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South Louisiana Company Recycles Offshore Oilfield Materials into Innovative Lightweight Construction Aggregate



THIBODAUX, La. — Four Aces Logistics, a subsidiary of Onshore Companies of Louisiana, is transforming discarded offshore oilfield drilling risers into an environmentally responsible, cost-effective construction aggregate. Marketed as **Silverlite**, the recycled synthetic aggregate provides a lightweight alternative to traditional materials such as crushed stone, sand and gravel for a variety of civil and marine construction applications.

Offshore drilling risers are critical conduits that connect floating drilling platforms to wellheads on the seafloor. To withstand harsh ocean conditions while maintaining buoyancy, the risers are encased in 75-foot-long buoyancy modules (or floaters) manufactured from ceramics and specialized polymers.

Once an offshore well reaches the end of its productive life, these floaters are removed and typically disposed of in landfills throughout Louisiana. Because the material is non-biodegradable, it occupies valuable landfill space indefinitely.

"Our company has worked in the offshore industry for decades, and we've watched these huge drilling risers pile up in landfills year after year," said Joe Arabie, vice president of Four Aces Logistics. "My dad suggested we find a way to repurpose them and use the material as aggregate. At first, we thought he was crazy. But he always says, 'You have to turn over a few rocks to see what's underneath.' So, we started experimenting, and through an innovative process we discovered how to turn them into an incredibly effective construction material."

Lightweight Performance with Environmental Benefits

Silverlite offers several advantages over conventional aggregates, particularly in applications where reducing weight is critical. As a road base or parking lot sub-base, Silverlite provides the strength and durability required for structural support while weighing significantly less than traditional limestone or gravel. Its lower density reduces settling in soft soils, decreases transportation costs through lighter

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loads, and helps lower fuel consumption during hauling. By repurposing discarded offshore materials, Silverlite also diverts thousands of cubic yards of waste from Louisiana landfills.

Currently, Four Aces Logistics manufactures two primary Silverlite products:

- Riprap: a smaller sized aggregate for roads, parking lots and roadway sub-base applications.
- Lightweight: a golf ball to baseball-sized material suitable for bulkheads

Port Fourchon Bulkhead Project

One of Silverlite's largest projects to date was the installation of approximately 25,000 cubic yards of material as backfill for a new bulkhead at Port Fourchon in south Louisiana—a volume equivalent to covering more than three football fields to a depth of one foot. Roughly 7,500 floaters were used for the project.

Traditional bulkhead backfill typically consists of coarse-grained sand or crushed stone. While effective, these materials are extremely heavy, increasing lateral pressure against bulkhead walls and often requiring more costly transportation.

"Silverlite is an outstanding material for bulkhead backfill," Arabie said. "Traditional stone creates tremendous weight that increases pressure on the bulkhead structure. Because Silverlite is significantly lighter—usually offering about a forty-percent reduction in weight, it provides the necessary drainage and support while greatly reducing the load placed on the wall."

In addition to reducing structural loads, Silverlite's lighter weight can decrease hauling costs by about twenty percent, improve installation efficiency and provide environmental benefits by giving discarded offshore materials a productive second life.

Davie Breaux, Deputy Port Director stated, "Port Fourchon was able to test Silverlight on one of our recent Slip D Bulkhead Projects. The Silverlight was readily available, the size we used locked in tight while still allowing the subsurface drainage we needed. We are glad to have an alternate lightweight product that performs well and is made from recycled riser float material."

About Onshore Companies

Onshore Companies provides civil and commercial construction, construction management, coastal restoration and flood protection projects, logistics and transportation throughout the Gulf Coast. It a third-generation, family-owned company headquartered in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Learn more at www.onshoreco.com.