

CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT: Super Excavators

By Bill Wilson

MENOMONEE FALLS –Ray Schraufnagel founded Super Excavators Inc. in 1950, specializing in excavations for septic systems. Tunneling services were subsequently added, at first using hand-mining techniques.

In the early 1990s, the company took on larger projects using Tunnel Boring Machines. These included a job for the city of Kenosha. And, later that decade, Super Excavators added projects for the city of Milwaukee.

In 2013, Super Excavators and its experienced Operating Engineers provide a variety of underground services to municipalities, developers and businesses, from tunnel work to subdivision development.

The contractor has experience in soft-ground tunneling and rock tunneling, excavating spaces from 4 feet to 14 feet in diameter. Its capabilities range from using TBMs, to micro-tunneling, and include pipe-jacking, slip-lining and construction of large tunnels using ribs and lagging.

Some of the company's notable projects are the Combined Sewer Overflow Tunnel 034 and 035 in Indianapolis, the Highway 32/Sheridan Road project in Kenosha, the Trunk Interceptor Sewer in Marysville, Ohio, and the Sunnydale Auxiliary Sewer in San Francisco.



The tunnel in Indianapolis was designed to lower a floodplain and improve water quality on the east side of that city's downtown by capturing flow and consolidating two, major CSOs. Super Excavators installed a pre-cast liner 144 inches in diameter there in what was the first segment-lined tunnel completed for that community. The company received the American Society of Civil Engineers' award for its "Indiana Project of the Year 2006."

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation awarded the Highway 32/Sheridan Road project to Super Excavators in spring 2007. This entailed reconstructing the last leg of Highway 32 on Kenosha's north side. It was completed in several phases over two years.

A number of challenges were encountered including deep storm-sewer installations, dealing with contaminated soils, and working under traffic at all times. Crews also had to work around many utility lines.

The city of Marysville awarded a \$35.6 million contract to install the interceptor sewer and Super Excavators completed the job in December 2008 after two years of work. Super Excavators' crews installed 14,000 linear feet

of 60-inch microtunnel and more than 6,000 linear feet of 60-inch, open-cut at an average depth of 45 feet.

This project involved varying and difficult ground conditions near industrial and commercial areas of Marysville. The contractor completed the project a few months early and stayed within budget.

Super Excavators was awarded a \$37.5 million contract for the auxiliary sewer in San Francisco in 2010. This CSO tunnel was designed to prevent storm water from flooding homes near San Francisco Bay.

The project involved the excavation and lining of a 4,000-foot tunnel with pre-cast concrete segments.

Super Excavators used a Lovat Earth Pressure Balance Machine to install 9-inch thick pre-cast concrete segments having an inside diameter of 12 inches.

Crews for the contractor encountered numerous, undercrossing challenges: A major, four-track commuter rail for Caltrain, a street-level light-rail line, deeply buried utilities, and the eight-lane Highway 101.

For more information on Super Excavators, please visit the company's website at www.superexcavators.com

Editor's note: Bill Wilson is a Milwaukee-based, wage-and-hour investigator with Construction Business Group.

CBG, a valuable resource on prevailing wages

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However, sometimes double chip sealing can be considered new construction and might need to have a prevailing wage attached to it.

Additionally, a new rule states that highway departments are not allowed to combine forces except where the county road itself is the border between two counties. Only then can both bordering county highway departments work

on that road together. This rule was changed because, for years, county highway departments had no boundaries. They were allowed to travel the entire state doing construction projects.

As I stated earlier, taxpayers win when the competitive bidding process is used. The hard part is knowing how the work has been awarded and what the job's dollar value is to determine prevailing wage requirements.

Construction Business Group representatives are a great resource we can use to help make sense of all this. They spend a portion of their time being proactive by educating municipalities on these laws.

Remember, the majority of our tax dollars are spent by local-government people making these decisions for our communities. I hope everyone has a great work season.