HELPING YOUR CLIENTS PROTECT THEIR INVESTMENT

Researchers at Boston's Northeastern University stunned the community by suggesting that global warming is reducing the service of the community's concrete structures. Their research found that the warmer winters, higher ambient temperatures, increased amounts of rain, and increased number of freeze/thaw cycles are causing concrete to carbonate at higher-than-predicted rates. Based on this report, researchers are now proposing that the concrete thickness above the reinforcement should be increased on new structures.

The results of the Northeastern University study served as a reminder that proper surface protection is an important element to every parking deck maintenance program. Since it's impractical to increase concrete thickness, structure owners need to assess how they can adjust their maintenance procedures to lessen carbonation. The best way to slow carbonation is to lessen their structures' exposure to moisture.

Moisture can enter the structure's concrete in many ways. Contractors should advise their clients to adopt a surface treatment program that protects the entire structure -- both vertical and horizontal surfaces. To do this, they should work with manufacturers that offer a full range of products. By selecting a one-source supplier, contractors are assured that material incompatibility will never be an issue.

The process starts when contractors select repair materials that are part of proven systems combatting rain and moisture. In the park deck industry, using products that waterproof decks to mitigate attacks from wind-blown rain and allow any entrapped moisture vapor to escape is an effective way to protect service life.