

READER
COMMENTS

NTA & HDD

On behalf of the NTA, I would like to extend our most sincere thanks for the article published about our annual meeting. Well written and formatted, it gave us excellent positive exposure and made many NTA members very proud.

I personally enjoyed taking part in the mid sized drill article. Thank you for the invitation to express my thoughts. As a woman in this industry my voice is small sometimes.

Danielle Martin

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Inquiry in pipeline blaze centers on bulldozer operator

A gas line exploded Feb. 17, in northwest Harris County in Houston, TX, apparently from a breach caused by a bulldozer operator, said officials with El Paso Corp. The pipeline is owned by Tennessee Pipeline Co., a subsidiary of El Paso Corp. The pipeline runs from south Texas to the northeastern United States.

As reported in the Houston Chronicle, El Paso Corp. spokesman Richard Wheatley said the bulldozer was not the company's.

"We want to understand why the bulldozer was on our right-of-way," Wheatley said. "We also have to look at what actually caused the pipeline to ignite."

The breach of one of the company's 30-inch pipes happened about 2 p.m. The bulldozer may have cut into the underground line when it got bogged down in the mud, Wheatley said.

When the bulldozer operator notified them of the accident, company officials reported the incident to authorities and began shutting off the gas flow in the 11-mile section of pipeline around the breach.

Because of the escaping natural gas, workers couldn't get close enough to determine if the bulldozer operator turned off the engine after the breach.

The El Paso Corp. will report the findings of its investigation to the

U.S. Department of Transportation, which has oversight for interstate gas pipelines.

Mystery pipes flow into two churches

Lakewood Ranch District 1 Supervisor Gary Berns announced at a district meeting in Bradenton, FL, that he discovered a map showing irrigation water lines going to St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal and Living Lord Lutheran, both located on Palm Brush Avenue near State Road 70 and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard.

Berns believes the non-potable water coming out of the church lines is being paid for by District 1 residents based on a map he found Jan. 29. He also has no idea who installed the lines or when.

According to Bob Weber, senior vice president for Lakewood Ranch Communities, no records indicate the existence of the church pipes. To verify the existence of the pipes, the Braden River Utility will turn on the irrigation system to see if anything impacts the lines to the system.

If the churches are using District 1 water, Braden River Utilities will send them a letter asking them to install meters on those lines so they can be billed, Weber said.

As for compensation for water, Berns said he is not looking for the churches to pay for past water use, just to correct the problem. Berns and other officials also think the churches used very little water and are not the cause of a spike in District 1 irrigation use.

Insituform Donates To Dominican Republic Clean Water Program

Insituform Technologies Inc. is doing its part to bring accessible and affordable filtration systems to the village of Bayacanes and surrounding poverty-stricken communities in the Dominican Republic.

In an effort to provide clean water for the world, Insituform is donating \$50,000 to the Agua Pure project in the Dominican Republic. According to a recent study from the UN, 1.1 billion people across the globe lack access to improved water sources. The same report also says that over a fifth of the Dominican Republic's population lacks access to basic sanitation.

Agua Pure is being implemented by Jesus for all Nations, a missionary group working to distribute

water filtration technology to residents of the Bayacanes area of the Dominican Republic.

The new filtration method, developed by Potters for Peace and ceramics researcher Dr. Manuel Hernandez, uses kiln-fired clay pots to transform contaminated and turbid liquid into safe, drinkable water.

The pots are made using a mixture of sawdust and clay. During the firing process, the sawdust burns away, leaving the pots porous and suitable for filtration. Field tests have shown that the ceramic pots developed by Dr. Hernandez remove 99.88 percent of bacteria and microbes from drinking water including coli form bacteria and E. coli.

Volunteers for Agua Pure have built two firing facilities where the pots can be produced. The firing facilities employ local residents to implement and distribute the water purification systems.

The \$50,000 donation from Insituform will subsidize the cost of pots produced at the facilities and fund the purchase of educational materials, payment of local residents working at the firing facility, ongoing water testing for one year, and transportation of the filtration materials.

Tom Rooney, CEO of Insituform, said, "This donation is in line with Insituform's mission of providing clean water for the world. We are always looking for opportunities that bring clean water to the people who need it most."

Jesus for all Nations board of directors' member Lisa Ballantine states, "The donation from Insituform will enable us to bring the equipment necessary for clean water to 1,000 households in this part of the world."

"The great thing about this simple technology is that it is sustainable by the very communities to which we are bringing it. Insituform is giving the people in these areas the ability to produce clean water for years to come," says Rooney.

HDR acquires Quest Engineers

HDR, a leading architecture-engineering-consulting firm, has acquired Quest Engineers Inc., a full-service engineering firm based in Lexington, KY, with offices in Louisville, KY, and Cincinnati. The company employs 120 people. Financial terms of the agreement

were not disclosed. Going forward, Quest Engineers will conduct business as HDR/Quest.

Under the new corporate structure, Charles Scroggin, Quest Engineer president, will have a key leadership role in HDR=s operations in Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Ohio and will be a senior vice president for the company.

PIPES Act presents changes for energy providers

The Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act of 2006, commonly referred to as the "PIPES Act," reauthorizes federal pipeline safety at the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) through 2010.

PHMSA is the federal agency responsible for overseeing the safety of approximately 2.3 million miles of interstate liquid and gas pipelines. Natural gas and liquid products transported through regulated lines account for approximately two-thirds of the total energy products consumed in the United States.

One change of the act will now require the submission of a statement by a senior company executive attesting to the accuracy of annual and semiannual pipeline integrity management program performance reports.

The PIPES Act also provides for new federal oversight of previously unregulated low-stress (low-pressure) liquid pipelines. Previously, the agency had exempted lines, regardless of size, operating at less than 80 percent of maximum operating pressure. As a result, smaller operators may find themselves in a position where marginally profitable lines are no longer profitable.

Congress did not incorporate into law the Bush administration's proposal to modify the seven-year reassessment interval for natural gas pipelines. It did, however, continue the preexisting federal mandate to require PHMSA to review a Comptroller General report on the reassessment and to submit further legislative recommendations to Congress within 60 days of the Act's passage.

Damage to pipelines resulting from a crowded underground infrastructure is a major problem facing pipeline operators and is a leading cause of pipeline incidents. The PIPES Act expands its applicability to excavators and operators alike. The new law seeks to reduce the number of One-Call violations.

The Latest Industry Developments



CIGMAT '07 Has Record Turnout

A record number of people attended a one-day conference and exhibition organized by the Center for Innovative Grouting Materials and Technology (CIGMAT) and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Houston on "Construction, Geotechnical and Flooding Issues in Houston & Other Major Cities" at the University of Houston on March 2. More than 280 participants attended



and included owners, consulting engineers, material suppliers, contractors and academia who came from many parts of the U.S.

After C. Vipulanandan, chairman, professor and di-

rector of CIGMAT presented opening remarks on the urban environment, the general session focused on public works and transportation issues related to highways and rails in the Houston area. Plans for maintaining and expanding city of Houston water and wastewater facilities and funding highway projects in the region for years 2007-08 were discussed. The challenges in maintaining civil infrastructure were also discussed. Among the speakers in the morning session were Michael Marcotte, director, Public Works, city of Houston; Gabriel Johnson, director for Transportation, Planning and Development, TxDOT; and John Sedlak, vice president-planning, engineering and construction, Metropolitan Transit Authority, Houston.

Participants were invited to attend four technical sessions. The first session "Management of Water and Wastewater Systems" discussed the use of management concepts to maintain water systems and performance of pipes in wastewater applications. Daniel Krueger, deputy director, Public Works and Engineering Department, city of Houston discussed the management issues related to the capital improvement projects in Houston. Gary Oradat, executive director, Coastal Water Authority discussed the Luce Bayou Inter-basin Transfer Project and the issues related to funding the project. Rick Turkopp, technical manager, Hobas Pipe USA Inc. discussed some of the applications of fiberglass piles and presented case studies on some of this challenging project.

"Flooding and Stormwater Issues" speakers addressed methods for mitigating and assessing the flood damage. Mike Talbott, director, Harris County Flood Control District, presented newer concepts, based on environmentally friendly solutions, for Harris County, TX. Tom Beck, TxDOT discussed their plans for stormwater management. Andy Icken, deputy director, Public Works and Engineering-Houston, talked about Houston's plans for storm water management.

Other sessions

Two other sessions were on hurricanes and expansive soils and deep foundations. A presentation on hurricanes was delivered by Adrindam Chowdry from the International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC), Florida International University, Miami, FL. Ron Langston, geotechnical program manager, Harris County Flood Control District, discussed the issues related to the slope stability of embankments in the area. Marshall Addison, geotechnical consultant, discussed the cyclic foundation movements on expansive clays and methods of remediation.

On the session on "Deep Foundations," Professor Dan Brown (Auburn University, Alabama), presented "Special Consideration for Construction of Large Drilled Shaft Foundation." He discussed the major issues related to the drilling, reinforcing and concrete of very large diameter drilled shafts. Also methods used for quality control of the drilled shafts were discussed. Professor C. Vipulanandan discussed the recent advances in designing, monitoring, modeling and testing deep foundations in North America.

A reception followed the technical sessions in the exhibit area where there were posters on research activities at CIGMAT and in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Several grouting, pipe, material suppliers, wastewater rehabilitation companies and engineering companies participated in the exhibition.

Proceedings will be available on the CIGMAT Web site at: www.cigmat.cive.uh.edu. CIGMAT-2008 will be held on March 7, 2008 at the University Hilton, University of Houston.

The act also offers incentives to states to leverage technology in order to prevent incidents and lower the call-out rates for operators.

The act also raises the matching share that the federal government will provide to states for state pipeline-safety programs over the next six years from 50 percent to 80 percent for every dollar spent by states.

The act also authorizes emergency response management and training grants to state and local governments for the training of emergency responders to protect the public and environment from pipeline accidents.

Other provisions of the PIPES Act address providing the public with more information regarding pipeline enforcement actions; bring direct sales lateral pipelines under federal oversight by including them in the definition of a gas pipeline facility; and authorize a phased addition of 45 federal inspection and enforcement personnel to the agency's pipeline safety program by 2010.

In Memoriam

Robert H. Hamil passed away Feb. 21. Hamil was a heavy equipment operator in the 1960s and 1970s when his natural ability and skills as a utility welder and mechanic brought him to one of the first projects in the Houston area that involved horizontal directional drilling (HDD). The project involved a crossing of Greens Bayou that was carried out by Titan Contractors. After only a month on that project he became hooked on HDD. A few years later he was asked by Don Hardin to help build the first rack and pinion HDD rigs for BERCO, which was an adaptation of Baker Manufacturing's jack-up work boat.

In 1983, when Don Hardin and Hugh O'Donnell started Spie HDI, Hamil was the driving force behind the new and improved second generation rack and pinion rigs, of which he built four in just two years.

In 1989, Hamil teamed up with Marcus Laney, Dickey Laney and Steve Laney, to form Laney Directional Drilling Co., to design, build and operate some of the most successful HDD rigs to date. Laney Drilling has now grown into one of the world's leading HDD contractors.

Lionel ("Scotty") H. Scott of Tinley Park, died on April 3. Scott was born in Chicago, IL, on October 9, 1927, son of Lionel Herbert & Alma H. (Butler) Scott, brother of Alma E. and Edward H (deceased). He served as a Merchant Marine in WWII. Scott and his wife, Ann M. O'Malley (deceased) were married for 51 years.

Scott started a successful career in marketing at the Farley Company in 1957, becoming executive vice president. He left in 1972 when he founded Publisher's Resource Inc., an industrial marketing firm (Oildom Publishing magazines are represented by Publisher's Resource). After retiring in 1999, Scotty focused his energy on his family and community service.

Scott is survived by his children Edward (Pamela); Susan (Terry) Fanis; Barbara (John) McBlain; William (Maureen); Richard; Mary (Duane) Zube; Michael (Susan); grandchildren Linda and Kate Fanis; William, Angela and Matthew Scott, Mark Rateike; Jenny Vrba; Alex Scott; Christine Kral; Dana, Miranda and Chelsea Zube; Lauren and Scott McBlain; and great grandson, Andrew Rateike. ■