

# CHAIN STORE AGE®

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR RETAIL EXECUTIVES

JULY 2007

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A LEBHAR-FRIEDMAN® PUBLICATION

## Winterizing the Walkways

A snow melting system keeps sidewalks clear



Most retailers and shopping centers deal with a winter storm after the damage has been done, typically relying on an outside contractor to remove snow and ice. Legacy Village, an outdoor lifestyle center in Lyndhurst, Ohio, decided to take a more pre-emptive approach by installing embedded electric snow melting cables underneath the pavement.

"We wanted people to shop in comfort, and the snow melting system seemed to make the most sense for us," said Richard Carlisle, VP and director of development, First Interstate Properties, Lyndhurst, Ohio, developer of the center.

There was no question that the system would get a workout, considering Legacy Village's locale: It is in the heart of the Great Lakes snow belt, an area that typically receives up to 106 inches of snow accumulation during the course of a winter. Traditional removal procedures did not make sense, according to Carlisle.

"With the way that snow can fall in this area, there was no way we would be able to keep up with it by shoveling," he explained. "We couldn't afford to do it that way, either from a practical standpoint or a dollars-and-cents standpoint."

Instead, First Interstate specified Mineral Insulated (MI) snow melting cables from Delta-Therm Corp. The cables, which are controlled by outdoor sensors, warm the pavement, melting the snow and ice before accumulation. The melt water is sent down a drain system.

The cables were installed in a sand bed beneath the center's brick pavers and concrete, and in the drain areas. The MI Delta-Therm system consists of an outdoor moisture sensor, slab thermostat, ambient thermostat and control panel. When the sensors detect snow conditions, the snow melting cables switch on, the pavement is warmed and the snow melts.

A total of 419 cables were installed at Legacy, with 75,276 linear feet of cable under brick, 18,385 feet under concrete, and 4,112 feet in drain areas. The individual MI cables were delivered during sidewalk installation).

**Shopper reaction:** The snow melting system has proved popular with shoppers at Legacy Village. It has given the center a certain aura and adds to the overall atmosphere.

"People love coming here and walking down our dry sidewalks with the snow high on either side of them—it's like walking through a winter wonderland," said Brandon Stevenson, operations manager, Legacy Village.

As to its operation, Stevenson has few complaints.

"There can be two feet of snow and our sidewalks are perfectly clear, looking as if it hadn't snowed at all."

Stevenson advised that the system, which is all electric, can be expensive to operate. He tries to run it as efficiently as possible.

"When it snows all day, for instance, I run it two hours on and two hours off, during which time it still maintains its warmth," he explained.

"It is hard to put a price tag on the system's value in terms of what it does for our guests," Stevenson added.

In addition to reducing the potential hazards posed by snow and ice accumulating on sidewalks, the snow melting system provides an additional benefit in that Legacy Village's tenants don't have to worry about salt being tracked into their stores and corroding doorways and flooring.

"The tenants definitely like that," Stevenson added. ■



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