



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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No more illusions about sustainability

Avenhorn, The Netherlands. Drive along any European road in mid summer and the mirage from the heat issuing from its tarmac surface is inescapable. But that illusion may now be exorcised by a Dutch company that has succeeded in turning the experience into valuable geothermal energy, thanks to flexible plastic pipes!

The firm called Ooms Avenhorn Holding BV has embedded the pipes within tarmac along a stretch of road and beneath a car park in the North of Holland. By absorbing solar heat, the tarmac exchanges the freely available energy through the plastic pipes. The water is stored within aquifers and can be used later in the year to prevent the road from freezing over or for example, to heat buildings. The system may also be applied to cool office buildings.

The investment required for this sustainable solution is not insignificant and payback is long term. However, with spiralling energy costs, environmental experts argue that these kinds of methods offer tangible returns as well as lower carbon emissions. Moreover, domestic geothermal systems that incorporate plastic pipe technology have been used extensively in the south of France. They have proved their commercial and sustainable worth within the medium term.

Largest plastic pipe conference ever

Budapest. Organisers of the XIV Pipes Conference expect this year's event to be the largest ever. The conference brings together the global plastic pipe community and will be held from 22 - 24 September 2008 at the Marriott Hotel in Budapest.

The previous event in Washington in October 2006 attracted 450 attendees from over 35 countries. According to Dr. David Walton, Marketing manager, Borouge Pipes: "After more than 70 years, our knowledge of plastic pipe technology is still continuously expanding. Important developments will be announced during the course of this conference. Key subjects of papers will involve market issues, plastic pipeline solutions, application areas and pipe system developments."

Plastic pipe systems are making important inroads in Central Eastern Europe. Frank Jones, director of the BPF Plastic Pipes Group explains: "This year's premier conference takes place at a turning point for the industry and especially for the region. The pace of plastics conversion is now accelerating in every application and on every continent. The reasons are clear: the poor legacy of competitive pipe materials, concern for climate change and attendant water shortage and surfeit coupled with a wider appreciation for the benefits of plastic pipe systems."

The conference will certainly be addressing the environmental side. Key address speaker for the previous conference was Jean-Michel Cousteau. "It is perhaps time we should stop talking about climate change and start thinking about how to create a mind change," says Jones. "If the world were to invest in a sustainable future by using plastic pipes, many water issues would be solved. We would have leak free distribution of water, more economic irrigation techniques and improved drainage and flood control."

The three-day schedule will comprise the presentation of about ninety papers, a trade exhibition and a social programme. As many as 600 participants are expected.

Technical information will not be the only resource on offer: communication will also be a valuable medium. Zoran Davidovski, Vice President Marketing of Pipelife and Chairman of the Organising Committee comments: "The conference is always an ideal meeting place for delegates and the latest ideas from utility companies, technical and certification institutes, plastic pipe companies, equipment manufacturers, compound makers and other suppliers."

Plastic Pipes XIV is organised by TEPPFA, PE 100 +, PVC4Pipes and the Plastics Pipe Institute. For more information:
<http://www.ppxiv.com>

Lighten the load

Grudziadz, Poland. Modern viaducts have to be built for strength if they are to accommodate heavy road traffic and steel pipes. But replace these pipes with the plastic variety as is the case with a pioneering road project in central Poland, then the resulting pipe structure exerts a lighter load. It is also air tight, extremely durable and as expert civil engineers have proved, easy to install.

The Diameter Route project in Grudziadz is designed to limit traffic density by bypassing the city centre. Financed by the European Regional Development Fund, this three-stage scheme involved the construction of a 260-metre viaduct to link an existing intersection with a collector road.

Until recently, engineering designers relied on steel pipes as their component of choice in similar projects. Instead, Weholite (PE-HD) pipes from KWH Pipe were used to lighten the load. As noted by Mr. Wojciech Fedorońko of Mosty Łódź, the contractor responsible for all the bridgeworks in the development: "Steel pipes are not only significantly heavier than plastic pipes but also susceptible to damage from chemicals and adverse environmental factors."

In total, 900 metres of polyethylene pipes in 600 – 800 mm diameter were delivered to the construction site. They were customised in sections to match the dimensions of the viaduct spans and reinforcement structure precisely. They were also fitted with stub pipes (condensate drainage system), which were cut to size at the installation site according to customer specifications.

After the prerequisite construction work on the viaduct was completed, the pipes were then sealed, hoisted by crane and placed between reinforcement bars of the viaduct spans. The pipes were then secured with additional reinforcement to prevent ejection by uplift force during the pumping of concrete. Pumping concrete grout into the spans constituted the final stage of the installation.

According to the contractors overseeing the project, everything went smoothly and to plan. The viaduct's structure has thus become lighter and its service life due to the exceptional qualities of polyethylene has been extended. Furthermore, as the volume of air in the pipes is 430 m³, which constitutes almost 14 percent of the volume of the ferro-concrete structure, savings were made in the use of concrete grout and reinforcing steel.

Source: Pipe World

Good pipeline connections in The Netherlands

The Hague. The international Water Association has opened a major operational office in The Hague to further its collaboration with international partners in the water sector. The choice of The Netherlands is excellent. The Dutch have demonstrated their civil engineering skills in the field of water management for several centuries. Today, plastic pipes are used in the country throughout the utilities, civils and building sectors and encompass many applications.

As Paul Reiter, IWA Executive Director says: "The Hague office offers us a myriad of opportunities to partner with the scientific, consultant, utility and industrial communities that are pro-actively engaged in solving problems of water supply and sanitation in both developed and developing countries" said Paul Reiter, IWA Executive Director. "The role of the Dutch in this international context is remarkable, but perhaps not surprising given their experience in turning the threat of water into a strategic asset over a period of centuries. Here we find a utility structure better set up to tackle the issues in a holistic way when compared to many places in the world."

Water scarcity and thus stress has become an urgent global issue and the work of the IWA will therefore be influential in promoting solutions.

Further information: www.iwahq.org

Life is a Beach...

Philipsburg, N.A. Most barmen in the Caribbean are friendly and one in particular, is even environmentally friendly with his length of plastic gutter.

Danny from St. Maarten operates a bar out of a truck at Cupecoy Beach, close to the border of this tourist isle which is divided into Dutch and French sides.

Every day, to keep his drinks cool and his customers happy, Danny fills the back of his truck with ice. He also attaches a temporary two metre plastic gutter over the rear bumper of the truck and this drains the icy water away from the truck and into a plastic tub. The water in the tub is not wasted since Danny uses it to regularly wash his hands.

And before Danny finishes his long and truly tiring day on this lazy, thirsty tropical paradise, he scours the beach to collect any beer bottles or litter forsaken by their distracted owners. When he is sure that every scrap of discarded refuse is rescued from disappearing into the beautiful blue Caribbean Sea, he deposits it in a plastic bag – made in The Netherlands from recycled plastic materials.

His bar albeit organised from the back of a truck overlooks a bay where gas-guzzling mega yachts occasionally anchor. This perspective enables the great and glamorous yacht guests to admire the sensational sands that Danny has so dutifully inspected. They have never met Danny and probably never will.

Should they?

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