



# Snow NEWS

WINTER 2018-2019

42<sup>nd</sup> Edition



# Editorial

We are pleased to share with our readers that this is the 42nd year that SMI has distributed SnowNews!

Our philosophy with SnowNews is to share what's new at SMI and to provide some relevant technical details to help owners and operators better understand the complexities of snowmaking. To bring you up to speed, here are some highlights of SMI accomplishments over the past year:

SMI expanded our automation and controls facility in Salisbury, Pennsylvania by 50%. As the demand for our equipment and automation grew we needed more space and people. SMI is proud to be an American based company and to invest in our facility in Pennsylvania.

As many of our readers know, SMI has a strong Olympic heritage. In the recent 2018 Olympics in Korea, two unique venues used SMI equipment: the Jeongseon Alpine Centre and Alpensia Nordic, Cross Country and

Biathlon facilities. In total, we covered the most events and supplied the most equipment. The snow venues also relied nearly 100% on machine-made snow and the SMI crews did amazing work. The course prep workers, grooming drivers, athletes and coaches all raved about the snow consistency and quality. We were proud that this was SMI's seventh Winter Olympic Games since 1984.

SMI remains committed to creating and providing the best snowmaking products in the industry. Fans, lowE sticks and automation all continue to be industry leaders. And our parts and service are critical to success.

We encourage you to reach out to your sales, technical and headquarter representatives to hear what's new at SMI. We are here to help with snowmaking planning, engineering, equipment and service.



**Joe VanderKelen**  
*President, Snow Machines, Inc.*

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# Off the Hill



Photo credit: Bill LeClair

This snowmaker from Hyland Hills enjoyed a break to catch some rays during night shift - inspiring us to add the most creative category to our 2018-2019 photo contest.

Arapahoe Basin, CO, thought it was time for a snow camo Super PoleCat and we agree!



Photo credit: Thomas Sticha

**Every year our SMI team attends more than 30 trade shows around the world.**



The SMI Team at ISPO in Beijing.



Our team in Russia took a quick detour for a team photo.



SMI's booth at Mountain Planet in Grenoble, France, included a Super Puma and Smartsnow demo as well as our V2, Axis and new Grizzly.

# SMI 2018 Photo Contest

You voted and our 2017/2018 photo contest winner was from Keystone.

Make sure to follow our Facebook page for info on this year's contest.



1st Place: Nobuhisa Ishizuki – Keystone, CO



2nd Place: Shaz Dagan – Thaiwoo, China



3rd Place: Reed Weimer – Red River, NM



# SMI Snowmaking Successes

## Thaiwoo, China Moguls Course



Thaiwoo, China hosted the final 2 moguls World Cup competitions of December, 2017. This was the second time the moguls World Cup has visited Thaiwoo after the hugely successful moguls and dual moguls competition on the custom-built course in 2016. The course features custom 1m SMI towers with Full Auto Super PoleCats. In total, Thaiwoo installed 73 Full Auto towers across their resort in Fall of 2017. Congratulations to the Thaiwoo team on their successful events!

## Turnkey Solution in Rybinsk, Russia

SMI with local partner, SKADO, provided the Demino cross country ski and biathlon center in Rybinsk, Russia, a turnkey solution. In total, 5 new PoleCats were provided along with a new Lowara pumping station and 2km piping. Now all they need are some cold temps!



## More 2018 Highlights

### **Mt Rose, NV**

Added 12 Full Auto Super PoleCat towers and 5 Grizzly sticks to enhance their snowmaking system.

### **Ober Gatlinburg, TN**

Added 9 Full Auto Super PoleCat towers and 3 Standard PoleCat Full Auto Towers. In addition they purchased 6 retrofit kits to upgrade their fleet to the latest equipment technology.

### **Hunter, NY**

Added 20 Super PoleCat Full Auto Towers for their Hunter North Expansion.

### **Yabuli, China**

Added 10 Super PoleCat towers on Swing Arms, 10 Super PoleCat Towers and 30 Manual Super PoleCat carriages to assist in snowmaking. Yabuli also upgraded their pump system.

### **Bogus Basin, ID**

Added 20 Full Auto Super PoleCat carriages and 4 Super PoleCat manual to Full Auto kits.



## SLOPE AUTOMATION CONSIDERATIONS

Everyone always wants to get better, faster, safer and smarter when it comes to snowmaking. A way to achieve that is through automation.

Many people think of automation in 3 categories: manual, semi-automated or full automation. In reality there are actually dozens of automation options to choose from now!

To help you get started, read through the questions below to understand what type of automation could help your resort:

### HYDRANTS

1. The first question is whether you would like vaults or above ground? Some general points of thought to walk through would be:

- Confined space issues
- Protection/padding
- Draining
- Aesthetics
- Snowgun mobile or tower
- Avalanche issues

2. Do you need pressure control or just an on/off valve?

- High pressure on/off valve
- Pressure control consistent or varying
- Slow start/stop important or is it ok to bang open/close?

3. Safety to fail close on air, water or power loss to avoid icing down the slope:

- A recommended feature is to have battery or spring activated close if there is a power loss

4. Hydrant and snowgun spacing? How to connect the piles?

### GUN TYPE

1. On/off only – no valve steps
2. Valve – 1 step after start
3. 2 valves- 3 steps after start
4. 3 or more valves (lots of steps)
5. Water pressure adjusting between steps to smooth flow curve
6. Fan versus LowE
7. Fixed or mobile
8. Oscillating or not?
9. Head up and down remotely or by hand?

### SENSORS AND DISPLAYS

At each hydrant and snowgun location

1. Pressure sensing air and water to know snowgun is on/off after signal sent
2. Flowmeter air and water or calculation
3. Amps/power usage
4. Display to see data at snowgun
5. Display to adjust/start/stop at snowgun
6. Adjust snow quality at the snowgun with HMI

### WEATHER

1. Central weather device – how many snowguns/hydrants per device for control?
2. Weather at each machine – improved snow quality
3. On snowgun or standalone – solar or electrical
4. Wind speed and direction

### INTELLIGENCE AND BRAINS

1. At central computer only?
2. At snowgun only?

3. At central computer and snowgun?
4. Master/slave pods?
5. Does it need communications to work? Is it via snowmaker and a radio or real hard wired or wireless radio dedicated to only snowmaking?

### COMMUNICATION SCHEMES

1. Hardwire
2. Fiber optic
3. Radio
4. Wireless
5. Your own handheld snowmaker on a radio ordering start and stop commands to an operator at a central computer?

Please note that each of these options and considerations can add cost to the product and more or less complexity. It can also mean more maintenance. Feel free to complete the questionnaire and discuss it with your local Representative.

## CONE PARK TUBE PARK SIOUX CITY, IA

SMI is pleased to share our recent project at Cone Park in Sioux City, Iowa. The project was completed with over triple the tubers projected and came in on time and under budget. [Keep reading to learn more!](#)



*Aerial view of snowmaking at Cone Park*



*View from the neighboring Hard Rock Hotel of cosmic lighting*

In 1981, the Ruth Cone family put \$200,000 into a 25-year trust to be designated for a new park in Sioux City, IA. In 2006, the trust reached maturity and the \$200,000 grew into a \$2.9 million gift to the City.

The City wanted to hear from their constituents to understand what type of park to build. So they created a public survey in which the public responded that they wanted winter recreation including outdoor ice skating and alpine activities.

To facilitate planning and development, the City hired Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH®) to prepare a feasibility study and bid documents for the project. SEH's team included SMI and Torrent, who later successfully bid their equipment to the project's general contractor for installation into Cone Park.

Given the location, the slope facing westward and its limitations for natural snowfall, the snowmaking component was a determining factor in the success of the project.

For snowmaking equipment, SMI won the bid for 5 SMI Super PoleCat towers and 1 portable





Super PoleCat carriage to cover the tubing lanes. SMI pedestals and recommended hydrants were also installed along with pipe and cable to feed the system.

To supply the snowmaking system, Cone Park was lucky to already have an existing pond at the site. Originally constructed as a water quality/storm detention pond,

**Congratulations to the City and its Cone Park design team. Thank you for choosing SMI for your snowmaking partner!**

this pond only needed partial dredging to provide the needed volume for the snowmaking requirements. Coincidentally, the pond benefitted from the dredging as routine maintenance to remove accumulated silt deposits from storm run-off. The increased pond volume also improved overall water quality and is fed by run-off from the drainage area.

For pumping and controls, Torrent won the bid for a prefabricated 15' x 26'-6" building enclosure with (2) 500 gpm 150HP vertical turbine wet well pumps provide water to the snowmaking equipment. Both pumps are operated by VFD motor controllers and a Torrent PLC logic system and all equipment, piping and wiring were completed at

Torrent's shop. The neighboring Hard Rock Hotel and Casino gifted the project with a complete sound system with a multi-colored LED lighting network connected to the beat of the sound system. The gift added an enhanced customer experience called 'cosmic tubing' to nights at the Cone Park site.

The project was completed on time and under budget with opening in December 2017 as originally planned. The first season's public use and appeal were excellent and above expectation. First year projections were 5,571 tubing visits with actual visits of 20,252 visits in the first season.

Congratulations to the City and its Cone Park design team. Thank you for choosing SMI for your snowmaking partner!



# NICK GASSON, JEONGSEON 2018 WINTER OLYMPICS



SMI proudly wrapped up the 2018 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in PyeongChang, South Korea. We covered two distinct venues: the Jeongseon Alpine Centre and Alpensia Ski Jumping, Biathlon and Cross Country Centres.

Nick Gasson was based at the newly built Jeongseon Alpine Centre for 3 winter seasons. We recently sat down with him to talk about his experience of being a part of the Olympic Games.





**Hi Nick, thanks for taking the time to sit down with us. So let's get it started with some background on how you got into ski industry and ended up at the Olympics?**

I have been skiing and snowboarding since I was a kid and around 8 years ago I got a job at Treble Cone Ski Resort in New Zealand as an Electrician and became familiar with Snowmaking and Ski Area maintenance.

My coworker in New Zealand told me of an opportunity to work in South Korea and I was lucky to be recommended. My electrical background was an advantage for installing new pump stations, snow guns and operations at Jeongseon. I spent three winters in South Korea building and preparing the Alpine venue snowmaking system.

**What was unique about the Jeongseon Alpine Centre?**

This venue didn't exist 3 years ago. It went from a forest to an Olympic venue with an all new snowmaking system, 3 lifts, including buildings and 2 hotels without a known future after the games. Having a brand-new snowmaking system was great to see what SMI equipment is capable of and gave us a great opportunity to try some new ideas.

The weather was also cold with low humidity and very little natural snow. It could be extremes though from great conditions for snowmaking to warm and raining.

**What equipment was used there?**

Jeongseon Alpine Venue has a full auto system of 100 Super PoleCat towers, 20 Super PoleCat carriages and 10 Kid PoleCat carriages. In total, the guns run over 4500 gpm (1000 m3/hr) from the main Torrent pump station. The terrain was steep and rocky and we had a long cold stretch before the Olympics. So we got amazing snow down which put us ahead of schedule for building the course.

**Were there any tricks you used to prepare the course?**

All of the Super PoleCats we used were set up with extra marginal nozzle configurations. This gave us a great advantage early in the winter providing great snow quality for the course to be built with and stand up to the variety of weather and duration required to the end of the Paralympics.

**Who was in your team there?**

We had a small team of us foreigners from all over the world. We were there to help install, train and oversee operations as well as provide technical support to the local Korean snowmakers.

**What was the hardest thing you had to overcome in Korea?**

The language barrier made communication hard and funny at times, adjusting to the culture and working with them proved to be challenging at times.

**What was the coolest thing?**

Seeing the place go from nothing to holding the Olympics and to be part of the project from start to finish.

**I heard you were interviewed by CNN. How was that?**

I wasn't expecting to have CNN filming me using chopsticks and drinking shots of soju with the local snowmakers in Jinbu, but my five minutes of fame was the talk of the town back home with friends and family abroad catching a glimpse of us getting rowdy over Korean BBQ.

**What was the first thing you did when you came home?**

I couldn't wait to get home for a break from the cold and sit in the sun with a beer before another winter here in NZ.

**Lastly, is there anything else you'd like to share?**

A big thanks to Ian Honey and everyone else who supported us throughout the project.

**Thanks Nick for sharing your insights into this project!**



# SMI Expansions

## SMI NORWAY A TASTE OF SUCCESS SMI SNOW MAKERS AS



Well known as the cradle of skiing, Norway is an incredible place to enjoy snow and SMI is well represented by Kristofer Tanberg (20 years of snowmaking experience) and his crew for enhancing the snowmaking performance of the ski resorts.

SMI NORWAY is located in Lier, with 4 offices, a 500 m2 warehouse and workshop. The service is always guaranteed in the long Norwegian winter.

In the past 3 years SMI Norway supplied more than 10 automatic SMI snowmaking installations along with



*From Left: Magnus Bråten, Jonas Petterson, Aase Tanberg, Kristofer Tanberg*

a wide variety of other interesting projects from the west Fjords to the urban cross country facilities.

SMI is proud of our team's success in Norway.

## SMI AUTOMATION EXPANSION

With the theme of automation continuing from earlier in this issue, SMI is pleased to share that we have doubled in size at our Salisbury, PA location, home of SMI Automation. This location has doubled the number of employees, streamlined production and doubled our testing and production areas. We are happy for our team's achievement and continued success.





# SMI Snow Knowledge



**Midwest Ski Areas Association's annual conference.** In August, 2018 SMI hosted a training session at the Midwest Ski Areas Association's annual conference in Boyne Highlands, MI. Over 40 midwest customers were in attendance to learn about compressor maintenance, dodge clutch replacement, and more!



**New marginal nozzles.** In last year's SnowNews we covered our new marginal nozzles available. The Jeongseon Alpine Centre used this

configuration for the 2018 Winter Olympic Downhill, Super-G and combined events.

The change to smaller flow nozzles increases the startup temperature and creates drier snow across the

performance range of the machine. Competitors and groomers both noticed the difference. Ask your local SMI representative how marginal nozzles could impact your snowmaking performance!



**SMI's Las Vegas Snow Clinic.**  
Want to learn more about snowmaking  
and meet snowmakers from  
around the world?

Join our team in Las Vegas, NV in Fall of 2019 for SMI's Snow Clinic. Ask your local SMI representative to be added to our list for future communications!



# TED HARDY

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT & AUTOMATION SPECIALIST



Based out of Denver, Colorado, Ted has been a part of the SMI Team for over 4 years. He has serviced our equipment in Russia, Korea and China but is more commonly seen in the Rocky Mountains where he is based.

I recently sat down with Ted and asked him about his work at SMI.

**BROOKE:** Hey Ted, so let's start this thing off by bringing it back to the very beginning. How did you get started in the ski industry and in snowmaking?

**TED:** I used to work at a ski resort in Oregon called Mt Hood Skibowl as a lift mechanic. One year we bought a Super Polecat and 2 first gen Puma carriages. I'd never seen a fan gun until that point and just loved being around them, working on them and

learning as much as I could. That's when I made the jump into snowmaking.

**BROOKE:** So from there, how did you get started with SMI?

**TED:** An opportunity came up for me to help out prior to the 2014

Sochi Olympics at the Rosa Khutor snowmaking installation. I was actually quite hesitant to go as I had never even been on a plane at that point in my life, let alone out of the country. But I talked myself into going and ended up doing 3 winter seasons and 2 summers at RK.

RK was a pretty massive system with over 400 SMI fan guns (PoleCats and Pumas on towers, carriages and swing arms) and 14,600 hp vertical pumps in the main pump station putting out a little over 13,000gpm. Being there for multiple seasons allowed me to really learn the system, gain tons of experience working with SMI's automation systems and just to be part of a team that hosted the Olympics was pretty amazing.

**BROOKE: That's pretty cool. So from there what made you want to work for SMI?**

**TED:** Everything about the company really. The amazing team Joe has put together around the world, from all the guys and gals in Midland, to the automation group in PA, to all the international reps, everyone is really easy and fun to work with. That we build such high-quality equipment that is made and assembled in America. That SMI is a second generation family business that moves fast and is constantly changing. Why wouldn't I want to work at SMI?

**BROOKE: I'm sure that you get this all of the time. Can you share any tricks of the trade?**

**TED:** Go slow and use the right tools. Just because your leatherman has a screwdriver on it doesn't mean it's suitable for all situations. It's sometimes a pain (ok, always a pain) to bring a bunch of tools with you



everywhere, but it pays off when you can do things the right way the first time. Nothing is more frustrating than a rounded bolt or stripped hex head when its dark and your fingers are frozen.

**BROOKE: Always a good motto. So how do you describe your job to someone that you meet?**

**TED:** Depends on who's asking but "I make snow in the mountains" tends to get a "that can't be a real job" reaction that never gets old.

**BROOKE: I couldn't agree more. So what's your favorite place that you've been to?**

**TED:** I get asked "what's the most beautiful place you've been to" or "what's your favorite place" a lot, and my answer is always "the last place I was at". Ski resorts are some of the most beautiful places in the world and it's impossible to pick a favorite. It's honestly my favorite part of the job, and even though the travel gets tiring sometimes, it's pretty amazing to just take a minute at the end of the day and enjoy the view from wherever I'm at.

**BROOKE: Ok one last one to wrap this up. Do you have a favorite memory or story you'd like to share?**

**TED:** Oh man, too many to really pick a favorite, but the power of Mother Nature always amazes me. So when I lived in Oregon, we had an unusually wet spring one year. There was a heavy rain event where almost 11" fell in a 48 hour period on Mt Hood. My brother and I ended up hanging out by the river near our house and you could hear and feel these massive boulders thundering downstream from all the water. It was surreal experiencing the power just rain and snowmelt has to rip mountains apart and toss them down the river like pebbles.

It always reminds me of the awareness you must have for the elements at all times. Because no matter how invincible we think we are, the mountain will bite you when you get complacent and fail to give it the respect its due.



**Some of Ted's hobbies are skiing, hiking, kayaking – really anything involving nature and the outdoors.**



## Snow News



A TIMELY NEWSLETTER FOR OWNERS AND OPERATORS  
OF SNOWMAKING EQUIPMENT HERE AND ABROAD

SPRING 1988



### Editorial

Again, at most ski areas in North America, snowmaking was the key to a successful season. Those with adequate snowmaking had a good, very good or outstanding season. Those who missed the few cold days in November and December OR did not have enough snowmaking fire power had problems at Christmas.

Others were providing good to excellent conditions at Christmas. It doesn't take a genius to figure which areas had good seasons and which had outstanding seasons.

It just seems to happen, the ski areas that are the early openers are the successful ski areas.

Ski areas are selling SNOW. All the rest is an accoutrement. NO SNOW, no ski, no ski area. Be sure to have SNOW.

Relatively inexpensive and quiet SNOW is available from SMI, try it you'll like it.

The best doesn't always cost the most!!



### Snowmaking at the 1988 Olympics at Calgary

With at least six days of weather where the temperature was over 50°F (8-10°C) and no brown spots at either Nakiska or Canadian Olympic Park, snowmaking at the Olympics was a success!! Almost perfect snow conditions. The guys at Nakiska and Canadian Olympic Park did a great job.

At Nakiska, about 140,000,000 gallons of water were put through the system in 2400 hours of snowmaking. This averages slightly less than 1000 gallons per minute. With 6000 CFM installed it soon became apparent that more was needed and 3000 CFM was rented. And several Boyne Snowmakers were used including one that was air shipped in December upon urgent request of the crew. Many snowmaking hours of temperatures below 0°F (-20°C) were balanced



by a few snowmaking hours above 20°F (-7°C) but overall there was considerable time of optimum snowmaking weather. Many "glitches" with the system were resolved or worked around by an outstanding crew who were dedicated to having plenty of snow and THEY DID IT.

At Canadian Olympic Park there were no major problems. With an adequately sized air/water system and five Highlands, the crew had lots of snow early. Snomax was

regarded very highly at COP.

Overall, the Calgary Olympics were outstanding. The organization, hospitality, security, friendliness were all top drawer.

After the outstanding success of Los Angeles in 1984 and Calgary in 1988, future Olympic sites have an almost impossible target to shoot at.





## What is Happening With the Weather?

For the past two to three years, Alps ski areas in Europe have had real problems in December. No snow below 2500 meters, little cold weather and rain. Some Europeans have concluded that their weather has been moved back about a month. In other words, the usual December weather now comes in January.

And on the other end of the season, John Bintz, who owns a ski area and grows apples, notes that for the past few years, his apple trees are budding about two weeks earlier than "normal".

What does this mean for ski areas? COMPRESSION. A shorter season for an intense business. In other words, an intensive business becomes even more intense.

Thus, have the SNOW, don't miss an early day in November or December, because the season may be getting shorter and more intense.

## Snowmaking Research

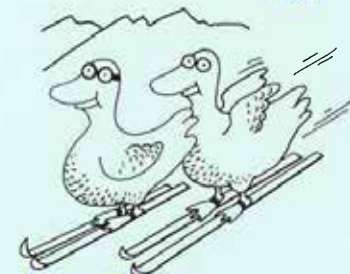
Doing effective snowmaking research is a real challenge!!

While we all know that temperature, humidity and wind have a significant effect on production and quality by a particular gun, there seem to be other factors that have not been correlated or quantified. A gun with one set of measurable

conditions will give one set of data and with exactly the same measurable conditions on a different day will give a different set of data.

Being frustrated by this, several years ago SMI built a research facility whereby two guns could be run side by side using the same water source and pump, the same compressed air (if used), the same electricity (if used) and even piped it so the same meters were used.

After several years of testing and hundreds of experiments, the unknown factors (sun spots?, moon phase?, gravitational forces?, water history?) still have not been correlated or quantified. However, the tests have resulted in improvements to the SMI machines and will continue. But it is difficult to improve already excellent machines!!



## Another Snowmaking Additive?

The snowmaking pond at Snow Trails, Ohio is home to several ducks and two geese. Is the ahem (organic particles) created by these birds enhancing Snow Trails' snowmaking? Should we call them snowmaking ducks?

## Price of Lift Tickets

When they drive up in their \$15,000 car, unload their \$300 skis, their \$100 bindings, wearing their \$200 parka, \$100 bibs and put on their \$250 ski boots, and then complain about the \$25 lift ticket, one wonders about value perception. We all know the costs of lifts, snowmaking, grooming, not to mention lodges and all the rest.

When their alternatives are \$50-\$100 golf rounds (4 hours), \$20-\$30 tickets to NFL or NBA games (2-3 hours) and \$100-\$1000 tickets to fights (2-3 hours), ski areas need to do more to change the perception in skiers' minds.

One way is to publicize the investments made over the past several years. Put a sign in front of the lodge listing the changes and improvements made each of the past several years.

Publicize it in your newspaper. Put posters in the lodge. Show the skiers you are putting money back in.

It should help to change the perception.

1984 - New Groomer
1985 - Added to Snowmaking
1986 - New Lift and Lodge Expansion
1987 - Expanded Parking and Bathrooms
1988 - Modern Snowmaking - Added SMI

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