ILLINOIS CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION

67th

ILLINOIS BITUMINOUS PAVING CONFERENCE



DEC. 8–9, 2026

I Hotel and Conference Center
Champaign, Illinois

67TH ILLINOIS BITUMINOUS PAVING CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE AGENDA

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

Location: I Hotel and Conference Center | Heritage Hall

3:30 – 5:00 P.M.

Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs): Upcoming IDOT Specifications, Current Progress, and Stakeholder Feedback

Lara Diab, ICT/Illinois: EPD Fundamentals and Technical Background
Kelly Senger, IDOT: Introduction to IDOT's LCTM and EPD Initiative
Charlotte Ochoa, S.T.A.T.E. Testing: Chicago DOT and Illinois Tollway EPD Initiative
Lianna Miller, WAP Sustainability Consulting: EPD from an Industry Perspective — NAPA Ecolabel, Simulator, and Optimizer
Imad Al-Qadi, ICT/Illinois: Stakeholder Discussion and Feedback

5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Reception

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Location: I Hotel and Conference Center | Heritage Hall

7:30 – 8:00 A.M.

Registration

Continental Breakfast Available

8:00 – 8:10 A.M.

Welcoming Remarks

Imad Al-Qadi, Conference Chair, ICT/Illinois

8:10 – 8:30 A.M.

IDOT Update

Justan Mann, IDOT

8:30 – 8:45 A.M.

Illinois Tollway Update

Dan Gancarz, Illinois Tollway

8:45 – 9:30 A.M.

Keynote Presentation: Warm-Mix Asphalt in Europe: Performance, Experience, and Lessons Learned

Malcolm Simms, MPA Asphalt, UK
Moderator: Imad Al-Qadi, ICT/Illinois

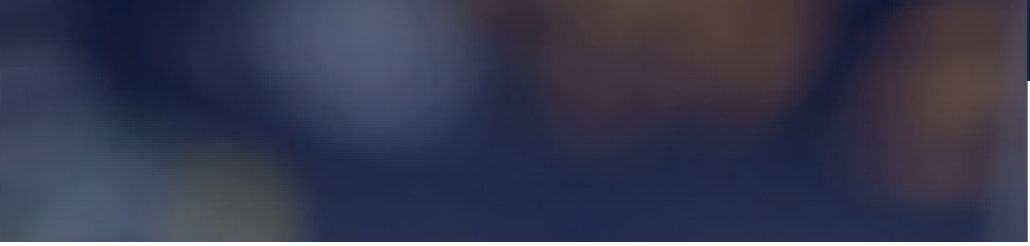
9:30 – 9:50 A.M.

Break

9:50 – 10:20 A.M.

Balanced Mix Design for Next-Generation Airport Pavements

Akash Bajaj, ICT/Illinois
Moderator: Kevin Burke, IAPA



10:20 – 10:50 A.M.
Use of AI in the Hot-Mix Asphalt Industry
Mike Copeland, Idaho DOT
Moderator: Kevin Burke, IAPA

10:50 – 11:20 A.M.
Recovered Performance-Grade from IDOT/CDOT/Tollway Mixes
Dan Gancarz, Illinois Tollway
Steve Worsfold, S.T.A.T.E. Testing
Moderator: John Lynch, Iroquois Paving

11:20 – 11:50 A.M.
Trichloroethylene: Current Status and Future of Binder Extraction
Ramez Hajj, ICT/Illinois
Kelly Senger, IDOT
Moderator: John Lynch, Iroquois Paving

11:50 – 12:05 P.M.
Awards
Moderators: Brian Hill, IDOT; Kevin Burke, IAPA

12:05 – 1:00 P.M.
Lunch

1:00 – 1:30 P.M.
Latest Advancements in Paving Equipment Technology and Future Directions
Craig Lamarque, Wirtgen America
Moderator: Jim Trost, Gallagher Asphalt

1:30 – 2:00 P.M.
Highway Bill Progress and Next Steps Heading Into the 120th Congress
Nile Elam, NAPA Government Affairs
Moderator: Jim Trost, Gallagher Asphalt

2:00 – 2:30 P.M.
Hot-Mix Asphalt Best Paving and Construction Practices
Pat Koester, Howell Paving, Inc.
Moderator: Lama Abufares, ICT/Illinois

2:30 – 3:00 P.M.
Highly Polymerized Asphalt
Jason Wielinski, Asphalt Institute
Moderator: John Senger, IDOT

3:00 – 3:30 P.M.
IDOT HMA Technical Update
Brian Hill, IDOT
Moderator: John Senger, IDOT

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SPEAKER BIOS

Workshop Speakers
Tuesday, December 8



Imad Al-Qadi is the Grainger Distinguished Chair in Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the director of the Illinois Center for Transportation. His research has led to the development of innovative technologies, testing protocols and advanced modeling methods for highway and airfield pavements. He is a registered professional engineer and a Distinguished Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.



Lara Diab is a doctoral candidate in civil and environmental engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on pavement sustainability, including life cycle assessment, life cycle cost analysis and transportation-related emissions. She develops analytical and web-based tools to support more sustainable pavement design and decision-making.



Lianna Miller specializes in environmental product declarations, life cycle assessment and impact benchmarking for construction materials. She works with pavement companies, industry associations and agencies to reduce environmental impacts. She currently leads a consulting group supporting low-carbon transportation materials at IDOT and has a background in mechanical and biomedical engineering.



Charlotte Ochoa is a sustainability engineer at S.T.A.T.E. Testing, supporting the Chicago Department of Transportation and Illinois Tollway on carbon reduction and benchmarking of concrete and asphalt mixtures. She previously advised the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on embodied carbon in construction and worked as a structural engineer. She holds civil and structural engineering degrees from Illinois Institute of Technology.

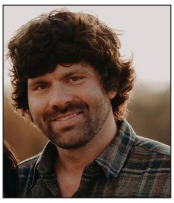


Kelly Senger is chief chemist at IDOT's Central Bureau of Materials, where she began her career in the Chemical Tests Unit in 1994. She contributes to state and national research and serves in leadership roles on committees and task forces of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

Conference Speakers
Wednesday, December 9



Akash Bajaj is a doctoral candidate in civil engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. His research with ICT, funded by the Federal Aviation Administration, addresses asphalt cracking, balanced mix design and stone-matrix asphalt at airports. He previously researched asphalt recycling agents at Texas A&M University and serves as research forum chair for the Academy of Pavement Science and Engineering.



Mike Copeland manages statewide construction and materials quality assurance for the Idaho Transportation Department. He has more than 20 years of experience in transportation construction, including asphalt pavements, materials testing and statistical acceptance. His recent research examines practical uses of data science and generative artificial intelligence in transportation, with attention to reliability and data integrity.



Nile Elam leads government affairs for the National Asphalt Pavement Association, addressing federal legislative, political and regulatory issues affecting the asphalt industry. He works with Congress, federal agencies and policymakers to explain the industry's economic role and keeps association members informed about Washington developments that could affect their businesses.



Dan Gancarz is a senior project engineer (materials) at the Illinois Tollway, managing pavement materials research, design and construction projects. He joined the Tollway in 2021 after consulting on its projects in the private sector. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



Ramez Hajj is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and asphalt materials lead at the Illinois Center for Transportation. He studies asphalt materials characterization and develops construction materials for next-generation flexible pavements. He holds civil engineering degrees from Virginia Tech and the University of Texas at Austin.



Brian Hill is the engineer of hot-mix asphalt, aggregate and chemical tests at the Illinois Department of Transportation in its Central Bureau of Materials. He joined IDOT in July 2016 and holds civil engineering degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



Pat Koester is senior vice president of production for Howell Paving, a hot-mix asphalt contractor in south-central Illinois. He oversees production, quality control and environmental compliance. He joined Howell in 1993 after working at IDOT District 7 and has held his current position since 2004. He also teaches IDOT quality assurance courses.



Craig Lamarque leads digital products at Wirtgen America, supporting Wirtgen Group's product offerings in North America. Before joining Wirtgen America, he spent 24 years at John Deere Construction. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and works from Wirtgen America's office near Nashville, Tennessee.



Justan Mann is deputy director in IDOT's Office of Highways Project Implementation. He joined IDOT's Bureau of Bridges and Structures in 1998 after working in heavy highway construction. He has more than 30 years of transportation experience, holds a master's degree in civil engineering from Southern Illinois University Carbondale and is a licensed professional and structural engineer in Illinois.



Malcolm Simms is director of MPA Asphalt, a position he has held since 2011. Originally from Northern Ireland, he has worked in site engineering and construction materials across the United Kingdom. He represents the industry on technical standards and public policy committees and is an honorary fellow of the Institute of Asphalt Technology.



Jason Wielinski joined the Asphalt Institute as a regional engineer in 2022. He serves eight states across the Midwest and Southeast, including Illinois. A registered professional engineer in Indiana, he holds civil engineering degrees from the University of Toledo and Auburn University.



Steve Worsfold is a senior materials engineer at S.T.A.T.E. Testing after a 32-year career at IDOT District 4. He spent 12 years in construction and 20 years as mixtures control engineer, overseeing concrete and asphalt materials. A 1991 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign graduate, he now works with transportation agencies including the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Illinois Tollway and Cook County.

MODERATOR BIOS



Lama Abufares is a research scientist at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She studies nondestructive pavement testing, including ground-penetrating radar, and applies signal processing, automation and machine learning to pavement evaluation. She supports the planned Illinois Autonomous and Connected Track (I-ACT) and other Illinois Center for Transportation initiatives.



Kevin Burke is the executive vice president of the Illinois Asphalt Pavement Association. Before joining IAPA, he spent 20 years at the Illinois Department of Transportation, serving in the Materials and Physical Research and Local Roads and Streets bureaus. His background includes extensive work in transportation materials, quality oversight and infrastructure support.



John Lynch is vice president of Iroquois Paving Corporation. He has worked as a laborer on the paving crew, in the quality control lab and as an estimator. Lynch serves on the company's board of directors, is an IAPA board member and is a former IAPA president.



John Senger is IDOT's bureau chief of research. Before joining IDOT, he worked as a consulting engineer on a range of infrastructure projects. Senger earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Bradley University.



Jim Trost is president of Gallagher Asphalt. He serves as the Illinois state advisor and vice chair of the North Central Region Advisory Council for the National Asphalt Pavement Association. He also serves on NAPA's and IAPA's boards of directors and on the IAPA Executive Committee.

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is scheduled for December 7–8, 2027, at the I Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign, Illinois