

# **K** You Should **Know**



---

A Message from the American Concrete Pipe Association

Bulletin No. 102

---

## **Piqua Project Punctures Plastic Pipe Promises**

*June 10, 1996 – 1 page*

PIQUA, Ohio - Once again, the durability, structural strength and reliable installation properties of concrete pipe have triumphed over promises of cost savings by plastic pipe sales representatives.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) had scheduled to take bids in January 1996 for a construction improvement of Looney Road near the west central Ohio municipality of Piqua, in Miami County. The project included specifications for nearly 10,000 feet of reinforced concrete pipe, ranging in sizes from 12" to 54".

However, sales representatives of plastic pipe manufacturers made claims of potential cost savings as high as \$150,000 if plastic pipe could be considered for the project. The representatives' estimates of savings ranging from 5 to 25 percent persuaded ODOT to postpone bidding while documents were revised to allow contractors to price both the concrete and plastic pipe. Despite a delay in the bidding process of nearly three months, ODOT pushed back the completion date for the Looney Road project by only one month to November 30, 1996.

A low bid of \$2.48 million was accepted from Holland Excavating Inc. of Enon, Ohio, on April 24. The contractor's bid revealed that when installation and other factors were considered, plastic pipe offered only a one-percent saving over reinforced concrete pipe. "With such a tight completion date, productivity is a major consideration in a job like this," says Rob Geyer, RE., project manager for Holland Excavating. "Concrete is not as installation sensitive as plastic and our pipe crews are very familiar with how to get a proper installation with concrete pipe, so much of the possible difference in material cost is lost."

Holland Excavating has installed plastic pipe on other projects, and Geyer says those experiences have led him to prefer concrete. "If the soil is not properly compacted, or you put more backfill on one side than on the other, you get a plastic pipe that starts to 'egg' or 'snake.' Its strength is largely dependent on the backfill. With concrete, the structural strength is in the pipe. That allows you to move quickly without worrying about deflections," Geyer says.

Reluctant to exchange the proven durability and longevity of concrete for such minimal savings, the contractor chose reinforced concrete pipe for the project.