

WATLOW 100-Year Stories

SPECIAL EDITION

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World Leader in Asphalt Paving Turns to Watlow® for Thermal Solutions

When road builders pave with asphalt, tough construction conditions pose several threats to peak performance of the screeds used to flatten, shape and smooth the driving surface.

Maintaining a uniform temperature over the entire screed plate – essential to the quality and density of the finished road – is a particular challenge. It is one that Caterpillar® (Cat®), the world's leading paving equipment maker, has turned to Watlow® to fulfill with its FIREBAR® flattened tubular heaters since 2008.

In June 2016, the CAT® Paving engineering team initiated the pursuit of several screed enhancements and approached Watlow for help. In addition to full-surface heat uniformity, CAT® Paving sought to eliminate moisture from reaching the connector, speed heating time for the screeds, safely produce higher temperatures, reduce service calls and make it easier to replace heaters in the field.

“In our work with customers, we find problems are the root of



improvement and innovation,” said Mike Ruhr, FIREBAR production engineering team leader at Watlow’s manufacturing center of excellence in Hannibal, Missouri. Watlow’s thermal systems knowledge enabled design breakthroughs. “Sales engineer Brad McDonnell brought his experience with our FIREBAR and sensor products together because he had seen similar problems with sensors in harsh, industrial environments. The trick with electricity is keeping moisture out. We adapted our high-tech sensor seal for use

with our FIREBAR in similar environments.”

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Mike Ruhr