

## **Yellowstone Park Foundation and Michelin Help Build New Ecological Pathway at Old Faithful Geyser**

GREENVILLE, S.C., Sept. 3, 2015 /3BL Media/ – Old Faithful, one of the world’s most iconic natural wonders, now has an even more ecofriendly surrounding thanks to the installation of a newly paved walkway that creates a porous, clean and flexible surface that uses recycled Michelin tires along with other materials.

Unlike asphalt, the new pavement, called Flexi-Pave by KBI, is a durable and permeable surface that is being used to help preserve groundwater flow and better control erosion in the area. The project was completed last week and is already being traversed by visitors who come from around the globe to see the infamous geyser that was first discovered by an expedition to the area in 1870.

While the most important benefit of this new pavement material is the porous surface, it is also heat tolerant and durable with low maintenance requirements. In addition, much of the material comes from recycled Michelin tires used by the park’s fleet of vehicles. Importantly, this repurposed tire rubber and other components create a stable material that does not leach oil—as asphalt can—into a sensitive area.

The new path, which used 900 end-of-life Michelin tires, covers 6,400 square feet in the park. Interestingly, those same tires were donated to Yellowstone by Michelin for use on their vehicles several years ago. After 100K miles, the tires were then recycled for use in this new path.

“The material used to create KBI’s Flexi-Pave is completely benign and therefore can be used safely with the delicate aquifers here in Yellowstone,” said Kevin Bagnall, CEO and founder of KBI. “The path allows 3,000 gallons of groundwater to pass per square foot. It also is designed to diffuse the water’s force, helping prevent erosion.”

The project was made possible through a partnership between Yellowstone National Park, park concessioners, the Yellowstone Park Foundation, KBI (FlexiPave) and Michelin, which has been a Yellowstone Park Foundation corporate partner since 2008.

In fact, Michelin, which donates about \$300,000 worth of its tires and maintenance expertise to the Yellowstone National Park fleet every year, flew in employees from across North America to help complete the path’s construction last week.

“We held a company-wide contest in which we gave our employees from the U.S., Canada and Mexico a chance to spend a week here at Yellowstone and work eight hours a day on this innovative new pathway,” said Leesa Owens, the director of community relations for Michelin. “More than 2,200 entered and 10 were chosen from our facilities to help be a part of this important project and also experience the natural beauty of one of America’s great national treasures.”

“We take the ecological integrity of Yellowstone very seriously,” said Steve Iobst, deputy superintendent of Yellowstone. “This important project would not have happened without Michelin’s vision and the support of its employees.”

As a major corporate sponsor of the Yellowstone Park Foundation, Michelin donates and helps maintain thousands of tires to equip Yellowstone National Park’s fleet of more than 800 vehicles and equipment, which includes everything from electric carts, patrol cars and garbage trucks to giant earthmoving vehicles, rotary snow plows and large load-hauling tractor trailers.

“The Old Faithful Walkway Project is a great example of what a difference a company devoted to sustainability can make in the world’s first national park,” said Karen Bates Kress, president of the Yellowstone Park Foundation. “We are fortunate to have a corporate partner as farsighted, public spirited, and generous as Michelin.”

Through the partnership Michelin’s goal is to help Yellowstone National Park reduce its operating expenses and significantly lower the consumption of raw materials, mostly through the implementation of Michelin’s industry leading green tire technologies that save fuel and reduce emissions. These sustainability goals for tire performance are significant given that, on average, these vehicles collectively travel 3.75 million miles per year on the park’s more than 420 miles of roadways.

“Helping build and provide material for this new pathway is very much in line with Michelin’s goal of working with the Yellowstone Park Foundation,” Owens said. “It has been a very exciting project to be involved in. It doesn’t get more hands on than this.”

#### About Michelin

Dedicated to the improvement of sustainable mobility, Michelin designs, manufactures and sells tires for every type of vehicle, including airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, earthmovers, farm equipment, heavy-duty trucks and motorcycles. The company also publishes travel guides, hotel and restaurant guides, maps and road atlases. Headquartered in Greenville, S.C., Michelin North America ([www.michelin-us.com](http://www.michelin-us.com)) employs about 22,700 and operates 20 major manufacturing plants.

About the Yellowstone Park Foundation The Yellowstone Park Foundation (YPF) has been the official fundraising partner of Yellowstone National Park since 1996, and has more than 18,000 individuals, corporations and foundations that donate to YPF each year. Its mission is to fund projects and programs that protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources, and enhance the visitor experience in Yellowstone. YPF has raised more than \$70 million, and funded more than 250 important projects and initiatives since its inception, including cutthroat trout restoration, wildlife research, trail restoration, and youth education. For more information, please go to [www.ypf.org](http://www.ypf.org).

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For more information, visit [www.MichelinMedia.com](http://www.MichelinMedia.com) or contact:

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