

Iowa Group Providing Wastewater Treatment for Habitat Homes

The Iowa Onsite Waste Water Association (IOWWA) began working with Habitat for Humanity in 2003 to rehabilitate 21 homes whose wastewater needs were originally served at a lagoon near Waverly, Iowa.

With IOWWA's 2006 installation workshops, eight of the homes on the abandoned cold war military base known as Heartland Hills now have state-of-the-art water treatment and dispersal systems. Seven of the eight homes completed to date are now occupied by families that otherwise would not be able to own their own homes.

Doug Bird, catalyst for connecting IOWWA and the Heartland Hills Habit Project, is a past president of IOWWA and the public health officer in Bremer County, the project's home county. "The IOWWA board saw numerous reasons to get involved with Habitat," said Bird. "First, on-site wastewater treatment technology and equipment met the location's need because continued service to the lagoon was no longer possible. It was also a worthy service project for our organization to provide and we could use the installations as training opportunities for industry professionals."

The Heartland Hills project allows IOWWA the opportunity to host installation and maintenance workshops at the site. IOWWA's June and September workshops, which demonstrated best-practice technologies to 65 workshop attendees, were made possible by major donations of an Aqua Textile Filter system and an Ecoflo treatment unit from Premier Tech Environment, Quebec, Canada; a 1000 gpd SCAT Bio-Coir unit from Quanics, Crestwood, KY; and an Advantex Treatment System from Orenco Systems, Sutherlin, OR, and Volrath Sales Group, Des Moines, IA.

"Utilizing a variety of systems from different manufacturers allows IOWWA to expose installation and maintenance professions to the latest technologies, ones they might not embrace until they've seen what's behind these innovations and what it takes to install and maintain them," said Cary Solberg, current IOWWA president.

Materials, equipment and labor donations in 2006 came from more than 19 entities, including 12 IOWWA members. Septic tanks this year were donated by Lister Industries (Jerry Dalbey), Des Moines; Swales Precast Inc. (Roger Swales), Strawberry Point; Fairfield Precast Concrete (Mike

Scearcy), Fairfield; and Wieser Precast (Greg Verthein) Stewartville, MN. Past IOWWA president Bob McKinney has continually donated time and effort to obtain equipment donations and oversee the installations for each phase of the project.

The first phase of the project was installed in April, 2005 and serves four homes with individual septic tanks. Secondary treatment of the effluent collected from the four individual tanks is through a single FAST unit donated by Bio-Microbics. A drip system donated by American Manufacturing disperses effluent from the secondary treatment system. Tanks for the homes and FAST unit were manufactured by Fralo, Ace, and three other local concrete pre-casters.

Any companies and manufacturers wishing to supply equipment or materials for future workshops and installations at the Heartland Hills site can contact Doug Bird, 319-352-0332, lbird@co.bremer.ia.us.