

A SALUTE TO AN **EHRBAR** CUSTOMER**AMERICAN PAVEMENT SPECIALISTS**

A rich family history of asphalt paving
has served this Danbury, Conn., firm well



Bill Stanley,
Co-owner/President



Colleen Stanley,
Co-owner/Office
Manager

Asphalt paving is in Bill Stanley's blood. He learned the trade from his dad, who learned it from an uncle who started a paving business back in the 1940s.

"Many family members were involved in that business and a number of them, including my dad, eventually started their own paving companies. Dad founded Road Master Paving in Burkeville, which he and my brother Mark still operate. I worked with them for many years and that's how I learned the trade."

In 1992, after 15 years of gaining experience and expertise with his dad and brother, Bill Jr. went out on his own.

"When I left to start my own company, American Pavement Specialists, I had a pick and shovel and my dad gave me a truck and a roller," Stanley noted. "I didn't have any employees. My first job was a driveway. I used my pick to pull the old driveway out. I threw it on the truck to haul away. I got the asphalt, dumped it, shoveled it, raked it and rolled it — all by myself — then I picked up my check."

"Paving was much different back then. It was hard, physical, grunt-labor type of work. By the time you were 50, your knees, back and shoulders were pretty much shot. Today, you still have to work hard, but the equipment is so much better, you no longer kill yourself physically."

Because Stanley has so many relatives in the paving business, and his wife, Colleen, is office manager and co-owner of American Pavement Specialists (she also serves on the Danbury, Conn., City Council), and because their four sons — Billy, Jack, Josh and Matt — all work at the company, paving talk dominates family dinners and get-togethers.

"The two youngest boys are still in college, but they work summers and will likely join us full time upon graduation," said Stanley. "There are many good things about all of us working together. We understand one another's problems. We almost always have at least one family member on a job to keep an eye on things. And we have the same schedules, so we're also able to spend a lot of time together away from work, which brings us closer. Of course, all that closeness can also cause friction. To keep that to a minimum, as we move forward, we'll put each of our sons in charge of a separate division. We don't want them butting heads and stepping on each other's toes."

"It's a family-owned business," Colleen explained. "We live it, work it, think about it, talk about it and dream about it. It's a constant. There's no escape. But it's fun too. We're not complaining. We enjoy it."

Commercial paving specialists

Based in Danbury, Conn., American Pavement Specialists does milling, grading and paving. The company does some municipal work as well as

(L-R) Josh, Jack, Billy and Matt Stanley work alongside their father, Bill Stanley, at American Pavement Specialists.



This American Pavement Specialists crew uses a Wirtgen W120F cold-milling machine on a job in Danbury, Conn. "We started milling last year to diversify, and it's been one of the best things we ever did," said President Bill Stanley. "Our Wirtgen mills are highly productive, and in my opinion, technologically superior to other milling machines."

some residential driveways, but most of what it does today is private commercial work.

"Our specialty is parking lots and small roads for industrial and retail clients, many of which are repeat customers," said Stanley. "I've been doing work for the same companies since day one — 20 years now. We take a lot of pride in giving customers a product that keeps them coming back. Our motto is, 'Once you try American Pavement Specialists, you'll never go anywhere else.' We're good at what we do and we take care to do it right. When we leave, the job is going to be just what we said it would be."

Stanley relies on a talented, versatile and experienced team to do the work that keeps customers coming back. In addition to family members, the company has about 10 employees and little-to-no turnover.

"I've still got the first guy I ever hired, Juan Cardenas, as well as the second and the third, Oscar Lemus and Oscar Fonseca," said Stanley. "Also, Fonseca's brothers, Mannie and Jose, work here. We have a top estimator in George Chauvin. Everybody is impressed the first time they see our guys on a job. I think the biggest compliment I ever got was from a competitor who thought we had 30 to 40 workers. I told him, 'No, there's 10 of us.' We're lean and mean and loyal to one another. We work hard and we get a lot done."

"All of our staff are like family," added Colleen. "They've been with us a long time. They work hard and they're high-quality people. Bill doesn't lay people off. He keeps them on, even when it slows down during the winter. His attitude is that we're all in it together."

American Pavement Specialists works the entire state of Connecticut, as well as Westchester County and the Bronx in New York.

Top equipment and unmatched support

In addition to his employees, Stanley relies on top equipment to produce timely, high-quality paving projects for his customers. Machines include two Wirtgen cold-milling machines (W120F and W35), three Hamm rollers (HD10, HD12 and HD13) and a Mauldin 413XT grader, all from Edward Ehrbar Inc.

"I love equipment," said Stanley. "I do research and study specs, and it looks to me as though Wirtgen, Hamm and Vögele technology is passing other manufacturers by like they're standing still. Things like Level Pro on our Wirtgen mills can get us to 'true level' so much faster that it can save us \$10,000 on a large paving job. The offset wheels on our Hamm rollers allow us to roll right up against anything, substantially cutting the amount of handwork. Our Hamm rollers also get us to compaction quickly and easily, and

This Hamm HD10C is one of American Pavement Specialists' three Hamm rollers. "Our Hamm rollers get us to compaction quickly and the end result is a smooth surface," said President Bill Stanley.

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American Pavement seeks paving perfection

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most important, the end result is a very smooth surface.

"If you're an equipment junkie like me, you can look at a machine and tell right away if it's user-friendly," he added. "I use the word 'tight' to describe a machine that's well-thought-out and well-made. Wirtgen products are tight. We've always used another brand of paver, but our next paver will likely be a Vögele for the same reasons we've turned to Wirtgen and Hamm."

As sold as he is on the products, Stanley says the real key for him is the relationship he has with Ehrbar, which opened a branch in Danbury in 2006.

"Ehrbar's support knocks the other guys right out of the park," said Stanley. "Whether we need an emergency repair or a replacement machine, Ehrbar understands what we need and they take care of us."

Jeff Weston (left) works closely with Ehrbar Sales Rep Bill Stanley on equipment and support issues. "We're very pleased with the support we get from Jeff and everybody at Ehrbar," said Stanley. "Their service knocks the other guys right out of the park."



The American Pavement Specialists team poses for a photo. "I think one of the biggest compliments I ever got was from a competitor who thought we had 30 to 40 employees," said President Bill Stanley. "I told him, 'No, we've got 10.'"



"Here's a good example. We bought a new machine that came in with a different engine than the one we wanted. Our Ehrbar salesman, Jeff Weston, said, 'No problem, they'll build you another one.' But there was going to be lag time and we needed the machine immediately for a job. So Jeff and Ehrbar called one of their other customers — a guy I'd never met — and he agreed to lend me his machine for as long as I needed. That literally saved me. You just don't get that kind of help from every dealer."

"From Jeff to Branch Manager Tony Olivieri to VP Matt Ahern, it seems that everybody at Ehrbar is on my side and working with me. They don't stall. They don't try to minimize issues. They come up with solutions that work for everybody. Ehrbar's like us. They do whatever it takes for their customer."

Record years

As it is elsewhere in the country, the slow economy has been a challenge, but American Pavement Specialists has succeeded in spite of it. Stanley says 2009 was the company's biggest year up to that time, then they surpassed that in 2010, and are on pace to set a new record this year.

"We're definitely growing. My plan is to keep everybody on the payroll during this tough economy, then when things turn around, we'll really be in a position to roll. I believe in getting good people and giving them the tools they need to do the job. Certainly, that means upgrading equipment. My philosophy is: easier plus faster equals better. Paving is hard work, but I'm always on the lookout for new equipment or techniques that will make it easier, and make us better."

Asked what separates American Pavement Specialists from other asphalt-paving contractors, Colleen Stanley gave full credit to her husband.

"I think it's the personal care and responsibility that Bill puts into each and every project. For example, we did a road job and the customer was fine with it — no complaints. But when Bill looked it over, he didn't feel it was representative of the type of work we do, so we did the whole thing over again. That's the way he is. He's a perfectionist. His attitude is that his name is on every American Pavement Specialists job, and if his name is on it, it's going to be done right." ■