

PARTNERING SUCCESS STORY

Situation:

- Eighteen million dollar project of an Urban Interchange across an Interstate. State was doing the project for the City of Tucson as part of a turn-back arrangement. Interchange would greatly benefit the city, but do little for ADOT. Bridge structure was massive and complicated with several cross grade breaks and numerous details for hardscaping atop the structure. Bridge was wider than its length and the ramps came right up to the deck. The single pier was designed and constructed with a series of arches instead of a solid wall. Traffic was to be maintained at all times and in all movements throughout the site. Besides all this, there was an existing water main running under the new pier, which was to be replaced with a new 42” water main running across the entire project and under both bounds of the interstate. Portion under the interstate was placed within a 625 foot long 6 foot diameter steel pipe casing and was to be restrained joint pipe. Entire line was cast-iron pipe, having to be in-service before April 1st and installed before the existing line could be taken out of service and the pier built.

Challenges:

- During pressure testing of the new 42” water main the restrained jointed sections inside the encasement literally came apart and blew up, sending one shrapnel piece of the joint across the main street and into a neighbor’s front yard. Upon further pressure testing of other joints the pipe continued to break at various pressures. Local water department subsequently rejected all install pipe and wanted it removed. Pipe supplier made several trip from Iowa to Arizona trying to offer different designs, fixes, and newly made pipe. Accusations and the finger pointing began between the supplier, local jobber, and the water department. Finally, somewhat out of desperation and to meet the schedule of the project the contractor took upon himself to reorder pipe from a different supplier on the City’s approved list and reinstall the entire run of 42” water main. They decided to take their chances of claims from the original supplier and put themselves at considerable risk. All they wanted from the contract and ADOT was a justifiable time extension. Contractor trusted that ADOT would eventually grant the time and not penalize them for any rework.

Partnering Practices:

- Fortunately, the project had had a good pre-construction partnering session, but more importantly several other rather gnarly issues had been resolved at the project level through the partnering process and a level of trust with the contractor's new project manager was established, besides a long-standing level of trust with the Vice President. It was apparent that the contractor depended upon this trust for the project to prevail in eventually getting the time extension granted and to intercede with the City and Water Department to prevent any other hardships, and to be allowed to continue the project.

Outcomes:

- The new pipe was delivered quickly; jointed and installed very easily, and in very short order. New line passed all pressure testing without trouble and the City water accepted the line in time to put it in service before the end of the off season, such that the in situ line could be taken out of service and pier construction begun. Although, it took quite a long time and several submittals, discussions, and diagrams the requested time extension was granted. Project continued unimpeded from there, and several, otherwise difficult issue, were resolved at the project level because of this success. I seriously doubt this could have been accomplished without exercising the essence of the partnering concepts and allowing those basics to work their powerful influence.