NDUSTRY UPDATE

Survey says: Geosynthetic walls for DOT jobs are on the rise (but relative costs are not)

A recent Dread University cost study consolidating the results of several surveys of state transportation engineers offers valuable insight regarding out variances of Department of Transportation (DOT) earth retaining walls. The report examined total wall installation costs gathered in 1973, 1981, 1988 and 1998 for four basic kinds of retaining walls system:

- · Gravity walls, e.g., reinforced concrete cantilever types
- · Crib/bin walls, both metal and concrete
- Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls using metal reinforcement
- Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls using geosynthetic reinforcement, e.g., geogrids and geotextiles



These comparative well costs show that while overall costs have risen, geosynthetic walls remain the least costly alternative."

THE COSTS OF GEOSYNTHETIC WALLS APPEAR TO BE RELATIVELY STABLE

The turky observed a gradual increase in wall const across all four types of structures, ranging from 33% to 71% over the part ton years and 21% to 33% over the part 25 years. Dedpite these increases, the relative position of the different types of walk has reminish the same over the 25 year point. That is, the goosynthetic wall, with the lowest cone per unit wall face areas, still remain the lace condy alternative. It also shows the low variation in case when analyzed by region. On the other end of the spectrum, gravity walls are constantly the most expentive option and also show the grazent variation in visco on the analyzed by region. The turk is a gravity, unit coasts in eading with the higher of the wall for all four types of walls studied.

GEOSYNTHETIC WALLS HAVE GAINED A FOOTHOLD IN THE INDUSTRY

In addition to cost findings favorable to the segmental retaining wall industry, the report documents a measurable increase in the acceptance of this type of structure the newcomer in the markerplace — for state DOT projects. Twenty-four of the 50 states report that they currently use MSE-geosyntheir walls for DOT projects.

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP FOR GEOSYNTHETIC WALLS

The implications of the GRI report are positive for the geosynthetic retaining wall industry in general, and Anchor Wall Systems in particular. Anchor blocks are



This DOT highway project along County Road 42 in control Minnesota features Ancher Diamond Pro*.

already a preferred product for many DOT projects. This report should serve to strengthen Anchor's position in a growing market.

*GRI Report #20, Earth Retaining Wall Costs in the USA. A full copy of the report may be obtained by contacting 215-895-1437.