Where the rubber meets the road

Do you ever wonder what happens to the tires you discard once you have done your best to use them? Well, I just read an interesting article about a company in Mississippi that had taken 1,000 tires from local landfills and used them to produce nearly, 1,050 tons of mixture for a mile-long test on Mississippi’s U.S. Highway 49.

A company in Gulfport, Miss., Blackidge Emulsions, created a granulated tire rubber modified asphalt cement mixture. Scrap tires are recovered, processed and ground into small pieces, which then are blended to create this mixture. Since rubber tires are created to be flexible in cold weather, do very well in high heat and are manufactured with anti-aging processes, they are a great resource to make our highways safer, quieter and more durable. Blackidge Emulsions is awaiting Mississippi Department of Transportation to approve the technology.

I take my hat off to this company that 20 years ago had the foresight to make a commitment to turning an unusable product into something useful. Since that day this company has grown, to having 10 plants in southeastern United States. To date, they have recycled 100 million pounds of discarded tires into asphalt highways. With this environmentally friendly process, we could rid the landfills of most of this product in a short period of time.

In fact, in my research in “Sustainable Construction” and “First State Tire” on this topic, I found that there are many products created from recycled tires. There is rubber tire flooring, playground bedding, sculptures, ottomans and stools from truck tires, waste baskets, wall art, retread biker bags or messenger bags, garden tables, and there was even instructions to make your own tire sandals.

This made me wonder what was being done with the tires we recycle at Always Available Roll Off? We partner with a licensed facility and found that our local tires are converted to environmentally friendly products used in the civil engineering industry as backfill materials for septic systems, basements and roadway bedding.

So little did I know there were so many wonderful products being created from the tires we so easily discard as waste. I have had to look at tires differently after learning about all of these wonderful uses and I hope you do too. Thanks once again for your wonderful questions and suggestions that we have received at aarolloff@aol.com.