

CALIFORNIA ASPHALT INSIDER

The latest news and views from the California Asphalt Pavement Association

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CALENDAR

(Always on-line [HERE](#))

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'Asphalt Pavement 101' class
(WEBINAR ONLY)
Tuesday & Wednesday, May
19 & 20, 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Contact: Sophie You (916)
791-5044
Details [HERE](#).

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Asphalt Pavement
Smoothness Specifications
(WEBINAR ONLY)

Greetings!

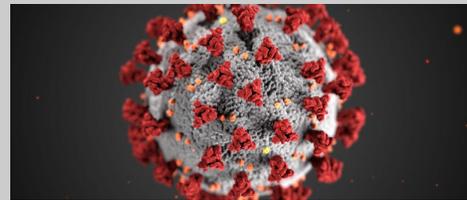
This weekly bulletin contains the latest news and information of interest to the asphalt pavement industry in California. Please feel free to distribute this newsletter to others who may be interested in asphalt pavements.

→ SPECIAL REPORT: COVID-19 pandemic weighs on state & local public works budgets; Workers Comp executive order raises alarm; Caltrans oil index gets new scrutiny

As the asphalt pavement industry in California continued to move carefully forward last week on public and private paving projects in the midst of a global pandemic and a wounded economy, Gov. Gavin Newsom delivered another blow in the form of an executive order on workers compensation insurance that shook the industry like a vibratory roller.

Meanwhile, the Caltrans oil index, used to calculate asphalt price adjustments and intended to smooth out price spikes, received renewed scrutiny as the posted oil price for May 20 stood at \$109, down from \$350 in January and widening the gap from the price of liquid asphalt binder across the state.

And in the first assessment of the impact of the coronavirus- COVID-19 public health emergency that has triggered widespread "stay at home" orders across the state and nation, the state Department of Finance projected California's state budget surplus would vanish, replaced by a \$50 billion deficit that could take years to erase.



As of May 9, the California Department of Public Health reported there were 66,680 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 2,745 deaths in California. That compared to 21,794 cases and 651 deaths a month prior. One closely followed model predicted California could experience more than 6,000 COVID-19 deaths by August. The CDPH central repository for COVID-19 information in California is [HERE](#).

Although road construction largely has been allowed to continue in California since March 19, when the governor issued a statewide "stay at home" order, several San Francisco Bay Area counties later imposed moratoriums on commercial construction. Those counties on April 29 announced an extension of "stay at home" orders through May, but also lifted the commercial construction restriction as long as certain safety guidelines are met. The San Francisco order and construction guidance, which was mirrored by neighboring counties, can be found [HERE](#). Of the new restrictions, the addition of a "COVID-19 Safety Compliance Officer" in the list of additional requirements

Tuesday, May 26, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Contact: Sophie You (916) 791-5044

Details [HERE](#).

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Quality Asphalt Paving
Wednesday, May 27, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

(WEBINAR ONLY)

Contact: Sophie You (916) 791-5044

Details [HERE](#).

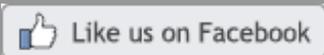
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Asphalt Pavement
Smoothness - Best Practices
(WEBINAR ONLY)
Thursday, May 27, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Contact: Sophie You (916) 791-5044

Details [HERE](#).

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Asphalt is used on about 95 percent of paved roads in California and across the U.S. Why? Because it's smooth, quiet, safe, durable and 100 percent recyclable. Visit the [Asphalt Pavement Alliance](#) website learn more about why asphalt is the right choice now more than ever.

created the most confusion and consternation in the construction industry generally lauded for keeping workers safe on the job.

The coronavirus is easily transmitted via airborne droplets expelled by those who have been infected, and the COVID-19 illness it brings about can lead to mild to severe flue-like symptoms, with hospitalization and death for some, particularly those with underlying health conditions. There is no known cure. To slow the spread of the virus, public health officials have issued a series of "social distancing" and other orders across the state and nation to slow the spread of the virus, which include banning large gatherings, keeping at least 6-feet apart, personal hygiene and wearing of protective face coverings.

Generally, the health orders issued carried exemptions for the preservation of essential services related to health, safety and the protection of vital infrastructure, such as utilities, transportation systems and housing, and supply chains critical to ensuring Californians continue to have access to food, medical care and other services during the emergency. Road construction, along with the upstream supply chain supporting it, was generally considered an essential activity so long as proper safety precautions were in place.



A Teichert paving operation being completed under new COVID-19 safety protocols.

Last week, the governor made a series of announcements to relax some "stay at home" restrictions for certain leisure activities and low-risk business operations while urging caution and continuing restrictions for many other types of businesses where close contact by people could spread the virus quickly.

But it was his May 6 executive order establishing a "rebuttable presumption" for workers to access workers compensation benefits if they contracted COVID-19 that sent shockwaves through the business community.

"We are removing a burden for workers on the front lines, who risk their own health and safety to deliver critical services to our fellow Californians, so that they can access benefits, and be able to focus on their recovery," Newsom said in announcing the executive order. "Workers' compensation is a critical piece to reopening the state and it will help workers get the care they need to get healthy, and in turn, protect public health." His full press announcement and link to the Executive Order is [HERE](#).

The reaction from the business community was immediate.

"The Executive Order issued today will unnecessarily and significantly drive up costs for California employers through increased workers' compensation insurance rates at a time when they are struggling to keep Californians employed," the California Chamber of Commerce said in a statement. "Imposing a legal presumption that any employee who contracts the coronavirus is covered by workers' compensation benefits shifts the cost of this pandemic to employers."

Other news out of Sacramento was just as devastating. The Newsom administration on May 7 projected the state budget deficit will balloon to \$54.3 billion, the biggest deficit in state history. The figures were released by his Department of Finance, which prepares



GET TECHNICAL

Are you an engineer, designer or technical professional who makes decisions on pavement type selection? The DriveAsphalt website has technical reports and other resources may be just what you're looking for. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



CalAPA

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BACK ISSUES

Did you miss an issue of the *California Asphalt Insider*? No problem! Past editions of the newsletter are available at the CalAPA newsletter [archive page](#).

MAGAZINE

the annual state budget proposed by the governor. The DOF memo is [HERE](#). A day later, the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office projected the deficit to be between \$18 billion and \$31 billion -- not quite as horrifying but still massive. "The state's newly emergent fiscal challenges are unlikely to dissipate quickly and will extend well beyond the end of the public health crisis," the LAO said, predicting that budget deficits will "persist for years to come." The LAO report is [HERE](#).



The governor's official revised budget will be released May 15 and will give a clearer indication of how those deficits will be dealt with, and the impact on transportation, which is largely funded through gas-tax and use fees, supplemented in many counties by sales-tax levies devoted to transportation. The state's fiscal year begins July 1.

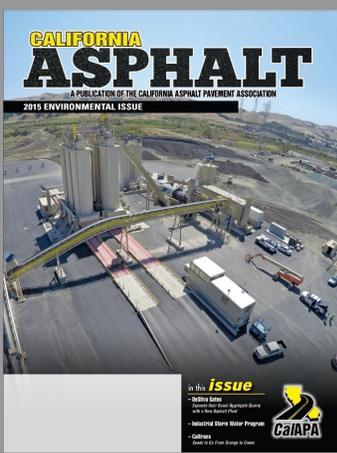
Similar dire warnings have been made by various cities and counties during the week. The San Diego City Council, for example, was reviewing a city budget that anticipates the COVID-19 emergency will cost the city more than \$300 million. Mayor Kevin Faulconer has proposed eliminating 354 city jobs to help close the gap between tax revenues and expenses.

The triple whammy of geopolitics, a global glut on oil supplies and the COVID-19 emergency has pushed oil prices downward, which in turn has pushed the Caltrans crude oil price index to historic lows. The oil index is used to calculate asphalt price adjustments, but the widening gap between the price of oil and the going price for asphalt binder sold in California continued to be wide, creating pain for some state highway projects that include the index provision. The May 20 posting was \$109, compared to \$359 in January, the lowest price in more than a decade. The posted prices can be found [HERE](#). Industry and Caltrans representatives were communicating last week about the harm an out-of-balance index could cause to an industry already under siege by other COVID-19-related impacts.

Undeterred by the shifting coronavirus landscape, asphalt associations continued to update members on relevant information and push out educational information in new and compelling ways. On May 6, CalAPA held its most widely attended Regional Technical Committee meeting completely on-line, with more than 88 CalAPA members and public works agency representatives in attendance. Moderated by CalAPA Technical Director Brandon Milar, participants heard an update on the Caltrans Independent Assurance and Joint Training & Certification Programs from Jeremy Peterson-Self (an electronic copy of his presentation is [HERE](#)), and a technical presentation on polymer modified binders by Gary Fitts with CalAPA-member Kraton Polymers U.S. (his presentation is [HERE](#)).



CalAPA will hold "Asphalt Pavement 101" classes on-line on May 19 & 20 (details [HERE](#)), as well as pavement smoothness classes (new specifications class May 26 -- details [HERE](#); smoothness best practices May 28 -- details [HERE](#)). CalAPA's popular Quality Asphalt Paving class will be held on-line on May 27 (details [HERE](#)).



CalAPA produces a highly regarded magazine, *California Asphalt*, and an annual membership directory. To view current and past issues of the magazine, click [HERE](#). For advertising sales information, click [HERE](#) or call Kerry Hoover with Construction Marketing Services at (909) 772-3121.

STAY INFORMED



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GET CERTIFIED!



The Caltrans-industry Joint Training & Certification Program (JTCP) for materials technicians is holding classes in Northern and Southern California. Click [HERE](#) to visit

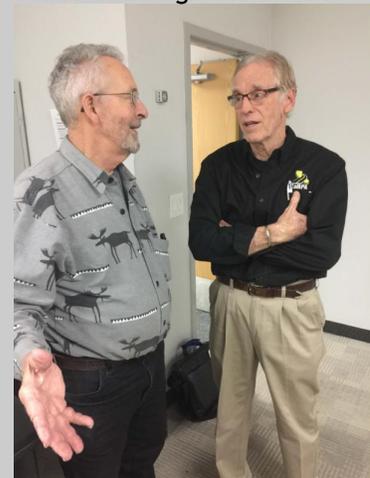
The National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA), a CalAPA partner, continues to update its COVID-19 information page [HERE](#). CalAPA COVID-19 "Member Alerts" continue to be posted on the CalAPA website [HERE](#).

As the the impacts from the pandemic continue to unfold, CalAPA will continue to keep the industry informed of pertinent information as it becomes available. For more information, contact CalAPA at (916) 791-5044, or visit the CalAPA Safety page on the association's website [HERE](#).

➔ New smoothness, HMA paving classes added to CalAPA schedule of on-line training

Just in time before the paving season gets into full swing, CalAPA's on-line technical training offerings have been expanded to include live webinar-style offerings of popular "Quality HMA Paving" and a pavement smoothness specifications and best practices classes. They join the "Asphalt Pavement 101" class that will be held in two installments on May 19 & May 20. All CalAPA webinars and events are listed on the association's on-line calendar [HERE](#).

The "Asphalt Pavement 101" class is a good overview of everything asphalt, touching on how asphalt pavements are designed, constructed and maintained. It is taught by Roger Smith, a former senior materials engineer with Caltrans and the Asphalt Institute, as well as a former executive director of CalAPA. Although the class is just a half-day it is packed with loads of useful information for contractor and agency paving crews, quality control specialists, lab personnel and others who interact with asphalt pavements. The class will be held in two installments on May 19 & May 20 for one registration fee. Details are [HERE](#).



Skip Brown (left) and Roger Smith.

Just added to the calendar is a return of "Quality Asphalt Paving," a "boots on the ground" view of practical asphalt paving techniques and best practices, taught by veteran paving contractor and consultant Skip Brown, who in his career has personally supervised the placement of more than 4 million tons of HMA on highways and parking lots in California. His on-line class will be held May 27. Details are [HERE](#).

Also returning to the schedule are training smoothness classes broken up into a deep-dive into new pavement specifications, and also into best practices to achieve optimum pavement smoothness and incentive payments. Both classes are taught by Mike Robinson, a longtime industry figure and consultant. Details on the May 26 specifications class is [HERE](#). Details on the May 28 best-practices for achieving smooth pavements class is [HERE](#).

Attendees to all CalAPA on-line classes receive customized electronic certificates of completion, as well as a digital reference book.

While the COVID-19 pandemic

our JTCP resource page to learn more.

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We can bring CalAPA's popular training classes to your facility at a date and time convenient to you! Click [HERE](#) to view our "hosted" training class flier, or contact CalAPA at (916) 791-5044 for details. This service is available to public agencies and CalAPA members only.



response discourages face-to-face meetings and classes, CalAPA will utilize internet technology to continue the sharing of technical information related to asphalt pavements. The classes are lively and interactive, with on-line polls, the opportunity for participants to have specific questions answered and more.

For more information on CalAPA training classes, contact Sophie You of CalAPA at (916) 791-5044. To learn more about CalAPA's "hosted" training opportunities, view our flier [HERE](#).



Mike Robinson

→ Tech Term of the Week

Each week we highlight a word, acronym or other reference commonly used in the asphalt pavement industry in California.

ASPHALT JOINT FILLER: An asphaltic product used for filling cracks and joints in pavement and other structures.

→ Paving Pointer of the Week

Each week we highlight a key point or best practice of interest to asphalt paving crews, inspectors and others working in the field. We welcome suggestions. More tips can be found in our Asphalt Parking Lot Construction Checklist [HERE](#).

COMPACTION / DENSITY: The plans and specifications should specify how density is tested. The inspector needs to monitor the specified compaction density with a gauge to ensure that final target densities are achieved. Regular visual inspection of the mat during compaction is also required: look for segregation, indentations, properly sealed joints, and under-compacted areas.

→ Safety Tip of the Week

Each week we highlight a key tip or best practice to ensure that asphalt plants and paving operations are safe, comply with appropriate regulations and are accident-free. We welcome suggestions. More tips can be found in our Safety Checklists posted on our Safety Resources Page [HERE](#).

PROPER USE OF RESPIRATORS: Employers who have never before needed to consider a respiratory protection plan should note that it can take time to choose an appropriate respirator to provide to workers; arrange for a qualified trainer; and provide training, fit testing and medical evaluation for their workers. Learn more from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration [HERE](#).

→ Quote of the Week

"The best way out is always through."

Robert Frost

We hope you enjoy CalAPA's *Asphalt Insider*. We are committed to providing you with the most up-to-date information on technical issues, regulation, news, analysis, events and trends in California that may impact the asphalt pavement industry. Click [HERE](#) to contact us with any comments or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Snyder, CAE

Executive Director

California Asphalt Pavement Association (CalAPA)®



Visit the CalAPA Safety resources page [HERE](#).

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