

# MID ATLANTIC REAL ESTATE JOURNAL

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## SHOPPING CENTERS

### By Pete Haran, Thesing Property Services, LLC Putting your properties snow removal on thin ice

Surviving in the snow and ice management industry isn't easy, especially when forced to fend off the low-balling contractors determined to win the job at any cost to remove your snow.



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A good property manager should be more concerned about people being able to get to the site promptly when needed than they are the low bidder. In addition the ideal Property Managers are more in-tune with safety and liability concerns for the sites they are responsible for. Those property management shoppers, who want the lowest bid, technically do it at their own risk.

To your clients, whether they are tenants, employees, shoppers or residents, snow is a nuisance. They want it gone and they don't care how you do it; but property managers and owners usually don't want to pay much for the service. That's especially true when they fall into the comfort zone of a low-balling contractor, only to be left stranded if they are a no-show and your site has six inches of unplowed snow on it! The best and some say the only



way to overcome this mindset is to educate the property manager about what you do, why you do it, and why you charge what you do. It is essential that property managers understand the importance of hiring a company that specializes in Snow and Ice management, not someone who's in it to make a little extra cash on the side or to keep employees busy to handle their winter needs.

The snow industry is a very difficult business and snow & ice management professionals have invested a lot of time learning how to service their clients and properties with the proper equipment and products. With all the de-icing chemicals on the market, there exists a responsibility to know what is being applied and that the right amount is being applied. Having that expertise is not only good practice for property managers, but it's good for the environment.

SIMA, the Snow & Ice Management Association, the only nationwide trade association dedicated to snow & ice contractors, agrees that education is an integral weapon to help Snow professionals and offers marketing brochures and other resources to help its members educate the customers. The association is also reaching out to property managers and owners to help them better understand the need to hire reputable snow and ice professionals.

Those making the decision about which contractor to hire need to understand why they should be looking beyond price alone. They need to ask the right questions, and find out whether the contractor is properly insured, what equipment will be utilized and are they qualified to handle the job. If they don't, they may find themselves looking for a new contractor in the middle of a storm. Even in today's economy cheaper is not always better, and when property owners or managers base their decisions to hire a contractor solely on cost, they threaten being put on thin ice.

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