He added, "While we can document the \$175,000 reduction in truck tire costs with this higher bid, it is more difficult to identify other savings associated with the additional uptime."

Bishop also found big savings with his grader tires under the new contract. He said, "Prior to moving to the Bandag products, we had to run chains on our grader tires. Maine Commercial Tire introduced us to Bandag's Gripper tread for the graders, and our operators found that Gripper had enough bite to eliminate the need for chains. That change might actually be a lifesaver. The chains often broke and the operator had to get out of the grader and replace them. We know our grader operators are much safer when they are inside the grader clearing the roads rather than replacing broken chains."

He continued, "The Gripper tread not only **eliminates the need for chains** but it wears much better. Last year, our tire cost for grader tires was \$4,500. That's down from \$12,000 under the previous contract. Again, those savings are just in tire costs.



Jim McCurdy (left), Vice President of Maine Commercial Tire, agrees with Eugene Bishop on the importance of dependable tires.

“When you add the savings in time, this new contract just keeps looking better.”

Eugene Bishop, Maine Heavy Vehicle & Equipment Supervisor

When you add the savings in time, the cost of chains and safety issues this new contract just keeps looking better.”

McCurdy is also offering the state some value-added features they didn’t have under the previous contract. BFA Reporting and Performance Tracking with Bandag’s Fleet Analyzer will make it possible for the state to better understand tire performance and how to budget for the future.

Safety is another big benefit. Maine Commercial Tire has a Tire Industry Association Certified Commercial Tire Service Trainer on staff, who is providing free training for the state’s mechanics and supervisors.



Bandag BDR-HT

Ongoing product evaluation will also help Bishop determine if he is using the best tread design for his operation or if more savings can be generated with one of Bandag’s new application specific tread designs, such as BDR-HT.

These value-added features, state-of-the-art technology and ISO Certification, with repeatable processes and independent audits have taken the State of Maine’s tire program to a higher level, while generating substantial taxpayer savings.

Low bids can be misleading. **Quality rewards those who invest in it.**