



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Media Alert

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THIS WARM MIX ASPHALT COULD BE “JUST RIGHT...”

ATLANTA – How hot is hot enough?

A question pondered since Goldilocks wandered into the Three Bears’ cottage two centuries ago.

Well, the Georgia Department of Transportation thinks “warm” may be not only the best temperature for serving porridge; it might be “just right” for putting down asphalt too! At least that’s what preliminary test results indicate. And the consequences could be a boon to the Department and Georgia’s air quality.

“We think warm mix asphalt has the potential to help control a portion of our paving costs; allow us to extend the construction season in North Georgia; and reduce paving-related greenhouse gas emissions at the same time,” Georgia DOT Materials and Research Engineer Georgene Geary says.

Traditionally, asphalt used for new road construction or resurfacings is the product of “hot mixing” – a heated blending and application of its various components at temperatures ranging between 300 and 325 degrees, Fahrenheit. (It’s long been thought that temperatures of at least 300 degrees were needed to properly bond asphalt components to seal out moisture.) With thousands of tons of asphalt needed for some jobs, burning a great deal of fuel for long periods of time is required to maintain those high temperatures. And once in place, hot asphalt requires hours to cool before it can be used.

More fuel burned equates to greater expense and more carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

In recent years though, technology has advanced to the point that asphalt can now be “warm-mixed” at temperatures 30 to 120 degrees lower than a hot-mix. That equates to less fuel needed and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. And because the mixture doesn’t require as much heat, it cools and can be compacted quicker which could extend North Georgia’s paving season.

Questions remain about warm mix asphalt’s long-term susceptibility to moisture damage. But results so far from a Department test project in Coweta County are encouraging. “We’re cautiously optimistic,” Geary says.

Benefits could be substantial considering Georgia DOT places seven million tons of asphalt each year.

Cost savings, an extended construction season and cleaner air; seems like everyone really could live happily ever after?

Independent analysis consistently ranks Georgia's transportation system as being in the best condition of any in the United States, despite the fact that only one state spends less per capita on transportation infrastructure. But our highways and bridges are carrying more vehicles than ever; they are aging; and they are becoming more expensive to maintain. More than \$500 million is needed for basic bridge maintenance over the next decade and \$1.5 billion for routine road repairs over just the next five years.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For general information on the Georgia DOT, please visit our Web site (www.dot.ga.gov).

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