

WHY CHOOSE CONCRETE?

The Series by Brad Skow, PE

Why choose concrete? Good question. For all the years that I was a consulting engineer, and all the years I designed and prepared plans for my clients, I usually didn't understand how the final pavement selection was made. Was it the owner who decided? Was it the geotechnical firm? Was it an interested landowner? I'm not sure, but it usually ended up asphalt. And usually there is no written explanation, in any file, that would explain the decision process that determined the pavement type for that road. Maybe it was because we were so comfortable with one pavement type and we were so efficient at designing, building, and maintaining it that we didn't want to know that there might be something better out there.



for higher volume roadways such as highways and interstates, and asphalt has been the choice for lower volume highways and local streets. Why?

Well over 90% of the streets in the State of Minnesota are constructed using asphalt. Concrete was not even considered. Why? As taxpayers, the best value for our money is achieved through a competitive free market. If pavement alternatives are not being considered, we aren't being very fiscally responsible. Just because one pavement type *appears* cheaper doesn't necessarily mean that it *is* cheaper. As an example, the Federal Government says that it costs 44.5 cents a mile to drive your car. Does it make any sense to drive 3 miles out of your way (6 miles = \$2.67) to save 10 cents on a gallon (15 gal = \$1.50) of gas? Nope.

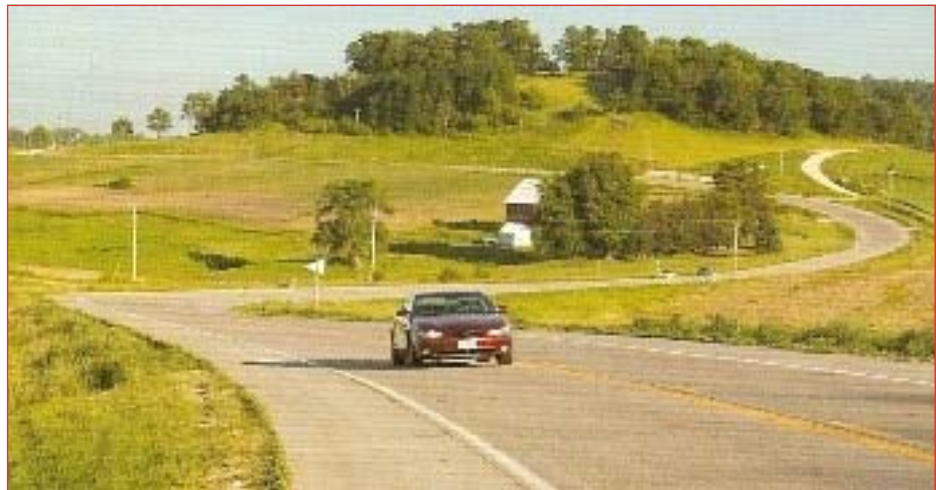


Over the course of the next several newsletters I will be writing a number of articles discussing the advantages of choosing concrete pavements. The Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota represents the bulk of the concrete paving contractors and materials suppliers in the Minnesota area. The goal of our association is to promote the use of:

- **SMOOTH**
- **QUIET**
- **SAFE**
- **COOL**
- **DURABLE**
- **LONG LASTING**
- **EASY TO REPAIR**
- **RECYCLEABLE**

and the most **COST EFFECTIVE** pavement material in the world... **CONCRETE**.

The two most common pavement surface types in the State of Minnesota are concrete and asphalt (bituminous). Historically there has been a typical split when it comes to pavement selection throughout the State. Concrete is used



Cheaper isn't always cheaper; there are other factors that need to be considered.

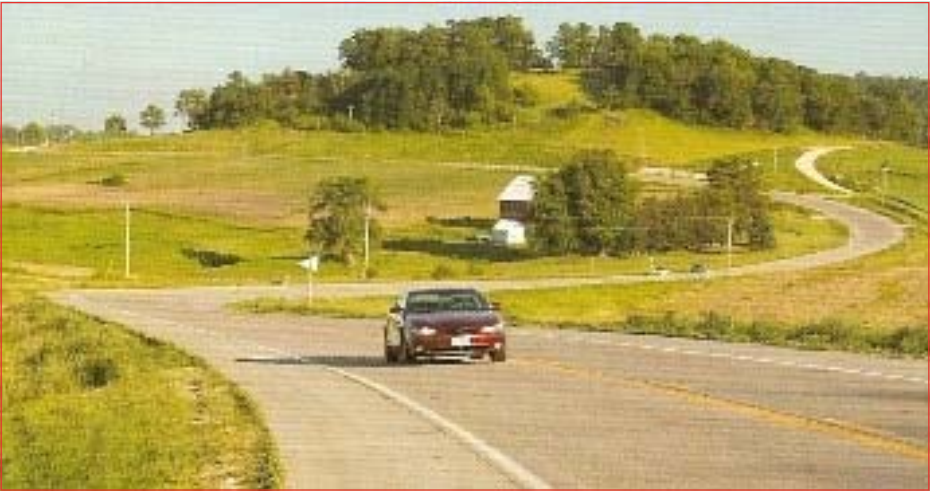
In future newsletters I will be discussing these factors and the reasons why concrete should be considered an option for any upcoming local road improvement or maintenance projects. As you'll discover, concrete pavements are durable, aesthetically pleasing, safe, smooth, low maintenance, and most importantly, cost effective for use on *any* roadway -- low or high volume. And in this day and age, don't we, as taxpayers, deserve the best bang for our buck?

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