

# Pipe extruder ADS donates \$1M to Ohio innovation district



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Ohio State University

Ohio State University and Advanced Drainage Systems marked the start of a project that will use ADS donations of money and products to improve the sustainability of the OSU campus.

Hilliard, Ohio-based pipe extruder Advanced Drainage Systems Inc. is donating two stormwater management systems to Ohio State University as well as money to install them and support education and research programs.

The product and cash donations made to the OSU Sustainability Institute exceed \$1 million and are part of a public-private collaboration to manage campus stormwater "in a more environmentally innovative way," according to the institute's executive director, Kate Bartter.

The stormwater systems are scheduled for installation in March at the west campus, where officials from the state of Ohio, OSU, Nationwide Children's Hospital in Franklin County and the city of Columbus are coming together to fuel \$3 billion in economic impact over the next 10 years.

The partners will invest \$1.1 billion in the so-called Columbus Innovation District to develop an interdisciplinary research facility, an energy advancement and innovation center, an outpatient cancer facility and the region's first proton therapy facility to treat cancer patients.

One of the goals is to generate 20,000 new jobs over the next 10 years with 10,000 jobs in the life sciences, technology and health care industries and 10,000 jobs in the community at large.

The project also will create "significant" stormwater management issues, Bartter said, pointing to the need to prevent runoff from developed areas from carrying pollutants to rivers and lakes, which can harm aquatic life.

ADS systems are designed to address those issues. Stormwater from parking lots, freeways and fields will enter Nyloplast-brand basins, which have filters to remove sediment and debris. The stormwater then will be conveyed by high density polyethylene corrugated pipes away from roads and neighborhoods to StormTech-brand storage chambers that manage the water flow to prevent flooding.

Other EcoPure-brand water quality products then will treat the storm water before returning it to lakes and streams.

With \$1.5 billion in annual sales, ADS is the No. 3 pipe, profile and tubing extruder in North America, according to *Plastics News* data.

Founded in 1966, the company has 63 plants manufacturing products that drain fields, hold stormwater and control erosion for the construction, municipal infrastructure and agricultural markets.

ADS also is the second-largest plastics recycler in North America, according to *PN* data.

About two-thirds of the material used to manufacture ADS products is recycled content. The company continues to expand its in-house recycling capacity for HDPE and polypropylene, acquiring Fort Payne, Ala.-based Jet Polymer in December 2021.

Ohio State also will be a source of post-consumer recyclables. The university provides single-stream recycling across campus and recently expanded what it accepts to include PP in the form of used yogurt containers and other packaging.

As part of its gift, ADS will be the largest sponsor of the university's "Recycle Right" campaign, according to Brian King, ADS executive vice president of marketing, product management and sustainability.

"The better recycling is across campus, the more material will be available for ADS products," King said.

OSU researchers are studying recycling, sustainable water management, climate change and how best to mitigate, and creating a circular economy — all of which makes the

university a good partner, according to ADS CEO Scott Barbour.

"We approached them about doing some unique things around stormwater management at that site – ways we could create an environment where there could be learning, teaching and also some engineering development with their civil engineering and sustainability engineering groups," Barbour said.

The ADS systems will not only replace the need for a retention pond but also they will become a living laboratory for the students to use for research, Barbour added.

For starters, students will design a rainwater harvesting system that can pump water stored in the ADS system and use it for landscape irrigation. They also will look for other opportunities for the university to recycle rainwater and reduce the amount of potable water it consumes.

ADS officials plan to recruit from the engineering programs by offering three-month paid internships, according to Margaret Finley, ADS director of diversity, equity and inclusion.

"Our vision is to create a pipeline of talent that will ultimately come and join ADS for their first career experience out of school," Finley said.