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FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS

How local alumni are helping Edmonton turn sewage into a valuable soil supplement.



WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Human waste is piped through the sewer system to the treatment plant.

FEW COMPANIES would be willing to tackle a project that was so clearly in the toilet from the outset. But ONEC, a local engineering and construction firm, was happy to work with the City of Edmonton to help it produce a marketable soil supplement from sewage sludge.

The \$15-million project at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre makes the city a leader in processing this kind of waste, thanks in part to the expertise of NAIT grads at the company.

ONEC enhanced and expanded the system, making it more automated, faster and more efficient at removing much of the water from the massive amounts of sewage produced by close to a million people.

"It's a really good recycling story," says Denis Wiart, general manager of engineering and president of ONEC, which completed the work in December. "A lot of people think it just goes down the river and, in many cities, it does. But here, they're recycling; they're using it for other purposes."

The system processes sewage sludge that is treated at the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant and piped to a storage lagoon at the waste management centre. "I've been telling people, 'Everybody has input into this project in one way or another,'" Wiart adds with a laugh.

ONEC, recently named one of *Alberta Venture's* 50 fast-growing companies for 2015, had a team of about two dozen mechanical,