

Many Facets of a Construction Project Require Due Diligence



The city of Enterprise is installing more than two miles of 8-inch force sewer main to the existing lagoon on the joint use project at Detroit. Four days after this photo was taken, this entire valley was covered by more than three feet of water.

The summer construction season is upon us. Here in the city of Enterprise we have two projects to be completed this summer season. One is a street project; the other is a long-awaited replacement of our old aerated wastewater treatment lagoons. The wastewater project involves installing just a little more than two miles of 8-inch force main, construction of an additional cell on the Dickinson County SD No. 3 existing non-discharging lagoons, a river bore as well as a railroad and highway bore.

The key to this project is the fact that more than half of the two miles of pipe lays in river bottom ground. It's ground that easily floods. When we had the pre-construction conference the general contractor said it would

start raining as soon as he signed the contract. He was right. As reported in the news here in the Enterprise area the Smoky Hill River did indeed flood. Much of the route for the new force main was covered with more than three feet of water for more than two weeks.

Any project can expect delays of one type or another, but the time it takes for ground to dry enough after having three feet of water covering it can greatly delay a project. Other issues have derailed progress. Railroads can often cause delays. There are permits to obtain and each rail company has their own set of rules to play by. The engineer for our project had obtained the needed permit but this rail

company also requires a third-party observer be present while the bore occurs. Our engineer had language in our contract that detailed who was responsible for contacting the third-party observer and who was responsible for paying that expense. A subcontractor was kicked off the railroad property by the rail company for not having the third-party observer present. Then the finger pointing began, and the contract came out and clearly defined who was responsible for the third-party observer. The point to be taken from this issue is that project owners need an experienced engineering firm that has encountered such situations as well as having legal staff review all contracts prior to the execution of the contracts to protect your system's interests in a project.

Then came the flood. I am a fifth generation of my family in the Enterprise community. I have personally been through three floods in my lifetime. I have a good idea of where the water will go. I told the contractor laying the pipe he needed to get his equipment to high ground. They thought



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it was on high enough ground. That was not the case! During the peak of the flood they had to move a dozer and a very large trencher to even higher ground. Not only does this area flood, part of it has swift currents and an emergency pipe retrieval had to occur. Bundles of pipe had been placed along the route and were in danger of being swept downstream as the river had enveloped our old treatment lagoons.

We have finally gone a week without significant rain. Our contractor was back and could only lay 760 feet of pipe until being shut down by mud. This project will eventually be finished and I am sure we will be hit by other surprises and before you know it, the leaves will be falling and the 2019 construction season will come to an end.

Comments on the conference; loss of a strong KRWA supporter

This year has been a busy year and I was pleased with another record attendance set at the annual KRWA annual conference and exposition. It was a great getting to meet new friends at the conference as well as connecting with old friends. A familiar face was absent from the conference this year though the quilts she pieced were again coveted prizes.

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Kathleen Ronnebaum, the spouse of our KRWA General Manager, passed away on May 7. "Kate" suffered from bulbar ALS for the past three years. Not only did Kate make 100 quilts that have been given as prizes at KRWA's conferences, her diligent quilting has ensured some quilts for future conferences. Kate was not only a prolific quilt designer, she was a staunch supporter of the Association. She did so without Elmer's presence many times while he spent many days and nights on Association work that kept him from being home.

Kate's experience as an educator assisted our scholarship committee by creating a grading system for the applicants making our committee's job much easier. Kate will be missed but her mark on our Association will live on for decades to come.

Paul Froelich is City Superintendent at Enterprise, Kansas. Since 1983, he has worked extensively in law enforcement, emergency management and municipal operations. He holds numerous accreditations in Emergency Management and Fire and is a certified water and wastewater operator.




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