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COVER CREDIT: THE SMITHVILLE LOOP 230 DOWNTOWN  
PAVEMENT PROJECT



COLUMNS

- 7** President's Message
- 9** From the CEO
- 10** Associate Member Forum
- 11** The Major's Perspective

FEATURES

- 12**  
**PARTNERSHIP BRINGS  
ACCELERATED  
CONSTRUCTION SUCCESS**  
The Smithville Loop 230 accelerated  
asphalt pavement construction project  
demonstrated how strong partnerships  
and sound engineering judgment  
can deliver outstanding results  
for a community.
- 16**  
**TXAPA MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS  
GREAT STRIDES IN 2025,  
EVEN BIGGER PLANS  
FOR 2026**  
TXAPA celebrates accomplishments  
and welcomes new board and  
leadership for 2026.



- 19**  
**INSIDE THE APEX  
ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP  
PILOT: LAYING THE  
FOUNDATION FOR  
INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT**  
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classroom instruction with live and  
video demonstrations, expert video  
interviews, and open discussion.

IN EVERY  
ISSUE

- 22** Sustainability & Permitting
- 25** Calendar of Events
- 25** New Members
- 26** Advertisers Index



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# A CALL WORTH ANSWERING



Cliff Kay  
A.L. Helmcamp  
2026 TXAPA  
President

In the coming issues of *Texas Asphalt*, I will be sharing more about the 4Ps. If you missed the Membership Meeting, I introduced the four pillars that will guide me during my presidency: Partnership, Planning, Performance, and Participation. I will expand on them here in these pages throughout the year.

In the meantime, please know that I am here, I am committed, and I look forward to serving you in 2026.

**W**hen I received the call asking if I would consider serving as your 2026 TXAPA President, I will be honest: I paused. The association has taken significant strides in recent years, and the leaders who came before me have done big, meaningful things. I found myself asking whether I could truly fill those shoes, both in honoring the work of my predecessors and in meeting the responsibility that comes with this role.

I was also very aware of what saying yes would mean. A real investment of time and energy, and time away from my family. My wife Wendy and I spent a lot of time talking it through. In the end, we agreed this was something we could do together.

What made that decision easier was knowing I would not be stepping into this role alone. The TXAPA staff has truly held both Wendy's and my hands through this transition and made it a fantastic new path in our lives. They are an incredible team, and they have made the move into this role seamless.

The first month has already been a whirlwind, starting with record attendance and a beautiful day of golf at the annual Membership Meeting. It was fantastic to see so many of our members enjoying the perfect weather. Mother Nature was kind to us this year.

The following day, I fulfilled one of my first official duties as president, honoring our outgoing president, board members and committee chairs. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who served in 2025. This Association does not move forward without those who volunteer and dedicate their time and talent to TXAPA.

I also want to extend a huge thank you to Past President Eric Suarez. In late 2024 and throughout 2025, he included me in all matters TXAPA and prepared me for this role with generosity and intention. I can only hope to mentor future TXAPA leaders the way he mentored me. Well done, Eric.

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# OUR STORY IS PAVED WITH PARTNERSHIP



Harold C. Mullen  
Chief Executive Officer  
Texas Asphalt  
Pavement Association

As I was contemplating my 2026 kick-off article for *Texas Asphalt*, it struck me that this will be my last year to write articles as the Chief Executive Officer of the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA). For those of you who did not attend TXAPA's January Annual Membership Meeting, our President Cliff Kay gave me a "pink slip" symbolizing that my fulltime gig at TXAPA was coming to a close and that I have about 11 months to vacate the premises. I appreciate Cliff's fun and personal approach to this change and yet again it reminded me that I find myself reflecting not on an ending, but on an extraordinary journey.

Thirty-one years ago, I could not have imagined the growth, resilience, and unity that would define this association. I am deeply humbled by what TXAPA has achieved over the past three decades, but I am equally certain that I am blessed to be in an industry filled with great and wonderful people who love to overachieve.

The accomplishments we celebrate today are the direct result of our members and member leaders. Their dedication, commitment, thoughtful planning, and proactive attitude have shaped every milestone along the way. From committee rooms to board meetings, from job sites to the State Capitol, our members have consistently chosen to do what is best for the asphalt pavement industry in Texas. That mindset, placing the long-term health of the industry above individual interests, has been one of our greatest strengths.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my time at TXAPA has been witnessing the power

of partnership. Our long-standing relationship with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) stands as a model of collaboration. Through open dialogue, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to quality, we have worked together to improve specifications, advance materials research, and implement innovations that have enhanced pavement performance across the state. These efforts have not only strengthened our industry but have also delivered lasting value to Texas taxpayers.

Beyond TxDOT, we have built strong partnerships with local governments, universities, and national organizations such as the National Asphalt Pavement Association. Together, we have advanced workforce development initiatives, expanded training and certification programs, strengthened safety culture, and promoted environmental stewardship. Whether implementing balanced mix design practices or advocating for sound transportation policy, our progress has always been rooted in collaboration.

I have always believed that leadership is about bringing people together around a common purpose. Over the years, we have faced economic downturns, regulatory changes, and rapid technological evolution. Each time, our members responded with foresight rather than fear. They planned strategically. They engaged constructively. They tackled challenges with solutions in mind. That proactive approach has allowed TXAPA to remain strong, relevant, and respected.

As I look ahead to the next generation of leaders, I feel a profound sense of gratitude and optimism. I am proud of what we have built—strong relationships, meaningful partnerships, and measurable improvements in pavement quality and industry advocacy. But more than anything, I am truly grateful for the people who made it possible.

Serving this association has been one of the great privileges of my professional life. The story of TXAPA's success is not mine—it is ours. And I am confident that the foundation we have built together will support even greater achievements in the years to come. 🌟

**OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE FACED ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS, REGULATORY CHANGES, AND RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION. EACH TIME, OUR MEMBERS RESPONDED WITH FORESIGHT RATHER THAN FEAR. THEY PLANNED STRATEGICALLY. THEY ENGAGED CONSTRUCTIVELY. THEY TACKLED CHALLENGES WITH SOLUTIONS IN MIND.**



# INTENTION + ACTION = RESULTS



**Terry Morris**  
Lhoist North America  
Associate Member Advisory  
Committee Chair

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as the new chairman of the TXAPA Associates Committee. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by my peers and for the opportunity to help guide an organization that plays such an important role in supporting Texas’s aggregates and construction materials industry.

TXAPA Associates are a vital part of the broader TXAPA mission. From equipment suppliers and service providers to

logistics, technology, and professional services, Associates bring innovation, expertise, and partnership to every corner of our industry. The strength of TXAPA is rooted in collaboration, and the Associates Board exists to ensure that our collective voice, value, and contributions continue to grow.

As chairman, my primary focus is on engagement, relevance, and results. Engagement means creating meaningful opportunities for Associates to connect with producers, fellow members, and TXAPA leadership. Whether through events, committees, or educational programs, we must continue to foster relationships that lead to long-term partnerships and shared success.

Relevance means ensuring that TXAPA Associates remain aligned with the evolving needs of the industry. Our sector is changing rapidly—through technology, regulation, workforce challenges, and market demands. The Associates Board has an important responsibility to help TXAPA anticipate these changes, adapt proactively, and deliver value that matters to our members today and in the future.

Results mean action. I believe strongly that leadership is about execution, not just intention. During my tenure, I look forward to working closely with the board and TXAPA staff to strengthen Associate participation, enhance visibility, and support initiatives that positively impact safety, education, advocacy, and workforce development across Texas.

I also want to recognize and thank the past leadership of the Associates Board. Their dedication and hard work have built a strong foundation, and I am committed to building upon it with energy, transparency, and collaboration.

Most importantly, I encourage every Associate member to stay involved. Your ideas, feedback, and participation are essential. This board represents you, and its success depends on open communication and active engagement from our membership.

I am excited about the road ahead and confident in what we can accomplish together. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and I look forward to working with each of you as we continue to strengthen TXAPA and the industry we proudly support. 🌟

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# FROM CRUDE TO PAVEMENT: WHY ASPHALT BINDER IS MORE LIKE COFFEE THAN CONCRETE



Juan D. Hermosillo, Ph.D.  
Martin Asphalt Company  
Major Associate Member Chair

**M**ost people assume that asphalt binder is a uniform product. Black is black, right? If it meets the specification, it should behave the same everywhere. That assumption makes sense until you work in asphalt binder supply.

A better comparison might be coffee.

To the casual drinker, coffee is just coffee. But anyone who has spent time around it knows the truth. Beans from different regions taste different, roast differently, and behave differently in the grinder and the brewer. Two cups can look identical, yet one is smooth and balanced while the other is bitter or weak. The difference is not the cup. It is everything that happened upstream.

Asphalt binder works much the same way.

What arrives at a terminal tank is the end product of a long and variable refining process. Asphalt binder is produced from different crude sources and refined in different facilities with different configurations and operating objectives. Even when materials meet the same grade designation, their underlying characteristics can vary in meaningful ways. From a supplier's perspective, that variability is not an exception. It is the starting point.

That is where the real work begins.

Before a binder ever goes into a pavement, it must be evaluated, blended, tested, and often modified to perform reliably under Texas conditions. Texas is not a forgiving environment

for pavements. High surface temperatures, heavy truck traffic, long haul distances, and wide geographic diversity all place significant demands on asphalt materials. A binder that performs acceptably in one climate or region may behave very differently once exposed to Texas heat and loading.

Managing that variability requires more than checking a box on a specification. It requires understanding how each incoming material responds to blending, modification, aging, and storage. Two binders that look the same on paper can respond very differently to polymers or oxidation. Ensuring consistent performance from inconsistent starting materials is an engineering challenge that happens quietly long before a paving crew ever sees the mix.

Scale only amplifies the challenge.

Texas operates at a scale where small inconsistencies can quickly become large problems. Long transport distances, high production volumes, and tight construction schedules leave little margin for error. When a binder does not behave as expected, the impacts ripple outward through certification timelines, plant operations, and project schedules. Maintaining consistency across that system requires coordination between refiners, terminals, laboratories, contractors, and the agency.

That coordination is supported by the framework provided by TxDOT specifications and certification programs, but it is sustained through collaboration. Ongoing dialogue

between industry and agency, often through TXAPA committees and working groups, helps ensure that specifications continue to reflect both performance goals and real-world material behavior. From a supplier's perspective, that collaboration is essential. Specifications are most effective when they are informed by how materials actually behave rather than how they are expected to behave.

The role of binder suppliers in this process is often invisible to the public, but it is foundational to pavement performance. Long before mix design or placement, suppliers are managing variability, verifying properties, ensuring storage stability, and engineering materials so that what leaves a terminal today will still perform as intended years down the road.

As Texas continues to grow, the demands placed on its pavements will only increase. Meeting those demands will require continued attention to the less visible parts of the system, including the supply chain, testing, and engineering decisions that happen well before asphalt is placed. Asphalt binder consistency does not happen naturally. Like a good cup of coffee, it is the result of careful sourcing, thoughtful processing, and a great deal of behind-the-scenes work.

Understanding that complexity helps explain why asphalt pavements in Texas perform the way they do and why collaboration across the supply chain under the umbrella of TXAPA remains critical to building durable, high-performing roads across the state. ✪

**TWO BINDERS THAT LOOK THE SAME ON PAPER CAN RESPOND VERY DIFFERENTLY TO POLYMERS OR OXIDATION. ENSURING CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE FROM INCONSISTENT STARTING MATERIALS IS AN ENGINEERING CHALLENGE THAT HAPPENS QUIETLY LONG BEFORE A PAVING CREW EVER SEES THE MIX.**



# PARTNERSHIP BRINGS ACCELERATED CONSTRUCTION SUCCESS

## THE SMITHVILLE LOOP 230 DOWNTOWN PAVEMENT PROJECT

**W**hen a pavement needs to move from concept to completion in a matter of days, success depends on trust, experience, and a willingness to collaborate under pressure.

That was the case in downtown Smithville, where an accelerated asphalt pavement construction project demonstrated how strong partnerships and sound engineering judgment can deliver outstanding results for a community.

### A PROJECT DEFINED BY URGENCY

The project began as a planned maintenance effort intended to extend the service life of an aging roadway through downtown Smithville, a small but active community with local businesses, pedestrian traffic, and upcoming community events. The original approach included a scrub seal application designed to preserve the roadway temporarily before a future overlay.

However, conditions in the field indicated the pavement was not performing as intended and the citizens of Smithville were eager for a resolution. With an important downtown event approaching, the timeline quickly accelerated.

What had initially been planned as a near-term maintenance response became a full-scale, fast-tracked paving operation.

Rather than allowing the situation to escalate, representatives from TxDOT's Austin District and Lone Star Paving came together immediately to determine the most effective path forward.

### COLLABORATION AT EVERY LEVEL

According to Miguel Arellano, Deputy District Engineer for TxDOT's Austin District, the outcome hinged on open communication and long-standing professional relationships.

"This project could not have happened without the ability to pick up the phone, talk through the problem, and work together toward a solution," Arellano said. "Those relationships between the district, contractors, and engineers are our biggest keys to success."

Within hours of identifying the need for action, teams from TxDOT and Lone Star Paving coordinated design recommendations, construction logistics, materials availability, and staffing. Multiple evening calls took place among district leadership, maintenance staff, project managers, and operations teams to align resources and expectations.

### ENGINEERING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

Given the compressed schedule and existing surface conditions, the team selected a dense-graded Type D mix (D64) with 20 percent reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP). The mix was engineered specifically for the roadway's characteristics: low-speed traffic, downtown access points, and the need for thickness flexibility over an irregular underlying surface.

"The dense-graded mix gave us forgiveness," said Jon Wickes, Project Manager at Lone Star Paving. "We needed the ability to adjust thickness in real time and still deliver a smooth, durable surface."



The binder selection also reflected practical considerations. A PG 64 binder provided sufficient performance while allowing extended workability during overnight paving in November, when conditions would have been more challenging with a stiffer binder.

Importantly, the mix design aligned with TxDOT Austin District standards and lifecycle performance goals, delivering an engineered solution optimized for both cost and durability.

### CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED IN 32 HOURS

Once mobilized, the operation moved quickly. What did not exist as a construction project earlier in the week became a fully paved roadway by Friday afternoon.

“Having industry partners who could respond immediately made all the difference,” said Omar De Leon, Director of Maintenance

for TxDOT’s Austin District. “That level of teamwork allowed us to find solutions quickly and deliver the project on a very accelerated timeline.”

The project included:

- Approximately **2.25 miles of roadway**
- **6,000 tons of asphalt**
- Continuous paving over **32 hours**
- Two rotating paving crews
- Around-the-clock plant operations
- Approximately **25–30 belly dump trucks** cycling throughout the operation

To ensure proper surface transitions through downtown curb-and-gutter sections, the team incorporated targeted edge milling during overnight shifts, preventing excessive buildup at intersections and parking areas.

Throughout the operation, TxDOT maintenance crews worked in advance of paving to sweep loose material and prepare the surface,

allowing Lone Star Paving to begin work immediately upon arrival.

De Leon, who was on site during paving, noted the sense of pride among crews. “You could feel it out there,” he said. “Spirits were high, and everyone took pride in working together to get the job done.”

### SAFETY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Despite the intensity of the schedule and scale of operations, the project was completed with **zero safety incidents**; a point of pride for everyone involved.

“Hundreds of people were involved when you consider plant crews, truck drivers, paving crews, and support staff,” noted Chuck Fuller of TXAPA. “To run continuously for more than 30 hours without an incident speaks volumes about the planning and professionalism of the teams.”



PHOTO: MIGUEL ARELLANO, TxDOT



Lone Star Paving personnel, left to right: Fredy Escobar, Brian Swift, Allen Knox.



A close-up shot of the finished project.

PHOTO: JOSH WHITEHEAD, HMAAC

and cost optimization without sacrificing performance.

#### A MODEL FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

The Smithville Downtown Loop 230 Pavement Project stands as a testament to what can be achieved when agencies and contractors work as true partners. From rapid decision-making to safe execution, the project reflects the Austin District's leadership in flexible pavement solutions and Lone Star Paving's operational excellence.

As Arellano summarized, "This is what happens when trust, accountability, and experience come together. Everyone owned the outcome and the community benefited." 🌟

**"THE DENSE-GRADED MIX GAVE US FORGIVENESS," SAID JON WICKES, PROJECT MANAGER AT LONE STAR PAVING. "WE NEEDED THE ABILITY TO ADJUST THICKNESS IN REAL TIME AND STILL DELIVER A SMOOTH, DURABLE SURFACE."**

Crews were rotated at 12-hour intervals to maintain alertness and performance, reinforcing that speed never came at the expense of safety.

#### A COMMUNITY-FOCUSED OUTCOME

Since completion, the pavement has performed as intended, with no reported issues, which is often the best possible result.

"For projects like this, no news is good news," said Alex Flores, Vice President of Lone Star Paving. "And the community response has been very positive."

The project not only restored ride quality and functionality, but also demonstrated how thoughtful material selection (such as the use of RAP) can support sustainability

## PROJECT TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

### TxDOT AUSTIN DISTRICT

Miguel Arellano, Deputy District Engineer

Omar De Leon, Director of Maintenance  
Tucker Ferguson, District Engineer

### LONE STAR PAVING

Alan Knox, Vice President

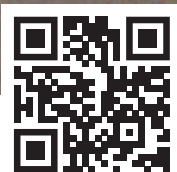
Austin Operations

Alex Flores, Vice President

Jon Wickes, Project Manager

Tracy Gainey, Project Manager

Brian Swift and Fredy Escobar, Superintendents



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# FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

## TXAPA MEMBERSHIP MEETING HIGHLIGHTS GREAT STRIDES IN 2025, EVEN BIGGER PLANS FOR 2026



The 2026 Board of Directors was formally welcomed at the Annual Membership Meeting, including (Left to Right) Glynn Forshage, Foremost Paving, Inc.; Troy Morrison, Austin Bridge & Road (Ex Officio Board Member and National Asphalt Pavement Association State Director); Roland Nunez, Hunter Industries Ltd.; Terry Morris, Lhoist North America (Ex Officio Board Member and Associate Member Chair); Juan Hermosillo, Martin Asphalt Company (Board Member and Major Associate Member Chair); 2026 President Cliff Kay, A.L. Helmcamp Inc.; Past President Eric Suarez, Durwood Greene Construction Company; Luiza Barros, Texas Materials (Central Texas Area); Jose Mata, Reece Albert Inc.; Alex Flores, Lone Star Paving; Mark Miller, Big Creek Construction; and Ricky Lemmons, Jagoe Public Company.

**T**XAPA held its Annual Membership Meeting to kick off the new year with a comprehensive update on the association’s direction, growth, and priorities. Leadership outlined expanded statewide services, including the addition of regional directors and special projects staff to strengthen outreach across Texas as part of the association’s multi-year regionalization strategy. Members were briefed on the proposed dues increase potentially taking effect in 2027 to support these expanded efforts, along with plans to open a North Texas location that will house regional staff and a second Hot Mix Asphalt Center facility to meet growing certification demand. Updates were also shared on the HMA scholarship program and recipient outcomes, along with new promotional efforts to increase participation.

Additional reports highlighted major progress within APEX—the Asphalt Pavement EXchange—including new staff hires, development of educational resources, and the launch of statewide Essentials Workshops focused on asphalt education for engineers and inspectors. Association leadership emphasized that continued growth and promotion are essential to protecting Texas’s asphalt market. The meeting also recognized the accomplishments of outgoing President Eric Suarez and numerous committee and board leaders for their service. Members formally welcomed the 2026 Board of Directors and installed the new president, marking the start of the association’s next leadership year. ✦



TXAPA CEO Harold Mullen (center) and incoming TXAPA President Cliff Kay, A.L. Helmcamp, Inc. (right) honored 2025 TXAPA President Eric Suarez, Durwood Greene Construction Company (left), with a ceremonial gavel. Suarez oversaw some of the most significant changes in the association’s recent history.



Past President Jason Exum, R.K. Hall, LLC, was recognized for his continued leadership on the Board of Directors as Past President and was the 2025 recipient of the esteemed Eric Johnson Service and Leadership Award (pictured with 2026 President Cliff Kay, A.L. Helmcamp).



Jason Purke, Texas Materials Central Texas Area, was honored for his leadership of the Marketing Committee.



David Johnson, Colorado Materials, was recognized for his leadership of the Aggregates, Soils, and Base committee.



Guy Bobbora was recognized for leading the Associate Member Committee and serving as an Ex Officio Member of the Board of Directors.



Andy Cascione was honored for service on the Board of Directors and his tenure as Major Associate Member Chair.



Mike Brown was honored for completing his tenure of service on the Board of Directors as an Ex Officio Board Member and National Asphalt Pavement Association State Director.



Harry Bush was recognized for completing his service on the Board of Directors.



Eddie Updike was recognized for his leadership and completing his tenure as Finance Committee Chair.



Luisa Barros was honored for her tenure as Chair of the Women of Asphalt Texas Branch. Barros will continue serving on the board in 2026.

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# INSIDE THE APEX ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP PILOT:

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT

In December 2025, APEX launched its Essentials Workshop Pilot at the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA) headquarters in Buda, marking an important step toward strengthening foundational knowledge across the asphalt pavement industry. The two-day, in-person workshop brought together more than 50 asphalt professionals for an immersive learning experience

designed to connect the dots across the full lifecycle of asphalt pavements.

The workshop blended classroom instruction with live and video demonstrations, expert video interviews, and open discussion. Participants explored core concepts spanning materials and mix selection, pavement design and planning, construction, and maintenance. Attendees represented a cross-section of the

industry, including TxDOT, contractors, and industry professionals, with experience levels ranging from newcomers to seasoned veterans. APEX committee members also participated, helping ensure the program reflected real-world needs and perspectives.

At the heart of the APEX Essentials Workshop is a simple but powerful goal: to get everyone in the industry on the same page



and speaking the same language. By the end of the program, participants are expected to demonstrate a solid understanding of asphalt pavement fundamentals and, just as importantly, how each phase of the pavement lifecycle influences the others. APEX refers to this interconnected process as the “circle of life,” encompassing materials and

mix selection, design and planning, construction, and maintenance. Understanding one’s role within this circle—and how collaboration and knowledge-sharing strengthen the system as a whole—is a key takeaway of the workshop.

Participant feedback from the pilot workshop underscored the program’s impact. When

asked to assess how the workshop influenced their technical knowledge, attendees reported increased understanding across all subject areas. More than 90 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop met APEX’s stated objectives.

For many attendees, the value extended beyond technical content. Mark Dean of

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**PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FROM THE PILOT WORKSHOP UNDERScoreD THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT. WHEN ASKED TO ASSESS HOW THE WORKSHOP INFLUENCED THEIR TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, ATTENDEES REPORTED INCREASED UNDERSTANDING ACROSS ALL SUBJECT AREAS.**

Longview Asphalt shared, "I'm impressed with the program so far. There's been a lot of great points brought up that even after many years in the industry were new to me. Very educational—I found them helpful. I can only imagine how much this would have impacted my career had I been exposed to it in the early years."

Bryce Naivar of Lone Star Paving echoed that sentiment from the perspective of a newer professional. "I think this program has been a tremendous help," Naivar said. "I've been in the industry for about four years. I started on a paving crew and worked my way into the office into estimating. It's really cool to

look at all four aspects—construction, maintenance, materials, and planning—and hear from experts about their side of the business. It makes me want to dive deeper and learn as much as I can."

The APEX Essentials Workshop Pilot was thoroughly evaluated, and participant feedback was used to refine and enhance the program ahead of its broader rollout. Throughout the spring of 2026, APEX is hosting Essentials Workshops in multiple regions across the state. Workshops were held in Houston and San Antonio in January, Dallas/Fort Worth and San Angelo in February, followed by Lubbock

and Buda in March. Continuous evaluation throughout the spring sessions will guide further improvements.

Looking ahead, the APEX Essentials Workshops will expand to additional regions in fall 2026. Location announcements will be released later this year. To stay informed about upcoming workshops and registration details, join the APEX mailing list by scanning the QR code or visit the APEX website at [www.apextx.org](http://www.apextx.org).



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# RAP: TURNING YESTERDAY'S PAVEMENT INTO TOMORROW'S ROADS

By Carlee M. Ritchie, Environmental Specialist - Westward Environmental, Inc.

**R**eclaimed Asphalt Pavement (RAP) has been a proven and reliable component of the asphalt industry for decades. RAP is produced from existing asphalt pavement that has been milled or removed, then crushed, screened, and reprocessed for use in new asphalt mixtures. When properly designed and controlled, RAP offers both economic and environmental advantages over mixes produced with 100 percent virgin materials. Its use reduces demand for raw materials, lowers production costs, and supports sustainability initiatives across the industry. In recent years, state agencies have demonstrated a growing interest in increasing the percentage of RAP used in asphalt mixtures, particularly in base course applications.

The environmental benefits of RAP are substantial. In 2021 alone, the use of RAP prevented approximately 2.6 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions from entering the atmosphere. That same year, an estimated 94.6 million tons of RAP were incorporated into new asphalt mixtures, offsetting the need for roughly 26 million barrels of virgin asphalt binder. RAP use has also helped preserve

landfill capacity, with nearly 60 million cubic yards of landfill space conserved in 2019 by diverting reclaimed materials from disposal. The incorporation of higher percentages of RAP in asphalt mixtures positively influences a mix's Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) by reducing reliance on virgin materials, decreasing energy consumption, and lowering the overall environmental impact of asphalt production.

Despite these advantages, industry professionals recognize the performance challenges that can accompany higher RAP contents. Mixtures containing RAP tend to be stiffer due to the presence of aged binder, which can reduce cracking resistance if not properly addressed. As a result, ongoing research and field evaluations continue to focus on mix design optimization, binder replacement strategies, rejuvenators, and improved production practices to enhance durability and long-term pavement performance.

Another commonly noted consideration with RAP-rich mixtures is pavement appearance. Higher RAP contents can result in lighter-colored pavements compared to mixtures made with all virgin materials. While this difference is primarily aesthetic and does not affect performance, future advancements in material technologies and mix design approaches may help address these visual concerns.

From a production standpoint, several well-established best practices are critical for successfully manufacturing asphalt mixtures containing RAP. Key considerations include minimizing moisture in RAP stockpiles and ensuring consistent, uniform feed rates into the asphalt plant. Excess moisture or material segregation can negatively impact plant efficiency, mix consistency, and overall pavement quality.

RAP feed bins and conveying systems are similar to those used for virgin aggregates; however, RAP bins are typically constructed with steeper sidewalls to reduce the potential for material bridging at the bottom of the bin. Bridging can interrupt RAP flow and cause inconsistent feeding. When fractionated RAP is used—especially when more than one RAP size is incorporated—the plant must be equipped with a corresponding number of RAP feeder bins to ensure proper proportioning.

In the United States, RAP is typically introduced into the asphalt plant downstream of the burner combustion zone. This configuration prevents the RAP from being exposed to direct flame or excessively hot exhaust gases, which can cause smoking and damage the aged binder. Many modern plants designed for higher RAP contents utilize counter-flow dryer arrangements, allowing RAP to be added after the virgin aggregate has been dried and superheated.

Plants producing mixtures with elevated RAP contents also commonly allow for longer mixing times to ensure adequate heat transfer and thorough blending of virgin aggregates, RAP, and virgin asphalt binder. When properly designed and operated, these systems enable producers to maximize RAP usage while maintaining consistent mix quality and performance.

Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement continues to play a critical role in the asphalt industry as producers balance performance requirements with economic and environmental responsibility. When properly designed, produced, and controlled, RAP offers measurable sustainability benefits while remaining a reliable component of high-quality asphalt mixtures. Although higher RAP contents present challenges related to stiffness, durability, and production controls, ongoing research and advancements in plant technologies and mix design practices continue to expand its effective use.

By focusing on sound stockpile management, consistent plant operations, and thoughtful mix design strategies, producers can successfully incorporate RAP while maintaining long-term pavement performance. As the industry moves toward increased sustainability and resource efficiency, RAP remains a proven and practical solution for building durable, cost-effective roads across Texas and beyond. ☘

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For TXAPA event registration options, go to [texasasphalt.org/events](https://texasasphalt.org/events).

\*TXAPA Exhibiting at Event!

## 2026

### MARCH 25-26, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting  
Richard M. Borchard Fairgrounds—  
Corpus Christi, Texas

### APRIL 28-29, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting  
Humble Civic Center & Arena Center—  
Houston, Texas

### MAY 27-28, 2026

MAPS Regional Meeting  
The Hurst Convention Center—  
Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas

### JUNE 17, 2026

Materials and Asphalt Technology  
Research Symposium—  
Buda, Texas

### SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

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

### SEPTEMBER 14-17, 2026

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

## TxDOT LETTING SCHEDULE

### 2026

Jan. 6–7

Feb. 4–5

March 4–5

April 7–8

May 6–7

June 2–3

July 1–2

Aug. 5–6

Sept. 2–3

Oct. 6–7

Nov. 3–4

Dec. 1–2

### 2027

Jan. 6–7

Feb. 2–3

March 3–4

April 6–7

May 5–6

June 1–2

July 1–2

Aug. 4–5

Sept. 1–2

Oct. 5–6

Nov. 2–3

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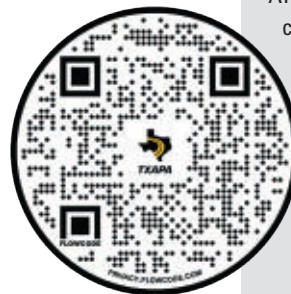
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Become part of a collaborative effort to shape the future of asphalt pavement in Texas. Members work directly with TxDOT, local agencies, and industry partners through TXAPA committees, which serve as the backbone of the Association by fostering expertise, solving challenges, and driving progress statewide. Membership also connects TXAPA to national partners—including AI, NAPA, and the APA—providing access to technical, promotional, environmental, and legislative resources that strengthen both businesses and the industry. Together, members contribute to a powerful, unified voice advancing asphalt pavement across Texas and beyond.



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CSA Materials, Inc.....8  
<https://www.csamaterials.com/home/>  
 (home:welcome)  
 Heidelberg Materials .....18  
<https://www.heidelbergmaterials.us>  
 JOBE Materials, L.P.....24  
<https://www.jobematerials.com>  
 Vulcan Materials Co.....20  
<https://www.vulcanmaterials.com>

## AIR COMPRESSORS

Crafco, Inc. ....6  
<https://www.crafco.com>

## ASPHALT

Cleveland Asphalt Products.....Inside Front Cover  
[www.clevelandasphaltproducts.com](http://www.clevelandasphaltproducts.com)  
 CSA Materials, Inc.....8  
<https://www.csamaterials.com/home/>  
 (home:welcome)

## ASPHALT & ASPHALT PRODUCTS

JOBE Materials, L.P.....24  
<https://www.jobematerials.com>  
 Martin Asphalt.....21  
<https://www.martinasphalt.com>

## ASPHALT ADDITIVES & MODIFIERS

Cleveland Asphalt Products.....Inside Front Cover  
[www.clevelandasphaltproducts.com](http://www.clevelandasphaltproducts.com)

## ASPHALT CEMENT & PRODUCTS

Jebro Incorporated.....24  
<https://www.jebro.com>

## ASPHALT EMULSIONS OR EMULSIFYING AGENTS

Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions, Inc.....15  
<https://www.ergonasphalt.com>

## ASPHALT HEAVY EQUIPMENT

ASCO Equipment ..... Outside Back Cover  
[www.ascoeq.com](http://www.ascoeq.com)  
 Closner Equipment Co., Inc. ... 10, Outside Back Cover  
[www.closner.com](http://www.closner.com)  
 HOLT CAT .....8  
<https://www.holtcat.com>  
 LeeBoy / LBP ..... Outside Back Cover  
<https://www.leeboy.com>  
 Nueces Power Equipment .....7  
[www.nuecespower.com](http://www.nuecespower.com)  
 RDO Equipment Co.....6  
<https://www.rdoequipment.com>  
 ROMCO Equipment Company..... Outside Back Cover  
<https://www.romco.com>

## ASPHALT PAVERS

Asphalt Inc. dba Lone Star Paving .....24  
<https://www.lonestarpavingtx.com/>

Overland Corporation .....8  
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 R B Everett & Co .....23  
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## ASPHALT PAVING EQUIPMENT

HOLT CAT .....8  
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## ASPHALT PLANT PRODUCTS

Reliable Asphalt..... Inside Back Cover  
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McCourt Equipment.....3  
<https://www.mccourtequipment.com>

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Asphalt Testing Solutions &  
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 McCourt Equipment.....3  
<https://www.mccourtequipment.com>  
 Nueces Power Equipment .....7  
[www.nuecespower.com](http://www.nuecespower.com)

R B Everett & Co .....23  
<https://www.rbeverett.com>  
 Texas Bearing Company ..... Inside Back Cover  
[www.texasbearing.com](http://www.texasbearing.com)  
 T-K-O Equipment Company.....3  
[www.tkoequipment.com](http://www.tkoequipment.com)

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Colorado Materials Ltd. ....24  
<https://www.coloradomaterialsltd.com>

## LIME MANUFACTURERS

US Lime & Minerals .....18  
<https://www.uslm.com>

## LIME PRODUCTS

Lhoist North America .....20  
<https://www.lhoist.us>

## PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

McCourt Equipment.....3  
<https://www.mccourtequipment.com>

## RECYCLING EQUIPMENT

McCourt Equipment.....3  
<https://www.mccourtequipment.com>  
 Texas Bearing Company ..... Inside Back Cover  
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<https://www.rbeverett.com>

## STRIPING

TRP Construction Group, LLC.....24  
<https://trpinfrastructure.com>

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Asphalt Express Enterprises, LLC .....18  
<https://www.asphaltexpress.net/>  
 Kimrad Transport..... Inside Back Cover  
<https://www.kimrad.com/>

## TRAFFIC CONTROL

TRP Construction Group, LLC.....24  
<https://trpinfrastructure.com>

## TRAILER/TRUCKS

Eager Beaver Trailers .....4  
<https://www.eagerbeavertrailers.com/>

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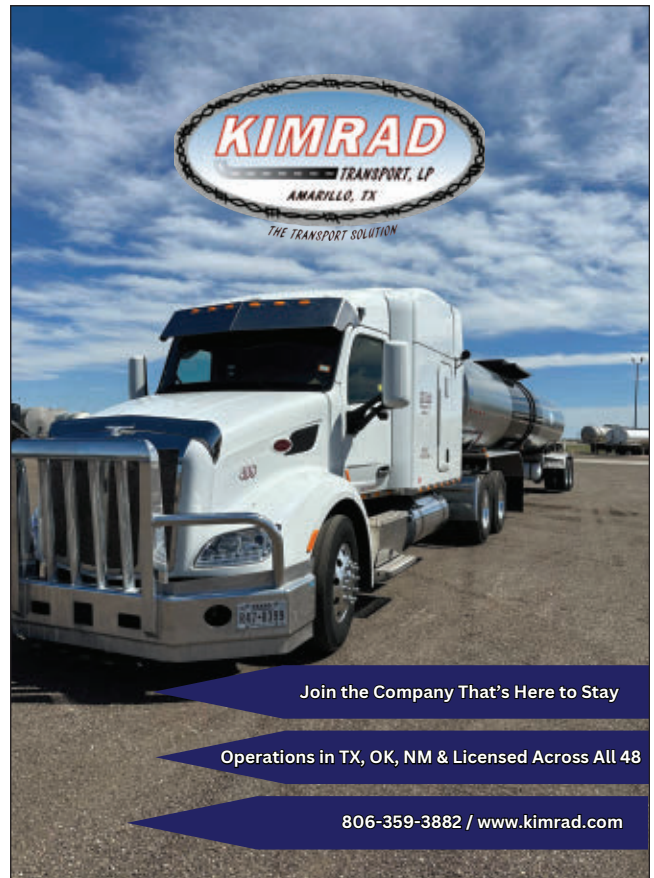
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