



**October 27, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Minnesota Company Transforming Highway and Bridge Repair by Using NCFI Engineered Polyurethane Foam

MOUNT AIRY, NC—Gary Molstre, owner of Mudpumpers Mudjacking, Moorehead, MN, says there is no chance they are changing the company name, but they are definitely changing the material they use to repair highways and bridges to an engineered polyurethane foam system and they've coined a term for it: "foamjacking".

Mudjacking, also called slab jacking, concrete lifting, concrete raising, and slab leveling, is the traditional method of fixing damaged concrete highways and bridge approach panels. The process was developed in the 1930s and involves pumping "mud" (everything from clay, sand, and loam, to Portland cement, fly ash, lime, casting plaster, and hot asphalt have been used) beneath concrete slabs that have become uneven, sunken, and/or pulled away from bridge approaches due to soil erosion and/or the soil being compacted or compressed from the sheer weight of the slab. Mudjacking involves drilling holes in the concrete and pumping "mud" and pressure beneath to lift the slab to its original place and keep it there.

"We've been doing this work for 22 years, says. Molstre. "We started using NCFI's TerraThane engineered polyurethane foam system about four years ago

and we love it,” says Molstre. “We just did eight bridge approaches on I-29 around Fargo, ND, 940 square yards, with TerraThane and it really did the job.” Bridge approaches made of concrete slabs can settle anywhere from two to four inches making for uncomfortable, unsightly, and potentially dangerous driving conditions. “We foamjacked 22 approach panels with over 120,000 lbs. of TerraThane, then tapered and smoothed the ride for about 40-80 feet. The North Dakota DOT was very happy with the job. Foamjacking is the new, better model for efficient highway and bridge repair.”

Patrick Burchett, senior product manager for NCFI, a company pioneering the use of engineered polyurethane foam in concrete lifting, says, “Our product, TerraThane, has some definite advantages over mudjacking: it’s cleaner, lighter so there isn’t as much weight on the soil or bridge beneath, and the contractor can drill smaller holes in the concrete to apply it. This specially formulated polyurethane foam utilizes a hole that is only five-eighths inch or smaller compared to mudjacking holes that run between one inch and two inches.”

Molstre says his company is seeing a major increase in demand for foamjacking from DOTs and highway contractors in the Central and Midwest. “This Red River soil likes to move. We’re seeing more demand not just for foamjacking highways and bridge approaches, but also for curbs, gutters, airport runways, and parking lots. TerraThane does a great job and NCFI’s technical support staff goes above and beyond by helping us set the polyurethane rig and fine-tune the processes. It was the first time a manufacturer sent tech reps. to our jobsite. They really care about our business. In fact, foamjacking with TerraThane is transforming our company. We won’t change to another product.” He jokes, however; “But I think we’ll keep our name.”

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About NCFI

NCFI was organized in 1964 by research chemist, Dr. H. W. Bradley and Barnhardt Manufacturing Company. NCFI is headquartered in Mt. Airy, NC and manufactures polyurethane foam chemical systems for spray foam-in-place insulation (SPF), roofing, marine floatation, packaging, specialty molding, and many other uses. The company also offers a complete line of flexible foams for furniture seating, transportation seating, bedding, carpet underlay, and packaging. NCFI also has manufacturing plants in Hickory, N.C., Dalton, GA., and Salt Lake City, UT. To learn more about NCFI please visit www.NCFI.com.