

Good sampling and testing make better roads

“Everybody should be sampling and testing on a regular basis to ensure they’re getting what they’re paying for,” says Keith Lundin, Director of the Highway Technician Certification Program (HTCP) based at the UW Platteville. “That process is easier these days because of Wisconsin’s quality control and assurance leadership.”

The state is a national leader in establishing a strategy for addressing quality control and assurance with highway contractors. WisDOT has given contractors responsibility for quality control using revised specifications and contractual practices for contracted work. This involves routinely sampling and analyzing the materials and the work.

The HTCP assists in this process by offering programs that train and certify individuals who do sampling and testing, process control/ troubleshooting, and mix design in aggregate, hot-mix asphalt and Portland Cement Concrete. Between January and June, HTCP is offering more than 30 classes in Eau Claire, Green Bay, Wisconsin Rapids, Madison, and Platteville.

Local agencies can take advantage of Wisconsin’s leadership in quality management by requiring certified testing in all bid specs. Larger agencies and those operating their own gravel quarries and asphalt and PCC plants can benefit by training and certifying staff through the HTCP.

Testing aggregate is fundamental to managing road construction quality. Aggregates are the main ingredient in all phases from base construction and pavement mixes, to granular shoulders, granular surfacing, and erosion control. A proposed new HTCP class will teach specific aggregate testing for PCC mixes. This will allow contractors to test their own aggregates to assure they are using good materials.

“Materials represent approximately 60 percent of a road construction project’s cost,” says Lundin. “You have to use good materials.”



Good aggregates make better roads.

One of the newest classes teaches mix design and testing for SUPERPAVE, the new superior-performance asphalt pavement. Beginning in 2000, Wisconsin’s goal is to implement using SUPERPAVE on all high volume roads. This new design system requires a better aggregate matrix and properties for better load transfer and greater durability.

A new Federal mandate requires that any project using Federal Aid funds, must also use qualified sampling and testing personnel and laboratories. WisDOT has arranged informational meetings for January and February 2000 on this new mandate. Contact the HTCP office for more information and to attend these sessions.

For more information contact Keith Lundin at 608/342-1545, or lundin@uwplatt.edu.

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