

A photograph of a road with a yellow center line that is burning at the bottom of the frame. The road is asphalt and the yellow line is in the center. The background shows a green field and a clear sky.

MADE IN MISSISSIPPI burning rubber

WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

Blacklidge Emulsions takes a unique step toward saving the environment with the observance of Earth Day

story by **Al Jones** photos by **John Stricklin**

Blacklidge Emulsions, a locally owned South Mississippi business, has taken a unique step toward saving the environment and improving the road ways with its Ground Tire Rubber (GTR) modified asphalt mixture. The new mixture was used in a recent testing procedure on a portion of the southbound lane of U.S. 49 near Saucier. The Gulfport-based company now has its sights set on preserving more roadways in the area with an eye on taking the product to the national level with the observance of Earth Day on April 22.

The new technology began when Blacklidge Emulsions and the Huey Stockstill Construction Company of Picayune converted used tires – ones that were to be disposed into local landfills – to produce the modified asphalt cement in a project known as PG 76-22GTR. In all, the project used 1,000 tires from Harrison County landfills to produce nearly 1,050 tons of mixture for the demonstration project. Unlike aluminum cans, rubber tires do not dissipate into the environment so this project is environmentally friendly.

After the modified cement product was developed, it was presented to the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) for approval to replace polymer modified asphalt cement. That potentially translates into cost savings for MDOT, smoother riding conditions for vehicles and longer lasting highways.

“It’s encouraging that MDOT has been open-minded to this recycling asphalt technology that uses finely ground discarded tire rubber to make our highways last longer,” said Brittany Blacklidge, president of Blacklidge Emulsions.

The end result closely resembles the old saying of ‘this is where the rubber meets the pavement.’

“It was really exciting to showcase this environmentally friendly process on a highway that many South Mississippians travel over every day,” said Blacklidge. “Once MDOT approves the technology, we believe it will significantly benefit Mississippi roads, save MDOT and taxpayers money and help decrease the stockpiles of discarded tires that have and continue to accumulate in our landfills.”

The modified asphalt was developed at Blacklidge Emulsions’ 3,000-square-foot laboratory off Cowan Road in Gulfport.

Blacklidge Emulsions is now providing GTR modified asphalt on I-12 in Baton Rouge and U.S. 231 in Dothan, Ala.



TOP: SCRAP TIRES are recovered, processed and ground into small pieces. **MIDDLE: THE PROCESS** of turning ground tires into asphalt is carefully monitored. **ABOVE: A PIECE** of the ground tire rubber modified asphalt mixture.

Blacklidge Emulsions

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