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Concrete Isn't the Same Ole Concrete This Year at the Indiana State Fair's Pathway to Water Quality Exhibit

Indianapolis – Did you know concrete can contribute to improving water quality? This year, fairgoers at the 2005 Indiana State Fair will find out just how environmentally important a special type of concrete can be.



Thanks to the Indiana Ready Mixed Concrete Association (IRMCA), a new **pervious** concrete walk installed at the Pathway to Water Quality Exhibit will demonstrate its environmental qualities. The exhibit, located on the northeast side of the Indiana State Fairgrounds, will feature the special concrete.

Essentially, pervious concrete is structural concrete pavement that "drinks" water. Water can pass through it rather than run off into storm drains carrying oil and other pollutants with it. Pervious concrete has a porous structure allowing rainwater to pass directly through the pavement, into a storage layer of stone underneath, then into the soil naturally. This specific type of concrete filters and cleans storm water before it reaches water stored beneath the earth.

"Protecting Indiana's water and soil is important to all Hoosiers," remarked Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, who also serves as Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Whether you are a farmer, engineer, or developer in our largest cities or smallest rural communities, we need to be looking for innovative ways to conserve Indiana's soil and water resources. Pervious concrete is an innovative step forward."

"The IRMCA is very excited to be a partner with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and other members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership to provide this addition to the Pathway to Water Quality," said Pat Kiel, Executive Director, Indiana Ready Mixed Concrete Association. "Now visitors will be able to see pervious concrete with its value as a storm water management system alternative that allows engineers, architects and those interested in soil, water and the environment to have options to traditional systems such as retention ponds currently being utilized in storm water management control."

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In addition to its importance to water quality and storm water management, the pervious concrete display at the fairgrounds has another great Indiana agriculture tie to it. An environmentally safe soybean water-repellent, THE BEAN™, was applied to the pervious concrete after it was poured to help protect the surface, especially during the curing period. THE BEAN™ is manufactured in Indiana from Indiana soybeans and is distributed by C² Products, Inc., located in Noblesville, Ind. THE BEAN™ is safe for plants and animals. The Hoosier state is a major producer of this agricultural commodity, ranking third in U.S. production last year.

The *Pathway to Water Quality* Exhibit has been a popular fixture at the fairgrounds since 1993. It is an excellent watershed demonstration site, showing how proper management practices at home, on the farm and in business can protect our soil and water resources. The exhibit contains practical displays and information for anyone who uses the land. The exhibit is managed by the Indiana Conservation Partnership under the director of the ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation. The partners also include the:

- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, and the
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In addition to the pervious concrete, a splash fountain demonstrates the absorption capabilities of the pervious concrete system (and provides a great way for fairgoers to cool off). Storm drains also were installed to demonstrate the difference in runoff between pervious and traditional concretes, while educating the public about urban storm water issues. Four concrete benches provide a rest spot, and a new pergola seating area includes ADA compliant accommodations in a shaded sitting area.

A new pervious concrete water fountain, rain garden watered by rooftop runoff, and rain barrel collecting rain water, also are new additions to the Pathway. The rain barrel and garden are sponsored by the Youngs Creek Watershed Project and IDEM's Office of Water Quality. They are easy and great conservation measures that can be incorporated into almost any home landscape.

Other partners who promote and maintain the PWQ exhibit include the Marion and Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Project WET, an education initiative under the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The Pathway exhibit will be open daily during the Indiana State Fair from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.

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