



Zip up roads

Full depth reclamation saves asphalt, and an innovative tool saves time and money

by Lee Toop

Oil costs, labour costs, fuel costs — there are a lot of variables that can make the difference between making budget and missing it when it comes to repairing road surfaces.

Across Canada there are roadways that are cracked and broken. Often, the only way to deal with these roads is to pull up the fractured and worn asphalt and dispose of it, laying new asphalt in its

place. This results in added costs for new aggregate and labour, increased fuel use, and plenty of time.

To get around some of these issues, the concept of full depth reclamation has started to become a more popular alternative for road managers.

Incorporating the worn portion of the asphalt into a certain amount of the road base, generally mixing with strengthening additives and then compacting that down to provide a new, strengthened and

stabilized base for a new road surface, is a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly way to refresh roadways.

While in the past that has required a large milling machine and substantial manpower to accomplish, a small, portable tool is drawing interest from roads departments looking for ways to improve their efficiency and costs in-house.

For Ken Gagnon, public works manager in the rural Ontario township of Guelph/Eramosa, a combination of increased costs and lots of weary road surfaces led to the desire for hands-on full depth reclamation work.

"We have quite a few kilometres of road where the base is still in good shape, but the surface has gone south on us," Gagnon related. "With money getting tight, I'm finding cheaper ways to resurface my... roads. If I can do the pulverizing and shaping in-house, then just contract out the asphalt, there's a considerable cost savings."

Guelph/Eramosa had used other methods for dealing with its road problems in the past, from bringing in big milling machines and repaving afterwards to a grader and scarifier method, where the surface would be scarified, asphalt placed and smoothed with the grader, and a compactor would finish the job. That,

