

MISSOURI ROUTES GET TONS OF NEW SURFACING RECORD COLD MIX ORDER HELPS MODOT REFRESH RURAL ROADS

They don't see a fraction of an Interstate's traffic volume, nothing close to a U.S. or state highway's, but Missouri's lettered routes (A, N, DD, etc.) are valuable connectors for the small towns and rural areas of the Show-Me State. For years, these minor roadways didn't get enough attention, but the state has changed that in a big way – with a lot of help from Vance Brothers.

REDUCING RISK

Working with federal High Risk Rural Roads Program funding, the Missouri Department of Transportation targeted more than 5,000 miles of rural highway for safety improvements. Surface quality on a large chunk of those miles had fallen under

65 percent on the quality meter. The multi-year program has helped MoDOT inject important new life into these aging, deteriorating roadways.

To do it, they needed a lot of cold mix! Also known as “pre-mix,” it's a bituminous mix produced with either mixing-grade asphalt cutback or asphalt emulsion. Once mixed in a pug mill, it can be used immediately or placed in a stockpile. Cold mix is an attractive option to traditional



overlays, especially on old rural roads, because it provides a roadway with a little more “flex,” along with a very long-wearing surface.

Vance Brothers' bid for a six-district portion of the contract exceeded any previous amount we'd supplied for MoDOT in the past.

“This was big,” said Gary Lyons, Vance Brothers' estimator and project manager on the job. “We had two pug mills going for a solid three months and were mixing out of two plants.”

Lyons is referring to the Van Keppel Peerless pug mills custom made for Vance Brothers, one working out of our Kansas City location and the other out of Chillicothe. Each day saw serious cold mix tonnage produced and delivered to MoDOT barns scattered across northern and southern Missouri.

PUGGING ALONG

Thanks to mild weather, some projects in the southern districts got off to an early start in late February, which Lyons said was a big help to crews facing several tight deadlines.

“It is considerably colder in the northern part of the state, but we planned to be finished by the Fourth of July,” he said. “That meant we met every one of our deadlines.”

From Wheatland and El Dorado Springs all the way up to Rockport and Tarkio, Vance Brothers and local quarries worked tirelessly in coordinated fashion to mill and move all the cold mix.

“It was probably the biggest (cold mix) contract we've done in 10 years. I wasn't sure anyone could produce that much, that quickly,” said Rick Kimberle, maintenance superintendent for MoDOT District 1, which covers the better part of three counties in northern Missouri. “Well, everything went like clockwork, and my guys have been saying

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it's the best oil quality and rock consistency we've ever seen."

Feedback was similar coming out of the southern projects, which took place roughly 100-150 miles from Vance Brothers' Kansas City facility.

"You can ask other contractors who've mixed for me. I'm very particular on behalf of our taxpayers. If it isn't mixed right, I'll reject it," said John Mathews, Kimberle's counterpart in District 8

in southern Missouri. "I trust Vance Brothers. I don't have to stand over them to make sure they're doing things right."

The trust factor didn't build up overnight. It comes as the result of delivering consistent quality and exceptional service to the department over many years.

"We have made quite a bit of cold mix for MoDOT in the past, but this was almost three times as much as they normally need," Lyons said. "Now that all of it is down, they'll let it cure for a while, then move into the next phase. Hopefully, Vance Brothers is in good position to bid on the chip seal contract."

Have tonnage, will travel!