Northeast Asphalt Wins Top National Pavement Award

Work on STH 22 earns honors for WisDOT Northeast Region

Madison, W1 – The National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA) announced this week that Northeast Asphalt Inc. of Greenville, Wis., is the winner of the 2014 Sheldon G. Hayes Award for excellence in construction of an asphalt pavement. The award, bestowed annually since 1971, recognizes the country’s highest quality highway pavement. The company received its award on Wednesday, January 28th at a ceremony during the association’s 60th Annual Meeting in Marco Island, Fla.

Northeast Asphalt Inc. and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Northeast Region were named the winner for Northeast Asphalt’s work on State Trunk Highway (STH) 22 from Gillet to Oconto Falls.

“This is a great spotlight for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) considering that only one award is earned annually,” said Brandon Strand, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Asphalt Pavement Association (WAPA). “We actually had two pavements in our state as finalists for this honor. Projects like these and so many others illustrate the quality and workmanship that our industry is capable of performing in Wisconsin.”

In the spring of 2012, just prior to the start of Northeast Asphalt’s mill and overlay project, a utility conflict running along both sides of the 8.1-mile project was discovered, threatening to wreak havoc with planned completion before year’s end.

“In the typical utility relocation, it would happen just prior to us coming in and doing any work,” said Ric Szalewski, Project Manager at Northeast Asphalt for the winning project. “But they were anticipating a couple of months to relocate those utilities and there was talk of delaying the project until 2013.”

Everyone involved in the project came together to discuss options. In the end, innovative thinking saved the day. “We came together with our dirt contractor, Relyco Inc., to use Spar underground mapping technology, ground-penetrating radar, and advanced software to locate the utilities within a three-dimensional space,” Szalewski said.

With the radar pinpointing the utilities exactly, the construction crew was able to provide a workaround solution without harming the utility lines. “They could start construction and not have to worry about interfering or damaging any utilities,” Szalewski said. “They knew the areas where the utilities crossed, so they skipped those areas. And where the utilities were running with construction, they could stay away from them or stay above them. The utility contractor could work behind the excavators to relocate the lines.”
With this utility conflict solved, Northeast Asphalt was able to complete the project quickly and efficiently. The company was anxious to submit this job for a Sheldon G. Hayes award only to face another unexpected hurdle: the weather. Winning pavements of the Sheldon G. Hayes award are scrutinized only after surviving one winter season after completion.

Because Northeast Asphalt’s STH 22 project was completed so late in 2012 — Oct. 30 — the company had to wait until 2013 to submit its entry. Thus, the pavement was evaluated with two winters under its belt, including the winter of 2013–2014, one of the harshest on record.

“I looked back through the records in this area, and there were 59 days during the winter when temperatures were at or below 0° Fahrenheit,” said Brett Stanton, Director of Engineering Services for Northeast Asphalt said “That was particularly unique, and [the road] looked very good for the rough winter it went through.”

Northeast Asphalt was also able to procure a cost reduction incentive (CRI) modification to the original contract. “We partnered with WisDOT to evaluate the pavement, and we realized we could save the DOT $160,000 if we changed the pavement structure and used some of the existing materials on site,” Stanton said.

While some of the materials were new, “we imported far less by utilizing what was there,” Stanton said. In the end, recycled asphalt material reduced the company’s need for virgin asphalt by 24 percent with the 12.5-mm surface design mix and 23 percent with the 19.0-mm binder mix.

The Sheldon G. Hayes Award winner and finalists are determined through a rigorous two-year evaluation process. Any highway pavement project using more than 50,000 tons of asphalt is eligible for consideration. Initially, the project must win a Quality in Construction (QIC) Award, which is determined by numerical scores given by pavement engineers at the National Center for Asphalt Technology (NCAT) on the basis of how well the contractor met specifications and achieved density on the finished pavement. All the pavements that meet a benchmark figure earn a QIC Award.

The year after a project wins a QIC Award, it is eligible for consideration for the Sheldon G. Hayes Award. The top-ranked projects from each year are tested for smoothness, and then visually inspected by an independent pavement consultant with many years of experience in the industry. This year, the evaluators praised all the candidates for their high-quality construction practices, which resulted in smooth, safe, and durable pavements.

About WAPA

“Asphalt. Wisconsin rides on us.” Established in 1948, WAPA is a statewide non-profit organization representing the asphalt industry on a wide range of issues related to asphalt design, construction, maintenance, technical specifications, costs, marketing, and public policy.

WAPA members include asphalt mixture producers, contractors, liquid asphalt suppliers, and associate members who support the industry by providing quality pavements, materials, and services. WAPA’s mission is to keep asphalt the number one choice for pavements by building quality roads in a safe, environmentally friendly and cost-effective manner that is in the best interest of the customer and the state.

For more information, please visit www.wispave.org or contact strand@wispave.org.

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