

## UNITED PAVING

### Saskatchewan firm specializes in providing small towns with exceptional paving service

In 2004, Ben Wilkinson, a farmer from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, decided he wanted a change of scenery and change of career, so he bought into an asphalt paving firm in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. He has since acquired 100 percent of the company and today is sole proprietor and President of United Paving.

"I'm proud to say that every year we've generated more business and gained more clients," said Wilkinson. "We now have a good list of individuals and communities that we work with regularly from one end of Saskatchewan to the other."

United Paving does highway maintenance, but its specialty is working for small towns.

"We have a unique relationship with many communities, such as Shaunavon, Carlyle, Redvers, Humboldt and others," he explained. "Every summer, they have a certain amount of money in their budgets set aside for paving projects. We come into town and go to work taking care of as many city streets as the budget will allow. In many cases, we don't even have to bid the work. They are great relationships built on trust, and that's a really great place to be."

United Paving is a family business. In addition to Ben, his wife, Cheryl, and son Justin are also heavily involved. Cheryl is a registered nurse who runs the company's safety program. Justin has a civil engineering degree and currently runs the back end of the paver. Wilkinson also relies heavily on Asphalt Plant Manager Wade Mitchell.

"We employ about two-dozen people during the paving season, many of whom come back year-after-year," said Wilkinson. "They do a

great job for us and are like extended family. One of the things I look for when hiring, in addition to paving skills, is personality. We live on the road and put in 12 to 14 hours a day around hot asphalt. Sometimes it's tough to be positive all day long, but our people manage to keep a good attitude and are very helpful. I'm grateful for them, because without them, I'm nothing."



Discover more

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**Owner Ben Wilkinson (right) works closely with his son Justin, who has a civil engineering degree and is the Paver Operator for United Paving.**

**United Paving uses a Vögele 5200-2 paver on a recent project in Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. "It's a great paver," said Paver Operator Justin Wilkinson. "As an operator, it makes me look good, which I appreciate."**



# United Paving strives to give personalized service

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With its own asphalt plant and trucks, Wilkinson says United Paving is very self-sufficient.

“When we’re in a pinch, we sub work out to Blackrock Paving, a Nipawin, Saskatchewan, firm owned by Jody Funk,” said Wilkinson. “They do great work and help us out in a lot of ways, but we do the vast majority of our work in-house. We’ve found that’s the best way to ensure a high-quality project every time. We take a lot of pride in delivering that for our customers.”

## Vögele Pavers and SMS Support

In order to deliver quality projects, United Paving recently turned to Vögele pavers and a Hamm roller from SMS Equipment in Regina and Sales Rep Clinton Templeton. The company has a Vögele Vision 5200-2 rubber track, high-speed paver that can lay down as much as 1,200 tonnes per hour; a Vögele Super 700 for smaller jobs, such as utility paving, road shoulders and widening, and for paving in confined areas; and a Hamm HD90 roller.

A United Paving operator uses a Hamm HD90 roller to compact asphalt. Owner Ben Wilkinson says he’s been very pleased with the performance of the Hamm roller, which he acquired largely because of the support he received from SMS Equipment. “The parts and service support we get from SMS is tremendous. It’s nice to be with a dealer we know is going to be there for us,” said Wilkinson.



“We saw Vögele pavers all over Saskatchewan,” said Justin Wilkinson. “We had heard good things about them, and we needed a paver, so we thought we should give the 5200-2 a try. We haven’t had it very long, but on the jobs we have used it, I’d say it’s a great paver. As an operator, it makes me look good, which I appreciate. As for the Super 700, it’s also really nice. Being small, it takes a little getting used to, but once you do, it’s actually a lot of fun to run.”

Ben Wilkinson says he’s been very pleased with the performance of the Vögele pavers and Hamm roller, which he says he acquired largely because of the support he received from SMS on a Wirtgen mill.

“We purchased the mill used from another source. We were mid-way through a good-size job and started having some issues. We called the salesman and the dealer, and nothing. The support was non-existent. We were in a real bind, so we called SMS, and they’ve been our ‘go-to’ dealer ever since. The parts and service support we get from Clint and SMS is tremendous. It’s nice to be with a dealer we know is going to be there for us.”

## Optimistic about what lies ahead

As Ben Wilkinson looks to the future, he likes what he sees. He says he was a little concerned going into this year, but now he’s almost fully scheduled through the end of the season.

“If we wanted to expand, we could probably have twice as many employees, add another plant. But I’m not very interested in doing that. I think if we start spreading ourselves too thin, we could lose the quality control we have now. We could also lose some of the personal touch we have with clients, which is one of the reasons these towns trust us like they do.

“We like to say, ‘What’s small for the big boys, is big for us.’ That’s why we treat all of our clients like they’re important – because to us, they are,” continued Ben. “As long as we keep taking care of these longtime customers, which means giving them personalized service and delivering high-quality paving projects at a fair price, I think we’ll be in good shape for years to come.” ■