

## Asphalt creation goes green at Baker Rock Resources

*Beaverton company's warm mix technology should cut fuel costs and lower emissions*

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JONATHAN HOUSE / BEAVERTON VALLEY TIMES

Congressman David Wu views Baker Rock Resources rock silos with Gary and Todd Baker. The company received federal stimulus funds for its more sustainable way of warm mixing rocks.

**Baker Rock Resources believes it is heading towards the future of asphalt creation in the form of warm mix, a way to create the sticky mixture using small amounts of foamed water to lower the products temperature and create a more environmentally safe product.**

Warm-mix asphalt is a generic term that can apply to a number of technologies that reduce the temperature that asphalt is produced, placed and compacted. Many companies around the world are beginning to make some of their asphalt this way, either with chemicals, or like in Baker Rocks case, a foaming process that uses one pound of water for every ton of mix.

Adding water to the mix as it is created reduces the temperature by nearly 100 degrees and helps to eliminate fuel and energy usage by about 30 percent, company officials say. They also say it can reduce emissions by anywhere from 30 to 90 percent. On top of that, they add, there appears to be no downgrade in quality of the asphalt, based on tests and paving jobs it has been used in.

The asphalt, concrete and ready-mix production company at 21880 S.W. Farmington Road, first installed a warm-mix device in April and has been lobbying their government clients to use it in future paving projects.

So far, many of these clients, including Washington County and the Oregon Department of Transportation, have jumped on board, using warm-mix asphalt in

several of their paving operations. The city of Beaverton has been reluctant to use the technology as of yet, but Baker Rock leaders hope the city will come around.

We said, Hey, we want to be a part of this, said Dave Scamp, road operations and maintenance manager for Washington County. Its an excellent fit, it really is.

Its nice to be a part of what we see as moving forward.

Traditionally, asphalt is mixed at temperatures topping 275 degrees Fahrenheit. The high temperature causes fumes and odors to rise from the mixture, sending emissions into the air. At temperatures below 275 degrees these fumes are minimal, company officials say.

The technique has been in development for a few years and is slow in taking off, said Jim Records, vice president of operations for Baker Rock, but he and others in the company believe in five to 10 years it will be the common way to create the product.

But first, he said, it will take support from the people who pay for paving work cities, counties and other agencies.

Where government goes, everybody else goes,Records said.

On Tuesday afternoon, U.S. Rep. David Wu visited Baker Rock Resources to witness the warm mix in action. He sees the investment the company made in buying the new equipment and its push to have its clients use the warm-mix asphalt as an example of a business looking towards the future.

More companies should follow Baker Rocks lead and work energy-friendly practices into their business, Wu said. He believes it will create more jobs and also help the environment a win-win situation.

This is what Oregon innovation is all about, Wu said.