

OCDC Wins Top National Award With Sewer-Riding Hydrosled

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It's a sled that rides waves of sewage and uses the force of the flowing muck passing underneath to clean sewer pipes. It's the "hydrosled" and it was the principal reason why the Oakland County Drain Commissioner's (OCDC) office captured the 2007 National Environmental Achievement Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA).

NACWA will officially present the award at its summer conference in July in Cleveland.

"I'm extremely pleased with this recognition because it shows that technical innovation and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand," said Oakland County Drain Commissioner John P. McCulloch.

Inland Waters Pollution Control, Inc. (IWPC), a Detroit industrial and environmental services contracting firm, engineered and fabricated the hydrosled for the OCDC at a cost of \$21,000.

McCulloch said that the hydrosled, which is about three feet wide, two feet tall and weighs about 300 pounds, "has more than paid for itself."

"Before utilizing the hydrosled, conventional cleaning methods of jetting and vacuuming pipes proved both costly and ineffective compared to the hydrosled. A typical cleaning often required multiple passes and cost about \$125 per foot of pipe," McCulloch said.

"The hydrosled, on the other hand, requires just one pass and does a better job and does it for less than half the cost," he said. "Recently, we used it to remove about 250 cubic yards of sand, gravel, and large rocks from a large sewer pipe between Pontiac and Waterford Township, at a cost of \$52 per foot.

"We saved nearly \$577,000 on that one project alone," McCulloch said. "I'm proud of the award, but I'm especially pleased with the money we saved on behalf of the citizens of Oakland County."

NACWA represents the interests of the country's wastewater treatment agencies and environmental practitioners. It maintains a key role in the development of environmental legislation, and works closely with federal regulatory agencies in the implementation of environmental programs.