

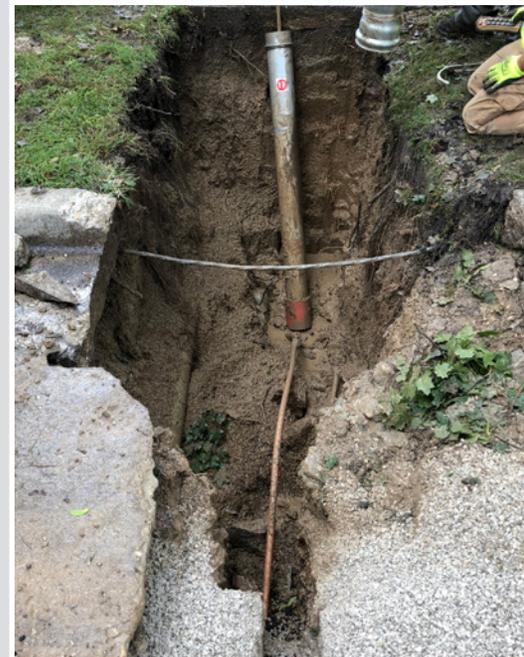


## City's lead **service line** crisis puts **AllExcavate** in forefront

The City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has launched a massive project to replace about 46 percent of the 70,000 lead lateral water service lines in the city with copper. The initiative was spurred by tests showing children's elevated lead blood levels reaching 4.6 percent – close to the 4.9 percent blood level of lead poisoning found among children tested in the Flint, Michigan, water crisis. ❖ While some of the lead found in the testing was traced to paint chips in older homes, the primary cause was found to be the lead water service lines going into buildings such as homes, schools and day care facilities. Even though Milwaukee treats water with an anti-corrosive agent, lead can still leach into the drinking water. ❖ In 2017, the city began replacing sections of lead service lines from the cast iron water mains in the streets to the curb stops at property lines, especially if leakage is detected or a line is damaged during construction. The property owner has several options to address the balance of the service line between the curb stop to the water meter. In all, the line replacement program could cost \$750 million. ❖ At first, the work was only being performed by contractors. But in 2018, the city decided it could expedite the process by purchasing its own hydro excavation equipment.

### The Vacall versatility advantage

After examining equipment options, the city purchased an AllExcavate hydro excavator from Serwe Implement, the Vacall distributor in Theresa, Wisconsin. ❖ The service line replacement process typically involves digging down 12 to 15 feet, removing soil, rocks and other material to expose the lead line and then clearing the area where the new copper line can be installed. ❖ “The city was so busy using the machine, it was in use for several weeks before they could even stop to put signage on it,” said Nathan Berk, sales manager for Serwe. “The operators were enthusiastic about it, saying the Vacall was simple to operate and they could get the work done faster.” ❖ “They purchased an AllExcavate model with a 12-yard debris body, mounted on a Freightliner truck chassis,” noted Berk. “The machine is equipped with a high dump option to make it easier to raise and tilt the body to empty debris into rolloff containers the city placed around town.” ❖ Using remote control, the debris tank can be raised 76 inches above ground level and then shifted back horizontally 21 inches beyond the rear bumper.



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That way, the debris tank can be tilted and dumped over the walls of containers without spillage or the need to travel to dumping stations. ❖ To continue work through the cold Milwaukee winters, the machine also is equipped with the Vacall cold weather package. Heated cabinetry encloses the boiler, warming the water for hydro excavation even when temperatures drop below freezing. The package also includes a changing compartment for operators. ❖ “The vacuum system is very powerful because of its design,” Berk continued. “It has an eight-inch tube with a positive displacement vacuum pump and an air flow system that’s far better than other machines.” ❖ Occasionally, the AllExcavate machine is taken off the line replacement work to handle repair jobs, because the crews find it very effective digging around utility lines and foundations. But the size and scope of the lead service line replacement need creates an urgency that means that won’t happen often, said Berk.

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For information and to download AllExcavate literature, visit [www.vacall.com](http://www.vacall.com).  
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