### BENEFICIAL USE OF SULPHUR

### IN

### SULPHUR-ASPHALT PAVEMENTS

Interim Report<br>Project RF 3644

For the Period

1 November 1977 to 30 October 1978

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### By

C. Y. Jacobs D. E. Newcomb D. Saylak B. M. Gallaway

Prepared for

The U. S. Bureau of Mines

And

The Sulphur Institute

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#### INTRODUCTION

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A definite interrelationship exists between the U.S. 77 Kenedy County field trials and the laboratory evaluations of binders composed of sulphur and asphalt as pure sulphur. Fiscal support for these related areas of research come from two sources. The Sulphur Institute and the U.S. Bureau of Mines share equally in funding of the Kenedy County part construction evaluation; whereas the U.S. Bureau of Mines at Boulder City, Nevada supports the related laboratory studies which deal with specific and specialized studies of the more basic properties of these combination binders. It therefore seems logical that these related efforts be reported together.

This is an interim report for the funding year's effort of testing and evaluation of the sand-asphalt-sulphur field trials on U.S. 77 in Kenedy County, Texas and the freeze-thaw and flexural testing of sulphur concrete. Therefore, this report consists of two parts. Part A pertains to data which have been collected on the Kenedy County field trials. This segment of the report contains all data collected through the trial testing period designated 1+12.

Part B is a summary of the support effort TTl is providing to the U.S. Bureau of Mines in the areas of freeze-thaw testing of sulphur concrete, and flexure fatigue testing of sulphur-recycled and sulphurasphalt concrete mixtures. The contractual agreement on this support effort will terminate in December 1978 at which time a final report will be prepared .

Part A

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I  $\overline{\phantom{a}}$ .. Post Construction Evaluation of Sand-Asphalt Sulphur Test Section, Kenedy County, Texas

#### Part A

#### Purpose:

To conduct post-construction testing and evaluation of a sandasphalt-sulphur (S-A-S) experimental test section located on U.S. 77 in Kenedy County, Texas, in District 21 of the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT).

### Background:

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During the month of April, 1977, a 3,000 foot section of roadway being constructed on U.S. 77 in Kenedy County, Texas, five miles south of Sarita was set aside for a demonstration of sand-asphalt-sulphur paving mixtures. The experimental sections were placed in the two north bound lanes between stations 1985+00 and 2015+00 in conjunction with Highway Project TQF 913(13) under the jurisdiction of District 21, Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. The pavement was constructed under a concept which was developed and patented by Shell Canada Limited. This concept involves the utilization of sulphur as a structuring agent in paving mixtures which contain poorly graded sands. These sands are plentiful in many areas of the United States and particularly along the Gulf Coast States.

Through efforts initiated by the Sulphur Institute, and co-sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) has, during the past five years, conducted an extensive laboratory program to verify the sand-asphalt-sulphur concept developed by Shell Canada. This effort is directed toward introducing the use of sulphur in asphaltic concrete to United States highway agencies. The construction

of this test section represents the next stage of verification through field evaluation.

A construction report describing the details of design and placement of the test section is available upon request. The report includes details of materials, mix designs, equipment, materials handling, quality control, and evolved gas analyses [1].

Upon completion of the test sections, cores were obtained by District 21 personnel and a series of tests was run [2]. Data were processed and a report was prepared. This testing period was designated as initial (I). At six month intervals following construction, TTI personnel took cores and performed a series of tests on these samples. During the same six month intervals SDHPT personnel collected field data in the form of Dynaflect deflections, Mays Ride Meter roughness measurements, and visual distress observations. Both in-situ testing and core testing are performed in accordance with the Test Matrix presented in Figure 1-A. Location of the cores within the test sections was established by station numbers. A schematic of the test sections is presented in Figure 2A.

### Test Results

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The results of the I+l2 core testing are reported in Table 1-A. Tables 2-A(l) and 2-A(2) compares the results of core testing from the I, 1+6, and I+l2 testing periods. Specific methods of testing were in accordance with the following:



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 $\mathcal{L}(\mathbf{v}) = \mathbf{v}$ 

()Loadometer Survey, 1-Week Duration

 $\mathbf{A}^{(k+1)}$  and the set of the

 $\Delta$  Evaluations on Both Sand-Asphalt-Sulphur Mixes and Conventional Asphaltic Concrete Sections \* Initial Testing Performed One Week After Pavement Opened To Traffic

\*\* Set of 3 Cores (minimum) at Each Test Section Per Sampling Period (Each Lane)

\*\*\* Continuous at 6 Month Intervals Between 18 and 36 Months

Figure 1-A. Testing Matrix For Sand-Asphalt-Sulphur Trial, US 77, Kenedy Co., Texas

 $r$   $\mathbf{r}$   $\mathbf{r}$   $\mathbf{r}$   $\mathbf{r}$   $\mathbf{r}$ 



Figure 2-A. Mineral Aggregate-Asphalt-Sulphur Research Project Kenedy County - Highway U.S. 77

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# Table 1-A Test Results For Initial +12 Testing Phase

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Table 2-A(l). Test Results From Field Cores For I, I+6, I+l2 Testing Periods.

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\* No Cores Available For Testing

t The mix design established for these systems was 6.2 weight percent asphalt and 13 weight percent sulphur. However, asphalt contents ranged from 5. 8 to 6. 8 weight percent. *(2]* 



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Table 2-A(2). Test Results From Field Cores For I, I+6, I+l2 Testing Periods.

 $\bullet$   $^{4+1}$  , and the set of the

\* No Cores Available For Testing

t The mix design established for these systems was 6.2 weight percent asphalt and 13 weight percent sulphur. However, asphalt contents ranged from 5.8 to 6.9 weight percent. [2]

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From Tables 2A(l) and 2A(2) it can be seen that the SAS mixtures are maintaining higher Marshall stability with lower Marshall flow as compared to the conventional asphaltic concrete sections. The Hveem stability values are lower for the conventional asphaltic concrete sections. The resilient moduli and splitting tensile strengths of the conventional AC sections are greater than those of the SAS sections. Tensile strength also seems to be increasing with time for all test sections .

SDHPT personnel took Dynaflect measurements in accordance with the procedure set forth by Scrivner and Moore [4]. A summary of the results of the STIF 2 computer treatment of the Dynaflect data is presented in Table 3-A. The differences between the data at !+6 and 1+12 are probably due to seasonal (temperature) and variation which would explain why the maximum deflection is higher for the I+l2 testing period (June, 1978) than the maximum deflection recorded for 1+6 (December, 1977).

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Table 4-A presents a summary of the Serviceability Index for each wheel path as computed from the Mays Ride Meter test performed by District 21 personnel. The Mays Ride Meter and its operations are described in Reference 5. The results from the initial testing period



TABLE 3-A. DYNAFLECT RESULTS AS COMPUTED BY STIF 2

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 $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}$ 

\* All Sections Have 1 Inch Asphaltic Concrete Wear Course And 8 Inch Lime Treated Subgrade.

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 $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\sum_{i=1}^{N} \frac{1}{i} \sum_{j=1}^{N} \frac{1}{j} \sum_{j=1$ 

### TABLE 4-A. MAYS METER\* TEST RESULTS FOR ROAD SERVICEABILITY INDEX

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SERVICEABILITY INDEX (SI)

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\* MAYS METER VEHICLE STRADDLED THE WHEEL PATHS.

are somewhat lower than those from the last two periods. This was probably caused by an instrumentation error in the measuring device. It may be noted that the Serviceability Index (SI) increases from I+6 to I+l2 for wheel path number 1. The reason for this could be that two wheels of the Mays Meter vehicle were on or near the shoulder during the I+6 testing period. This testing format makes the data from wheel path 4 suspect, also. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis only the data taken from the inside wheel paths (Nos. 2 and 3) during the I+6 and 1+12 testing periods will be considered.

The average serviceability index for all sections of wheel paths 2 and 3 was 4.0 during the 1+6 testing period with a range from 3.0 to 4.5. During the I+l2 testing period these wheel paths had an average SI of 3.8 with a range from 2.7 to 4.6. The 1+6 average SI for the sand-asphalt-sulphur sections (stations 1985+00 to 2000+00) was 3.7 ranging from 3.0 to 4.1 while the average SI for the conventional asphaltic concrete sections (stations 2000+00 to 2015+00) was 4.3 with a range from 4.0 to 4.5. For the 1+12 period the sand-asphalt-sulphur sections had an average SI of 3.5 ranging from 2.7 to 4.1 and the conventional asphaltic concrete sections' average SI was 4.3 with a range from 3.9 to 4.6. The average SI for U.S. highways in Texas is reported to be 3.6 with a standard deviation of 0.58 and a range from 0.5 to 4.9 [6].

It is evident from Table 4-A that the SI values for the sandasphalt-sulphur sections are somewhat lower than those for the conventional asphaltic concrete sections. This is evident even in the initial measurements which were taken one week after construction. The lower SI values for the sand-asphalt-sulphur sections are believed to be due

to inadequate construction control. The contractor had no previous experience with SAS mixtures or with the special equipment utilized in this type operation. The batch plant was old and in very poor condition. Temperature control was marginal and the pug mill was out of adjustment throughout the period when SAS was being produced. Operation of the lay down machine was such as to produce a poor quality riding surface. The machine stopped and started frequently and the screed temperature varied from too hot to too cold for proper placing of SAS mixtures.

A survey of cracking is presented in Table 5-A. It should be noted that almost all of the cracking has occured in the control section, and that the 4 inch AC section shows only a minute amount of distress.

It may be recalled that one of the original objectives of this field experiment was to compare the performance characteristics of hot-mix asphalt base with a paving material such as SAS. Hence, the U.S. 77 experimental section contains three subsections which utilize pure asphalt and graded aggregates for the base, and three subsections of SAS. The thickness of these subsections are 4, 7 and 10 inches all on 8 inches of lime stabilized subgrade. The pavement in the rest of the job (the control) consists of 10 inches of lime stabilized subgrade and 10 inches of caliche base. The entire pavement in this contract also has a l-inch surfacing of Type D Item 340 hot-mix.

Data on traffic analysis for highway design are given in Table 6-A. These are estimated quantities based on statistical information gathered by the SDHPT Austin Office Personnel.

# TABLE SA. RECORD OF VISUAL DISTRESS

 $\label{eq:2} \mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}$ 



I. . . . • ' •

OUTSIDE LANE

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# TABLE 5A. (Continued)

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# OUTSIDE LANE



 $\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{v}) = \mathcal{T}(\mathbf{v})$  , where  $\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{v}) = \mathcal{F}(\mathbf{v})$  , where  $\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{v}) = \mathcal{T}(\mathbf{v})$  , where  $\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{v}) = \mathcal{T}(\mathbf{v})$ 



# TABLE SA. (Continued)

# INSIDE LANE



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# TABLE 6-A. TRAFFIC ANALYSIS FOR HIGHWAY DESIGN

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### Conclusion:

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Although certain trends are emerging, it would be premature to draw any specific conclusions on the performance of one structural design with respect to the other at this point in time. The two thinner sections of the SAS and/or the black base would normally be expected to show distress in 3 to 6 years after construction. However, similar under designed sections on the U.S. 69 sulphur extended asphalt paving show no distress and these are three years old.

Part B

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Laboratory Support Efforts for the U. S.

Bureau of Mines

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### Purpose:

To provide additional laboratory testing for the U.S. Bureau of Mines research projects in which sulphur is being investigated as an additive to binders of sulphur recycled pavement mixtures and sulphur concrete.

#### Background:

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For the past three years TTI has been providing technical support to the U. S. Bureau of Mines' Metallurgy Laboratory in Boulder City, Nevada, in the area of sulphur recycled asphalt pavements and sulphur modified concretes. Specifically, this support has been in the form of freeze-thaw and flexure fatigue testing.

The past year's effort has included flexure fatigue testing for recycled Nellis Air Force Base material, recycled Boulder Highway material, recycled Los Angeles Freeway material and U.S. 95 sulphurasphalt. TTI has also conducted freeze-thaw testing on a number of sulphur concrete samples received from the Bureau of Mines.

### Test Results:

### Flexure Fatigue

Flexure fatigue results from this year's testing appears in Figure 1-B through 4-B. The fatigue testing apparatus which was used to obtain these results is described in Reference 7.

It can be seen in Figure 1-B that the recycled mixture containing 1.0% virgin asphalt and 0.5% Paxole [8] maintains a consistantly higher strain level than the other two designs in Boulder Highway, The



Figure 1-B. Fatigue Curves for Recycled Boulder Highway Material

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recycled mixture containing only 1.25% sulphur has a curve which roughly parallels the curve of asphalt and Paxole mixture at a lower strain. The curve of the 1.25% sulphur and 0.25% asphalt mixture shows a fatigue curve similar to that of the typical asphaltic concrete which starts at a higher strain but becomes more susceptible to fatigue with time than the other two designs.

Figure 2-B once again shows that the asphalt and Paxole mixture maintains a higher strain level than the other two mixture designs from Nellis Air Force Base. Also similar to Figure 1-B the mixture recycled with sulphur alone parallels that recycled with asphalt and Paxole at a lower strain level. Once again the mixture containing sulphur and virgin asphalt possesses about the same fatigue properties as typical asphaltic concrete.

The general fatigue characteristics of the materials from the recycled Los Angeles Freeway do not greatly differ from those already discussed. Figure 3-B shows that the Paxole and asphalt mixture can initially sustain a higher strain than the mixture recycled only with sulphur. In this case, however, the slope of the fatigue curve for the Paxole and asphalt mixture is steeper than those for the same material at Boulder City and Nellis A.F.B.

The results from the flexure fatigue testing of the U.S. 95 Sulphur-Asphalt test section at Boulder City, Nevada are shown in Figure 4-B. These results indicate that while the sulphur-asphalt mixtures can initially withstand less strain they are less susceptible to fatigue over a longer period of time than the conventional asphaltic concrete mixture.



Figure 2-B. Fatigue Curves for Recycled Nellis A.F.B. Material

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Figure 3-B. Fatigue Curves for Recycled Los Angeles Freeway Material.

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Figure 4-B. Fatigue Curves for Sulphur-Asphalt U.S. 95 Boulder City, Nevada.

### Freeze-Thaw Testing:

Results of the freeze-thaw and residual flexual strength testing of sulphur-concrete beams received from the U.S. Bureau of Mines appear in Table 1-B.

The freeze-thaw testing was conducted under the specifications described in ASTM C666, procedure A. The relative dynamic modulus of elasticity was calculated according to the equation

$$
P_{c} = n_1^2/n^2 \times 100
$$

where:  $P_c$  = relative dynamic modulus of elasticity after c cycles of freezing and thawing (%),

- n = fundamental transverse frequency at 0 cycles of freezing and thawing at dry weight (not SSD), and
- n<sub>l</sub> = fundamental transverse frequency after c cycles of freezing and thawing. [ 9]

This calculation of  $P_c$  is based on the assumption that the weight and dimensions of the specimens remain constant. This assumption did not hold true for the sulfur concrete specimens tested. However, since this test will be used to make comparisons of the relative dynamic moduli of different formulations,  $P_c$  is assumed to be adequate for the purpose. <sup>[9]</sup>

Graphs of relative dynamic modulus of elasticity versus time are shown in Figure 1-B through 11-B for the various compositions of samples.

The durability factor was calculated according to the equation

$$
DF = P_{C}N_{C}/M
$$

Tabel 1-B. Results from Freeze-Thaw and Residual Flexure Strength Test.

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 $\label{eq:3.1} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\sum_{i=1}^N\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\sum_{i=1}^N\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right)^2.$ 

 $\mathbb{R}^2$ 



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 582-F & 604-B, C, F. Figure 1-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 583-B, E & 605-A, C, D, E, F. Figure 2-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 585-A, B, C, D, E, F. Figure 3-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 586-A, B, C. Figure 4-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 587-A, B, C, D, E, F. Figure 5-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 588-A, B, C, D, E, F. Figure 6-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 625-E, F. Figure 7-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 526-E, F. Figure 8-B.



Figure 9-B. Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 628-A, C, E.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 629-A, D, E, F. Figure 10-B.



Relative Dynamic Modulus vs. Number of Freeze-Thaw Cycles<br>for Sample Nos. 630-B, C. Figure 11-B.

where: DF = durability factor of the specimen  $(\%)$ ,

 $P_{c}$  = relative dynamic modulus of elasticity at c cycles (%),

- $N_c$  = number of cycles at which P reaches the minimum value for discontinuing the test or the specified number of cycles at which the exposure is terminated, whichever is less, and
- $M =$  specified number of cycles at which the exposure was to [9] be terminated.

The following modifications were made in testing the sulfur concrete specimens:

1) regular tap water was used instead of lime water since these were not portland cement samples, and

2) failure was defined as being that point at which the samples reached 50% of their original dynamic modulus of elasticity as opposed to 60%, as prescribed by ASTM.

The flexure tests were conducted on the beams upon completion of the freeze-thaw tests. The beams, therefore, were in a deteriorated condition and were not the standard specimen length designated in ASTM C78-64. The residual flexural strengths of the beams were determined using third-point loading at a constant crosshead speed of 0.05 in./min.

The flexure stress was calculated by using the equation:

$$
\delta = \text{Mc}/I
$$

where:  $\delta$  = flexural strength (psi)

r

 $M =$  maximum moment (in.-lbs.)

 $c =$  distance from neutral axis to the extreme fiber (inches) I = moment of inertia (in.<sup>4</sup>)

The modulus of rupture was calculated using two separate equations:

1) If the fracture occurred within the middle third of the span length  $R = P1/bd^2$  was used where:

 $R =$  modulus of rupture (psi),

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- $P =$  maximum applied load indicated by the testing machine (lbs.),
- $1 = span$  length (gage length, inches),
- $b = average width of specimen (inches), and$
- $d =$  average depth of specimen (inches).

2) If the fracture occurred outside the middle third of the span length by not more than 5% of the span length  $\,$  R = 3Pa/bd $^2$  was used, where:

> a= distance between the line of fracture and the nearest support measured along the center line of the bottom surface of the beam (inches).

Since fracture did not occur outside the middle third of the span length by more than 5% of span length, none of the samples were discarded.

A diagram of the third point loading and typical beam cross-section are shown in Figure 12-B.





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Cross-section of beam



Conclusions:

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At this writing a series of freeze-thaw specemins are still under test. A proposal to continue the service effort into the next calender year was sent to the Bureau on  $4$  October 1978. This proposal also contained activity to further expand the data base and in-service performance predictions capability of sulfur-recycled asphalt pavements. The effort to date has been primarily directed to analyzing recycled materials taken from the Las Vegas area. The proposal task would evalute other materials and also examine the economics aspects of sulfur-recycling in the light of current materials cost trends and processing technology.

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