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Romanians take tour of Millbrae pollution control plant

By Christine Morente, STAFF WRITER

MILLBRAE -- Romanian delegates examined the whirling and whirring of two machines that break down waste Wednesday, with the mission of bringing modern technology to their country's wastewater system.

The delegates -- including the country's 13 top water officials -- have toured the country for 10 days, looking at the different technologies for water and wastewater. The group made Millbrae's Water Pollution Control Plant their last stop before heading home Wednesday morning.

At the plant, the Aire-02 Tritons were the main attractions. The two 20-horsepower machines spin boat-like propellers to push air into the tanks, enabling the microorganisms which eat away at the waste to live. The plant treats 2 million gallons a day.

Advertisement

Millbrae is one of few water treatment plants to the aerators for that purpose. The Tritons, manufactured by Aeration Industries International, Inc., a Minnesota-based company, were bought to update the city's old wastewater system, said Dick York, the plant's superintendent.

Calling the Tritons a "Godsend," York enjoyed showing them off to the Romanian officials.

The delegates seemed impressed.

"It is our main duty in looking for low-cost processes and deliver them to the population," said Florin Stadiu, Romanian state secretary of Waters Department. "We have big investments in this section, so it's important that our water-quality system is up to date."

The Romanian delegates are sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) EcoLinks. The organization

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addresses environmental issues in Europe and Eurasia.

During the tour, not many questions were asked, but the delegates were pleased with their welcoming. They were told of the cost-saving benefits.

The Tritons cost \$20,000, including installation.

"(The Tritons) are least burdensome to the ratepayer," York said. "We've paid for these aerators many times over in five years. And we've impacted biology. We don't produce the slime and sludge that will clog up the system."

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