The University of Wisconsin System is one of the largest systems of public higher education in the country, serving more than 178,000 students each year with 26 campuses throughout the state. When replacing water and sewer infrastructure on University and College campuses, it is vital to reduce the impact of construction to the students, faculty and everyday life. When replacement is required, most campuses have a very small window during Holiday breaks or summer months when campus activity is reduced.

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville was founded in 1866. During the 1960s, the college experienced a period of rapid growth resulting in the construction of many new halls and a build out of its utility infrastructure. Many of the aging water mains across campus are in need of replacement, including the need to increase diameter to meet fire flow protection and increased demand. During a 3 week period in July, UW-Platteville had a small window to replace sections of water main that were located through the heart of campus.

The pipe bursting method is considered a “green” technology and assisted in reducing the environmental impact on the surroundings. Only surgical excavations were required along the project which helped reduce excavation and restoration by over 85% compared to traditional open trench. None of the historic trees, flower beds and mature landscaping were affected. The reduced excavations also helped to eliminate risks that can be associated with long open trenches as it was vital that students taking summer classes could move freely throughout the campus.

The efficiency of the method also attributed to the overall success as Murphy Pipeline crews averaged replacing 460 feet per day. This production rate meant crews were only visible to each area of replacement for one day. The rapid installation and small footprint was a key element in minimizing the impact to faculty and student life.