

Pilot project for septage issue under way

Dignitaries watch demonstration at Eganville treatment plant

BY HEATHER KENDALL
Staff Reporter

The Townships of Bonnechere Valley and North Algona Wilberforce joined Bishop Aquatic Technologies in holding a demonstration of septage dewatering at Eganville's WasteWater Treatment plant on Tuesday August 9.

According to Bishop spokesperson Marcie Campbell, the project began when Don Bishop read an article in a local newspaper about the challenges facing Renfrew County over septage handling. He approached Reeve Harold Weckworth of North Algona Wilberforce Township and Mayor Zig Mintha of Bonnechere Valley Township with the idea of using Geotubes. Mintha and Weckworth felt this approach could work, and arranged to have the process explained to other municipal associates.

Septage is the matter that is pumped out of septic and holding tanks.

At the demonstration, Weckworth stated that there was some urgency to finding a solution to septage, because the ministry will ban the spread of septage in fields soon. He said septage dewatering was much better than trucking the sludge to Ottawa.

There are three stages to the Geotube dewatering process. First, the sludge or dredged waste goes into the Geotube container, which is fabricated with permeable geotextiles that have uniquely designed retention properties. This tubes look like a huge black bag. The excess water then drains from the tube through small pores in the geotextiles. As the volume reduces, the tube can be filled again. The drained water is returned to the waste water treatment plant for further treatment.

The final stage is consolidation. After as much water as possible is removed, and the tube can no longer be "topped up," the remaining material continues to consolidate because any residual water vapor escapes through the geotextile. The tube (also referred to as "bag" at the demonstration) can hold 40-50,000 gallons of septage, which translates into 25-30 truck loads.

Marcie Campbell said that once the process is complete and the bag emptied, the bag can then be recycled and used for road building or structures.

Paul Lefevbre, district manager of Ashland, Drew Industrial, demonstrated how the use of a polymer additive to the sludge speeds up the process. The treated sludge separates solids from water more easily, which in turn allows the water to drain more

quickly. The remaining solid material is also easier to handle.

Andrew Polley of the Ministry of Environment explained how the trial will work. He said that the primary dewatering will take place at the facility, with the solids retained in the bag. When the bag is full, and no more liquid can be removed, it will be taken to a test field. There, it will be monitored and tested over a period of time for such things as e-coli. Once the project is complete, the material will be taken out of the bag and spread on the test field.

In answer to a question about composting, Polley said the organic mass is compostable, and could go through a compost system; alternately, it could be used for top-dressing at a landfill. He also said that the ministry is very supportive of the project. Polley congratulated the local politicians for being proactive in finding a solution to the septage problem.

The County of Renfrew commissioned a study to find solutions to the septage problem; the consultants came back with four or five options, and dewatering was one of them. Township of Madawaska Valley Councillor Sylvie Yantha was at the demonstration with Operations Manager Hilary Kutchkoskie. Yantha stated that, while he found the display very interesting, all options, including dewatering, would be studied before a selection is made. Kutchkoskie mentioned liming as a possible solution. Yantha said there was still time to make the right choice for the township.

Township of Killaloe-Hagarty-Richards Reeve Janice Bush was also in attendance. She thought the demonstration was excellent, and was happy to have been invited. She felt that this pilot project was being done the right way, and congratulated Reeve Weckworth and Mayor Mintha for their efforts. She was initially concerned about how the system would work during cold weather, but felt the organizers were taking this problem into consideration.

She also said educating the public about having septic tanks pumped out in spring, summer or fall would help. Bush added that Polley suggested tanks be pumped out every three years, and said there is a possibility that legislation will be introduced to this effect. The municipalities would be in charge of policing, which would be a difficult task.

The pilot project is expected to run for about three months.

Once all of the data is compiled and reviewed, a final report should be ready in February or March.



Paul Lefevbre, district manager of Ashland, Drew Industrial gives a demonstration on how adding polymer to the sludge speeds up the separation process.



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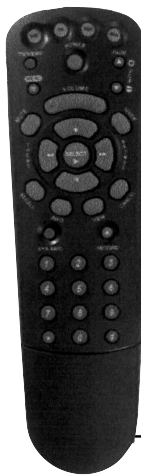
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