

## Skid Steer Gets Use All Year Long

Neil Eckelberg uses his Bobcat skid steer to blow snow in the winter and mow road ditches in the summer. He also mounts a grader blade on front.

"My snowblower conversion was one of my first skid steer attachments," says Eckelberg. "I did it for around \$800, and it still works great."

Eckelberg first checked with a local retailer about a mount to adapt a rear mount snowblower for a tractor to a skid steer. The retailer wanted \$2,500 for a kit to do the job.

"I looked at the way it was constructed and ordered a similar size orbital motor," says Eckelberg. "I unbolted the original 3-pt. hitch unit and pto shaft and bolted it to a quick-tach plate. I figured I could change it back to a 3-pt. if I ever need to."

Eckelberg installed an orbital motor in place of the pto shaft. The one auxiliary hydraulic valve originally on the skid steer controls the motor.

Since the commercial adapter kit used a double wrap winch to turn the snow chute, Eckelberg did the same. "I used a standard 12-volt winch and drilled a second hole in the center shaft for cable, reverse wrapped it from the original cable and attached one to each side of the snow chute," explains Eckelberg. "When the winch turns, one cable unwraps while the second wraps, turning the chute."

He then attached a small electro-mechanical actuator to the hood on the chute to adjust discharge distance.

"The only thing I've had to replace is the cutting edge," says Eckelberg. "Everything

else continues to work fine."

A rear mount, Ferguson sicklebar mower has also served Eckelberg well as a skid steer re-do. He selected the Ferguson for its pitmanless, camshaft, belt drive design.

"I just pulled the pulley off and mounted the orbit motor to the shaft," says Eckelberg. "It lets me operate the mower even when the bar is vertical. In fact, I use it to trim trees alongside my road. I just raise the loader and adjust the bar."

Eckelberg needed another auxiliary valve to adjust the bar. In preparation for future needs, he added three spool valves giving him two to either side of the loader arms.

Unlike the snowblower, Eckelberg made numerous changes to the mower. He made a frame out of 2 by 2-in. sq. steel tubing and mounted it to a quick-tach plate. Given the natural tendency of a skid steer front-end attachment to dip or rise over uneven ground, Eckelberg added a wheel forward of the mower.

"I used a swivel wheel off an old combine swath pickup and mounted it to the frame with angle iron," he says. "It helps smooth out the ride."

Eckelberg says that if he did it over, he would use 2 by 2-in. supports instead of the current angle iron, to better handle the weight. He would also extend it out farther for a smoother float.

Eckelberg hung the mower from the frame using a pivot point and springs to provide some freedom of movement. A hydraulic cylinder mounted between the mower base



Nick Eckelberg uses his Bobcat skid loader to mow road ditches in the summer and blow snow in the winter.

and the frame lets him adjust bar pitch relative to the skid steer.

"The cylinder has an 18-in. stroke that lets it float level or follow the slope of the ditch bank well past 45°," says Eckelberg.

Eckelberg put more of his auxiliaries to work when he fabricated a 6-ft. wide, 2-ft. high snow blade. Once a local machine shop put the right curve in the blade, Eckelberg cut ribs out of 1/2-in. steel to match the curve and welded them in place for reinforcement. He also welded 1/4-in. thick, 1-in. angle iron across the top and on the bottom against the cutting edge. He used 2 by 2-in. steel tubing to mount the blade to a quick-tach plate using pivot points so he can adjust the angle of the blade.

"I used single action cylinders taken from old combines my dad



He also mounts a home-built, 6-ft. wide grader blade on front.

collected," says Eckelberg. "I have one on either side, so one pushes out and the other pushes back."

Eckelberg plans to add two more cylinders so he can tilt the blade as well as angle it. He may also add hydraulic wings.

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## Pull-Type "Maintainer" Does Gravel Roads Right

You can keep driveways and farm roads in shape the professional way with the 312 HRLS Road Maintainer from Bonnell Industries. It does everything a self-propelled road grader can do for a fraction of the price.

"We sell a lot of these to townships, municipalities and counties, but it's built for anyone with a gravel, dirt or sand road," says Joe Bonnell, Bonnell Industries. "Motorized road graders are great for building a road, but they don't do as good a job grading them. Our 312 is built to do the job at less cost in one easy pass."

The heart of the two-wheel, 3,100-lb., 22-ft. long machine is a set of 6 blades. They cut and mix the road surface in preparation for the finishing blade mounted at the rear. The finishing blade uses a turnbuckle system to adjust the angle. (An advanced model has hydraulic cylinders.)

"Material is mixed three times and then leveled off for a nearly perfect road surface," says Bonnell. "It's equally effective for grading parking areas and farmyards, as well as land leveling and drainage contouring."

Bonnell recommends a minimum 60 hp tractor to pull the machine. Options include scarifier blades mounted ahead of the cutting and mixing blades, a light bar option and a spare tire mounted to the top of the frame.

The basic Bonnell 312 is priced at \$13,500. With scarifier blades, HRLS rear blade, spare wheel, light bar and other options, the price increases to \$23,000.

To see the Bonnell graders in action, check out the videos at [www.farmshow.com](http://www.farmshow.com).

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Bonnell Industries says its pull-type Road Maintainer can do everything a self-propelled road grader can do, for a fraction of the price.

## Modified Haybine Halves Cutting Time

With a homebuilt \$1,000 bracket and a couple new 7560 New Holland haybines, Willie Albrecht reduced the time and fuel it took to cut his hay last summer.

"I cut 270 acres in 9 hrs. on 100 gal. of diesel fuel with one operator," says the Athens, Wis., farmer. Additional savings will come in a few years, when he trades in the haybines for new ones, and their resale value will hold strong.

"The resale value of bigger mowers is lousy," Albrecht says. The smaller 15-ft. haybines have a much better resale market to smaller farm operators.

Plus, one of his haybines will have practically new components.

"I took the hitch and wheels off one and stored them in the shed," Albrecht says. He

attached the head on the bracket he built for the front of his tractor, which has a 3-pt. hitch and pto shaft. The haybine is secured with three pins.

"I bought a New Holland because it has a center gearbox that swivels. I spin it backward to make it work," Albrecht says. As it cuts hay in front of the tractor, a second haybine cuts off to the side to create a 30-ft. swath.

With a 300 hp tractor Albrecht says he can cut hay at 20 mph. He's considering adding another haybine on the other side to make a 45-ft. cut next year.

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Willie Albrecht modified a new New Holland 7560 haybine to mount on front of his 300 hp tractor. A second haybine cuts off to the side to create a 30-ft. swath.