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# Visions for Greater Volumes

Delegates attending the Quarry Products Association's Asphalt 98 conference in October were told the asphalt industry can develop and improve its market share beyond the millennium.

Tarmac Quarry Products Chief Operating Officer Bill Bolsover presented several key opportunities and challenges that asphalt producers and their suppliers must tackle to counteract falling sales volumes. Bolsover called for a positive approach to the industry's current predicament, which he said will only be averted if asphalt suppliers provide a better service to the customer and look to new markets for their products.

Our industry needs to change if it is to develop, said Bolsover. The output of asphalt in the UK has dropped by 30% since 1993, and the trend in the near future is likely to continue steadily downwards. We cannot rely on increases in road maintenance for a significant recovery.

But the future can be bright. If we produce better products and provide a better service to our

clients in conjunction with better cost controls, public relations and environmental practices, we can improve our businesses without chasing volumes.

Bolsover showed delegates the potential profits of adventurous marketing by demonstrating the gains that could be gleaned from other markets such as rail track ballast, flooring, agricultural uses and dams and reservoirs.

We have a product that is both flexible and rigid, hard wearing, waterproof and resistant to extreme changes in climate. If we can exploit just a small percentage of each alternative market, the opportunities for asphalt are very good.

Bolsover also called for greater investment in research and development, which he said will be crucial for developing new products and expanding into new markets in the future.

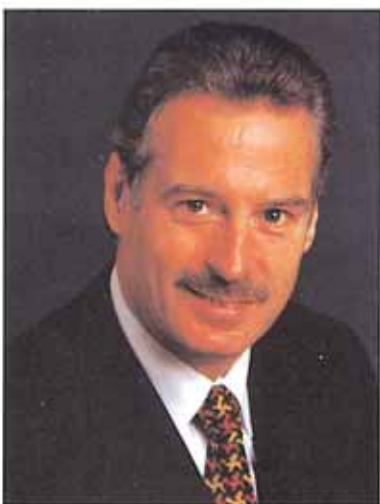
Customers should get a service more in tune with their needs, said Bolsover, with mobile and cold mix plants, mini deliveries and local collection outlets being the future

for asphalt supply. He also said suppliers must strive to change the image of their product to one of technical sophistication by effective branding so that the black stuff preconceptions may be wiped out and a foothold gained in other markets.

ARC Technical Director Chris Curtis gave a joint presentation with TQP's Technical Director Colin Loveday on highway maintenance, which was followed by an overview of current developments in the off-highway market by Bardon Aggregates Technical and Development Director Paul Phillips.

Curtis and Loveday emphasised the importance of customer focus in highway maintenance. The customer, they pointed out, is the road user who wants good roads well maintained with a minimum of disruption. We are now providing a better service to the public through the use of new innovative materials that have long life, are quick to lay and provide quieter and safer roads, said Curtis.

## Hunter new head for RBA



Willie Hunter

Willie Hunter, Sales and Marketing Director of bitumen producer Nynas UK AB, has taken over as Chairman of the Refined Bitumen Association (RBA), succeeding Tim Green from September.

Hunter has over 30 years experience in the road construction industry. After starting his career in the mining industry, Hunter moved to civil engineering in 1971 when he began working for Tarmac and later for Tarmac subsidiary Briggs Oil, which was acquired by Nynas AB in 1992.

The RBA is the trade association for the UK's six bitumen sup-

pliers who between them produce nearly all of the country's bitumen, 85 per cent of which is used in road maintenance and construction.

The RBA is a key voice in the road maintenance and construction industry. Under my chairmanship it will continue, among other activities, to campaign for better-maintained and safer roads. In addition, we will push for the widespread use of modern asphalts which ameliorate environmental problems such as traffic noise and provide value-added solutions for road maintenance, said Hunter.



TQP Chief Operating Officer Bill Bolsover called for a positive approach to counteract falling sales volumes at Asphalt 98.

Super Agency, Local Authority and Design, Build, Finance & Operate maintenance contracts have transferred responsibility for performance management to suppliers, and exposed clients to a minimum of risk, said Loveday. This and the use of technical back up, quality assurance and proprietary products is maximising client confidence, he added.

Clients are looking for value, safety and performance, said Phillips. In the off highway applications market, the partnership ideology has been used to develop specialist materials and risk/reward sharing relationships.

The necessary products are available, but securing the required funding for maintaining our roads is proving difficult. We will be addressing this problem by campaigning for the ring fencing of Government and local authority funds for road maintenance.

A Member of the Institute of Asphalt Technology and the Institution of Highways & Transportation and a Fellow of the Institute of Quarrying, Hunter was previously Chairman of the Road Emulsion Association (REAL) and a committee member of the Road Surface Dressing Association.

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