

James Collins

As a former research chemist with Shell Development Company, Collins was responsible for new market and new product development in polymer-modified asphalt during the mid-to-late 1980s and early 1990's. He worked as part of a small group within the larger Shell organization that was focused on developing polymer-modified asphalt technologies based on those that were being used in Europe during the time, with the goal of making the European technologies applicable in the United States.

"This was when the Strategic Highway Research program was underway, and asphalt modifiers were really growing in Europe," said Collins. "But, in the U.S., many were still opposed to using additives. Our group at Shell believed in the improved quality and cost performance benefits that polymer-modified asphalt could provide, and we used the quality benefits as a selling point."

Collins and his team worked closely with asphalt producers, contractors, Department of Transportation engineers and administrators, researchers and the sales and marketing teams at Shell to promote the benefits of modified asphalt, while also demonstrating the improved performance of modified asphalts by implementing highway test sections across the U.S.

In 1993, Collins took early retirement from Shell Development Company to start his own consulting business. Since then, he's provided research, development and consulting services to a wide variety of clients in the asphalt manufacturing, paving and roofing industries. His most notable efforts to date include his work to co-author a patent on the modified asphalt developed and implemented in Utah; his development of a binder that was used in the asphalt at a NASCAR track in Las Vegas; and his efforts to develop modified asphalt test sections in Alaska, a state which had been previously been seen as uncharted territory.

Today, Collins continues his consulting work and spends his free time travelling to visit his children and grandchildren, and working with his wife to develop a wildlife preserve on his 25-acre ranch in Central Texas.

"I never really thought I made that much of an impact on the modified asphalt industry, until I found out that I was being named to AMAP's Paving Hall of Fame," noted Collins. "This recognition is a true honor, and I'm grateful to AMAP for thinking of me."