



Case Study

North Kansas City, MO

Channel Monster® delivers reliability North Kansas City, Missouri, can depend on

Covering about four-and-a-half square miles, North Kansas City, Missouri, is home to about 5,000 people. Surrounded by the Missouri River, the city depends on levees and pumping stations to protect residents and businesses from flooding.

Built in the 1950s, the Bedford Pumping Station is the main receiving station, handling about two million gallons a day. The water department is working with the North Kansas City Council to explore the feasibility of overhauling the Bedford station or building a new pumping station. However, the projected timelines for both projects were about three years out.

The pumping station was operating with two welded metal grinders that were experiencing frequent failures and maintenance issues. “We’ve kept the station running band-aided, if you will,” explains John Sponsler, Water and Wastewater Services Superintendent for North Kansas City Water.

The problems stack up

For the city, it seemed like the current grinders were doomed from the start. According to Brad Saul, Service Manager at Letts Van Kirk & Associates, “Immediately after installing the first grinder, I noticed the manufacturer had sent the control panels with incorrectly sized overloads, so it kept tripping out.”

Saul resolved that initial issue, only to face more problems. “The grinder has a bearing assembly that bolts on to the

Problem

Frequent failures and maintenance issues with grinders in the city’s main pumping station caused downtime and frustration

Solution

Channel Monster high-flow sewer grinder

bottom of the unit to hold the grinder in place, but it fell off,” he explained. “The stainless steel bolts on the brush screens kept backing out, which meant the screen would peel away and hit the grinder. The motors for each drum kept failing, and it took three to four months to get replacements.”

Having had enough of the near-constant issues, Saul and Sponsler set out to find a much more reliable solution. The city’s 19th Street Pumping Station used grinders from JWC Environmental. “They don’t fail,” explained Sponsler. “These grinders are really pretty good. I’ve had them at facilities I previously worked at and was really impressed.”

The city decided it was time for a replacement. They selected a Channel Monster with 11-tooth cam cutters — specialized,

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John Sponsler, Water and Wastewater Services Superintendent for North Kansas City Water

hardened-steel cutting components designed for heavy-duty, industrial-scale shredding. The Channel Monster uses high-flow screening drums that prevent unshredded solids from bypassing the grinder without compromising flow.

Dependability from the start

Unlike the previous grinder, which failed two weeks after installation, the Channel Monster has been going strong since it began operating in late 2025. “We expected dependability, no downtime,” explained Sponsler. “We get a lot of cloth, rags, and stuff like that. We expect it to pass through the blades and teeth with no defects or obstructions, if you will. Obviously, if we get a large chunk of metal, things might change a little bit, but the Muffin Monster is good for about any application.”

Saul added, “The old grinder had cast cutters, so it was a complete cutter stack. The JWC has individual cutters and spacers, so tolerances are tighter. For solids conditioning, we won’t have larger solids that pass through. We can do a better job of grinding and avoid the risk of solids reconfiguring downstream.”

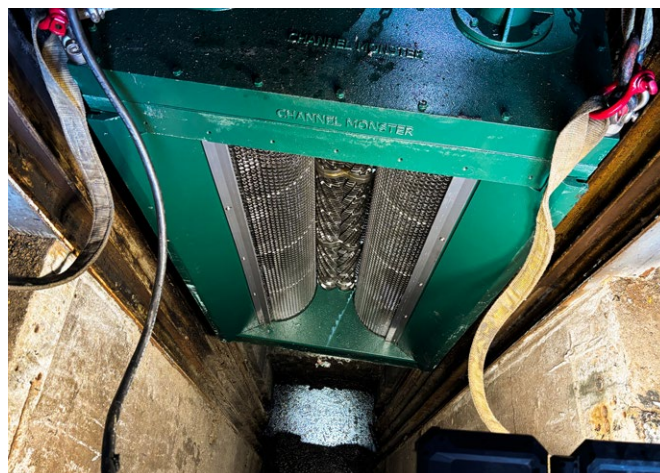
The Channel Monster is made from ductile iron and hardened steel, not welded iron. That means it won’t rust if the paint chips or wears away.

The Channel Monster’s robust construction gives Sponsler peace of mind. “I’m sure it’ll probably last for our timeline. And Brad and the team at Letts Van Kirk & Associates are very good about servicing things. They’re very dependable and responsive to our needs, whether it’s water or wastewater.”

Looking ahead

North Kansas City intends to replace the second grinder at the Bedford Station with another Channel Monster within the coming year. Additionally, as plans for the new pumping station progress, Sponsler and Saul hope their recent experience will be taken into account. “Everything’s up to the design team and engineers, but we hope to have our two cents worth in what type of equipment is chosen,” explained Sponsler. “And we’d like to have the Muffin Monster.”

“The dependability, cost-efficiency, and everything of the [Channel Monster] are top-notch for both stations,” Sponsler said. “The reputation is outstanding. We haven’t had any problems with the JWC units since we had them installed.”



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