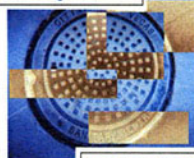




Sewer Operations



Engineering Services

The Connection

September 23, 2004, Fall Edition

SEWERS HOSTS SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION

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Africans
Visit
Vancouver

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Benchmarking. There's that word again and it seems to keep popping up all over the place.

So what is benchmarking and why do we keep mentioning it? Well, simply put, benchmarking is the measurements of performance standards which allows us to compare our work and see how we stack up against other sewer utilities, and municipalities across North America and the World.

So how come a delegation from South Africa traveled across the World to ask us about our experiences with benchmarking here in Vancouver? Well, to answer that question we have to journey back in time.

In 2003, the Sewers Branch joined a number of other Canadian cities in a benchmarking initiative sponsored by engineering consultants Earth Tech Canada Inc. At the time, Sewer Operations was responsible for collecting and compiling maintenance figures for the entire year of 2002. This was...
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Delegation of Municipal Politicians and Water Utility Professionals tour Stanley Park (above), and the Annacis Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (below).





South Africans Interested in our Experience

not an easy task as approximately 20,000 work records had to be screened then tabulated in order to produce results.

Sewer Support Services with the steady help of Mike Moor completed the first draft of the submission of maintenance records within about six weeks, a time frame that impressed Earth Tech's Chris Lombard especially as this was the first time the City had contributed to the initiative.

By March of 2003, both Sewer Operations and Sewer Design had finished their benchmarking and the completed submission was sent to Earth Tech so they could prepare the 2002 group graphs for all 38 of the participating municipalities.

In early April of 2003, representatives from Sewer Operations attended a National Benchmarking Initiative Workshop sponsored by Earth Tech that was held in Vancouver. During the five day event, members primarily from Cities and Regions across Canada, attended break-out sessions intended to encourage discussions about data collection, best practices, performance measures and a variety of other topics.

By the end of the conference it appeared that Vancouver's wastewater utility was an industry leader in terms of how we maintain, regulate, replace and in general manage our collection system.

In the Summer of 2004, Earth Tech's Chris Lombard having worked closely with Sewer Support Services asked us to make a presentation to a group of visiting South Africans interested in pursuing benchmarking for their respective townships and utilities.

The mission to Canada is the first phase for the group who consist of eight representatives from the South African Association of Water Utilities, South African Local Government Association, Water Boards and Municipalities. Visits to selected water and wastewater utilities located in Southern Ontario and Vancouver were arranged by Earth Tech in order for the South Africans to reflect on a design for their own benchmarking management model.

On Friday September 17, Sewer Design, Sewer Operations, and Water Operations offered the South African delegation a 3.5 hour power point presentation on our wastewater collection and water distribution systems and how we separately approach and accomplish benchmarking.

A number of questions were raised by the delegates, who by the end of the presentation seemed highly impressed with the passion and attitude City employees had for the benchmarking initiative as well as the original challenge of piecing the 2002 data set together in a relative short span of time.

We wish our new colleagues and friends the best of luck in reaching their goal of designing their own benchmarking management model.



A nice sunny day for the South African tour of Annacis Island