

Jay Hensley,

Asphalt Industry Statesman, Creative Promoter and Friend to the Highway Engineer, Retires After 33 Years



By John Davis

"The reason he is such a good promoter is because he loves and believes in his product. He believes in the benefits of asphalt." Tom Deddens, AI District Engineer

"I don't think we're going to miss him because I think he is going to stay. If you poke him, he's going to bleed black. He's been a good teacher and role model for a lot of people." Byron Lord, FHWA Deputy Director of Pavement Technology

"He believes 100 percent in the product he promotes—asphalt. That's what makes him a great promoter—his sincerity." Ed Miller, President, Asphalt Institute

Thirty-some years ago Jay Hensley, Chief Engineer for the Asphalt Institute, concluded that asphalt was the most creative material on the face of planet earth and decided to spend his entire career promoting it.

As a result of Jay's career in asphalt, both the transportation industry and the asphalt industry have reaped some enormous benefits. His ability to creatively promote asphalt has given us new ways to rehabilitate concrete with asphalt, railroad trackbeds paved with asphalt, state DOTs that have accurate data on life-cycle costs of asphalt roads, and paving machines that are better equipped than ever before to place hot mix asphalt.

In his thirty-plus years of promoting asphalt, Jay has never stopped thinking of better ways to use asphalt or new ways to increase its use.

No Better Promoter

"There's no better asphalt promoter in the industry," declares Tim Murphy, President of both Chicago Testing Lab and JFG Technical Center. "Nobody does it with more fervor, humor and knowledge. He walks, talks and promotes asphalt 24 hours a day.

"In many ways, he is a statesman for the asphalt industry," says Murphy. "He promotes the excellence of the product for the good of the industry. He practices statesmanship wherever he goes—be it an American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) committee meeting on asphalt specifications,

a planning and design meeting for an interstate highway or a construction site where Superpave is being placed for the first time."

Jay's three decades of asphalt statesmanship and creative promoting have earned the respect of the entire industry. Suppliers, contractors and DOT people at all levels agree that Jay is credible, ingenious and dependable. "You can trust what he says, he's always available and he will always come up with an ingenious solution to your problem," they say.

Knows Asphalt

"He is credible because he knows the product and he believes in it," says University of Kentucky Engineering Professor Jerry Rose. "He's always interested in new ideas and new challenges. That's how asphalt trackbeds got started. Jay realized that a lot of highway industry technology could be applied to the railroad industry. But nobody had ever talked to the railroad people about it. Jay started talking and they started listening. Once he had their attention, he proceeded to blend the two industries like good soup. Now we've got major railroads using asphalt trackbeds."

"Jay's engineering knowledge and his sincerity made him a great promoter," says Carlos Rosenberger, Senior District Engineer for the Asphalt Institute. "Our ability to deal successfully with specifying agencies rests in our credibility. We asphalt engineers can go in and talk



with the DOTs, but if we don't have credibility, nothing will happen. Over the years, as an Asphalt Institute engineer, Jay developed the highest kind of credibility."

Knowledge Plus Sincerity

But Jay's knowledge and credibility did not happen overnight. Countless visits to state DOT materials engineers, asphalt testing labs and hot mix plants, along with thousands of visits to paving sites over the years helped produce his knowledge and credibility. Long hours spent in the field with asphalt sticking to the soles of shoes fine-tuned his expertise. Jay did it because he loves asphalt.

"He sincerely believes in the product he is promoting," says Fred Waller, asphalt consultant and former Regional Engineer for the Asphalt Institute. "He has worked with asphalt all his life and has enjoyed it. He has a genuine love for working with asphalt.

"He also has superb technical knowledge of the product and he is willing to share his knowledge with the state and agency people," says Waller. "That willingness and ability makes him a great resource."

Likes to Help People

"He has a true appreciation for the industry, is always finding ways to improve the product, and is always helping people," says John D'Angelo of FHWA's Office of Pavement Technology. "His good relationships with highway people in so many state and local agencies have allowed him to easily communicate new technology to industry officials," says D'Angelo. They trust his technical competence but also trust him."

Ed Miller, President of the Asphalt Institute, says Jay's relationships with key federal, state and local highway agency people are a big part of why so many of our roads are asphalt today. "He knows the decision-makers and they respect him. They trust Jay because of his honesty and technical expertise."

Dan Flowers, Director of Highways and Transportation for the Arkansas State Highways and Transportation Department, thinks Jay was a great promoter because of his complete knowledge of the technical aspects of producing good asphalt mixes, running a good hot mix plant, and doing quality construction. "He understands what it takes to produce good asphalt, and he likes people," says Flowers.

"I'm not sure how you could describe Jay in just three words, but I will always think of him when I hear about rubblization, railroads and life-cycle costs."

*Linda Botkin, Asphalt Institute
Director of Finance and
Administration*

"Jay was a mentor in business and a loyal friend each day. He cares about people, families and happiness. He will always return your phone call."

*Bob Boyer, Asphalt Institute Senior
District Engineer*



*"Jay has the kind of personality that can get people together and coordinate ideas. He is very influential. Although he has a heavy Arkansas drawl, he speaks with the authority of an industry expert." John Bukowski, FHWA
Asphalt Pavement Engineer.*

*"He has the ability to find common ground wherever he goes, and he knows how to listen. That's one thing he taught me—how to listen."
Tim Murphy, President of JFG
Technical Center*

*"A good friend. That's what Jay Hensley is to us all—a good friend."
Kelly Singleton, Asphalt
Institute Director of
Marketing and Education*



Practical Approach

Jay has never been short on practical advice, and how to apply it practically, say his asphalt colleagues and the Asphalt Institute field engineers he has hired and trained. Bob Horan, AI District Engineer, says that Jay has "a very practical approach to promoting asphalt. He explains the benefits of asphalt technology in layman's terms. That's why he is so effective."

He teaches by precept and example, says AI District Engineer Tom Deddens, and has a unique ability to communicate. "Everything I have learned about asphalt, I have learned through the Jay Hensley school of asphalt technology," says Deddens.

Roger Smith, Executive Director of the Northern California Asphalt Pavement Association, says Jay's attention to engineering details, together with his down-to-earth way of presenting asphalt technology, makes him an effective teacher. Bob Boyer, AI Senior District Engineer, says Jay "is one of the last asphalt pavement field experts capable of dissecting an asphalt pavement to determine type of distress, cause of distress and the correct remedy for the distress."

Dan Flowers recounts that Jay gave him practical help when he was a young project engineer moving up the management ladder. "He would come by and see me often," says Flowers. "We talked about problems we were having and ways to resolve them. He gave me practical advice about how to do my job better."

Endless Humor

Flowers, and the rest of the highway industry who know him, also appreciate Jay's ready humor. "He is a person with a tremendous amount of wit," says Flowers. "He can talk about a serious matter in a lighthearted way and ease the tension. He's a great storyteller."

Jay is a real comedian, adds Fred Waller. "He has an endless sense of humor. He has a unique ability to impart humor and jokes in technical presentations. Something that very few of us can do."

Jorge Villacres, former AI Senior District Engineer, says "Working with Jay was always memorable. The audience and I particularly appreciated his wit and humor. Besides his knowledge, experience and dedication, I'll definitely miss his humor."

*"I would describe Jay as factual, practical and applicable. What Jay says is factual, practical and applicable."
Dr. Jerry Rose, University of
Kentucky Professor of Engineering*

*"You asked if I was trained by Jay? Everyone was trained by Jay."
Ed Miller, President,
Asphalt Institute*





Never-Ending Commitment

Jay never tires of talking about the benefits and uses of asphalt. “He is tireless in his commitment,” declares Phil Kirk, President of RMI, Inc. “And not only to the product but to the people who use it and benefit from its uses.

“As far as my business is concerned—which is rubblization—Jay’s input was critical. We invented the rubblizing process together, and it was through his interest in the process that we took it further. It was his influence that got many states to start using it. He still thinks rubblizing is one of the best ways to rehabilitate concrete with asphalt.”

exceptional. His good relationships with highway officials helped them trust in asphalt. His integrity built trust with our customers and partners. He was and is an industry champion.

“I don’t think we’re going to miss him because I think he is going to stay. If you poke him, he is going to bleed black. He’ll be coming up with more ideas in the future about how to improve our industry.”

Ed Miller agrees. “Anyone with Jay’s kind of dedication to asphalt is not going to just quit. Yes, we’ll miss him at the Asphalt Institute, but he’ll continue to be a champion for the industry. To me he is the Will Rogers of asphalt.” ▲

“He was successful because of his knowledge, experience, expertise and personal contacts. That’s a unique and unbeatable combination to promote asphalt.”
Bernie McCarthy, Vice President of Industry Affairs, Asphalt Institute

“He is not only a great asset to the Asphalt Institute, but to the entire paving industry. He is always there when you need him.”
Dan Flowers, Director of Highways & Transportation for the Arkansas State Highways & Transportation Department

Friend

Besides knowing everything there is to know about asphalt, Jay is a helpful friend, says Kelly Singleton, Director of Marketing and Education for the Asphalt Institute. “When I first started in this marketing position, Jay came up to me and said: “Kelly, we’re gonna do some things. We’re gonna turn up the heat on these concrete guys. We’re gonna rubblize their socks off. And that’s what we’ve done.

“I’m going to miss his knowledge and dedication, but mostly I’ll miss his practical support and guidance. He has been a good friend to me and to all of us in the industry. That’s what Jay is—a good friend.”

“We invented the rubblization process together. It was his influence that got many states to start using it.” **Phil Kirk, President, RMI, Inc.**

“If I was going to start a new Asphalt Institute, Jay Hensley is the first person I would hire.”
Gerry Triplett, former President of the Asphalt Institute

“Jay helped us tremendously in implementing different types of asphalt technology. If we have a forensic problem with one of our pavements, we call Jay.”
Jerry Westerman, Assistant Materials Engineer, Arkansas State Highways and Transportation Department

“Asphalt is the most creative engineering material on the face of planet earth.”
Jay Hensley, Asphalt Institute Chief Engineer

Industry Champion

Byron Lord of FHWA’s Office of Asphalt Technology, summed up Jay’s success in one word: faith. “Jay believes 100 percent in what he is doing,” says Lord. “And from that faith comes commitment, integrity, trust and all that makes him

