

Get To Know Richard Goldstein



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Richard A. Goldstein, President of [Green Meadows Landscape Contractors](#), the Oakland, New Jersey, company he founded in 1982, employs 50 to 65 people during a snow event and, depending on the size, deploys 20 of its own trucks and up to 20 subcontractors.

What is life like “in the plow?” I have been plowing now for 35 years. The only snowstorm I ever missed was Feb. 23, 1987, the day after I got married. While the average Joe has no clue what it takes to be “that guy in the plow” and the new guy thinks it’s the greatest thing since sliced bread, it definitely takes its toll on you. Living in the Northeast, snow seems to be the end-all for human life. Snowplowing is stressful and having your customers yelling at you because things are not done the minute the snow stops certainly adds to it. We can’t move cars, plow under them or make the snow stop – we just clear it as fast as we can. At the end of the day, it all gets cleared.

What is it like during a major storm? I remember the blizzard of 1995-96 the most. We had a record 30-some inches of snowfall that ended around 6 a.m. after a night filled with complete whiteout conditions. I remember telling all my trucks to park, go home or just do nothing because it was so dangerous to work. I worked a record 72 hours with limited sleep through the whole storm.

Why do you love the service? The challenge of the task at hand and the sense of accomplishment. Knowing that we just had the opportunity to turn an unsafe condition into a safe one is rewarding.

What’s most challenging about the service and why? Getting qualified help. Nobody wants to do it but they all want it done! The other major obstacle is getting insurance. The market has closed into few and far between for carriers.

How do you stay sane during a busy plow season? I stay very calm because we

spend a lot of time preparing our equipment prior to the season. Some may think I am crazy for spending thousands of dollars in October getting things ready, we are the ones who operate flawlessly – or, should I say, with minor issues.

How did you handle your most epic snowplow story? The 1995-96 blizzard was again the most challenging. I was doing the snow plowing at a local Stop and Shop. The store has windows from the ceiling to the ground a curb's distance from the parking lot. The snow had ramped up to the top of the windows. I dropped my plow along the curb, angled away from the building, and I could not see anything but I could feel the curb. It took me over an hour-and-a-half to clear that snow.