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ACCELERATES ASPHALT RESEARCH**

**TEXAS BRANCH LEADS THE
NATION IN WOMEN OF ASPHALT**

**BACK TO SCHOOL AND
BACK TO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY**

TexasAsphalt

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS ASPHALT PAVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCING APEX: **A TxDOT QUALITY INITIATIVE FOR ASPHALT PAVEMENTS**

REGIONALIZATION:
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Hot mix plants are vital to maintaining and improving our national transportation infrastructure. However, the industrial processes involved in these plants can pose significant environmental and occupational hazards if not managed properly. One of the most critical aspects in mitigating these risks is the implementation of robust housekeeping practices.

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TXAPA AND TxDOT: AN ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

Eric Suarez
Vulcan Materials Company
President—TXAPA



The relationship between the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is built on a foundation of genuine partnership, a collaboration that I have witnessed firsthand for over two decades. This partnership is exemplified by several key initiatives, all driven by a shared commitment to producing high-quality, long-lasting pavement.

Twenty years ago, I attended the first Partners in Quality (PIQ) meeting in the Houston District. Local contractors, area engineers, the Director of Construction, and the District Engineer were all present. The discussions were candid and productive, with everyone sharing their perspectives on the agenda items. Having the District Engineer there was crucial, as it allowed for immediate decisions or the assignment of follow-up tasks. I was impressed by the spirit of collaboration and the shared focus on quality paving. Since then, the PIQ program has expanded to every TxDOT district,

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CURRENTLY, TXAPA AND TxDOT ARE COLLABORATING ON A NEW VENTURE THAT WILL IMPACT THE HMAC INDUSTRY FOR YEARS TO COME: THE ASPHALT PAVEMENT EXCHANGE (APEX) PROGRAM. THIS EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE IS DESIGNED FOR TxDOT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AND CONSULTANTS.



and I continue to see the same dedication to achieving “good long-lasting quality pavement” in my current role with TXAPA. The consistent attendance of district engineers demonstrates their understanding of how vital this partnership is.

This collaborative spirit was also evident during the two-year process of rewriting the 2024 TxDOT specifications. As chairperson of the TXAPA Specification and Test Procedure committee, I worked closely with TxDOT to review proposed changes. We didn’t always agree, and the discussions were often intense, but the ultimate goal for both parties was to agree on specifications that would ensure high-quality pavement. While we had different viewpoints on certain topics, we ultimately reached a consensus on specifications that both sides could support. This is what true partnerships are about: working through disagreements to achieve a common, mutually beneficial goal. It was a pleasure to be part of this process, and I know many of our members have had similar experiences.

Currently, TXAPA and TxDOT are collaborating on a new venture that will impact the HMAC industry for years to come: the Asphalt Pavement Exchange (APEX) program. This educational initiative, led by Director Jim Warren, is designed for TxDOT employees, contractors, and consultants. I have the privilege of co-chairing the essentials working group with Mr. Greg Cedillo, the District Engineer in the Brownwood district. Our group, composed of six industry members, six TxDOT employees, and two consultants from various parts of the state, is developing an agenda for a workshop focused on essential information needed to perform tasks on any given project. The goal, once again, is to provide “good long-lasting quality pavement.” It has been rewarding to see new relationships develop into a powerful partnership that will create an impactful workshop. APEX is a significant undertaking, and I encourage all members to get involved if they have the opportunity. Your participation will not only shape the future of our industry but also help build valuable new relationships.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has been and continues to be a part of this vital partnership between TXAPA and TxDOT. 🔄

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Harold C. Mullen
Chief Executive Officer
Texas Asphalt Pavement Association

When I think about the work we do every day, one phrase always comes to mind: quality for the traveling public. That's what it all comes down to—the men, women, and families who rely on our roads to get where they need to go safely and smoothly. And quality doesn't happen by accident. It happens when dedicated people come together with a shared purpose, clear communication, and a commitment to doing things the right way.

That's exactly why I am so proud to introduce **APEX—a TxDOT Quality Initiative for Asphalt Pavements**. APEX isn't a one-time program. It's a perpetual commitment. It means that industry and TxDOT are standing shouldertoshoulder, providing training, tools, and education so that

from planning to design, from materials to construction, and on through maintenance, every part of the process is connected.

Communication is at the heart of this. In today's world, the art of communication has taken a hit. Too often, we find ourselves working in silos, relying on emails or reports instead of genuine, face-to-face conversations. But to build the best roads possible, we must talk to each other—openly, honestly, and often. That means pre-paving meetings, daily debriefs, and post-project reviews. It means sharing both our successes and our challenges, so we can keep raising the bar together.

I often think of this as an ecosystem for asphalt pavements—a decision made in design ripples through materials selection, construction practices, and, eventually, maintenance. If one link in the chain is weak, the entire system feels it. On the other hand, when each part of the process is done well—when designers, contractors, engineers, and maintenance crews all communicate and collaborate—the results speak for themselves: long-lasting, high-quality roads that serve Texans well.

I've been in this business a long time, and I know one thing for certain: we cannot do it alone. Industry cannot do it alone. TxDOT cannot do it alone. Our CEI partners cannot do it alone. But together, through APEX, we can achieve something greater than the sum of our parts—roads that reflect the very best of our shared commitment to excellence.

So as we roll out APEX, I want to thank each of you for the role you play in this work. This program is for you, for me, and ultimately, for every person who drives our roads. Let's make them proud. 🌟



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Guy Bobbora
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With the summer months in the rearview and fresh from celebrating TXAPA's 50th Annual Meeting in September, I want to extend my sincere thanks to all our Associate Members for their continued support. My role as Chair this year has been made easier by the remarkable energy and dedication of the Associate Member Advisory Committee and the TXAPA staff—it has truly been a joy working alongside you.

I was honored last month by the committee's vote of confidence to allow me to continue serving as Associate Member Advisory Committee Chair through the end of 2026. With this renewed opportunity to capitalize on the strong momentum we've established together, I am excited to help guide MAPS into a full slate of four regional events. This expansion reflects not only the dedication of the Associate Member Advisory Committee but also TXAPA's broader commitment to providing practical solutions and strengthening connections across our industry.

Building on the success of this May's events, we are pleased to announce the 2026 Regional MAPS schedule:

- **Midland**—February 24-25
- **Corpus Christi**—April 14-15
- **Houston/Humble**—April 28-29
- **Dallas-Fort Worth**—May 12-13

In addition to our one-day, regionally tailored seminars, each MAPS event will now feature a second day dedicated to a Paving and Compaction seminar—bringing together municipal engineers, public works professionals, transportation planners, and industry experts to address everyday asphalt challenges unique to each region.

Registration details will be shared a few months ahead of each MAPS event as sites are confirmed. Group rates will be available, PDH credits offered, and exhibitor spots are limited—so vendors and sponsors are encouraged to apply early.

Thank you again for your continued support. I look forward to carrying on the momentum of our 50th Annual Meeting into 2026 and seeing you at the upcoming MAPS regional events. 🌟

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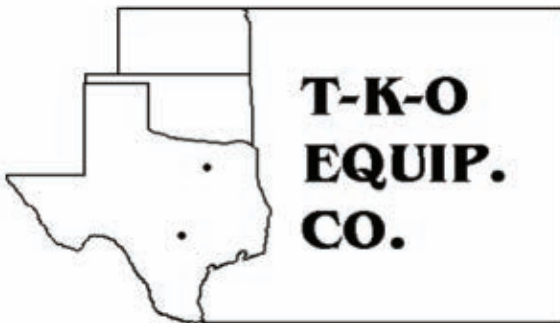
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FROM LAB TO PAVEMENT: ASPHALT RESEARCH ACCELERATES AT MASTERS 2025

Andy Cascione, PhD, PE
Valero Marketing and Supply Co.
Major Associate Member Chair



All roads led to Buda at this year's Masters. The 2025 Materials and Asphalt Technology Research Summit, known as MASTERS, shared impactful advancements to Texas's asphalt paving community. Held at TXAPA's headquarters in Buda on June 25, nearly 100 participants assembled from all corners of the industry, including producers, suppliers, researchers, agency officials, and consultants. MASTERS has grown into a unique forum where Texas universities showcase their research and receive valued feedback. This year's event was no exception.

The day featured a dynamic series of presentations from leading Texas research institutions, including UT El Paso, Texas A&M, UT Tyler, UT Austin, the Center for Transportation Research, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, and the Center for Transportation Infrastructure Systems. These presentations reflected the wide-ranging priorities of pavement materials research in Texas.

Throughout the day, the summit fostered engagement between academia and industry. The collaborative setting allowed audience members to ask questions, offer their insight, and learn how they can apply research results. MASTERS ultimately strengthened the relationships between researchers and industry professionals.





This year's program exhibited some of the most pressing research needs in Texas, from friction data integration into mix design to updates on TxDOT's evolving material specifications. Attendees heard from presentations on new asphalt skid resistance test methods, the role of fine aggregates in friction performance, the impact of recycled materials on polymer concentrations, robotics technologies, highly polymer-modified binders, and emerging technologies for asphalt testing. Topics pointed toward changes likely to impact design, construction, and performance in the future.

As always, TXAPA was an excellent host, providing not only food and drinks but also a space that encouraged networking and informal discussion. By bringing together the people who test materials, write specs, produce hot mix, and oversee projects, the summit helped communicate and advance valuable research.

MASTERS 2025 highlighted challenges facing asphalt pavements in Texas, but also opportunities for innovation and solutions. With collaboration and open dialogue, the summit certainly propelled the asphalt industry in Texas. ✪



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HOUSTON REGIONAL MEETING: Expanding Reach, Strengthening Relationships

On Wednesday, August 13, TXAPA members gathered at the Royal Sonesta in Houston for the East Texas Membership Meeting, part of the Association's ongoing regional outreach initiative. The program was led by TXAPA CEO **Harold Mullen**, with 2025 TXAPA President **Eric Suarez** (Vulcan Materials), **Corey Schwarz**, **Sam Davis**, **Larry Peirce**, and **Chuck Fuller** joining him to guide discussion and engage with attendees.

The meeting opened with welcomes, introductions, and a safety share before highlighting announcements and new staff members. From there, the conversation turned toward TXAPA's **Strategic Plan**, which continues to guide the Association's priorities and growth.

Key themes included:

- **Regionalization:** Strengthening connections across Texas through newly established geographic regions, supported by regional directors focused on members, TxDOT districts, consultant engineers, and local governments.
- **Growth & Expansion:** Updates on the Buda campus expansion, North Texas office development, and new staff dedicated to APEX, events, and member services.
- **Member Engagement:** A commitment to building stronger relationships, supporting workforce development, and providing resources and education for industry stakeholders.

As Mullen emphasized, TXAPA's focus remains clear: *expanding our reach, strengthening relationships, and creating opportunities* for members and the Texas asphalt industry. 🌟



Eric Suarez



Chuck Fuller



Harold Mullen



TEXAS BRANCH LEADS THE NATION IN WOMEN OF ASPHALT MEMBERSHIP



The Texas Branch of Women of Asphalt is leading the nation—with nearly **400 members strong**, we are officially the largest branch in the country. This milestone is more than just a number; it's a testament to the energy, vision, and commitment of our members and steering committee.

Our leadership model sets us apart. With a dedicated **chair, vice chair, and past chair co-leading**, and a steering committee that drives the work forward, we meet monthly to turn ideas into action.

Together, we have built an impressive slate of initiatives and activities. From **speaking at high schools and universities, exhibiting at career fairs statewide, participating in the national Women of Asphalt Mentorship Program**, and proudly representing Women of Asphalt at

every major TXAPA event, our volunteers work tirelessly to spread our mission across Texas' vast geography.

Our branch has also created memorable gatherings such as a **Fishing and Golf Retreat at Rayburn Resort, located on Lake Sam Rayburn**, an annual **Hill Country Wine Tour**, and **quarterly Branch Meetings** that blend networking with substantive industry dialogue, and our flagship **Ideas That Lead & Inspire** panel and Christmas celebration at TXAPA headquarters.

Another highlight is the **Women of Asphalt Dinner at the TXAPA Annual Meeting**, now in its third year. This elegant evening is one of our most anticipated, where we come together to **celebrate achievements, recognize our outgoing chair, welcome incoming leadership, and honor the incredible women driving our industry forward**. This year, we were especially proud to welcome **Brittyn Heisler, Executive Director of the National Women of Asphalt**, as our distinguished guest.

None of this would be possible without the tireless dedication of our **volunteers**, who make every initiative, event, and milestone a reality. And thanks to the support of our industry partners and members, the Texas Branch is **entirely self-sustaining**, ensuring our momentum continues.

As we celebrate this achievement, we invite you to be part of what's next. Whether it's joining our membership, volunteering on a committee, or partnering with us on future initiatives, now is the time to get involved. Together, we're not just making history—we're shaping the future of our industry.

Join us and help keep Texas leading the way.

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WHAT'S NEXT FOR WOMEN OF ASPHALT TEXAS BRANCH

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Join us December 11, 2025, at TXAPA headquarters for our fourth annual panel discussion and holiday celebration. This inspiring event features women in the field, career development content, and a festive Christmas party to close out the year.

WOMEN OF ASPHALT—HILL COUNTRY TOUR

Mark your calendars for the Third Annual Women of Asphalt Hill Country Tour, taking place February 19, 2026. This popular event has quickly become a highlight on the calendar, offering an unforgettable day of touring the beautiful Texas

Hill Country while enjoying great food, libations, and networking.

Full event details will be announced soon—but for now, save the date and don't miss this opportunity to connect with colleagues and friends in a relaxed, one-of-a-kind setting.

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Asphalt Pavement EXchange

INTRODUCING APEX: A TxDOT QUALITY INITIATIVE FOR ASPHALT PAVEMENTS

BY KEATON HERNANDEZ, PH.D., ADULT LEARNING DIRECTOR, APEX

APEX is paving the way. With the launch of the Asphalt Pavement EXchange (APEX), Texas has become the first in the nation to implement a program built entirely around professional development, continuous learning, and real-world knowledge sharing in asphalt pavement. APEX isn't just another training initiative; it's a bold step forward in asphalt education, comprising a blend of virtual and in-person learning, with resources and courses available online, on demand!

For the first time, Texas asphalt professionals across TxDOT and the industry have access to a series of technical documents, videos, graphics, reference guides, and materials designed to empower individuals, strengthen connections, and raise the bar for pavement quality.

"APEX is about marshaling resources, using what we already know, making it better, and developing tools to fill the gaps so we can keep things moving forward," says Jim Warren, APEX Director.

Under Warren's leadership, APEX is quickly becoming a powerhouse of expertise and

collaboration. The team includes an Adult Learning Director, Visual Asset Creator, an Administrative Coordinator, and more roles are being added as the program grows. It also benefits from the experience of Dr. Jon Epps, a long-time leader in asphalt innovation, who serves as a Senior Consultant to the program.

The name, Asphalt Pavement EXchange, says it all. APEX is about more than just learning. It's about building a culture of collaboration and exchange: exchanging lessons learned, ideas that work, and the kind of insight that only comes from years on the job. At its heart, APEX is about elevating the entire asphalt community in Texas—one conversation, one connection, one career at a time.

As Carl Johnson, TxDOT's Chief Engineer, puts it: "APEX is continuous education so folks can start small, grow through it, and develop a career path in asphalt. It's good for TxDOT, good for contractors, and good for the traveling public."

Through APEX, Texas is creating a space where learning is ongoing, support is built in, and the people behind the pavement are the



priority. Whether you're new to the field or have decades under your belt, APEX opens the door to growth, collaboration, and a higher standard for asphalt pavement.

WHY APEX MATTERS NOW

APEX serves as a central hub for asphalt pavement knowledge, providing a platform where professionals can learn, connect, and grow. The APEX website will house learning materials, including infographics, quick references, how-to guides, and a myriad of other resources accessible to anyone, at any time. This program brings everyone to the table and offers a clear, consistent path for learning. It's not just about one phase of the work; APEX addresses the *entire* process, from project selection through construction and long-term maintenance.

"This effort grew out of conversations among TxDOT and industry leaders who recognized that education about asphalt pavements often wasn't continuous or easy to access," says Carl Johnson. "APEX takes that next step, creating a framework that

supports engineers and contractors throughout their careers."

By creating access to high-quality, real-world education, APEX empowers professionals at every level to make better, more informed decisions. That doesn't just benefit the individual, it benefits the entire state. When we invest in people, we invest in longer-lasting, durable pavements and safer roads for our fellow Texans.

BUILT FOR THE INDUSTRY, BY THE INDUSTRY

We know that no one knows this work better than the people who do it every day. That's why APEX is being built with input from the field experts—TxDOT engineers, contractors, and researchers who've spent their careers in the field. Their real-world experience is shaping the content, the tools, and the way APEX delivers learning.

Contributors from across the state are helping the APEX team develop materials that address the specific needs of each audience. Whether it's a frontline technician or a senior

**THROUGH APEX, TEXAS
IS CREATING A SPACE
WHERE LEARNING IS
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THE PEOPLE BEHIND
THE PAVEMENT ARE
THE PRIORITY.**



engineer, the goal is to deliver the right message in the right format. Learning products will be accessible to all industry professionals, ranging from documents, briefs, and short videos for on-the-job use to technical documents to provide a deeper dive into specific topics.

This level of collaboration is what sets APEX apart from others. It's not a one-size-fits-all program. APEX is a living, evolving effort shaped by those with real-world experience

and expertise. The knowledge and insight shared by both TxDOT and industry professionals is what gives APEX its strength, and their engagement is essential to its success.

ORGANIZED FOR IMPACT

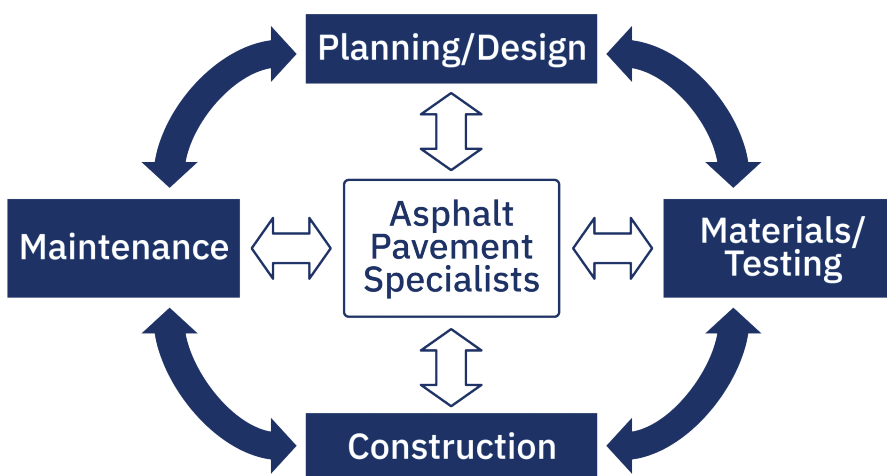
In an industry as complex and technical as asphalt pavement, clear communication and consistent information are everything. That's where APEX comes in.

"APEX is a one-stop education program that streamlines information, promotes consistency, and helps everyone speak the same language—from specifications to materials," says Ryan Barborak, Director of TxDOT's Materials and Tests Division.

That shared language is being built through deep collaborative work. APEX is working side by side with academics, TxDOT, and industry professionals to identify the most pressing challenges in asphalt and develop targeted education that addresses them head-on.

At the core of this effort are eight Working Groups, each focused on a vital area for pavement performance: Safety, Essentials, Communication, Pavement Design, Construction and Inspection, Ride Quality, Asphalt Pavement Specialists, and Materials and Mix Selection. Once a topic is identified, smaller teams roll up their sleeves with APEX staff to develop the right product.

Another cornerstone of the program is the Asphalt Pavement Specialists (APS). There is one specialist in every TxDOT District, serving as the go-to person for Design, Materials, Construction, and Maintenance.



The specialist in each district is there to serve the district and act as a liaison, advocating for the needs of their district through APEX resources.

“We’re not envisioning the APS to have all the answers,” says Dwayne Milligan, Director of TxDOT’s Construction Division. “But they’ll know where to go to get answers and help maintain consistency statewide.”

CREATING MOMENTUM

The APEX team officially hit the ground running in May 2025, and their focus has been on laying a strong foundation for lasting impact from day one. From setting up internal processes and project tracking systems to fostering a culture of innovation, the staff works behind the scenes to turn vision into action. With diverse educational and professional backgrounds, each APEX staff member brings fresh energy, creativity, and insight to the program—helping shape a learning experience that truly reflects the needs of Texas asphalt professionals.

BY CREATING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, REAL-WORLD EDUCATION, APEX EMPOWERS PROFESSIONALS AT EVERY LEVEL TO MAKE BETTER, MORE INFORMED DECISIONS.

One of the first major efforts underway is the Essentials Workshop, developed by the Essentials Working Group. This workshop will engage participants through the entire life-cycle of an asphalt road, from design through maintenance, offering a well-rounded and practical introduction to APEX. The pilot is scheduled for November 2025 in Buda, with regional sessions planned for early 2026.

In the months ahead, APEX will continue to expand its staff and collaborate with Working Groups across the state. By working closely with academic experts and field professionals, the team is committed to developing

education that’s accessible, relevant, and grounded in standard industry practices.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED

The success of APEX depends on the people it’s built for—YOU! Your insight, involvement, and feedback are what will shape this program.

“If you’ve got ideas, send them,” says Jim Warren. “We’ve already received hundreds of suggestions—and we’re just getting started.”

APEX is growing fast, and there’s never been a better time to get involved. Visit www.apextx.org to join our mailing list and stay up to date on what APEX is building. 🔄



REGIONALIZATION: TXAPA'S BOLD NEXT STEP

BY EMILY ADAMS, TXAPA

The Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA) is moving full speed ahead with one of its most ambitious initiatives to date: regionalization. While regional representation is common for chapters of larger national associations, TXAPA's plan is uniquely bold. Focused solely on asphalt pavement, this initiative represents a strategic expansion designed to deepen member engagement, strengthen local relationships, and broaden the association's statewide impact.

For years, TXAPA operated with a lean staff while growing its services, waiting for the right time to expand its reach. That moment has arrived. With the search underway for a permanent DFW home for a satellite TXAPA office, regionalization is no longer just an idea—it's becoming a reality.

THE WHY BEHIND REGIONALIZATION

TXAPA already provides services statewide. Workshops, site visits, PIQs, and targeted outreach keep members supported throughout the year. But keeping up with the demand for services in a state as large as Texas from a single location has meant long hours on the road for staff, who often drive the equivalent of an entire workday to connect with members and agencies for only a few brief hours. Regionalization will help TXAPA meet needs more efficiently by adding people and, eventually, additional square footage in North Texas.

TXAPA's last major expansion came in 2017, when the board of directors approved the purchase of property directly behind its

existing facility just off I-35 in Buda, TX, just outside of Austin. An existing structure on the property was remodeled to become the Association's headquarters. At the same time, the original building was renovated to house the state-of-the-art Hot Mix Asphalt Center (HMAC), which serves as the custodian of TxDOT's training and certification program. Today, the Buda campus is home to both TXAPA and the HMAC. The TXAPA campus was born. From this campus, TXAPA provides professional education for industry and agency partners through workshops, meetings, and outreach, while the HMAC certifies the state's technicians and specialists. These vital activities advance the quality of asphalt pavements across Texas.

The planned North Texas facility will build on this foundation, offering convenient access to both certification and professional education programs in one of the state's fastest-growing, most populous areas. With two full-service campuses, TXAPA and the HMAC will extend their reach, serving members, TxDOT, and local agencies more efficiently and creating greater

opportunities for training, collaboration, and statewide impact.

This effort is designed to serve all stakeholders: the asphalt pavement industry and its partners, along with the 25 TxDOT districts and the growing number of local agencies relying on asphalt pavement solutions. By addressing this broad audience, TXAPA is ensuring that *everyone* involved in Texas roads is supported and heard. The initiative builds on TXAPA's ongoing success with the Partners in Quality (PIQ) program, which will continue under Chuck Fuller while increasingly involving new regional leaders Sam Davis and Larry Peirce. In addition, TXAPA will conduct smaller, targeted membership meetings across the state, supplementing the major Annual Meeting in September and Membership Meeting in January.

MEET THE LEADERS



- Larry Peirce, Director of Special Projects**
 Larry brings over 35 years of experience in civil infrastructure, from research with FHWA's Strategic Highway Research Program to leadership roles with Pavetex Engineering (now Atlas Technical Consultants), Fugro Consultants, Lhoist, and the Lime Association of Texas. At TXAPA, he will focus on building relationships with partner associations, including APWA, ASCE, TACERA, and TML. He will also represent TXAPA at trade shows and lead business development efforts.



- Sam Davis, North Texas Regional Director**
 A civil engineer with 25 years in the industry, Sam has worn many hats—from managing partner of a small paving company to VP of Construction for Texas Materials. *“I’ve been building Fort Worth since 2003,”* Davis says, capturing his deep roots in the region. His mission is clear: to connect personally with TXAPA members year-round. *“Rather than waiting for our members to come to us, we’re going to meet them on their turf*

and do what we can to help,” he says. Sam is especially passionate about reaching smaller contractors, ensuring that every member feels supported.

Together, Sam and Larry will host lunch-and-learns, visit member firms, support the PIQ program, and in October 2025, launch a new podcast aimed at local agencies.

LOCAL AGENCIES & MAPS: A REGIONAL FOCUS

Regionalization also supports TXAPA’s growing emphasis on local agencies, complementing our service to TxDOT. In 2025, TXAPA relaunched its highly successful MAPS Conference and Trade Show as Municipal Asphalt Pavement Solutions (MAPS) and piloted a smaller regional format. The pivot from one centrally located trade show was a tremendous success, highlighting the appetite for region-specific engagement. Building on this momentum, TXAPA will host four MAPS regional meetings in 2026—in Midland, Corpus Christi, North Houston, and the DFW area. These meetings will bring together municipal leaders, TxDOT

representatives, engineers, contractors, and industry experts to address local needs while reinforcing TXAPA’s statewide mission.

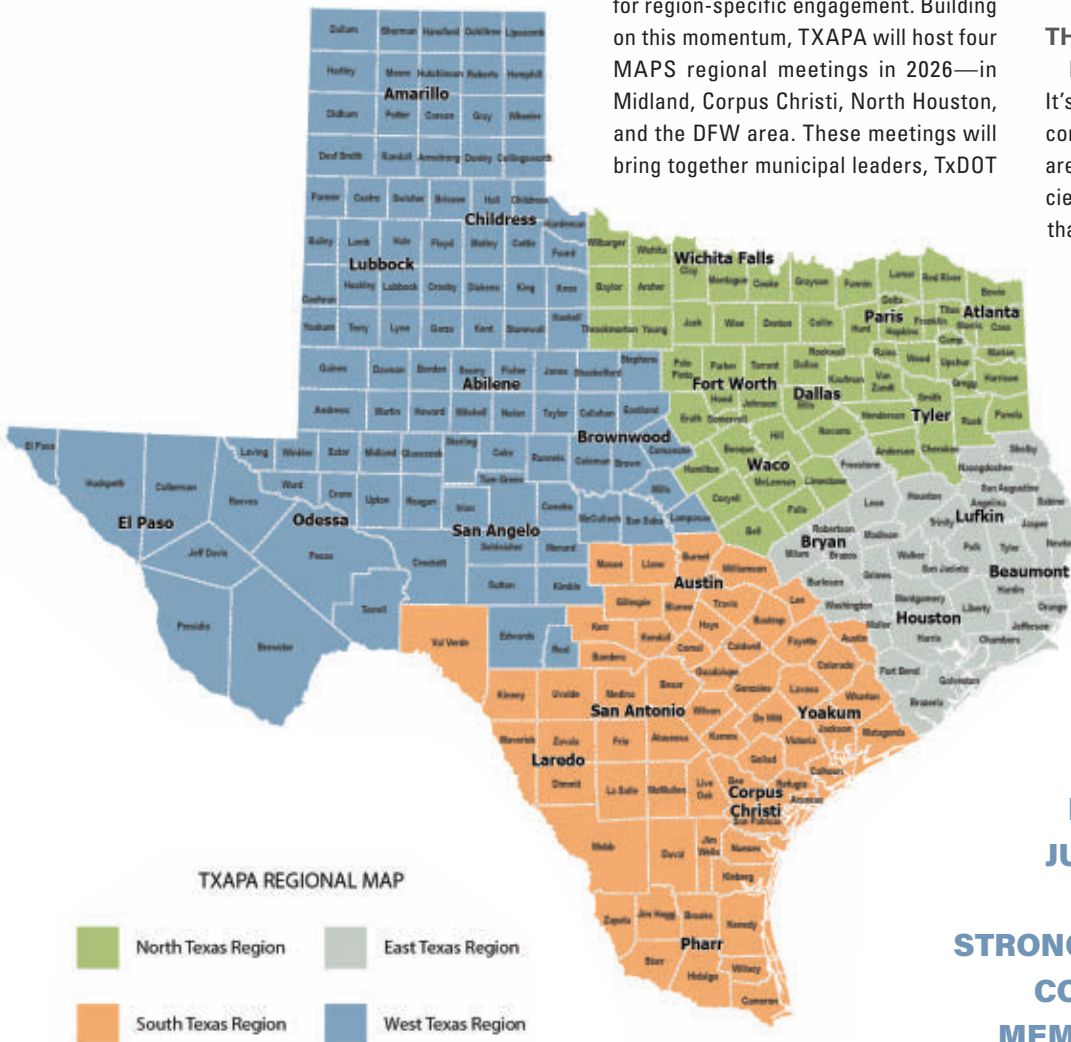
APEX & REGIONALIZATION: TWO SIDES OF GROWTH

While regionalization expands TXAPA’s reach, Jim Warren now leads the Asphalt Pavement EXchange (APEX), a complementary statewide initiative designed to elevate asphalt education and professional development for industry and TxDOT engineers and inspectors. APEX grew from the virtual Asphalt Education series of online-only courses and offers a combination of on-demand resources, classes, and workshops, creating a culture of continuous learning. Together, APEX and Regionalization ensure that TXAPA members not only gain access to high-quality education but also enjoy stronger, more personal connections across Texas.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Regionalization isn’t just about geography. It’s about building stronger, more responsive connections that meet members where they are. By serving both TxDOT and local agencies, TXAPA is creating a balanced approach that ensures *all stakeholders in asphalt pavement* benefit from the association’s work. With seasoned leaders, expanded programming, and a future North Texas hub, TXAPA is setting a new standard for what an association can deliver.

As Sam Davis put it, *“At the end of the day, our members are working all year long. They deserve support all year long.”* With regionalization, TXAPA is making that vision a reality. 🌟



REGIONALIZATION ISN'T JUST ABOUT GEOGRAPHY. IT'S ABOUT BUILDING STRONGER, MORE RESPONSIVE CONNECTIONS THAT MEET MEMBERS WHERE THEY ARE.

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MANAGING ASPHALT PLANT OPERATIONS

For more than four decades, TJ Young has been a leading voice in asphalt plant operations. Known for his hands-on expertise and his annual instruction at TXAPA's Asphalt Plant Operators Workshop, Young has logged time in nearly 1,000 asphalt plants across North America. His career, rooted in both equipment design and plant management, offers a unique perspective on the evolution of plant technology, best practices for operations, and the critical role of teamwork in producing high-quality asphalt.

FROM BATCHES TO DRUMS: A HALF-CENTURY OF CHANGE

In the mid-1970s, the asphalt industry began a shift that would forever alter how plants operate. Batch plants, once standard, gave way to drum mixers as three key innovations changed the game:

- Sized aggregates from quarries eliminated the need for onsite screening towers.



- Belt scales made continuous material measurement possible.
- Variable speed motors (and eventually variable frequency drives) enabled precise control of gradations.

ANATOMY OF A MODERN PLANT

A modern urban plant requires a minimum of five cold feed bins, three silos, and two asphalt tanks, with increasing demand for a third or even fourth tank, especially for high-polymer

TJ YOUNG'S 5 KEYS TO BETTER PLANT PERFORMANCE

1. Control Gradation—Manage your stockpiles and baghouse dust return—voids are king.
2. Verify Binder Calibration—Check each binder at its operating temperature.
3. Master Temperature Control—Keep mixes within a 10-15 degree window.
4. Run with Three People—Loader operator, console operator, and ground man.
5. Test Early, Test Often—More data is better; look for trends, not single results.

QUICK STARTUP & SHUTDOWN CHECKLIST

STARTUP

- Control temperature manually—don't rely solely on automation.
- Watch for coarse, shiny mix at startup—keep it out of the trucks.
- Minimize waste: the waste pile tells the story.

SHUTDOWN

- Expect gradation shifts as big rock empties first.
- Assign a spotter at the chute—divert off-spec mix to the pit.
- Never leave a partial silo; top it off to reduce crusting and heat loss.

**TEST EARLY, TEST OFTEN.
MORE DATA IS BETTER;
LOOK FOR TRENDS,
NOT SINGLE RESULTS.**

binders. A filler silo is also recommended for additives like lime or SMA. Such a facility represents a \$5-6 million investment before land costs.

THE PLANT'S ROLE: COOKING THE RECIPE

Asphalt plants don't design recipes—they cook them. The plant's job is to take specified aggregates, binder, and additives, and produce a consistent, high-quality mix. To do so requires close attention to:

1. Gradation Control

2. Binder Accuracy
3. Temperature Management

THE HUMAN FACTOR: THREE PEOPLE, ONE PLANT

Technology has advanced, but success still depends on people. The minimum team includes a loader operator, console operator, and ground man—each role critical, and communication among them non-negotiable.

QUALITY CONTROL AND CROSS-TRAINING

High-performing producers test all mixes daily, including private work. Cross-training—allowing plant personnel to participate in lab work and vice versa—helps both sides understand the process, leading to quicker problem-solving and stronger quality outcomes.

BEST PRACTICES: YOUNG'S RAPID-FIRE TIPS

- Aggregate Handling: Know your material before it enters the plant.
- Binder: Verify calibration at the actual operating temperature for each binder.
- Startup: Control temperature manually—don't rely solely on the computer.
- Shutdown: Dispose of "loose mix" to avoid gradation issues.
- Mix Storage: Fill silos completely to minimize temperature loss and crusting.
- Loadout: Always use multiple drops and never load below the cone line.
- QC Testing: Collect more data than you think you need and make changes based on trends, not single results.

CHALLENGES AHEAD: PEOPLE AND EQUIPMENT

Young identifies two major challenges facing today's asphalt producers:

- Equipment complexity—Highly computerized systems make troubleshooting difficult.
- Workforce focus—Maintaining a 'culture of craftsmanship' is more critical than ever.

CONCLUSION

TJ Young's career reflects both the evolution of asphalt plants and the timeless truth that great roads are built not only with advanced machinery but with dedicated, well-trained people. As TXAPA continues to invest in education and training, the industry can look forward to producing safer, smoother, and more durable pavements across Texas and beyond. 🚧

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BACK TO SCHOOL AND BACK TO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

As students across Texas trade in their swimsuits for school supplies and head back to the classroom, safety officials are reminding drivers that their vigilance is crucial to protecting young lives.

With the school year starting, drivers can expect increased morning and afternoon traffic, more young pedestrians and cyclists, and a need for heightened caution around schools and buses. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is urging all motorists to slow down, put away their phones and follow school zone traffic laws.

In 2024, Texas recorded 781 traffic crashes in school zones, resulting in two deaths and 17 serious injuries. The leading causes of these crashes were driver inattention, speeding, and failure to yield the right of way—all preventable behaviors.

"School zones demand extra care and attention from every driver," said Cathy Kratz, deputy director of TxDOT's traffic safety division. "Slowing down and staying alert can be the difference between life and death for a child crossing the street."

Crashes involving school buses were also a concern last year, with 2,480 incidents state-wide, resulting in 11 fatalities and 93 serious injuries. Speeding and distracted driving again topped the list of contributing factors.

DRIVERS: STAY ALERT, SLOW DOWN, AND FOLLOW THE LAW

TxDOT urges all motorists to take the following precautions in and around school zones:

- **Be aware of changes:** Traffic patterns near schools may be different from last year. Allow extra time to navigate these areas safely.

- **Put your phone away:** It is illegal to use a handheld device in an active school zone.
- **Obey posted speed limits:** Fines are higher in school zones, and so are the risks.
- **Yield to pedestrians:** Always stop for people in crosswalks and be extra cautious when children are present.
- **Use designated areas:** Drop off and pick up your children only in your school's official zones and not in the middle of the street.
- **Be vigilant at bus stops:** Watch for kids who may step into the road unexpectedly.

PARENTS: TEACH YOUR KIDS TO STAY SAFE

While drivers have a major responsibility, TxDOT also encourages parents to start safety conversations early with their children. Key reminders include:

- **Use sidewalks** whenever possible. If none are available, walk facing oncoming traffic.
- **Cross only at intersections or marked crosswalks.** Always look **left-right-left** before crossing.
- **Obey crossing guards** and follow their signals.

- **Make eye contact with drivers** before stepping into the street.
- **Watch for vehicles** when getting off a bus or moving between parked cars.
- **Wear a helmet** when biking or riding a scooter.
- **Avoid distractions** like phones or headphones when walking or biking.
- **Always know and follow traffic signs and signals.**

As the school year begins, TxDOT's message is clear: Every driver, parent, and student plays a role in preventing tragedies on Texas roads. Let's all do our part to make sure every child arrives at school—and back home—safely.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY: A TWO-WAY RESPONSIBILITY

Each year, thousands of crashes involve school buses. While school bus drivers are trained to prioritize student safety, drivers must do their part, too.

For Drivers:

- **Follow at a safe distance** and be prepared for frequent stops.
- **Stop for flashing red lights and stop signs** on buses unless you're on the opposite side of a divided highway.
- **Watch for children crossing the street**, especially in low-visibility conditions.
- Failing to stop can result in fines **up to \$1,250** for a first offense.

For Students:

- **Wait safely away from the curb** and board only when the bus is fully stopped.
- **Stay seated and quiet** to avoid distracting the driver.
- When exiting, **cross only in front of the bus**, making eye contact with the driver before crossing.

School zones demand everyone's full attention. Whether you're behind the wheel, riding a bike, or walking to school, **safety is a shared responsibility.** Let's work together to make sure every child gets to school and back home safely. ★

Contributed by the Texas Department of Transportation

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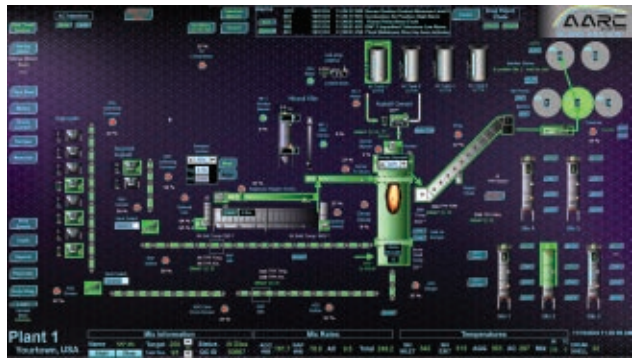
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HOUSEKEEPING AT HOT MIX PLANTS: UPHOLDING ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLEANLINESS STANDARDS

BY LANDON HOOD, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST, WESTWARD ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

Hot mix plants are vital to maintaining and improving our national transportation infrastructure. However, the industrial processes involved in these plants can pose significant environmental and occupational hazards if not managed properly. One of the most critical aspects in mitigating these risks is the implementation of robust housekeeping practices. Housekeeping in this context is not just about cleanliness, but rather it involves the ongoing commitment of employees and resources, as well as management buy-in, to ensure environmental compliance, operational efficiency, and worker safety.

Hot mix plants are subject to various environmental regulations depending on the region. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides overall

regulatory oversight, while here in Texas we also adhere to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regulations. These agencies craft and enforce upon rules and regulations relating to air emissions, waste disposal, and water management. Failure to comply with these rules and regulations can lead to legal penalties, plant shut-downs, property devaluation, and reputational damage. Therefore, good housekeeping is not just a matter of internal discipline; it is also a critical factor in regulatory compliance.

One key area of housekeeping involves proper storage and handling of materials. Raw materials such as liquid asphalt, coarse and fine aggregates, and mineral filler must be stored in a manner that prevents contamination and minimizes environmental impact. Covered storage areas are essential,

particularly for fine materials that can become airborne. Liquid asphalt tanks should be kept in containment areas to capture and contain any potential leaks or spills. Moreover, all loading and unloading zones associated with chemical/oil/fuel storage areas should be regularly cleaned to avoid accumulation of loose materials and spilled products, which can contribute to both safety hazards and environmental compliance issues.

Dust and air emissions are major concerns at hot mix plants due to the nature of aggregate handling and mixing processes. While current TCEQ and EPA air emissions control standards require the use of baghouse filters, scrubbers, and/or dust collection systems, their effectiveness depends on regular maintenance and cleaning. Filters used to treat air emission prior to being vented to the atmosphere should be



inspected frequently, and repaired or replaced when nearing the end of service life. Using dry cleaning methods such as vacuum sweepers in concert with water trucks can effectively suppress and remove light sediment from common plant areas without creating unnecessary and potentially noncompliance fugitive emissions.

Liquid asphalt handling presents its own set of challenges. Being a petroleum derivative, liquid asphalt, if spilled, has the potential to cause environmental contamination and could potentially devalue the property. Good housekeeping practices in this area include regular inspection of liquid asphalt pipelines and valves, the use of drip trays under connection and transfer points, and the availability of spill kits and other absorbent materials. Workers must be trained to respond swiftly and effectively to spills, and any contaminated materials must be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable TCEQ industrial solid waste rules and regulations.

Effective waste management is another essential component of plant housekeeping. Hot mix plants generate various types of solid waste, ranging from discarded packaging and off-spec chemical products to common maintenance related waste materials such as used oil, oily rags, and degraded filters. Waste generated at a hot mix plant should be stored in a compatible waste container and if possible, placed in a covered area prior to disposal. Labels indicating the type of waste material and, if applicable, the classification of that waste material should be clearly visible.

Water management is often overlooked but is equally crucial. During plant operations and routine cleaning activities, any stormwater

falling on the hot mix plant site is likely to mix with and mobilize loose sediment, spilled fuel, and oils, as well as other commonly used industrial chemicals, potentially contaminating additional areas of the site and adjacent water bodies. To ensure compliance with TCEQ stormwater regulations, it is vital to have well-designed and maintained drainage and treatment systems, such as sedimentation ponds, to adequately treat stormwater runoff before it leaves the plant boundary. Periodic inspections of these systems ensure they function efficiently and comply with environmental regulatory requirements.

Maintaining cleanliness in and around the plant is also necessary for operational efficiency and worker health. Routine cleaning schedules are recommended for all plant areas, including control rooms, fuel and oil storage areas, and maintenance areas, and other commonly used areas throughout the site. Keeping these spaces tidy also instills a sense of pride and responsibility among workers, further reinforcing accountability and a proactive safety culture atmosphere.

Heavy equipment and vehicles used at the plant are often the primary contributors to oil and chemical spills and leaks. Routine preventive maintenance should include checks for ongoing leaks, worn hoses, loose fittings, damaged gaskets/seals, and mechanical damage. Areas used to park equipment should consist of paved surfaces that are cleaned on a regular basis.

An often-underestimated aspect of housekeeping is the human element. Without proper training and active involvement by plant management and employees, even the best

systems can fail. Workers should be trained in basic housekeeping principles, use of PPE, fire safety, spill response, and waste management procedures. Regular toolbox talks and visual reminders like posters or checklists can be used as valuable tools to reinforce awareness of a company's good housekeeping protocols. Assigning housekeeping responsibilities to specific teams or rotating duty schedules also ensures accountability.

The benefits of a well-maintained hot mix plant are far-reaching. Good housekeeping leads to better air and water quality, reduces workplace accidents, reduces complaints from adjacent neighbors, and helps to ensure compliance with state and federal environmental and safety standards. It also has the added effect of boosting plant productivity by minimizing downtime due to equipment failure and reducing potential quality control issues. Moreover, a clean and organized work environment improves morale, fosters discipline, and builds the reputation of the plant among stakeholders and the local community.

In conclusion, effective housekeeping in hot mix plants is more than a maintenance function, it is a strategic necessity and a requirement to maintain compliance with state and federal environmental and safety regulations. It serves as a direct reflection of a company's commitment to environmental responsibility, operational excellence, and worker welfare. As environmental rules and regulations continue to evolve, and public scrutiny of the hot mix industry increases, integrating good housekeeping into daily operations is no longer optional. It is an essential part of running a safe, compliant, and efficient hot mix plant. 🌟




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*TXAPA Exhibiting at Event!

2025

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

Everyday Asphalt - Virtual

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2025

Civil Engineering Conference
(CECON) - San Marcos, Texas*

OCTOBER 16, 2025

Everyday Asphalt - Virtual

OCTOBER 29-31, 2025

Texas Municipal League (TML)
Annual Conference -
Fort Worth, Texas

NOVEMBER 20, 2025

Everyday Asphalt - Virtual

OCTOBER 19-22, 2025

Texas Association of County
Engineers and Road Administrators
(TACERA) Annual Conference -
Waco, Texas*

DECEMBER 11, 2025

Women of Asphalt, Ideas
That Lead and Inspire, and
TXAPA Christmas Party

DECEMBER 18, 2025

Everyday Asphalt - Virtual

2026

JANUARY 20, 2026

Winter Classic Golf Tournament -
Lost Pines Resort,
Bastrop, Texas

JANUARY 21, 2026

TXAPA Membership Meeting -
Lost Pines Resort,
Bastrop, Texas

FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Women of Asphalt - Hill Country Tour

FEBRUARY 24-25, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting -
Midland, Texas

APRIL 14-15, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting -
Corpus Christi, Texas

APRIL 28-29, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting -
Houston / Humble, Texas

MAY 12-13, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting -
Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas

SEPTEMBER 14-17, 2026

51st Annual Meeting - Hyatt Regency
Hill Country Resort and Spa,
San Antonio, Texas

SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

TXAPA Golf Tournament - Hyatt
Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa,
San Antonio, Texas

TxDOT LETTING SCHEDULE

2025

Oct. 8–9

Nov. 5–6

Dec. 2–3

2026

Jan. 6–7

Feb. 4–5

Mar. 4–5

Apr. 7–8

May 6–7

Jun. 2–3

Jul. 1–2

Aug. 5–6

Sept. 2–3

Oct. 6–7

Nov. 3–4

Dec. 1–2

2027

Jan. 6–7

Feb. 2–3

Mar. 3–4

Apr. 6–7

May 5–6

Jun. 1–2

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Nov. 2–3

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Membership also connects TXAPA to the broader national network through partnerships with the Asphalt Institute (AI), the National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA), and the Asphalt Pavement Alliance (APA). These relationships open access to technical, promotional, environmental, and legislative resources that strengthen both businesses and the industry as a whole.

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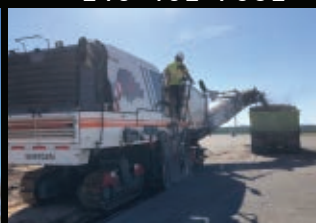
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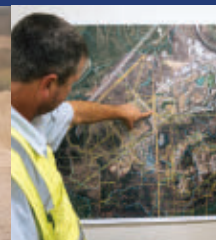
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