



Hydro-Excavation

Eases Fiber-Optic Cable Installation At Wyoming Oil Storage Facility

Installing a half-mile of underground fiber-optic cable isn't an unusual job for telecommunications contractor Americom Technology Inc. But when a maze of oil pipelines crisscrossing the cable route adds complexity, difficulty and possible danger to an otherwise routine project, Americom turns to hydro-excavation technology to get the job done quickly and safely.

Americom faced this situation recently at a large oil storage facility in Ft. Laramie, WY. Despite the buried pipelines and other underground infrastructure, Americom completed the project in just eight working

days, using a Vactor HXX Hydro-Excavator to trench more than a football field's length each day without disrupting or damaging any of the underground installations.

The project included installing, terminating and testing more than 2,500 feet of high-capacity fiber-optic cable to enable remote control and monitoring of various valves and pumps at the Ft. Laramie tank farm. Americom's Project Superintendent Pat Berkholt said the excavation depth ranged from 24 to 30 inches to maintain a safe distance between the cable and the underground oil pipelines.

"Hydro excavation gives us some important advantages on these kinds of projects," said Randy Hawks, operations manager for Salt Lake City-based Americom Technology. "In fact, for a job like this one at the oil depot in Wyoming, there's no other choice. Excavating with a backhoe would be crazy, with the high likelihood of a pipeline strike. Digging by hand would take more than a month, which is expensive and still somewhat dangerous given the situation.

"Using a hydro-excavator is much safer and more efficient than any other method. Digging with pressurized water almost eliminates the risk of damaging any pipes in the ground. And vacuum excavation removes the material while you're digging, which helps the operator see what he's excavating. For this kind of application, you can't beat what we're doing with the hydro-excavator in terms of safety, speed and performance."

Excavated material that is vacuumed into the Vactor HXX unit's 12 cubic yard debris tank may be backfilled into a completed utility trench, stockpiled on the job site, or taken off-site for disposal or reclamation. A high-capacity, 1,300-gallon water tank feeds a variable-volume, 10-gallon-per-minute water pump to keep the hydro-excavator on the job for long periods without needing a refill.

Vacuum tech versatile

Hawks said Americom uses its two hydro-excavator trucks for a variety of projects, most of which involve sighting underground cabling installations, but also include applications such as excavating footings for towers that carry high-voltage power lines and excavating sewer lines and other utility installations. He noted the vacuum technology is appropriate for cleaning spills and controlling excess mud around drilling rigs and other equipment.

"We use the hydro-excavators day in and day out. They're a dependable mainstay of our operations," said Hawks, who noted the company operates a full fleet of construction equipment, trucks and drilling rigs.

Founded in 1981, Americom Technology is a single-source telecommunications construction and installation contractor, providing turnkey design, integration, certification and support for information transport systems including structured cabling, IP telephony, telephone and voicemail networking, as well as wireless and physical pathway solutions. While the company concentrates on serving the Mountain West region, it has worked on projects for public utilities and private companies throughout the country.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- *Contractor: Americom Technology Inc., (801) 627-3171, americomtech.com*
- *Vacuum Excavator: Vactor Manufacturing, (800) 627-3171, or visitvactor.com.*