

Don't Just Say No October 2022

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick,
I enjoyed your column on taking the opportunity to educate a client instead of just saying no. It brought back a memory of a half century ago. I was a very young engineer working for a steel fabricator when I was asked to be on an AISC Panel talking to engineering educators. I was surprised and more than a little in awe to realize I was sharing the podium with Dr. Fazlur Kahn, who talked about how engineers, unlike architects, tended at that time to study and practice alone. Since SOM functioned in a Design Studio concept, the engineers had to learn how to participate. He told the SOM engineers that when a really impractical or unworkable idea was put forth, the engineer instead of outright rejection should perhaps say: "That is an



interesting idea; let me think about that." At the next meeting, the response could lead to an explanation of the issues involved and possibly how modifications could be made.

Dr. Kahn went on to tell about how the framing system for what was then the Sears Tower was developed and how he presented it to the owner and contractor. He had this joyful smile when he told the story of the presentation. I have served on numerous programs through the years, but this one was special in the way Dr. Kahn shared with the audience and this very young structural engineer.

Columns like this are important, because in this digital age it is important to realize that projects still involve dealing with people.

Lawrence A. Kloiber, P.E.
Structural Design and Fabrication Consultant
LeJeune Steel Company

Please send comments and letters to:
Todd Danielson tdanielson@v1-media.com or
Kevin Carmody kcarmody@v1-media.com

Traditional mail:
attn: Todd Danielson
1441 S. Plymouth Ct., Suite H
Chicago, IL 60605

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INTO TEXAS



Engineered Solutions: Septic Tanks Pose Serious Threats to Health and Quality of Life for Millions

October 2022

This article "Septic Tanks Pose Serious Threats to Health and Quality of Life for Millions" is very misleading. Granted, there are entire communities in states such as Arkansas and Mississippi where the legislators and regulators have failed to protect the health of their populace with more stringent codes and available financing. Obviously E/One, who is in the business of sewage lift stations, is promoting their product as they should. Pumped systems can be the more viable solution within limited circumstances. The main problem with this article is that conventional centralized sewage systems are unaffordable for small remote communities, especially when they are saddled with ongoing costs of pump operations and maintenance. However, this statement "zero preventive maintenance" in the closing paragraph is the most misleading. Grinder pumps notoriously wear out in two years of service. I have specified one E/One unit to reach from a materials recycling yard to the City of Santa Rosa's sewer main as it was the only available solution.

In many well-managed states, advanced septic systems provide a safe and healthy means of sewage treatment and



disposal more cost-effectively than conventional sewers possibly could. In 43 years of civil engineering practice in Northern California and one resort system in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, I have designed hundreds of systems on very challenging sites all still safely operating today. These include several large ones for communities generating up to 40,000 gallons per day of wastewater.

Peter J. Lescure, P.E., CDT
Principal Civil Engineer
Lescure Engineers, Inc.
Santa Rosa, Calif.

Peter,
Thank you for your note. We love to hear reader feedback.

I should point out that this is clearly labeled sponsored content and not editorial, so it allows E/One a wider range to make claims than an editorial-driven feature.

Kevin Carmody
Partner-Group Publisher
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Chicago

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