

Salina firm innovator in saving pavement

By Ron Wilson

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As we drive down the road, we see cracks and worn tracks on the highway - and then, Bang! We hit a big pothole. This is a sign of a road that has not been cared for. If only there was a process for restoring or preserving these roads. But now there is, thanks to a Kansas company which is benefitting roads in our state and around the world. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Scott Bergkamp is president of Bergkamp Inc. in Salina. He explained that this company is an innovator in pavement preservation. Specifically, the company is an in-

ternational leader in the design and manufacturing of asphalt preventive maintenance equipment.

The company began with Scott's parents, Mel and Marge Bergkamp, who came from rural Kansas roots. Marge is from Conway Springs, population 1,308 people, and Mel is from Pretty Prairie, population 610. Now, that's rural.

Mel came from the farm, but he wanted to pursue an education. He came to school at what is now K-State-Salina, got an engineering degree, and stayed in the Salina community. He opened a job shop to build various types of metal fabrication products. Scott said, "He'd build one of these and two of those and then go find something else to design and build."

One local customer wanted a

piece of road repaving equipment which the Bergkamps then designed. It worked so well that other contractors were interested in getting a similar machine. Eventually Bergkamp Inc. developed into a business with a specialty in pavement preservation equipment.

Today the business, which began with only Mel and Marge, employs some 65 people. Scott earned an electrical engineering degree at K-State and joined the company in 1998. Scott now serves as president. His brother Jason joined the company in May 2010. Mel and Marge are still involved as directors, so this is truly a family business.

Bergkamp Inc. has two main lines of products: One has to do with slurry seal and microsurfacing equipment for pavement preser-

vation, and the other has to do with pothole patchers for maintenance. Both products can be truck or trailer-mounted. The pothole patching is a way of remedying a problem once it has developed in a roadway, but the other equipment is for proactive preventive maintenance.

In other words, the Bergkamp units are used to seal the road surface and prevent moisture from seeping in while the road is still good. By applying a thin layer of crushed aggregate mixed with asphalt emulsion and some additives to the road surface, it preserves and extends the life of the roadway and creates a safer road for motorists.

Timing is key. Scott said, "If you can put the right treatment on the right road at the right time, you can avoid more expensive problems in

the future." He credits the state of Kansas with pursuing a proactive pavement preservation system for 20 years which has helped Kansas have good state roads compared to our neighbors. This process makes a wise investment for taxpayers in the long run.

Scott emphasizes quality products and customer service as priorities for the company. In fact, the only manufacturer in North America to produce a full-size continuous slurry seal and microsurfacing paver is Bergkamp Inc. of Salina.

The economic and safety benefits of these products appeal to customers across the United States and around the world. Bergkamp products have gone from coast to coast in the United States and to such places

as China, Russia, Chile, Argentina, Thailand, Belarus, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Ecuador, Peru, Angola, Nigeria and more. The website, www.bergkampinc.com, even comes in four languages: English, Espanol, Russian, and Chinese. Wow. Now I know what potholes look like in Chinese.

As we drive down the road, we look at the surface of the highway. Now we're thankful to see that the roadway is not marked by cracks and potholes, thanks to the processes provided by Bergkamp Inc. equipment. We salute Scott and Jason, Mel and Marge, and all those involved with Bergkamp Inc. for making a difference with their entrepreneurship and international innovation. For Kansas, creating this business was a smooth move.

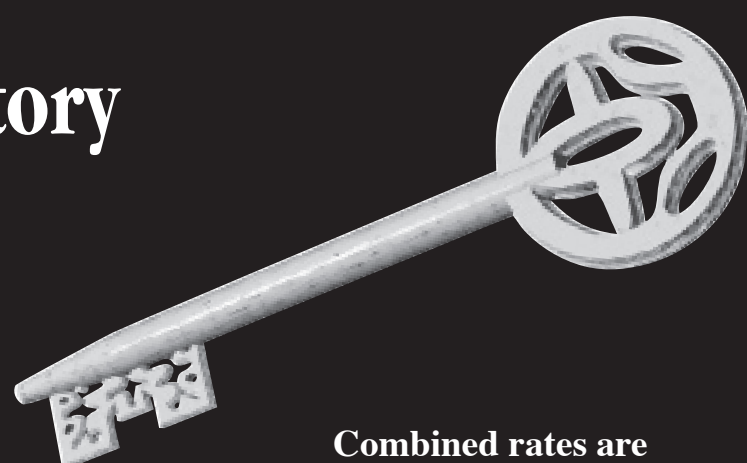
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