

ASPHALT SPECIALISTS

MOVING MOUNTAINS TO GET IT DONE, GET IT RIGHT

Asphalt Specialists of Grand Junction, Colo., has grown to become the largest sealcoater on the Western Slope of the Rockies. The nearest sealcoat manufacturers are 250 miles away, though; one in Salt Lake City and Vance Brothers in Denver. For more than 10 years, Asphalt Specialists has only looked east.

Owner Earl Elam says it isn't a quicker route – either direction requires crossing major mountain passes. It isn't capacity – both suppliers can meet his volume needs. For Elam, it comes down to product and people.

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As far as product goes, he remembers the pre-Vance Brothers days and doesn't care to go back.

“We were buying from an outfit out of Salt Lake and started having trouble with the material,” Elam said. “Bacteria was growing in it, causing it to expand in our tanks. Several times it ran over through the night, and we would walk into a giant mess first thing in the morning.”

Was it the altitude? The changing weather conditions during transport? Whatever it was, Elam and his employees thought the only solution was to underfill the tanks and just live with it. Until they tried Vance Brothers.

“Unlike our previous suppliers, Vance Brothers really worked with us to solve the problem,” Elam said. “They had seen it before, but they worked and worked at it, experimenting with different additives to keep it under control for us.”

Together, Asphalt Specialists and Vance Brothers have come up with the right formula, not only to combat the bacterial growth, but to provide the best coating for Elam's customers in the region.

“We've always tried to use an emulsion sealer, but they recommended a blend of about 20 percent coal tar,” Elam said. “It seems to have cured our bacteria problem, plus the darker black holds its color really well. People like it that way.”

Perfecting the product never stops, which is another key reason Elam calls in product from the other side of the Continental Divide.

“Vance's people simply understand the products better, because they take the time and effort to figure things out,” he said. “The blends are good and they're always looking to improve them.”

And Elam knows we're always looking to improve a good customer relationship.

“Whether we need a load of sealer trucked over the mountains in a pinch, or an answer to a problem, they always find a way to get us what we need, when we need it,” he added. “Somehow, some way, they've never let us down.”

