



Cost-Effective Clean

Sewer and catch basin cleaner complements county's proactive maintenance

By Barb Cooper

A proactive maintenance program and a cost-effective sewer and catch basin cleaner enable Saratoga County, located 30 miles north of Albany, N.Y., to provide its 125,000 residents with a reliable sewer system with minimal blockages. Even in the face of winters that average more than 40 in. of snow and extended periods of subzero weather, plus the area's rapid commercial and residential expansion, the county's maintenance initiative ensures optimal performance of all 333 miles of sewer line.

Proactive Maintenance

Every spring and fall, Saratoga County Sewer District (SCSD) personnel clean sewer lines and the county's 100 pump stations. As a result of the consistent, thorough effort, the county experiences only minimal blockages annually. By contrast, a

drain located on the front of the debris collector body, the county can clean six wet wells before the debris tank needs unloading.

"Those features of the Camel not only make us more efficient, but also save time and fuel since we make fewer trips to dump sites," said SCSD Maintenance Mechanic Jim Vedder, who has been on the front lines of the maintenance effort for 25 years.

Equipment Efficiency

The cleaner's positive-displacement pump is another feature that contributes to the county's sewer maintenance and cleaning efforts. Unlike sewer and catch basin units with a centrifugal fan that only provides one mode of vacuuming, the Camel features a positive-displacement vacuum system that offers three modes: air conveyance, pure vacuum and a combination of air conveyance and pure vacuum that utilizes a fluidizing tube.

"We have found that the combination of air conveyance and pure vacuum—which can pick up material as far as 75 ft below the liquid level—gives us the optimal solution for removing material at the bottom of a pump station without the need to evacuate the liquids," Vedder said. "That enables us to eliminate removing and

disposing of the water."

When compared with dual-engine units, a sewer and catch basin cleaner with a single engine design saves money because operating and maintenance costs are lower. In a dual-engine centrifugal fan unit, the drive engine needs to run the fan at maximum

speed. Fuel consumption is constant whether the vacuum tube is moving air or material. The positive-displacement vacuum pump, however, only needs to run as fast as material is being removed. Fuel consumption is directly proportional to the work being done.

Customer Service

"The SCSD is available 24/7 to respond to customer concerns and issues," Vedder said. "As soon as we get a report of a blockage, we go to the location and assess the situation."

Vedder also noted that the cleaner's ease of use means that one person can respond to an emergency call and solve the problem. It also enables personnel to maneuver in space-restricted areas without damaging property. The fact that county workers can clear blockages quickly is not only important for preventing sewage from backing up into basements, but also for preventing overflows of sewage into streets.

"With our severe winters, reliable, durable equipment is essential," Vedder said. "Another feature that we find valuable is the winter recirculation package. All I have to do is connect the end of the sewer hose to a fitting and turn a ball valve, and the water system can be operated while I drive down the road. This keeps the water moving continuously throughout the entire system to prevent it from freezing. We also have an air-purge system that is designed to completely blow out the water system using the chassis air." **SWS**

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The county's new cleaner features a dewatering/compaction system and a positive-displacement pump.

study by the National Urban Institute indicated that every year municipalities experience an average of 827 backups per 1,000 miles of sewer pipe.

Using a Camel sewer and catch basin cleaner from Super Products LLC, which has a dewatering and compaction system to remove excess liquid through