



BREAKING INTO THE GREEN SCENE

For savvy contractors like Todd Weiher, recycling aggregate is not just a way to be environmentally responsible, but a way to persevere – and thrive – through some of the worst economic conditions in nearly a century.

Weiher, who got his start in the industry about 15 years ago, launched Advanced Rock Crushing in Escalon, Calif., in 2008, right before the economy plummeted to its bottom during The Great Recession. The low demand for contractors resulted in little initial work for the young company. But carving out a niche as a service-oriented, portable contractor capable of meeting the tightest specs and producing recycled products kept him in business until stimulus funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 kicked in.

“The first two years were tough – really tough,” Weiher said. “We struggled a lot, trying to find work. Nobody had money to do anything. But it started to come around [with stimulus money] and people are finally to the point of wanting to spend money again.”

For contractors around the country, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – which has paid out \$48 billion nationwide for transportation since its enactment in February 2009 – helped stimulate some public work. With more work available, it didn’t take long for Advanced Rock Crushing to take off and become one of the best-known recycling contractors in the state.

TAPPING INTO THE RECYCLING MARKET

Recycling aggregate continues to be a priority for California and most other states. Up to 100 percent of recycled concrete aggregate is now allowed for supporting pavement layers by Caltrans, California’s Department of Transportation. In 2010, 3.1 million tons of concrete and 12.5 million tons of asphalt were recycled in California. Recycled aggregates continue



to increase in popularity because they are cost effective (decreased landfill fees, transportation costs and disposal costs), environmentally friendly (saved landfill space, reduced long-haul transportation, conserved petroleum products and reduced energy use) and beneficial for local governments (saved money, reduced waste, high quality and performance), according to the California Construction and Industrial Minerals Association (CALCIMA).

With that in mind, forward-thinking entrepreneurs like Weiher have grown their businesses by investing in equipment that allows them to expand into new markets and handle a variety of jobs.

Weiher and his team of eight employees specialize in portable crushing and recycling, thanks to a full spread of KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens track-mounted equipment, including two FT4250 Impact Crushers, an FT2650 Jaw Crusher, a Global Track GT125 Jaw Crusher, an FT300DF Cone Crusher, a SuperStacker™ and a Global Track GT205S Screen. Because Weiher is capable of processing recycled materials efficiently and effectively, he has been able to secure long-term contracts in the state, which is known for its eco-friendly practices.

“When they tear down freeways or buildings, they have to take it somewhere,” Weiher said. “The state of California is serious about recycling. You can’t just take it to a landfill – someone is crushing that material, and Advanced Rock Crushing has been able to secure a lot of the work. We got a lot of it last year, and we’ve got a lot of it on the books for this year.”

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, approximately \$2.57 billion was appropriated to California for highways, local streets and roads, freight and passenger rail, and port infrastructure projects, with an additional \$1.07 billion for transit projects. Weiher’s portable spread of equipment allows him to handle nearly any type of work, from concrete and asphalt recycling, to recycling blocks, bricks and tiles, to natural or native rock crushing.

“Advanced Rock Crushing does it all,” Weiher says. “We do recycle, we’ve done freeways, we go into quarries and help them when they can’t make enough





product— be it asphalt, aggregates, whatever it might be. Anything anyone is going to need, we're going to try to make it. We work in all regions of California – border to border. If they want us to come, we go."

Advanced Rock Crushing's primary business comes from crushing $\frac{3}{4}$ " road base, which he produces using the FT4250 Impact Crusher, a self-contained, track-mounted crushing plant featuring an Andreas-style impact crusher and a 6' x 12', 2-deck screen. His impact crushers allow him to produce high-quality recycled asphalt pavement, or RAP, which must meet state specification before it can be used for any Caltrans projects.

"Eighty percent of what we do is recycling concrete and asphalt for base material," he said. "With our equipment, we haven't had a single problem meeting any specification."

A CAREFUL SELECTION

When it came to investing in equipment, Weiher sought out an equipment manufacturer who could provide high-production portable equipment that could move at a moment's notice. Weiher moves his FT4250 impact crushers at least 10 times per year all around the state, making portability critical.

"We chose our equipment in part because of the ease in setting up," he said. "We try to make it easy for our guys to move in, set up quick and get out. Our customers want rock, and we don't want to be sitting in a place for a long time. We try to make our equipment purchases based on quality and ease of setting up the plant."

In addition to portability and quality, Weiher feels strongly that his company aligns itself with a manufacturer that believes in service as strongly as Advanced Rock Crushing.

"The motto we live by is, 'Above all, service,'" Weiher said. "Service is huge, and the service that is provided by KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens is just above and beyond what anyone else is doing. Downtime costs you money. If you can call someone 24 hours a day and get an answer, that's just enormous in this line of business."

"Customers come back to us because of our service," he said. "We don't show up and crush rock and you don't see or hear from us again. We make sure we're on a personal level with our customers. When we leave a site, we make sure the only way the customer knows we were there is that their pile of concrete is gone and they have a base pile. We don't leave trash behind and we're very clean. Every customer we've ever worked for has called or in some way expressed to me how great it is to work with Advanced Rock Crushing."

Parts availability is important to Weiher as well, because it allows him to provide the best service to his customers.

"If you can't get the parts, you can't run," he said. "We have not had one issue with getting any part. I know that if it's not available right here in California, it's one day away. That's been really nice for us, and it's not something that we've been used to in the past with other manufacturers."

WORDS TO LIVE BY

For contractors seeking to break into the recycling

market or expand their business, Weiher offers a few words of advice.

"It's a tough business to break into," he said. "The overhead is enormous in this business. It's important to know what you are buying. If you get something that is dirt cheap, that means you're probably getting something that is dirt cheap in quality."

"You've got to do a lot of homework," he added. "This is a tough business. A lot of people think you just throw rocks at a crusher and it comes out the right size at the other end. But there's a lot more to it than that. There are a lot of people who have tried, and there are a lot of people who have failed. Our goal is to continue to grow and make our customers satisfied. We might not be the biggest company, but as a working standard, we're one of the best to work with."

