

NCPP Marks Decade as Voice of Pavement Preservation

By Tom Kuennen

The National Center for Pavement Preservation is a tremendous resource for public and private sector stakeholders in pavement preservation.

Today—after a decade of service—the National Center for Pavement Preservation at Michigan State University has an ambitious program of technology transfer, reaching state and local road agencies through many channels, with support from AASHTO, FP² Inc., FHWA, and to a lesser degree, the private sector.

The NCPP's mission is to lead collaborative efforts among government, industry and academia to advance pavement preservation. Founded in July 2003, the NCPP is the embodiment of the collective national vision of pavement practitioners, policymakers and industry.

"Ten years ago, few people had even heard of the term 'pavement preservation,'" said NCPP executive director Larry Galehouse, P.E. "Today, pavement preservation is a commonly used term among highway officials, and practitioners understand what it is. I would like to think that the national center had a lot to do with that."

Now—after 10 years of working principally with government road agencies—NCPP sees a great opportunity for growth in the use of NCPP by contractors and private entities.

"The National Center for Pavement Preservation is one of the players in the pavement preservation



arena," said Mike Buckingham, president of FP² Inc. and principal, Buckingham Consulting LLC. "NCPP is the information exchange, the technology transfer source, and via its relationship with the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials and FP² Inc., is the main focus of pavement preservation within the government side, the public sector."

While NCPP has strong exposure to the public sector, it's utilized less by the contractor, or private sector, Buckingham said. "It may be that some contractors in the private sector feel they are best positioned to relate to pavement preservation techniques," he said. "It leads to the national center being underutilized by the private sector."

That's unfortunate, Buckingham said, as they have common goals and purposes. "As an industry we all support the preservation processes," he said. "There are proprietary, specialty processes within those categories, but the industry is marketing those, while the National Center for Pavement Preservation is educating about the general concepts of pavement preservation and the standard processes used."



All stakeholders need to stand together and work together to promote pavement preservation effectively, Buckingham said. "Support for pavement preservation is like a three-legged stool," he said. "NCPP provides education, FP² provides advocacy, and the third leg, industry—as represented by the FP² founding organizations of International Slurry Surfacing Association, Asphalt Emulsion Manufacturers Association, Asphalt Recycling & Reclaiming Association and other industry partners—delivers quality, innovative products to the buyers. We all need to work together to make sure our limited resources are used to the best advantage."

STATE/INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Under the aegis of AASHTO's *Transportation System Preservation Technical Services Program*, or TSP•2, the NCPP has been very active in creating regional state pavement preservation partnerships, including the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Rocky Mountain West Pavement Preservation Partnerships. They include all 50 states, Puerto Rico, D.C., and four Canadian provinces.

But the "partnership" refers not to the state agencies in cahoots with

each other, but a partnership between federal, state, local agencies, academia, and the private sector.

"It would be great to see more industry involvement with the regional partnerships," Buckingham said. "They are as much a part of the partnership as the agencies are. The states are there to have a relationship, and have an opportunity to exchange information with industry. Industry is given equal time within the partnerships. But the industry involvement is not near what it should be; private sector members in the regions don't take advantage of the partnerships as much as they should."

"I think there is tremendous opportunity for the private sector to get more involved in the partnerships, but for whatever reason, they have not picked it up and run with it," NCPP's Galehouse said. "We got a tremendous response to the Nashville conference in 2012, and industry stepped up to the plate for that. We had a full house of exhibitors. But as big as industry is, and for the need that is out there, there always is room for more industry, and some in industry don't perceive the opportunities that are there."

Training is one area where the national center excels, as its position as an independent organization lends an air of non-promotional authority to the content, to which agencies respond, Buckingham said. "NCPP can train where an industry effort would not be acceptable. Private industry trainers may be characterized as having a bias about a product or products. But the NCPP provides unbiased education, but with much more authority than a private contractor. The private contractors don't like to hear that, but it's sometimes true."

In addition to public/private sector interaction, the regional partnerships provide an important avenue for technology transfer to the state agencies. They have been so successful with the TSP•2 program that NCPP is developing state-level pavement preservation councils to spread the gospel of pavement preservation to county, township, and municipal agencies. This has begun with the

launches of the Florida Pavement Preservation Council and the Georgia Carolina Pavement Preservation Council, each with the mission of unbiased technical outreach to local agencies, and private industry is involved with both councils.



National Center for Pavement Preservation's executive director Larry Galehouse, P.E., gives perspective on pavement preservation at conferences and workshops throughout the year

"We have begun the process of setting up local state preservation councils," Galehouse said. "The councils are designed to work with local agencies to advance pavement preservation. They are an outgrowth of the state partnerships, because the partnerships see a need for greater local agency involvement." This statewide outreach is critical as many local agencies don't have the resources for personnel to travel out of state on business.

"The national center has a vision to establish pavement preservation councils wherever they are needed," Buckingham said. "They realize that many local agencies are unable to participate in the pavement preservation partnerships. At the councils, industry—contractor applicators, suppliers and consulting engineers—gets together with the state county association, and the local public works association. Industry funds the effort and participation is free to local agencies. Industry

funding defrays the cost of training if presented by the national center. It's very important because local agencies have the bulk of the road miles."

A TREMENDOUS RESOURCE

NCPP's broad resources are just right for today's needs in which preservation takes place within the context of asset management. "Today the emphasis is on how we manage our infrastructure investment," said NCPP's Galehouse. "The key issue for agencies is to have an asset management plan that is successful and provides predictability. We can have the most sophisticated asset management plan, but if we don't have success where the rubber meets the road, we will end in dismal failure."

To help promote that concept, early-on NCPP established a strategic plan, and with the help of many individuals, was able to land contracts that would support the center. "We are an independent, self-supporting organization, backstopped by the university, with some assistance from FP²," Galehouse said. "Like a small business, we have to bring in revenue, despite our being a not-for-profit entity."

A contract from the FHWA was the initial anchor for NCPP, to conduct voluntary pavement preservation technical appraisals or audits for state DOTs. "They were three to five days in length, and involved interviews with central office staff and both urban and rural districts," Galehouse said. "The material was compiled into a database and we developed a final report for each state surveyed. States have been able to use those reports to advance their pavement preservation programs." To date, 44 states, plus D.C., Puerto Rico, several counties, and federal agencies with road inventories have been appraised.

NCPP's movement into the field took a load off of FP²'s predecessor organization, as there was a need for a tech transfer entity, and FP² was not prepared to fill that need. Today, FP² and NCPP continue to work together.

"The relationship between NCPP and FP² is better than it ever has



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At Oct. 17, 2003 ribbon-cutting for the new National Center for Pavement Preservation at Michigan State University are, from left, Center Advisory Board member Jim Moulthrop, Fugro-BRE, Inc.; King W. Gee, P.E., associate administrator for infrastructure, FHWA; Lou Anna K. Simon, provost and vice president of academic affairs, MSU; David Porteous, chair, MSU Board of Trustees; Bill Ballou, president, Foundation for Pavement Preservation; Rep. Rick Johnson, Michigan Speaker of the House and NCPP Advisory Board member; Dr. Ronald Harichandran, P.E., chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, MSU; and Dr. Janie Fouke, Dean, College of Engineering, MSU

been right now," said Jim Moulthrop, executive director of FP² Inc. "The work that we all did in putting together the National Pavement Preservation Conference last year in Nashville typifies this," he said (see *National Conference*

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NCPP

NCPP conducts workshops on pavement preservation in many locations and venues on a continuing basis

Gives New Momentum to Preservation Movement, Winter 2012, pp. 22-31). "The outdoor demonstration was a great cooperative effort between public and private sectors, and the entire event was a defining moment for the relationship between NCPP and FP²."

When the center took over technology transfer duties from FP², it liberated FP² to pursue other goals, including Capitol Hill lobbying.

"Back then we had very little money," Moulthrop said. "We were a volunteer organization at the time, and as the center was a real entity, paying people to do things, they

were able to take over an activity from FP² that we were never really very good at."

In addition to its long-term financial support, FP² partners with NCPP in other ways, Moulthrop said. "In addition to the 2012 National Pavement Preservation Conference in Nashville, we co-sponsored the 1st International Conference on Pavement Preservation in 2010 in Newport Beach," he said. "The FP² executive director is chair of the advisory board to the center. They are facilitating our October strategic planning meeting. And we provide an annual partnership contribution. The relationship is excellent."

LAUNCH TRAINING PROGRAMS

Soon after founding, NCPP launched its first training program, an asset management course in 2004. "With the assistance of the International Slurry Surfacing Association, we developed a micro surfacing and slurry seal training course," Galehouse said. "This was followed by courses on chip seals, and what we call the 'top of the curve', dealing with rejuvenators, fog seals, and crack sealing and filling, treatments that are typically applied to pavements whose conditions are towards the top of the deterioration curve." Currently, NCPP is developing courses in cold milling and in-place recycling.

A major step forward was an alliance in which AASHTO designated NCPP as the major provider of pavement



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preservation technology transfer to state DOTs. One channel for this is the regional state preservation partnerships, which NCPP manages.

"AASHTO has contracted with the NCPP to develop and administer the TSP•2 program, including a help 'desk', webpage, library link, and four pavement preservation partnerships," Galehouse said. "The partnerships facilitate the exchange of information on pavement preservation techniques and provide support to state and industry efforts."

AASHTO's involvement with the center was a big boost to NCPP's capabilities. "When AASHTO joined with the center, it made all the difference in the world," Moulthrop said. "From the very beginning, the center had very little money to operate with. Although the university provided the facilities, the NCPP had to subsist on a series of small contracts until winning a larger FHWA contract to conduct voluntary pavement preservation appraisals of state highway agencies. The appraisals helped lead to the genesis of the TSP•2 program."

INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

Today, TSP•2 serves as a clearinghouse for information on preservation measures that enhance highway performance and extend useful life. The TSP•2 program is funded by voluntary contributions from state DOTs, other agencies and private sector stakeholders.

The regional partnerships are key to advancing pavement preservation nationwide and permit members to share technologies and resources in depth with each other. This partnership technology transfer helps states to observe field tests by an agency in the same region, determine whether to test the technology itself, or even specify the technology based on another state's findings, and this saves time and money.

As part of this tech transfer, NCPP manages a large online technical "library" which can be accessed by any user. It also has compiled streaming video of past conference

presentations, containing for example, every presentation at last year's NPPC in Nashville.

With TSP•2, NCPP's reach has broadened. "Not only are we providing technology transfer on pavement preservation, but also bridge preservation, and recently, equipment management. We have been selected by AASHTO to lead the charge on all three themes, which represent three of the most vital functions for all state DOTs," Galehouse said.

NCPP also arranges and manages meetings and workshops for stakeholders in the pavement preservation industry, such as the FHWA/ARRA-sponsored workshop on in-place recycling and demonstration, held in suburban Chicago in September (see article in this issue, pp. 30-31).

While web-based training has value, Galehouse said, NCPP prefers to conduct in-person classes and presentations, and specializes in this classroom format. "We bring the courses to whoever wants the courses, along with an experienced trainer who has actual field experience," he said. "We believe that face-to-face training is more effective than web-based because it holds the class's attention better, and allows interaction with a trainer."

FOLLOW-UP TO NASHVILLE

Presently, NCPP is working with its partners to assemble a follow-up to last year's National Pavement Preservation Conference in Nashville, tentatively scheduled for September 2016, also in Nashville.

In the meantime, NCPP will increase its efforts to get technology out to the government agencies that need it. "At this point, the states recognize that they must do preservation, with a strong emphasis on asset management," Galehouse said. "The fact that pavement preservation is now written in federal legislation [MAP-21] really opens up an opportunity for state agencies to implement preservation programs. Now, each state also has a strong political reason to move toward a preservation program." 