



US007641419B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Nelson

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 7,641,419 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Jan. 5, 2010**

(54) **HEATING CONTROL SYSTEM FOR A SCREED**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1316 days.

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(22) Filed: **Sep. 24, 2001**

(51) **Int. Cl.**
E01C 23/14 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **404/84.05**; 404/95; 700/300

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 700/299, 700/300; 404/84.05, 84.1, 95, 79
See application file for complete search history.

(Continued)

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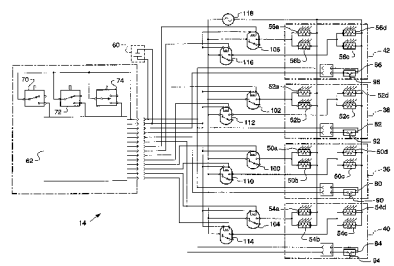
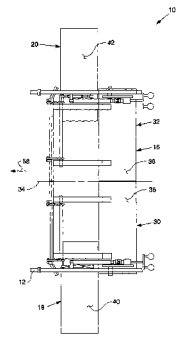
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A control system for heating a screed assembly of a paving machine is provided. The control system includes a plurality of resistive heating elements positioned adjacent to a screed plate of the screed assembly. An electrical power supply is selectively connected with the resistive heating elements via switches operated by a controller. The controller is responsive to inputs from at least manual switches and temperature sensors. The controller is configured to automatically adjust the temperature of the screed plate by selectively energizing fewer than all of the resistive heating elements at a time.

8 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



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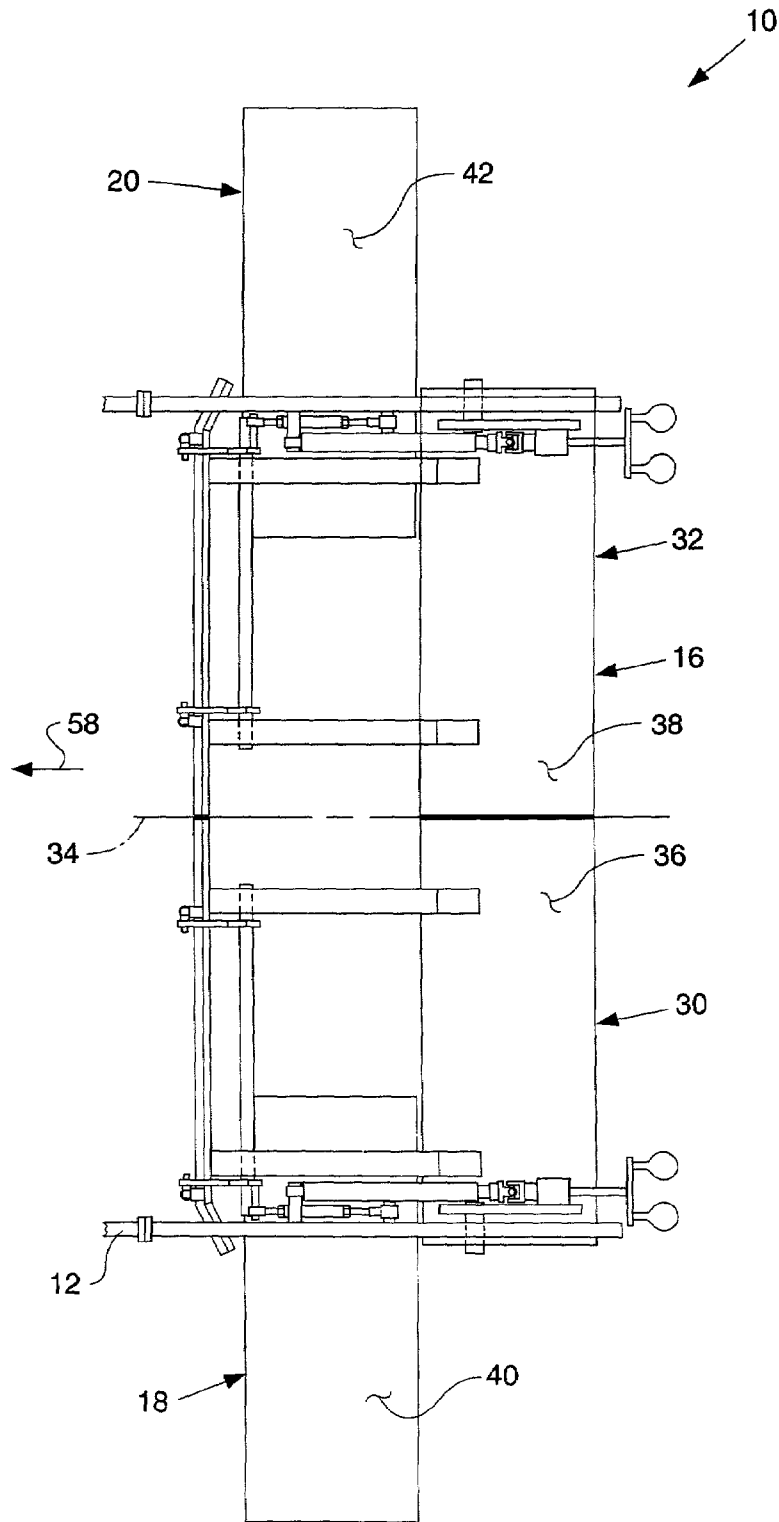
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FIG. 1



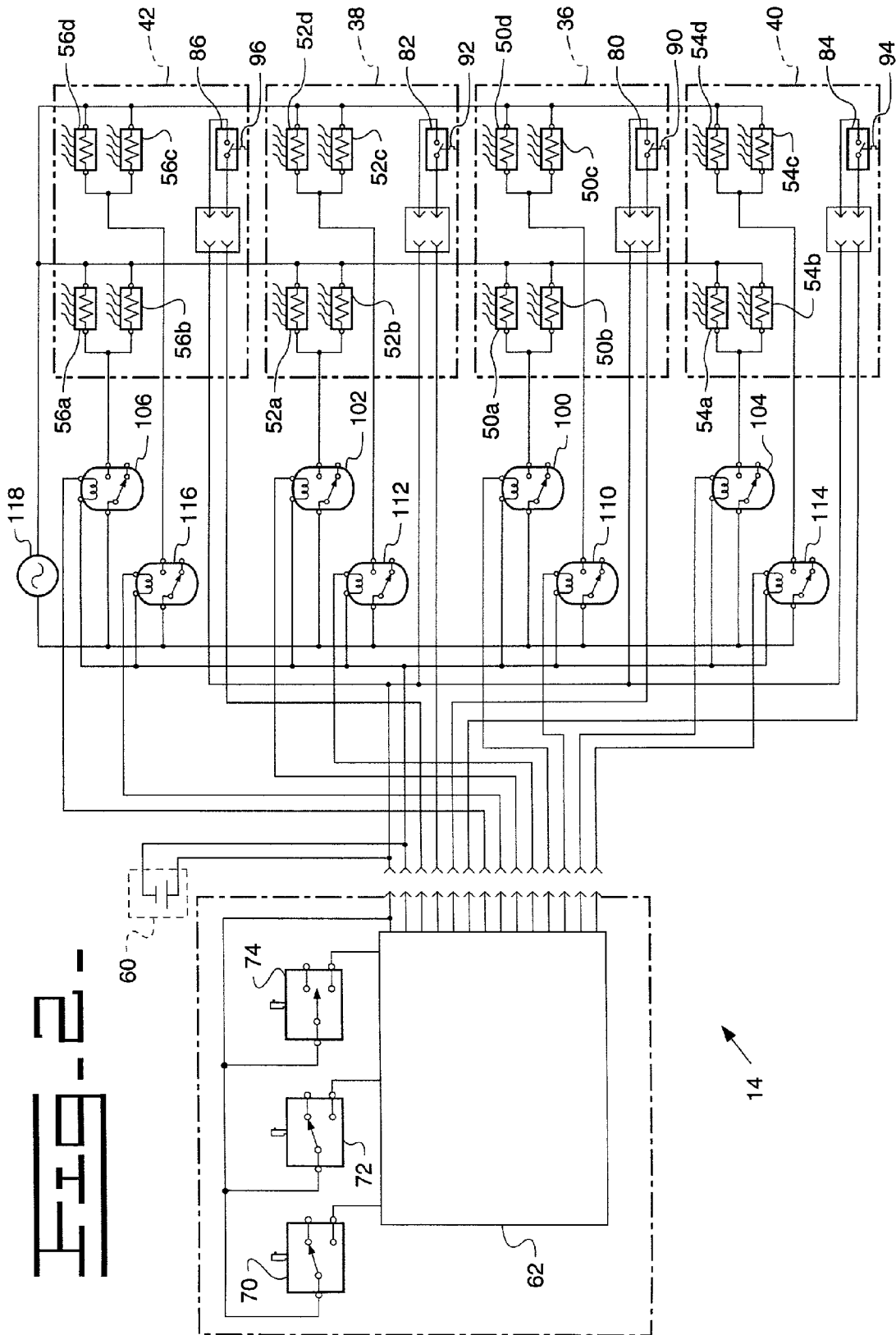
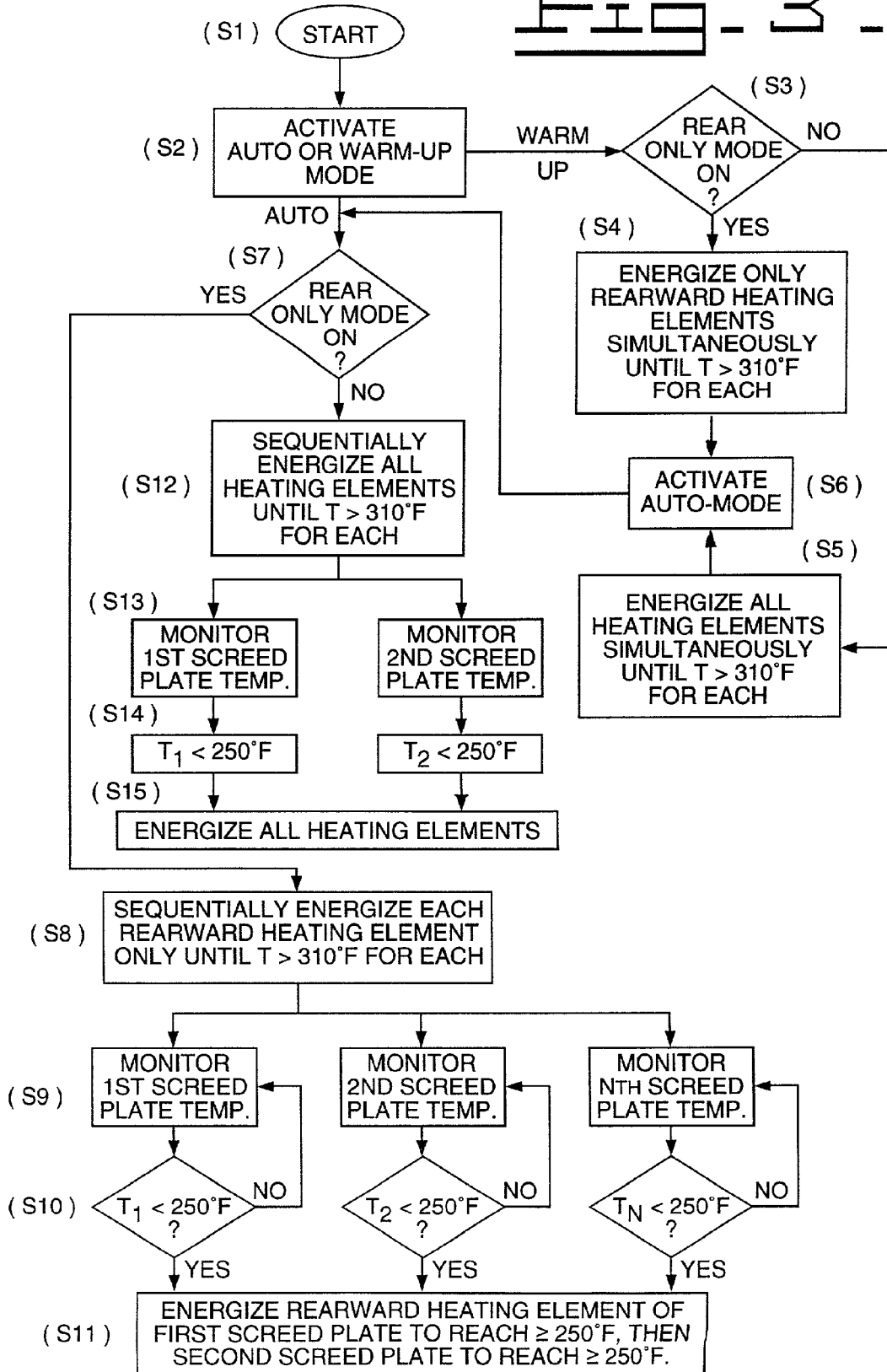


FIG. 3



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HEATING CONTROL SYSTEM FOR A SCREED

TECHNICAL FIELD

The invention relates to paving machines and, more particularly to a heating control system for a screed of a paving machine.

BACKGROUND

Paving machines are generally used for laying a heated paving material, such as bituminous aggregate mixtures or asphalt, onto a roadbed and spreading the heated paving material to achieve a road with a uniform, smooth surface. After the heated asphalt is laid it is compacted and cools so that the road becomes passable by vehicles.

The paving machines include a screed assembly for spreading the heated material. The screed assembly has one or more screed plates, and these screed plates are at times heated for ease in manipulating the heated paving material. The temperature of the screed plates is important, because if the temperature is too high, the screed may warp or the heated paving material may be damaged. Also, if the temperature is too low, the heated paving material adheres to the screed and is difficult to spread and compact. Generally, the screed plates should be heated to a temperature close to the temperature of the heated asphalt material.

Controllers have been developed for controlling the temperature of the screed plates. Published patent application WO 00/47822 is directed to a heating control system that automatically regulates the screed plate temperature by adjusting current flow through resistive heating elements for each of the screed plates. However, when the temperature of a screed plate drops below a predetermined value, the entire screed plate is heated even though only a section of the screed plate may require heating. In addition, several screed plates may be heated simultaneously. Heating the entire screed plate or several screed plates simultaneously drains the power supply, which is used for other functions, such as lighting, of the paving machine, and such general heating is inefficient.

The present invention is directed to overcome one or more of the problems as set forth above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A heating control system for heating a screed assembly of a paving machine is provided. The screed assembly includes a screed plate. The heating control system includes a plurality of resistive heating elements attached to the screed assembly and positioned adjacent to the screed plate. An electrical power supply is connected to the plurality of resistive heating elements. A controller is connected to the plurality of resistive heating elements to automatically adjust the temperature of the screed plate by selectively energizing one or more of the plurality of resistive heating elements.

A method for heating the screed assembly includes sequentially and automatically energizing one or more of the plurality of resistive heating elements at a time to achieve a predetermined screed plate temperature.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a screed assembly, embodying the present invention, that is towed by an asphalt paving machine;

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of a screed heating control system of the present invention; and

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FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of operation of the heating control system of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A screed assembly **10** for a paving machine **12**, only a portion of which is, is shown in FIG. 1. The paving machine **12** includes a heating control system **14** as shown in FIG. 2. The screed assembly **10** includes a main screed **16** and left and right screed extensions **18,20**. It should be understood that left and right screed extensions **18,20** are shown as being front mounted but can be either front or rear mounted extensions. In an extended mode the left and right screed extensions **18,20** extend outwardly from either side of the main screed **16**.

The main screed **16** is made up of first and second sections **30,32** one on each side of a longitudinal central axis **34**. The left and right screed extensions **18,20** are slidably mounted to first and second sections **30,32** of the main screed **16** respectively and include first and second screed plates **36, 38**. The left and right screed extensions **18,20** also include left and right screed plates **40,42**.

The screed assembly **10** functions to spread paving material distributed by the paving machine **12** onto a roadbed. In order to achieve optimum workability of the paving material, the temperature of the screed plates **36,38, 40,42** should be maintained within a predetermined temperature range. This predetermined temperature range is for exemplary purposes, between 250-310° F., however, other temperature ranges may be set. The heating control system **14** automatically controls the temperature of screed plates **36,38, 40,42** and is illustrated in detail in FIG. 2.

The heating control system **14** includes resistive heating elements **50a-50d, 52a-52d, 54a-54d, 56a-56d**, an electrical power supply **60** and a controller **62**. Power supply **60** is any suitable AC or DC power source that is connected, as by wire, to the controller **62**. The power supply **60** shown in FIG. 2, utilizes a 24V DC power supply, but other voltages and power sources may be used, as would be known in the art. The controller **62** may include a typical microprocessor and memory, and can be programmed or hard-wired to provide the functions discussed below.

As illustrated in FIG. 2, the four resistive heating elements **50a-50d, 52a-52d** are disposed on first and second screed plates **36,38** respectively, and four resistive heating elements **54a-54d, 56a-56d** are disposed on the left and right screed plates **40,42** respectively. However, the present invention is not limited to this construction and other numbers of resistive heating elements may be provided for each screed plate.

The resistive heating elements **50,52,54,56** with subscript a & b are disposed on forward portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42** and the resistive heating elements **50,52,54,56** with subscript c & d are disposed on rearward portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42**. As used herein throughout, forward refers to the side of the screed plate that is closest in proximity to the paving machine **12**, while rearward refers to the farthest away from the paving machine **12**. In use, the screed assembly **10** is pulled in the forward direction as indicated by arrow **58** in FIG. 1.

The heating control system **14** also includes inputs to and outputs from the controller **62**. An on/off switch **70**, a both/rear-only switch **72** and a warm-up switch **74** provide one set of inputs. Each of the switches **70,72** and **74** selectively connect the electrical power supply **60** to respective input connectors of the controller **62**. Temperature switches **80,82**,

84,86, which are normally open, provide another set of inputs. The function and operation of each of these switches is provided in further detail below.

The temperature switches **80,82,84,86** are provided, one for the first and second screed plates **36,38** of the main screed **16**, and one for the left and right screed plate **40,42** of the left and right screed extensions **18,20**. A temperature sensor **90,92,94,96** is provided with each temperature switch **80,82,84,86** to detect the temperature of the corresponding screed plate **36,38,40,42**. Temperature switches **80,82,84,86** will close when the detected temperature falls below a first predetermined temperature T_a , e.g., $T_a=250^\circ\text{ F.}$, and will open when the temperature reaches a second predetermined temperature T_b , e.g., $T_b=310^\circ\text{ F.}$

As shown in FIG. 2, eight outputs (1-8) from the controller **62** are provided respectively to eight solenoid relay switches, i.e., four forward output switches **100, 102, 104, 106** and four rearward output switches **110, 112, 114, 116**. Two output switches (**100, 110; 102, 112**) are assigned for each respective section **30,32** of the main screed plate **16**. Similarly, two output switches (**104,114; 106,116**) are provided respectively for the left and right screed extensions **18,20**. The output switches are normally open, and the output switches are closed in response to signals provided from the controller **62**. When closed, the switches connect an AC power generator **118** to the respective resistive heating elements **50a-50d, 52a-52d, 54a-54d, 56a-56d**, thus selectively heating the screed plates **136,38,40,42** in response to the temperature being below a threshold temperature T_a . Similarly, when the temperature then increases above the second threshold temperature T_b , the closed switch opens and AC power is disconnected from the heating element.

Each temperature switch **80,82,84,86** controls two corresponding output switches of the associated screed plate. As shown in FIG. 2, temperature switch **80** corresponds to the forward and rearward output switches **100,110** of the first screed plate **36**, the forward output switch **100** corresponds to the forward resistive heating elements **50a, 50b** and the rearward output switch **110** corresponds to the rearward resistive heating elements **50c, 50d**. Thus, the heating of the forward and rearward resistive heating elements on the first screed section **30** is separately controlled by the two respective output switches **100, 110**. Similarly, temperature switches **82,84,86** correspond to the second screed section **32** and the left and right screed extensions **18,20** respectively.

FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating a control diagram for the present invention. First, the paving machine is turned on (S1), and either the auto mode or the warm-up mode is turned on (S2). If the warm-up mode is turned on, it is determined whether the rear-only mode is turned on (S3). If yes, all of the rearward heating elements are energized simultaneously (S4) until the screed plates reach a predetermined temperature T_b , e.g., 310° F. If no, all of the heating elements are energized simultaneously (S5) until the screed plates reach a predetermined temperature T_b , e.g., 310° F. After all of the desired heating elements have been heated so that the screed plates reach a predetermined temperature T_b , the controller is automatically set to the auto mode.

In the auto-mode, it is determined whether the rear-only mode is turned on (S7). If yes, only the rearward heating elements are to be heated. Each rearward heating element is heated in sequence so that the screed plates are heated in sequence. Of course, if only one screed plate is present, this step may refer to only one rearward heating element being heated at a time, whereas if multiple screed plates are present, those rearward heating elements associated with one screed

plate are heated together, followed by the rearward heating elements of a second screed plate, etc.

Next, the temperatures of the screed plates are monitored (S9) and if it is determined that the temperature has fallen below a predetermined temperature T_a , e.g., 250° F. , the rearward heating elements of that screed plate are energized (S11). If the temperature is within an acceptable range, the monitoring of the screed plate temperature is continued (S9) until it requires heating.

A similar method is followed if the rear-only mode is not on in the auto mode. Specifically, all of the heating elements for all of the screed plates are heated in sequence (S12). Again, if only one screed plate is present, only one of the heating elements may be heated at a time. If multiple screed plates are present, those heating elements associated with one screed plate may be heated together. Still further, as with the main screed plate that is divided into two sections, those heating elements associated with one section of the screed plate may be energized first, followed by the energizing of the heating elements of the other section of the screed plate.

After the screed plates have reached their predetermined temperatures, the screed plate temperatures are monitored (S13). If a screed plate temperature falls below the predetermined temperature T_a (S14), e.g., 250° F. , the temperature switch of that screed plate closes and the controller notifies the associated output to energize the corresponding heating elements (S15). While these heating elements are being energized, other temperature switches may close as other screed plate temperatures fall below 250° F. However, these screed plates are not heated until the heating of the previous screed plate is completed. If more than one temperature switch closes at the same time, the controller activates the outputs for only one of the screed plates at a time, in a random order.

According to the present invention, the controller can be programmed according to the operator's need or the requirements of a particular paving operation. For example, the controller can be programmed to alternately heat each screed plate, or section of a screed plate. Further, the controller can be programmed to heat first one plate, than two plates, or any pre-selected combination of plates in order to provide optimum heating conditions while conserving power.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

In operation, the on/off switch **70** on the controller **62** selectively connects the 24V power supply **60** to the controller **62**. When the on/off switch **70** is positioned in an ON position, an automatic mode of the heating control system **14** is initiated. In the automatic mode, the controller **62** is programmed to limit the number of plates or sections that can be activated at a time. For example, only one of two output switches that control heaters in the first and second screed sections **30,32** or left and right screed extensions **18,20** is on at a time. Moreover, the controller **62** can be programmed to allow only one of the output switches that controls right or left hand side heaters of both the extension and main screed plates to be on at one time, i.e., only one extending screed plate or section of the main screed plate can be heated at a time. This control can be variably programmed to have one or more, but fewer than all of the heaters to be on at a time, as would be understood by one skilled in the art.

The warm-up switch **74** may be activated if it is desirable to heat more than screed extension plate **40,42** or first and second section plate **36,38** of the main screed plate **16** simultaneously. Such simultaneous heating may be desirable during initial start up of the paving machine **12**. When the warm-up switch **74** is activated, the controller **62** turns on all the out-

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puts switches **100,102,104,106,110,112,114,116** at the same time if all the temperature switches **80,82,84,86** are closed. Once the screed plates **36,38,40,42** have reached their predetermined temperatures, the temperature switches **80,82,84,86** open, and the controller **62** returns to automatic mode.

Also, the warm-up switch **74** overrides the automatic mode. Thus, when the automatic mode is not providing the type of surface finish desired, due to inadequate heating, the warm up mode can be activated. After all the temperature switches open once, the controller **62** may go back to the automatic mode. Alternatively, the warm-up mode may be manually controlled. For example, the warm-up switch **74** also can act as an override for the warm-up mode. Thus, if the operator determines that the appropriate surface finish is being achieved, the warm-up switch **74** can be operated again, and the controller **62** will go back to automatic mode.

During normal operation the screed plates **36,38,40,42** will cool down and the temperature switches **80,82,84,86** will close. The temperature sensors **90,92,94,96** detect the temperature of the corresponding screed plate **36,38,40,42** and when the temperature falls below a predetermined level, the temperature switch **80,82,84,86** closes. The controller **62** receives a signal that the temperature switch **80,82,84,86** has closed and that the corresponding screed plate **36,38,40,42** should be heated. The controller **62** will energize the resistive heating element or elements corresponding to that screed plate **36,38,40,42** in the time sequenced order in which the temperature switches close. For example, if temperature switch **80** closes first, outputs **100,110** turn on, and then when another temperature switch **84** closes, the controller **62** detects the closing but it waits for outputs **100,110** to turn off before issuing a signal to the appropriate relay to turn on the next outputs **104,114**. If multiple temperature switches close while an output is on, then the next outputs associated with a particular screed plate or section will be turned on in the order in which the temperature switch is closed.

With this automatic mode, only one screed plate **36,38,40,42** can be heated at a time, thus, conserving power for other operations of the paving machine **12**. For example, with conventional heating systems several screed plates may be heated simultaneously. This depletes power from other functions, for example, the paving machine speed may slow down, thus slowing down paving operations and affecting road quality. With the present invention, only a limited amount of power is used to heat the screed plates at any given time, and thus other functions of the paving machines are not affected during normal operation.

In general, only certain screed plates require heating due to the manner in which the asphalt material interacts with the screed plates. For example, during paving operations, high temperature asphalt material is conveyed from the paving machine **12** onto the roadbed surface. This high temperature asphalt material reaches the center portions (i.e., main screed **16**) of the screed assembly **10** first, since the material is conveyed from a central portion of the paving machine **12**, and then tends to spread toward the left and right screed extensions **18,20**. Since the asphalt material temperature lowers from the time it contacts the main screed **16** to the time it contacts the left and right screed extensions **18,20**, the left and right screed plates **40,42** are influenced less by the asphalt temperature. Thus, the left and right screed plates **40,42** tend to require more heating than the first and second screed plates **36,38**.

The both/rear only switch **72** distinguishes the forward outputs **100,102,104,106** from the rearward outputs **110,112,114,116**. When the both/rear only switch **72** is off, i.e., "both" is activated, all outputs, forward **100,102,104,106** and rear-

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ward **110,112,114,116**, are enabled. However, when the both/rear-only switch **72** is on, i.e., "rear-only" is activated, only the rear output switches **110,112,114,116** can be closed.

For example, if the rear-only switch **72** is on, only the temperature switch **116** for the right screed plate **42** can close, and thus only the rearward resistive heating elements **56c,56d** associated with the temperature switch **116** are energized accordingly.

This feature provides for a more efficient use of the power supply **60** under certain conditions. Namely, those conditions are where only the rearward portion of the screed plate needs to be heated, making it inefficient to energize the forward resistive heating elements. This condition may be preferred due to the manner in which the heated asphalt material interacts with the screed plates. For instance, when the asphalt material is first conveyed from the paving machine **12** onto the roadbed it has a high temperature. This high temperature asphalt contacts the front portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42**, and then reaches the back portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42** as the screed assembly **10** travels over the asphalt material. However, the temperature of the asphalt material lowers by the time it reaches the back portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42**. Thus, the rear portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42** are not as influenced by the heated temperatures of the asphalt material, as compared to the front portions of the screed plates **36,38,40,42**. Thus, under certain conditions, it may be desirable to only energize the rearward resistive elements in order to conserve power of the paving machine.

During initial start-up of the paving machine **12**, all of the temperature switches **80,82,84,86** will probably be closed since the screed plate temperatures will be low from lack of use. If the controller **62** is set to automatic mode, there is no priority of turning on the output switches **100,102,104,106,110,112,114,116**, and they can be randomly activated. Alternatively, the controller **62** can be programmed to heat the screed plates **36,38,40,42** in a predetermined order.

Of course, automatic mode can be overridden by initiating the warm-up mode in which case all the outputs would be activated at the same time as described earlier.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the present invention without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. For instance, additional outputs may be provided to more specifically control each individual heating element, or more or less heating elements may be provided to more specifically control the heating of each screed plate. Thus, it is intended that the present invention cover the modifications and variations of the invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

Other aspects, objects and advantages of this invention can be obtained from a study of the drawings, the disclosure, and the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A heating control system for heating a single screed plate selected from among a plurality of screed plates included on a paving machine screed, comprising:

a first heating element operatively positioned with respect to the single screed plate;

a second heating element operatively positioned with respect to the same single screed plate as the first heating element, the first and second heating elements both being configured to apply heat to the single screed plate; and

a controller configured to selectively energize the first heating element and the second heating element such that there is at least some period of time when heat is applied

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to the single screed plate from only one of the first heating element and the second heating element.

2. The heating control system of claim 1, wherein the controller is configured to energize the first heating element without energizing the second heating element, according to a first mode of operation.

3. The heating control system of claim 2, wherein the controller is configured to energize the first heating element together with the second heating element, according to a second mode of operation.

4. The heating control system of claim 3, wherein the controller is configured to select between the first and second modes of operation based on a state of a selector switch included in the heating control system.

5. The heating control system of claim 2, wherein the first heating element is disposed on an aft portion of the single screed plate.

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6. The heating control system of claim 2, wherein the second heating element is disposed on a forward portion of the single screed plate.

7. The heating control system of claim 1, further including at least one temperature indicator associated with the single screed plate, wherein the controller is configured to selectively energize the first heating element and the second heating element disposed on the single screed plate based on a state of the at least one temperature indicator.

8. The heating control system of claim 1, further including a plurality of relay switches, wherein at least a first one of the plurality of relay switches is operably connected to the first heating element and at least a second one of the plurality of relay switches is operably connected to the second heating element.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 7,641,419 B1
APPLICATION NO. : 09/961483
DATED : January 5, 2010
INVENTOR(S) : Nelson

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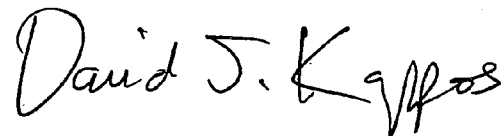
It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 3, line 28, delete "136," and insert -- 36, --.

Column 6, line 63, in claim 1, delete "appy" and insert -- apply --.

Signed and Sealed this

Twenty-fifth Day of May, 2010

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Kappos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David J. Kappos
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office