

GRATIA INTERNATIONAL

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Gratia commissions Chicago engineering firm to develop university

May 29, 2008 — Last month representatives from Sheaffer & Roland Inc., a Chicago-based civil engineering firm, made an inaugural visit to Umunya, Nigeria, to survey the land at a new 200 acre site for Tansian University.

Gratia International commissioned Sheaffer & Roland to develop a water supply and wastewater infrastructure to support the university as it grows.

"In Africa pollution of the surface and ground water from human waste is pandemic. In addition, the need for fertilizer and irrigation water to augment food production is universal. Therefore, our wastewater technology is perfect for this part of the world. Right now we are adapting our design to deal with the nuances that limited infrastructure create," said John Sheaffer, president of Sheaffer & Roland.

Located near Onitsha, a city on the eastern bank of the Niger River, in southeastern Nigeria, Tansian University is one of the first private universities in the nation and has been approved by the Nigerian University Commission.

Gratia has partnered with the university in its mission is to produce leaders with integrity who will seek to renew the face of an otherwise corrupt land in the political, business and spiritual realms.

Aiming to be one of the premier higher education destinations in Western Africa, Tansian University requires modern infrastructure, including an efficient wastewater system, to help ensure that this dream becomes reality.

Sheaffer & Roland Inc. has a longstanding tradition of developing alternative wastewater systems, and is committed to develop Tansian University so the institution can better carry out its mission.

The company is challenged with building a modern wastewater system that can sustain the university, but relies on primitive technology.

In a region where electricity is scarce, the power needed to run Sheaffer & Roland's MARS 3000 aeration system will have to come from an alternate, natural energy source — wind, water or solar power. The system is eco-friendly and creates long-term benefits for the surrounding area.

"Sheaffer & Roland wastewater reclamation and reuse systems are environmentally friendly zero discharge alternatives to the conventional sewage treatment plants. Our philosophy is that pollution is actually a resource that is out of place, Sheaffer said.

"Eliminate the odor and oxygenate over an adequate time and raw sewage becomes clean water which is then used to irrigate a growing crop. The same nutrients that remain in sewage treatment plant discharge that pollute our rivers and lakes, are also present in the irrigation water which provides fertilizer for the land plants."

While traditional sewage treatment usually involves discharging into bodies of water, Sheaffer & Roland uses a land application system that sprays treated wastewater on an open area, such as a golf course, to irrigate the land.

International projects are not new to Sheaffer & Roland. The company designed a similar wastewater system in Beijing, China to help the city prepare for this summer's Olympic Games.

Gratia International is a London-based nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing poverty in all of its forms — economic, social and spiritual — throughout the world.

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