

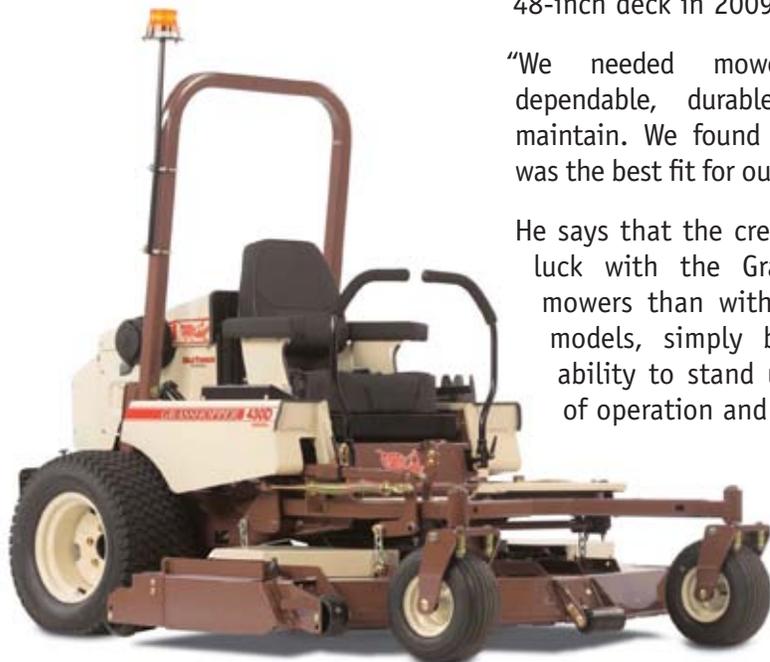
WHAT OUR USERS ARE SAYING

The vision is clear for the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore.: build a world-class training center to serve the community, the state of Oregon and the United States.

With a commitment to excellence unrivaled by other commands, the civilian-airman pilots and instructors stationed at Kingsley Field receive top-notch air-to-air combat training on the F-15 Eagle.

But the pride of Kingsley Field extends far beyond textbooks and training missions.

Monte Hill, the lead worker and supervisor of the roads and grounds crew, approaches regular maintenance of the airfield and its several administrative, dormitory, service and industrial buildings with the same zeal and passion as the pilots and instructors approach theirs.



"I'm responsible for all general grounds maintenance at Kingsley Field, and I love my job," Hill says.

Hill and his eight-member crew mow the grounds, lay pavement, sweep airfields, repair concrete, maintain water lines, remove snow and help with carpentry, electrical and other general maintenance.

"My main concern is productivity. We have to have equipment that gets the job done, and gets it done quickly, without hassles."

As a result, Kingsley Field made the switch to Grasshopper in 2007 with two 428D diesel models equipped with 72-inch decks. They added three 430D diesel models with 72-inch decks and one 620T gasoline model with a 48-inch deck in 2009.

"We needed mowers that were dependable, durable and easy to maintain. We found that Grasshopper was the best fit for our needs," says Hill.

He says that the crew has had better luck with the Grasshopper diesel mowers than with comparable gas models, simply because of their ability to stand up to long hours of operation and consistent use.

"We bought the 620T for spaces where we need the agility of the out-front deck,

but by and large, we use our big diesels for all the heavy mowing."

Usually, two members of the crew are out mowing the grounds eight hours a day, five days a week, from April through October; they can mow the entire grounds three times in two weeks. For Hill, the fact that the Grasshoppers hold up so well under such heavy operation each day is testament to their superior construction, durability and reliability.

"We've had other mowers that just couldn't cut it, the grass or otherwise," he says.

Although mowing is only a portion of what the roads and grounds crew does at Kingsley Field, it is a crucial function because the 173rd Fighter Wing shares space with the Klamath Falls Airport, which offers commercial air and full general aviation services to the public.

"We try to keep our lawns and grounds looking like a park," says Hill. "This isn't just home to the 173rd. We have visitors coming and going every day. The appearance of the grounds is of vital importance."

He says that Grasshopper is essential to the task. The mowers always start, they always run and they require very little maintenance, aside from regular preventative maintenance, but even Hill admits that it is minimal.

"That provides us the time we need to get our job done, and the time and energy we need to accomplish all of the other tasks we have on any given day," he says. "We have to have reliable equipment, and it doesn't get any better for us than Grasshopper." ~