

A New Level for Smooth Pavement



SELFLEVEL Asphalt Installation - Elmira, New York

In a city with frequent freeze-thaw cycles, SELFLEVEL® by EJ helped improve ride quality and make streets smooth.

Manhole covers are critical points of access for a city's underground infrastructure. But in the City of Elmira, New York, the dips and raises and cracking in the streets, especially in the areas surrounding the manholes, were garnering some bad press.

Frequent freeze-thaw cycles were wreaking havoc with the smooth surface of city streets, especially around the manholes.

Solving a rough problem

The residents of the City of Elmira didn't appreciate driving over uneven streets that felt like they were driving on dirt roads. They also didn't like the wear-and-tear on their vehicles. The Mayor's office received complaints, and making the city streets smooth and bump-free became a priority.

Craig Southard, Senior Engineer for the City of Elmira, hoped to find a solution that would also increase the lifespan of the pavement, making the maintenance of city streets less labor-intensive.

Through a sales meeting with an EJ representative, he heard about SELFLEVEL access assemblies by EJ and ordered seven units to try out. Judson Street, a street that would receive heavy traffic as the detour route for a major city thoroughfare, was selected as the test site.

Expert knowledge. Excellent support.



The EJ team met with superintendents and supervisors from the City of Elmira prior to installation, and they were present the day of the installation to ensure everything went well.

“The process and installation turned out to be very easy,” Southard said. “Everyone is very happy with the customer service and technical support we received from EJ.”

The two-frame assembly by EJ actually makes installation easier than with a single frame. With the SELFLEVEL, once you set the base frame, you’re done. The top frame will move to match the pitch in the road.

The SELFLEVEL access solution eliminates steps that are par for the course with a typical one-frame assembly such as measuring to ensure the frame lines up with the existing curb line, and shimming the frame to match the pitch of the road.

Smooth result. Easy maintenance.

The immediate result after installation is a smooth street, and even after a winter of continual freeze-thaw cycles, the street will remain smooth since the covers will move with frost heaves to match the pitch in the road. The SELFLEVEL unit can be used for either new installations or retrofits.

While the upfront cost is higher than regular access assemblies, there are substantial savings to be realized on the backend.

“It will save us money long-term, and will save us on maintenance, too,” Southard said. “It’s definitely a labor reduction internally of at least 50 percent. There’s also no need for extension rings with the SELFLEVEL.”



The EJ crew said word about the SELFLEVEL access assembly is spreading as municipalities in the region share their experiences with one another.

“It just makes sense, especially for the region we’re in and for other regions in the U.S. that have large amounts of freeze-thaw cycles,” said Southard. “Everyone here is on-board, and I intend to use them for a good time to come.”