

Product Innovation Cuts Costs

Asphalt Zipper eliminates hassles and headaches of pavement removal and puts money in contractors' pockets.



The city of St. George, Utah, shaved 70 percent off repaving expenses. The town of Matthews, North Carolina, completed a job, budgeted to cost \$53,000 and take 20 days, for \$19,000 in only 4 days. Larry Hess, owner of Hess Construction in California, says he's saved so much money he hopes his competition never finds out about it. The key to success for these contractors is found in an unlikely package: a small milling machine called the Asphalt Zipper.

Compact enough to be hauled by a pickup truck, the Asphalt Zipper reduces thousands of square feet of asphalt into reusable millings in a fraction of the time traditional methods require.

"The Asphalt Zipper's brutal power condenses one- to two-day projects into as little as one to two hours," says Bill Smythe, president of Smythe & Associates in Kirkland, Washington. "Full-depth reclamation is now affordable and

easily accessible — providing cities with longer lasting repairs. The Asphalt Zipper is easily transported on its own trailer and the Zipper's Zip-n-Go easy-connect system attaches to most backhoe or loader buckets, so you're off the trailer and into the cut in minutes."

Once into the cut, the Zipper saves thousands of dollars in reduction of labor, time and equipment costs. "Take for example," says Smythe, "a typical sewer line job with 1,000-foot trench 3 feet wide and 6-inch-thick asphalt. Traditionally, you saw cut the asphalt at \$1 to \$2 per foot, per side, which takes about a day to a day and a half. Then you've got to chunk up the asphalt with a backhoe or hydraulic excavator. Then you have to haul the asphalt away, with pretty significant dumping fees. Throw in flag people to maintain traffic, and your total costs average about \$5,000 to \$6,000. The Asphalt Zipper can do it all in about one hour, for approximately \$250."

Frank Shea, street superintendent for the town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, adds, "The savings are enormous because the Zipper also grinds the pavement into 1-inch minus reusable material. We don't have to excavate and truck all the blacktop, which is considered a hazardous waste."

The Zipper's other benefits include its size, which allows for flexibility on large and small jobs. The Zipper also leaves a scarified edge for better adhesion to new material. What's more, at an operating cost of as little as 10 cents per square foot, the Asphalt Zipper often pays for itself within 30 to 50 running hours. Dan Shaw, owner of Shaw Equipment in California, says he saw an immediate return on his dollar. "It paid for itself on the very first job," says Shaw.

Smythe sums the Zipper's impact on asphalt removal by drawing an analogy: "You can cut down a forest with an ax, or you can use a chain saw. In my experience contractors want the powerful solution." ■

— Heather Beers

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