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MASTER

"Performance and Economic Assesment of
an Improved Electrostatic Precipitator
Electrode Design for Fine-Particulate Collection"

Technical Progress Report

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"Performance and Economic Assessment of an Improved Electrostatic
Precipitator Electrode Design for Fine Particulate Collection"

Technical Progress Report
(Fiscal 1981 year end)

Summary

The report covers work done on this Project (WAVY) during the 1981 fiscal year and discusses the follow-on work planned for FY82.

During FY81 a laboratory facility was designed and constructed for testing the new wavy plate configuration for precipitator collection electrodes. Materials required for the test program were specified and ordered. Computer programs were prepared for making theoretical predictions of the collection behavior of wavy plates and for evaluating data taken during the test program.

During FY82, tests are planned for conventional and wavy plates in order to complete the two proof-concept tasks. A comparison of wavy plate configurations is also scheduled for bench scale studies.

Status of Facility

Design - Considerable care was taken with the design of the test facility to accommodate a range of electrode configurations. Movable partitions in the expansion plenums adjacent to the test section were made to allow for variation of spacing and electrode shape. The use of an extensive baffle system and plexiglass partitions combined with wiper seals were made to minimize effects of sneage and bad peripheral flow distributions. Both inlet and outlet ducts were designed to terminate outside the building and prevent respiration of the resuspended fly ash used for testing. A special hopper tray was designed for ease in handling collected ash. Test ports were placed at the optimum locations for well developed flow between duct bends and the test section. Placement of the opacity meters was engineered to provide the widest range of response possible around expected conditions. The outlet meter has a longer path length to compensate for the reduced loading of particulate after the precipitator section.

Construction - Construction of the facility is practically complete (see Figure 1). It is currently capable of running flow tests without ash. The hopper system and outlet duct penetration of the roof should be completed before performance testing can be initiated. Several problems were encountered during construction which extended this phase of the project. The test section had to be redone by the subcontractor. An earlier difficulty with the design of the movable partitions was finally resolved. As a one-of-a-kind facility which needed a high degree of versatility designed into it to be an effective test bed, the facility design and construction proved to be much more involved than anticipated. The resulting facility, however, is of excellent quality and should prove invaluable in achieving good test results.

Analytical Work

The TEACH CODE has previously been used to do fluid flow calculations in a cartesian coordinate system (rectilinear). An additional program was developed to add the effects of space charge density to fluid flow, by solving the Poisson equation and current conservation equation for a precipitator geometry. In order to apply this combined computational system to the non-uniform collector plates of WAVY, a special program was developed to generate a

boundary conforming general orthogonal grid (WAVY grid)(see Figure 2). The TEACH CODE was modified to do fluid flow calculations in WAVY grids. Flow equations were rederived in terms of WAVY grids following the normal rules of coordinate transformation for vector and tensor quantities. Finally, boundary conditions were matched to wavy wall calculations. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show some of the results of these program modifications applied to the wavy configuration. Unexpected problems were encountered in implementing the orthogonal grid transformation but were eventually resolved. Another problem was encountered in the final step of applying the combined codes to efficiency predictions, in that excessive run times were needed to calculate the fluid-particle interactions for a statistically valid result. This has been resolved with a particle averaging technique (see Figure 6). Initial verification of this technique was made with a laboratory test by collecting monodisperse particulates (2μ diameter) on a flat plate. Although good correlation was observed for the main features of the collection signature a degree of three-dimensional organization was noted. This organization corresponded to the corona brush pattern on the discharge electrode (see Figures 7 and 8). Although at the plate separations and velocities typical of normal precipitator operation, sufficient averaging of collection is expected to justify the use of a two-dimensional (cross-sectional) model, care must be exercised in checking for anomalies presented by vertical organization. Fortunately such anomalies can be observed with visualization techniques.

Selection of Materials and Auxiliary Equipment

Selection of equipment for dust injection, opacity measurement and particulate sampling was made after a careful analysis of those items used in other facilities and in industry. The two primary concerns were that equipment used be acceptable by industry standards and that they be of the best quality and durability.

For this reason an Acrison auger injector was selected for ash feeding, Lear Siegler transmissometers for opacity measurement, an MRI (Meteorological Research, Inc.) impactor for particle sizing and a Kiethley electrometer for charge measurement. These items were considered first choices by most industrial users. Fly ash was obtained from the Centralia Power Plant, in Centralia, Washington.

Considerable effort went into the design of a high voltage pulsed charger. The system selected will superimpose a 150 microsecond, high voltage spike on a DC background voltage level. Frequency will be variable up to 200 Hz, pulse voltage will also be variable up to 60 kV. Denver Research Institute has been subcontracted to build the charger. The system was based on the results of work done by Buell Envirotech and EPA that has indicated an increased uniformity of current emission with the appropriate pulsing technique.

Because the design of wavy plates also offers a more uniform field environment, it is anticipated that the addition of pulsed charging will result in further performance improvement.

Planned Work for FY82

Because the performance tests of Tasks 2 and 3 were not completed in time for this interim report, the work schedule has been modified somewhat. The remaining tasks will be continued in sequential order without a break after Task 3. Regular monthly reports will be made to show technical progress. The planned schedule for task completion, following work resumption, is outlined in Table 1. A final report will be delivered at the end of the contract period.

The test facility will be ready for the initial performance testing within one month after resuming activity on the WAVY contract. Complete characterization of wavy plate performance will be made following the sequence of parametric tests outlined in the scope of work. Resuspended fly ash will be used with both opacity and gravimetric efficiency measurements to quantify the plate performance. The Wavy Plate will be compared back to back with a standard flat plate configuration. Approximately 2-1/2 months are allotted for this task (Task 2). Data analysis and comparison with the theoretical predictions formulated by the newly developed computer code will be carried out concurrently (Task 3).

Further study of the wavy plate performance will be made under Task 4. The effects of changing wave amplitude and wavy plate configuration on fluid flow will be examined. The purpose is to visualize the flow with a smoke and laser technique previously developed at Flow. The interaction of electric field and fluid flow can then be observed as a function of configuration.

In Task 5, a further set of performance data will be taken for those wavy configurations that are identified in Task 4 as the most promising. Test procedure will follow the same methodology utilized in Task 2. Task 5 is scheduled to last 3 months.

Task 6 will be primarily devoted to the economic analysis of improvements identified by the test results conducted under Tasks 2 and 5.

No change is anticipated in the scope of work as outlined in the original contract. Work on less productive configurations or conditions will be streamlined in order to compensate for the facility construction time that lasted longer than expected.

Table I Manpower Schedule

<div> <div>MONTHS</div> <div>TASKS</div> </div>	WAVY FY82									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Task 1 — Facility Construction
Task 2 — Performance Testing
Task 3 — Data Analysis
Task 4 — Flow Tests
Task 5 — Configuration Testing
Task 6 — Economic Analysis
Final Report
Milestones										
Monthly Progress Report
Final Report

WAVY TEST FACILITY

Figure 1.

COMPUTATIONAL MESH SYSTEMS

Wire Wire

(a) Nonuniform Mesh System
Grid 59×30

Wire

(b) Boundary Conforming,
Orthogonal Mesh System
Grid 59×29

Figure 2.

COMPUTED VELOCITY FIELD, -70 kV

(a) Conventional Precipitator

(b) Wavy Electrode Precipitator

Figure 3.

COMPUTED ELECTROSTATIC POTENTIAL, - 70 kV

(a) Conventional Precipitator

(b) Wavy Electrode Precipitator

Figure 4.

COMPARISON OF COMPUTED CURRENT DENSITY, -70 kV

Figure 5.

PARTICLE COLLECTION EFFICIENCY AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICLE SIZE

Figure 6.

Photograph

Cross Flow Schematic

Figure 7. Electrode Effects on Particulate

Photograph

Figure 8. Particle Collection

Appendix A

Work Statement

Flow Research Company

"Performance and Economic Assessment of an Improved Electrostatic Precipitator Electrode Design for Fine Particulate Collection"

Work State: en1Objectives

The objectives of this study are to experimentally verify, at bench scale, the technical and economic feasibility of an improved configuration for electrostatic precipitators.

Scope of Work

The contractor will provide the personnel, materials and facilities necessary to perform the tasks listed below:

Phase I: Proof-of-Concept --Task 1. Construction of Bench-Scale Facility

Design and construct a 3000 ACFM bench-scale precipitator test module including a hopper and screw auger arrangement capable of generating particulate loads of 0.5 to 10 gr/ft³ and the option for pulsed charging of the electrodes. Include necessary instrumentation for inlet and outlet opacity, flow velocity, electrical field and duct/channel loading measurements. The precipitator box should be approximately 1' x 5' cross section and will include power supply and rappers which are representative of commercial practice. The exit duct from the precipitator duct should possess a fan blower and cleaning filter.

Task 2. Performance Tests

Conduct a series of performance tests with resuspended fly-ash for two sets of candidate electrode plates of wavy and flat configuration. Approximately 25 square feet of surface should be associated with each plate. Perform a series of parametric tests under the following conditions:

- (i) Three flow rates providing average flow velocities in the range of 5 to 15 feet/sec.
- (ii) Three particle load levels in the range of 0.5 to 10 gr/ft³.
- (iii) Two electrical operating conditions: one set of data will be taken at moderately high, conventional current levels and one just under the spark-over breakdown, with another set of data to be taken with short duration, high voltage pulses, being imposed over the voltage required to achieve moderately high but steady current levels. Measure the current and electric field distribution. (The electrode plate should be fitted with non-conductive backing and metal strips which will individually be connected to a system of voltmeters, microammeters and bias voltage supplies.)

Use the measurement of input-output opacity as a gross index of performance efficiency. Take isokinetic samples of the gas stream and measure solids loading and collection efficiency on a periodic basis using tared membrane filters. For select operating conditions, use a cascade impactor and/or optical counting procedure for determining particular size distribution before and after the test module. Determine the relative performance of the electrodes with regard to rapping reentrainment by monitoring the opacity at the precipitator outlet during rapping. These tests will be conducted for each of the test conditions specified (i thru iii). The time between raps should be 5 to 20 minutes depending on the electrode dust load.

Task 3. Data Analysis and Reporting

Analyze the data developed in Task 2. Compare the performance of the wavy electrode and the conventional design will be performed and compared with theoretical predictions. An interim report detailing all work performed in Phase I will be prepared.

Phase II: Bench-Scale Studies

Task 4. Precipitator Flow Facility Tests

Perform tests on several variations of wave amplitude and shape. The first three electrode configurations to be evaluated should have a wave amplitude in the range of 5 to 25% of the channel width. The fourth electrode configuration will be selected on the basis of the first three tests. Each test should consist of performance characterizations at three flow velocities (in the range of 5 to 15 ft/sec.) and two levels of steady electric field intensity. For each electrode configuration flow a given velocity will be selected for measurements of the electric field and current distribution. The two most promising candidate electrode geometries will be studied in Task 5.

Task 5. Bench-Scale Precipitator Tests

Conduct a parametric evaluation of the two promising wavy plate configurations. Test conditions should include the following matrix to parameters for each plate:

1. Four flow velocities (three in the range of 5 to 15 ft/sec. and the fourth to be selected on the basis of task and earlier tests).
2. Electrical operating conditions (medium and high steady electric field and high pulsed electric field).
3. Three electrode spacings (12 and 9 inches with the third spacing to be determined during the tests).

Individual tests will be characterized using the methodology specified and developed under Phase I.

Task 6. Preliminary Engineering and Economic Analysis

The data obtained during the bench-scale testing will be used as the basis for a preliminary design and economic analysis. Realistic estimate on the expected payoff in utilizing the wavy wall precipitator with conventional charging, pulsed charging and, in combination with other advanced precipitator techniques such as wetted wall operation, will be addressed.

Final Report

Prepare a comprehensive final report that compares the performance and economics of the wavy plate ESP with standard flat plate units both under conventional charging and under pulsed charging techniques. Recommend the preferred procedure for piloting and demonstrating this technology to facilitate commercialization which also may provide the basis of a possible Phase III continuation effort. The format for this report and the report proper shall both be reviewed and approved by the Technical Project Officer.

Deliverables

At the conclusion of Phases I and II, the contractor will supply the Environmental and Safety Engineering Division with the following documented information:

- A comparison to the efficacy of particulate control between the wavy plate ESP configuration and the conventional flat plate ESP, using both steady and pulsed electrode charging techniques.
- Preliminary engineering designs for a commercial wavy plate ESP installation and associated costs.
- Recommendation as to which, if any, wavy plate ESP configuration deserves confirmatory field oriented piloting and/or additional study.

Appendix B

Advanced Electrode Design for Electrostatic Precipitators

ADVANCED ELECTRODE DESIGN FOR ELECTROSTATIC PRECIPITATORS

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this paper is a wavy electrode precipitator which employs a new collecting electrode. The wavy electrode precipitator incorporates a contoured collecting electrode geometry which produces a nearly uniform electric field along the electrode. This feature allows operation with higher average electric field strengths near the electrode than in conventional designs. The wavy electrode provides separated flow zones within its "valleys", which fluid dynamically shield particles from the main stream. The design also provides mechanical rigidity to vertical bending without the sharp flanges normal to the flow commonly found in conventional precipitators. These features permit increased performance for all particle sizes, but especially help in the precipitation of fine particles which are normally the most difficult to collect.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the wavy electrode precipitator and gives an analysis of its performance. This advanced electrode design is based on a unique geometrical configuration of electrodes which is expected to provide significantly improved performance as well as reduced cost over conventional precipitators.

Overall reviews of electrostatic precipitator technology are given by White (1,2), and Robinson (3). A state-of-the-art precipitator configuration is illustrated in Figure 1a. The collecting electrodes are typified by baffles which provide plate stiffness and shield the collected particulate layer from direct scouring by the mainstream, particularly during rapping. The advanced design presented in Figure 1b is typified by a wavy collecting electrode shape which provides the same functions with certain advantages. A brief outline of fundamental collection processes is given here to emphasize the advantages of the latter configuration. These processes are ion generation, particle charging, particle capture, particle removal, particle re-entrainment, and sparkover.

Gas ions are obtained from a corona discharge at the anode to provide a source for particle charging by diffusion and by field charging. Diffusion charging dominates the charging process for very small particles (submicron

size); the charge increases as the free ion density increases. High ion density in turn is obtained by high operating voltage and uniform current distribution in the interelectrode space. Field charging occurs when a collision of an ion and a particle takes place. A particle continues to capture ions until the repulsive electric field of the accumulated free ions on the particle balances the attracting electric field of the background. The value of the saturation charge increases linearly with the magnitude of the background electric field, which is determined by the voltage applied to the electrodes and by the electrode configuration.

An electrically charged particle experiences a coulomb force directed toward the collecting electrode and proportional to the charge on the particle and the intensity of the electric field. Since this force increases with particle charge and with the driving electric field intensity, highly charged particles and a high average field intensity along the collecting electrode surface promote efficient collection. The resulting migration accelerations for fine particles are small compared to the accelerations imparted by the turbulent fluctuations present in the flow through the precipitator. However, in regions near the collecting electrode where the flow is separated and relatively protected from the turbulent eddies, the electric field forces are effective in moving the particles to the collector. Thus, one design goal is to increase the sparkover threshold (discussed below), which is the determining factor for the maximum voltage that can be applied. Another goal is to enhance the charging and collecting electric field and current distribution for a given operating voltage which will also increase the charging effectiveness.

It is desirable to maximize both the charging and the collecting field operation at the highest possible voltage. The upper limit for the operating voltage is determined by the sparkover voltage of the given electrode. Thus, peaks in the distribution of electric field intensity along the collecting electrode surface tend to promote early sparkover. Conversely, a uniform distribution delays the onset of sparkover.

Several other phenomena play significant roles in precipitator performance (e.g., chemical composition of the particulate, back corona generation, the conveyance of particulates into the hopper, and particulate removal). We do not intend to minimize the significance of these process, although a full discussion of these topics is beyond the scope of the paper.

THE WAVY ELECTRODE PRECIPITATOR

The wavy electrode precipitator is illustrated in Figure 1b. In terms of electric field and gas flow characteristics, the fundamental improvements over the standard precipitator configuration shown in Figure 1a are: (1) A more uniform electric field which gives a higher average electric field for a specified operating voltage and which allows operation at a higher operating voltage without sparkover. (2) The ability to obtain this condition while maintaining separated flow regions which, for the standard configuration, are created by flanges that are generally detrimental to the electric field. The bulging of the flow channel at each of the wire electrodes provides the more uniform electric field (i.e., voltage gradient) and also provides the pockets

of "dead" air. (3)The wave shape provides structural stiffness for the collector plates so that no stiffeners need be attached during manufacture.

The disadvantages and unknowns associated with the wavy electrode precipitator are the increased cost of manufacturing the wavy shape, the problem of how to design the hanging of plate so as not to promote sparkover, and the fraction of the collector plate area that will be protected from scouring by the mainstream as compared to a standard configuration. The theoretical investigation has provided some quantitative measure of the improvement in collection efficiency that can be expected from the wavy electrode configuration. This work is reported in the next section.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

In order to compare the performance of the advanced wavy electrode with that of the conventional electrode, a detailed analysis of fluid dynamic flow field, electrical characteristics and efficiency was performed. The analysis included the adaptation of a numerical model introduced by Bernstein et al., (4,5) which consists of a system of seven coupled nonlinear partial differential equations: a three-equation fluid dynamics model which describes conservation of mass and momentum for the fluid flow, a two-equation turbulence model, and a two-equation electrostatic model. In order to predict the efficiency of the precipitator for each particle size, a differential form of the classical Deutch efficiency equation is used. The precipitator section is divided into fine elements, and the local electric field is used to compute the charging field and the collecting field. The charging field is assumed to be the average field normal to the electrode surface and the collecting field is the field near the collecting electrode at each point consistent with the Deutch model.

It should be recalled that for the purpose of computing the efficiency, the restrictive assumptions of the Deutch model (see, for example, White(1,2)) are still applicable. These include the assumption that the fluid turbulence is dominant and effective in dispersing the particles to obtain uniform particle concentration in the interelectrode space. Electric field effects are dominant near the collecting electrode. No reentrainment of particulates is allowed, and no particle-particle interactions.

In this section, we describe the basic structure of the model, the boundary conditions, and the techniques of solution which have been employed. The solution in the numerical model employs a finite difference scheme. Since the wavy electrode is not easily represented by a finite difference scheme, a coordinate transformation was employed to map the wavy electrode into a rectangular grid.

Numerical Model

In the present study we have adapted and modified a model for the description of time-averaged fluid motion (4). The model includes fluid transport equations and electrostatic equations.

Transport Equations

For time-averaged flow, the continuity and momentum equations can be written as

$$\frac{\partial \rho U_i}{\partial x_i} = 0 \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial \rho U_i U_j}{\partial x_i} = - \frac{\partial P}{\partial x_i} - \frac{\partial \tau_{ij}}{\partial x_i} + \rho^* E_i \quad (2)$$

where $\rho(x)$ is the time-averaged fluid density at position, U is the averaged velocity, P the pressure, and τ_{ij} the stress tensor. The term $\rho^* E_i$ is the pressure gradient caused by the discharge electric field where ρ^* is the space charge density, and E_i is the electric field intensity. The turbulence kinetic energy equation is written as

$$\frac{\partial \rho U_i k}{\partial x_i} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \frac{\mu_{eff}}{\sigma_k} \frac{\partial k}{\partial x_i} - \frac{\partial U_i}{\partial x_j} \tau_{ij} - \rho \epsilon \quad (3)$$

and the turbulence energy dissipation equation as

$$\frac{\partial \rho U_i \epsilon}{\partial x_i} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \frac{\mu_{eff}}{\sigma_\epsilon} \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial x_i} - \frac{\epsilon}{k} \left(C_{\epsilon 1} \frac{\partial U_i}{\partial x_j} \tau_{ij} + C_{\epsilon 2} \rho \epsilon \right) \quad (4)$$

and furthermore

$$\tau_{ij} = -\mu_{eff} \left(\frac{\partial U_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial U_j}{\partial x_i} \right) + \frac{2}{3} \left(\rho k + \mu_{eff} \frac{\partial U_l}{\partial x_l} \right) \delta_{ij} \quad (5)$$

Equations (3) and (4) describe the transport of the turbulent kinetic energy, k , and its rate of dissipation, ϵ . The effective viscosity are given by

$$\mu_{eff} = C_\mu \rho k^2 / \epsilon \quad (6)$$

The parameters C_μ , $C_{\epsilon 1}$, $C_{\epsilon 2}$, σ_k , and σ_ϵ are empirical constants.

Electrostatic Equations

The two dependent variables describing the electrostatic field are the voltage and the ion space charge. These dependent variables may be described using Maxwell's electrostatic equation and conservation of current.

$$\text{Maxwell's Equation} \quad \frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial x_i^2} = - \frac{\rho^*}{\epsilon_0} \quad (7)$$

$$\text{Conservation of Current} \quad \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} (\rho^* b E_i) = 0 \quad (8)$$

where ϕ is the electrostatic portential, ϵ_0 is the dielectric constant of the medium, ρ^* is the space charge density as before, and b is the mobility assumed to be constant.

These equations model the interaction between the electrostatics and fluid dynamics. However, the model presently excludes the effects of particle dynamics on fluid field using the following assumptions: (1) The response time of any given particle to adjust itself to the surrounding fluid environ-

ment is sufficiently small to ensure that the particles follow the small-scale fluid motion. (2) In case of low particle loading, the fluid dynamics field exerts little influence on the electric field and, consequently, the correlation between fluid velocity and electric field is neglected.

COMPUTATIONAL MESH GENERATION

The above set of equations is numerically solved using finite differencing techniques. These computational methods for solving physical problems in complex-shaped regions require the generation of an appropriate grid system in the region. A good grid system ensures the economy and accuracy in the computational procedure. This section will discuss the two independent methods of grid generation: one for the conventional precipitator and the other for the wavy electrode precipitator.

Grid System for Conventional Precipitator

A state-of-the-art conventional precipitator is illustrated in Figure 1a. An appropriate grid system conforming to this configuration is the one that models the regions of high gradient (in fluid transport and electrostatics) in detail. For this reason, denser grids were allocated to the regions near the wires and the baffles. Additional constraint is imposed on the field intensity near the discharge electrode. Following the discussion in Cobine (6), a characteristic corona radius is used for the calculations of the field intensity near the wire. The grid system was constructed by taking the first grid node at that characteristic distance away from the wire and gradually increasing the grid size to the center of the precipitator cell. To achieve a better resolution of the velocity gradients near the baffles, a similar method was used in the lateral direction to allocate a denser mesh in those regions. Thus, nonuniform mesh system of 59×30 grids was constructed.

Grid System for Wavy Electrode Precipitator

For the wavy electrode precipitator, a boundary-conforming, orthogonal, curvilinear coordinate system was generated. A recent series of papers by Reid et al. (7) and Mobley and Stewart (8) presented a method with flexibility in generating grid systems more appropriate to physical problems. A second transformation is incorporated to stretch and pack the grid as the problem necessitates.

A sample mesh system of 59×29 grids for a wavy electrode precipitator was used. The coordinates were packed towards the wire in order to place the first computational grid node at the characteristic wire radius as before. The grids were stretched gradually away from the wire to optimize the number of grid nodes for economical computation.

To utilize the general orthogonal coordinate system, the governing equations were rewritten using the usual rules of coordinate transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of numerical modeling for electrostatics are presented in Figure 2. The applied conditions were a wire voltage of -70 kV at a room temperature of 15°C. These conditions were selected for comparisons with laboratory conditions. Obviously, in a full-scale precipitator, the operating temperature will be higher and the maximum allowable operating voltage, as well as the current densities, will be much lower. However, both the conventional and wavy electrodes were considered under the same conditions for our analysis. The test wavy collector was a sine wave with height (from the centerline to the peak of the wave) of 15 cm, wave amplitude (peak-to-valley distance) of 3 cm, and wavelength of 22.5 cm. The solution for the electric potential takes into account the effect of ion space charge, and the boundary conditions along the inlet and outlet are assumed periodic. As can be observed in Figure 2a, there is a strong gradient of potential near the baffles in a conventional precipitator, indicating an imminent sparkover under the given test conditions. The wavy electrode shows, on the other hand, more uniform distribution of potential throughout the precipitator cell, as seen in Figure 2b. This favorable property of the wavy electrode may allow the applied voltage to be increased without promoting a sparkover as discussed earlier.

Figures 3a and b show the fluid dynamic flow field at corresponding applied conditions. The volume flow rate was set at 0.6 m³/s which translated to the inlet velocities of 0.6 m/s for the conventional precipitator and 0.5 m/s for the wavy electrode precipitator because of varying inlet geometries. As illustrated, the numerical predictions show the dramatic effect of ion motion and ionic wind along the electric field lines.

The influence of the ionic flow is strong enough that just beyond the cell entrance the calculations show a rapid adjustment of the flow to the electric field. The region between the discharge wires experiences a minimum in both the electric field and space charge concentrations; this results in a locally minimum electric pressure gradient $\rho^* E_i$ which allows the fluid a return path to the wire.

The wavy electrode exhibits a different pattern in separation region near the collection plate. The strong interaction between the ion migration and the fluid motion along the wavy-shaped plate promotes a large recirculation zone behind the inlet section. In the conventional precipitator, the recirculation zone extends to about one-quarter of the cell behind the inlet baffles. On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of the collection plate in the wavy precipitator is protected by the recirculation flows.

A comparison of current flux distribution is given in Figure 4. The applied voltage was at -70 kV and at room temperature. The solid line corresponds to a numerical prediction of current density of a wavy electrode, and the broken line corresponds to that of a conventional precipitator electrode. The conventional precipitator has a peak current at the plate exactly opposite to the wire, whereas the wavy electrode shows nearly uniform current density over the collection plate.

This condition is conducive to a higher average migration velocity for the particles being collected. Particularly for fine particles (submicron-diameter particles), the wavy electrode shows favorable trends in improving the particle charging process by two ways: (1) The average charging field over the precipitator cell is higher for the wavy electrode, giving the higher field charging. (2) The average current density in interelectrode space is higher in the wavy electrode, to promote the higher diffusion charging on the fine particles.

The results of these theoretical calculations have been utilized to obtain a qualitative measure of the improvements offered by the wavy design: namely, the increase in particle collection efficiency per unit collector area. Figure 5 shows the efficiency per cell versus particle size using a modified Deutsch-Anderson technique. The efficiency predicted in this figure is a relative value and should not be taken as equivalent to the total performance of a given precipitator system. As expected, the submicron particles are most difficult to collect. However, the wavy collector consistently outperforms the conventional collector counterpart. Since the field intensity peaks are not present in the wavy design, sparkover may be delayed and the operating voltage may be increased as schematically illustrated in Figure 5.

CONCLUSIONS

The advanced precipitator electrode with the wavy geometry shows promising improvements over the conventional precipitator electrode. Based on the present analysis, this improved collector design will offer (1) a higher average electric field and (2) a larger flow-shielding region without sharp flanges. A combination of fluid dynamic advantages and improvements in electrostatic properties may become attractive for precipitator optimization once the improvement provided by each technique is proven. The design may also be incorporated with other design innovations, such as the pulse-charging, rigid-frame electrode and multistaging of precipitators.

ENDNOTES

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(a) A State-of-the-Art Electrostatic Precipitator

(b) The Wavy Electrode Electrostatic Precipitator

Figure 1. Precipitator Electrode Geometry

(a) A State-of-the-Art Electrostatic Precipitator

(b) The Wavy Electrode Electrostatic Precipitator

Figure 2. Computed Electrostatic Potential, -70kV

(a) A State-of-the-Art Electrostatic Precipitator

(b) The Wavy Electrode Electrostatic Precipitator

Figure 3. Computed Velocity Field with Average Wire Potential of -70 kV

Figure 4. Comparison of Computed Current Density, -70 kV

Figure 5. Particle Collection Efficiency as a Function of Particle Size