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South Blount Utility District

Seeking an alternative to copper water service line pipe, South Blount Utility District decided to put MUNICIPEX® to the test.

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For 50 years, South Blount Utility District has served Tennessee's Blount County as a supplier of reliable, high-quality drinking water. The utility has taken a proactive stance on constantly updating and expanding its infrastructure throughout the greater Knoxville metropolitan area, to address the needs of a growing population and ensure ongoing delivery of a quality water supply.

Seeking an alternative to copper water service line pipe, South Blount Utility District distribution managers John Myers and Stacy Gregory attended an introductory seminar on the REHAU MUNICIPEX crosslinked polyethylene (PEXa) piping system.

"We were continuing to watch the price of copper rise, and experiencing a direct and significant increase in our overhead," said Myers. "Also, the quality of the copper pipe we'd been using just wasn't the same as in the past, and we found ourselves having to replace it after only a couple of years."

According to Myers, South Blount Utility District was interested in making a change away from copper. Based on a demonstration at the REHAU seminar, they decided to conduct its own research on the durability of MUNICIPEX.

"It was almost like the pipe was too good to be true," Myers explained, "so we decided to test it for ourselves."

Myers and Gregory proceeded to lay a length of 3/4 in. MUNICIPEX 1 to 2 in. deep in a gravel bed outside the utility's service bay entrance. The pipe, which was capped off and pressurized to 130 psi, remained in the gravel for three months, with 15 to 30 half-ton pickup trucks running over the area on a daily basis. After the pipe withstood this initial test, it was removed from the gravel bed and was laid on top of the gravel in the same area for an additional two months, where it was repeatedly run over by the trucks and exposed to the environment.



"We certainly didn't hold back on the beating we gave the pipe, and at the end were somewhat baffled that after months of rough treatment, MUNICIPEX never lost pressure," Myers said.

Myers noted that in addition to maintaining pressure, the pipe exhibited no major indentations and only minor scratches, and had not been permanently flattened in any areas.

Following this test, the South Blount Utility District began using MUNICIPEX exclusively for all its maintenance and new installation projects.

"We've used several thousand feet of MUNICIPEX over the past year, and have completely switched from copper and HDPE without looking back," said Myers. "It is incredibly reliable, and being both flexible and durable, is also so easy to work with on the job site."

Project: South Blount Utility District, Maryville, TN
Type of construction: Municipal
Owner: South Blount Utility District, Tennessee
REHAU systems used: MUNICIPEX® water service line

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