



HIGH PERFORMANCE

28 DEGREES OF SPEED

SUNMOUNT PAVING CO. TAKES ON
THE HIGH-BANKING TURNS AT
ATLANTA MOTOR SPEEDWAY –
AND MAKES THEM EVEN HIGHER.

// We have used the same (custom mixed design) for the past 20 years because that's the surface NASCAR likes. //

– John Rauer

BY TY JOHNSON

MANAGING EDITOR

BILLED “THE FASTEST track in the south,” Atlanta Motor Speedway (AMS) will host two NASCAR races in 2022 on a new asphalt racing surface that promises to make for more excitement and fewer caution laps thanks largely in part to innovations from Eurovia’s Sunmount Paving.

John Rauer, Division Manager for Eurovia, explains that while the balanced mix design (BMD) of the new surface will maintain the same high performance racing surface as the pavement it’s replacing and other NASCAR tracks, there is more specialized equipment available than when his crews laid the outgoing asphalt in 1997.

“We updated all our equipment. You’re not using the same equipment you’ve been using for the past 20 years,” Rauer said. “You can imagine the technology back then and today as far as just the equipment.”

The reconfiguration of the 1.54-mile oval called for the introduction of a 28-degree bank that makes it the only one of its kind on the circuit, making for center of gravity challenges with the roller and paver that required real-time problem solving.

“It’s a unique project that not everybody can do,” he said. “Every area has its basic challenges. We just adjust on it and move it around accordingly for what we’re doing on that project. Before Atlanta, we had never paved a racetrack more than 24 degrees holding from the bottom.”

Rauer has overseen a number of these types of projects since

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SUNMOUNT PAVING CO.



The challenges of resurfacing Atlanta Motor Speedway required an all-hands-on-deck approach from Sunmount Paving Company. Division Manager John Rauer (left) is onsite to assist with ground-level operations.



Absent any off-the-shelf equipment options, custom fabrication was required to meet the demands of running heavy paving machinery on a 28-degree incline.

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Sunmount first paved Texas Motor Speedway in the mid-1990s.

Looking back on more than two decades of racetrack paving, Rauer chalks up his success in some part to geography.

"We got into the business because our plant's right behind the speedway," he said of the asphalt plant's Justin, Texas address, just miles northwest of Texas Motor Speedway within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. "There was another contractor that asked us if we wanted to take a shot at this. That's how we got started."

Rauer's crews have paved so many speedways, their track record reads like a tour of the greatest venues in stock car racing: Texas three times, the Homestead-Miami Speedway, Richmond Raceway in Virginia, Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina, Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama, Darlington Raceway in South Carolina, the Kansas Speedway, and Daytona International Speedway in Florida.



Sunmount Paving teams conduct daily Jobsite Safety Analysis (JSA) meetings in the predawn hours inside Atlanta Motor Speedway. Meetings help solidify the day's objectives and provide a warm-up opportunity through group Stretch-N-Flex activities.

"It just morphed into it," he said, looking back after paving at AMS concluded in the final quarter of 2021. "Because we were behind the Texas Motor Speedway, it went down the road from there."

Ever since then, Rauer says Sunmount has become the go-to contractor for banked tracks and all banked tracks on the circuit over 20 degrees.

"(AMS) will be the only mile-and-a-half greater than 24 degrees," he said.

Those new high-banked turns may be the upgrades most likely to get fans cheering, but beneath the track lies an open drainage layer (ODL) that will quietly rush rainwater

NASCAR Drivers Excited After Taking First Laps On All-New Atlanta Motor Speedway

Kurt Busch — a four-time winner at Atlanta, including the final race on the previous configuration last July — was immediately struck by the new characteristics of the nearly 62-year-old speedway.

"It was exciting to go out on track and be in a different environment, but yet here at Atlanta Motor Speedway," said Busch. "It's completely changed with the banking, the fresh asphalt. It's a clean slate."

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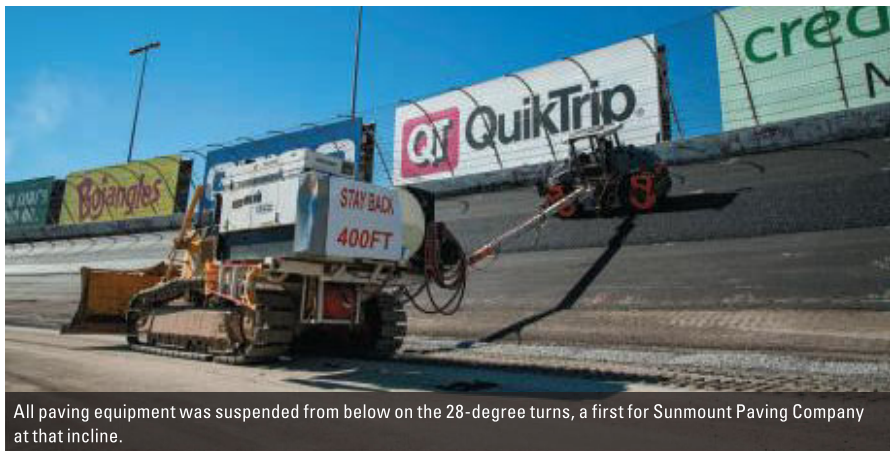
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All paving equipment was suspended from below on the 28-degree turns, a first for Sunmount Paving Company at that incline.

Open Drainage Layer

"The bottom line for our race fans is more time on track and less down time," said AMS Executive Vice President and General Manager Brandon Hutchison. "In the unfortunate circumstance we do get some type of weather, this ODL layer is going to quickly absorb the water as it hits the track and take it down to that drainage system. Which ultimately means we get back to racing quicker." Scan the QR code to see how it works.



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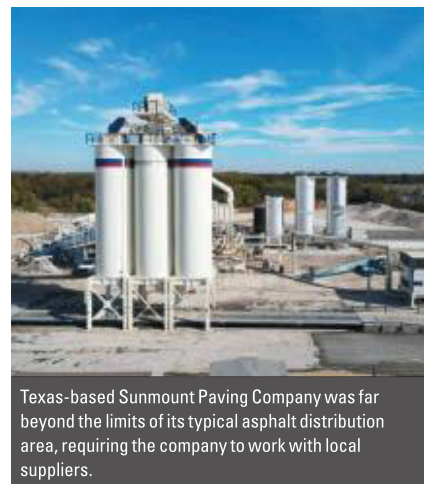
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away from the racing surface, meaning more racing and less waiting for the track to dry.

"The ODL's purpose is to dry the track faster when they have a rain event," Rauer explained. "It takes any ground water and drains it down so it doesn't try to find its way out of a joint or seam. That means no water spots on the track and with that drainage under the surface, you can dry the track faster."

Despite all of the new innovations the new track promises, the resurfacing has also inspired pangs of nostalgia for the outgoing asphalt. Recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) from onsite allows portions of that historic track to be repurposed, but not all of it, since fans have been clamoring for it.

"We have used the same (custom mixed design) for the past 20 years



Texas-based Sunmount Paving Company was far beyond the limits of its typical asphalt distribution area, requiring the company to work with local suppliers.

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because that's the surface NASCAR likes," Rauer explained. "They don't like change. We have a 9.5 millimeter, middle-of-the-road mix. It's more about consistency with the other tracks. We use the same mix design on every track for their tires so they are dealing with the same texture."

While members of the AMS Insiders Club received a souvenir chunk of the asphalt pavement as part of their ticket renewal package, AMS has since allowed Speedway Children's Charities (SCC) to sell off jars of asphalt and highly sought-after blocks from the start and finish lines to the public, with the benefits going toward the SCC Atlanta chapter.

Rauer said finishing a project like the AMS reconfiguration has given his employees a new appreciation for racing.

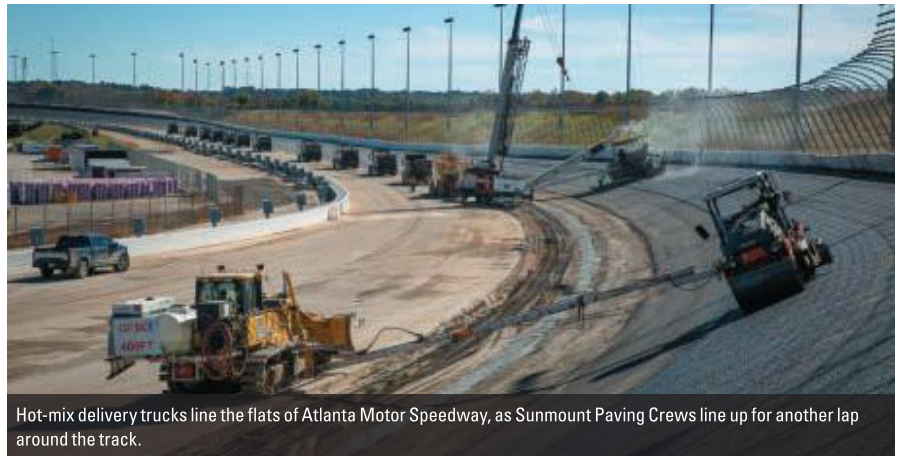
"They're all educated fans after doing that," he said. "Now they want to come and see what they did. They want to go into the stands and watch cars race on it."

"If they weren't NASCAR fans when they got there, they were when they left." 🏁

Want to see more from Sunmount Paving and Atlanta Motor Speedway?



- The NASCAR Cup Series comes to Atlanta Motor Speedway where drivers will take on a brand-new racing surface for the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 on March 20.
- NASCAR returns to AMS July 10 for the Quaker State 400.



Hot-mix delivery trucks line the flats of Atlanta Motor Speedway, as Sunmount Paving Crews line up for another lap around the track.

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