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A photograph of a plumber working in a utility room. The plumber is wearing a blue t-shirt, a blue baseball cap, and glasses. He is looking upwards and to the right, focused on his work. His right arm is raised, holding a white pipe. A white cloth with blue stripes is draped over a pipe to his left. The background shows wooden joists and other pipes.

FUELED *for* GROWTH

*Plumbing shop reinvents itself with a new fleet,
new services and a cross-trained staff capable of tackling any job*

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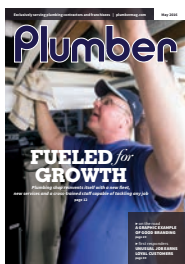


Chris Roseland, co-owner of Backlund Plumbing, talks with service manager Tom Ostrand at the company shop in Omaha, Nebraska.

Profile: Fueled for Growth

Plumbing shop reinvents itself with a new fleet, new services and a cross-trained staff capable of tackling any job.

By Ken Wysocky



ON THE COVER

Backlund Plumbing's Mike Barr replaces old galvanized waterlines with new copper in the basement of a house that's being completely re-piped. (Photography by Matt Ryerson)

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Ann Richmond



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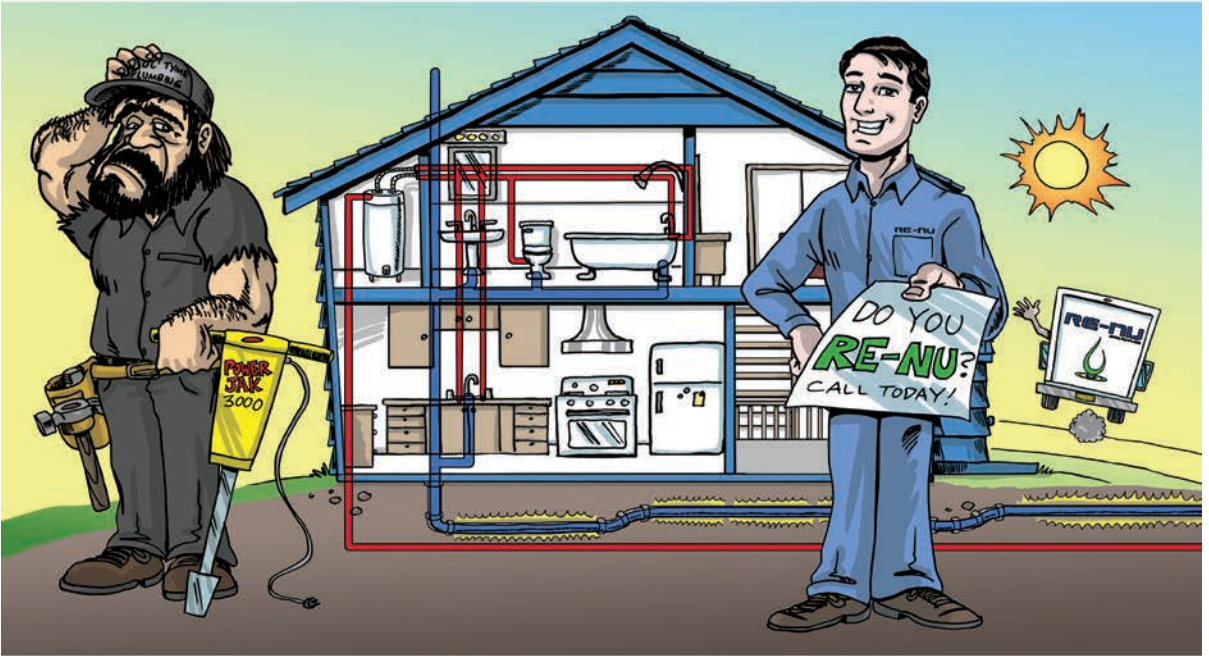
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DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE

Don't just reach your potential customer base, build relationships with them

By Luke Laggis

I recently found a promotional mailer from a local plumbing firm that I'd never heard of. It was very nicely done, but the fact I even saw it at all before it ended up in the garbage was pure luck.

I had sorted through a pile of mail and was bagging up all the junk — mailer included — when I saw it. I was folding up the bundle to fit it into the bag when the mailer slipped out and floated across my kitchen floor. I'd never even heard of the company, but it's right in my backyard.

So here was this expensive mailer from a local company I'd never heard of and the only difference between me seeing this company's name or going on blissfully unaware of its existence was the heavy, glossy stock that allowed the card to slide out of the pile as I was throwing it away. Would you gamble your promotional dollars like that?

This particular mailer appeared to be a co-op venture with a major furnace manufacturer. That obviously cut the cost down considerably, and I wonder if that was the primary factor in this particular shop choosing to do the mailer. It would be easy to jump on board when you see the cost of your mailer cut in half, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's a good buy.

The fact is, plenty of small-business owners have no idea if they're spending their marketing and advertising dollars effectively. It's not easy to measure, but it's easy to second-guess.

This month's Smart Business column takes a look at print advertising, specifically the value of advertising in your local newspaper. Sometimes an ad in the paper is still a great buy, for several distinct reasons outlined

in the column. But you've been told that to reach customers you must have a strong Internet presence, including a website, blog, Twitter account and Facebook page. If my target audience was under 30, that's where my attention would be focused as well, but as good as those outlets can be at helping you build a brand, they're not going to reach everyone and they're not going to give you a community presence.

In the case of that glossy mail promo, the company's Web address wasn't even valid. I was able to find them on Facebook, but the few posts on the page were basically just sales pitches and didn't provide any substantive information.

In reality, just the fact that I'm writing about it probably means the local HVAC shop got more mileage out of this mailer than they ever imagined. But even though I've hung onto it for a couple months now, they still wouldn't be my first call — or even second or third — if I needed someone to come and work on my furnace.

My point is there are advantages and disadvantages with every type of marketing and advertising. What's important is that everything you do works together. Don't send out a mailer with a bad Web address. Don't waste the time on Facebook and Twitter if you're not going to convey a strong message and help people build relationships with your company. Most importantly, don't spend money just because you know you need to advertise. Formulate a plan. Target your message and brand yourself properly.

Make sure you're giving people a reason to start a relationship with you and your company, because in the end, it doesn't matter how good a plumber you are if no one calls.

Enjoy this month's issue. ■

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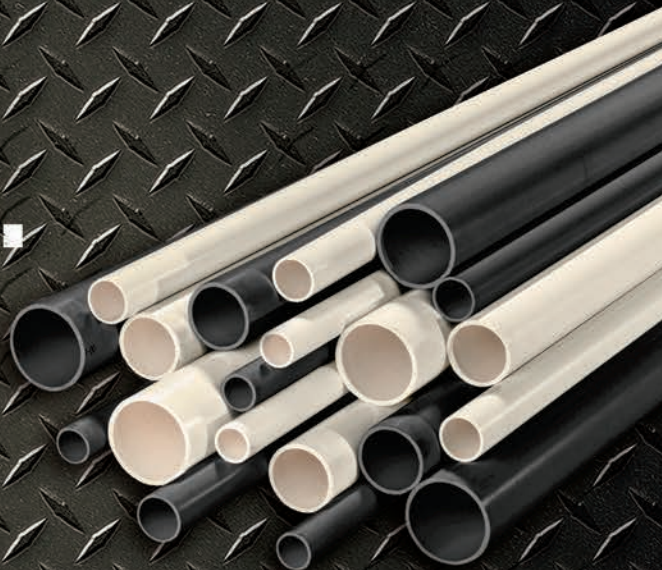
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A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

LOW-WATER TOILET CHANGES QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES IN HAITI

Through his association with Plumbers Without Borders, Fred Schilling has made five trips to Haiti, providing residents with clean water and sanitation. Schilling says the greatest challenge is determining what type of toilet to install. Lack of water makes typical installations impractical and one reason why the SaTo toilet pan has made an instant impact. Developed by American Standard, the low-water toilet closes off gas and odors from pit latrines – a huge problem in a country where 80-90 percent of the population practices open defecation. >> plumbermag.com/featured

10 WAYS PLUMBING MATTERS

SANITATION PLAYS VITAL ROLE IN GLOBAL HEALTH

World Plumbing Day is an international event initiated by the World Plumbing Council in 2010 to recognize the important role plumbing plays in the health, safety and sustainability of our society. While celebrated on March 11, in many ways, every day is World Plumbing Day. >> plumbermag.com/featured

GOLD STRIKE

PLUMBERS UNCOVER \$50,000 METAL BAR DURING BATHROOM RENOVATION

Who has \$50,000 worth of gold in their bathroom? Better yet, who stashes a cellphone-sized bar of precious metal under their Jacuzzi tub? That's what two plumbers in Canada were wondering after striking gold during a bathroom renovation in Calgary.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

“Many times, the cost of equipment lies more in ownership than in the initial purchase price. Employee training, storage, insurance, maintenance and repair are ongoing expenditures. If the monthly ownership cost is higher than the profit, then the initial purchase price doesn't matter – it's a bad decision.”

IS NEW PLUMBING EQUIPMENT WORTH THE INVESTMENT?

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A man with a mustache, wearing a white hard hat, safety glasses, and an orange high-visibility shirt, is kneeling on a construction site. He is focused on working with copper pipes. In his right hand, he holds a yellow propane torch, which is lit and directed at a pipe. In his left hand, he holds a roll of copper pipe. The background shows a construction site with wooden framing and a white wall with some red markings.

FUELED *for* GROWTH

*Plumbing shop reinvents itself with a new fleet,
new services and a cross-trained staff capable of tackling any job*

Todd Bessire, a 26-year employee and current foreman of the commercial plumbing side of Backlund Plumbing, sweats copper pipe for a new bar being built in Omaha.

Backlund Plumbing, Omaha, Nebraska



FOUNDED	1932
OWNERS	Chris and Mark Roseland
EMPLOYEES	65
SERVICES	Drain cleaning, plumbing, sewer and water installations, cross-bore inspections, septic tank pumping
CUSTOMER BASE	Residential, commercial and municipal
SERVICE AREA	Omaha, Nebraska, metropolitan area
WEBSITE	www.backlundplumbing.com

By Ken Wysocky

Photography by Matt Ryerson

Image is everything, even in the plumbing industry. Just ask Chris Roseland, the co-owner of Backlund Plumbing in Omaha, Nebraska, who watched revenue jump — and customers' perceptions change — after the company invested in 10 new service vans featuring advanced, game-changing technology: engines that run on compressed natural gas.

The switch from conventional gasoline to CNG-powered vehicles in 2012 did more than just reduce the company's monthly fuel tab. It also prompted a ripple effect of other benefits, including free advertising in the form of media coverage. It also gave the company a novel marketing angle — the ability to portray itself as a “green,” eco-conscious company — that helps it differentiate from other outfits in a competitive market.

“If I had to name one thing that helped spark our plumbing world, it would be our use of CNG,” says Roseland, who co-owns the company with his father, Mark. His father and late mother, Sally, originally bought the company in 1987; Chris joined the company in 1994 and earned a master plumber license in 2004. “At the time, we were driving outdated vehicles that didn't look up to par. Switching to CNG vehicles prompted us to update our fleet and apply the (fuel) savings to buying more new trucks.

“We simultaneously rebranded the company — all our new plumbing vehicles hit the road at the same time with new vinyl wraps,” he continues. “It really helped our image and gave us a lot of free advertising from the press doing stories about our trucks. It's hard to put a price on that. If I had to choose one thing that spurred our plumbing growth during the last several years, it was the conversion of our plumbing trucks to compressed natural gas.”

More conversions to CNG followed. Today, more than two dozen of the company's vehicles run on natural gas: 12 Ford Econoline vans and seven Ford Transit vans, all used for plumbing and drain cleaning work; two Dodge 2500 flatbed delivery trucks; three Freightliner FL70 service trucks; two vacuum trucks built on Freightliner M2 chassis; and two Freightliner FL70 dump trucks.



▲ Chris Roseland, co-owner of Backlund Plumbing in Omaha, Nebraska, stands in front of a 2012 Vacall AllExcavate hydroexcavator on the job site.

REDUCED OPERATING EXPENSES

High fuel prices played a key role in the decision to convert to CNG. In 2012, the nationwide average price for a gallon of gas hovered around \$3.60. “At the time, we were doing work for the city’s Metropolitan Utility District and I noticed they were converting their vehicles,” Roseland recalls. “So I inquired about it.”

Research showed that CNG at the time cost just \$1.70 a gallon. In addition, natural gas prices historically aren’t subject to the volatile swings commonly seen in gasoline prices. And while the conversion price was expensive — about \$12,000 per service van — MUD was offering a 50 percent rebate. That sealed the deal, Roseland says.

“With financial assistance from the rebates, our break-even point was running 3,000 gallons (of CNG) through the vehicles,” he explains. “Each van saved about \$4,000 the first year through reduced fuel costs. I’d say 90 percent of those first 10 conversions paid for themselves within the first two or three years.”

Now that gas is under \$2 a gallon, the savings aren’t nearly as dramatic. But Roseland points out that since the vans’ conversions, the company has also converted the two Freightliner dump trucks and other vehicles that use diesel fuel, which currently costs about 50 cents more per gallon than CNG.

“When diesel is at \$4 a gallon and CNG is \$2 a gallon, we might save up to \$250 a day,” he explains. “In my opinion, fuel prices eventually are going to go back up. Our vehicles have a seven- or eight-year life cycle, so we’re betting that fuel costs will average out higher in the next seven years.” In the short term, Roseland remains undaunted by lower fuel prices; the company plans to buy and convert five more Transit vans during 2016, he says.

“It really helped our image and gave us a lot of free advertising from the press doing stories about our trucks. It’s hard to put a price on that.” - Chris Roseland

Truck Center Companies does the CNG conversions. The process is relatively simple: The gas tank and fuel-delivery system is replaced with a CNG tank and a new fuel-delivery system. A different conversion kit enables the original gas engine to run on compressed natural gas, Roseland says.

Backlund’s revenues have increased since the CNG conversions, and he attributes much of it to the company’s ability to brand itself as a “green,” eco-conscious business. “I can verify that because we’ve only promoted it on our vinyl vehicle wraps, and when people call, they usually ask about the CNG trucks,” Roseland says. “They notice that we’ve done it. Our employees tell me that customers are always asking how it works. I think that if we’re on par with a competitor price-wise, we get chosen because we’re ‘greener.’”

There is one drawback to CNG-powered vehicles: Fueling stations are scarce. Roseland says the company is fortunate because there are two CNG stations within a mile of the company’s headquarters. In addition, the CNG vehicles have only a 250-mile range, so drivers must always be aware of their proximity to fueling stations. “But they’re adding more refueling stations every year,” he notes.

▼ Compressed natural gas flows into one of Backlund’s Ford E-250 service vans. Most of the company’s fleet has been converted to run on CNG.





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“Each van saved about \$4,000 the first year through reduced fuel costs. I’d say 90 percent of those first 10 conversions paid for themselves within the first two or three years.” - Chris Roseland

DIVERSIFIED SERVICES

When the Roselands bought Backlund Plumbing in 1987, the Omaha-based business was a small service shop with three employees. Today, it’s a \$10-million-a-year company with 65 employees. A critical factor in this extreme makeover? The expansion into a range of diversified services. Backlund now does residential, commercial and municipal drain cleaning; residential and commercial plumbing; sewer and water installations; cross-bore inspections; and septic tank pumping.

“We made a decision years ago to try to offer as many services in-house as possible versus using subcontractors,” Roseland says. “We’ve always felt that we can maintain the quality of our work and do a better job if we control these jobs instead of relying on subcontractors.

“If someone calls with a problem at midnight, we show up with all our vehicles and we don’t have to wait

for a sub to show up,” he adds. “We run a 24-hour operation — no answering service. If the phone rings at 2 a.m., we answer it. Same-day service is a huge must in our world. And we also have the equipment ready to handle virtually any problem; we’re a one-stop shop for plumbing, pumping, utility work and hydroexcavating. If people asked us to paint their house, we’d probably paint their house. ... We’ll literally do anything.”

Moreover, offering a variety of services avoids the eggs-in-one-basket problem that some companies run into, which leaves them vulnerable to market downturns, he says.

The company’s primary focus on residential plumbing shifted dramatically in the early 2000s due to the recession-induced decline in new housing. “The market suffered for new houses and remodeling projects,” Roseland says. “So we jumped into the commer-



▲ Jon Bailey labels new waterlines on a commercial installation job.

CROSS-TRAINING CREATES HAPPIER, MORE PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYEES

One of the keys to Backlund Plumbing's exponential growth during the last couple decades is a cross-training program that enables employees to perform a variety of functions, which improves efficiency at the Omaha-based company.

At Backlund, some plumbers know how to operate a vac truck, for instance. In other instances, sewer line cleaners can also run inspection camera systems. Along the way, employees make themselves more valuable — and sometimes even earn pay increases. “One of my best drain technicians became a full-time cross-bore CCTV technician,” says Chris Roseland, who co-owns the business with his father, Mark, bought in 1987. “He got a substantial pay raise for acquiring a new skill.

“Cross-training is a big reason why we excel,” he adds. “We have very smart employees. One of our technicians likes to fix things, for example, so he learned how to repair pipeline inspection cameras. We also have interior commercial plumbers who want to be out in the dirt, digging. So they learn how to run excavating equipment. Then in winter, when there's less digging going on, they can go back to doing interior plumbing again.”

Cross-training is time-consuming and requires thorough planning as well as a strong commitment. But in the end, it's worth the time invested, Roseland says, and not just because of the increased efficiencies. “I think our employees are happier because on most days, they never know what they'll be doing. ... We're as far from an assembly-line job as you can get,” Roseland says. “Doing different things keeps them invigorated about their jobs and helps to prevent burnout.”

Backlund also improves retention by paying top wages and offering good benefits, such as more paid time off and a matching 401(k) retirement program, plus paying the bulk of employee health insurance premiums. “When people came to work for us 10 years ago, it was because we could give them 60- to 70-hour weeks and enable them to make more money,” Roseland points out. “Now they seem to prefer that we offer a 40- or 50-hour workweek, pay them a good wage and back it all up with a good benefits package.”

To build company loyalty and teamwork, Backlund also holds special events for employees, like Thursday night bowling-and-pizza parties or fishing/hunting trips. “Once we took 50 guys to a Kansas City Chiefs game,” Roseland says. “We treat employees like gold because they're our most valuable asset.

“In 2015, we went from \$8 million to \$10 million in sales — with the same number of employees,” he adds. “I never thought we could top \$10 million in sales. But we did it, thanks to diversified services and cross-trained employees.”

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cial market to diversify the company. ... Since then, about 50 percent of our business comes from commercial work. We basically grow as our customers' needs grow."

Then customers started asking if Backlund did outside utility installations, such as new waterlines. The company didn't — but in 2008, based on continuing requests, the company invested in tractors and backhoes so it could install fire lines and storm and sanitary lines. "There was a huge learning curve in learning how to do outside utilities," he notes. "But we took our experienced plumbers and added utilities to their scope of work. They took OSHA confined-space entry classes and learned safe excavation techniques — things like what equipment to use in what situation, how to use it, and proper compaction and backfilling techniques."

Much of the outside plumbing work is driven by infrastructure improvements. For instance, when Omaha officials recently embarked on a large project to separate the city's storm and sanitary sewers, it also replaced water mains in certain locations. "That, in turn, drives demand for replacing waterlines to houses — changing lead service to copper," Roseland explains. "We do a lot of water reconnects for our local utility, the Metropolitan Utilities District. In 2014, we reconnected about 700 waterlines to a new mainline."

As services expanded, so did the company's roster of equipment. Today, the company owns two trailer-mounted Spartan 798 water jettors (4,000 psi at 18 gpm), equipped with 500-gallon water tanks, and a 2010 Camel 1200 vacuum truck with hydroexcavating capability, made by Super Products. It features a

"If the phone rings at 2 a.m., we answer it. Same-day service is a huge must in our world. And we also have the equipment ready to handle virtually any problem; we're a one-stop shop for plumbing, pumping, utility work and hydroexcavating."

- Chris Roseland

12-cubic-yard debris tank, a 1,500-gallon water tank, a Roots Systems blower (4,460 cfm) and a water pump (80 gpm at 2,000 psi) made by Myers.

In addition, the company relies on five cart-mounted drain cleaning machines made by Duracable Manufacturing; six VuTek push cameras for pipeline inspections, made by Insight Vision; several RIDGID Mini-SeeSnake pipeline inspection cameras; and a CUES-equipped Dodge Sprinter camera truck with a LAMP inspection camera that includes lateral launch capability.

The company also owns a 2012 Vacall AllExcavate hydroexcavating truck, built on a Sterling chassis with a 12-cubic-yard debris tank, a 1,300-gallon water tank and a 5,150 cfm Hibon blower; and two trailer-mounted vacuum hydroexcavators made by Ditch Witch. Used primarily for utility potholing, the units feature a 500-gallon debris tank and a 250-gallon water tank.

As for the future, Roseland says the company is aiming for 10 percent growth in sales during 2016, with much of the increase coming in sewer and water infrastructure work.

He also says acquiring another company isn't out of the question. "We're always thinking like that," he says. "We're always willing to consider getting into something new." ■

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www.cuesinc.com

DITCH WITCH
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www.ditchwitch.com

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▼ Erik Johnson cuts copper pipe to replace old galvanized waterlines on a residential re-pipe job.



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A GRAPHIC EXAMPLE

Award-winning vinyl wrap design on Nevada plumber's trucks underscores the high-flying power of effective branding

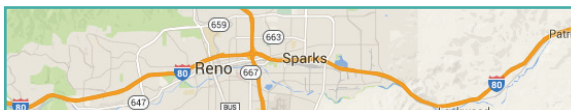
By Ken Wysocky

When Mark Treglia decided to take off and form Straight Up Plumbing in 2014, he knew breaking into the competitive market in Nevada's Reno-Sparks metro area would require a fresh, bold branding statement.

The U.S. Navy veteran achieved just that by hiring a New Jersey marketing firm that came up with an eye-catching vinyl-wrap design: a retro-looking airplane that, upon closer examination, is actually a water faucet, with hot and cold handles serving as the propellers.

"I wanted to make a statement — be different," says Treglia, who owns the company with his wife, Jerilyn. The company's primary focus is service and installation for residential and light-commercial markets. "Most of the local plumbing trucks have simple and homemade lettering and we didn't want to enter the market like that. We wanted something bright, bold and fresh."

As they say in the military, mission accomplished. The airplane graphic works on several levels; it's not



- COMPANY** Straight Up Plumbing
- LOCATION** Sparks, Nevada
- VEHICLES** 2006 Ford E-350 with a Spartan box body made by Supreme Corporation and a 2001 Workhorse step van with a Union City body
- FUNCTION** Transport roughly \$6,000 worth of repair parts
- FEATURE** Bold vinyl wraps designed by Graphic D-Signs
- COST OF VINYL WRAPS** About \$17,000 (which included market research to develop a company branding/marketing campaign)



▲ The vinyl wraps on the Straight Up Plumbing fleet are part of an integrated marketing campaign centered on the airplane logo and a short-and-sweet motto that reflects company owner Mark Treglia's aspirations: "Where service meets integrity."

only memorable, Treglia points out, but it also meshes perfectly with the company name. Moreover, the retro-looking airplane reflects his desire to provide old-school service aimed at changing the public's often-negative perception of plumbers.

"We want to bring back the kind of service people got in the 1950s — when you shook hands with customers and served their needs, not the contractor's wants," he explains. "Companies get so caught up in sales these days that they forget what the customer is asking for. That's why we decided to call our company Straight Up Plumbing. There's no baloney. We're not going to sell people something they don't need."

The vinyl wraps adorn both the company's 2006 Ford E-350, which carries a 10-foot Spartan box body made by Supreme Corporation, and a 2001 Workhorse step van, featuring a cargo body made by Union City Body. Graphic D-Signs, an advertising and marketing agency that specializes in small-business clients, designed the wraps. The Straight Up Plumbing wrap won an award in 2015 at the NJ Ad Club's 47th Annual Jersey Awards Show.

Creating a strong brand identity for a new company does not come cheap. Treglia says he made an investment of just less than \$10,000 to have Graphic D-Signs develop a branding package that included the

"You can't expect customers to pay you as a professional if you don't project a professional image with things like nice-looking trucks, uniforms and business cards. Without all that, you're just a Chuck in a truck." - Mark Treglia



▲ Straight Up Plumbing owner Mark Treglia understood the value of creating a strong brand identity when he hired an advertising agency to design the wraps for his service vehicles. He says the wraps generate 10 percent of his company's service calls.

logo, wrap design and business cards. The result? An integrated marketing campaign centered on the airplane logo and a short-and-sweet motto that reflects Treglia's aspirations: "Where service meets integrity." The company's research even delved into what colors appeal most to both male and female baby boomers. The findings: Aqua blue appeals to women, red and black to men. "Who would've thought that combination would work?" Treglia says. "But it does."

A local company, Graphics Unlimited, printed and installed the vinyl wraps. That cost another \$8,500. Total investment: roughly \$17,000. But Treglia, who was trained to be a plumber in the Navy and worked for another contractor before striking out on his own, says it was worth every penny. "I was scared to cough up the initial investment," he admits. "But I decided to do it after I read a book written by the owner of Graphic D-Signs, Dan Antonelli (*Building a Big Small Business Brand*). In the end, I would say the wraps have paid for themselves. It's hard to quantify that kind of return on investment, but it definitely was worthwhile."



How worthwhile? Treglia estimates that about 10 percent of the company's total service calls, which average about 45 a month, are a direct result of the highly visible trucks. (Customers are always asked where they heard about the company.) "That's not only huge, it's pretty remarkable," he says. "Customers say they've never seen anything like our trucks — they say they love the retro look. We've been delightfully surprised at their reactions."

What would Treglia tell other plumbers who'd like to develop a better company image but are hesitant to invest a chunk of money in a new logo and vinyl wraps? "I'd say, 'Thank you,' because they're giving me more

business," he quips. "They're just shooting themselves in the foot. You can't expect customers to pay you as a professional if you don't project a professional image with things like nice-looking trucks, uniforms and business cards," Treglia says. "Without all that, you're just a Chuck in a truck."

Ironically enough, the airplane design was Treglia's least favorite out of four options presented. "My mind was stuck on a little guy — a mascot holding a grip wrench," he laughs. "But I took a leap of faith on their recommendation and I've never regretted it. We went the extra mile to make sure our trucks make a statement and disrupt the market. And I think we're on our way." ■

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GIVE YOUR FLEET A LIFT

Let safety and ideal lifting capacity be your guide when choosing a hoist for your shop

By Ed Wodalski

You've been using floor jacks and jack stands to work on your trucks and equipment. Tired of squeezing beneath vehicles, you're thinking about moving up to a lift. But how do you know which one to choose? Will a less expensive lift perform as well as a higher priced model? What about a used lift? Are they safe? What should you look for?

Lifts come in various styles — inground, two-post surface mounted, multi-post runway (four-post surface mounted), low/mid-rise frame engaging, drive-on parallelogram, scissor and moveable wheel engaging — and can vary in price from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

Before investing in a lift, determine how the lift will be used and where it will be located. Can your garage floor support the weight, is there enough ceiling height and how close is your power and air supply?

LIFTING POWER

Certified inground and four-post above-ground lifts, designed to do so, can hoist their rated capacity, including a 33,000-pound vehicle. Certified mobile column lifts, heavy-duty scissor lifts or parallelogram lifts are equally suited to the job.

"Typically, when someone has buyer's remorse it's because they didn't do their homework upfront," says R.W. "Bob" O'Gorman, president of the Automotive Lift Institute in Cortland, New York. "For example, they purchased a 7,000-pound lift when a 12,000-pound lift was really needed. Perhaps a decision was made to buy a 12,000-pound lift when they needed an 18,000-pound lift. Examples like these are probably one of the biggest consumer issues we see. People buy a lift not really considering the capacity and application they will need."

O'Gorman suggests visiting the institute's FAQ (autolift.org/faq.php) and Buyer Beware (autolift.org/buyer_beware.php) pages to become better educated.

SAFETY FIRST

Unlike other tools in your shop that get used and abused, a lift is a safety item and should be viewed in this manner by the user, O'Gorman says. With thousands or tens of thousands of pounds overhead, you don't want your lift to be a hazard. And while most lifts look the same, even to the trained eye, that doesn't mean they are.

"In the United States and Canada we have the International Building Code, the National Electrical Code, health and safety regulations and product safety standards to help manufacturers address known hazards such as electrical and mechanical safety considerations that should be built into the product before it leaves the factory," says Dale W. Soos, senior project engineer for the Automotive Lift Institute.



▲ Above-ground, surface-mounted lifts, typically bolted to the garage floor, are among today's most popular styles. (Photo by Ed Wodalski)



▲ The Automotive Lift Institute's Gold Certification Label ensures your lift meets safety standards.

“A mandatory requirement compelling manufacturers to comply simply is not the case in some industries — automotive lifts is one such example. Therefore, if you are not careful, you get what you pay for in this market,” he says. “Speaking as an engineer and a car guy, steel is a commodity. With this in mind, lower price most likely means less steel to some degree. That may be OK if the design is solid and the quality or quantity of the steel is not lower than that required by the design.”

O’Gorman says one way to ensure the lift you are considering will perform as claimed is to look for the Automotive Lift Institute’s Gold Certification Label.

ALI’s vehicle lift certification program utilizes OSHA’s Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories to conduct its product safety evaluations and tests every lift model it certifies and deems eligible to bear ALI’s certification label.

ALI’s mission is to promote the safe design, construction, installation, inspection and use of automotive lifts. It is not involved in the pricing or sales of lifts.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

When deciding on a lift, keep in mind that above-ground lifts sold in North America are manufactured in Canada, Europe, China and other Asian

countries, as well as the United States. Rather than base your choice on country of origin, O’Gorman suggests focusing on important aspects of product performance and design, as well as material used, stress calculations and adherence to national requirements for safety and quality control, including a model’s accessories and subcomponents.

“For those interested in the country of origin, a label declaring this information is mandatory for all lifts that comply with the ANSI/ALI ALCTV safety standard that is recognized throughout North America as the industry standard,” he says.

SECONDHAND OPTIONS

If you’re considering a used lift, make sure it’s in working condition and that it operates as intended by the manufacturer. For many, this might require obtaining the opinion of an experienced lift inspector. You don’t want a safety hazard that puts you or your employees at risk.

“Was the lift removed after being found no longer fit for duty as a result of wear or some form of damage?” Soos questions.

Depending on the age of the secondhand lift, it might not include some of today’s safety features or meet installation code requirements. Before relocating a lift or purchasing a used one, it’s best to check with local code officials first — even if you’re moving the lift from one location in the shop to another.



▲ Heavy-duty mobile column lift system. (Photo courtesy Mohawk Lift)



▲ Telescoping inground lift. (Photo courtesy Rotary Lift)

INSTALL AND INSPECT

Installing a lift, especially an above-ground model, might seem like a weekend project; however, ALI recommends consulting a professional installation company before attempting to install a lift. If you are confident in your abilities and find local codes don't require a professional, proceed with caution and safety in mind while following the manufacturer's instructions.

"We are aware of at least one professional installer with years of installation experience who was seriously injured after being pinned during a routine installation that was expected to be fairly easy," Soos says. "Save yourself the headache and obtain the services of a professional who has experience with the lift you select."

Once installed, be sure you and your employees are properly trained on use and maintenance. Perform a daily check of fasteners and anchor bolts. Look for cracks in the concrete floor and for fluid leaks. And, at a minimum, have your lift safety-inspected at least once a year.

LIFT TYPES

Until the 1980s, most lifts were of the inground type. Today, surface-mounted lifts are a popular choice. Typically bolted to the floor, they are powered by an electric motor that operates either a hydraulic pump or screw drive. Here are a few models:

- **Two-post, surface mounted** - The most popular type of surface-mounted lift purchased today, arms ride up each column and are synchronized mechanically, hydraulically or electronically.
- **Multi-post runway** - Commonly configured as a four-post, surface-mounted lift, the vehicle is driven onto two runways and lifted by the tires.
- **Low/mid-rise frame engaging** - The lift operates in either a parallelogram style (fore or aft as it raises and lowers) or a scissor style that moves in a straight vertical direction. Lifts might be electric-hydraulic or powered by compressed air.
- **Drive-on parallelogram** - The surface-mounted, drive-on lift (except low rise) raises the vehicle with two runways using a mechanism that moves a short distance fore or aft when raising or lowering, depending on how the lift is mounted.
- **Scissor** - Using a mechanism similar to the parallelogram, the scissor lift raises and lowers the vehicle in a straight vertical path rather than fore or aft.
- **Moveable-type wheel engaging** - Traditionally used with longer, more unconventional vehicles, the lift utilizes individual columns in sets of two, four, six or more. A master control synchronizes the columns to operate in unison.
- **Inground** - Still a popular choice, pistons raise the vehicle with the lifting assembly located below the garage floor. ■



CREATE A SAFER WORK ENVIRONMENT

Protect your plumbers and let them know you're looking out for their well-being

By Matt Crum

Workplace safety is too important for employers to overlook. With nearly 3 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses reported each year by private employers, the costs are nearly \$250 billion annually, in addition to the pain and suffering experienced by the workers and their families.

Costs your business may incur include increases in workers' compensation premiums, loss of productivity, overtime paid to other workers, damage to equipment and disruption of the team, just to name a few.

Plumbing contractors may be particularly susceptible to on-the-job injuries experienced by their workers, including slips and falls, exposure to hazardous materials, inhalation of mold or airborne contaminants, improper lifting, burns, tool injuries and other common accidents.

However, proactive approaches to fostering a safer work environment can make a real difference from a cost point of view as well as an employee safety and satisfaction perspective. Rather than gambling with the safety of your employees and the associated costs, there are a number of steps you can take to put the odds in your favor:

- **Establish a safety program:** Include regular discussions of injury prevention in new employee orientations. Conduct periodic safety refresher sessions for all employees, and encourage employees to discuss safety controls and how to manage near misses and hazardous conditions.

- **Make safety a measurable performance factor for your supervisors as well as your employees:** Your front-line supervisors are best equipped to monitor procedures to ensure that safe practices are in place and followed — and including safety monitoring as a performance factor makes it clear to them that you're serious. However, it's not just your supervisors. Including participation in safety meetings

as a performance factor for all employees should encourage better and more engaged participation.

- **Follow safety standards yourself:** It's human nature for employees to emulate practices they observe on the part of owners and managers. Be sure you're conveying the right messages.

- **Communicate and be proactive:** Employees may have previously worked for contractors with rules and standards you may not agree with. You don't want these to become the norm in your business. Safety posters aren't enough; if you see a problem, or hear about it from workers and supervisors, deal with it immediately at a safety meeting for employees.

- **Keep your door open:** You want your employees to feel comfortable coming to you to discuss safety issues, conditions, hazards and equipment.

- **Reward good behavior:** This is where the performance standards come in. It's not just on the punitive side — you want to recognize positive behaviors and good safety records.

- **Be sure your workers' compensation insurance coverage is adequate:** Cover your employees for every role they fulfill and cover yourself as the business owner as well.

Developing or improving your safety program is not a theoretical exercise. Studies by insurance carriers indicate that investment in proactive workplace safety programs can yield a return on investment of approximately \$6.15 for every \$1 spent.

But there's more to it than that. Employees don't want to work where they don't feel safe. If they feel safe and believe you are interested in their welfare, not just their work output, you'll be more likely to recruit and retain the best workers. ■

Matt Crum is president of Frank Winston Crum Insurance Company. He can be reached at mattc@fwcruminsurance.com.

FOLLOW YOUR FLEET

SkyBitz's Local Fleets provides a variety of options in one fleet-tracking system

By Kyle Rogers

When your business has a lot of vehicles on the road, it's important to stay in the know on their whereabouts.

Good fleet-tracking software provides many efficiencies that can improve your bottom line: Ensuring you dispatch the closest vehicle to a service call or monitoring drivers' idling time, for example. That's where fleet-tracking software like SkyBitz's Local Fleets can help. The company showcased its product at the 2016 Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show.

"We like to say that we watch the fleet so you can watch your business," says Amy Ward, regional sales director for SkyBitz. "That's our tagline and it's true with the way the system is set up. Once the data is flowing, it's autopilot from there."

A hardwired GPS device is installed in each vehicle, and from there the Local Fleets software can produce a number of different reports or provide valuable information in real time. It can be integrated with dispatch to give turn-by-turn directions to a service call, or tailored to provide a number of different alerts such as preventive maintenance reminders.

"We also have an app for mobile devices so you can see where the trucks are while on the go. And a lot of the information we collect can be emailed directly to the end user," Ward says. "As far as user friendliness, it's really simple, very automated and easy to manage the data."

Ward says a majority of Local Fleets customers use the system to dispatch more efficiently, reduce fuel expenses through route planning and the monitoring of idling time, and verify payroll hours by tracking job-stop time. But there are other benefits as well. Local Fleets has been on the market for about 15 years, and



▲ Ken Borowski, a regional sales manager with SkyBitz, discusses the program with attendees at the 2016 WWETT Show. Local Fleets can be used to dispatch more efficiently, reduce fuel expenses and verify payroll hours by tracking job-stop time. (Photo by Cory Dellenbach)

the most recent upgrades have focused on providing data about driver behavior.

“It’s more than just a dot on the map now,” Ward says. “In the last couple years, it’s been more about driver safety and how people are performing behind the wheel. There’s an accelerometer inside the GPS unit and that is what allows us to tell how hard someone is pressing on the gas or the brake, or how fast they’re going around a corner.”

Ward says that data can be used to create a report showing how many instances of hard braking, acceleration or cornering a driver has had in a given amount of time. It can also be used to produce a graphical display of a company’s safest and least safe drivers.

“Not only do our customers want to use the system to verify time in and time out, they also want to make sure their employees are driving the vehicles as if the boss was in the passenger seat next to them,” Ward says. “Nobody wants to receive calls from community members about a driver speeding or driving erratically. The driver behavior feature can be used to give customers confidence in their brand, confidence that their company is not causing any issues on the roadway.”

Local Fleets is scalable, so customers can start with basic vehicle tracking and add features later as needs change. Tracking other assets (heavy equipment or non-powered assets such as trailers and containers) is also available with everything viewable in the same Web-based application. One feature Ward says distinguishes Local Fleets from other tracking systems is the E-Log function — digital driver logs that allow users to more easily track hours of service in order to maintain DOT compliance. “That is one feature that I think we have a handle on that not all providers offer yet,” she says.

Backing the Local Fleets hardware and software is a department dedicated solely to customer support and helping companies find success using the system.

“It’s not as if a customer signs up, we get their money and that’s it,” Ward says. “We want our customers to see the full value behind the system and we’ll support them throughout the time that they’re our customer.”

Plumbing companies are only a portion of SkyBitz’s target market, which is diverse. Any company with a mobile fleet can benefit from the type of data Local Fleets compiles, Ward says. That’s why SkyBitz has had a fairly consistent presence at the WWETT Show in recent years.

“Almost every single company here — even some of the exhibitors — has a mobile fleet, so the show gets us in front of a lot of different companies,” Ward says. “And the traffic is always good at the show. It makes sense to come every year.” ■

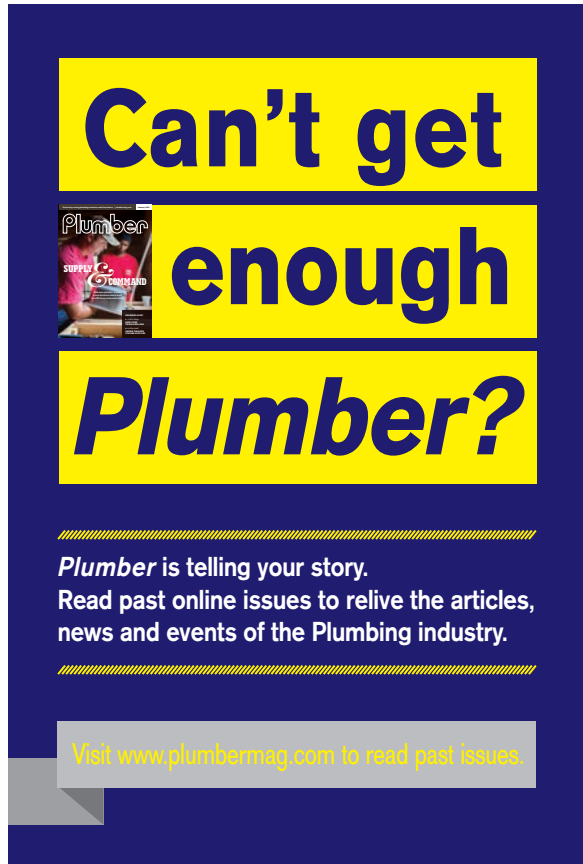


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CAUGHT IN A PIPE

Plumber's pet rescue operation earns some loyal new customers

By Paul Nicolaus

It wasn't a leak. It wasn't a backed-up sewer line. But the callers needed help. Fast.

"They were panicked, and everyone was standing around the pipe," explains Matt Mertz, owner and president of Matt Mertz Plumbing. "No one could figure out what to do." Even the fire department didn't have any luck.

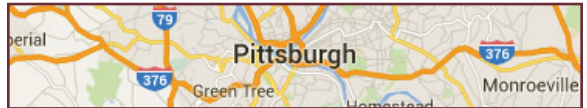
The source of all the worry was a furry gray kitten named Emerald that had crawled down a broken drain-line while playing with a young girl. Without help, it just couldn't make its way back out.

TO THE RESCUE

The call came in as Mertz was driving home at the end of the day. Within 20 minutes he was on site at the local subdivision, taking a look at the hole that had already been dug and the section of pipe that had already been cut out by a couple of concerned community members.

The pipe was a piece of 18-inch corrugated plastic, with a lid that landscapers had previously broken and never repaired. Using flashlights, they were unable to catch a glimpse of Emerald, so Mertz grabbed his RIDGID SeeSnake with a 200-foot reel and small, collapsible monitor to peer in farther.

About 100 feet in it was possible to see the cat's eyes, but nothing more. He continued to advance the camera to get a better image, and eventually to encourage the cat to run in the other direction.



COMPANY	Matt Mertz Plumbing, Inc.
OWNER	Matt Mertz
LOCATION	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
FOUNDED	2007
SPECIALTY	Full plumbing services
WEBSITE	www.matt-mertz-plumbing.com



▲ Matt Mertz and his wife, Lisa, outside the company shop in Pittsburgh. Mertz handles everything from general plumbing service to pipe relining, along with the occasional cat rescue.



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“It was on a steep grade,” Mertz says. “There was no way the cat could come back up. It had to go down.” After 15 or 20 minutes of finessing the camera, Emerald finally made her way to the point where the pipe would typically discharge — the grate had been removed to allow her to escape.

“We went in there and kind of saved the day for that little girl,” Mertz says. “The cat lived, and everyone was happy.” The girl’s dad offered up a handshake and both the little girl and her mom gave Mertz a hug.

GOOD DEED DIVIDENDS

When the homeowners’ association representative said they’d be happy to take the bill, Mertz said there wouldn’t be one. When the family tried to hand Mertz some cash for a job well done he declined as well, asking that they simply keep him in mind for future work or refer his company when others are searching for plumbing help.

Shortly after the encounter, the homeowners’ association hired him to make the small repair to the pipe. To get the job done, Mertz put his Milwaukee Saw-

zall and Bosch Bulldog demolition hammer with a shovel blade to work.

Since that time, Matt Mertz Plumbing has been the go-to company for that same family and homeowners’ association, and they have gained several additional clients within that subdivision as well. “I’ve made thousands of dollars just for that little good deed,” he says. “It definitely paid off that way. I believe in karma. It comes around.”

Mertz — who first started off on his own in 2004, incorporated in 2007, and has since grown his business to a total of 36 employees — notes that sometimes doing something for nothing pays off over the long haul. “It’s not always about the money,” he says. “It’s about the relationships that you gain throughout the years.

“You help somebody out one day, and it just pays dividends going forward,” he adds. “They’re going to remember that good deed. It’s not about how much you made that one day. It’s a long-term thing. It’s more of a marathon and not a race.” ■



GIVE YOUR ADVERTISING SOME INK

In these Internet-dominated times, an advertisement that customers can rip out and hold can still be effective

By Judy Kneiszel

Advertising revenue for newspapers has been on the decline for years, while social media seems to have taken over the world. You've been told that to reach customers you must have a strong Internet presence, including a website, blog, Twitter account and Facebook page.

Regardless, good old-fashioned print advertising still has a place in a small business' marketing budget. Here are five ways print advertising still works:

1. If it's targeted. Does every single person who picks up *USA Today* need to know about your plumbing business? Absolutely not. There may, however, be a specific group of subscribers to your local newspaper who do. For example, my local newspaper distributes a community section free each Wednesday and has different versions of the paper for different geographic zones. Knowing that one of these zones is markedly more rural, with a higher-than-average number of homeowners who have septic systems, a plumber who also offers septic pumping services might find it pays to advertise specifically in that section of the newspaper in that zone.

2. If it's relevant. Local newspapers generally produce special advertising supplements a few times each year. While it may not pay for a plumber to advertise in a local newspaper every day, one who wants to secure more construction contracts might want to be in the local newspaper's special section promoting an annual home and garden show or previewing the annual showcase of homes, because those special publications are heavily read by local builders. The exact group that plumber wants to target is studying this supplement to make sure the home they have on the tour got good placement and to learn what their competition is doing. Call the ad sales department at your local newspaper (if they don't regularly call you) and find how many special sections or advertising supplements they print each year, what the themes and rates are, when they are published and the deadline for including an ad.

3. If you can measure it. Print advertising is effective because its impact can be measured. Use a print ad in a local newspaper or regional magazine to make an exclusive offer. Include a coupon or special offer for whatever you think would make clipping out the ad worthwhile. If no coupons come back or ads are mentioned, you can assume the ad wasn't worth the expense, but at least you know for sure.

4. If you want to make a name for yourself in the community. Not all advertising is designed to produce immediate sales. Sometimes its purpose is reputation building. Take out an ad congratulating the peewee baseball team you sponsored on its great season. Include a picture of the team in front of your truck, wearing uniforms with your name on them, and your



business name will be on families' refrigerators all over town, boosting the mileage you get on the money spent sponsoring the team. Print advertising can also be an effective way to draw attention to changes in your company. Take out an ad to thank customers for 20 great years of business in your old location and introduce the new location. It's possible the ad will alert the paper's business reporters to the change and they'll also run a story about the move. But please, don't make purchasing an ad contingent on the paper running a story. Reporters don't like that and it may backfire on you, making them averse to giving your business publicity in the future. Your goal should be to build a good relationship with local media.

5. If you need to reach potential customers who are not tied to the Internet. In rural areas there are still a number of people who are not getting their information from the Internet. ABC News recently reported that 15 percent of American adults have no Internet access whatsoever. And I'd wager including those who technically have access but don't have good, fast, affordable Internet service would at least double that figure. Especially if you operate in a small town or rural area, solely relying on the Internet for marketing may mean you are unable to reach a portion of the population. Keep the generation gap in mind as well. Almost half of those without Internet are 65 or older. They may have not embraced social media to the extent that their children and grandchildren have. In fact, some are downright mistrustful of the Internet and may respond better to what they are comfortable with — print advertising.

TAKE A VARIED APPROACH

Certainly advertising budgets are tight and the low cost of social media marketing is attractive. An effective marketing plan for any business, however, will include a variety of different advertising methods. If you aren't satisfied with your current advertising reach, print advertising could be the piece you are missing if you've cut it out of your budget in favor of online efforts. Just be sure to put some thought behind that ink. ■

Writer Judy Kneiszel has operated her own small business for 20 years and is familiar with the many rewards and challenges of business ownership. Write to her with questions, comments or topic suggestions at thewordhouse@ameritech.net.



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Plumber

SEPTIC AND SEWER INSTALLATION AND REPAIR

By Craig Mandli

ADVANCED TREATMENT UNITS



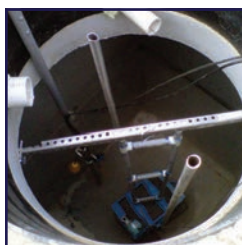
ANUA PURAFLO DN

The Puraflo Dn peat fiber biofilter system from Anua provides enhanced denitrification below 20 mg/L by recirculating 50 percent of the treated effluent back to the front end of the septic tank, according to the manufacturer.

Flow proportioning is accomplished through simple adaptations to external plumbing, allowing for a single pump system with no aerators. In recirculation mode, each module is rated for domestic strength at 240 gpd total hydraulic loading equivalent and 120 gpd forward flow. It can be designed and installed as a combined treatment and effluent dispersal system. Treated effluent exits the modules via weep holes around the perimeter at the module base and flows into the dispersal system situated directly beneath the modules. Available dispersal system options are inground pad or mounded pad. 336/547-9338; www.anuainternational.com.

BIO-MICROBICS BIOBARRIER MBR

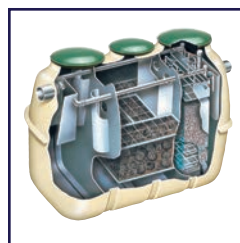
The BioBarrier MBR system from Bio-Microbics simplifies the settling, screening, direct aeration and ultrafiltration of the wastewater treatment process to remove 99.9 percent of the contaminants. Certified to NSF/ANSI 40 class 1, NSF/ANSI 245 (nitrogen reduction) and NSF/ANSI 350 standards, this black water/graywater treatment system establishes the material, design, construction and performance requirements for onsite residential and commercial applications. Installed below or above grade, it offers flows from 500 to more than 27,000 gpd, and meets wa-



ter-quality requirements for the reduction of chemical and microbiological contaminants for non-potable water use. Treated wastewater can be used for restricted indoor water use and/or unrestricted outdoor water use. 800/753-3278; www.biomicrobics.com.

CLARUS FUSION SERIES

The Fusion Series drop-in wastewater treatment system from Clarus Environmental is designed to use anaerobic and aerobic zones to produce secondary-quality effluent. Filter media are never removed or replaced.



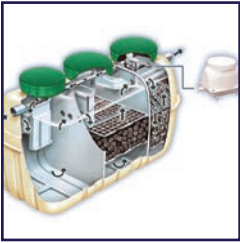
Features include constant recirculation of treated wastewater and a twice-daily automatic backwash cycle that returns residual sludge to the head of the system. A programmable compressor delivers oxygen to aerobic zones, using about the same energy consumed by a 65-watt lightbulb. 800/928-7867; www.clarusenvironmental.com.



CLEARSTREAM WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

The Clearstream Wastewater Treatment System is an extended aeration sewage treatment plant. This system, through aeration and clarification, is

designed to provide a proper environment for aerobic bacteria and other microorganisms that convert the incoming sewage into clear, odorless and organically stable water. The simple, compact design makes it easy to install and maintain. A wide selection of sizes are available to fit design needs from 500 through 1,500 gpd. All plants meet NSF Standard 40 and some systems are available to meet NSF Standard 245. Clearstream indicated that test results averaged as low as 5 mg/L CBOD and 5 mg/L TSS. All are classified as Class 1 systems. 800/586-3656; www.clearstreamsystems.com.



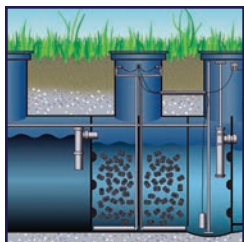
FUJI CLEAN USA CEN

The **CEN** advanced wastewater treatment system from **Fuji Clean USA** (certified NSF 40/245) is an enhanced denitrification system modeled on the company's standard CE system (NSF 40) achieving a

total nitrogen removal rate of over 70 percent in NSF testing. With an integrated, inclusive septic tank and small footprint, the lightweight, fiber-reinforced plastic system fits tight, difficult-to-access sites. Contact-filtration treatment includes aerobic and anaerobic chambers with built-in flow equalization, continuous recirculation and controlled discharge, all powered by an efficient MAC linear diaphragm air blower that uses 1.27 kWh per day for most residential units. Models are available from standard three- to four-bedroom-homes to commercial-sized systems. **207/406-2927; www.fujicleanusa.com.**

HYDRO-ACTION INDUSTRIES SET-N-GO

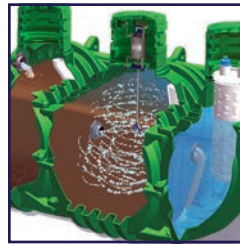
The **Set-N-Go** onsite wastewater treatment unit from **Hydro-Action Industries** uses an activated sludge treatment process designed to add oxygen to wastewater where aerobic bacteria metabolize the waste. Then it separates in a clarification chamber without the use of media filters or carbon additives. The three-tank combination operates as a single unit offering pretreatment, aerobic treatment and a pump tank. Systems are available as 72-inch-tall standard and 52-inch-tall low-profile models. They are NSF Standard 40 and 245 Nitrogen Reduction approved with testing results of an average CBOD5 of 4 mg/L (98.5 percent reduction), TSS 9 mg/L (95.25 percent reduction) and 5.1 mg/L dissolved oxygen. Nitrogen reduction averages less than 10 mg/L TN and 79 percent reduction in total nitrogen removal. **800/370-3749; www.hydro-action.com.**



MICROSEPTEC ENVIROSERVER ES

EnviroServer ES from **MicroSepTec** is a combination of primary treatment, flow equalization and secondary treatment by both fixed-growth and suspend-

ed-growth aerobic processes. The system consists of five chambers in one compact, pre-engineered unit. The first chamber is a primary clarifier, the second chamber is the first aeration zone, the third chamber is the second aeration zone, the fourth chamber is the final clarifier and the fifth chamber is the effluent chamber where an optional pump or pumps and disinfection device may be installed. **877/473-7842; www.microseptec.com.**



NORWECO SINGULAIR GREEN

The **Singulair Green** aerobic wastewater treatment system from **Norweco** incorporates an advanced aerobic treatment process into a durable, watertight polyethylene tank. It offers

single-tank convenience, and includes pretreatment, aeration, clarification, filtration, flow equalization and optional disinfection and dechlorination. Incorporating support ribs and an inherently strong arch shape, the durable tank provides reliable long-term performance. It is designed for domestic wastewater flows up to 600 gpd with treatment performance meeting or exceeding the strictest state and county requirements, and is certified to NSF Standards 40 and 245. **800/667-9326; www.norweco.com.**

ORENCO SYSTEMS ADVANTEX AX-RT

The **AdvanTex AX-RT Series** of advanced wastewater treatment systems from **Orenco Systems** is designed for system repair and rehabilitation. All interior components are installed, plumbed and adjusted at the factory. Units can be shallowly buried for use between a functional, watertight septic tank and a functioning drainfield. The three-in-one design includes recirculation, treatment and discharge in a single unit to simplify installation and eliminate the need for additional tanks, basins, risers and lids. The treatment system can be maintained with an annual service call. Filters and textile media are accessible and cleanable, and control panels use touch-safe components. No blower is needed for the passively vented system. An optional UV disinfection unit is available. **800/348-9843; www.orenco.com.**



SALCOR 3G UV WASTEWATER DISINFECTION UNIT

The 3G UV Wastewater Disinfection Unit from Salcor is designed for residential, commercial and municipal uses, and is UL-certified NEMA 6P Flood-proof and NSF/Washington State Protocol six-month tested (with 21 upstream treatment systems). It inactivates pathogens, including superbugs. Rated at 9,000 gpd gravity flow, it is a reliable building block for large water recovery/reuse systems, according to the maker. When installed in 12-unit parallel/series arrays with ABS pipefittings, systems are disinfecting over 100,000 gpd. Gravity flow equalizes without distribution boxes. Identical modular units increase plant reliability and reduce the need for spare parts, facilitating plant expansion. Each unit has a foul-resistant Teflon lamp covering, two-year long-life lamp, allows for quick installation, requires minimal annual maintenance and uses less than 30 watts of energy. 760/731-0745.



PUMPS

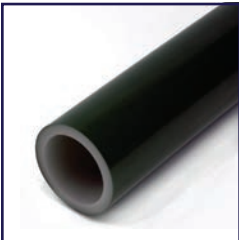
BLUE DIAMOND PUMPS ENVIRO



Designed for biological aeration in domestic wastewater treatment units and ATUs, the Enviro from Blue Diamond Pumps provides an aeration source in packaged sewage treat-

ment plants. The pumping principle uses an electromagnetically operated diaphragm, eliminating sliding parts, keeping wear and tear minimal. It incorporates energy-efficient motors for low power consumption. It has a weatherproof compact alloy casing that doesn't degrade over time. It is available with a built-in alarm system that can detect low pressure in the air line,, alerting users via a loud buzzer and LED warning light. 770/831-1122; www.bluediamondpumps.com.

PIPE



REHAU CONSTRUCTION MUNICIPEX FORCE MAIN MUNICIPEX Force Main Pipe from REHAU Construc-

tion is color-coded with a green co-extruded coating and specifiable for force-main sewer and grinder pump applications. Produced from the same PEXa as the company's water-service line, this pipe is offered in continuous coil lengths of up to 500 feet for easy, joint-free installations. It is made with a high-pressure peroxide crosslinking process that results in a highly flexible polymer pipe known as PEXa. This crosslinking process allows PEXa to maintain high-performance properties, and withstand harsh conditions without compromising performance. 855/686-4739; www.na.rehau.com.

FRANKLIN ELECTRIC LITTLE GIANT GP SERIES

Little Giant GP Series grinder pumps from Franklin Electric operate across voltages ranging from 208 to 230 volts in one model. The GP-A (automatic) and GP-M (manual) versions' power-



ful motor and construction are designed to handle the demands of low-pressure sewage applications, using a cutter system that operates at 414,000 cuts per minute. They incorporate a non-clogging impeller staged for efficient pumping of sewage slurries with a shut-off head of 130 feet. They are equipped to handle grinding domestic sewage whether as a replacement pump or a packaged system. Available in an automatic version for single-phase power sources and a manual version for both single-phase and three-phase power sources, they employ a 2 hp single-phase, 3,450 rpm with capacitor start/run motor that has built-in overload protection to prevent over-current and over-temperature damage. They have corrosion-resistant brass impellers that minimize downtime and maintenance and an epoxy-coated cast iron finish for corrosion resistance and durability. 260/824-2900; www.littlegiant.com.

SEPTIC SERVICES

MAXAIR500

SUBMERSIBLE AERATOR

The MAXAIR500 Submersible Aerator from Septic Services sits inside the tank and out of sight. Its efficient operation provides continual cost savings through low energy consumption. It has a continuous-duty motor and stainless steel motor enclosure and legs. It's prewired and has a 15-foot power cord. The industrial-grade, factory-built aerator has been engineered to meet or exceed industry standards and has been put through rigorous testing in the lab and field. 800/536-5564; www.maxair500.com.



WEBTROL PUMPS V-SERIES

V-Series wastewater pumps from Webtrol Pumps have a recessed, cast iron impeller that prevents clogging, providing more life from the pump. The motors are air-filled and offer con-

tinuous-duty ratings. To protect the motor from water, the pumps come with potted epoxy cord seals as well as double silicon-carbide mechanical seals, providing defense against water intrusion. All single-phase motors come with overload protection. Constructed from stainless steel and cast iron, these pumps are available from 1/2 up to 2 hp, 115- and 230-volt, single- and three-phase. 800/769-7867; www.webtrol.com.

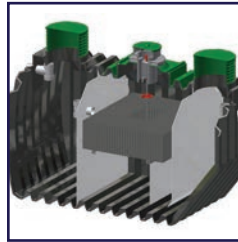
ZOELLER PUMP COMPANY SHARK FRACTIONAL HORSEPOWER GRINDER SERIES

The Shark Fractional Horsepower Grinder Series from Zoeller Pump Company is designed to handle difficult residential and small commercial applications where sewage ejectors struggle. These 115- and 230-volt pumps are integral automatic grinders, and are available in 1/2 (803), 3/4 (805) and 1 hp (807) models, offering performance head up to 55 feet. Each model is made of cast iron and is oil-filled for optimal heat dissipation, with three independent cutting channels to efficiently handle debris. Tri-Slice Cutter Technology provides over 300,000 cuts per minute, handling flushable wipes, sanitary napkins, and



disposable and cloth diapers. Fractional horsepower grinders are available in automatic and non-automatic versions. 800/928-7867; www.zoellerpumps.com.

SEPTIC TANKS



JET INC. J-500-800PLT

The J-500-800PLT plastic tank from Jet Inc. offers a lightweight alternative to concrete J-1500 Series BAT Media Plants. The tanks provide variable treatment capacity from 500 to 800 gpd. They are rotational

molded out of lightweight polyethylene material to offer a seamless tank with strength and durability. They are easy to transport and install in difficult site conditions and are locally supported by a global network of trained and certified distributors. 800/321-6960; www.jetincorp.com.

NORWESCO LOW-PROFILE

Low-Profile septic tanks from Norwesco have molded-in support columns that are filled with flowable soil before backfilling to maximize strength, stabilize the tank during backfill and reduce buoyancy. The tanks

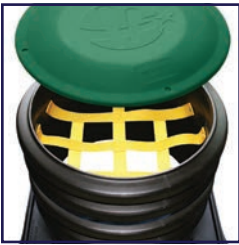


have molded-in tie down and lifting lugs on the corners for ease of handling and moving. The inlet and outlet holes are predrilled. Gaskets and field-adjustable sanitary T's that can accept SDR 35 or schedule 40 pipe are included with the tank. The tanks are one piece so they do not have to be assembled by certified personnel. Dual-wall pipe or PVC ribbed pipe can be used for a riser. 800/328-3420; www.norwesco.com.

SEPTIC TANK COMPONENTS

HEDSTROM PLASTICS SEPTIC TANK COVER

Septic Tank Covers from Hedstrom Plastics are designed to eliminate riser systems. Lids come in 18- and 24-inch options and are made from polyethylene UV-protected material, yet are lightweight for easy



installation and transportation. Lids can be filled with sand or foam for additional strength. Gasket and safety screws come standard, along with optional custom nameplates displaying a company name and phone number. **888/434-5891; www.hedstromplastics.com.**

POLYLOK PL-250

The PL-250 effluent filter from Polylok is designed to handle up to 3,000 gpd with 250 linear feet of filtration. Like the company's other filters, installation is easy. All filters are designed with functionality and longevity in mind. **877/765-9565; www.polylok.com.**



ROTOSOLUTIONS ROTO-MOLDED SEPTIC TANK LID

Roto-molded septic tank lids from RotoSolutions are manufactured out of lightweight and durable materials for easy handling and transport. They are sold with hardware kits that include stainless steel components. The lids are sold in boxes of six and are made to fit 12-, 18- or 24-inch I.D. corrugated pipe. They can be used with or without the sand-filled option, and are easy to ship and install. **800/868-0973; www.rotosolutions.com.**

Whether installed in plastic or locally sourced concrete tanks, this decentralized wastewater treatment system uses an enhanced, biological, unsaturated media filter process. The passive aeration method sprays oxygenated water over the biofilter media, allowing it to trickle through the media for optimum growth. They enable high reduction

SEPTITECH STAAR

Residential **STAAR (Smart Trickling Anaerobic Aerobic Recirculating)** filter systems from SeptiTech are ETV-EPA-verified, NSF/ANSI Standard 40 class 1 and NSF/ANSI Standard 245 certified. Whether installed in plastic or locally sourced concrete tanks, this decentralized wastewater treatment system uses an enhanced, biological, unsaturated media filter process. The passive aeration method sprays oxygenated water over the biofilter media, allowing it to trickle through the media for optimum growth. They enable high reduction



in BOD/TSS/TN and accommodate peak flows, batch treatment and nitrogen removal. With minimal operator oversight, the automatic operation of the system uses a PLC-based controller for continuous operation, time-dosing, field process customization, automatic recirculation of wasted sludge to the settling tank, self-cleaning media/processor and sleep mode for enhanced energy efficiency. An optional UV disinfection system allows for compatibility with shallow drip, direct discharge, pressure distribution or conventional leachfields. **800/318-7967; www.septitech.com.**



SIM/TECH FILTER STF-BTPS BOW TIE

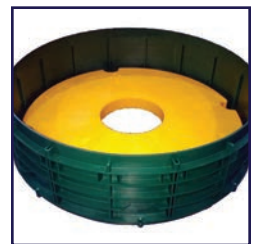
The STF-BTPS Bow Tie pipe stand from Sim/Tech Filter is designed for use in chamber systems where the distribution piping is suspended above the soil. The stand is independent of

the chamber, allowing the pipe to be installed prior to chamber installation and before the squirt test is performed. They install by a squeeze-and-release action that makes installation quick and easy. The stand can be installed on the pipe before placing it in the trench, and is easily adjusted to any desired spacing. They store flat for economical shipping and easy storage. Versions are available to fit 1-, 1 1/4-, 1 1/2- and 3-inch pipe. **888/999-3290; www.simtechfilter.com.**

TUF-TITE RISER

Tank risers from Tuf-Tite have internal supports or ledges to reinforce internal plastic safety lids. The ledges will strengthen the company's plastic internal safety lids or a variety of internal safety devices

made by others, such as concrete, fiberglass or rope netting. The riser lids come with all necessary mounting hardware, including safety screws. **800/382-7009; www.tuf-tite.com. ■**



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SEPTIC AND SEWER INSTALLATION AND REPAIR

By Craig Mandli

FAILED SEPTIC SYSTEM IN SHALLOW LIMITING ZONE REPAIRED



Problem: During a real estate transaction in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, a septic system over 30 years old did not pass inspection. Sewage enforcement officer Michael Rinkevich determined that the soils were too shallow (less than a 20-inch limiting zone) to meet current state requirements for a traditional system or elevated sand mound.

Solution: Out of the shallow-soil options available, soil scientist Joseph Eckenrode recommended using an **Eljen Corporation GSF** system due to its performance and because it requires no annual maintenance or filter media replacement. Soil scientist Mary Kay Lupton designed a 4-foot-wide by 116-foot-long bed after hydraulic linear loading rates were determined from the necessary soil probes. Expert Septic met with the installer during a pre-construction meeting, and provided product delivery as well as on-site assistance and training.

Result: The bed was constructed in one day, helping the real estate transaction continue in a timely manner and giving the new homeowner a code-compliant system. 800/444-1359; www.eljen.com.

SYSTEM HELPS INCREASE PERFORMANCE AND SEPTIC LOAD CAPACITY



Problem: A busy Tennessee family had a septic system that was already pushed to the max, and loading on the system when family and friends were visiting meant it was struggling to properly treat the wastewater, resulting in poor performance and more expense from frequent pumpouts.

Solution: A **Turbo** system from **Bluewater ATU** was installed. With a typical installation taking only one or two hours, the system minimizes sludge and delivers effluent that is significantly clearer and cleaner than a stand-alone septic system. It has been tested with BOD at 3.7 and TSS at 3.0, with nitrogen removal at 50 percent, with the added benefit of vastly reduced odor. With all this work done inside the tank, and with no moving parts to fail, the load on the drainfield is significantly reduced.

Result: The system delivered an improvement in performance and efficiency immediately. It can be installed in new systems or retrofit to existing systems. 866/639-6475; www.bluewaterturbo.com.

**PASSIVE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM
FITS ON SMALL LOT**



Problem: A three-bedroom house on a small lot in San Diego, California, burned down. A reconstruction permit restricted the new owner's plans to place a prefabricated house on the vacant lot before replacing the septic system. The small lot had little space for a conventional system plus a full-size replacement system reserve area, and the homeowner did not want to install a costly mechanical treatment system.

Solution: The homeowner chose to have a 450 gpd **Advanced-Enviro Septic (AES)** passive wastewater treatment and dispersal system from **Presby Environmental** installed. The system, which fit the tight site constraints, was installed in a 20 percent sloping configuration matching the building lot's natural terrain.

Result: With the new system installed, the homeowner was able to proceed with his plans to place the new home on the property. 800/473-5298; www.presbyeco.com. ■

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Noritz combination boilers deliver heat, hot water in one unit

By Ed Wodalski

The CB Series of combination boilers (combi) from Noritz America Corp. feature high-efficiency condensing technology to deliver hot water for both residential plumbing and hydronic applications.

“Because the units are tankless, they are not continuously heating a large quantity of water,” says Patrick McQuillan, lead branch engineer at Noritz. “The burner only turns on when there is demand for heat or DHW (domestic hot water). If there is no water demand, no gas is being burned. Additionally, the CB prioritizes between heating and DHW. It never does both simultaneously. The logic of the programming is designed so you do not experience a drop in performance on either heating or DHW.”

The CB combi delivers up to 9.2 gpm of hot water and performs at 95 percent AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency), converting 95 percent of the Btuh input into usable heat. On the heating side, the combi accommodates multiple applications including radiators, baseboards, low- and high-mass radiant heating and air handlers. It weighs 90 pounds and is 17.3 inches wide, 28.7 inches tall and 14.8 inches deep.

“It’s a light unit that can be carried by one person,” McQuillan says. “It hangs on the wall, so it takes up little to no floor space. You also only need to run gas and vent lines for one unit — that means less cost for piping materials and fewer penetrations through the wall or roof.”

Available in two models, the CB180DV has a maximum gas input Btuh of 180,000 for hot water and 100,000 Btuh for space heating. The CB199DV has a maximum gas input Btuh of 199,000 for hot water and 120,000 Btuh for space heating. Little maintenance is required.

“Typically, with tankless water heaters, the biggest maintenance issue is flushing out the unit with vinegar or an acidic solution to clean out scale buildup due to hard water,” McQuillan says. “This is a concern for DHW tankless units, but not for boilers. The CB combi uses heat exchangers made of high-grade austenite stainless steel. Scale does not stick to stainless steel the same way it sticks to copper, so maintenance is less of an issue. However, Noritz still recommends that a flush be done on the DHW side of the loop.”



Other key features of the Noritz CB include a large internal heat loop circulation pump (maximum flow rate of 5 gpm at zero head), outdoor reset and temperature sensor, safety controls that prevent water from reaching scalding temperatures, premix combustion with negative pressure gas valve for consistent combustion and low, consistent levels of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide emissions. **714/433-2905; www.noritz.com.**



SANIFLO HIGH-EFFICIENCY TOILETS WITH MACERATING SYSTEMS

Four high-efficiency toilets from Saniflo are available with macerating plumbing systems: Saniplus, Saniaccess2, Saniaccess3 and Sanibest Pro. The vitreous china, floor-mounted toilet bowls use 1.28 gallons per flush, meeting the WaterSense labeling criteria of the Environmental Protection Agency. Available in white with either an elongated or round front, the new bowls feature a washdown-style flushing action with a 3-inch trapway. Both the elongated and round-front toilet bowls have a floor-to-rim height of 16.75 inches, enhancing user comfort and convenience. The elongated model, which measures 28.75 inches deep, complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Both toilets feature soft-close toilet seats. **800/571-8191; www.saniflo.com.**

The Flygt 2190 midsized submersible dewatering pump from Xylem is built to handle tough, abrasive-laden liquids. The 25 kW, 30 hp pump is available with two impeller options. The signature Dura-Spin safeguards against wear by sweeping abrasive particles away from the impeller neck while the semi-open impeller increases uptime by preventing fibrous solids from obstructing the pump. The pump's conical trim sleeve, a quick and easy-to-use impeller-adjustment feature, restores clearances to near-original condition, boosting pump performance, while robust cable entry ensures safe, continuous operation. **855/995-4261; www.flygtus.com.**

FLYGT MIDSIZED DEWATERING PUMP

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MILWAUKEE TOOL HIGH-TENSION HACKSAW

The 12-inch high-tension hacksaw with reinforced metal frame from Milwaukee Tool is designed for plumbers and electricians who need to make fast, accurate cuts. Features include a high-leverage tension knob at the top of the hacksaw's frame that enables the user to easily tighten the blade to the high-

est tension needed. For added utility, the hacksaw has six-blade storage capacity as well as a 45-degree blade position for a better angle on flush cuts. **800/638-9582; www.milwaukeetool.com.**

est tension needed. For added utility, the hacksaw has six-blade storage capacity as well as a 45-degree blade position for a better angle on flush cuts. **800/638-9582; www.milwaukeetool.com.**



J.C. WHITLAM MANUFACTURING PTFE PIPE THREAD COMPOUND

Talon PTFE pipe thread compound from J.C. Whitlam Manufacturing is designed for all types of metal and plastic threaded connections. The triple-lu-

bricating, all-purpose, non-seizing, VOC-free, industrial-grade compound contains graphite, ceramic microspheres and virgin PTFE for optimal thread seating and sealing. It is available in 1/4-pint (118 mL), 1/2-pint (237 mL), 1-pint (473 mL), 1-quart (.95 L) brush top cans; 1-gallon (3.785 L) metal can; 5-gallon (18.9 L) plastic pail with handle; and 55-gallon (208 L) open head steel drums. **800/321-8358; www.joinpipe.com. ■**



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOINS PHCC'S QUALITY SERVICE CONTRACTORS

Lawrence Leonard joined PHCC — National Association's Quality Service Contractors (QSC) as its incoming executive director. Leonard replaces Charlie Wallace, who retired in March. The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors — National Association also added Milwaukee Tool as a corporate partner. The provider of professional heavy-duty tools, hand tools and accessories joins Bradford White, Federated Insurance, InSinkErator, Kohler Co. and Viega in support of PHCC and its affiliates.

TACO COMPLETES REORGANIZATION, CHANGES NAME

Taco Inc. changed its name to Taco Comfort Solutions and completed a major reorganization as it diversifies into new industries and market channels. Under the privately held company's new organizational structure, Taco Comfort Solutions will be part of the Taco Group. In addition to expanding its core business in heating and cooling through the recent acquisition of Askoll's indoor heating business, Taco Comfort Solutions intends to pursue growth and diversification through additional partnerships and acquisitions in HVAC and non-HVAC markets and channels, including plumbing.

HYDRA-FLEX NAMES SALES MANAGER

Hydra-Flex named Joshua Pelovsky national industrial sales manager. He will focus on hydroexcavation and industrial cleaning products and be based out of Hydra-Flex's corporate headquarters in Burnsville, Minnesota.

ISUZU SETS TRUCK, PARTS SALES RECORD

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America set sales records in 2015 for Isuzu commercial trucks and parts. Isuzu dealers in the United States sold 20,725 Isuzu trucks in 2015, a 10.5 percent gain in Isuzu N-Series sales versus 2014. The company also sold 5.5 percent more parts in the U.S. in 2015 than it did in 2014.

ARS ACQUIRES GREENSTAR HOME SERVICES

American Residential Services of Memphis, Tennessee, provider of heating, air conditioning and plumbing services, acquired the assets of Greenstar Home Services. Greenstar, provider of plumbing and HVAC services, has locations in Orange, California, and Las Vegas, Nevada. The California location will retain the Greenstar brand and continue to operate as an independent service center. The Las Vegas location will be consolidated with the ARS brand, Yes! Air Conditioning and Plumbing.

KOHLER INDUCTED INTO 2015 BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING AWARDS HALL OF FAME



Herbert V. Kohler Jr., executive chairman of the Kohler Co. board of directors, was inducted into the 2015 Best in American Living Awards Hall of Fame during the National Association of Home Builders' International Builders Show. The Hall of Fame Awards recognize individuals and companies that have made significant impacts on residential design and construction.

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JENNY PRODUCTS ELECTRIC AIR COMPRESSORS RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

Electric air compressors by Jenny Products has been certified to UL 1450 and C22.2 No. 68-09 safety standards covering motor-operated air compressors, vacuum pumps and painting equipment for the United States and Canada.

DWYER GROUP BRANDS RANKED AMONG FRANCHISE 500

After a record-breaking year of growth, Dwyer Group begins 2016 with nine service brands ranked on *Entrepreneur* magazine's Franchise 500 list. The brands and their ranking include Molly Maids (97), The Grounds Guys (174), Mr. Appliance (220), Aire Serv (221), Five Star Painting (259), Mr. Rooter (380), Mr. Handyman (381), Glass Doctor (441) and Mr. Electric (473).

MANSFIELD PLUMBING RECOGNIZES DISTRIBUTORS

Sixteen plumbing product distributor locations across the country and one in Jamaica won grand prizes in Mansfield Plumbing's fourth annual Take Five promotion. Each winning location receives an all ex-

pense-paid, five-day trip for two to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic. Prize winners include Gray-Hodges Corp., Knoxville, Tennessee; Lewis-Smith Supply Corp., Dothan and Enterprise, Alabama; Anderson Electric & Plumbing Supplies, Springdale, Arkansas; Masters Supply, Danville, Kentucky; National Wholesale, Longview, Texas, and Shreveport, Louisiana; Peterson Plumbing Supply, Salt Lake City, Utah; Plumbers Supply Co., Lexington, Kentucky; South Midway Supply, Somerset, Kentucky; Southern Pipe, La Place, Lafayette and Monroe, Louisiana; Winnelson, Springdale, Arkansas; Tile City and Home Center Ltd., Kingston, Jamaica; VP Supply Corp., Rochester, New York; and Wholesale Plumbing Supply, St. Charles, Missouri. ■

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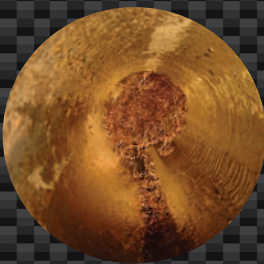
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