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Taking the Heat Off: Bulldog Diving LLC Allows New Jersey Municipality To Minimize Time Offline for Required Maintenance

Rockport, Ind. – A newly installed liner was leaking at several joints in a 72-inch diameter sewer pipe servicing a major New Jersey Municipality, and Bulldog Diving was brought in for their special skill set in problem-solving for particularly difficult challenges others throw up their hands at.

Problem

After the new liner was installed on a deteriorating sewer line, a CCTV inspection revealed that several joints were still leaking. Multiple East Coast dive companies were called, but due to the complexity of the project, none wanted the job. Bulldog Diving was called in from the Midwest to attempt a repair. Based on their experience and expertise, they felt confident that they could affect a successful solution. Every aspect of this job was a challenge, but they had faith in their proven problem-solving abilities.



Solution

In general, and especially on large-diameter lines, sewers do not have valves. Therefore, regular flows to the required work area could not be stopped, and bypassing 80 million gallons per day to install an interior seal was not practical. As often is the case in their work, the Bulldog Diving team was left with an incredibly difficult job, due to limited access and available technology options.

Consulting with the utility, Bulldog determined that active sewer flow could be stopped, but only for 90 to 120 minutes once in each 24-hour period, for the dive team to access the repair location, which was up to 690 feet into the sewer line. Making the most of a low-flow window from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am, they installed two 72-inch inflatable plugs a mile upstream, to stop flow long enough to make the repair.

Miller Pipeline Weko-Seal internal pipe seals were chosen by the client as the repair technology, prior to Bulldog Diving accepting the project. “This seal was probably why most others declined to do the project,” explains company president

Bram Williams, “as it is very difficult in these conditions.” Divers had to wear heavy dive helmets, even though the flow water itself was only 12 inches deep, due to the potential presence of H2S gas and the possibility of a plug blowout. Maneuvering freely under the weight and bulk of this helmet was challenging and uncomfortable for the divers. This was among the experiences that led Williams to develop Bulldog’s patent-pending lightweight, topside MK3 Air Helmet.

In fact, the job wasn’t just difficult, it was downright dangerous. A plug blowout was almost a certainty, as sewage would be backing up behind it, exerting enormous pressure. Prior to actual installation, divers didn’t know how long the two 72-inch plugs would stop flow before being overcome. As it turned out, after 90 minutes of blockage, sewage buildup pushed past the plugs, forcing workers to urgently vacate the pipe.

They had to learn quickly how to work within this window. A 72-inch Weko-Seal has multiple, very heavy parts, requiring two men per each install. This physical challenge meant some teams were more efficient than others, presenting a constant need for Bulldog’s topside crew to closely monitor conditions to keep their divers safe.

Despite these challenges, the divers penetrated the line and were able to successfully install the Weko-Seal and the interior seal, to stop the leaking joints.

Result

All seals were successfully installed at Bulldog’s quoted price. The asset owner was satisfied, and Bulldog’s customer—the liner company—was able to claim its project completion retainer.

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Bulldog Diving Services has been providing underwater and marine services to the inshore industrial sector throughout the United States since 1991. They provide cleaning, repair, maintenance and recovery services to a wide array of industries, including power generating plants, sewage systems, paper and package manufacturers, and marine construction companies, among others. Bulldog Diving has an excellent track record of working efficiently and cost effectively in often difficult conditions, while adhering to rigorous safety standards for themselves and their clients. Bulldog also holds the patent to the Ultra Lite MK3 Topside Air Helmet. Designed by real-world users, this lightweight, positive pressure air helmet provides protection, comfort and mobility for divers who must sometimes work above surface in a multitude of confined spaces with toxic fume potential. Learn more at <https://bulldogdiving.com>.

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