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WHY PARTNERSHIPS AMONG PUBLIC WORKS AGENCIES, UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRY MAKE SENSE

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ABSTRACT: It takes two to tango but it takes many more partners than that to develop technologies that can both serve the public good and create a viable marketplace for manufacturers, suppliers, contractors and the consulting community. New ideas and products need public works agencies willing to try them, consultants willing to learn how to specify them and contractors willing to install them. All parties take a risk in this development but, without such risk, technologies and materials that can benefit the public may die an early death or be long-delayed in reaching their optimum market share.

The premise of this paper is that universities represent an important resource for a technology-based industry. They educate both engineers and construction management personnel and have the capacity to tackle both fundamental and applied research problems facing the industry by assembling faculty partnerships from among a variety of science and engineering disciplines. Perhaps the most important benefit and the most critical aspect of a university's relationship to the public works agencies, consultants and industry is its independence and transparency in terms of research and testing.

The paper will explore these issues in more detail and provide examples of how the existing trenchless related research groups and faculty in North America have contributed to the successful and cost effective use of trenchless technology. The paper will also discuss how industry and public works agencies can engage both local faculty and local engineering and technology students on a regional basis.