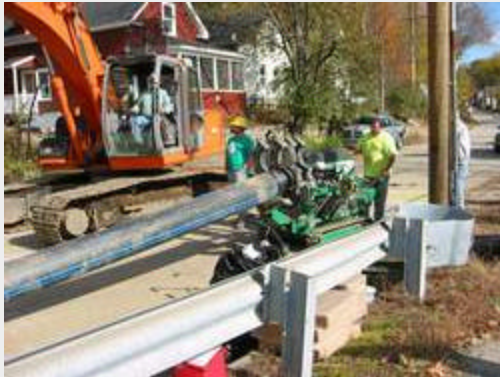


# Wilton officials expect to see improvements in pressure and safety

By **JESSIE SALISBURY**, Telegraph Correspondent

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**ENLARGE PHOTO**



**Correspondent photo by Jessie Salisbury**

Workmen fuse two sections of pipe before inserting it in the sleeve while working on the water main project that has Lower Main Street in Wilton closed.

WILTON – An engineering project that has a lot of obstacles to overcome makes a job much more interesting, according to engineer Ben Lundsted, the man in charge of the water main project that has Lower Main Street closed.

That project presented Lundsted, who works for Comprehensive Environmental Inc. of Merrimack, with three major obstacles to cross: Route 101, the Souhegan River and the railroad embankment.

The railroad was the last problem, and that has been solved. A 36-inch casing has been installed about 5 feet under the embankment, which will carry two 12-inch water mains. The second pipe is a spare, put in place just in case.

Crossing the three obstacles required three different procedures, Lundsted said.

The hardest part of the project, he said, was crossing Route 101 from Eastview Condominiums. That was done with a horizontal bore.

“The Department of Transportation likes that method,” he said. “It doesn’t disrupt traffic. It’s like drilling a well,” he explained, except you are going sideways. A hole is drilled, and then widened and the pipe pushed through.

“It took about a day,” he said. “It’s hard to get through if you run into a lot of rocks,” which they did.

The pipe was then run down the riverbank and a 5-foot trench was dug across the Souhegan for the water main.

The water level in the river was lowered as much as possible, and the ditch made with a system of diversion dams. A temporary island was constructed to hold equipment. The river channel was diverted to the Main Street side while the pipe was laid on the Route 101 side. The water was then diverted over the laid pipe while the crossing was completed. The pipe is encased in cement to protect it. The river is now in its proper channel. The dam will soon be closed and the water level returned to normal.

“It took about a week to get across,” Lundsted said.

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**Correspondent photo by Jessie Salisbury**  
Workmen insert the second water pipe.

The tunnel under the tracks was “actually rammed through,” he said, “like a lateral pile driver. It drives through the soil like a hollow straw, and then the dirt removed from the center. It took about a day to actually go under the tracks, but a week to prepare the holes on either side of the embankment for equipment to do the work.

The pipe being used is a type of fusible plastic. “You can fuse and cut the pipe to whatever length you want. The fusing creates a tighter joint,” he said.

The ramming was a faster procedure, he said, and there were no rocks, apparently just the sandy fill below the embankment, put there when the railroad was built in 1851.

The project required a lot of cooperation and coordination, Lundsted said, including the state Department of Transportation, the state Department of Environmental Services and Guilford Transportation, owners of the railroad. All of that was worked out by the town’s water commissioners.

“Everyone was very cooperative,” he said. “DES was very enthusiastic about the project.”

Traffic should be moving on the street again by the end of next week. The current water mains will be closed temporarily twice, on Tuesday and Thursday if all goes well, while a new main is installed and service changed. About 100 feet of old 8-inch water main will be replaced by the new 12-inch pipe.

“This should really help the water system,” Lundsted said. “It will create a loop” instead of the current dead-end line. “If there’s a problem, you have water from both ends.”

Water pressure and fire safety should be improved.

Lundsted lives in Rindge and has been with CEI for three years. He previously worked for another company, which did construction inspections for the state. “I like to design projects from the start,” he said.

The work was done by Engineers Construction Inc., of South Burlington, Vt., who have a work crew of three or four men at the site.

This second river crossing has been planned for about three years. The earlier crossing is at the Route 31 bridge.