

NATURES TALES

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LIVING LIFE NATURALLY

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The Final Stage of the Expansion – Black Top Roads!

We have Blacktop Roads!

In typical South Texas style the paving contractor told us that he would be dropping of some of his equipment on Friday afternoon, April 5th, and that a couple of loads of Caliche would be delivered that day. He planned to start work on the roads on Monday, April 8th.

Having worked with various contractors during the expansion period, we already knew that we should not expect either the equipment or the Caliche until we actually saw it coming through the gate. They did not let us down! As expected on Friday neither the equipment nor the Caliche arrived. This is definitely North Mexico (where everything is 'tomorrow') and not South Texas!

On Monday the equipment arrived and on Tuesday they started leveling the roads, filling dips with Caliche and packing it all down.

Wednesday day was the BIG day – the start of the blacktopping. The paver was heated and set to go, then the huge trucks with the hot mix started arriving. The backhoe raced back and forth (waaay over 5 mph!) keeping the bucket in the paver filled and everything was running smoothly. By early afternoon the north/south road on the east side

of the park as well as the east/west road in front of "Sandy's Bar" was paved, and there was still time to do another section, so they started the east/west road in front of Sharon & Rosaire.

And that's where 'Operation Blacktop' ran into trouble! Something broke in one of the paver's tracks preventing it from going in a straight line. Having just received the final load of hot mix, they HAD to continue paving or they would end up with an immovable mountain of cold, set blacktop.



Oh, Oh! Trouble!

Working feverishly they tried to fix the track, but had no luck – so they had to go to 'Plan B'. The backhoe filled the bucket in the

paver to capacity, then they hooked a chain to the backhoe, and with the most delicate touch, the backhoe put just enough pressure on one side of the paver to keep it in a straight line! Plan B worked amazingly well, and the road was completed. Only in South Texas!



Note the Chain linking the Paver to the Backhoe!

Thursday was spent prepping the remaining Caliche roads, and on Friday they brought in another paver, and these roads were paved with no mishaps.



Don't the New Roads look Pretty!

The remaining work was to seal coat the main driveway, but we had three days of either wind or rain, and work had to be postponed. This was a blessing in disguise as we could continue to use the main driveway, giving the new roads a few extra days to set prior to allowing traffic on them.

Maintaining access to the park while seal coating the main driveway was quite a

challenge. However, thanks to the wonderful cooperation and understanding of everyone in the park this was accomplished with a minimum of inconvenience.

We are indeed grateful that this project is now complete – and this also means that the entire “Expansion Project” is finished. Halleluiah!

Condolences

Al V. passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of Memorial Day. Al, who always greeted everyone by name and always had a smile to share, will be greatly missed by his Natures’ family. A bright ray of sunshine will forever be missing at Natures. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

Tidbits from Speckles, Natures Proud Cat!



My Winter Texan friends have all gone back to their homes up north, so I’m a bit lonely. But it’s quieter here now, so I get to laze in the sun a lot, and I like that! Even though there are not many people around, things are still happening here.

- The new roads look great, but it was pretty scary having so much heavy equipment racing around while they were being paved. I and all my Natures friends stayed well out of the way so that we wouldn’t get hurt!
- We had a wonderful Easter Dinner. The clubhouse was decorated with an enormous rainbow and each table had decorations in one of the colors of the rainbow. The organizers, decorators and clean-up crew did a terrific job. Thank you for making this such an enjoyable event.

- A new house came in and was put on Lot 316. This is Big Bill's new home. He skirted it before he left for Colorado, and when he gets back he will hook up the power and water.
- The Killdeers are back again and have made their nest behind Doug & Alannah's coach. They have four eggs! I promise that I will only look and not touch!
- Denny is at it again. He spent many days pressure washing, sanding and painting the metal work around the NR signs outside the gate. Now he is working on the Welcome Home sign at the top of the main driveway. Thanks for all your hard work Denny!



Working on the Welcome Home Sign.

- Besides running the office, Frank has also been busy getting things spruced up for next season. There will now be a small desk to sit at when using the phone under the stairs. Thanks Frank!
- Doug has offered to be "The Recycle Guy" during the summer while Bruce is away. Many thanks Doug!
- Check out the butterfly bush in the Memorial Garden. It is full of flowers and the butterflies love it.

- Ellis and Barb gave their house a facelift with a new roof and new siding. It looks like a brand new house. Check it out!



Ellis & Barb's "New" House!

- I love the new Cool Deck. The surface doesn't hurt the pads on my feet like the old deck used to.
- Memorial Day picnic was awesome. I never saw so many hamburgers – and there was an amazing amount of other food too. Everyone had a great time, but as usual, I had to catch my own dinner. No one shared with me! Many thanks to Mel, Randy and all their helpers for a well run, fun event.
- There are lots and lots of bright orange dots and lines all over the grass and around the paths. They look a bit like crop circles! I'll find out what they are and let you know in my next report.
- I saw Richard get his arm run over by his golf cart! Hehehehe!
I hope that everyone is having a purrrfectly wonderful summer. That's all from me.



Project 'Cool Deck'

Over the past few years the cool deck started cracking, and last year it had begun to lift off in places. It just would not last another season, so on May 1st Project 'Cool Deck' began. In order to make sure that there would always be one pool open at all times, it was decided that one half of the pool area would be completed before the second half was begun.

The first step of section one was to remove the old Cool Deck. Although this sounds simple, it was a very long and messy process. It was discovered that in some areas the top layer of the cement under the Cool Deck was 'soft' (which may have been part of the reason why the Cool Deck was lifting off), so it was removed with the Cool Deck. This process took many days.



The Cool Deck has been chiseled off, and the Leveling Layer is being applied.

After this was completed, a leveling layer with a bonding agent was applied to create a smooth surface, ready to receive the new Cool Deck.

The final stage was to apply the Cool Deck which, because of the summer heat, needed to be poured in the early morning. That entailed working long hours the day before getting all the fences and walls covered

with paper so that the Cool Deck could not splash onto them. Then at 3 a.m. on May 17th (Yes, **three a.m.**) the workers were back setting up flood lights etc. for the delivery of the Cool Deck at 4 a.m.



Pouring Cool Deck at 4 a.m.



The huge job required about 12 people

After a long day Richard drained the big pool during the night so that the following day the workers could clean out all the debris that had fallen into it. While it was empty a couple of areas on the bottom of the pool were repaired and the steps were chipped out and re-plastered. Then, finally, the big pool was refilled, the water balanced and at last the west side of the pool area is finished.

Now, all we have to do is repeat the whole process, and do the east side with the volleyball pool and hot tub!

We Love hearing your Suggestions!

One of the volley ball players had suggested that when the old Cool Deck was replaced, it might be a good idea to make the edge of the volleyball pool smooth so that when the players jumped for a ball at the edge of the pool they would not scratch themselves on the rough surface. When the contractor was asked about this he said that he had never had this request before, but he could see no reason why it could not be done. It was decided that if it was possible, we would do all the pools with a smooth edge.

With the big pool this was a three day process prior to the Cool Deck being poured, and the workers had to do all the work while in the water. Although that sounds nice on a hot day, spending 8 hours in the pool can be a chilly job!

Below is a close up of the edge. We think it looks really great and are most grateful for the very practical suggestion. The contractor was so impressed with it that it just may become the new way of doing things even though it is somewhat time consuming!



The New Cool Deck with a Smooth Edge