

“Are you getting enough?”

By Dan Tousley

When I go to say, a ‘fast food’ restaurant, for example, and I order french (a.k.a. freedom) fries, I expect a full order of french fries! Especially if I am willing to pay extra and order an extra large serving of french fries, (please don’t tell my wife!), by golly, I want an extra large order!

I prefer to think I am ‘frugal’ – avoiding unnecessary monetary expenditure: thrifty. Yeah, that sounds like a nice word, thrifty!! I do not expect two for the price of one, but I do expect my money’s worth or value for payment rendered. An uncooked or burned order of fries, even though ‘full’, is not what I ordered either!

Well, what about you?

Are you concerned about the value you receive as a result of your order? Whether you are spending your own money, village, county, or state funds, loan or grant monies, taxpayer dollars, whatever the source, you should closely monitor what was received when your order was delivered. Far too frequently material or service delivered will differ, at least to some degree, from what was ordered.

I am not suggesting there are any unethical business people out there – heavens no! But, *‘buyer beware’!*

Now, you have done your research, drafted your specifications, comprised your materials list, navigated the bidding process, and placed your order! Whew! Job well done! Well, is it? Do you have a follow up program, including a designated person (not the salesperson!) to verify that your pipe actually is class 52 ductile, your valves are right to close, valve and hydrants actually do incorporate stainless steel trim (nuts, bolts). If so speced, are all your fittings American made? Are the curb boxes delivered the correct size, length, cover design, quality, curb rods included? If you ordered mechanical joint fittings, did the accessory kits come? Correct size?

None of us, well, most of us were not born just yesterday. There is a reason that gate valve box is half the price of the others!

When I have tried to explain cost differences to so-called purchasing agents in the past, I’ve been told, “I don’t care! My job is to fill requisitions while being accountable to that ‘bean counter’ down town!” This attitude does not take into consideration the accelerated cost, inconvenience to public, disruption to employee work schedules, damage to moral, etc, that finally ordering quality materials and ‘redoing’ a job the second time incurs.

Generally speaking, the installation contractor is only responsible for the first year. Most materials will at least provide that. Afterwards, when low quality materials fail or rapidly degenerate, you are blessed with the aftermath!

I’ve heard of water main extensions speced as class 52, that when direct tapped years later resulted in leaking corps! Yup! You guessed it! Class 50 was installed which did not provide enough wall thickness for the proper threads of engagement! I wonder if they were only charged for the lighter weight pipe or did someone cheat on delivery and ‘pocket’ the difference? Hmmm.

Well, lets see, yes, the french fries are done. How do you want the order you paid for? Extra crispy, undercooked, full, half, three quarters, or shall we let someone else decide?