

News from Public Works Board, Water Policy Board, and Municipal Wastewater Committee Meetings

- Winterizing of the irrigation rigs began to wrap up as the harvest drew to a close in mid-November. Thankfully, necessary work was completed before the first snow arrived.
- The soybean harvest was completed in October. Thanks to a great growing season, our yields were above average and we finished at about 57 bushels per acre across the entire farm. All of the soybean ground was planted with an oat cover crop and the rig tracks in these fields were filled with the new track filler. We are very impressed with the machine's effectiveness and its ability to cover over 100 acres per hour!
- Technical and mechanical issues with the grain drying system equipment created a few headaches at the beginning of the harvest season, but when it is running properly will still effectively dry over 1000 bushels per hour. The new Dryer Master Control Panel installed this summer has given us the ability to continually monitor the drying process from our computer or smartphones.



One of the Wastewater's resident Bald Eagles
(wildlife photos courtesy of Louise Olson).



"These are not the droids you are looking for." It looks like a droid assembly line from a Star Wars flick, but it's really a pair of hydraulic motors before and after being serviced in the Farm shop.

- NPDES reports during the past quarter had no instances of noncompliance for the Muskegon Metro facility or for the Whitehall facility.
- The hut at the influent sampling point had insulation installed in October and has reduced the amount of freezing of the sample line during the winter months.
- Lagoon elevation on January 25 was 686.3 ft. with 2,926,000 gallons stored. Hauled waste flow for January was 1.4 million gallons, 17.6% lower than it was this time last year.
- Jackson-Merkey Contractors was awarded the contract for sludge removal in Cell #3 which started just after Thanksgiving. Until the cold weather halted their efforts, they had pumped out about 70% of the sludge. They will resume the project when the weather gets warmer.

- The farm recently purchased a sandblasting unit to prep our rebuilds, and it is working wonderfully. Our past practice was to hire an outside company to do our annual sandblasting. We will save hundreds of dollars per year doing the work ourselves.
- Old communitors are currently being removed and will be replaced soon with the new "wipes ready" Monster Muffin communitors. These are due to arrive very soon and will be installed immediately.
- The average daily wastewater flow received at the treatment plant in January was 11.9 million gallons per day, 4.8 % lower than the same period last year.

Ashley Hibbard
Wastewater's new custodian



- DVT Electric was selected as the contractor to do the electrical upgrade of the Irrigation Pump Station #3. They will begin work on the project as soon as the weather breaks. Three of the pumps at this station have been sent out to be rebuilt. These pumps are around 26 years old and it is amazing that they lasted such a long time.
- Bids were received to have an epoxy coating applied to C Station's wet well. The work can't be performed until the summer. The purpose of the coating is to remedy an observed degradation of the concrete walls of the lift station and also in some manholes near the lift station.
- Wastewater staff met with foresters to get quotes on developing a forest management plan.
- The Wastewater is currently in the process of acquiring some additional property around the Keating pump station which will allow us to enclose the area with fencing.



The newly-built seed vacuum system, which makes for easy, fast cleanup of the corn planter.

- Our farm operators have been working on various projects over the past month. One of these projects was fabricating a seed vacuum system. One of the biggest troubles for the farm is cleaning out the corn planter when switching from one variety of seed to another. That's where the new seed vacuum system (left) comes in. It takes the pain out of cleaning, which makes plot planting more efficient.
- The request for bids for the Montague Station upgrades was promulgated on February 26. A pre-bid meeting will take place at the Wastewater on March 3. Bids are due on March 23.



Old communitors being removed from C-Station.

**Britney Nicolai,
Wastewater Laboratory Technician**



Personnel News

Congratulations to Larry Coleman, Mark Stockwell, and Tom Strach on their retirement from the Wastewater on September 30, 2015

- Welcome Wastewater's newest staff additions:
Britney Nicolai, Laboratory Technician
Ashley Hibbard, Custodian
Allen Parsons, Irrigation Technician
- On January 4, 2016, the Department of Public Works welcomed Mike Hysell as the new Building Maintenance Supervisor/Master Electrician for Facilities Management. Mike will be in charge of overseeing day-to-day activities of the maintenance mechanics and will also be in the field addressing work orders.

