Rochester, NY - Standard operating procedure in most areas of the northeast when paving a gas station is to pave around the pumps and tanks with concrete. It makes good sense since gasoline spills do not deteriorate concrete and parked tanker trucks won’t sink into hot concrete. But then in most cases the owner chooses to pave the rest of the site in asphalt.

Back in late 2004 Dick Steamer’s HESS station opened for business sporting a new concrete pavement to the delight of both customers and owner. Since Rochester, NY is not normally a concrete parking lot market, the choice to go concrete was viewed by many as interesting, unique and out of the ordinary. When interviewed by a local paper about his choice of pavement Mr. Steamer was quoted as saying, “It’s amazing, customers have actually made it a point to comment on how attractive our new facility is. They like the clean look of the concrete pavement and have mentioned specifically that they feel more secure because at night its much brighter than the surrounding businesses. And during our last heat wave, I had people remark that our facility felt cooler to them.”

The ready mixed concrete producer on the project was Manitou Concrete, part of the NY/NJ Division of Oldcastle Materials. They worked closely with the engineer on the project Mike Montalto with Parrone Engineering, a local design firm. As Mike was no stranger to concrete paving, the real trick was to convince the owner Dick Steamer that it was worth the investment. The initial cost of the concrete pavement compared to what asphalt would have cost was several thousand dollars more, but Montalto made the case for life cycle cost savings since Steamer planned to own the facility for the foreseeable future. Mr. Steamer leases out another gas station in the area and was willing to pay more initially for concrete, citing not only the savings on maintenance costs but also the clean look of concrete.

When construction scheduling called for the concrete placement to begin in late November, both Manitou Concrete and the project engineer, Montalto worked together with the local concrete contractor Western Concrete to make sure there was a clear understanding of everyone’s responsibility. Cold weather concreting precautions were followed, as were using proper jointing and curing techniques to ensure a strong, durable and attractive concrete pavement.

When asked recently if he would choose concrete again, this station owner declared, “absolutely, it’s helped my business and now with the price of asphalt going higher and higher, it is even more attractive than four years ago when we built this.” “We have yet to spend one dime on maintenance of this facility yet each year must spend hundreds of dollars patching and sealing the asphalt on our other property.”

Submitted by Doug O’Neill—NRMCA