



RUSTON PAVING CO. INC.



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Virtual Corporate Presence

Ruston Paving Co. Inc. – a leading commercial asphalt paving and site work contractor – says it plans to continue growing steadily through taking on diverse projects into the future.

BY KATE BURROWS

When Ruston Paving Co. Inc. was founded in 1943, it served clients throughout the central New York region. Two generations of ownership later, the company has evolved into an organization serving much of the East Coast, while operating with a “virtual corporate presence,” throughout its five offices, President and CEO Mark Ruston says.

“Rather than house corporate-level management in one headquarters, we now have upper management spread throughout our various locations,” Ruston explains. “Even though it wasn’t a conscious decision of ours to operate this way, it works very well for our company.”

“It allows our offices to operate as independent, smaller companies while benefiting from the resources of a larger organization,” he adds.

Imaging Innovations

Three years ago, the commercial asphalt paving and site development contractor began an initiative to reduce paperwork by enhancing its companywide computer network.

“Now that we’re not operating under one roof anymore, it’s not as easy to move paperwork throughout the company,” he says. “Initially, we were [shipping] packages of paperwork on a daily basis between our offices.”

“We started reducing all paperwork by scanning everything into computers.

“All our paperwork has been converted to images that can spontaneously bounce between offices for approvals and review,” he adds.

“Although implementing the system into our work flow has been a challenge at times, we are well on our way to mastering the system.”

The system works especially well with corporate responsibility spread throughout its offices. “Our network ties into our virtual corporate presence,” Ruston explains.

“With everything stored on our server for any office to access, it’s not quite as important to have everyone working under one roof.

“This way, they can be working together

Ruston Paving Co. Inc.
www.rustonpaving.com
2006 sales: \$35 million+
Locations: New York, Virginia and North Carolina
Employees: 175
Services: Asphalt paving and site work
Mark Ruston, president and CEO: “Efficiency ... sets us apart while giving us a substantial cost advantage.”



on the same documents from multiple locations. The system is used throughout the company, by project managers, estimators and administration alike.”

Reputation for Success

According to Vice President Lang Butler, Ruston Paving is known for operating with a high level of professionalism and expertise throughout its markets.

“This is one of the main things our clients recognize about us,” according to Butler. “All of our managers have strong technical backgrounds in civil engineering, landscape architecture or construction management.”

The company requires its field workers to wear uniforms on the job sites. “We promote professionalism in everything we do,” Butler says.

“The major way we do this is to have our workers wear uniforms and operate clean equipment.

“Customers appreciate this because we have a professional appearance when we’re on-site.

“We get compliments on this all the time,” he adds.

Additionally – unlike many competing firms – the company does not employ a traditional sales force to grow its business, he says. “We always say our employees are our best salesmen,” Butler explains. “Our employees are the No. 1 reason that we get repeat business.”

Efficient and Effective

The company is also known for its ability to successfully complete complex projects at competitive prices.

“We have extremely productive crews,” Ruston explains.

“Their efficiency is something that sets us apart while giving us a substantial cost advantage.”

Constant Communication

Ruston Paving managers see that customers’ needs are met by staying in constant communication with them throughout the course of a project.

“I believe we leave a great impression on our customers because we do a great job of paying attention to their needs and following up with them after the project has been completed,” Butler says.

“Since many of our managers have technical backgrounds, we’re also good at helping clients expand their vision,” he continues.

“We often help them brainstorm to come up with the best ways to meet their needs and eventually deliver the product they’re looking for.”

Forward Thinking

The company has not been immune to the volatility of asphalt prices in recent years, and it has been examining possible solutions to the problem.

“It’s difficult to bid work and commit to long-term contracts with customers these days,” Ruston explains.

“Many suppliers are no longer willing to quote material prices based on a project. Instead, we all have to adapt to the price variability in commercial work.

“Fortunately, we’re not alone in this effort,” he continues.

“We’re always trying to educate our customers about why it’s necessary for them to accept an element of variability in our projects.”

Employee Growth

Through the years, Ruston Paving employees have enjoyed opportunities for internal growth and, as a result, the company boasts “an excellent retention rate,” Ruston says.

“We provide career paths for individuals with the desire to continually be challenged and take on new responsibilities.

“In the future, we want to continue to grow steadily, so we can keep creating opportunities for internal promotions for our employees.” ■