

Road Maintenance Solutions



American Asphalt South - Fontana, California

AMERICAN ASPHALT SOUTH: UPGRADING THEIR FLEET AND THEIR SERVICES

Tim Griffin, Operations Manager for American Asphalt South in Fontana, CA, knows a great piece of equipment when he sees one. That's why he bought a half dozen Model 12B Macropavers in less than three years.

VSS (Valley Slurry Seal) Macropaver in Hickman, CA, near Modesto, provided the equipment solutions that Griffin's company needed as American Asphalt South sought to upgrade equipment that was thirty years old. "Moving into newer equipment was just trying to keep up with the times," says Griffin. So, in 2005, Griffin looked at the specs for the Model 12B Macropaver and decided to try it out. "We bought two Macropavers at that time and found that it was a really good product." That started American Asphalt south on the path of becoming a satisfied and loyal customer.

Because of the nature of his company's projects, Griffin sought a reliable paver that could handle the work load his company contracts for. American Asphalt South handles massive slurry surfacing projects for public works departments for California cities south of Fresno and recently for the State of California. When they acquired their first two Model 12B's, Griffin's company had ambitions of expanding into the state market. In order to win bids for state work, it was necessary to use equipment that was approved by the California Department of Transportation. The Model 12B Macropaver is CAL TRANS approved. American Asphalt South has achieved that initial goal and is expanding their project lists every day those machines are in use.

Initially, Griffin and his crews were just happy to have a reliable machine that they could use at their

job sites. "We decreased our downtime," Griffin said. "Now, instead of putting fires out and making emergency calls, we are actually able to do maintenance." This wasn't just because the Macropavers were new. Griffin and his crews soon found out that these pavers were rugged workhorses that had no chains or sprocket drives, making them much easier to maintain because they had fewer wear parts to break down.

But more than that, Griffin soon found that the new machines got the job done quicker and with more accuracy. "We increased our productivity," he says. "We started doing better all around on the job." The new pavers allowed Griffin and his crews to lay more material because the machines have a larger capacity to hold more aggregate, more oil, and more water. They were able to increase production by as much as one or two more loads a day, laying about 10 percent more material. This meant that the two new machines were able to do the work of three older ones that they had replaced.

"So, about eight months later, we bought two more," Griffin says. He then trained more employees on the new machines that offered state-of-the-art upgrades such as digital readouts on the mixes that they were handling. Crew members could dial in the exact settings so that they could use more complex mixes with confidence and lay product more easily. "They are a lot easier to use," Griffin says. "They are more accurate as far as getting the percentages and target yields. You can do a lot more in less time."

Once the crews were trained and the machines were programmed and set up, any operator could

handle any machine. You didn't need to find the veteran operator who knew the quirks of an old machine and was the only one who could coax the old equipment to life when it began to cough and sputter. Every crewman was eager to take his turn running the new Macropavers that were more high-tech and much more reliable.

Griffin and his crews found that the VSS truck-mounted Macropavers gave consistent quality through automatic materials sequencing. The machines could easily double the application rates of conventional pavers, producing 3 to 4 tons/min. They were rugged, dependable, and easy to operate.

The Model 12B Macropaver comes with standard features built in: an automatic aggregate finish shutdown sensor, a 3-way Teflon-lined steel valve self-loading system, an anti-syphon water load system, a heated emulsion pump, flow meters, and automatic variable emulsion basket strainer, and a side debris dump box. It is powered by a durable 115 hp John Deere water-cooled turbodiesel engine. It has a pugmill output rate of 3-4 tons/min and can apply polymer-modified microsurfacing as well as slurry. It maintains consistent quality by means of automatic sequencing, a feature pioneered by VSS. Some of the options available on the paver are a computerized programmable controller/monitor, a truck speed control on the operator joystick, a high pressure washer, and a CAL TRANS-approved material monitoring and shut-off system.

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American Asphalt Operator

"We have found with updating our equipment, we are not only getting better equipment on the road," Griffin says, "but we are giving our employees better tools to work with."

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Besides increased productivity and reliability, Griffin also saw an added benefit with these Macropavers. "OSHA and the insurance companies like them because they have cages around the moving parts." This not only protects workers but it can help lower insurance rates. "A lot of (manufacturers) do not take that into consideration. That is a benefit for us."

Griffin has been so sold on this machine that he bought more. "Recently, we were able to buy two more Macropavers for our parent company. So, over the last two and a half years, we have actually bought six now," says Griffin. Their parent

company, American Asphalt Repair and Resurfacing in Hayward, California, handles residential and commercial projects in Northern California, but specializes in public works projects as well.

In addition, Griffin is able to keep his machines running year round in the drier and warmer climate of Southern California. His parent company, American Asphalt Repair, does have to put their pavers to bed during the winter. "Their working season is a little shorter than ours," Griffin says. "We can pretty much work year round, where their window of opportunity is a lot smaller." This has allowed Griffin to keep building his business, doing work for many of the major municipalities in the region. "We have done public works projects for the city of Ontario, the city of San Diego, the County of Los Angeles, Signal Hill, pretty much everything in Southern California," says Griffin. "We have done some CAL TRANS work." But he quickly adds, "We are not a huge company. We run three crews. We will work on three different projects at a time."

But the pavers are running all of the time. And Griffin's crews have become the Macropavers biggest support. "We have found with updating our equipment, we are not only getting better equipment on the road," Griffin notes, "but we are giving our employees better tools to work with. They are able to take pride in what they do. It gives

them a little bit more incentive to do better." That pride is seen in how well they keep the equipment clean and ready for use. "The operators like the Macropavers because they are so easy to use. The machines can do pretty much everything you want them to do."

In addition, Griffin and his crews appreciate the little amenities that came with the new equipment from VSS Macropaver, a Division of Reed International. "We actually have a shade on the back of ours to keep the operator out of the sun and keep things from blowing on him. There are a lot of things that Reed (VSS MP) thinks about that other companies do not."

For Griffin, the Model 12B Macropavers have been essential to his company's growth. "I have worked for several different companies, and I have used pretty much everything that is out on the market as far as machines go. I would not buy six of these if they were not worth it. You could spend more money, but you are not going to get more for it. For the cost, they are the best thing on the market, and they are the best for ease of use and safety," Griffin says. "Reed (VSS MP) also has good customer service. Anything you need, they help you out."

So, take it from a contractor who keeps buying them, the Model 12B Macropavers can help you increase your productivity and expand your business.

By Janie Franz

