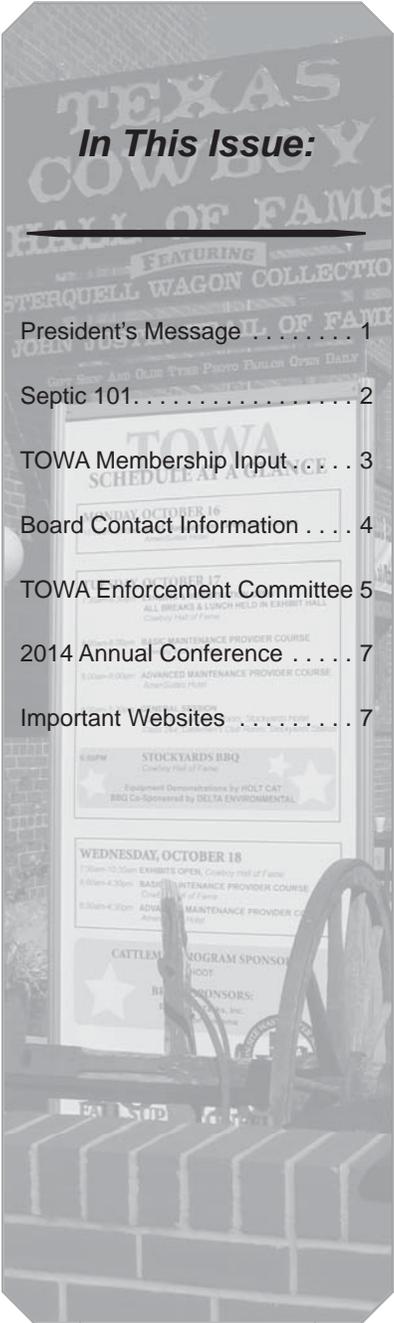


TOWA Insider



The Official Texas On-Site Wastewater Association Publication
Issue 1, 2013



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President's Message

Randi Weber

Summer has arrived and things are really starting to move in Texas. Most of the installers have a backlog of work in front of them due to the rebirth of housing starts. Maintenance Providers are busy on existing OSSF systems. So we seem to have reached around that corner that we have been waiting for. More business than we are ready for again. So gear up for the next couple of years, the future is becoming brighter. In the eastern half of the state of Texas, Beaumont area has picked up in housing, Greater Houston area and surrounding counties are beginning to boom again. Austin and San Antonio areas are accelerating in growth. Dallas-Fort Worth is beginning to rise again also. Out west in San Angelo a real boom is happening.

So our OSSF outlook is very positive and we should start to recover from the last three year drought in business. Speaking about drought, the rains have been above average and water tables have been on the rise. But we are not out of the woods yet. Hopefully this summer is a wetter one than the last two to three years have been. Maybe some time off for some good fishing is in order this year. T.C.E.Q. has no major issues on their plate so we are not expecting any new items to worry about unless we get complacent and begin to slip up on follow through in Maintenance activities which is their major area of complaint. This generates the need for MORE legislative activity. So let's police ourselves and cooperate with each other to maintain a status quo which has been less offensive for everybody. High strength designs are more of an issue on new work for commercial establishments. Putting in the minimum design for restaurants and other high volume use may not hold up for the long haul. Designers should consider a little extra in the up front design capability to prevent the over whelming of a design in the future with a possible unknown misuse by the user/owner by accident.

(Continued - Page 5)

My guess is that most new residents in your county are new to the whole “septic system” experience. Your builder probably handled getting the septic designed, the permits, picking your system, having the system installed and maintained-- “out of sight, out of mind”, right? Did your builder explain the State laws and regulations for your septic system? Did your maintenance provider schedule a meeting with you after closing to go over the system and explain how your system works and your responsibility as the property owner? Just in case, here is a refresher course-- Septic 101:

Your county Health Services’ Environmental division is responsible to the state, as the permitting authority for legal installation and maintenance of septic systems. Before you can build, you must have a professional engineer or Registered Sanitarian do a soil analysis and design your septic system based on the square footage of the home, number of bedrooms (if it has a closet, it’s a bedroom) and the number of people in some cases, the design along with the soil analysis and site evaluation must be submitted to the county for approval, once the paper work is approved you receive your building and septic permit. You will not be able to get your building permit without your septic permit.

State law requires the Installer to be licensed with the state as well as be a certified maintenance provider, or work with a maintenance company that is state certified, to include a two year maintenance agreement with the installation, after that it is up to the property owner to obtain a yearly maintenance contract.

The law requires that your maintenance company inspect and maintain your “Aerobic” system by inspecting the system a minimum of three times per year (once every four month’s). A Biological Oxygen Demand or a Total Suspended Solids grab sample should be performed once per year. A copy of the results from all inspections is given to

the homeowner and a copy is sent to the County to keep on file.

After two years, it is the homeowner’s responsibility to contract a company to maintain their septic system. Be sure that your maintenance company is a state certified maintenance provider.

If you do renovations to your home that increases your water usage or changes the footprint of your structure, or if you add a swimming pool, or storage building, you may need to get a new septic design and an “add on permit” from the county. For instance, the diameter of the outside spray area of your system must be 25 feet from your swimming pool. So you may need to move your existing spray heads. If you have a landscaping company install a sprinkler system you need to make sure it does not interfere with the septic system. Under no circumstances can a landscaping company replace septic spray heads with theirs. Septic sprinklers are by state law, required to be purple so that it is obvious that they are used for sewage

So, what happens if you don’t have a maintenance contract? Or what if you had a contractor but the company never performed the State inspections? You could receive a citation from the County and be fined as much as \$500 dollars a day. How would the County find out that you haven’t maintained your system? Well, it wouldn’t take long for everyone to know. The smell would give you away. Or your neighbor may notice that your spray heads are spraying during the day and your alarm will be going off and annoying your neighbors. Many things could happen that would alert you and your neighbors that there is a problem. If the County is contacted with a complaint, they will look up your reports and contact your maintenance provider to go out and check your system. If the county discovers that you don’t have a maintenance provider, then the homeowner is given ten days to sign a maintenance contract and fix the problem. If not, the homeowner may be issued a citation and could be fined

\$500 per day until the problem is resolved. The County also does random maintenance checks. They will randomly pick an area and send out agents to check each home in that area. The agent will check your system to be sure that the maintenance tag is up-to-date. If they suspect a problem with your system, they may turn the system on to make sure it operates properly.

Maintenance companies are required to bring repair issues, such as a broken sprinkler head or pump, to the attention of the homeowner. The law requires that homeowners pay for the repair. If the homeowner refuses, the maintenance company must alert the County, who in turn sends out a 30 day notice to the homeowner to make the repair. A Citation will be written if the problem is not corrected.

Last but not least, Chlorine tablets are required to be routinely administered to your septic system. Based on the usage of your system, you may need to add tablets monthly. Chlorine tablets are the responsibility of the homeowner. Chlorine tablets for sewage and liquid chlorinators which use household bleach are the only approved methods for the treatment of the bacteria in sewage.

Many of you may not realize that an Aerobic Wastewater Treatment Plant is a "living" machine that houses a micro-organism "bug colony" that consumes organic waste. These micro-organisms require oxygen and appropriate "food" (organic waste devoid of toxins) to survive. The following "do's" and "don't" should be practiced to insure your system performs properly.

- Medicines: If anyone in your household is ingesting strong medicines; antibiotics, chemotherapy or other, the health of your "bug colony" may be jeopardized.
- Do not dispose of grease, fats, and oils.
- Do not dispose of pesticides, herbicides and other toxins.
- The garbage disposal should be used sparingly. Food waste, grease, etc. should be disposed of in the solid waste bin. Food waste represents additional loading the Aerobic Treatment Unit would have to digest increasing pump out intervals.
- Do not dispose of paints, household chemicals, automobile fluids, or discard mop water into the system.
- Do not dispose of no-biodegradable items such as cigarette butts, disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products, condoms, hair, coffee grounds, paper towels, bandages, etc.
- Wash loads must be spread out over the week. More than one wash load a day is not recommended. Never use laundry detergents with "built-on" bleach.
- Do not dispose of citrus products.
- Do not use drain cleaners or additives for septic systems like Rid-X or similar products.
- Do not connect other water sources to the system.
- Water softener discharge kills the micro-organisms in your wastewater treatment system.
- Do not dispose of alcoholic beverages or home brewery waste.
- Do not dispose of strong disinfectants or bleaches, such as "Clorox", "Lysol" or "Pine-sol". Anti-bacterial soaps should be avoided.
- Never use automatic toilet bowl cleaning dispensers.
- Recommended detergents should be low sudsing, low in phosphates, and be biodegradable, with washing soda ingredients. Fabric softener dryer sheets are recommended.
- Recommended cleaning products are non-chlorine, biodegradable, non-toxic, and non-corrosive.



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Here is a quick contact list for you board members. Please contact one of the following members of the board with any concerns, suggestions, and questions that you may have.

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(President 's Message - Continued)

Installers who have high strength installations need to educate that owner/operator of the OSSF system in the little details which must be taken care of on a day to day, week to week and monthly basis. Any sign of a problem should be addressed as quickly as is possible so no long term problems arise or major incidents occur. So everyone in this industry should be feeling better as the activity level has risen and higher economic impact should happen to all. Hope your 2013 is successful! Remember we are at the halfway point now. So let's finish the year with a bang. To everybody's success this year, so 2014 will even be better built on a solid year this year.

TOWA ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

By Jerry Snyder

Septic Scam Artists Arrested

Audie Murphy Cooper and Audie Murphy, SR. were charged by Grimes County Sherriff Dept. for exploitation of an elderly.

A TOWA member notified the TOWA Enforcement Committee of a possible scam being committed by Buggy's Septic Co. located in the Bryan area.

TOWA did some investigation and discovered an elderly lady was charged \$5,800 by Buggy's to pump her septic system in McClendon County. TOWA contacted a TCEQ investigator which got the investigation started. There didn't appear to be enough evidence to warrant enforcement by TCEQ.

Several months passed when we received information on another "Rip Off" by Buggy's in the Bryan area. TOWA shared the Information we had with the Grimes county investigator. The two Coopers were subsequently arrested.

The story can be viewed by Goggling KBTX story "Septic Scam Victim Comes Forward" at <http://www.kbtx.com/home/headlines/Septic-Scam-Victims-Come-Forward-203506171.html>

"On March 22th, Robert Smith says two men knocked on his front door -- offering to inspect his septic system -- for free.

"Their initial offer was to come out and give us a

free inspection and estimate for any free repairs, so I said, what have I got to lose?" lamented Anderson resident Robert Smith.

That free inspection wasn't so free after all; in fact the inspection turned into major repairs and came with a major price tag.

"They then said they needed to pump the tanks out and quoted a price of \$275 and once they completed their work," said Grimes County Sheriff's Investigator JJ Jones. "They demanded a check for \$2,205 which the gentleman did in fact write them."

The Coopers allegedly demanded the money up front with the agreement to finish the repairs.

"They came with their truck and a tank in the back with the hoses and I didn't find them to be suspicious at all," said Smith.

Smith's family members contacted the Grimes County Sheriff's Office with concerns of a possible scam. Further investigation, coupled with numerous reports from victims in surrounding counties continued surfacing. Enough evidence was gathered to issue warrants for 45-year-old Audie Cooper and his son Audie Murphy Cooper the second.

"I just get chill bumps just thinking about it," explained Madison County resident Peggy Davis. Peggy Davis says Cooper even came to her rural Madison County home about a month-and-a-half ago and quoted her \$500.

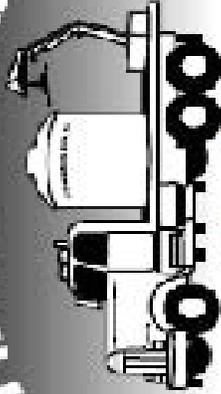
"I said well, no my husband isn't here so let's not do that, and he said 'it's for free, and I said, No, I'd rather talk to my husband," said Davis.

"It just really scary because he came to my house and after seeing his face and hearing his name on the news, I just thought to myself, 'Wow, that could have been us.' "

Davis says it hit too close to home but she's thankful the only thing she's left with -- is a business card. Audie Murphy Cooper was arrested last week; however, his father Audie Cooper Sr. is still at large. Exploitation of an Elderly or Disabled Individual is a 3rd Degree Felony".

Thanks to the TOWA member for referring this!

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Articles and Opinions

By Tim Taylor

Express your opinions, air your complaints and share your knowledge. This newsletter is intended to benefit TOWA members but without input from the membership it cannot consistently meet this goal. This is YOUR industry and it will not improve without your participation. I encourage all members of TOWA to submit articles for the TOWA Insider. This is the best way to express your opinions, air your complaints and share your knowledge with other OSSF Professionals. Also if your company, your county or your competitors have innovative ideas (good or bad) please share them. TOWA will NOT alter your articles without your permission but we cannot print any abusive language or slanderous statements about specific individuals, companies or agencies. If an article is critical of TOWA we will print it but reserve the right to offer an explanation and/or rebuttal. If you submit an article but do not want TOWA to use your name we will withhold your name from the article but we will only publish articles written by TOWA Members. The one exception is if we receive an article from a regulatory agency which includes information on rules or operating procedures. We will publish these as informational material for the membership.

Email your articles to tnaylor1@msn.com

2014 Annual Conference

By Tim Taylor

The annual Waco show will be held on March 11th and 12th, 2014 at the Waco convention center.

We need input from the membership on what topics you would prefer to see presented. If possible also recommend the speaker for your proposed topic.

This is your organization and your show so get involved.

Important Websites

For the latest news -

www.txowa.org

For AMP and BMP course dates –

<http://www.txowa.org/calendar.html>

To check hours and Licenses with TCEQ –

http://www2.tceq.texas.gov/lic_dpa/index.cfm

For TOWA Members only information –

<http://www.txowa.org/members/members.html>



Local Enforcement Problems?

Attend a TOWA Chapter Meeting and Report Local Enforcement Problems

TOWA Chapters throughout the State hold periodic meetings that give 2 hours of continuing education credits as well as offer a forum to discuss local enforcement issues.

If an issue cannot be handled locally, your Chapter contact will refer the problem to the TOWA Enforcement Chairmen and legal counsel.

If you do not tell us what problems you experience that impact the industry, we cannot help to solve them!

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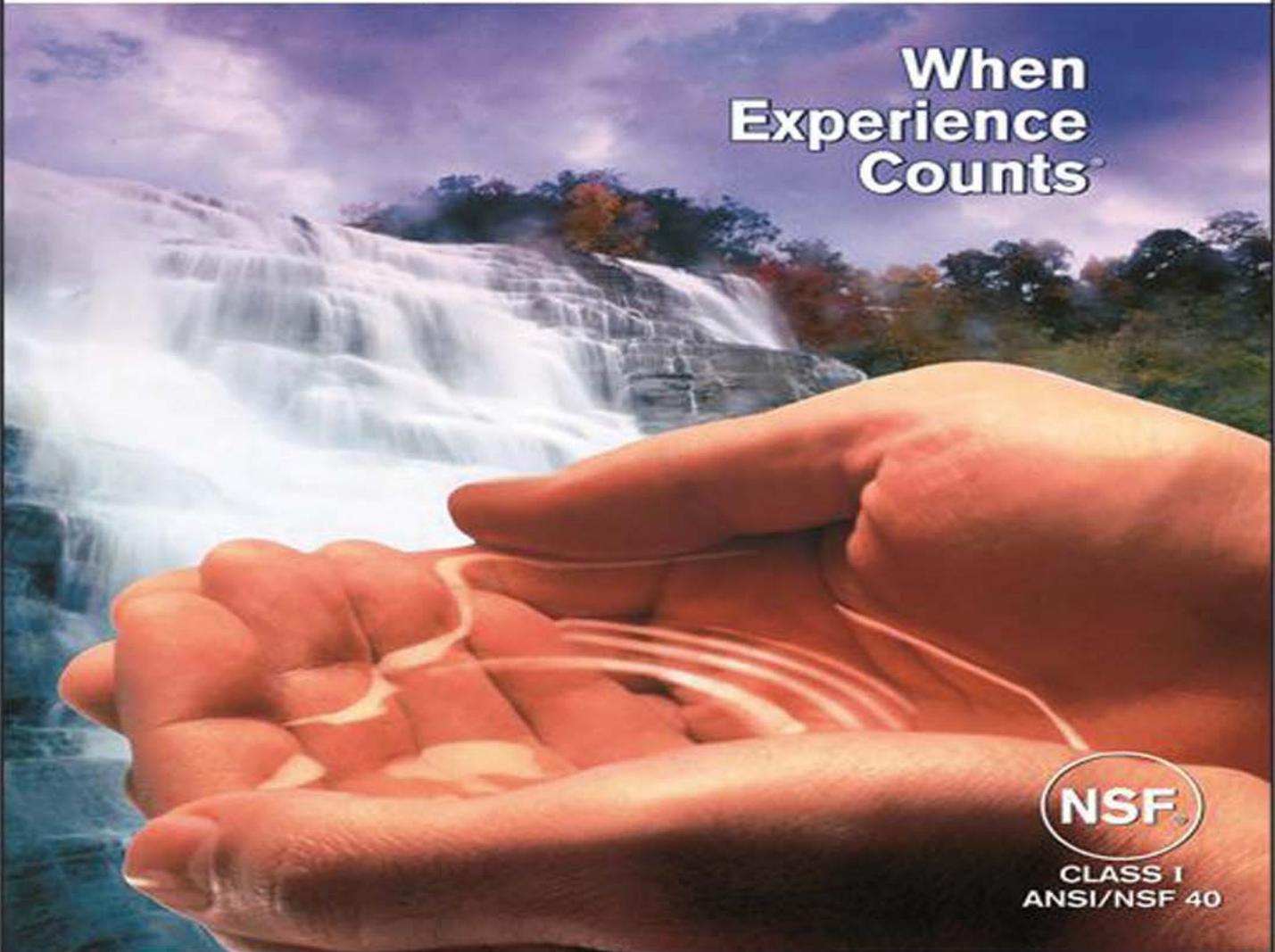
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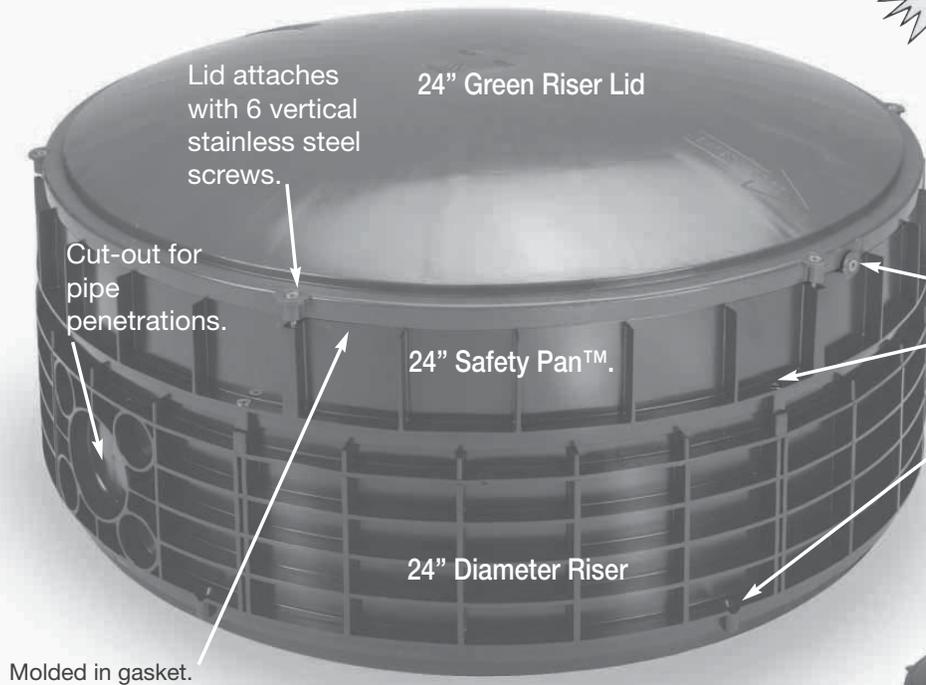
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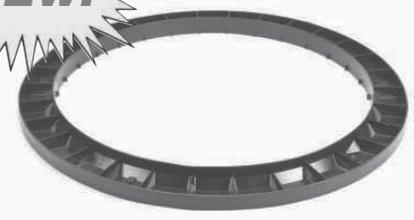
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5,617,679 &
5,852,901; other
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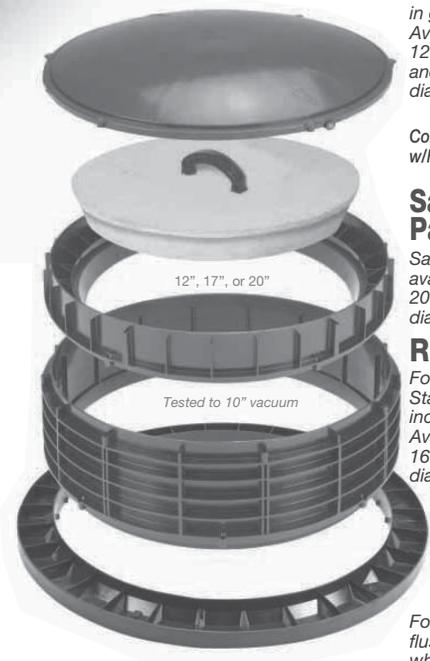
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Patent Numbers
6,319,403; D 431,629; other
pats. pending.

800 GPD
ANSI/NSF
Standard 46

4" Sch. 40 &
SDR-35

EF-4
4" Filter

EF-6
6" Filter

1500 GPD
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Standard 46

4" Sch. 40 &
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244 ft. of
1/16" filtration
area.

Gas/Solids
Deflector

One-Piece Tank Seal

For concrete Septic tanks and D-boxes.
Accepts pipes from 1-1/2" to 4".
Mounts with or without concrete flash.



TS-4-RUBBER TANK SEAL

(will hold 10psi)

TS-4PRO TANK SEAL

(will hold 5" vacuum)

Free Freight: 32¢

Patent No's
4,951,914,
5,624,123
& 5,711,536;

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Solids
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Aeration
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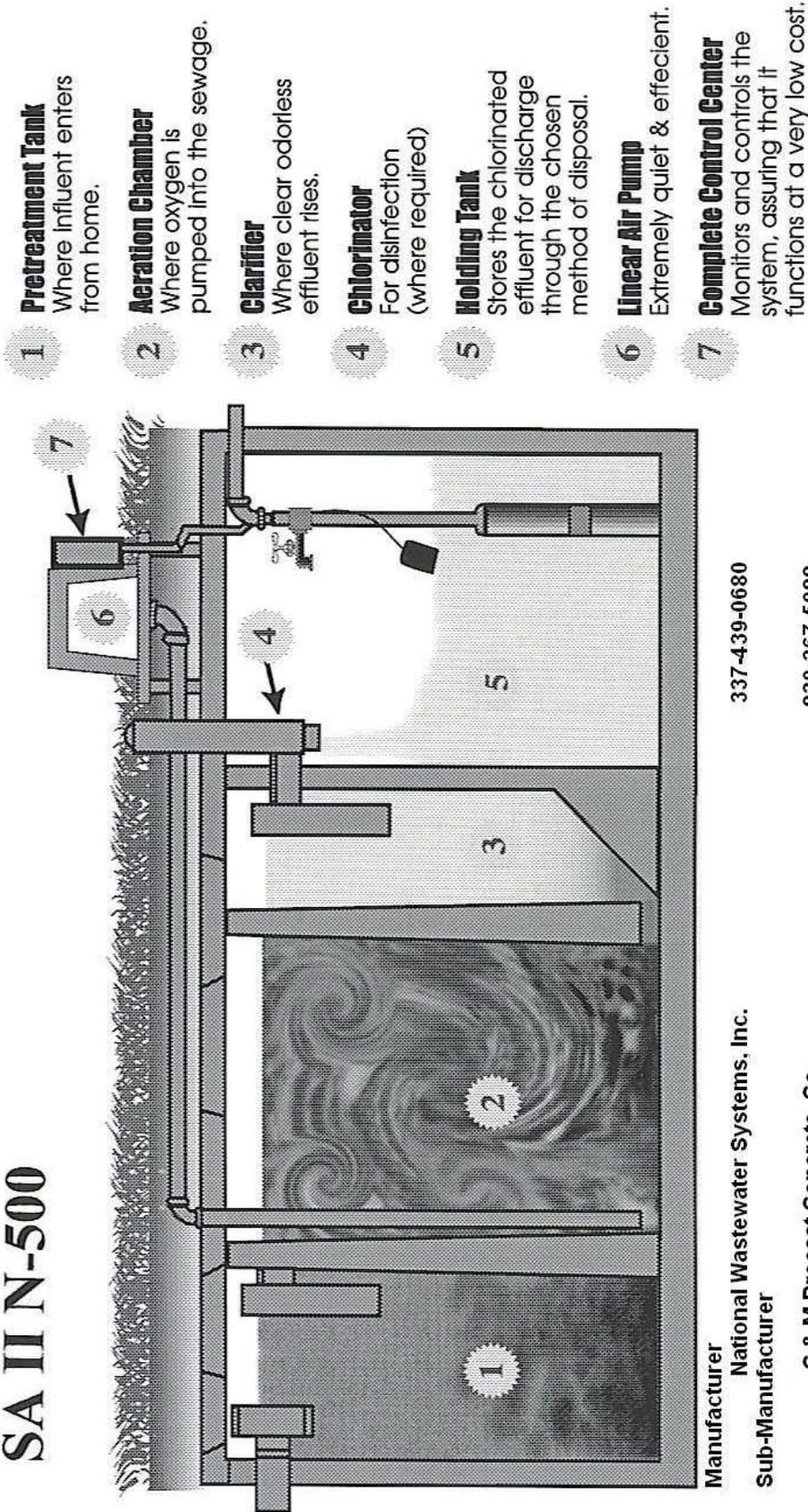


Solar Air

Aerobic Wastewater Treatment System



SA II N-500



- 1 Pretreatment Tank**
Where influent enters from home.
- 2 Aeration Chamber**
Where oxygen is pumped into the sewage.
- 3 Clarifier**
Where clear odorless effluent rises.
- 4 Chlorinator**
For disinfection (where required)
- 5 Holding Tank**
Stores the chlorinated effluent for discharge through the chosen method of disposal.
- 6 Linear Air Pump**
Extremely quiet & efficient.
- 7 Complete Control Center**
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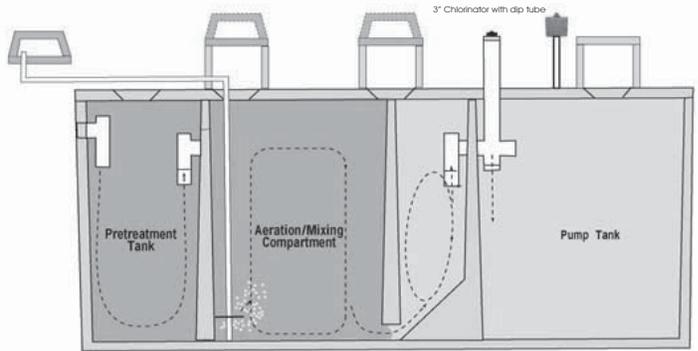


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