

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Asphalt Tops List of Most Recycled Materials**

As Earth Day Approaches, Local Asphalt Contractors save tax dollars and landfill space through massive recycling efforts

What's the world's most recycled material? Most Americans would guess aluminum, glass, plastic or paper – items they recycle at home. But they would be wrong.

Surprise, it's asphalt! Although Ohio residents drive on asphalt roads every day, few are aware that Asphalt is in fact the most recycled material in America, even as we approach Earth Day (April 22).

A report from the Federal Highway Administration shows that 80 percent of the asphalt pavement that's removed each year during widening and resurfacing projects is reused. That is substantially higher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recycling rates of 60 percent for aluminum cans, 56 percent for newsprint, 37 percent for plastic soft drink bottles, 31 percent for glass beverage bottles and 23 percent for magazines.

Ironically, in a survey of 1,009 adults commissioned by the National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA), Americans ranked asphalt pavement as the material they thought was recycled the least among nine commonly recycled products.

Pete Alex, president of The Osterland Company, is heavily involved in asphalt recycling in the Northeast Ohio area. "All of the new asphalt roads around here contain recycled asphalt pavement (RAP)," said Alex. "We recycle everything we possibly can because it saves us money, it saves our customers money and it saves huge amounts of space in landfills."

"Last year, Ohio asphalt contractors recycled approximately 2.6 million tons of RAP into new pavement," said Fred Frecker, president and executive director of Flexible Pavements of Ohio, the trade association for the state's asphalt industry. "This saved in the neighborhood of \$42 million, not to mention the fact that our landfill space would be overwhelmed if it weren't for large-scale recycling of industrial products such as asphalt pavement. The asphalt paving industry is truly a leader in this respect."

"33 years ago, when we had the first Earth Day, asphalt recycling was not widely practiced," said Frecker. "Worn out asphalt pavement was discarded in landfills. In the 1970s asphalt pavement recycling was developed as a necessity during the oil embargo. Recycling proved to offer so many advantages, both economically and

environmentally, that today as we celebrate Earth Day, it's become an everyday business practice.”

Using RAP has additional economic benefits. Less aggregate quarries and mining operations are required, which saves our natural areas. Less Asphalt cement is used, allowing precious crude oil to be saved for things like home heating, gasoline and other energy needs. Considering today's fuel prices, these add up to considerable savings for taxpayers on public road projects, Frecker said.

Flexible Pavements of Ohio is an association for the development, improvement and advancement of quality asphalt pavement construction. As the trade association for the Hot Mix Asphalt Paving Industry in Ohio, FPO provides technical information and training for its members and customers on asphalt pavement design, production and construction.

Contact **Fred Frecker, 614-221-5402** to arrange an interview with a contractor involved in asphalt recycling in your city.

#### Asphalt Environmental Facts

Every year, approximately 73 million tons of reclaimed asphalt pavement are reused, or nearly twice as much as the combined total of recycled paper, glass, aluminum and plastics.

Flexible Pavements of Ohio conservatively estimates that approximately 2.6 million tons of asphalt are recycled each year in Ohio.

Ohio annual production of asphalt averages 18 million tons, incorporating an estimated average of 15% recycled asphalt pavement.

This represents a savings of approximately \$42 million annually to Ohio taxpayers.

Asphalt pavement accounts for 98.7 percent of Ohio's paved highways and roadways.

Sources: Reports from the Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Department of Transportation and Flexible Pavements of Ohio

#### NAPA Recycling Survey Results

- When asked which material is recycled the most, 35 percent of Americans said paper, followed by 31 percent for aluminum and 21 percent for plastic. More respondents rated asphalt as the least recycled of any material. In fact, asphalt is recycled more than any of these materials, both in terms of tonnage and percentage of material that is reclaimed.

- 46 percent of Americans rated their own interest in recycling as high or very high, while 33 percent said it was average and 20 percent said it was low or very low.
- Only 36 percent of respondents rated their community's interest as high or very high, while 37 percent said it was average and 23 percent said it was low or very low.
- Interest in recycling is higher in the Northeast and West than in the rest of the country.
- More than three-quarters (77 percent) of respondents said they recycle at least some aluminum cans. About two-thirds (67 percent) said they recycle newspapers, along with 65 percent who said they recycle plastic bottles; 60 percent, glass bottles; 58 percent, magazines; 55 percent, plastic bags, 54 percent, tin cans; and 53 percent who said they recycle white paper.
- 43 percent of respondents said recycling in the U.S. has improved a great deal over the past 10 years, 50 percent said it had improved a moderate amount and only 5 percent saw no improvement.

The survey was commissioned by the National Asphalt Paving Association (NAPA), and conducted by Bruskin/Goldring Research. Research included telephone interviews with 1,009 adults selected at random. The sample error in a survey of this size is  $\pm 3$  percentage points.