

Hurricanes Muddy Cement Supply Outlook

The recent string of hurricanes that have battered the southeast U.S. are making the cement supply outlook more complicated for the upcoming term. Florida, the nation's third largest consumer of cement, has been experiencing shortages since the beginning of 2004 due to high demand and shrinking amounts of available imports. This shortage condition has spread to a number of markets across the country during 2004.

No significant damage to any cement plants has been reported as a result of the recent hurricanes, however, plants have reported problems related to power outages causing interruptions in production. Some ships bringing cement into the Florida market were diverted as the storms approached.

While the demand for cement is expected to be depressed during the clean-up period, which is typically about 3 months, demand will be accelerated as reconstruction activities begin and projects delayed by the storms get back on schedule, again straining cement supplies. Because of the temporarily depressed demand, some inventory building may be possible. Suppliers will be challenged to reallocate cement inventories to areas not affected by the storms.

Demand for more durable, cement-based products is expected to put more strain on cement suppliers in the coming months.

The shift in cement demand to months when demand is usually lower may prevent significant inventory building during the December-to-March period, one of the causes of the shortage conditions in early 2004. In addition, cement plants that cannot build sufficient inventories to halt production for maintenance activities may experience equipment failure during the peak production season.

Parker Elected ITA President

Harvey Parker, PE, PhD, a Seattle, WA-based consultant, was recently elected to a 3-year term as President of the International Tunneling Association (ITA). The ITA, based in Lausanne, Switzerland, is composed of 53 member nations. The organization supports and represents the industry to benefit public, environmental, and sustainable development. Parker will be the ITA representative to the United Nations in his role as ITA President.



Harvey Parker

ITA President.

PAID ADVERTISING

Parker has consulted on a broad variety of projects including rail, highway, water, waste treatment, defense, transit, and mining in over 15 countries. Prior to founding his own firm, he was Senior Vice President at Shannon & Wilson, Seattle. He also served as Assistant Vice President for Parsons Brinckerhoff, NY.

Parker received his master's degree from Harvard University and his doctorate from the University of Illinois. He is a registered engineer in California and Washington.

California Portland Appeal Refused

In a case of major importance to the concrete industry, the California Supreme Court has refused to hear the appeal of California Portland Cement in the matter of Mesa Vista South Townhome Association versus California Portland Cement et al. The plaintiff alleged that the defendant, through its ready-mix concrete division, Catalina Pacific Concrete, and the concrete contractor, CDR Concrete, had constructed homes with concrete that did not meet the building code in effect at the time of construction. Because of potential sulfate attack from surrounding soils, a low water-cement ratio (*w/c*) concrete with Type V cement was required according to the code. Attorneys for the plaintiff claimed the concrete installed had a *w/c* of 0.60 to 0.65 and were mixed with Type I cement, resulting in potential premature failure. No structural failures had occurred at the time of the filing of the suit.

While the \$5.4 million judgment stands, a victory was achieved for the industry. The court in its ruling decertified the appellate court ruling that has the effect of preventing the case from being used as a precedent for further filings.

Concrete Featured in DC Exhibition

"Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete," is the title of an exhibition at the National Building Museum in Washington, D. C. The exhibit is featuring 30 current projects that use concrete in exciting and innovative ways to

demonstrate its strength, durability, and versatility. In addition, the exhibit explores the history of the use of concrete going back 2000 years. Another portion of the exhibit takes a forward look at concrete applications of the future. A portion of the exhibit is dedicated to shotcrete. The exhibit runs through January 23, 2005.

PAID ADVERTISING