

New product trio

Sonic Drill has unveiled more market offerings this year

This year Sonic Drill Corp (SDC) is focusing on three product developments.

"We now offer a diamond coring head option," Kevin Reimer, sales and operations manager at SDC, says. "Sonic drills really shine in unconsolidated formations. With a diamond coring head the operator can use the SDC drill through the hard rock formations." The diamond drill head is mounted alongside the sonic head. This option has been popular with both geotechnical and exploration clients.

In addition, SDC offers two safe rod handling systems. One is a single rod loader – a hydraulic arm that clamps and lifts single rods/casings into the drill head, even when the mast is set to angles as steep as 45°. "The other is our hands-free rod handling system with roto-magazine," says Mr Reimer. "This is designed to store 360ft (110m) of 4½in x 20ft (11.4cm x 6.1m) drill rods. It is operated by the driller's helper and there is no physical contact with the drill tooling. The arm can handle diameters from 3½in (8.9cm) to 8½in (21.9cm) and the magazine can handle 10ft (3.05m) or 20ft (6.1m) rods.

Finally, SDC offers a drill mast, "a simple and economical solution" allowing clients' existing equipment to be converted into a sonic drill (subject to horsepower and hydraulic capacity). Ready to work, the mast comes with an SDC head, feed system, breakout table, jib hoist and hose carrier.

At Rabbit Lake

SDC recently delivered an SDC390-14 rig to Cameco Corporation in Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan (Canada). Uranium miner Cameco owns three properties in northern Saskatchewan, connected via public roads.

All equipment at the mine becomes contaminated with traces of uranium radiation, which prevents equipment from being mobilised from property to property. "The SDC390-14 solves this problem because of its size, which allows it to be transported in a fully enclosed 20ft (6.1m) container," Mr Reimer explains.

Covering all corners

SDC has placed equipment in all corners of the globe, but the hot areas have been South America and Australia/New Zealand. A sample of SDC rig locations and uses: diamond drilling in Africa; expanding a subway in New York; revealing glacial secrets in Canada; searching for gold in Yanacocha, Peru; drilling for bauxite in Guyana; geothermal drilling for a school in Chofu, Japan; and unlocking gas deposits in the Arctic.

Cameco also called for the sonic drill to drill primarily in frozen tailings as well as install drill rods into the tailings for use as injection lines for tailings deposition. "Formations varied from tailings to sandy boulder till and hard rock at 50m. In addition, 95% or better sample recovery was required in all materials."

The sonic drill had to be capable of drilling at 25° off horizontal, with automatic rod handling, and operate in temperatures below -40°C. Cameco's SDC390-14 was fitted with a diesel-fired heating system. The rig's lightweight rubber tracks allowed it to tram through deep slushy tailings with ease. When conditions were warm and unsafe on the tailings, the drill was loaded onto a barge and towed out into a tailings pond to drill samples. Cameco is now considering buying additional machines.

Market currents

SDC identifies many opportunities in South America and plans to establish a distributor there. From its head office in British Columbia it has so far placed drills in



An SDC390-14 rig at Rabbit Lake site

Argentina, Chile, Guyana and Peru.

The company is experiencing strong demand, primarily for environmental investigation and mineral exploration. Demand for its rigs is up 15% this year despite the challenge of supply chain shortages felt by many manufacturers.

SDC's strategy for the next five years is continued business growth, product development in mid-size models and achieving a greater market share in construction drilling applications. ♥



SDC's Kevin Reimer

"With a diamond coring head option the operator can use the SDC drill through the hard rock formations"

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