INDUSTRYINSIGHT

By Tim Gregorski

Confidence in HDPE Pipe Growing

Demand for HDPE is increasing in water and wastewater industries and this expert explains reasons for growth

In recent years, demand for high-density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) for use in water and wastewater applications has grown significantly.

Helping to spur this demand, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently announced new changes to its national construction and maintenance regulation ("Summary of Acceptable Criteria for Specifying Types of Culvert Pipes"), for the application of alternative types of pipe, such as HDPE, in federal-aid highway projects. The decision was made to ensure each state's department of transportation promotes greater competition within the underground drainage industry, creates greater efficiency and reduces project costs.

***Water & Wastes Digest* recently interviewed Joe Chlapaty, president and CEO of Advanced Drainage Systems, about HDPE's role in water and wastewater applications, how the FHWA's specification changes impact HDPE and finally, a general overview of our nation's infrastructure.**

***WWD:* Why is there a growing demand for HDPE pipe in the water and wastewater industries?**

Joe Chlapaty: We believe there are several reasons for the continued growth of HDPE.

First, engineers are increasingly specifying a higher performance requirement that requires the benefits of our HDPE products over traditional piping systems. The joints of HDPE pipe are superior to other pipe types. As the regulatory environment has become more stringent, the need for leak-free joints has become much more commonplace.

Second, HDPE can be installed more quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively than other types of pipe. This saves time and money, and is less disruptive to the respective community.

Third, HDPE pipe offers more options in terms of custom design. The fact that it can be welded enables engineers to creatively solve design problems. These same benefits are also very valuable to the contractor if last minute field changes are required.

Finally, the engineering and contractor communities have had 40 years of successful experience with HDPE.

***WWD:* What impact has the FHWA had when it comes to specifying HDPE pipe for drainage-related projects?**

Chlapaty: The FHWA provides a level playing field in highway applications. They do not directly specify HDPE, yet by allowing the use of alternative types of pipe like HDPE, the FHWA is promoting greater competition within the underground drainage industry.

***WWD:* What about water and wastewater applications—has the use of HDPE pipe increased?**

Chlapaty: Certainly. As the confidence in HDPE has grown, the number of applications in which it is being used has grown accordingly.

***WWD:* What role will HDPE pipe play in the future of the water and wastewater industries?**

Chlapaty: We obviously feel it is going to play a much bigger role in the infrastructure of this country. As engineers and contractors continue to have positive experiences with HDPE, its use will continue to grow for a very long time.

With its high quality joints, extremely durable materials and economic benefits, it is quickly becoming the material of choice.

***WWD:* Do you think the nation's water and wastewater infrastructure is failing?**

Chlapaty: I wouldn't say the nation's infrastructure is failing, but it is in desperate need of updating to meet tighter EPA requirements and the demands of a growing population.

***WWD:* What can be done to improve the infrastructure? Will it take an impossible amount of resources?**

Chlapaty: Looking at the total picture can be overwhelming, but by addressing improvements every year we can make significant progress and eventually complete reconstructed infrastructure within a reasonable amount of time, without bankrupting our municipalities.

***WWD:* Are municipalities simply repairing the infrastructure or is more emphasis being placed on pipe replacement?**

Chlapaty: Municipalities are using a combination of both, based on the amount of corrosion or pipe failure as well as the overall needs of the community.

In some cases, corroding or failing pipes can be repaired and continue working. Many times pipes do need to be replaced, especially combined storm and sanitary systems. Now we're seeing many of these being separated and replaced with entirely new pipe systems. WWD

Tim Gregorski is editorial director of *Water & Wastes Digest*. For additional information, contact *WWD* at 847/391-1011 or by e-mail at nsimeonova@sgcmail.com.

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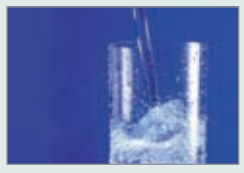
Veolia Water Wins Contract in China

Veolia Water has won its 23rd contract in China for the complete management of the drinking water service and operation of a wastewater treatment plant in the leading economic city of Haikou, the capital of one of China's top tourist destinations, on the Island of Hainan, South China.

The contract, worth an estimated consolidated turnover of 780 million euros over 30 years, was signed with the Haikou Water Group, who recently acquired Haikou First Water Co., Ltd. This ensures the total management of the drinking water service to 800,000 inhabitants in the area.

California Refinery Fined $1 Million for Breaking Drinking Water Laws



A California refinery was sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay a criminal penalty for violating the Safe Drinking Water Act. The company must apply $500,000 of the $1 million penalty towards the Los Padres National Forest Restoration Project. The company pleaded guilty in April and was sentenced in U.S. District Court, Central District of California.

NSF Announces New Nitrogen Reduction Standard

NSF Intl. announced that a new national standard has been published to reduce nitrogen from residential wastewater. The focus of the standard is on reducing excess nitrogen from any source that flows into surface waters and stimulates algae formation, a condition that could potentially harm marine life habitat and destroy fish and shellfish populations. NSF/ANSI Standard 245: Wastewater Treatment Systems – Nitrogen Reduction was developed to address regulatory agencies' concerns about onsite wastewater systems' environmental impact. Specifically, this standard addresses the impact these systems have on groundwater used as a drinking water source, and on surface waters receiving discharge from the systems.

Four GE Water Treatment Technologies Receive Ecomagination Certification

Reaffirming GE's Ecomagination commitment to new technologies that help customers meet environmental challenges, GE Water & Process Technologies, a unit of General Electric Co., announced that four of its advanced water treatment technologies have received Ecomagination certification. As water demand grows and global water supplies and quality decrease, GE's Homespring Central Water Purifier, ZeeWeed Ultrafiltration Membranes, ABMet Advanced Biological Metals Removal Process and Permatreat Enhanced Performance Pretreatment technologies will help increase water availability and protect global water sources.

WERF Releases $600,000 in Funding for Water Quality Research

The Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) is seeking pre-proposals for its Unsolicited Research Program for research that will advance knowledge and understanding in water quality that could transform how WERF subscribers perform their business. WERF will also consider proposals that would take existing research to the next level of completion, resulting in practical solutions to water quality problems. WERF currently has research under way on the following topics: wastewater treatment and reuse; solids treatment and reuse; infrastructure management; operations optimization including energy efficiency; storm water; decentralized collection and treatment systems; risk assessment and communication; and watershed management and water quality.

WWEMA & *WWD* Now Accepting 2007 Scholarship Applications

The Water & Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association, Inc. and *Water & Wastes Digest* are currently accepting applications for the 2007 WWEMA/*WWD* Scholarship. The $1,000 scholarship is awarded to a student seeking a career in a water or wastewater field.

Students who have parents employed by a WWEMA-member company are eligible to apply for the WWEMA/*WWD* scholarship.

Before receiving the award, the recipient must be accepted into a four-year bachelor's program in an acceptable field of study by an accredited institution of higher learning, such as biology, chemical engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, environmental engineering, environmental sciences and/or natural resources planning.

Applications are judged on the basis of: academic achievement; leadership and community service; level of commitment to environmental protection, as demonstrated in an essay and stated career goals; and overall presentation including emphasis in science courses, relevance of program of study, sincerity of commitment and demonstration of special need. The deadline for submitting a scholarship application is Monday, Sept. 24, 2007. Applications can be obtained by e-mail at waternews@sgcmail.com or by calling 847/391-1011. WWD

News compiled by Neda Simeonova

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