

CHINOOK ENVIRO-TIMES

October 2007

Bringing industry news, views and discussions to you on a monthly basis from the Environmental Service Industry.

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Vacuum Systems

When dealing with drilling fluids disposal, the primary vectors to deal with is proper environmental management, closely followed by vacuum system choice. Each scenario is different, and like we all know, you need the right tool for the job. This issue is the first in a 3+ part series examining the types and features of vacuum systems, features, pros and cons for a manager's important decision. December's topic: Vac System **types**.

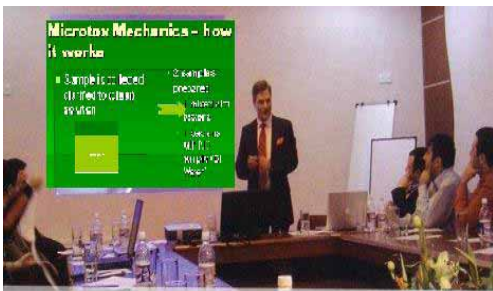
Tandem Axle. The tandem-axle highway truck is fitted with typically a 13m³ tank and blower. This 'shop vac on wheels' has been the most common in the oil & gas industry for the last 3+ decades. Its limitations include a heavy front-end (single axle/tires provide limited floatation), and high capital expense. However, they are very accessible across western Canada. The 'blower' comes in the Hibon model, ideal for "short-term" and snappy response. The Fruitland blowers are good for extended periods of operation, but lack that quick, heavy suction response. Investigate around, and you may run across the few 6-wheel drive units that are nearly impossible to get stuck. As well, some units are being made with Aluminum tanks; so legal weight limits are increased.



Tri-axle. An extra axle typically provides these trucks, slightly bigger than the tandem-axle, to employ an extra 3m³ tank. HOWEVER, the extra axle gives the unit that much more weight, and LEGALLY can only haul an additional 2m³ of fluids. The graduated day rate is sometimes offset, considering 6 or less loads save at least 1 trip that a tandem-axle would have to do. Drives often describe these units as 'tanks' due to the limited steering when all 3 axles are locked up.

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Seminar Helps Mud Supply Company see the 'big picture'



Chinook is constantly forging ahead with not only service, but more importantly educational opportunities. As such, sales and technical staff of **Canadian Energy Services LP** attended an educational forum with *Chinook Environmental Services Ltd.*. The forum allowed the representatives to be presented with a variety of topics to consider in not only the formation of mud systems, but also the repercussions of subsequent disposal.

"We constantly have to ensure the 'big picture' is kept in mind for our clients", says **Tom Simons**, President and CEO. "while planning and running drilling fluids for our customers, we make every effort to align drilling objectives with disposal objectives to create cost savings whenever possible."

Mitch Golay, B.Ed., presented topics of interest including what a toxicity assessment is and how it can be evaluated, the various disposal options currently used, and highlights of Alberta's new (proposed) Directive-050. With Oil and gas companies constantly evaluating mud systems for effectiveness in operation and productions, balanced against cost of supply and disposal, a close communication between supply and disposal representatives will ensure your most effective operations, cost control, and compliance.



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Semi-vac. HUGE volume tanks assist in cleanups. Probably the most cost-effective way of hauling fluids longer distances, they run for almost the same price as a Tridem unit. Though some have been used for landspraying in the past, it is not common to find hoist-units.

Gator-Vac. Fairly new system, they haven't quite caught up yet. With ability for greater accessibility due to flotation tires on the front AND back, they can move fluids on almost any surface with a very light footprint. Another secret to their light-weight design, and perhaps a downfall, is the decreased tank capacity. Don't forget; flotation tires have a speed limitation on them—so long distance hauling may not be a great idea with these units.

Trac-Vac. The old “honey-wagon” (named after its inception to haul hog-lagoon ‘honey’), is a very cost-effective unit. The rig crews will be amazed at it's loading time of under near 2 minutes for more than 16 m³. The application can be by



spreading, or direct injection into the soil. These units are great when they can be equipped with a plow in the front—for your vac unit now becomes a towing AND/OR snowplow in 1!! With a top road gear making 15mph, these units are very limited in range; compare the cost per hr. to remove fluid, and you'll find it more economical to use a tandem or tridem vac on hauls over the magical 5 miles distance. Keep in mind that the transport to/from site can take a LONG time, and semi-hauling of the tractor and vac unit can create a lot of extra cost.

Next Month: FLOTATION systems!

Ownership, Relationships, and Alliances

With a slight slowdown in industry activity, more and more mergers are happening. However, have you seriously considered the integrity of your mud disposal company? What is the agenda for their service? Is there a **conflict of interest**?

Ownership

Is your mud disposal company owned by a larger, parent company? Few mud disposal companies operate as *just* a mud disposal company. They are often a division of another company. Here is where a severe *conflict of interest* may come into play. If your mud system is costly to dispose, and/or toxic to the environment, and/or a logistics nightmare, is it REALLY in a third parties' interest to inform you, the client that takes on this liability? What is the bottom line; decreased liability, **or** cost-control to keep the job and increase their revenue?

Mud Supply Companies that own their own disposal division may prove a serious liability issue. Mud supply bills are often in scrutiny for their price. But then WHAM... look at the COST and HASSLE of (**PROPER**) disposal! Would it be in the company's best interest to cut corners and find the *cheapest* disposal option, while passing the liabilities **and/or** misdirecting information to “make compliance”?

Some **Treatment & Down hole Disposal Companies** own their own disposal wells/caverns. At up to \$200/m³, the vested interest may be to have an increased cost to take this drilling waste, and generate their own revenue by floccing and/or centrifuging fluids, hauling away solids to landfills and shoving (usually clear) liquids into a cavern or underground formation. Could Environmental Service companies owned by these parent companies be conflicted to generate increased revenue for their parent company? Consider them informing clients to let them take care of the fluid disposal for up to \$20,000, rather than pay a landowner to landspread the fluids at under \$1000. Do clients *REALLY* understand the limitations, or just trust what the ‘environmental’ consultant suggests. Is there a treatment option or other more cost-effective and/or logistically-feasible options that may not be presented?

Remember, an environmental company and mud supply company with *integrity*, and *professional* attitude ensures that the best interest of the client are always in mind!—Ed.



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