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Highway Department Partners with J.W. Speaker for Winter Safety
November 5-9 is Winter Awareness Week in Wisconsin

Germantown, WI - Most people don't look forward to Wisconsin winters, but the Washington County Highway Department is excited for this upcoming season.

The Highway Department has been partnering with J.W. Speaker to improve the lives of residents during snowy days out on the road. J.W. Speaker's [SmartHeat™ technology](#) used by the County's snow plows has allowed for more productivity after snow storms hit the area.

"With the latest LED technology that's on the market, J.W. Speaker is leading the way and we're on the forefront of that. The lights are definitely brighter than in past years. The operators definitely notice the difference and remark on the quality," Tim Pehowski, Shop Foreman, said.

The growth of private and public partnerships within Washington County has proven to be highly advantageous. J.W. Speaker utilizes the Highway Department to enhance their products while the Highway Department receives desired upgrades on their machinery that creates benefits for the entire community.

"The Highway Department has had the opportunity to test and use products that are groundbreaking and industry firsts," Jason Meyers, J.W. Speaker's Senior Sales Manager, said. "Washington County has been a great supporter of J.W. Speaker products and has been a great source to collect Voice of the Customer feedback."

"We have prototypes out there the market hasn't even seen yet and they allow us to try it out, and we give them our feedback," Tom Boden, Shop Superintendent, said.

"We always work efficiently together to come up with a solution. Being on the cutting edge with these types of things is exciting," Scott Schmidt, the County Highway Commissioner, said.

According to workers at the Highway Department, J.W. Speaker's innovative approach to the design and engineering of their lights has produced more effective outcomes and made their jobs much easier.

"One of the lead engineers on the projects physically came here and did a ride along with us in our plow trucks to see what our needs were. They design products to put the light exactly where we requested it, working directly with us," Boden said. "They were fantastic to come here and see what they were trying to achieve. I've never heard that done with any other company."

The lights work in a unique way that provide drivers with a safer experience out on the roads due to the advanced technology from J.W. Speaker's engineers.

"We're an industry leader delivering best in class optics. J.W. Speaker designs with application in mind, such is the case with a specific light pattern for the snow plow lights. We have an embedded thermal grid in the lens of our lights, that keeps lenses de-iced even at high speeds. Nobody wants to jump out of a vehicle in a snow storm to wipe off their lights because they're iced over, reducing the visibility and decreasing the efficiency of the job the driver needs to get done," Meyers said.

Through a collective partnership, J.W. Speaker and the Highway Department have worked together to ensure the public receives the best results as well.

"We definitely feel safer with these lights. Not only for the drivers' sake, but also for the public as it's easier to see oncoming vehicles coming our way," Pehowski said.

The partnership between the private and public sector on these snow plow lights makes the winter season more manageable and the Highway Department's plow drivers feel more prepared than ever to take on severe weather.

"We're neighbors and J.W. Speaker believes the drivers of the snow plows are doing a noble duty allowing people to get home safely. It's a valuable public service that Washington County is providing. Allowing the community and the infrastructure to keep running during inclement weather means a lot to J.W. Speaker. I think there's great alignment between our organizations," Meyers said.

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Washington County creates an environment for residents and businesses to enjoy our authentic quality of life through a well - governed and administered county dedicated to safe and secure communities; economic growth and vitality; effective mobility and reliable infrastructure; and access to basic needs.