

## Recovery Act

“If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do, and how to do it.”  
– Abraham Lincoln

It has now been just a year since this great country was shaken by an economic collapse the likes of which had not been witnessed since the Great Depression almost eighty years earlier. Falling home values, a plunging stock market, business failures from the largest to the smallest, and growing unemployment have consistently been the news of the past year.

The above quote is the opening line of a speech Abraham Lincoln gave at a convention in Illinois on June 18, 1858, just about three years before the Civil War began. Lincoln articulated the need to understand the impact and consequences of the crisis at hand in order to take effective action to end it. While most Americans have great distaste for the apparent causes of our current economic malady, it was widely accepted that a crisis was at hand as 2008 ended. In response to what to do, the country dedicated itself to increased government spending and investment to slow the growing unemployment.

As with any action at the time of crisis, the matter of how to proceed has been a topic for great debate and discontent. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included funding for a wide array of efforts, all initiated to save or create jobs. It is the very foundation of our society, that men and women may earn an income to provide for themselves and their families. And this foundation was threatened as the momentum of layoffs and business failures was growing early this year.

Recent reports from governors across the country report that this lifeline from the federal government has been just that to hundreds of thousands of men and women and their families. A small portion of this Act has been an investment of

about fifty billion dollars in public transportation infrastructure. This money is being spent on projects that are needed; making the investment now was clearly appropriate. For Koss Construction Company, the projects funded through this act have had a dramatic impact on what we are doing and will be doing for the next couple of years.

One year ago the volume of highway work in our markets appeared to point to less new equipment purchases and fewer employees for the next couple of years. This time last year, we had a couple of small airport projects and a couple of highway projects that simply did not amount to many paving weeks. Projects we had hoped to secure for 2009 and 2010 were being delayed as state revenue sources fell with the economy. Private projects like the BNSF intermodal facility planned for construction near Gardner, Kansas also were halted or canceled altogether.

Unlike many of the other federal investment initiatives undertaken to save faltering industries, we deliver products that are publicly owned, and necessary in good economies and bad. Thousands of people will earn their living over the next couple of years largely because of projects we will build that were funded by this action by the federal government. These include the following projects: K-61 in McPherson and Reno Counties, KS, I-35 in Kay County, OK, I-40 in Seminole County, OK, and US-59 in Leflore County, OK. This year

the company spent a record amount on new equipment acquisitions – trucks built in Missouri, a plant built in Wisconsin, a paver built in California, another paver built in Tennessee, and on and on. And, as you look around our projects, the new faces are even more plentiful than new equipment. As we deliver these projects, it seems that the work we are doing does indeed affirm that how the federal government is investing in these transportation projects does fit to “whither we are tending.”



## SUSTAINABLE PAVEMENTS

The widely accepted definition of sustainability is **the ability to provide for the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.** As Americans become more aware of the impact their lifestyles has on the environment, they are demanding more earth-friendly products in every aspect of their lives, including the pavements they travel on.



The paving industry as a whole has been building green pavements in some aspects for many years. The asphalt industry has used recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) as a percentage of the new asphalt on many projects. Concrete pavements have been recycled and used in the new base mixes and some pavements for decades. Both the asphalt and concrete industries have found ways to use fly ash, a by-product from burning coal in electric generating power plants. But, today's design engineers are being challenged to go further, to actually include in their design analysis the environmental impact of the design, just as they do when they calculate how many truck loads the pavement can car-

ry. It is really an emerging science.

The largest contributor to the environmental footprint of concrete is Portland cement (the carbon emissions from the production of cement represent about 5% of the worldwide total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions). Mix design changes, and new combinations of cementitious materials are already reducing the amount of Portland cement required to produce concrete. The recently completed two-lift concrete pavement on I-70 in Saline County, Kansas, proves that today's engineers may design two complete separate concrete mixes of a new pavement. The thicker bottom lift of concrete may include more locally available or recycled materials (low carbon footprint materials!) while the thinner surface lift may be designed to maximize performance as a road surface (and likely include materials with a large carbon footprint!).

We do not enjoy unlimited resources on this planet, but we have an awful lot to work with, and the demands of society will continue to push our industry to be responsive to these emerging priorities.

---

## WEATHER IMPACTS

Many things are certain in our line of work; miles to pave, pavement thickness, material requirements and even the depth of our sawcuts. One thing that is not certain is the weather. It is one of the most talked about and worried about topics in all of our everyday lives. We have all tried to guess if it was going to rain or not. When it does rain, it has a major impact on the work that we do.

Rain does more than stop work for the few hours that is raining. Wet conditions have prolonged effects on the ability to work our projects. Even after the rain has stopped, the haul roads we use to deliver the raw materials to our plant sites, and our products to the job are often muddy and impassible for days. Wet grade on which our pavements are

built can stop paving for hours, even after a brief storm that drops only half an inch of rain. Our workers who count on good weather to make a living often see their hours cut short by a single passing storm.

A great example of the impacts weather has on our work can be found on Koss Project #56 in Franklin County, Kansas. Production has been stopped on the US-59 project over sixty days this season due to rain and wet conditions. More than two months of production were lost even though it actually rained only thirty days. With an unusual 30" of rain recorded on this project so far, weather has been one of the most challenging parts of this project for the Koss team.

# MoDOT Follows Path of Other States to “Greener” Roads



Over the past few years the Missouri Department of Transportation has joined numerous other states in the Midwest and started utilizing Cold In-Place Recycling (CIPR) as a pavement rehabilitation strategy.

Using the CIPR process, the existing pavement is recycled and becomes the base before the road is resurfaced. The process is not a new one; Kansas has been using CIR successfully since 1977. The Kansas DOT credits the process with improving their pavements so much that they are currently ranked in the top five states in the nation for overall ride quality. MoDOT has tried the process before, but they have stepped up the pace over the last couple of years.

The first Missouri CIR project performed by Koss Construction Company came in early 2008 and was done in the “Boot heel” on Route 53. Koss then moved on to another project later in 2008 between Vienna and Freeburg, Missouri, on Route 63. During the 2009 construction season a large project was undertaken to rehabilitate roadways throughout the state utilizing CIPR. The CIPR work was done on numerous lettered roads around the state referred to as “minor roads”. Other Missouri CIPR projects have been awarded over the last couple of years and continue to be let today, leading us to believe that MoDOT is committed to “greener” roads by way of recycling.

We can all agree that there is no shortage of work to complete this year. Yet there is always interest in where the work will be next year, as well as projects upcoming that are scheduled for bidding.

While it seems doom and gloom keeps coming from the news reports of the country’s financial situation, the company is fortunate to have several contracts for work in the 2010 construction season. Concrete projects for next season’s work include the continuation of US-54 in Pratt County, and work near Garden City, KS. Nice paving work near Poteau, OK, and the K-61 corridor from Hutchison to McPherson, KS are funded with “Stimulus” money. Asphalt paving work for next



season includes the full depth reconstruction of I-35 near Blackwell, OK also a stimulus funded project.

Oklahoma continues with a nice program of reconstruction and new capacity projects scheduled for 2010. Surfacing on the new I-40 across Oklahoma City along with an I-40 reconstruction project or two are scheduled to bid in the spring.

Kansas too has a job or two letting in the spring. Widening work on US-50 in the western part of the state, and K-18 near Manhattan will present nice opportunities, as will a couple of I-70 whitetopping projects and the surfacing of US-54 and US-59 adjacent to our current projects.

# PERSONNEL IN THE NEWS

**Richard Brown** – has rejoined the company as Chief Information Officer. Richard is managing an accounting and budgeting software conversion for the company. Richard retired in 2003 as Vice President of the company.

**Ross Olsen** – has been assisting Richard Brown with the current software conversion in the capacity of Cost Engineer.

**Jason Tedder** – started with the company as a QC Technician and soon found himself in Oklahoma helping with the temporary pavements at Kay County and then to Seminole and LeFlore Counties to help coordinate these fast paced projects. Jason is a Kansas State University Construction Management graduate.

**Steve Smith** – joined the company as a Grade Foreman and has been helping to move the mud and build the base at our Franklin County project in between the rains.

## BE DEFENSIVE ABOUT YOUR SAFETY

It has been another wet, and cool, construction season across eastern Kansas and Oklahoma. From frustration to just plain melancholy, this weather can affect us in ways we may be too quick to dismiss. Our own safety may even be neglected when such moods become prevalent in our minds and bodies. As we finish up this 2009 construction season, please give constant consideration and actions to your own well being on our projects.

We have policies in place that have been developed based upon decades of experience in doing what we do – building highways. The most basic policies should always be adhered to, and a few of these from our Policy & Procedures Manual include:

- All employees are required to wear work boots on the job sites.
- Class 2 and 3 high visibility safety vests are now almost always a requirement for all employees on our job sites.
- Use the 3-point mounting procedure when getting on or off equipment or trucks. This means that both hands and one foot must be placed on the ladders or steps at ALL times.
- Do not operate any machinery, equipment or tools unless you have been properly instructed in its use and you are thoroughly familiar with all details of its operation.
- For equipment operators and drivers, walk around your equipment before starting it.
- Never place yourself between backing equipment and other equipment that could cause you to become trapped or worse.
- Do not stand next to running equipment unless the equipment operator knows you are there, and why you are there.
- Never assume the other operator or driver sees you.
- If you have any specific concern for your safety on the project, notify your supervisor immediately.

The days will continue to get shorter and colder. Dress adequately, make sure you are readily visible to others on the job site, and ALWAYS be defensive about your safety.

# SCOTT CITY MUNICIPAL AIRPORT



The Scott City Municipal Airport runway closure limit of sixty days looked to be a tough schedule on paper. But as the winter weather broke with consecutive dry days, it appeared this project would be completed within time allowed. Koss gave the go ahead to subcontractor Sporer Land Development to start pavement removals and grade building on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Just as luck would have it Sporer arrived on site to rain. Though the rain only lasted a few days, it was also discovered that the project grades didn't allow for adequate matching of existing edge elevations. The project designer, Evans-Bierly-Hutchison & Associates, moved quickly to prevent any delays and provided revised design elevations for the new pavement. That schedule on paper was again starting to look realistic.

Sporer went to work removing the existing asphalt pavement, which was crushed and incorporated into the soil with fly ash. This proved to be a good subgrade design. Right

behind Sporer was another subcontractor, RFB Construction, installing the edge drains. Pushing them along were the Koss final trim and steel setting crews. On May 19<sup>th</sup> Koss started paving at 37.5 feet wide of the 5002 foot runway. It took 4.5 days to have the 47,600 SY of runway paved out. Koss was then informed that the City approved an additional 1350 SY of parking lot to be added to the contract. Remaining were five taxiways, two turnarounds, and an entrance road to be completed by June 13<sup>th</sup>. With excellent weather and a determined work force the last concrete pour was June 6<sup>th</sup>. Sporer quickly shouldered up the pavement as crews sawed and sealed away. Lastly, our subcontractor Cillessen & Sons was in to stripe the runway as the NOTAM was filed June 12<sup>th</sup> notifying pilots the new runway was available for aircraft to use on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

---

In the Fall of 2009, the Koss Construction Company website was given a facelift. Please take a moment to visit our site and see an extensive view of our company, its history, current and past projects, and our products and services at [www.kossconstruction.com](http://www.kossconstruction.com)

