

McCOOK'S MOBILE WATER SHOP

Recently in my travels across our great State of Nebraska, I ran into yet another innovative operator idea. It seems as though water operators are constantly thinking of new ways to save time, labor, money and wear and tear on their vehicles. With the fuel prices again on the rise, and it seems as though the sky is the limit, this idea should also save the water department a considerable amount of money on fuel costs.

Last winter I was sitting in on a class Fred was conducting in Trenton and during the break I was visiting with Jesse Duthcer, Utility Director for the City of McCook. He was wondering if I would be able to stop by and check out a possible water leak. They had a street that was crumbling and they suspected they might have a water leak in the area.

When I arrived at the City's Water Shop I ran into Matt Coulter, Water Operator for the City, shortly thereafter Jesse arrived and we were discussing the possible water leak. During our discussion I noticed a new fully enclosed 6' x 12' trailer sitting in the shop with the back doors open, my curiosity got the best of me and I had to ask, what's up with the new trailer. Matt informed me it wasn't new, it was used but in near new condition, and he promptly give me a tour of their latest idea. They had purchased the used trailer and during the winter they had retrofitted it for an on site water shop. The idea is to hook onto the trailer and pull it to the job site so they will have every thing they need to either make a repair or tap a water main. They are also able to warm up inside in the winter and even change into warm dry clothes after a repair has been made.

As you can see from the accompanying photos they have barricades mounted on the sides, and a suction hose for a trash pump mounted on the front of the mobile shop. Inside they have built parts bins and a workbench complete with a vise. On the opposite inside wall they have mounted a pegboard to store assorted tools of the trade. In this portable shop they keep their trash pump, emergency lighting, generator, tapping tools and every other tool imaginable that may be needed for an emergency repair or to tap a water main. The trailer is also outfitted with interior lights and heat. While visiting with the operators they said the shop was a work in progress but had already saved them countless trips back to the shop for something that was forgotten.

Nebraska water operators are always looking for new and innovative ideas to put them a cut above all the rest. Matt and Jesse are great examples of what can be accomplished with a little imagination. If your system has come up with a great new innovative idea that you would like to share with other operators please let us know.