

Work begins on sewer rehab

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

There probably were as many photographers at the start of the long-awaited sewer-lining, cured-in-place project in Farmington as there were workmen assigned Wednesday.

The rehabilitation project began Tuesday on Grand River east of Orchard Lake Road.

"It (the Farmington Interceptor) is about four miles," said Kevin Gushman, Department of Public Services director. "It starts here at Grand River and Orchard Lake and ends up in the Eight Mile and Telegraph area in Detroit."

The cost-saving project is necessary for the general public health and welfare because the sanitary sewer pipe has deteriorated.

The project drew film crews from the Southwest Oakland Cable Commission and Congressman Joe Knollenberg's office. Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Hills) was instrumental in securing a \$1.5 million Environmental Protection Act grant.

The grant is a 55-45 split. The city pays 45 percent. "It's very important to the city because it saves an awful lot of money," Knollenberg said. "It's technology which doesn't disrupt the streets. You don't have any street closures. People aren't put in any disadvantage and it's fast. It gives you 40-50 years more life."

The grant was secured because the City of Farmington did its homework. "The proposal was well thought out," Knollenberg said. "I thought it would be a good fit."

Eight years ago, lawmakers weren't at all impressed with it, Knollenberg said.

"I was one of the first to bring it to their attention," he said. "They said, 'You're kidding. Are we going to repair all the infrastructure in the country with federal money?'"

That changed, he said as of about two years ago. "The EPA is driving this with their mandate," Knollenberg said.



BILL BRISLER/OBSERVER

Relining old pipes has begun along a stretch of Grand River near Orchard Lake Road.

'It's very important to the city because it saves an awful lot of money.'

Joe Knollenberg
Congressman

If the project costs \$2.5 million, the city will use the entire \$1.5 million. If it doesn't the city will get less than the \$1.5 million, said City Manager Frank Lauhoff in an earlier interview.

Voters overwhelmingly approved \$1.8 million last November. In January, the city learned Knollenberg secured the grant.

Knollenberg was on site Wednesday, ready to answer questions and give interviews. He also chatted with Mayor Jim Mitchell and Farmington Councilwoman Mary Bush.

The company doing the work is experienced.

"We make our own liner," said Ken Quillen, field engineer for Insituform Technologies USA, Inc. "We build the liner to

specifications of the line, by diameter and thickness. We impregnate the liner with a resin to the desired length. We use water pressure to invert, or push the liner inside out, through the line. We cure the resin using hot water."

Quillen expects that they will work on 500-1,000 feet a day, depending on location and size. "The liner is made out of a polyurethane coating and polyester felt material."

"It becomes a pipe within a pipe," he said.

Locally, Insituform's largest contract in Michigan is in the City of Detroit. The company has worked in Southfield, Ferndale and Centerline, among others.

Michael Hachigian, construction engineer for Orchard,

Hiltz & McCliment, Inc., explained his company set up the contract and put the job out to bid. Insituform has a seven-man crew working on the lining portion.

"Insituform has another crew about a mile ahead of the lining crew which is videotaping the existing sanitary sewer for any repairs before the liner goes in place," Hachigian said.

"The condition of the pipe was checked several months ago through a TV videotape inspection method," Gushman said.

"We don't believe there will have to be any repairs to the line. We want to make sure the conditions haven't changed since we originally TV'd it," he said.

The main objection of the line is to eliminate excavation. "This doesn't disturb residential and business properties," Hachigian said.

"It's a cost savings because, otherwise, sidewalks and roads would have to be dug up," Gushman said.

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