



Daily Dose: City shows off new pothole-fixing truck

Article by Ann Marie Bush

Excerpt from March 27, 2008 issue *The Capital-Journal* for the city of Topeka, Kansas

Pair of machines purchased to improve process of fixing potholes

The city on Wednesday unveiled a new truck aimed at making pothole patching more efficient. The city has purchased two new Bergkamp FP5 Flameless Pothole Patch units. The first one was on display for media at the city's Street Section Yard, and the second unit was expected to be in Topeka by week's end. Funds for the new units, manufactured in Salina, were allocated in the 2007 budget, said Mark Thiel, director of the city's transportation-operations division. Later this year, another patch unit will be purchased from the 2008 budget if the city finds the two new ones to be efficient, Thiel said.

Previously, the city had four standard patch units and a spray injection system pulled behind a pickup truck on a trailer. The city is keeping the spray injection system and one of the patch trucks. The other three were traded in on the new units. The new trucks will utilize the same amount of staff but should improve the time it takes to patch a hole, Thiel said. The public should see the trucks in use in about one week, he added.

"This winter has been very tough on us," Thiel said. "We're looking forward to a productive summer." The two new units are more green than the previous units, Thiel said, adding that the old ones used diesel fuel to clean hoses. The new units use compressed air for the process. Thiel stressed that the new trucks aren't substitutes for a long-term pavement management program.

What's It Do (Sidebar)

1. The new patch unit is self-contained. With a pull of a lever, a 400-pound roller can be lowered from the truck's platform, where it sits, to the street where the repairs need to be made.
2. A jack hammer on the back of the unit will keep employees from having to carry extra equipment.
3. A platform will allow city workers more safely to check the level of hot mix used to patch potholes.
4. Levers make the machine easy to operate.
5. Debris bins on the back and sides will allow for easier removal of pothole debris.
6. A wand used for compressed air to remove debris from potholes and to spray adhesive that bonds new asphalt to old asphalt.