

# Paving Its Way

CUTLER REPAVING SAYS IT HAS EARNED A LOYAL CUSTOMER BASE. BY ALAN DORICH

Although Cutler Repaving Inc. sometimes finds resistance to its hot-in-place pavement recycling process, the company has a strong record of winning clients over after they try it, Vice President of Operations John Miles says. "We have customers that will never consider [using] anything else now," he declares.

Based in Lawrence, Kan., the company says it is the largest and most experienced authority in single-pass asphalt recycling. Founder Earl Cutler started the company in 1965, after developing an idea for recycling existing asphalt.

During the process, which Cutler Repaving has refined over the past four decades, the company heats up existing pavement and scarifies it to a one-inch depth. Afterward, Cutler Repaving says it applies a recycling agent, mixes and lays the recycled material, applies a virgin hot-mix overlay and completes the process by compacting both layers simultaneously.

Initially, Cutler began performing the process with his own machines in Chicago, Vice President of Sales John Rathbun says. Cutler later moved the company to its current home in Lawrence, Kan., because of its central location in the United States.

Although he originally tried to sell his preheaters and repavers to U.S. clients, "That didn't work out," Rathbun says, noting that the company found more success selling the machines to clients overseas.

To make ends meet, Cutler Repaving took on road contracting jobs for numerous cities and counties. "It was easier for Earl to take his idea to those [areas] and say, 'We can save you some money,'" Rathbun says. "The cities and counties really kept [him] in the game, contracting-wise."

## Strong Reputation

Since its start, Cutler Repaving has recycled more than 190 million square yards of roadways in 350 cities. Miles notes that the company paves 7 to 9 million square yards annually.

In addition, many customers enjoy the cost benefits of the recycling process, Miles says. "We typically see a 50 percent cost savings," he says. "They like the fact that they save money."

» Cutler Repaving has completed projects in Kansas, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah.



## By the Numbers

**90 percent**  
the portion of Cutler Repaving's business that is comprised of repeat clients

**250**  
number of peak employees

**25,568**  
number of lane miles the company has recycled

**9.9 million+**  
number of tons of asphalt material Cutler Repaving has kept out of landfills

## On the Upside

With the downturn in the worldwide economy, Cutler Repaving has slowed its equipment sales to Mexico, Miles says. "We only delivered one machine down there this year," he says.

However, in spite of the recession, Miles says the company's contracting business is staying strong. "There really hasn't been too much of a downside for us," he says, noting that the company is now at work on projects for the city of Fort Worth, Texas, including curb line milling and adjustment of manholes.

On this project, the company is utilizing adjustable riser rings from East Jordan Iron Works, based in East Jordan, Mich. "Those are all custom fitted," Miles says, noting that East Jordan builds the rings specifically for the company and ships them to Fort Worth.

Miles says the company may see tough times ahead. "We're really expecting next year to be the challenging year, especially if sales tax collections continue to fall off," he says.

However, the company may compensate for that loss with new customers that have approached Cutler Repaving and are interested in sav-

## Cutler Repaving Inc.

[www.cutlerrepaving.com](http://www.cutlerrepaving.com)

- **2008 sales:** \$35 million
- **Headquarters:** Lawrence, Kan.
- **Employees:** 250 (peak)
- **Service:** Hot-in-place recycling of asphalt roads

*"We have customers that will never consider [using] anything else now."*

*-John Miles, vice president of operations*

ing money. "They're saying, 'This recycling process makes a lot of environmental as well as economic sense,'" Miles says.

Miles says he believes Cutler Repaving will continue to prosper. "I think anybody that has [anything] to do with recycling has a bright future," he says.

"I think selling this process is going to get easier and easier as time wears on, because of cost advantages [and] the national and worldwide rush to recycling and all things green," Miles states.

Rathbun also predicts that the company will grow its role as an innovative contractor. "I think our customers are going to demand that," he says. ♦

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