

ICE MADE EASY WITH KOOLER ICE AND SCOTSMAN



For years now, whenever you've needed extra ice for a party or summer outing, there's been only one way to get it: Take a trip to the local grocery or liquor store. Pull some ice that's who knows how old out of the cooler. Stand in line to pay for it. Smash the bag on the ground repeatedly before serving to break up the Arctic-sized mega-chunk of ice that's in the bag. But now, a company called Kooler Ice, with some help from Scotsman Ice, is revolutionizing the way ice is delivered to consumers.

In the early 2000s, Co-founders Jeff Dyson and Kerry Seymour were working in the forestry

industry. Seymour had designed several products in the industry and Dyson set up distributors to sell them. As Dyson explains, "Kerry's an inventor. He's one of those guys who always has a new idea." Around 2004, Seymour had seen an ice vending machine and thought the concept was intriguing, even though the currently existing machine was problematic. "It was just too big," Dyson says. "It was a great big structure, 24 feet long and 8 feet wide." Seymour thought the key to success would be to develop a self-service ice machine that was smaller, one that could be located in front of a grocery or convenience store.

From the start, however, Seymour and Dyson knew that the traditional model of ice delivery — one that's been around for a century or more — was basically flawed. Ice is produced in centralized plants and then trucked to the retailer, which can be 50 or 100 miles away. Once the ice is offloaded to the retailer's freezer, the quality of the ice can deteriorate. The chance for spoilage increases, and as the ice sits, it can take on "off" flavors.

Dyson and Seymour were determined to avoid this, and their solution was to make, store and automatically bag fresh ice, on demand — in a completely labor-free, coin-operated kiosk. Enter

Scotsman. Seymour investigated all the major commercial icemakers for use in the Kooler Ice kiosks, and “he concluded from a design standpoint that the Scotsman design really fit our product the best at that time,” notes Dyson. “He felt that the Scotsman icemaker was the best product compared with some of the other commercial icemakers.” The heart of the Kooler Ice system is a Scotsman ice machine inside the kiosk, which allows fresh ice to be made in seconds automatically and deposited

seem like a redundant sale, Kooler Ice even shipped six units to Alaska in 2016. They were retrofitted with a special cold-weather package so they could withstand the brutal Alaskan temperatures.) Since some of the Kooler Ice kiosks house more than one icemaker, that means there are nearly 1,600 Scotsman icemakers in constant usage around the world.

Keeping track of all those machines and ensuring they work consistently is a big job, but it’s one that’s made easier

that they have made numerous sales to entrepreneurs who buy the machine and go out and find a location on their own. That has led to Kooler Ice machines being placed at such unorthodox locations as marinas and car washes.

But the many advantages of the Kooler Ice concept make it appealing to the more traditional locations as well. “It’s a lower-cost alternative than buying ice from a packaged ice delivery system,” Dyson says.

Labor costs are reduced because employees don’t have to unlock the machine every time a customer wants to make a purchase. Finally, there’s no problem with spoilage, theft or running out of ice — an important factor at peak ice-purchasing times, such as long holiday weekends.

Building an ice machine that can stand up to the rigors of usage demanded by the Kooler Ice kiosks has broader benefits for all Scotsman customers. “The partnership with Kooler Ice has been an informative learning experience for Scotsman,” says Jeff Biel, Director of Marketing and Product Development for Scotsman Ice Systems. “We strive to make our ice machines for the environment they are used in, and with the data we have received from the Kooler Ice application, we have been able to build even more robust ice machines, which benefits all Scotsman customers.

“With their 24-hour-a-day ice-vending machines, Kooler Ice’s application breaks the mold,” Biel adds.

www.scotsman-ice.com

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By 2007, the pair had a prototype machine created, which they tested at the Georgia National Fair in Perry, Ga. “Everybody loved it,” says Dyson. “We said, ‘We’ve got something here.’” With the recession taking a major bite out of the forestry industry, the two closed their forestry products company and dove full time into the ice kiosk business — and never looked back.

The Kooler Ice concept, anchored by the Scotsman machine, took off. Since that first machine at the fair in 2007, the company now has placed more than 1,200 machines in 43 states, Canada, the Bahamas, Martinique and Australia. (In what might

with Scotsman technology. An advanced diagnostic control board in the icemaker constantly sends information to Kooler Ice headquarters. “Now we take that information off the icemaker itself and relay it to our iPhone app and our online Kooler Ice portal monitoring system,” says Dyson. “It allows our owners to see exactly what’s going on with that icemaker at all times. If you have a problem with your icemaker and it needs service, we can get the service person out there before you actually run out of ice.” The strength of the Scotsman after-sales and support network was another key reason why Dyson and Seymour chose Scotsman for their kiosks.

The reliability and ease of usage of the Kooler Ice machines has broadened its market beyond traditional grocery, liquor and convenience stores. Dyson says

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