

WORKING TOGETHER

Promotion is not about “me”; it is about “we.” Let me explain. Over the years in my promotion activities, I have been involved in a number of successful efforts. Many of you have been a part of them, and that is a key point, for promotion is about partnerships!

In our close working relationship with Illinois Ready Mixed Concrete Association, Jimie Wheeler and I have often had the opportunity to work directly with IRMCA staff and its members to promote new concepts and new projects. If the staff calls, we have a partner. If the producer calls, we have a partner. If a consultant calls, we have a partner. If a contractor calls, we have a partner. Finally, if the owner calls, we have a partner. The most successful of these efforts will have more than one partner.

As an example, the city of St. Charles, IL, just completed its most recent concrete overlay project. In 2006, the city started by trying an Ultra-Thin concrete overlay on one block. This year it has expanded the program to two blocks. According to our “engineering partner” with the city, they hope to expand the program by doing more such work every year as funds permit. That partnership started with a simple phone call one day several years ago about a joint pattern in a firehouse

Swederski Concrete Construction, Inc. at work on a thin concrete overlay in the City of St. Charles. The city plans to start using more of this technique annually as funds permit.



Promotion Principle: Take advantage of partnerships available to you, including IL-ACPA & IRMCA - it pays!

By Randell C. Riley, P.E.

driveway. This was later followed by construction of a block that combined a short stretch of both whitetopping and new construction. Repair issues on some of their existing concrete streets was discussed with the City on some other projects at various times. The partnership expanded from there as others were involved along the way.

Richard J. Plimpton, P.E., your retired Director of Marketing, was part of the efforts in St. Charles as things progressed a few years ago. George Burger, Holcim USA

lives in the neighboring community. He helped out, calling on the city, answering questions, monitoring progress and calling for assistance when necessary. A couple of IRMCA producer members were involved in the effort too offering seminars or information. When some specific questions came up regarding the construction, Joe Swederski and Dan Reynolds, Swederski Concrete Construction lent their expertise to provide answers. The company was actually the winning bidder on each of the two projects the City has awarded, though a couple of other non-member firms provided input as well. We welcome them too!

This is but one example. Every successful project that I have been involved over the years has been like this, and I could name literally dozens of people that have had a part in making

our efforts successful. Think back a couple of years to the “mega-partnerships” such as the Schaumburg, Illinois Department of Transportation, District One, Whitetopping Open House and demonstration. The number of people involved in that effort with the Department, IRMCA members, the Great Lakes Cement Promotion Association members and IL ACPA members is so long I could not even begin to name them all. But, it is this combined synergy of multiple partners unselfishly moving in the same direction with the same goal that is the key to long-term success! It resulted ultimately in making Whitetopping and Ultra-Thin concrete overlays a viable alternative in Illinois.

The lesson in all of this is simple: “Take pride in your partnerships rather than your efforts. It pays!”

promotion is about partnerships

Promotion Principle: Big projects create big opportunities for IRMCA members. By Randell C. Riley, P.E.



The concrete for this section of the Dan Ryan Expressway is being produced in an area producer's central mix plant.



This section of the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's extension of I-355 provides high volume opportunities for IRMCA members.

Big projects create big opportunities for IRMCA members, and the biggest of these are frequently roadway paving projects. Whether it is on the Dan Ryan Expressway or Illinois Toll Highway Authority's I-355 south extension to meet I-80, ready mixed concrete producers have played a part – a big part. But even though these are big projects, it is important to remember that “big” is a relative term. Outside of Cook and the collar counties, concrete paving also provides tremendous opportunities. Most of our Whitetopping and UTW projects in the downstate Illinois have been supplied by ready mixed concrete producers. Most of this is driven by volume.

Due in large part to the volumes associated with concrete paving projects compared to the costs of the contractor placing a portable plant, the IRMCA producer members best opportunity to land any kind of paving project in his or her back yard would be any project less than about three miles in length. This is based on current market dynamics. For the downstate producer, this is not an insignificant quantity of material and some extra effort may be required in order to meet the sudden spike in demand, but the opportunity to substantially expand your volume in a down year or any may well help you to replace one of your aging ready mix fleet with one or more new units. And that is something to think about!

For assistance in promoting these types of projects contact your IRMCA or IL ACPA Staff.