



NEWS RELEASE

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BLACKSBURG-VPI SANITATION AUTHORITY RECEIVES DEQ CLASS A BIOSOLIDS CERTIFICATION

Authority is first in Commonwealth to produce Class A biosolids using ATAD

Blacksburg, Virginia, Nov. 8, 2018 – In 2007, the Blacksburg-VPI Sanitation Authority Lower Stroubles Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant became one of the first municipal wastewater treatment facilities in Virginia to be awarded Extraordinary Environmental Enterprise status in the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program. This recognition was based on the authority's commitment to the principles of environmental excellence and sustainability.

In 2016, as a demonstration of the continuing commitment to these principles, the authority became the first wastewater treatment facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia to install an Autothermal Thermophilic Aerobic Digestion (ATAD) process to produce Class A Exceptional Quality biosolids. The ATAD process was selected by the authority after an extensive evaluation of multiple solids treatment options. ATAD is an advanced treatment process that uses high temperatures generated by the biosolids to kill pathogens and reduce odors in wastewater solids. It produces a fine granular product much like rich top soil. These Class A biosolids meet the most stringent federal and state requirements and can be used in a wide range of applications, including as a soil amendment, use in landscaping, and as a lawn or agricultural nutrient.

Each day, the Lower Stroubles Creek plant treats approximately 6 million gallons of wastewater from the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, and surrounding areas in Montgomery County.

The solids generated during the treatment process were previously incinerated, which required the authority to purchase, store and use thousands of gallons of fuel oil each year. The incinerator ash was captured and disposed of in the local landfill. The new ATAD facilities replaced the solids incinerator that was constructed when the treatment plant was first built in 1979. The ATAD facilities were designed to accommodate future population and enrollment growth.

“The decision to invest in the ATAD system reinforces the town and Virginia Tech’s commitment to sustainability through implementing state of the art processes which add value both fiscally and environmentally to our community,” said Blacksburg Deputy Town Manager and authority board member Chris Lawrence.

Installation of the ATAD treatment facilities was made possible through a \$13.3 million dollar investment from the authority. The successful implementation of the process was the result of a collaborative approach by the authority board and staff, the design engineer CHA Consulting Inc., the ATAD process manufacturer Thermal Process Systems, Inc., and the construction contractor Ulliman Shutte. The Class A certification was provided by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality after completion of an extensive testing program.

Currently the authority provides the biosolids to the New River Resource Authority landfill for use as a daily cover material; this reduces the amount of natural soil that must be excavated from areas near the landfill and used at the landfill site to cover the trash each day. The authority is also evaluating other possible uses for the material to identify other sustainable options for beneficial reuse of these biosolids.

Michael Vaught, director of the Blacksburg-VPI Sanitation Authority said, “The new process represents a significant improvement in our solids treatment and handling processes by eliminating the need for incinerator fuel, significantly reducing our air emissions, and providing opportunities for a variety of beneficial uses for the treated biosolids. In addition, this advanced treatment technology will enable us to stay in front of the increasingly more stringent biosolids use regulations and maintain our excellent compliance record.”

“The successful implementation of ATAD can be attributed to the strong partnership among the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, and the Blacksburg-V.P.I. Sanitation Authority, as well as a shared pledge for finding innovative and sustainable ways to deliver public services,” said Dr. Sherwood Wilson, vice president for operations at Virginia Tech and authority board member.

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