Hungary: M3 motorway, leading to synergy
or Colas, 2004 looks as though it will be a positive year.

The unification of Europe officially took effect on May 1. It has strengthened the Group’s central European development strategy, which was originally launched after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

We will take this opportunity to acknowledge the constitution of a major democratic, economic and cultural body, and rejoice in the opening of frontiers that are a vector of Liberty and development of ideas and trade.

The new territories of the European Union still need a modern highway network to be developed and built. Colas will take part in this major project, on which it has already started.

Along with favorable growth opportunities in Europe come numerous others on the North American and Asian continents, as well as in the Indian Ocean.

Colas will be able to take advantage of the upturn in the world economy.

The time required to act has shortened under the impact of new technologies, and this means that every employee in the Group needs to focus more than ever on the preparatory phases of forecasting, analyzing and developing the projects that he or she leads or takes part in.

After all, before roads can be built, they have to be prepared upstream.
To improve the appearance of the Quai des Hollandais wharf in the yacht harbor, the Dunkerque town council has put in place a public lighting project involving new lampposts with directional lighting and a light-reflective road surface. The council decision-makers were attracted by Scintiflex for its quality and its... scintillating appearance! As a result, last year the Dunkerque office of Sreg Nord-Picardie applied 4,000 m² of Scintiflex. In addition, 2,500 m² of granite cobbles, granite curbstones and lane separators were laid.

From the Philippines to Mayotte, in Belgium and in all parts of France... a rapid trip around the world in words and pictures to see Colas jobsites, work in progress and finished projects.

In Mayotte, Pamandzi airport gets off the ground

To cope with the increase in air traffic at Pamandzi airport, the civil aviation authority decided to undertake extension and upgrade work. A joint venture consisting of Colas Mayotte and GTOL, the Reunion Island subsidiary, was awarded the contract to build a new 20,000 m² parking zone for long-haul jets, widen the runway from 28 meters to 45 meters and reinforce its structure. The contract required a team of 80 people, including members of Vialis (Somaro), who applied kerosene-resistant surfacing and runway markings.
In Grenoble, the buses see red

Since last October, public transport users in the city of Grenoble have been able to admire the new bus lanes leading to the Minatec technology center. The Grenoble office of Sacer Sud-Est suggested a colored Sacerfalt formulation and was awarded the contract. Over 800 metric tons of red Sacerfalt were applied over 6,000 m². The central lanes were treated with noise-reducing Miniphone asphalt, 1,000 metric tons of which were required to cover approximately 10,500 m². Work was performed under traffic reduced to a single lane and required 15 operators over a three-month period.

Making the RN98 safer

The RN98 highway is very popular with tourists crossing the Dom Forest, but it has had to undergo extensive road works. The first part of the contract was completed in December 2003, with a new 3-kilometer stretch through the town of Bormes-les-Mimosas involving 30,000 m² of surface treatment, including application of Colclair, a light-color asphalt mix. The project aims to improve traffic conditions and generally make the road much safer for users on this accident-prone stretch.

BRITAIN

E411, a refurbished roadway

JMV, a subsidiary of Screg Belgium, performed work last Fall on the E411 in the Ardennes. The continuous reinforced concrete roadway had badly deteriorated and required renewing over a 37-kilometer stretch between Aukon and Brussel. A five-centimeter thick layer of semi-coarse asphalt concrete was applied before 64,000 metric tons of asphalt mix. The contract, worth over €3 million, was performed under particularly difficult weather conditions and to a very tight maximum 50-day schedule.

FRANCE

The work was contracted by the French Ministry of Transport and Highways, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region and the Var Department, and the contract was worth €2 million. The Provence agency of Sacer Sud-Est carried out the work, with co-contracting of the excavation phase. The site was commenced in March 2003 and occupied 15 people. Traffic was diverted and then gradually restored as work progressed.

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FRANCE

The contract was honored thanks to extremely smooth organization. For the sake of efficiency, a mobile Screg Sud-Est mixing plant was installed on the site. The JMV teams were also able to use stationary plants belonging to Liège Enrobés and Enrosambre. Teams from Wegebo and Enrovia were also called in to help apply the asphalt mix.

BELGIUM

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The work was performed under traffic reduced to a single lane and required 15 operators over a three-month period.
Helary TP, the Brittany-based subsidiary of Colas Centre-Ouest, is currently working on the ST1 adjudication of the A28 Rouen-Alençon motorway link. The contract represents 1,000,000 m³ of earthworks over a 10-km stretch. The road layout goes through extremely varied geological terrain – shale, marl, gypsum, limestone, clay, and silt – all of which are highly sensitive to water. This necessitates prior treatment with some 11,000 metric tons of lime. In addition to the sensitive nature of the materials, the site also has another drawback. The distance between the supply center and the site work is roughly 4 kilometers.

Difficult work for Helary TP on the A28 motorway

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A new grip for the Bugatti circuit

The Le Mans motor racing circuit, home of the 24 Hours race, will undergo a major renovation project. The aim is to improve safety conditions and the facilities available at the track. Among the first tasks to be carried out is the refurbishment of the wearing course on the Bugatti circuit to improve surface grip. The Le Mans Sacer Atlantic agency was chosen to carry out the contract, which is worth €520,000. After planing off a 50,000 m² surface, 7,000 metric tons of porous asphalt concrete and reprefiling materials were applied to the 4,100 meter-long circuit. Sacerflex, a special formulation of selected aggregates and elastomer-modified bitumen, was used to deal with the problem of skid-resistance. Work was organized in shifts, with three continuous days needed to complete the operation on time. In all, the contract took one month and was finished at the start of 2004. During the last 24 Hours Le Mans race, Suzuki driver Vincent Philippe was able to appreciate the difference between the old and the new surface. “Driving on it was great, especially in the rain,” he reports. “We can now drive in the wet within 7 seconds of our lap times under dry conditions, while the times used to be nearly 20 seconds slower.”

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Ecosol – both economical and ecological

Screg Ile-de-France/Normandie uses the Ecosol process to recycle inert waste from civil engineering sites into materials for use in road construction. Among the recent Ecosol LH sites are the 200-car parking lot and the surrounding service roads of the Evry Trades Faculty building and the hub of the new Castorama home improvement store at Ballanvilliers.
The Paris Nord agency of Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie and the Seine-Saint-Denis/Val d’Oise agency of Screg Ile-de-France/Normandie worked together on the A115 motorway extension contract. Together, the teams have built a 3-kilometer 4-lane stretch between Taverny and Méry-sur-Oise in the Val d’Oise Department, as well as a ramp to the RN 184 highway. 40,000 m³ of cut-and-fill have been excavated, 50,000 m³ of treated sand laid and 60,000 metric tons of asphalt mix applied. A TSM 25 mobile mixing plant from Screg Ouest was specially installed on the site. Work lasted six months, with phases that were extremely tight, particularly when it came to building the ramps, as traffic on the RN 184 highway was maintained with no lane narrowing. Other Group subsidiaries also worked on the project.

Somaro supplied safety equipment and was in charge of re-directing traffic lanes. Viamark applied the road markings and SES produced the signs and signals. The showcase site was even visited by students from the ESTP public works engineering school.

FRANCE

Rejuvenation for the A75
Colas Midi-Méditerranée formed a consortium with Screg Sud-Est and Sacer Sud-Est to perform two road works contracts on the Clermont-Ferrand-Béziers A75 motorway. In the Aveyron Department, 100,000 m² of Colflex were applied by the Rodez agency. In the Lozère Department, the Thermodel process was used for the slow lane. A Bitulastic asphalt concrete wearing course was then applied to the roadway.
FRANCE  The Airbus A380 lands in Lévignac

In September 2003, the town of Lévignac-sur-Save in southwest France had an inconveniently large visitor passing through – the first full-size prototype parts of the new Airbus A380 passenger plane, which came from the port of Langon on their way to Toulouse. The inhabitants held their breath at the most critical moment of the journey, when the convoy carrying the giant components was a mere 20 cm away from the signs outside the shops. Before the convoy could get through, a certain amount of road works had to be carried out. The Toulouse agencies of Sacer Atlantique, Sicreg Sud-Ouest and Colas Sud-Ouest had to widen the road, refurbish the pavements and modify the Lévignac roundabouts. Work took place in a very tight timeframe for an urban project (only five months). The roads all remained open to traffic except for two sections. The convoys containing the production aircraft parts began in April.

FRANCE  Lacoste and waste

In 2002, Nicollin, a waste management company, decided to set up a technical landfill center for final waste at Corcelles-Perrières in the Department of Doubs. The Lacoste agency, a subsidiary of Sacer Paris-Nord-Est, performed all the work, in particular the 80,000 m$^3$ of landfill cell capacity (which can be expanded to 200,000 m$^3$). Located near the agency, the 9,000 m$^2$ project required three months of work. The team of twelve carried out the overall excavation, the cut-and-fill for the banks of the drainage ditch, laying of the leachate collection pipe and replanting of the site. The Besançon laboratory was responsible for monitoring the quality of the materials. The Société Jurassienne d’Entreprise (SJE) and the Vesoul agency supplied Lacoste with back-hoes, dumpers and a compactor. The contract also provided an opportunity to highlight the benefits of Coletanche waterproof membrane, which the customer particularly appreciated.

FRANCE  site-seeing

The Airbus A380 lands in Lévignac

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PHILIPPINES  SES sets sail for the Philippines

Malaysia, China and Australia are all countries where SES, a subsidiary of Somaro, has already made a name for itself, along with Egis Projects and Clemessy. Today, it is continuing to site-seeing

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Site-seeing

Malaysia, China and Australia are all countries where SES, a subsidiary of Somaro, has already made a name for itself, along with Egis Projects and Clemessy. Today, it is continuing to export its expertise, but this time in the direction of the Philippines. The grouping is working on refurbishment of the North Luzon Expressway, which runs north of Manila. SES is supplying 26 sign panels, 15 traffic counting and three weighing stations, and is also supplying start-up support. The traffic management equipment is being installed by Clemessy, which is supplying the software. The signs and stations were shipped by boat. Their design and manufacture required a year. All the equipment was approved in France by the customer. This contract, worth €830,000, forms part of the SES sales strategy of offering its customers a comprehensive signs, signals and traffic management product. The equipment will be brought into service in September.
**Novacol on the roads of Martinique**

In February and March 2004, Colas Martinique used the Novacol process to refurbish three sections of local roads on the island – the RD 15 near Marigot, the RD 2 near La Trinité and the RD 36 near Sainte-Luce. The cold, in-place recycling technique was chosen because it is environmentally friendly (lower energy consumption, elimination of landfilling of materials, savings in additional aggregates) and because it could solve a number of problems arising from the three sites. Because the roads have concrete drains, the level could not be raised. In addition, the bond had broken on the various layers of asphalt mix applied during successive maintenance jobs and finally, work had to be carried out on one lane at a time so as not to cut off traffic entirely. After curing, the 60,000 m² of regenerated roadway received thin asphalt or micro-asphalt overlay. These contracts, which came about through close collaboration between Colas Martinique and Colas Sud-Ouest, were subject to a feasibility study carried out according to the Technical Guide to In-Place Pavement Recycling, the first time in France that such a procedure has been implemented.

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**Surabaya airport contract takes off**

To meet the demands of increased air traffic, the international airport at Surabaya, on the northern coast of the island of Java, needs to double its capacity. This involves the construction of a taxiway, a parking zone for aircraft and an air terminal. Colas was awarded the contract for asphalt application. "We're working in phases, as we have to coordinate with other suppliers," observes Vincent Roubinet, Wasco Vice President. "We began in April with the parking zone. We will then build the taxiway and when the terminal is finished we will lay the final layer of asphalt mix on the access roads." The contract involves 40 operators who are producing and applying 160,000 metric tons of asphalt mix.

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**New look for the main square in Châtellerault**

Colas Centre-Ouest’s Châtellerault agency has totally refurbished the town’s central square with new paving, faced stone steps, curbs, street furniture and fountains. The contract, worth €2.5 million, required 20 operators over a six-month period. Schedules were extremely tight for a job of this size.
The magnificent Millau viaduct, the final section in the A75 motorway linking the Bourbonnais region in central France to the Mediterranean, will open to traffic in December 2004. This massive, 2,460 meter-long structure straddles the valley of the Tarn River at a height of 270 meters. Its cable-bearing pillars bring it to 340 meters, making it the highest bridge in the world. Screg Grands Travaux and Screg Sud-Ouest are both at work on this key contract. Since October 2003, teams of 40 operators have been working on the northern link to the deck, a section 23 km long. The site has required huge volumes – 420,000 metric tons of asphalt mix applied in four layers and 70,000 metric tons of untreated aggregates for the hard shoulders and median. Flawless organization was called for throughout, particularly during the winter period when the teams had to work in bad weather conditions including frost and wind. Work will be completed next September.

French

FRANCE

On the road across the Millau viaduct

The magnificent Millau viaduct, the final section in the A75 motorway linking the Bourbonnais region in central France to the Mediterranean, will open to traffic in December 2004. This massive, 2,460 meter-long structure straddles the valley of the Tarn River at a height of 270 meters. Its cable-bearing pillars bring it to 340 meters, making it the highest bridge in the world. Screg Grands Travaux and Screg Sud-Ouest are both at work on this key contract. Since October 2003, teams of 40 operators have been working on the northern link to the deck, a section 23 km long. The site has required huge volumes – 420,000 metric tons of asphalt mix applied in four layers and 70,000 metric tons of untreated aggregates for the hard shoulders and median. Flawless organization was called for throughout, particularly during the winter period when the teams had to work in bad weather conditions including frost and wind. Work will be completed next September.
Winning synergies for the Casino logistics hub

Screg Sud-Est, Sacer Sud-Est and Colas Rhône-Alpes teams have recently completed a major contract for the Casino supermarket group involving 80,000 m² of heavy roadway. Easydis, a subsidiary of Casino and a key French logistics player with 36 sites and over 870,000 m² of surface area, has constructed a new packaging and stock management hub in the Saint-Etienne region. The contract required 30 operators to apply 20,000 metric tons of asphalt mix and lay 10,000 linear meters of poured concrete curbs, all performed within a tight timeframe. The work was carried out in two phases — November and December 2003 and February and March 2004. Work was phased to allow teams to switch between the roadway site and the depot construction site.

Peugeot uses Sacersol

The PSA plant in Vesoul has extended its storage building and contracted to the local Sacer Paris-Nord-Est agency to perform floor-laying operations. These involved excavation of 22,380 m² of floor area which was then prepared to receive 2,000 metric tons of Sacersol percolated asphalt mix, a flooring material that is resistant to punctures and is particularly suited to industrial floors. A non-slip, dust-repellent epoxy resin, produced on-site, was then cold-applied to the surface.

FRANCE A new drainage network for Athis-Mons

The need to separate sewage from rainwater for treatment was the main reason for the drainage work carried out in the town of Athis-Mons, south of Paris. Until now, all wastewater, whatever its origin, went to the same water treatment plant. This inevitably led to problems such as saturation of the sewer collector, flooding and release of polluted water into the river. The local council therefore decided to build a separate network. New sewage-only collectors have been installed. The old collector is now used solely for rainwater and has been fitted with filtering wells and draining wells to allow part of the rainwater to filter back into the ground. Over 25 operators were needed to perform the work on this difficult site, which was carried out in an urban environment and required heavy equipment. Begun in November 2003, work had to be postponed because of bad weather in December. The first section of work was completed at the end of April.

The contract was awarded to Sacer Paris-Nord-Est not only because of its specialist knowledge and the quality of its products but also for its ability to keep to schedules and the availability of its teams. Work lasted five months, with a two-month halt during the winter because of bad weather. 12 operators worked on the site and were required to comply with the safety rules laid down by the PSA workplace health and safety plan. Work was carried out in coordination with the other trades present on-site to install fluid and electrical networks.
Alaska, roads in the extreme

Its geographic situation, bitter climate and vast scale mean that the extreme territory of Alaska gives a unique character to the activity of Group subsidiary Colaska, calling to mind the old pioneer spirit. Colaska’s profit centers are required to work on ambitious projects which aim to provide tourist zones with top-quality road infrastructures. We visit three of the largest current projects.
The Americans call Alaska the "last frontier." Its very name literally means the "big land" in Inuit. Alaska is synonymous with adventure, excessive size, vast spaces and preservation of nature. With a coastline thousands of kilometers long, mountains, glaciers, rivers, countless lakes, tundra, grizzly bears and caribou, this immense territory through which the Arctic Circle passes holds a wealth of natural resources — mineral ores (which attracted gold prospectors in bygone days), oil and natural gas, present in rich reserves and extracted under difficult and expensive conditions. The 49th State of the Union is also of great strategic importance, which explains the presence of large military bases. The Alaskan economy is mainly based on oil production, tourism, and government military support.

Alaska's colossal road projects are carried out with the greatest respect for the environment. At present, Colaska is working on an extension of Ketchikan's mountainside bypass, in southeastern Alaska, the realignment of a highway and a rail-road line in the cove of Bird Creek, near Anchorage, including reclaiming land from the sea, and the refurbishment and widening of a very busy road running along Caribou Creek, 110 miles north of Anchorage on Glenn Highway. Work primarily takes place in the summer months, from April through November. Site teams work up to 16 hours a day during this period to take maximum advantage of daylight and the thawed-out ground. The work is hard, but it attracts a band of seasonal workers who gather together each year.

Ketchikan, a mountainside project

Our first port of call is in Ketchikan, in the "pan-handl"e of southern Alaska. This small coastal town of 8,000 inhabitants, accessible only by boat and airplane, suffers from serious traffic problems on its local road network because of the massive inflow of tourists. In summer, cruise ships unload up to 12,000 tourists per day. In an attempt to ease town-center congestion and improve access for emergency services, the state of Alaska decided to build a new 2.5-kilometer mountainside road, known as "Third Avenue" — a major challenge for the teams responsible for building the new infrastructure overlooking the town.

Work started in 2000 (see Routes no. 9). "Drilling and mining operations began, to blast thousands of..."
of cubic meters of rock,” explains project manager Bill Muzika. “We had to take great care of the homes at the foot of the mountain. Fortunately, we performed the blasting operations in a manner, so that there were no falling rocks. One of the design and construction concerns for this project was the requirement to build the roadway through a landslide area. The state of Alaska decided to design a 45,000 m$^3$ roller compacted concrete containment dam. This dam would contain the landslide area and allow the roadway to be built on top of the dam. We manufactured the RCC using an onsite mobile plant, and poured it directly from a conveyor belt, avoiding the need to load and unload concrete trucks.”

The first section of the road was therefore built into the mountainside looking out over the sea, while the second section was built on top of the dam, which contains the landslide area and provides safety to the homes below. This project, worth €22 million to Colaska, will be completed in the summer, when the road is surfaced.

Reclaimed land
Some 1,500 kilometers north of Ketchikan, in a cove called Bird Creek about twenty kilometers from Anchorage, Colaska teams are trying to complete the earthworks for the Seward Highway project before the onset of winter. Once again, the layout of the site is unusual. Both the highway and a railroad run along the foot of a mountain. In the winter, they were both regularly submerged by snow from the avalanches that are frequent in this region. This used to be the cause of accidents and would lead to the infrastructures being closed to traffic – a particularly harmful state of affairs for the neighboring ski resort, Alyeska.

To solve this problem, the state of Alaska decided to re-locate both the highway and the railroad and to reclaim land from the sea. The contract is worth nearly €18 million.

“We started out by blasting the rock all the way along the highway, a few kilometers upstream of the site itself – in all, there was about a million cubic meters of rock evacuation,” recalls Colaska area manager Lloyd Melone, who comes from the state of Washington but works in Alaska through the summer season. “The excavation was then transported by rail straight to the site. The biggest boulders were used immediately as foundations for the reclaimed land. Ultimately, the site of the quarry will get turned into a parking lot for all the salmon fishermen who come to try their luck at Bird Creek – the best of them catch the fish with their bare hands!”

The ballast, ties and rails were laid by a subcontractor. It was possible to re-site the railroad before the cold weather struck. There was a lull in proceedings over the winter months, but when the fine weather came it was time to re-site the highway. The abandoned road will be converted into a bicycle path to be used during the summer months.

A challenge on Caribou Creek road
Although the majority of tourists reach Alaska by sea or air, there are some who prefer to go by car. The road connecting the west of Canada to Anchorage is very heavily used, which explains the wear it has suffered, a phenomenon aggravated by the extreme cold. The authorities therefore decided to undertake the refurbishment of Glenn Highway at Caribou Creek. The 13-kilometer section skirts the Matanuska glacier, which requires the addition of a heavy truck lane for uphill traffic. Colaska teams started work on the project in March 2003. The first phase consisted of preparing to widen the road by blasting the surrounding mountain slopes. Then a temporary wearing course was applied. But that...
Originally from Pennsylvania, where he once worked as a miner, Bill Muzika, aged 39, has lived in Juneau for the last five years. He is project manager at Ketchikan for Secon. With the Third Avenue site, Bill knows he has a really big challenge on his hands. “Among the day-to-day difficulties is the closeness of houses to the foot of the mountain,” explains Bill. “At all costs we have to avoid any accident occurring during the construction of the embankment. Protecting the environment is also essential: the flow of wastewater from the site has to be carefully monitored to ensure that it doesn’t pollute the river, which would be harmful to salmon laying eggs.” At the height of the summer, Bill and his teams are hard at work for up to fifteen hours a day. But with the onset of winter, Bill is able to spend time with his five children and enjoy the snow.

Shannon Hawden "fell into" civil works as a small child – his father founded QAP (Quality Asphalt Paving) in Anchorage in 1970. The company has since been acquired by Colas. Shannon takes pride in working with Colas, which understands their business and respects them. “The work we do is fascinating. We always work on new projects, starting from zero every time. Personally, what I like best are the huge excavation projects, like the one we did at Bird Creek.” Shannon has already passed on his enthusiasm to his own son...

After engineering studies in Washington State, Jon Fuglestad returned to Alaska, where he was born and raised. He joined QAP in 1988 and worked his way up until he became general manager. He now does double duty as a vice president of Colaska, as well as a vice president of Colas. Jon declares: “I love my work, because it is a permanent challenge. Every day is different, and I get to meet a lot of people. QAP now bids for pretty big contracts, and we can be proud that we are behind some fine achievements. Joining the Colas Group brings us benefits in terms of both safety and quality.”

The entire project is worth $37 million (€32 million), and is scheduled for completion in March 2005.

These projects are being carried out on behalf of the Alaska State Government, which is granted a fixed amount each year by the US federal government.
The extension of the M3 motorway is a project unlike any other for Colas Hungaria. It is the Hungarian subsidiary’s first motorway contract and the first time that all four of its agencies have worked side-by-side.
**CATCHING THE ROAD-BUILDING BUG**

Bálint Sass, site supervisor with Debmut, joined the company in 1997 as a foreman. He caught the road-building bug from his father. “When I was three, my father was already involved in the road-building industry,” he recalls. “When I grew up, I followed in his footsteps and became a civil engineer.”

“I was always interested in roads and building things,” he adds. “I enjoyed being part of a team and working on projects that are challenging and rewarding.”

Sass’s work with Debmut has been particularly rewarding. “I’ve worked on a number of projects that have been challenging and required a lot of hard work,” he says. “But the most rewarding experience was when we completed the M3 motorway extension in Hungary.”

**EXPERTISE**

Sass has been involved in road construction projects for many years. “I’ve worked on a variety of projects, from small local roads to major highways,” he says. “Each project is different, and I always enjoy learning new things.”

Sass’s work with Debmut has allowed him to develop his expertise in the field. “I’ve learned a lot about the technical aspects of road construction, as well as the importance of teamwork and communication,” he says. “I’ve also learned how to manage unexpected situations.”

**THE FUTURE**

Sass is excited about the future of road construction. “I believe that the industry will continue to develop and improve,” he says. “I’m looking forward to being part of that development.”

“Roads are the backbone of any country,” he adds. “They are essential for transportation and economic development.”

**THE ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The extension of the M3 motorway in Hungary will have a significant economic impact. “The economic impact in Hungary of the extension of the M3 will be enormous,” Sass says. “It will allow for faster and more efficient travel, which will benefit the local economy.”

Görbeháza will now only be two hours’ drive from Budapest. This will make it easier for people to travel to the city for work or leisure. It will also make it easier for businesses to transport goods and services.

**THE CHALLENGE OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION**

Road construction is a challenging field. “It requires a lot of hard work and dedication,” says Sass. “But the rewards are worth it.”

“I love being part of a team that is working together to build something that will benefit the public,” he says. “It’s a great feeling to see the project come to life.”

**THE FUTURE**

Sass is optimistic about the future of the road construction industry. “I believe that the industry will continue to develop and improve,” he says. “I’m looking forward to being part of that development.”

“Roads are the backbone of any country,” he adds. “They are essential for transportation and economic development.”

**REFERENCES**

hardest part was the language barrier,” explains Eric Arques, “but with the help of an interpreter we were able to translate the entire control panel into Hungarian and even write a little glossary and train an operator. Daily output was between 2,000 and 2,200 metric tons. The working hours are much longer than in France but the deadlines are less stressful. Our Hungarian colleagues have far fewer resources than we have, but they manage very well. The platform that they built for the plant was absolutely perfect!”

A model site
At the end of October 2003, just before the work was due to stop for the winter, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Peter Medgyessy, and the Transport Minister, István Csilag, were given a tour of the site. This was a particular tribute for the Colas Hungaria teams. “Perhaps it was because we are ahead of schedule compared to the other two motorways currently being built in Hungary by our competitors, but for us, this official visit served as encouragement to keep up the effort,” says Sándor Csifor. It is also a sign that this motorway is of vital interest to the Hungarian people, and this makes the teams even prouder to have participated in the project. The site is due to be handed over on September 15, 2004. It will number among the prestigious projects of Colas Hungaria and stand as a benchmark model in a country that still has many more kilometers of motorway to build.

Key Figures

> Colas Hungaria
1,600 employees in four companies: Alterra, Colas Eszakkö, Egut and Debmut
12 quarries (annual production: 2.7 million metric tons)
12 wholly-owned asphalt mix plants with annual production of 700,000 metric tons

> The M3 Project
12.7 km of roadway
1,300,000 m³ of earthworks
83,000 m³ of cement agglomerates
135,000 metric tons of asphalt
4 engineering structures

Lajos Pager
Built to last
“I am passionate about road building,” says Lajos Pager, principal site supervisor for Egut. “I could never deny it. I am very proud to be part of this motorway contract — it is truly a milestone in my career — but even surfacing 200 meters of a city street gives me the same satisfaction. It’s terribly gratifying to build something that is going to last. Whenever I find myself driving on a road that I have helped to build, I always slow down to explain to everyone who is with me what I did on the site myself. I like going back to old sites to see how the road is standing up over time.” Lajos has been doing this for over twenty years, the time that he has been with Egut. Since his company has been part of the Colas Group, he has been able to notice the difference. “Thanks to Colas, we are now working on a motorway project that will become a benchmark. Plant and machinery have also progressed a lot. Colas has brought us a lot, technically speaking. The M3 motorway is an excellent example; we were able to have the use of two plants that are normally in France.”
Axter, a plant for the 21st century

Since Fall 2003, the entire Axter production of waterproof membrane has been grouped on the site of the newly refurbished production facility at Courchelettes, near Douai in northern France. We tour one of the most modern membrane plants in Europe.
Back in 2001, Axter and Smac Acieroïd decided to modernize the production facilities for their bituminous waterproof membranes. Previously spread over two sites, Courchelettes and Précy-sur-Oise, the company’s entire production has now been transferred to the original plant site of Courchelettes. Total renovation of the plant installations began in September of the same year but with production continuing during renovation work. The refurbishment program included the construction of buildings and storage depots, installation of new equipment and machinery, modernization of industrial processes, a new R&D laboratory and installation of clean plant technology. In March 2002, the first process components were assembled. In August 2002, the first few square meters of membrane rolled off the new L2 production line. By Fall 2003, Axter had finished carrying out the most important phase of plant modernization.

A site with a history

The Courchelettes site has links with industry that stretch back a long way into the past. In 1863, Paix et Compagnie installed a refinery there. The crude oil was brought by boat from Pennsylvania as far as the port of Dunkerque, and then shipped to the plant up the Sensée Canal that runs alongside the site. The refinery sustained heavy damage during both World Wars. In 1920, a new industry started up that was the forerunner of Axter, which consisted of making waterproof roofing material out of felt and bitumen. The activity grew over the years, until the plant, which was owned by Gerland Etanchéité, was purchased in 1989 by CIB, a subsidiary of Smac Acieroïd, and Axter was established the following year.

We relied on Group expertise to design our own new installations.”
The main business of Axter, a subsidiary of Smac Acieroid, is the design, production and sale of bituminous waterproof membranes for the construction and civil engineering industry. In 2003, Axter recorded sales of €80 million, of which the waterproofing business accounts for 75%. The company’s annual production can attain 25 million m² of membrane, 40% of which is exported to some sixty countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Axter’s decision to group all its waterproof membrane production on the single site of the original Courchelettes plant signified the closure of the plant at Précy-sur-Oise. Starting in April 2001, a package of severance benefits was put into place, with a raft of measures that led to efficient and successful outplacement of most of the employees. The transfer also gave rise to the creation of 21 new jobs, bringing total workforce to 89.

It is now possible to go from production of one product to another without having to stop the lines. Some membranes include up to five different layers of binder.

Profile
AXTER, WATERPROOFING SPECIALIST
The company’s annual production can attain 25 million m² of membrane, 40% of which is exported to some sixty countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

HUMAN RESOURCES
STREAMLINING MEASURES
Axter designed the new installations for Courchelettes, with the support of Group expertise. “We built modern, fully automated production lines and integrated the special requirements for the entire range of waterproof products that we produce – there are over four hundred of them,” explains waterproof products manager Peter Fleischmann. “Like this we can go from production of one product to another without having to stop the lines and we can include up to five different layers of binder in the membranes.” There are three production lines, which function two at a time. The L1 line is for high-speed production of all types of membrane (production rate of up to 4,000 m²/hour), line L2 is for underlay and under-roof products (production rate of up to 3,000 m²/hour) and line L4, to be modernized at the end of 2004, is for...
metallic products and extra-long lengths with a production rate of up to 2,000 m²/hour.

... for an ultramodern plant

"Continuing our strategy of modernization," continues Peter Fleischmann, "we also decided to proceed with the automation of our mixing and packaging operations. In order to handle round-the-clock production, we had to provide plenty of storage space for raw materials and finished products and also computerize their handling."

In addition to actual production, the plant has built a new laboratory dedicated to new product development. It is also used for inspection and verification of raw materials and finished products.

NEW STANDARDS
The new plant meets current environmental standards. Already certified for compliance with ISO 9001 standards, it will soon receive ISO 14001 certification.

Another major benefit of the new plant is that it is compliant with current environmental standards. Already certified ISO 9001-2000, the installations should soon receive ISO 14001 certification as well. "As a result of the renovation work, our plant is now a facility fit for the 21st century," concludes Peter Fleischmann with satisfaction. "It is now one of the most modern waterproof membrane manufacturing plants in Europe."

"As a result of the ambitious refurbishment, our plant is now a facility fit for the 21st century and one of the most modern waterproof membrane manufacturing plants in Europe."

ROUTES No. 15 – June 2004
The 50th session of phase 1 of the Colas University training cycle ended last November. By the end of 2003, 940 Group employees had already taken this 4-week course, which is intended for all newly hired personnel — engineers, managers or technicians — after one year in the company. The training aims to give employees an overview of Group “basics”, of its different professions and to give everyone a chance to consolidate the experience they have acquired and start to build up their internal network. Following in the footsteps of France, the United States, West Africa and Switzerland have also set up their own Universities.

Durban was the venue for the 2003 World Road Congress.

The world’s road builders meet in Durban

The 22nd World Road Congress held in Durban, South Africa, in October 2003 by the World Road Association, was attended by 2,000 decision-makers, researchers and technicians from 120 countries. The Colas stand was visited by many delegates. Colas South Africa had also invited some 30 of its customers. This major event was an occasion for the Group to circulate its publication “Sustainable development – the ecological road of the future, a lifecycle analysis.”
Colas helps make history at Austerlitz

Part of the land on which the battle of Austerlitz was fought in 1805 is owned by Colas CZ, the Group’s Czech subsidiary, which willingly made the area available to the organizers of the annual commemoration of what is often called “The Battle of the Three Emperors” (French, Russian and Austrian). The commemoration takes place every November, when for three days the town of Austerlitz (called Slavkov in Czech) is immersed in this historic celebration. A thousand or so enthusiastic participants wearing period uniforms bivouacked, maneuvered, fired cannons and reconstituted the clash of Napoleonic troops with Russian and Austrian soldiers which took place in the morning of December 2, 1805. Over 10,000 spectators watched the event, which is unique in Europe. The reconstruction was followed by a ceremony of remembrance in front of the Peace Monument in which the French Ambassador to the Czech Republic, the Russian Federation Consul and the deputy Mayor of the town of Waterloo took part.

Beyond frontiers

Far from being militaristic or nationalist, the event, which has attracted an increasing number of local and European partners, aims to “sustain the historical conscience of the public and provide a permanent reminder of the fundamental value of life.” Austerlitz was one of the bloodiest battles of the 19th century, leaving over 20,000 dead on the battlefield. The organizers’ determination not to pander to nationalistic feelings was clear in the way that the roles of the “extras” were handed out, transcending national identities. French, Czech and Russian uniforms were worn randomly by modern-day Czechs, Russians and French.

A place for dialogue

For participants and spectators, the commemoration provides an opportunity to meet and exchange views at the moment that the European Union is opening up to the east. Many informal exchanges took place, as did lectures and debates led by academics from all over Europe on topics such as “European politics of the 19th century” and “Napoleon and religion.”

The three days of festivities ended, as is the custom, on a musical note with a parade of the “troops” from the historic center of the town of Austerlitz. The highlight of the evening was the firework display at the castle of Kounitz. It was a memorable occasion which already augurs well for next year’s 200th anniversary celebrations.
IRIS 2 – everybody on the job

At the end of March, all the Group’s French road subsidiaries successfully migrated to the new IT system, IRIS 2. “The project required almost 75 people working full time in 2003. It succeeded thanks to strong teamwork between corporate headquarters and the field,” Yves François, Chief Information Officer, proudly observes. Designed by Speig, the Group’s information technology subsidiary, IRIS 2 was rolled out by the regional subsidiaries. Project managers, functional coordinators, facilitators – everyone got involved to help bring about a successful changeover. IRIS 2, which replaces SYAD, is used by the support processes (human resources, accounting, plant management). “It took the teams from Speig and from head office 18 months to design the system and address the three vital areas of functional cover, reliability and performance,” explains Yves François. “The method we used was to separate out software development from deployment.”

Field testing
The method was first of all put through its paces in field testing by Colas Rhône-Alpes, and it proved effective. “The project was well prepared, with good timing and clearly identified tasks,” states Philippe Decamini, president of Colas Rhône-Alpes. “By the end of the first trial we were seeing results in line with what we were expecting.” For Renée Bonnet, payroll accountant at the Saint-Etienne Center, “IRIS 2 is a revolution. It is an enormous change but we got used to it really quickly and it is a good thing for the company and for all of us in our daily work.”

A high-performance, user-friendly system
To support rollout of the software, €1 million was spent on training. Over 400 sessions were organized and 1,600 people received training. Now users have a high-performance system. “The features of the system are close to those of SYAD, but they are more user-friendly,” explains Jean-Yves Lebon, functional coordinator for Screg Sud-Ouest human resources. Beyond the success of the operation and the positive human relations aspect, proven methodology has come out of this huge project, which has already been deployed by other entities such as the International Division East in the Caribbean, Morocco and the Indian Ocean with rollout of Colibri software, and by the Northern Europe Division for the rollout of CODA software.
In April 2003 the Mediterranean modified binder plant belonging to Colas Midi-Méditerranée started up its new Bituclair® production unit. Numerous players were involved in the project development, including the Group Research and Development department and the Central Research Laboratory’s mix design studies. The Group R&D department and the Central Research Laboratory’s mix design studies made it possible to select the best products for the composition of Bituclair®, to give it the required color characteristics.

The new Bituclair® production facility is located at Vitrolles.

The plant produces 300,000 units annually.

SES sees big

The plant at Chambourg-sur-Indre, near the city of Tours in Central France, is one of four production facilities belonging to Somaro subsidiary SES. Specializing in the production of road signs and directional panels, it produces 300,000 units annually. To meet the increase in demand, improve productivity and deliver better service to customers, SES decided to extend its site. Work began in May 2002, and lasted twelve months, during which time the plant continued to produce at its normal rate. The new 1,800 m² building was completed in May 2003. The reorganization of the facility also provided an opportunity to refurbish some of the equipment.

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Bituclair® gets a new production facility

In April 2003 the Mediterranean modified binder plant belonging to Colas Midi-Méditerranée started up its new Bituclair® production unit. Numerous players were involved in the project development, including the Group Research and Development department and the Central Research Laboratory at Magny-les-Hameaux, and both the technical and production departments of Colas Midi-Méditerranée.

The Group R&D department and the Central Research Laboratory’s mix design studies made it possible to select the best products for the composition of Bituclair®, to give it the required color characteristics and provide a full range of synthetic binders for road use. The Colas Midi-Méditerranée technical department carried out tests in its regional laboratory to validate feasibility of binder production in the laboratory and verify the technical characteristics. And the Colas Midi-Méditerranée production department tested production of Bituclair® in its Colflex modified binder plant.

Qualitative and quantified targets previously set were reached during the first year. Bituclair® is being produced for use in asphalt concrete, surface treatment emulsions and cold-mix asphalt. Its offer is being broadened to include packaging in solid form (in 5 or 25 kg quantities) for installations not equipped for liquid binder in bulk. The future is looking rosy for Bituclair®.
or more than ten years, the Group has dedicated part of its research and development effort to the fight against noise.

After three years of studies, Somaro, working with the Condensed Matter Physics Laboratory of the Ecole Polytechnique engineering school, has developed a new noise barrier. “In 1994, Somaro and Ecole Polytechnique set up a collaboration,” says Didier Peyrard (Somaro), “which has culminated in the development of a noise barrier that is far superior in terms of performance and environmental impact.”

The noise barrier is made from a wood-cement composite that contains pine wood chips, cement and water. It is lightweight, and its hollow structure absorbs low frequencies with a 68% higher rate of efficiency than a traditional noise barrier. The wall is made of wood-cement concrete, which is composed of pine chips mixed with cement. “The noise barrier was tested at the Colas research center in Magny-les-Hameaux,” continues Didier Peyrard. “A patent has been filed for it and Bernard Sapoval from the Ecole Polytechnique last year received the Siemens Grand Prix Award for Innovation in Applied Research.”

Coming with a highly competitive price tag and an excellent appearance, the fractal wall has been marketed in France since the start of this year by BRS subsidiaries and outside France under a Somaro brand license.

Sécurigrrip — Screg Sud-Est gets a grip

Roads that are in a poor condition or slippery because of bad weather are the cause of 15% of fatal road accidents. To improve road safety, the technical department of Screg Sud-Est, headed by Hervé Tessoneau, has developed a new patent road surfacing material – Sécurigrrip. This new product consists of a modified binder tack coat combined with very hard, small, calcined bauxite aggregates that are resistant to polishing. Sécurigrrip increases the number of friction points between the tires and the roadway, delivering better skid resistance. Applied in a very thin 4 mm coat, and highly resistant, Sécurigrrip is suitable for all types of traffic and road – highways, motorways, urban freeways – and is particularly recommended for dangerous areas. Application requires a single machine and the daily rate of application can reach 20,000 m² (500 meters in less than ten minutes). Sécurigrrip is expected to prove popular with numerous customers.

A wall of silence

For more than ten years, the Group has dedicated part of its research and development effort to the fight against noise. After three years of studies, Somaro, working with the Condensed Matter Physics Laboratory of the Ecole Polytechnique engineering school, has developed a new noise barrier. Thanks to its “ragged” surface morphology, a fractal geometry of frustums and pyramids, the barrier greatly reduces noise generated by road or rail traffic. “Our challenge was to develop a morphology for noise-reducing material that would optimize noise absorption while at the same time being moldable and demoldable,” explains Didier Peyrard, Somaro Technical Manager. The hollows and cones on the wall absorb low frequencies with a 68% higher rate of efficiency than a traditional noise barrier. The wall is made out of wood-cement concrete, which is composed of pine chips mixed with cement. “The noise barrier was tested at the Colas research center in Magny-les-Hameaux,” continues Didier Peyrard. “A patent has been filed for it and Bernard Sapoval from the Ecole Polytechnique last year received the Siemens Grand Prix Award for Innovation in Applied Research.”

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Increasing success for Coletanche

The range of Coletanche products includes several reinforced bituminous membranes that deliver a very reliable response to pollution problems.

More and more customers are using them and are extremely satisfied. “In the management of landfilling household waste, the risk of pollution is a permanent headache,” states Emmanuel Pochet, an engineer at Smiclotom, the organization that is responsible for collecting and landfilling household waste on behalf of a federation of 32 local towns in the Médoc region of France. Smiclotom has chosen Coletanche to cover its landfill site, which extends over 19 acres. Spread out in huge cells, the waste is covered as rapidly as possible to avoid infiltration of rainwater that could cause leachates to enter the water table. The covering must be flexible and tough, watertight and durable. Coletanche has all these properties.

A tailor-made product

“Coletanche is three to four times more resistant over time than any other membrane,” explains Johanne Tremblay, Development Manager, Europe for Colas. “We use two types of material, oxidized NTP and ES elastomer, which adapt to any type of ground and climate.” It is hardly surprising that more and more customers are turning to this miracle solution. Confinement of landfills, storage of polluted fluids and waste, waterproofing of dams, protection of water tables – Coletanche can be safely used in all of these applications. “Our facility in Galway, Ireland, increases production by 30% every year,” says Johanne Tremblay. Not satisfied with merely selling its products, Colas also installs the membrane, using Asqual-certified welders (Asqual is a quality control agency) and delivers a durability warranty for its product of 25 to 30 years, depending on the circumstances.

Significant benefits

“Another major advantage of Coletanche is that because it is totally waterproof, we don’t have to replace the topsoil and re-plant immediately once work is finished,” adds Emmanuel Pochet. “The membrane can stay in place just as it is, and retain all its properties. As a result, we decided that we would cover a very large surface area of our landfill in a single stage, and replace the topsoil and re-plant afterwards. This turned out to be far more economical than having to do it bit by bit.”

Coletanche may well be the preferred solution for many types of environmental problems, but Colas has no intention of resting on its laurels. “We are continuing research in order to extend our range,” states Johanne Tremblay firmly.
Compagnons de la Route – after the awards

Meet Samuel, Jean-Marc and René. What do they have in common? All three belong to the Order of Compagnons de la Route, the Colas guild whose members are the Group’s best skilled workers as much in terms of their professional skills as their personal qualities. “When my boss called me into his office to tell me he wanted to submit my name for the Compagnons du Rail Trophy, I didn’t expect it at all,” admits Jean-Marc Perrier, a mechanic in the locomotive unit at Seco-Rail. The reaction of René Clémenceau, a sprayer driver with Sarrazy (Colas Sud-Ouest) at Naujac-sur-Mer, who received the Losange d’Or award, and Samuel Boukriss, a truck driver with Screg Sud-Est in Nice, awarded the Ruban Vert, was much the same as Jean-Marc’s. All three winners soon felt their surprise turn to pride, though: “It’s like being acknowledged for all the work you’ve done,” says Samuel. But there’s no question of them getting too full of themselves! Once the celebrations organized around the awards ceremony in Paris were over, it was back to work like before… although I have the impression that my colleagues are now more likely to come over to me to ask for advice or tell me about a problem,” admits René.

Access to training

Some of this crop of outstanding workers have taken advantage of special training programs. “I took a course on company management, which taught me a lot about how to balance a budget,” recounts Jean-Marc. “It also helped me make sense of my personal finances!” Meanwhile, Samuel found a training package on Human Resources fascinating: “I like anything to do with new people. It was very interesting.” A training session on Health and Safety is also programmed in the coming weeks.

Jean-Marc: “I also helped make sense of my personal finances!” Meanwhile, Samuel found a training package on Human Resources fascinating: “I like anything to do with people. Among other things, the course explained how to welcome new people. It was very interesting.” A training session on Health and Safety is also programmed in the coming weeks.

A professional opportunity

The winners’ enthusiasm can’t conceal their personal ambitions. “I would like to get more involved in recruitment,” says Samuel. “A few years ago I turned down a chance to become a foreman because I didn’t think I could manage a team,” recalls René. “But if I were offered the job now, I think I’d accept. I’ve gained more self-confidence.” And clearly, the honors that they have just won will not hold them back!

The winners

1. Jorge Lopes (Smag Aqua-Idéal)
2. Frédéric Galliard (Seco-Rail)
3. Dominique Daud (Colas Île-de-France/Normandie)
4. Josian Brumel (Colas Nord-Picardie)
5. Christian Balian (Colas Sud-Est)
6. Guy Bouyer (Colas Nord-Picardie)
7. Christian Loos (Colas Rhône-Alpes)
8. Bernard Mélisac (Colas Sud-Ouest)
9. Manuel Ferreira (Sacer Atlantique)
10. Emmanuel Lave (Screg Ouest)
11. Gérard Chop (Screg Île-de-France/Normandie)
12. Christian Balian (Seco-Rail)
13. Jean-Claude Mélisac (Colas Midi-Méditerranée)
14. Jean-François Lave (Sacer Rhône-Alpes)
15. Christian Ariot (Colas Centre-Ouest)
16. Alain Cachet (Sacer Paris-Nord-Est)
17. Gérard Pinola (Sacer)
18. René Gaubert (Screg Est)

THE ORDER OF COMPAGNONS
VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The Order of Compagnons de la Route recently elected Jacques Da Ponte, a paver driver at Sacer Sud-Est’s Clermont-Ferrand agency, as its new vice-president, in succession to Christian Laplace, a Colas foreman at Montceau-les-Mines. “I have held office since 1999, says the outgoing vice-president. “It has never been a burden, but a real pleasure. I represented the Order in discussions with Senior Management and at numerous events. I was also consulted on certain issues concerning workers. I have been forced to give up the vice-presidency now, though, because I have been promoted to supervisory level, and the Order is reserved for workers. I’m sorry to be leaving, of course, but I’m also glad that I’ve been promoted.” Meanwhile, Jacques Da Ponte cannot hide his joy at being elected. “I am proud to represent Colas’ elite workers. I joined the Group as an apprentice machine operator thirty-six years ago, and I’ve gradually risen through the ranks. This new role is the icing on the cake!”

Jean-Marc...
Apprenticeships – training on the job

Whatever happened to the apprentice of yesterday, the young boy taken on at 14 to learn how to lug around bricks? “In all honesty, that is a completely out-of-date image,” replies Frédéric Bourghelle, Human Resources manager at Screg Sud-Est. Apprenticeships have changed completely. They provide a type of training that now applies to every type of qualification, from entry-level professional certificates through to engineers’ diplomas.” After spending one, two or three years alternating theoretical courses with practical work experience, young people qualify not only with a diploma, but also, in the majority of cases, with a job as well. “They have acquired skills, they know the organization of the company, its culture, its operating methods and its people. All of which means that the logical consequence of an apprenticeship is an employment contract,” remarks Stéphanie Mairian, deputy to the Human Resources manager at Colas Rhône-Alpes.

Making a success of integration

Apprenticeships also provide companies with a way of coping with the shortage of labor. But it’s important to take great care during the recruitment process and then ensure that the young people are well integrated into the company, because otherwise they might abandon their training halfway through. “I think back to the experience of the Valence agency,” relates Frédéric Bourghelle. “The first two years of integrating young people on apprenticeship contracts ended badly, but we persevered. And for the 2003-2004 session, we received seven applications for three positions. Why? Because we have learned to operate personalized recruitment according to the teams that the future candidates will join.”

Another guarantee of success is good tutoring. “Every young person doing an apprenticeship is followed by a tutor,” explains Stéphanie Mairian. “They are a sort of professional role model who is there to supervise, coach, advise and help the apprentice.” They are chosen for their technical skills but also for an ability to teach others. “It’s a good means of gauging the managerial capacities of supervisory personnel,” smiles Frédéric Bourghelle. At the end of the training period, the two parties decide whether or not to prolong their collaboration through a standard employment contract.

Apprentices have the opportunity to acquire skills.

Stéphanie Mairian, deputy to the Human Resources manager at Colas Rhône-Alpes.

PIERRE-YVES ESPARCIEUX

I’VE ONLY JUST BEGUN!

“I first got a certificate as a machine operator, and then I went on to take a professional high school diploma. I decided to try to combine work and training. In September 2002, I signed an apprenticeship contract with Muet (part of Colas Rhône-Alpes) to qualify for a diploma in public works and later become a site manager. I took my exam in May. What I hope to do next is carry on, and go to an engineering school. When you get used to combining training with work experience, you can’t stop!”
any of the Group’s young road workers take their first steps in the company in the framework of qualification contracts.

What advantages does such a system offer? “It lets young people learn a craft by alternating theoretical courses with practical on-the-job training,” replies Xavier Pézard, training manager at Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie. “Young people become familiar with their new environment, while having a chance to measure their real motivation for working in the public works field. ... job.” Available to people below age 26 and lasting roughly one year, these contracts operate through a partnership with training institutes. During their time in the company, the young people perform site work alongside full-fledged operatives.

Training young road workers

On March 27 and 28, Colas winter sports fans went ski-to-ski in a challenge in the resort of Val-d’Isère in the French Alps. This new sports meet has been organized by the Group in the spirit of the Screg sailing challenge. The aim is to strengthen Group cohesion in a friendly, sporting atmosphere. Under a sparkling blue sky, over 200 competitors, divided into teams, set off to complete two giant slaloms. The weekend generated some excellent performances and a great deal of enthusiasm. So will this be the first of an annual series of skiing challenges? It is not to be ruled out...

Two hundred skiers on the snowy peaks

We all share the same dreams

Two months ago, Colas launched a major recruitment campaign on the theme “We all share the same dreams”. The campaign poster was displayed on 26,000 billboards in France, in every town with a population of over 3,000. Every year, Colas recruits and trains 3,500 men and women and takes on 1,600 interns to help cope with demographic evolutions and future Group development.

The poster that has been seen throughout France.

During the time they are with the company, the young people perform site work alongside full-fledged operatives.

The winter sports, but a warm feeling.
Safety initiatives in northern Europe

Risk prevention and safety are central to Colas’ preoccupations. The Group brought in a Safety Charter back in 1994, which was adapted by all its subsidiaries throughout the world. In northern Europe, in particular, an impressive array of actions have been engaged to ensure safety.

In the United Kingdom, for instance, Colas belongs to the National Term Maintenance Contractors Safety Forum, an association made up of a number of companies active in the sector. Its purpose is to improve the safety of road workers drawing on the experience of all the members. The Forum produces safety training videos for motorway maintenance personnel. It recently published a document on the design, color and marking of vehicles operating on motorways, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive and the Highways Agency, the body that manages the British motorway network.

Meanwhile, Colas Ltd has managed to persuade the Highways Agency to produce a short film for British TV intended to make drivers more aware of the danger of driving past road workers.

Involving contractors

Colas Ireland also concentrates on training its engineers, technicians and all other workers in risk prevention, and particularly on raising the safety-consciousness of new recruits. The recent construction of a storage tank for 4,800 metric tons of bitumen for production of Coletanche proved to be a particular challenge in terms of safety, because the site had to remain operational throughout the works. The contractors were given detailed safety instructions and an emergency evacuation plan, while a continuous information system on the number of contractors actually present on site was developed. Fortunately, the operation was concluded without any incident.

Analyzing accidents

In Denmark, the East and West agencies of Colas Danmark, where some 400 people work, are experimenting with a type of training designed to teach people to anticipate accidents: from a series of photographs showing the successive phases of an accident, participants are asked to analyze the causes and draw conclusions with regard to the risk-free behavior that needs to be adopted. In the space of five years, the number of accidents has fallen from an average of 12 to 5 per million hours worked annually.

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Presentation of the 2003 Safety Trophies in France

1 - Employees from the Neveux quarries.
2 - The trophy awarded to the Neveux quarries.
3 - Employees from the Sacer Champigny agency.
4 - Presentation of a diploma to Dieppedalle.
5 - Presentation of an award at Novello.
6 - Employees from Boscher.
Road safety in the Group

1 - The Road Safety Challenge trophy. 2 - Alain Decourchelle (Colas Est) receives the Road Safety Challenge trophy from Alain Dupont, the Group’s Road Safety Officer. The Group’s Road Safety Charter was renewed on April 27, 2004, in the presence of Gilles Evrard (French workers’ social security fund) and Rémy Heitz (interministerial delegate for road safety).

Smac Acieroid inaugurates its Vitrolles plant

1 - Frédéric de Souza, deputy mayor of Vitrolles, and Robert Lefevre, CEO of Smac Acieroid. 2 - Demonstration of the application of Low Temperature Néophalte® mastic asphalt.
AMIC’ART exhibition

1 - 48 exhibiting artists – past and present employees or their spouses – before the private viewing at the Group’s Head Office on May 14.

2 - The picture for the exhibition organized by the association of past and present Coles Group employees.

3 - Martine Gondet-Abas poses with two of her works.

4 - Alain Dupont and Jacques Feuillet, one of the artists, tour the exhibition.
Aggregates have to be transported from the quarry to the customer. Of the various options, what method of transport do quarry operators prefer? Although rail and waterway may sometimes be the most suitable methods, road transportation is still the most frequently used.

A jobsite at Charles-de-Gaulle airport requires 40,000 metric tons of 0/40 mm limestone aggregates to be delivered one month later. This is the type of order that the CCM quarry at Wailers-Trélon, in the north of France, receives regularly. After breaking and crushing, the aggregates have to be shipped to the customer’s mixing plants. “Transport is everything,” states Christian Wojcicki, CCM quarry manager. “It determines the tonnage price, so the solution we choose depends on the quantities to be shipped, the point of delivery and the turnaround times.”

Road – the method of choice

Frequently, the road is chosen for transport of aggregates. The Colas Midi-Méditerranée quarries transport their entire production by truck. A choice or a necessity? “We have a local customer base, which is mostly within a forty-kilometer radius of our quarries,” explains Daniel Peligny, who is in charge of 25 sites in the region. “Road transport is the most suited to our markets. Its flexibility means that we can meet our customers’ needs perfectly.” Flexibility is key when it comes to organizing deliveries and this is why road transportation is so successful, as it can be used even when customers are very far from the source of production. The CCM quarry performs three-quarters of its deliveries by road. Wouldn’t rail be a more suitable form of transport for long distances? “Yes, of course, rail makes it possible to move larger volumes,” replies Christian Wojcicki. “But it has a large number of drawbacks.”

Rail – high volumes and long distances

Some of the restrictions connected with rail transport are logistical in nature. To begin with, if there is no branch line to the quarry, then the material has to be trucked to the nearest rail depot. The same thing may have to be done at the other end, if the customer’s site is not linked to the rail network. In addition, the loading and unloading operations require special skills.
> Rail transport has a definite interest for extremely heavy, frequent and long-distance loads. However, the flows of aggregates have to be forecast because, as Christian Wojcicki points out, "the rail operator has to program trains and very often our orders come in on an 'as needed' basis." This particular difficulty may well lessen in the near future. Last year, a partnership was signed with the SNCF French public railway company that made it possible to put in place a system of train reservation at two months' notice, with a graduated system of modifications possible down to the last day. "This agreement has helped us scale our transportation tool in advance, while allowing us to still guarantee a transportation capacity to the quarry operator," explains Eric Van de Gehuchte, head of the Construction and Public Works Department in the freight division of the SNCF. "We are">

JEAN-DENIS PIERRE (SPME)

A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK

Jean-Denis Pierre is a manager at SPME (Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie and Screg Ile-de-France/Normandie), a company that produces hot- and cold-mix asphalt in the port of Bonneuil-sur-Marne. "The aggregates, consisting of crushed igneous rock, hard limestone and alluvial materials, are carried 74% by rail, 16% by water and 10% by road transport. Thanks to the branch line which links us to the line from the Sucy-en-Brie height station to Bonneuil port, over 145,000 metric tons arrive by rail every year. Road transport is used as a supplement and for supplies of specific material in small quantities. Our wharf in the Bonneuil port means that we can bring alluvial materials by waterway from the Seine and Marne rivers, along with limestone from the north. Every type of transport has its strengths and weaknesses. Ideally, you want all three to balance each other and to be able to work along the right lines with quarry operators and transporters to secure reliability of supply."
Semi-trailers are used for short-distance hauls.

A full 22-car freight train can carry 1,360 metric tons.

KEY FIGURES

TRANSPORT OF AGGREGATES IN FRANCE
92% by road
4% by rail
4% by water

> currently working on a new offer whereby the order date determines the price of the service. The further upstream the transport can be planned, the more the quarry operator will benefit from a wide choice and preferential rates. These are new conditions, which will clearly be appreciated by quarry operators, but which, remarks Christian Wojcicki, will not necessarily be determinant: "Although it is true that price is a major element, it is not fundamental to high-quality service."

Waterways – sites close to rivers and canals
Water-borne transport is undergoing somewhat slower growth, because of both the limits of the navigable network and the time taken in transportation. Only quarries that are sited on the banks of waterways, for example river-gravel quarries, can use this form of transport, which also has the advantage of being able to carry high volumes of material. The choice between road, rail and waterway is not always a simple one, but is always guided by a single priority – providing the customer with the best service.
They are technical managers, secretaries, site supervisors, plant foremen... They all do their jobs with enthusiasm and have decided to share their daily routine and their projects with us.

Enthusiastic and motivated... words that perfectly describe the 25-year-old woman who, since August 2002, has been supervising the site for the eastern Angoulême bypass. Among her tasks are managing the teams, organizing the work, monitoring the schedules, handling design studies and negotiating with the customer. A graduate of the Toulouse Institut National des Sciences Appliquées engineering school, Lauriane began her career with Colas Sud-Ouest as site supervisor on the A20 motorway before being transferred to the Charente area. ‘There’s nothing to compare with learning on-the-job,’ she says confidently. Is it hard for a woman to work in such a masculine universe? ‘It’s masculine, but not macho,’ she replies. ‘It doesn’t resemble the stereotype of the public works industry at all. It is actually an advantage to be a woman, because relationships are based on negotiation and not confrontation.’ Dealing with the same challenges as her male colleagues, Lauriane is quick to point out that ‘in this job you require strong synthetic abilities and good judgment to define problems and rank priorities.’
Bertrand Rougeot, age 26, already has a successful career behind him. He spent five years as a trainee engineer in an engineering apprenticeship, three of which took the form of internships, followed by two and a half years of professional experience with Serec Est in Dijon, working as site supervisor. "I was extremely lucky to start work with major contracts, such as the Dijon bypass and motorway service areas, so I was able to learn really fast by working alongside highly skilled and proactive teams," he explains. "Seeing a structure gradually take form is highly rewarding even if it requires a great deal of energy. You have to be capable of reacting to the unexpected and constantly adapt whatever the circumstances." It is a high-pressure job, so Bertrand relaxes by playing squash and badminton several times a week. Happy at work and leisure, Bertrand is now looking forward to his wedding later this month. Congratulations!

"My work is varied"

How on earth would the Serec agency in Saint-Étienne manage without Isabelle Chabrier? It would be hard! After all, she is the person who takes care of all the administrative work involved in the business, dealing with the accounts department, the supervisor and the accountant, she explains. After twenty years in the job, Isabelle is an expert at what she does. "When I first arrived, I had graduated from high school in secretarial studies and only had a few temporary jobs on my résumé. It took me quite a long while to become familiar with all the technical terms. I have no intention of changing jobs now, my work is varied and takes place in a pleasant, friendly atmosphere. And I’m also working in my native region, to which I am really attached."

bertrand_rougeot

site supervisor
france

"You have to constantly adapt"

Bertrand Rougeot

apprentice engineer
france

"I gained confidence"

Having gained a first qualification, Sébastien Bouquet began a three-year civil engineering apprenticeship alternating theoretical courses with work experience. "I wanted to continue studying at the same time as working," explains Sébastien, 23. "This gave me an opportunity. His application for an internship was accepted by SNPR’s L’Hay-les-Roses profit center (Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie), where he began work as an operator, before becoming team leader, foreman and finally assistant site supervisor. Now nearing the end of his training, he looks back on the three years spent working on projects. "It has been a really interesting experience, at both the personal and technical level. It wasn’t always easy to get myself accepted by a team of men more than twice my age, but as time went by I gained confidence," he says. He is due to graduate this month. "What does he intend to do with his engineering qualification? "Hopefully, stay with the Group," he reveals. Anyone out there listening?"

sébastien bouquet

apprentice engineer
france

"I gained confidence"

Sebastien Bouquet

route operations assistant
france

"You have to constantly adapt"

Sébastien Bouquet

site supervisor
france

"My work is varied"

Isabelle Chabrier

operations assistant
france

"You have to constantly adapt"

Isabelle Chabrier
“An industry where I can prove myself”
Claire Heywood’s first job was as a lab technician for a concrete manufacturer. Five years later, she took an administrative job with Colas Ltd. “I saw it as an opportunity to stay in an industry I enjoyed and prove myself,” she says. A year later, she became a technical assistant. She began a program of studies in Construction Management at Northumbria University in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and was soon promoted again, becoming Assistant Health, Safety and Environment Manager of Colas North. In 2003, she was made Assistant Health and Safety Manager for the A-one joint venture which has been awarded a prestigious road maintenance contract in the north of England. Now aged 26, she continues to study part-time for her NEBOSH Diploma and in the future would like to be more involved in construction work in the field.

“Where there’s smoke…”
It is now twelve years since Gérard Wachowiak came to work at Skydome – which became Essences Services in 1995 – on the Axter site at Sons-et-Ronchères. His assignment was to start up a smoke-extraction equipment installation activity. Today, the team consists of fifty people, spread out over five agencies throughout France, with sales of €7 million. “This is a fast-growing sector,” he declares. “Fire protection regulations have grown more and more stringent and this has helped to boost business. Smoke is actually often more dangerous than fire, because it causes suffocation. So smoke must be extracted as quickly and as quickly as possible.” Although several forms of smoke-extraction system exist, Gérard mostly works with natural ventilation systems, where the smoke is extracted through a system of outlets. He loves his work, but does not neglect to spend time with his family either. “I don’t like my wife worrying about what I am getting up to – people always say ‘where there’s smoke…!’”

“Exceptionally fine quality”
In Villeneuve, close to Lac Léman, Daniel Boven manages the Colas Suisse Arvel silica limestone quarry on the mountainside. “It is a material of exceptionally fine quality,” states Daniel proudly. “It is only to be found in five similar sites in the whole of Switzerland.” Daniel joined Colas in 1988 with a background in mechanics. He rapidly moved up through the ranks and became quarry manager in 1990. Today he oversees a team of 28 people. The pace of work is usually subject to weather conditions.

“Sometimes we also encounter negative reactions from the local residents because the surroundings are a tourist resort area,” explains Daniel. “I really love my job, but I’ve got another, very different interest in my life – wine-growing!” Indeed, he owns a one-hectare vineyard, which every year produces a delicious white wine!
Looking out through the windows of his office, Richard Begrand, supervisor of the asphalt plant at the Sacer Paris-Nord-Est site at Scey-sur-Saône, watches over the entire asphalt production line, right through to the loading of the trucks and the dispatch of products to construction sites. “I started out at Sacer as a mechanic in 1988, then became an operator. I accepted the job as plant supervisor with a certain amount of apprehension, to be honest. I wasn’t used to managing a team, organizing work or handling orders,” he explains. Richard is now delighted with his job. “The plant has been refurbished so I no longer have to spend time solving the technical problems that arose in the beginning. On weekends, when the weather is good, he goes to his “corner of paradise”, a plot of land near the Saône river, where he can enjoy a well-earned rest.

DENISE POTRIER
PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN
FRANCE

"I wanted an outside job"

Dennis Gregg took advantage of a job scheme for young people and became a painter and decorator. “I was good at it, but I couldn’t see a future,” he says. There followed an eighteen-month stint on a production line in an electroplating plant. “I couldn’t stand it any longer. I really wanted an outdoor job.” The ideal occupation came his way in 1990 in the form of a job with a traffic management crew. After five years, he moved from working for a road management specialist to a small road surfacing contractor. His experience was appreciated, and he gradually became more involved in managing the teams. He joined Colas UK as a traffic management manager in February 2001, and now divides his time between operations for Colas North and the new A-one joint venture. “It’s a shame I’ve been pushed away from the physical side!” he laughs. “Colas is now one of the largest traffic management operators in the north of England. We’ve got great potential and I want to play my part in developing this business.”

"I like anything new"

Down to the last detail… that’s how Denise Potrier talks about her job. At the SES plant in Wattignies, her work consists of placing adhesive graphics on sign panels, dealing with a bewildering array of square, round, triangular and other shapes which she further transforms by adding reflective overlays. Most of the graphics must be applied manually, she explains. “The largest of them go through the machine. I deal with manual application, but I also sometimes program the automatic cutting machine.” She is not afraid of new technology. “I like anything new. After 34 years of experience in this job, I’ve seen a huge number of technical changes!” She had no prior background in the road sign business. “Before joining SES, I used to work in the premature baby unit at a maternity hospital. Quite different, as you can see. Working here was not easy at first!” But today, Denise has all the secrets of road sign production at her highly-skilled fingertips.

"A corner of paradise"

"I wanted an outside job"
My job keeps me on the move

Tony Sanson’s job consists of traveling perpetually around France. He drives the trains that deliver materials and equipment to SNCF and RATP railway works sites. “The loads are extremely varied – rails, ballast, equipment, etc.” he says. “Currently, I am responsible for taking equipment from Lyon to Saint-Germain-des-Fossés.” After graduating with a qualification as an electrician, his first job was with the EDF public power utility as a temporary worker at a power plant in Le Havre. And when he is not driving a train, he is happy when he has his hands on the controls of a videogame.

Higher and higher!

This could be the motto of Denis Vennat, site supervisor at the Colas Aurillac agency. “I discovered the pleasures of mountain climbing during a trip to Kenya in 2001,” he says. “I was at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, and I said to myself, ‘Why don’t I try and go up there?’” A few days later, he set off with the company of a guide to scale the mountain. Since this experience he has not stopped. In 2002 he climbed Mont Blanc, and last January, Aconcagua in the Andes, a two-and-a-half week climb up to a height of 6,962 meters! In a final moment of triumph, Denis, an active fifty-something, placed a Colas pennant on the summit. “After 33 years in the Group and a job that I love, it is the least I can do!” he proclaims. When he came back down to earth, Denis happily returned to road works contracts in the Aurillac region. What will the next challenge be? “I haven’t quite decided yet,” he answers, “but I’m sure it will be soon!”

Following in the footsteps

For the last year and a half, Christophe Bironneau has spent every working day with his concrete crusher, a massive 54-metric ton mobile crushing plant that moves around construction sites and profit centers. His task consists of crushing into small pieces – the exact size depends on the customer’s requirements – all types of demolition materials for recycling. “When I began, I knew nothing about the machine,” he explains. “I had to learn on the job!” Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he joined Colas Centre-Ouest in 1995. Christophe had a number of site jobs before becoming a crusher supervisor. He works as a team with a backhoe driver who also helps out with maintenance and adjustment. “The hardest part of the job is the noise,” he says. “You would never leave off your ear protection!” Weekends are devoted to his passion for motorbikes. He likes to take off on trips and his three-year-old son is already an enthusiast, upholding the family tradition of following in father’s footsteps!

CHRISTOPHE BIRONNEAU
CRUSHING UNIT MANAGER
FRANCE

DENIS VENNAT
SITE SUPERVISOR
FRANCE

TONY SANSON
TRAIN DRIVER
FRANCE

“Following in the footsteps”

“Higher and higher!”

“My job keeps me on the move”
Welcome to Colas!

Here are two young people who have chosen Colas as their introduction to the world of work. We meet Jean-François Coroller, third-year student at the ESTP school of civil engineering, and Anne-Sophie Laigneau, second-year student at HEC business school.

Why did you choose the public works sector, and specifically Colas?

Jean-François Coroller: Because of childhood memories. When I was small, I lived near a public works contractor. I was fascinated by the huge machines that made the whole house shake! I met representatives of Colas Human Resources during a job fair at ESTP, and they offered me an internship.

Anne-Sophie Laigneau: For my first internship, I wanted a large company in the industrial or services sector. Colas was present at the HEC job fair and I struck up a good relationship with representatives of the company, so I applied. The result was that last year I was taken on for a twelve-week internship in the Schools, Employment and Job Mobility section in the Group Human Resources Department.

What image do you have of Colas today?

J.-F.C.: I have always got on extremely well with everyone at Colas. At Screg Ouest, in Quimper, my first internship was as a worker and required a lot of physical effort. The team helped me a great deal. Similarly, at GTR, in Morocco, where I worked on a contract for reinforcing and widening the roadway, the employees took the time to explain everything to me – the financial management of the site, personnel and supplier relations, etc. I think that Colas is really close to its teams.

A.-S.L.: Colas is good at listening to its employees and empowering them. Although I was only an intern, I was asked to produce a report on payment of French apprenticeship tax. I also got a chance to find out about areas that were not directly connected to the internship such as recruitment, social and labor issues and site safety. I think that Colas is a really open-minded company.

What is your view of the public works sector?

J.-F.C.: Public works engineers have a job that is technologically very rich, and there is constant change, which I find very motivating. I also like construction sites – they really have a great atmosphere.

A.-S.L.: I like the wide range of jobs both on sites and in support structures (HR, finance, audit, etc.). There is also a great deal of opportunity for international mobility in the company.

How do you see your future?

J.-F.C.: My final internship at Screg IDF/N will be something of a test. If everything goes well, I may well consider joining the Group.

A.-S.L.: In my case, it’s a little early to say. First of all I would like to find out about other sectors such as auditing. After that I may well return to the public works sector.
You have produced a painting with the road as its subject for the Colas Foundation. Have you done this before?

It was a new subject for me, but the idea of working on the theme of the path or the road had attracted me for a while. Colas gave me the chance to do it. I decided I would paint a small valley close to where I live. It looks like a lot of other valleys but I’m attracted by its simplicity. It is an extremely peaceful spot and there is a real air of freedom about it.

Other than depicting the Normandy countryside, does your picture have a symbolic dimension?

I wanted to portray the road in both its metaphorical and literal dimensions. Some people may see it as a country walk, others as a symbolic representation of life. But everyone has the feeling of being the first to discover the landscape, the first person to go there. Perhaps as a way of better identifying with it...

There is a break in the rhythm of the picture. What does it correspond to?

The very straight road is only a representation of the real road which follows an old railway line. But it may have been influenced by the loss of my father, who died last year.

What’s your view of the Colas Foundation project?

It is an excellent initiative that is unfortunately not common enough in France. This commission enabled me to work on a subject that is unusual for me as an artist. It made me want to take up landscape painting again.

James MacKeown, a British artist from Northern Ireland, has lived in Normandy since 1988. He has exhibited at:
- Côté Galerie and Galerie Colette Dubois in Paris
- Galerie Rollin in Rouen
- Solomon Gallery in Dublin
- Bell Gallery in Belfast

* See back cover.
acknowledgements