



WHAT OUR USERS ARE SAYING

Grasshopper zero-turn mowers have been a fixture of the Austin Independent School District Athletic Department since 2003, and according to Assistant Athletic Director Mike Szymarek, that isn't likely to change anytime soon.

With more than 40 separate facilities, fields and complexes to manage districtwide, Szymarek says that their fleet of 35 Grasshopper mowers – a mixture of diesel and gas, FrontMount™ and MidMount™ power units – is instrumental in keeping each site in top condition.

“We have football, soccer, baseball and softball fields to maintain. We also have several central facilities and stadium complexes,” he says. “With so much mowing going on, we need dependable equipment that works hard and doesn't quit.”

Szymarek says that the 15-member maintenance crew is out mowing eight hours a day, five days a week, every week of the year.

“Central Texas doesn't usually see severe cold snaps in the winter, and with our winter sports such as soccer, we plant perennial rye grass in October to keep the fields nice and green all year. So, we're mowing and maintaining each field and facility year-round.”

Even though the mowers endure hard use every day, Szymarek says that the maintenance and downtime is minimal. The district employs a part-time mechanic to see to the regular maintenance of each machine.

“That means we can be more efficient with the time that we have each day, and with as many sites as we have to maintain, it makes a big difference.”

Szymarek says that for wide-open areas, their diesel models 321D, 322D and 725DT with 61-inch

decks handle the mowing with ease. For the areas with more obstacles and obstructions, they use their model 616 gas units with smaller 44- and 48-inch decks for greater maneuverability.

He says that they've stuck with diesel instead of switching to other “alternative” fuels for the convenience, dependability and ease-of-use.

“The diesel engines are tough. They're powerful and durable; we don't worry that they won't work. They just do.”

Szymarek also touts Grasshopper's versatility. In addition to mowing, the district has a turbine blower and a bidirectional broom that can be attached to a power unit to clear debris from parking lots, sidewalks and compact areas at the larger stadium facilities.

“Those implements are the best investments we've ever made,” he says. “A street sweeper can't get into a lot of those places, but a Grasshopper with a blower or broom is so maneuverable in tight spaces.”

And even for a district with a \$1 billion budget, that versatility has helped them allocate their resources more wisely and effectively.

“As opposed to purchasing several separate pieces of equipment, one Grasshopper has multiple uses all year. We don't have equipment just sitting around waiting to be used. It just makes sense.”

Szymarek says that the dependability and versatility keep them coming back to Grasshopper.

“We've had opportunities to switch, but why should we when we have a good thing going?” ~