

CALIFORNIA ASPHALT INSIDER

The latest news and views from the California Asphalt Pavement Association
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CALENDAR

(Always on-line [HERE](#))

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SEATS GOING FAST!
'Asphalt Pavement 101'
class
Tuesday, Jan. 14, 8 a.m. to noon
University of Phoenix, 9645 Granite Ridge Drive, San Diego
Contact: Sophie You (916) 791-5044
Register [HERE](#).

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SIGN-UP NOW!
CalAPA Annual Dinner

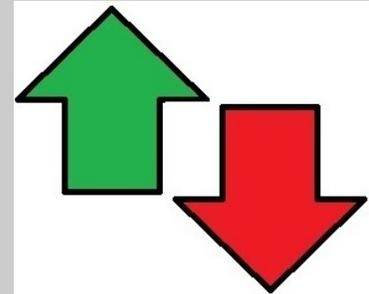
Greetings!

This weekly bulletin contains the latest news and information of interest to the asphalt pavement industry in California. Please feel free to distribute this newsletter to others who may be interested in asphalt pavements.

→ EXCLUSIVE: Optimism dips in our 10th annual 'better-worse' survey; Workforce challenges, project delivery among top comments

The results are in. The 10th annual CalAPA "Better or Worse" survey shows respondents remain bullish about next year, although much less optimistic than a year ago, and many worry about workforce challenges, the private market and lack of work in rural areas.

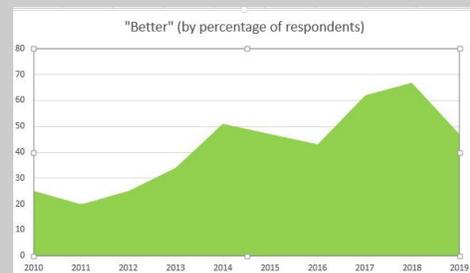
The brief, non-scientific poll of more than 2,500 "Asphalt Insider" newsletter subscribers, conducted over the past month, found optimism somewhat lower than last year's all-time high but still very strong in the 10 years the survey has been conducted. The number of respondents who said next year would be better than 2019 stood at 47 percent, compared to 67 percent last year. That is in stark contrast to 2011, when the "better" number was just 20 percent.



"SB1 money should be in full swing by 2020," said one industry respondent. "We have a much higher backlog," added another industry respondent. "We are a public agency," one respondent wrote. "Fuel tax money has stabilized and we are moving forward with projects."

Indeed, the passage of SB1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, appears to be contributing to the general optimism of the survey respondents. The bill, which raised the state's fuel taxes for the first time since 1994, is generating more than \$5 billion per year for transportation, with most of the money devoted to roads. A November 2018 ballot measure, Proposition 6, to repeal the fuel taxes that were part of SB1, was soundly rejected by voters. SB1 was mentioned by many survey respondents.

"SB1 revenue streams will finally be hitting our roads," one industry representative said. "The need for road maintenance is dire. The public's frustration is palpable and they know the money is available via our gas taxes. Industry and taxpayer stakeholders are committed to bird-dogging road dollars from collection to paving. The paving future in California is bright as long as we do not tire in our duty to shepherd road revenue from the



"Better" survey respondents 2010-19.

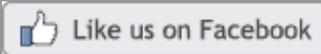
Thursday, Jan. 16, 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Jonathan Club, 545 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles. Contact Sophie You at (916) 791-5044 for sponsorship and table-reservation information. Details [HERE](#).

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REGISTRATION OPEN
Annual Asphalt Pavement Conference
April 15-17, 2020
Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, 1600 S. Disneyland Drive, Anaheim
Contact Sophie You at (916) 791-5044 for sponsorship and exhibitor information. Details [HERE](#).

SOCIALIZE



CHOOSE ASPHALT

Asphalt is used on about 95 percent of paved roads in California and across the U.S. Why? Because it's smooth, quiet, safe, durable and 100 percent recyclable. Visit the [Asphalt Pavement Alliance](#) website learn more about why asphalt is the right choice now more than ever.

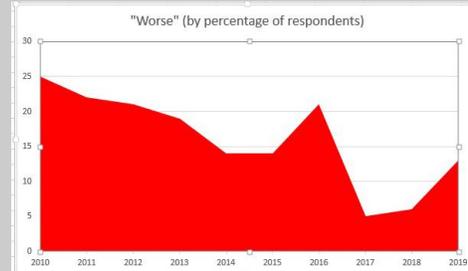


pump to the pavement."

An agency representative added: "The future looks very bright because SB1 funding from the gas tax is flowing, so we will continue have the revenue needed to maintain our County's road system. SB1 funding makes a HUGE difference! 2019 was good, and 2020 will be even better."

On the negative side, 13 percent of respondents said next year would be worse than 2019, an increase from the 6 percent who said that last year. The highest "worse" percentage in the history of the survey was 25 percent recorded in 2010, when the state was mired in a deep economic recession. About 36 percent of respondents said next year will be about the same as 2019. Much of the pessimism was related to lack of work, particularly in rural areas, and a decrease in private work.

"There appears to be a real lack of projects coming to bid in our area," one rural paving contractor said, while another added: "It is the status quo. SB1 is doing us no good in the rural counties." Yet another industry representative from a rural area lamented, "Need SB1 funding to come in our direction."



"Worse" survey respondents 2010-19.

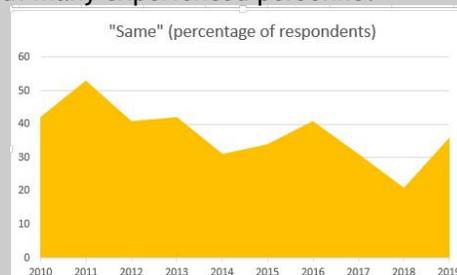
Of the overall respondents, about a quarter were public agency representatives, with the rest comprising asphalt producers, refiners, paving contractors and other companies that are part of the industry, plus a smattering of others.

For the fourth year in a row, the survey added an optional question, "What is the No. 1 challenge where you work?" That question elicited 82 written responses, with lack of being able to attract and retain qualified workers the top issue by far, followed by regulatory challenges.

"Attracting and retaining talented employees," once industry respondent said. "Finding experienced staff with a strong work ethic," added a local agency representative.

The churn in the workforce, with many experienced personnel retiring, is creating conflicts between industry and agency personnel, the survey responses suggest.

"Engineers and Inspectors that are green (new to the job) makes the work more challenging as the more experienced Engineers and Inspectors are retiring," said one industry respondent.



"Same" respondents 2010-19.

Several other respondents cited AB5, a new law that will take effect Jan. 1 and impact independent trucking, as well as the overall daunting regulatory environment in California.

"Cost of complying with regulations," once industry person cited as a No. 1 challenge.

The main survey question is purposefully vague: "For your company or organization, how do you think 2020 will compare to 2019?" However, most of the voluntary comments offered up by survey

GET TECHNICAL

Are you an engineer, designer or technical professional who makes decisions on pavement type selection? The DriveAsphalt website has technical reports and other resources may be just what you're looking for. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



CalAPA

California Asphalt Pavement Association (CalAPA)

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 981300
West Sacramento, CA 95798

Main office:
1550 Harbor Blvd., Suite 211
West Sacramento, CA 95691

(916) 791-5044 (phone)

BACK ISSUES

Did you miss an issue of the *California Asphalt Insider*? No problem! Past editions of the newsletter are available at the CalAPA newsletter [archive page](#).

MAGAZINE

to justify their opinion centered around how much work is expected in the coming year. The answer varied by company, agency and region, reflecting the size and diversity of California's massive economy and the economic micro-climates that are spread across the state.

As in previous surveys, the weather largely depends upon where you are standing. Some respondents commented that work was booming, while others were disappointed. Several respondents noted a drop-off in private work. "A slowdown in housing," said one. "Private work down," added another. A city respondent took note of a "drop in grading permits for private development."

A total of 123 people took part in the voluntary on-line survey, which was conducted from Nov. 7 to Dec. 18. To read the story about last year's survey results, click [HERE](#). More detailed economic forecast information will be featured in the 2020 Forecast Issue of CalAPA's official magazine, *California Asphalt*, which will hit mailboxes in January.

→ Popular safety video on preventing, responding to liquid asphalt burns released

The Asphalt Institute, a CalAPA partner, has released an edited version of its popular safety training video on how to prevent and respond to liquid asphalt burns. The 6-minute video can be viewed [HERE](#).

The video is a shorter version of AI's award-winning safety training video that demonstrates scenarios in asphalt refineries, terminals, and laboratories where liquid asphalt burns can take place. The film illustrates how important it is for workers to quickly place affected areas underwater. An extended version with interviews from burn survivors is available via the Asphalt Institute's website [HERE](#), as well as other educational material related to the topic.



→ AB5 information and resources assembled on state workforce agency website

One of the most controversial bills passed in the last year was AB5, which made widespread changes to the way workers, particularly independent contractors, are classified in California.

The bill, authored by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, has already attracted a lawsuit by the California Trucking Association and plenty of criticism from everything from freelance writers and photographers to newspaper delivery workers. The law is scheduled to take effect Jan. 1. The provisions impacting independent truckers are of particular interest to the construction and materials industry.

The State Labor and Workforce Development Agency has put together a website of information about the new law, including a "Frequently Asked Questions" area for both workers and employers. The website can be accessed [HERE](#).

Numerous interest groups are already ramping up lobbying activity at the state Capitol seeking fixes or clarifications in the new law, which is destined to be a hot topic in Sacramento in 2020.



CalAPA produces a highly regarded magazine, *California Asphalt*, and an annual membership directory. To view current and past issues of the magazine, click [HERE](#). For advertising sales information, click [HERE](#) or call Kerry Hoover with Construction Marketing Services at (909) 772-3121.

STAY INFORMED



Click [HERE](#) to receive *California Asphalt Insider* each week via e-mail FREE!
Or visit our website at: www.calapa.net

GET CERTIFIED!



The Caltrans-industry Joint Training & Certification Program (JTCP) for materials technicians is holding classes in Northern and Southern California. Click [HERE](#) to visit our JTCP resource page to learn more.



→ Tech Term of the Week

Each week we highlight a word, acronym or other reference commonly used in the asphalt pavement industry in California.

FLEXIBLE PAVEMENT: A pavement structure that maintains intimate contact with and distributes loads to the sub-grade and depends on aggregate interlock, particle friction, and cohesion for stability. Asphalt or bituminous concrete pavements are often referred to as flexible pavements, while concrete pavements are generally referred to as rigid pavements.

→ Paving Pointer of the Week

Each week we highlight a key point or best practice of interest to asphalt paving crews, inspectors and others working in the field. We welcome suggestions. More tips can be found in our Asphalt Parking Lot Construction Checklist [HERE](#).

COMPACTION: Check pavement temperature before compaction begins. Don't rely solely on an infrared temperature gauge. Have a probe thermometer on hand to check the internal temperature of the mat. The ability to achieve proper compaction requires a mat temperature of 175 degrees or greater. Do not let roller operators park equipment on the fresh mat while compaction is ongoing.

→ Quote of the Week

"The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude towards them."

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

We hope you enjoy CalAPA's *Asphalt Insider*. We are committed to providing you with the most up-to-date information on technical issues, regulation, news, analysis, events and trends in California that may impact the asphalt pavement industry. Click [HERE](#) to contact us with any comments or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Snyder, CAE

Executive Director

California Asphalt Pavement Association (CalAPA)®

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LEARN!

We can bring CalAPA's popular training classes to your facility at a date and time convenient to you! Click [HERE](#) to view our "hosted" training class flier, or contact CalAPA at (916) 791-5044 for details. This service is available to public agencies and CalAPA members only.



Learn more about work-zone safety [HERE](#).

The *California Asphalt Insider* is an official publication of the California Asphalt Pavement Association. For more information or to inquire about membership, call (916) 791-5044, or click [HERE](#) to send us an e-mail.
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