

A Solid Foundation



A quarter of a million acres are paved or repaved annually in the U.S., almost exclusively using impervious materials, according to *Porous Pavements* author Bruce Ferguson. In 2004, researchers determined that impervious surfaces nationwide covered an area about the size of Ohio. Fast forward to the present—not to mention future calendar years—and the math is frightening.

As industry professionals, we are aware of the slew of environmental problems this expanding coverage poses: wetland degradation, stream channel erosion, increased water body pollutant loads, etc. But with a booming

population to accommodate, growing road, home and business construction is inevitable. That said, it is time to rethink how we develop and redevelop our planet. Porous concrete and asphalt can be part of the solution.

These technologies continue to prove in performance studies that, with proper design, installation and maintenance, they can effectively infiltrate storm water in various environments (yes, even colder climates, shows an ongoing University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center study). As porous pavers become more widely evaluated in laboratory and real-world applications, technology options and performance quality should continue to increase while costs decrease.

Here in Chicago, porous pavers seem to be multiplying. Residents and visitors can find the storm water-friendly surfaces beneath their feet at Buckingham Fountain and U.S. Cellular Field, in revamped alleyways and on college campuses citywide, for example.

But the porous phenomenon is not exclusive to large-scale entities and projects. It trickles on down to the residential level thanks to greater mainstream media exposure and the more widespread availability of materials. Personal family friends recently opted, sans any pressure from yours truly, to go pervious when replacing an outdated backyard patio—a positive and, I hope, telling sign that our industry is building on a solid porous pavement foundation.

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Read more about porous pavement in this issue:

- A Virginia train station case study (see page 20)
- A recap of SWS editors' visit to Chicago's new Mary Bartelme Park (see page 38)
- A Q&A with Dr. Thomas P. Ballesterio, P.E. (see page 42)

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