

A Matter of Time and Money

A new chute washing system increases driver efficiency.



By Rick Yelton

I STILL BELIEVE the concrete industry will recover from this economy faster than other industry segments. One reason is our investment in efficiency. Each year, producers finish the year more productive than they were at the beginning. For many producers, it's the small investment that often yields the greatest return. And we all enjoy taking these small steps.

I knew something was up when I saw Brad Burke smiling at World of Concrete in January. Burke has been involved in the concrete industry for many years. I learned of his commitment to this industry when we worked together several years ago while he was active in promoting concrete parking lots. When we spoke, I was pleased to learn that Burke has turned his attention to helping our industry take another step toward improving fleet productivity.

Burke is the frontman for a team of experts known as Innovative Concrete Solutions (ICS). This group of concrete savants is planning to bring new technology to our industry. In November 2010, ICS introduced the Chute Wash Recovery system, the first of hopefully many product launches.

The Chute Wash Recovery system offers producers a new approach to onsite clean-up. Capturing washwater

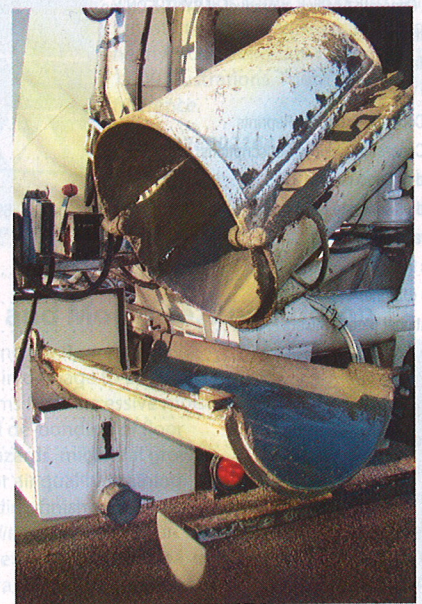
at a pour is becoming more common, as general contractors are increasingly pushing the responsibility back on producers. "We feel we have a method that enables producers to meet these new delivery requirements without sacrificing truck utilization," says Burke.

The system features a chassis-mounted collection tank. It is self-contained, requiring no additional buckets, pumps, or hoses. And the system's compact design adds little to the truck's tare weight.

The cleaning operation is just as simple. Drivers position chutes to direct a maximum of 25 gallons of washwater into the wash-collection tank. Upon return, drivers drain washwater into the plant's process water treatment system.

Fleet managers have found that the cleaning routine allows them to benchmark the period a driver needs to complete chute washing. In time studies performed around the country, Burke reports drivers typically complete the wash-down of a three-chute configuration in less than three and a half minutes. For a five-chute configuration, the washing process takes less than seven minutes.

With this benchmark data, dispatchers can better monitor truck utilization. Burke points out that truck status monitoring systems rarely track what happens between "finished pour" status and "return to plant" status. Using the industry average cost of \$1+ per minute to operate a ready-mix truck, a simple chute washing system can quickly provide



The Chute Wash Recovery System's compact design enables drivers to efficiently and safely perform onsite washing.

economic paybacks while helping meet environmental regulations.

It seems that ICS's new product has caught on. The patent-pending system is now being used by producers in more than 12 states. It has also drawn the attention of some mixer drum manufacturers. The Chute Wash Recovery system will be featured on a truck in the McNeilus display (Booth #S-9111) at the CONEXPO-CON/AGG exhibition later this month.

For more information on the new Chute Wash Recovery system, visit www.chutewash.com or contact Brad Burke, Innovative Concrete Solutions, at 952-388-1772 or bradleyburke@gmail.com.

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