



E.J. Breneman says it has been considered a leader for many of its processes.

PAVING THE WAY

E.J. Breneman of Pennsylvania says it offers various economical and efficient alternatives to traditional road construction. —ALAN DORICH

FOR ROGER SCHMIDT OF E.J. BRENEMAN L.P., change is good. "We like change," the senior partner says. "We like to be an agent of change, not a follower. We like to do things that make our competitors catch up."

In 1983, E.J. Breneman was one of first companies to start offering cold in-place recycling in eastern Pennsylvania, Schmidt says. Cold in-place recycling uses existing asphalt pavement and blends it with asphalt emulsion, which allows it to be used as new, recycled pavement.

These days, Schmidt says there are several competitors offering cold in-place recycling. But he notes, "Our early entrance into that technology market gave us a heck of a head start."

Methods like cold in-place recycling are common to E.J. Breneman. "We provide alternative methods to reconstruct roads, providing new technologies," Schmidt explains, adding that the new technologies are not only more economical, but also environmentally sensitive.

Though most of its work has been east of the Mississippi River, Schmidt says E.J. Breneman has also completed projects in Texas, Louisiana and South Dakota. Currently, the company is registered to work in 22 states and serves many departments of transportation, counties, cities and municipalities.

The company also operates a joint venture, EJB Paving & Materials Co., a road construction and blacktop supply company in Berks County, Pa. Schmidt describes EJB as a "traditional hot-mix asphalt producer and contractor." EJB serves Berks County and its adjoining areas.

"We are our own biggest hot-mix customer," Schmidt declares. "We do have a substantial retail trade to other contractors in the area." He notes that EJB's areas of focus include state roads, township and municipal roads, commercial and industrial lots, and residential development.

PROFILE

E.J. Breneman L.P.
www.ejbreneman.com
Employees: 135+
HQ: West Lawn, Pa.
Service: Road construction and maintenance techniques
Roger Schmidt, senior partner: "We like to do things that make our competitors catch up."



Laying the Groundwork

▷ E.J. BRENEMAN INC. WAS FOUNDED BY EARLE J. BRENEMAN IN Pottstown, Pa., when he purchased the construction division of the Pottstown Valite Co. in 1941. The company's work consisted of supplying road tars, asphalt, stone slag and gravel. In addition, the company built roadways, parking lots and railroad sidings.

In 1948, E.J. Breneman purchased land in Sinking Spring, Pa., in order to quarry limestone. More than 12 years later, E.J. Breneman constructed a bituminous concrete plant in the same location.

After the passing of his only son in 1970, Earle J. Breneman sold the company to five of his employees, including President Joseph Schmidt, Vice Presidents Ray Beissel and George Williams, Secretary Randall Bright and Treasurer Jack McGowan.

The five expanded the capacities of E.J. Breneman's asphalt plant and quarry in Sinking Spring, as well as its land holdings in the area. In 1983, the company became involved in cold in-place recycling, and three years later, both Schmidt and Bright would become the sole stockholders of E.J. Breneman.

In 1987, four longtime employees became shareholders of E.J. Breneman, including Schmidt's son, Roger Schmidt, John Burger, Larry Yerger and Rod Essig. In 1989, Breneman was reorganized, with Schmidt's son, Roger Schmidt, taking the role of president.

With its reorganization, E.J. Breneman continued expanding into alternative road maintenance processes, increased bitumi-

nous plant capacities and built a new maintenance facility.

In 1992, E.J. Breneman purchased Miller Municipal Supply, a sign-making and municipal supply company. One year later, the company formed EJB Paving & Materials Co. with Berks Products Corp., a local construction materials firm. In 2000, E.J. Breneman became a limited partnership, changing its name to E.J. Breneman L.P.

"E.J. Breneman L.P. will continue to look for new opportunities and geographic areas in which to promote these new and innovative processes," the company says. "We strive to remain the leader in promoting quality maintenance processes that provide our customers with a safe and cost-efficient alternative to conventional practices."

Paving New Ground

AMONG ITS PROCESSES, E.J. BRENEMAN OFFERS CUSTOMERS THE Novachip process, in which a polymer modified emulsion called Novabond and a specialized hot mix are applied to road surfaces.

According to Schmidt, the Novachip process is not only less costly but also more efficient than traditional paving, because only half an inch of material is applied to road surfaces. In addition, the company notes that the area of disruption caused by Novachip paving is small.

"The Novachip process can be one of the most effective skid-resistant surface treatments for high-volume, high-speed roads such as interstates, where quick return to traffic is important," the company explains.

E.J. Breneman also offers soil stabilization, where soils are altered in order to enhance their physical properties. In the process, a reclaiming machine pulverizes the soil, and afterward, an additive is placed on top, which is then mixed and re-mixed with the soil until a stabilized base is achieved.

Through soil stabilization, Schmidt says the expense of hauling away excavated material and incorporating new material is not incurred. Additional benefits can include higher resistance values, lower permeability and reduction of pavement thickness without the loss of load-bearing capacity.

E.J. Breneman says it has been recognized as a leader for many of its processes. The company adds that it has been invited to present and discuss the processes with engineering groups, local governments, transportation departments and the Federal Highway Administration.

In addition, E.J. Breneman has won numerous awards, including a Novachip paving award from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and two cold in-place recycling awards from the state of Maryland for work done in Harford County.

Schmidt adds that EJB Paving & Materials Co. also won two separate Asphalt Pavement Quality awards from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Asphalt Pavement Association. ▷

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Getting It Right

▷ SCHMIDT SAYS E.J. BRENEMAN HAS A "NEVER-DISAPPOINT" PHILOSOPHY when serving customers. On occasions when customers were dissatisfied with E.J. Breneman's work, Schmidt says, the company has gone back and repaired what the customer has requested. "We feel we have a responsibility to get it right," Schmidt declares.

However, Schmidt says the company's reach reflects how satisfactory its service has been. "Certainly, there's not too many [companies] from Pennsylvania traveling to Texas, doing a Novachip job," he explains.

Schmidt says E.J. Breneman also has a commitment to safety. "Safety is absolutely paramount in our organization, from the office to the shop to the field," he declares. "We absolutely stress that."

E.J. Breneman has a safety meeting weekly with its employees, and gives awards quarterly for employee excellence in safety. "As long as they have no incidents in that quarter, they earn that award," Schmidt states.

Schmidt adds that E.J. Breneman is distinguished from its competitors by its sales force. "Most construction companies do not go out and sell the kind of service we have," he explains, adding that the company's salespeople will match its services to the customer's problems.

"Our salesmen are out there, looking at these problems and trying to advise the customers on what the best course of action is going to be," Schmidt says.

Schmidt says E.J. Breneman, through its joint venture com-

pany EJB Paving, has a heavy commitment to paving in Berks County. "We are the largest [paving company] headquartered here in Berks County," Schmidt declares. "Most of our competitors are headquartered elsewhere."

Schmidt adds that several of the company's owners and staff members are involved in local activities, including coaching youth sports, the Boy Scouts, and the Boys and Girls Club.

"In addition to substantial monetary donations to local non-profits, we serve on a lot of local boards," he adds. "We reach out to the township and county that our headquarters and shop are located in and support the police and [the] recreation department."

Continuing Innovation

"WE SEE SOME GROWTH, BUT NOT IN LEAPS IN BOUNDS," Schmidt says about E.J. Breneman's future. He explains that the company plans to "continue the innovative process and products that we feel have made Breneman successful to our customers."

In the next four to five years, the company also sees growth in the areas it works in. "We're not looking to expand geographically, but to better serve our customer base," Schmidt explains.

He adds that E.J. Breneman also plans to improve its technology, particularly when working in the field. Though the company has laptops, Schmidt would like to improve its flow of information between its remote sites and its main office.

"When you're working in Louisiana, the flow of timely and accurate information between the home office and the field is a real challenge," Schmidt explains. ■