

Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

Memphis Mayor Touts Benefits of New Pothole-Fixing Machine.

Memphis has invested in the Pro-Patch machine, a truck that powers hydraulic cutting tools for removing section of road around potholes and carries heated asphalt mixed with tack.

Memphis' first Pro-Patch machine, a truck that powers hydraulic cutting tools for removing section of road around potholes and carries heated asphalt mixed with tack, costs about \$125,000. Wharton hopes to get two more in the coming months, and said the machines will "pay for themselves."

"We can't afford not to" get these machines, Wharton said. "Folks who come here looking to invest ride up and down these streets, and if it feels like they are riding a bucking bull they are going to go to Birmingham or Nashville."

The mayor also defended the purchases by saying, "It's a matter of quality of life. Quality of life does not always have to have a dollar figure."

A major factor that has slowed the filling of potholes has been a lack of money, said Director of Public Works Dwan L. Gilliom.

"Street operations are paid for by the general fund," he said. "Over the last four or five years it has been cut by as much as 30 percent. Only until now have we been able to secure these high-tech vehicles."

These new trucks will allow workers to repair up to 100 potholes a day, Gilliom said. These numbers are not higher than the current method of filling potholes, but the quality of the fix is superior, he explained.

"The patches they place down will be a permanent fix," Gilliom said. "This will allow us to extend the life of our streets."

On average, there are four dedicated crews driving around their specific quadrants of the city fixing potholes daily, said deputy director Robert Knecht.

"Last year we filled about 40,000 potholes," Knecht said. "This year we have averaged about 1,000 a week. Our crews do respond to calls, but the vast majority of the potholes filled are ones the drivers found while on the job."

In addition to purchasing the new trucks, the mayor also said the number of public works crews fixing potholes will double.

BY JONATHAN A. CAPRIEL, MCCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE / JUNE 5, 2014

©2014 The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)

