

SINNOTT BLACKTOP, INC.

SUPERIOR PRODUCT, SERVICE STAND OUT UP NORTH

The farther north you go in America, the harder it is on asphalt. Conditions don't get much harsher than in Duluth, Minn., home of Sinnott Blacktop, Inc.

On the shores of Lake Superior, winter can last as long as five months. Subzero temps and legendary snowfalls are the norm. All the salt and sand and scraping of snowplows can put a world of hurt on an asphalt surface, which places increased importance on the quality of a sealer and the people who put it down.

Sinnott is a full-service pavement contractor serving commercial and residential customers within a two-hour radius of Duluth. They lay it down, take care of it and excavate it. Kevin Smalley is project manager for Sinnott's maintenance division, which stays busy year round. He has two seasons: sealing and snow plowing.



"Our sealing time is so short. When we go, we go hard," Smalley said. That demands a supplier who will do the same – and a product that can stand up to the climate.

Sinnott used to subcontract its sealcoating work but decided it could grow the business with its own crews, and with a better product.

"We wanted the best product available to us," Smalley said. "Someone I trust referred me to Vance Brothers. Vance drove up here to show us what they had and how it would work. They also assured us they could supply the volume we need, and get it up here exactly when we need it."

That was seven years ago, and Smalley has never used anything or anyone else since.

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"Protectar really gives our customers more bang for the buck, because it works so well in our climate," he said. "Most competitors are using straight emulsion, but Protectar sets up better and stronger, and lasts longer in these temperatures."

As much as he likes the product, Smalley says Vance Brothers' reliability and responsiveness are just as integral to Sinnott's success.

"On many occasions, we'll get a call for a big project with no notice and a tight deadline. I call Vance and ask if we can make it happen. Their truck is here first thing in the morning," Smalley said. "Other times, we'll be bidding a job two hours out of town, making it very expensive for us to come back to our place and fill up. Vance will drop a tank wherever we need it, which helps us keep our bid low."

Customers are spreading the word. A reputation for doing good work and working with the best product has helped Smalley's division grow steadily and profitably. And so has Sinnott Blacktop's relationship with Vance Brothers, which all started with a recommendation.

It just goes to show that one good referral can definitely lead to many, many more.