

STREET Talk

NORTHWEST CEMENT PRODUCERS GROUP

MAY 2007

Klamath Falls, OR gets a new concrete intersection

Klamath Falls recently completed a \$7.1 million concrete intersection and signaling project at South 6th and Washburn Way.

Vehicle trips before the project started were estimated at around 30,000 per day. The asphalt intersection and approaches were deeply rutted and needed replacement. The existing pavements to the newly finished concrete intersection are asphalt.

Notice to the public for the project was given on July 5th, 2006. Closure of the intersection began on September 4th and was reopened fully on October 5th, 2006.

The actual cost of just the concrete paving, curbing and sidewalks, according to Gina Johnson, Public Works Administrator for the City of Klamath Falls, "Is difficult to break out because of the many bid items including rights of way, landscaping and signaling. The City, County and Oregon Department of Transportation were all partners in the projects. The majority of the funding came from the OTIA and Klamath County contributed \$1.5 million. The job was done well and in quick order."

The contractor was a local firm, Klamath Pacific.



View down 6th Street



View down Washburn, note sidewalk and signals



View up Washburn, note asphalt section at end



Nothing beats concrete streets and intersections!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CONCRETE STREETS AND INTERSECTIONS

What's the main advantage that concrete streets offer?

Much less maintenance. Concrete streets represent excellent long-term economic value because of longer life expectancies and minimal maintenance requirements. General funds can be devoted to pressing municipal needs instead of repetitive pavement repairs.

How much more do they cost?

Very little. The cost premium for a concrete street can vary from zero to perhaps 12% more than asphalt alternatives but offer more than twice, sometimes three times, the life expectancy. Look closely at projects completed in Wilsonville, Hillsboro, Albany, Seattle, Corvallis, Eugene, Spokane, SeaTac, Redmond, Bellevue, Missoula, Boise and La Grande. Bids solicited in Springfield, OR in February 2007 indicate that concrete streets can be actually less than asphalt, given the recent escalation in oil prices. Each public works department must gather actual market prices locally in order to then calculate their real costs.

Is it necessary to wait 28 days to gain sufficient strength in newly placed concrete pavement before allowing traffic on it?

No. Traditional "5-sack" paving mixes typically require a minimum flexural strength of 650 psi, which is usually attained within 14 days. Even when using this traditional mix, the time for allowing traffic on the new pavement can be expedited by determining strength gain through use of the maturity meter process.

For special applications concrete mixes can easily be designed to gain sufficient strength within very short elapsed time after placement, down to just a few hours. These fast curing mixes can be more expensive though, and more difficult to construct. With the typically higher cement content, shrinkage in fast curing mixes occurs rapidly and the time available for sawing joints is super-critical.

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