Above: At the auger boring field facility, students were first instructed individually to get better understanding of the equipment. Any student could operate the machine and experience boring, but first had to go through a short orientation and hook up to the shutdown tether. The instruction later continued still in small groups for better hands-on experience. **Left:** Fluids lab led by Frank Cannon and Ed Anderson of Baroid Drilling Fluids was educational – and fun. Here, Canon was playfully but effectively illustrating the power of lubricants. **Below:** Brian Dorwart instructing one of the classes in the contractors' track.

TTC Auger Boring School Garners Support, Success

In February, the Trenchless Technology Center (TTC) and the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) held the second annual auger boring school (ABS) on the Louisiana Tech campus in Ruston, LA. The ABS program, initially conceived by Leo Barbara, is now supported by both the TTC and NUCA.

With the national exposure, the training has expanded to offer a dual-track program for design and construction of auger bores. The programs focus on both engineering and contractor perspectives. Attendance grew this year to 38 students receiving classroom and hands-on field training by an impressive list of 17 expert instructors from varied industry sectors including contractors, consulting engineers, manufacturers and academia.

The school is a week-long, concentrated training program. Brian Dorwart of Brierley Associates served as a special advisor for the school, and along with Babs Marquis of McMillen Jacobs Associates, led development of the two-track program. Scott Fisher, from Barbco, and Chad Pendley, from U.S. Shoring, developed a hands-on field program to complement the classroom training.

NUCA partner

Once the curriculum was developed, NUCA officials were sufficiently impressed by the construction-focused program, with practical student operational training, and committed to fully endorsing the school.

"This is the only school where contractors can fully train their foremen and operators in auger boring operations," said Jeff Rumer, NUCA chairman of the board and president of Underground Infrastructure Technologies, Denver, CO. NUCA members were offered a special 10-percent discount when registering.

Louisiana Tech graduate and undergraduate students used the opportunity to visit with specialty contractor and engineer participants. Not only did they share in the construction and planning for the field hands-on program, they also joined the program as students.

"The school was a great experience for me, as a graduate student," said Greta Vladeanu. "I feel that I have gained a much deeper understanding about the design, planning and execution work that is involved in auger boring. Having experienced instructors teach the variety of courses made all this learning experience even more valuable. I feel that this school benefitted students tremendously, offering them first-hand, in-field training and classroom teaching that they would not have the chance to have anywhere else."

TTC enjoyed major support from many companies, which provided equipment and services that allowed ABS students to setup and operate the equipment while actually boring in a full-size field test yard.

- Barbco and U.S. Shoring provided the auger boring machine and augers, plus the steering head. The steering head was actually built by the Louisiana Tech students under Fisher's supervision prior to the practical sessions.

Students were required to participate in a fluids lab.

- Permalok provided four pipes.
- Baroid provided all materials necessary for instructing about lubrication and the fluids lab.
- The Robbins Company provided their SBU for show and tell.
- Trinity Products brought pipe for show and tell.
- Scott Equipment provided an excavator.
- Wicker Construction worked pro bono on the site reconstruction before the school.
- Milliken Jacobs donated a concrete cloth that was installed on the pit slopes during the site reconstruction.

"Barbco is excited to be a part of the ABS, and we look forward to continuing to support the training and instruction in running this equipment safely and economically," said Fisher. "We expect this school to grow, and look at this as an aid to our customers in offering this training to new employees and to refresh veterans with the technology available in today's market."

"It was an honor for U.S. Shoring & Equipment to be part of this wonderful program," added Pendley. "The training program at TTC is second-to-none and being able to play a role in helping train the next generation of boring contractors with hands-on instruction is vital to the future of this industry. We look forward to coming back next year with the latest and greatest equipment in boring and pilot tube technology."

Great weather, fun

The February Louisiana weather was perfect for field sessions. Temperatures ranged from the 60s and low 70s , and light rain drizzled only on one day during classroom instruction. Sessions lasted 10 hours a day, split by lunches that allowed participants to mingle and share war stories. These stories were often illustrated by instructors like Frank Canon of Halliburton, who offered cash prizes to anyone who could hold his hand when coated in super slime. As Canon pointed out, the super slime lubricant is definitely good for more than mud wrestling. No one collected on the cash prize, so Canon used it to buy a round of beverages.

"The ABS continues to be a vital and lively component of the TTC specialty schools," said Jadranka Simicevic, ABS director and assistant director of the TTC. "The school has been a valuable experience for all participants. We brought together top experts in the field and offered our state-of-the-art field facility and classrooms to deliver instruction in the construction method that has been around for a long time, but remains in demand because it is simple and effective.

"We shall continue to work on developing this school to incorporate lessons learned from this year, and recommendations we've been getting from other manufacturers and experts in the field of trenchless pipeline installation. We'll use the information to improve and probably come up with a slightly different program. Planning and running the school like this is very challenging and demanding, but we remain committed and enthusiastic," Simicevic stressed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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