

## IN THE NEWS...

### John Deere Co. Leaving Wind Industry

Exelon Corp. will be the recipient of Deere & Co.'s wind energy business in exchange for \$900 million. The deal is the latest in a recent string of wind business acquisitions, as the current economic conditions and laws make conditions ideal for some companies and less desirable for others.

### Other Industries Look for Opportunities

As more wind farms are built in Wisconsin, businesses who at first seem to have nothing to do with wind energy seek ways to get involved. Vorpahl Fire & Safety, which sells protective gear, and Patz Corp., known for its farm equipment, are just two of the Wisconsin companies eager to try their hand in the wind industry.

### Federal Assistance Necessary

The growing consensus is that wind energy requires federal standards to truly grow and succeed. Denise Bode, CEO of AWEA and former Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner, urged attendees at a recent conference to beseech their respective government officials for a bill with a renewable energy standard. While her focus is on Oklahoma, all states could clearly benefit from such a standard.

## Who'd Have Thought It?

The first known wind mills were built by Persians in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### Things You Should Know:

#### Topic 3: Condition Surveys – PASER Ratings

Is it your policy to wait until someone complains? Or do you prefer to take care of potential problems before they arise? If you belong in the second category, then one excellent way to nip them in the bud for pavements is to utilize a condition survey known as the PASER rating system. Here are a few facts about PASER:

- PASER: Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating
- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission developed the PASER system to assist county governments in gauging the condition of their roads, and determining the type and timeframe of necessary maintenance. Historically, counties would only repair roads that had become very poor and when residents began to complain.
- The results are on a 1-10 scale (1 being very poor and 10 excellent).
- The survey can be performed by any objective party, preferably independent, or a team of all parties involved; it's simple enough that most people can easily grasp the rating method. Even local citizens could look at a series of photos and determine a rating. However, the system is subjective and is truly best performed by experienced construction materials engineers, in person, and not just via photographs or video.
- Results assist in determining causes of damage and appropriate repair options, anticipating future deterioration, justifying improvement budgets, and much more.

In many cases and particularly in regards to wind farm projects, the only way to access the construction site is by traveling on county roads. With nearly any type of construction, the chief complaint made by the public is that any damage to the roads is caused by all of the construction. While it's true that construction can take its toll on roadways, sometimes projects get blamed unfairly for damage.

From the contractor's perspective, it's possible to look at the routes through which equipment will be hauled, and agree to replace the road when the work is done. But it's much more cost effective to rate the road prior to construction using the PASER system. If the roads are rated at a 7, for instance, and they deteriorate to a 5 or 4, a construction firm wouldn't necessarily have to pay the entire cost of replacement, or the roads may not have to be replaced at all.

To learn more about how the PASER system can help smooth the way on the "road to success," please feel free to contact any of RVT's construction materials engineers.