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Sealand Adds a Little Girth to Charlotte's Central Ave.

By Giles Lambertson
CEG CORRESPONDENT

A trafficway that serves vehicles entering and leaving uptown Charlotte is being sliced open to receive a new storm drain — and Link-Belt equipment is entrusted with key parts of the job.

"I'm a very big Link-Belt fan," said John Pike, superintendent of Sealand Contractors Corp.

Pike and his Sealand crew are performing major street surgery on .7 of a mile (1.1 km) of Central Avenue, which carries traffic southeast out of the city toward Mint Hill.

The project involves trenching and some widening of the avenue to install reinforced concrete storm drain pipe of several sizes ranging up to 60 in. (152 cm) in diameter. Catch basin installation is part of the job.

Some old pipe is being removed and replaced with new pipe in one operation. Other new lengths are being laid alongside existing pipe, which subsequently is being removed.

The project cost is approximately \$2.4 million.

Pike has several manufacturers represented on the project, with excavators including Hitachi 200 and 300 models and a Caterpillar 416.

But a Link-Belt 460LX is the one Pike relies on for principal excavation work. Utilizing a 3-cu.-yd. (2.3 cu m) bucket and a 13-ft. (3.9 m) arm, the 104,000 lb. (47,174 kg) piece of equipment has a six-cylinder 316 hp (235 kW) diesel Isuzu power plant. The machine easily slices through old concrete and asphalt and into the red clay beneath.

The capacity of the Link-Belt excavator has helped Pike keep the project on schedule. The work began May 6 and is due to be completed Jan. 2. The absence of rain so far has benefitted the project, through the region and much of North Carolina is growing desperately dry.

The Sealand crew of 16 includes two virtually separate pipe-laying contingents, one at each end of the Central Avenue segment being reworked. The work actually entered Central from side streets and the two crews are now working toward one another.

Pike has been with Sealand for a dozen years and in the industry for more than 20 years up and down the eastern part of the United States. He has each Central Avenue crew moving 130 ft. (40 m) a day.

The company is loading and wheeling out at least 30 truckloads a day of excess dirt and broken pavement. An assortment of 10-wheelers are hauling the mate-



The Link-Belt 460LX excavator, weighing in at 103,000 lbs. (46,720 kgs) is a versatile machine. Here it is setting in the 60-in. (152 cm) pipe.



John Ziros, operator of the Link-Belt 460LX excavator, said he likes the feel of the machine. Here, he is excavating dirt for the next section of pipe.



The Central Avenue storm drain and widening project is another one of Sealand Contractors' many jobs in and around Charlotte. Talking about the job and the performance of the Link-Belt 460LX excavator (L-R) are Robert Nichols, foreman; Jon Pike, superintendent, both of Sealand; and John Wingblade, of Moody Machinery Corporation.

Pike said he prefers the Link-Belt model because of its balance and reach. "It handles it so well," he said of the machine's capacity.

John Wall is a representative of Charlotte's Moody Machinery, which is supplying Sealand with the excavator on a rent-purchase contract. He noted that the power of the 460LX doesn't come at the expense of function and economy.

"It's very good on fuel, and very quiet," Wall said.

rial 4 mi. (6.4 km) away, where an unrelated project site needs the fill.

All of the work is happening with busy Charlotte traffic still using Central Avenue. Part of the crew is regulating the flow of traffic through the area. Lanes are closed each day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Some traffic is being diverted to a major artery, Independence Boulevard, that runs parallel to Central and Becomes U.S. 74 as it

angles southeast out of the city.

Pike said changing site needs soon will require Sealand to bring in another Link-Belt machine from Moody, an L130 wheel loader.

The German-made model has just entered the market and is the first to be placed on a job site in the Southeast, according to Wall.

Powered by a 173-hp (129 kW) Cummins diesel, the 30,000-lb. (13,607 kg) wheel loader has a bucket capacity of more than 3 cu. yds. (2.3 cu m).

With mid-mount articulated steering, the agile loader boasts some unique features. Wall particularly mentions the greater range of visibility for its operator.



The Link-Belt 460LX excavator can load the waiting dump trucks in only a few passes.