

BMP LAPS IT UP AT FORMULA 1



When Chris Collins started BMP Specialist in June 2004, he didn't imagine that he would be sweeping for one of the biggest international sports events to hit the United States in years. "It's an honor," says Collins. "Being out there was intense, but I was really impressed how smooth everything went. There were no hiccups even though no one had worked together before. It was well organized."

Nine years ago, they started in erosion control, building silt fences and water quality ponds for new construction. "That's where BMP, or best management practices, comes from," says Collins. Erosion control is one of the components of BMP.

That led to home builders asking BMP to sweep up for them, which has led to bigger commercial clients. Collins bought his first sweeper in 2005 and has developed quite a niche market for himself. "We've excelled here in central Texas," says Collins. "When they call, we are Johnny-on-the-spot ensuring that it is up to standards. If an inspector drives by the site, then they will shut it down if there is too much dirt or debris on the streets."

Collins sweeps for the major construction companies around town. "When we first got into sweeping, business was booming," says Collins. "The big construction companies had sweepers then, but have since gotten rid of them and now hire us exclusively."

When Collins started looking at sweepers, he chose the Tymo Comdex 600 and has been very happy with them. Now he has three, two of which were used to sweep the track at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, TX for the Formula 1 race. Collins' drivers used the nylon brooms typical for airports and race tracks to sweep in a tandem pattern around the track. The regenerative air sweepers also got an American-themed wrap for the event.

Months before the event, they swept the track multiple times. "You probably have the most laps," jokes Chuck Aksland, vice president of motorsport operations for Circuit of the Americas. "We've done mostly clean up work leading up to the race," says Collins. "Then when they were striping, we swept." On the Wednesday leading up to the race, BMP worked at the track from noon until 6; then from 7 am to 6 pm Thursday through Sunday. They swept each morning, in between practices and qualifying races and each evening Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, they swept before, after and in between races.

With the American flag and eagle on the sweepers, they are sure to be the best looking construction site sweepers in town now that the Formula 1 race is over. "We had people from the stands taking pictures of the sweepers," says Collins. "I was really proud of the way they turned out."

Finding good drivers for those sweepers has been one of Collins' biggest challenges. "We sweep 24 hours a day," says Collins. "The drivers need to be on call 24/7. With a new \$175,000 sweeper, you need someone who will take care of that equipment."

Collins' sweepers are on a three-year replacement schedule. "I bought two around Christmas and the other one I got three months ago," says Collins. "So, they are usually under warranty



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— CHRIS COLLINS, BMP SPECIALIST

and anything big is sent to IDS in San Antonio. Either my operations manager or I work on smaller maintenance issues."

Fortunately for Collins, he has been able to retain his drivers. The average driver has been there for about five years. "We offer benefits and treat them more like a family member than just an employee."

However, the biggest challenge was when the crash came in 2007. "No amount of college prepares you to go through a recession," says Collins. Prior to that, homebuilders accounted for about 80 percent of his business, whereas now, they only account for 20-30 percent. "We do a lot more commercial work now such as new apartment complexes, malls, TXDOT, and all

of the major constructions companies like Angel Brothers, Hunter Industries, and Wheeler. We continue to do erosion control work as well."

BMP Specialists and it's 35 employees build and repair guard rails and pavers, build water quality ponds, plant revegetation, spray hydromulch, and sweep.

Collins has a good outlook towards the future. "I see the industry growing more and more in the central Texas region and around the Edwards Aquifer as construction grows," says Collins. "And as far as the paving industry goes, roads always need to be repaved."

"As far as the race goes, I had a year contract with COTA and I hope to do it again next year," says Collins. "The race was very exciting and action-packed even without any accidents." 🏆

Story by Jennifer Taylor

Resources

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