

# *Willard Says.....*

One of a series on the subject of practical hydraulic dredging.

## **Dredge Good In Bad Times**

The recent downturn in our nation's economy has resulted in a decreased demand for sand and gravel in many markets. It is likely that there will be little if any improvement in market conditions for several years. Presently—early '10—there is considerable evidence the situation will get worse before it gets better.

Energy costs soared for a time and then fell back to a semi-tolerable level. History teaches that any of a score of factors stand ready to once again force energy prices up to where they take a huge bite out of profit margins.

Inflation continues to nibble at profit margins without cease.

In times past, when demand for product was strong, producers could counter rising operating costs by raising prices and see them matched by like-minded competitors. Now, weak competitors may resort to price-cutting in a last-ditch effort to stay in business or strong competitors may cut prices, take advantage of the situation and attempt to drive weak competitors out of business.

Which role are you playing in the above scenario?

Brings to mind the old truism:

**When the grass gets short,  
the horses bite each other.**

Some of those who find themselves being squeezed by fixed prices, increasing costs, falling sales and ravenous competitors may be forced out of business. I can imagine few more dismal circumstances. What does it do to one's self-esteem?

What to do? What to do? Oh, what to do?

## Dredgers take heart!

There is salvation—business salvation—to be found in the one common trait that I observed in nearly all of the hundreds of sand and gravel dredges I have visited over the last thirty years. And what is this inherent characteristic that holds such treasure for dredgers? One word:

### INEFFICIENCY!

You can take offense at this observation, however, your inefficiency can be turned to an advantage. Take steps to become efficient! Reap the reward of lower production costs! Increase your profit margins! Undercut your competitors! Survive to dredge another day. Andrew Carnegie, a man who knew a thing or two about making money, summed it up this way:

**“Watch the costs and the profits will take care of themselves.”**

## How To Stamp Out INEFFICIENCY

The hourly operating cost of any dredge is nearly fixed whether it is producing a lot of solids or pumping a lot of water. A substantial increase in production causes a relatively small increase in hourly operating cost. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the rate of production can be increased for FREE.

### Dredge Good—Take Action!

- Read Willardsays papers.
- Install and use a velocity meter.
- Operate the pump at the proper speed (velocity).
- Install a Twinkle Co CONVAC suction bypass system.
- Use an effective digging device.
- Identify and eliminate the causes of downtime.
- Strive to produce continuously at the maximum rate.
- Use effective positioning techniques.
- Install proper instruments and controls.
- Get rid of lazy, uncaring, inept or dumb operators.
- Institute effective management.
- Keep an operator’s log.
- Maintain equipment in good condition.
- Install a booster pump if needed.
- Use discharge pipe with the correct inside diameter.
- Check with Willardsays.com before taking the advice of “experts.”

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You can pump more solids per hour if you take my advice, usually a lot more. I have helped many to accomplish that and most of them are thriving because they have the lowest production costs around. I have told you how. Now take action to take your place among the efficient, the profitable, the survivors!

Contact [willard@willardsays.com](mailto:willard@willardsays.com) with questions, comment or criticism.