

# Plumber



## FIGHTING ADVERSITY

Arizona plumber overcomes challenges and uses new tools on the market to continue to grow his company five years after starting it **Page 12**

▲ On The Road  
PLUMBERS FIND A BETTER  
AND SAFER WAY TO LIFT  
HEAVY TOILETS  
**Page 20**

▲ In The Shop  
CREATING A FLEET MAINTENANCE  
PLAN CAN BE AN EASY TASK TO DO  
**Page 34**



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20

on the ROAD

### Get a Handle on Toilets

Tools for moving and setting bulky toilets reduce the risks of injury and product damage.

- By Ken Wysocky



### On the Cover

Dinosaur Plumbing owner Bobby Scirica works on a waterline replacement at a residence in Tucson, Arizona. Scirica started the Tucson-based company in 2013 after working for his uncle and wanting to set off on his own. The company now has four employees and five trucks and serves southern Arizona. **Photography by Lee Allen**

### 8 From the Editor: Learning to Take the Falls

Just because you face an obstacle doesn't mean you should give up. Learn from it, and make your company better.  
- By Cory Dellenbach

### 10 @plumbermag.com

Check out our exclusive online content.

### 12 Profile: Fighting Adversity

Arizona plumber overcomes challenges and uses new tools on the market to continue to grow his company five years after starting it.  
- By Lee Allen

### 24 Smart Business: Controlling Cash Flow

Instead of going to collections or court right away, explore all other ways of getting paid first.  
- By Neil Feldman

### 28 First Responder: Fourth Time Is a Charm

Plumber finds a unique approach for cleaning out a stone-filled pipe while also installing a new pipe.  
- By Cory Dellenbach

### 32 Industry Insider: Hard-Earned Lessons on Software Change

If you're ready to make a change, be ready to learn about the program and be ready for some long days of training.  
- By Anja Smith

### 34 In the Shop: Creating a Maintenance Plan

Tips for effective fleet maintenance planning that you and your crews can easily establish.  
- By Jeff Langley

### 38 Product Focus: Industrial and Commercial Plumbing

- By Craig Mandli

### 44 Case Study: Industrial and Commercial Plumbing

- By Craig Mandli

### 46 Product News: Product Spotlight: Quality microinspection

- By Craig Mandli

### 50 Industry News

### 51 Calendar

### Coming Next Month - Service Vans, Fleet Management

- ▲ Plumber Profile: LH Plumbing Services (Fairfield, Ohio)
- ▲ Industry Insider: Anthony Pacilla

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# ADVERTISER INDEX

ALLAN J. COLEMAN  
SINCE 1905

Allan J. Coleman Co. .... 35

American Jetter ..... 53



Cam Spray ..... 30



Central Oklahoma Winnelson . 25, 48



Duracable Manufacturing Company .19

Enz USA Inc. .... 15

FastEST, Inc. .... 53

Flows.com ..... 45



Fluidmaster ..... 31



General Pipe Cleaners/  
General Wire Spring ..... 2

HammerHead Trenchless ..... 23

Hot Jet USA ..... 54

Ideal Tridon ..... 22

Lowe's Companies, Inc. .... 27



MaxLiner USA ..... 37



MyTana Manufacturing ..... 9



Perma-Liner Industries, LLC ..... 56



Picote Solutions ..... 33



Pipe Lining Supply ..... 55



PrimLine Products, Inc. .... 44

Pulsar 2000, Inc. .... 43

RIDGID ..... 11

ServiceMaster Restore ..... 17

Simple Solutions Distributing. .... 53



Spartan Tool ..... 5

Superior Signal Company LLC .... 53

Texas Truck Racks ..... 25



TRIC Tools, Inc. .... 3



Ultra Shore ..... 42

VT Hackney/Hackney ..... 45



Water Cannon, Inc. - MWBE ..... 7

Western Drain Supply ..... 43

WexCo Environmental ..... 51

WWETT Show ..... 49

# Plumber

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Cory Dellenbach

## Learning to Take the Falls

Just because you face an obstacle doesn't mean you should give up. Learn from it, and make your company better.

**R**unning a business is hard work. It takes time, money and more time to keep it going successfully. Along the way, you hit bumps in the road that force you to take time and refocus.

It's kind of like water skiing. My oldest daughter, who is 11, is in her second year on the local water ski team, and it's been a roller coaster. There are many good days and then there are days where she might fall, or never make it off the dock.

*Just like in water skiing, you can't take a fall and let it end your dreams.*

From starting off on the boom on the side of the boat last year, she is learning to ski with no hands this year. There have been plenty of falls along the way. There were times I thought she would just throw up her hands and quit, but she's sticking it out and is determined to get better.

Back on the business side, Bobby Scirica, profiled in this issue with his company, Dinosaur Plumbing, has had his share of bumps but has fought through them. The company has grown every year and now has four plumbers and five vehicles.

Scirica started the company in Tucson, Arizona, five years ago. While many plumbers want to do jobs as fast as possible so they can move on to the next, Scirica takes a different approach, partly because of a learning disability that he's learned to work with.


"When I assemble pipe, it takes me longer to visualize the process and procedure, so I operate to the beat of my own drum," Scirica says. "I can't keep up with a bunch of calls back-to-back, but I do excellent work on one job at a time. ... Each job I do represents my unique form of installation art, and that's the way I envisioned my company would work."

That hasn't been Scirica's only obstacle. A couple of years ago, he had an accident while repairing a behind-the-wall leak between the first and second story of an apartment complex. His boot string got caught on the ladder, and he fell through a single-pane window, causing nerve, tendon, muscle, and bone damage to his right arm.

Because of that, he had to become left handed. It took time, but he did it. Just like in water skiing, you can't take a fall and let it end your dreams. Scirica learned from each of his bumps and made his company stronger.

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

What was the hardest lesson you had to learn in your career? Your experiences could help others in the industry. You can email me at [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy this issue! 



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## MIDDLE EAST PLUMBING Training Program for Women Helps Jordan Battle Plumbing Issues

The issues surrounding water, plumbing infrastructure, and those working in the plumbing profession can be extremely varied depending on where you are located in the world. In this online exclusive, check out how the circumstances in the Middle Eastern country of Jordan has resulted in a successful program that has trained more than 300 female plumbers.

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## OVERHEARD ONLINE

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## SERVICE VEHICLES

### Transit Vans Provide Company Functionality and Flexibility

Massachusetts' Boston Standard Co., featured in the June 2018 issue, has been gradually transitioning to full-size Ford Transit vans as the core workhorses for its 14-vehicle fleet. In this online exclusive, company owner Joseph Wood explains the reasons behind the shift.

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## MAKING ART

### New Home Needed for Retired Plumber's Toilet Seat Art Collection

Retired plumber Barney Smith has spent decades amassing an expansive collection of decorated toilet seats — 1,350 to date, all displayed in a two-room metal garage on his Texas property that has attracted visitors from around the world over the years. But at age 97, Smith is ready to move on and looking for a new home for his unique art collection. ▶ [plumbermag.com/featured](http://plumbermag.com/featured)



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# FIGHTING ADVERSITY

Arizona plumber overcomes challenges and uses new tools on the market to continue to grow his company five years after starting it  
Story and photos by Lee Allen



*Dinosaur Plumbing, Tucson, Arizona*

<b>OWNER</b>	Bobby Scirica
<b>FOUNDED</b>	2013
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	4
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	Southern Arizona
<b>SERVICES OFFERED</b>	Video inspections; installation of fixtures, toilets, water heaters for residential and commercial; hydrojetting
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.dinosaurplumbing.com">www.dinosaurplumbing.com</a>

**T**raditionally when you think of the word dinosaur, you think of a large reptile, unwieldy in size, outmoded, and unable to adapt to change.

Bobby Scirica is none of those things, although he will admit to being a bit slower than most as the owner of Dinosaur Plumbing in Tucson, Arizona, now entering its fifth year.

“We’ve seen every kind of fixture known to man and helped install them too,” Scirica says about repairs on all makes and models of water heaters, toilets, bathroom plumbing, furnaces, and air conditioners too. “While it sounds like a cliché, we put the customer first — from working hard to accommodate a client schedule to competitive pricing and guaranteed quality. If our technicians don’t perform in accordance with our high standards, clients don’t pay until they’re satisfied with the results. And if for some reason during the first year of a new system clients aren’t satisfied with the equipment performance, we’ll cheerfully refund the entire amount of their investment.”

- ◀ Dinosaur Plumbing technician Donn Coltrin, left, and Bobby Scirica feed a new waterline into place.
- ▶ Bobby Scirica, owner of Tucson, Arizona-based Dinosaur Plumbing, stands next to one of his five fleet trucks with a dinosaur printed on it.

Scirica says Dinosaur Plumbing is a full-service plumbing company with a reputation built on offering honesty and ethics along with its technical expertise.

“We do sales, installations and repairs on virtually every aspect of the plumbing system,” he says. “From small jobs like hose bibs, faucets, sinks, toilets, water heaters, leaky pipes, and clogged drains to larger jobs like remodels, new additions, and rough-ins. We do it all.”

### FOLLOWING FAMILY

That’s a sincere claim from the second-generation member of an Italian plumbing family where Uncle Luigi Lombarto also follows the trade in the same town under the banner of Res-Com Plumbing. “Uncle Luigi said there was room in this business for me, and he taught me a lot of things

“I wanted to separate myself from the typical high-speed, back-to-back volume companies. Each job I do represents my unique form of installation art, and that’s the way I envisioned my company would work.”

*Bobby Scirica*



about the business until 2013 when I started my own company,” Scirica says.

Lombarto remembers well: “We drove each other nuts for two years. I’m 30 years in the business, an old-school plumber, while Bobby likes to use all the new tools. I had to teach him some tricks of the trade, things like how to break a wall open politely to get to the plumbing behind the Sheetrock. I taught him some of the old-timers’ secrets, and then he decided to go independent.”

At age 26 and laboring under a couple of additional burdens, he struck out on his own to do things his own way.



▲ John Hall, a five-year-veteran technician with Dinosaur Plumbing uses a RIDGID SeeSnake on a drain outside of a customer’s home near Tucson, Arizona.

◀ Bobby Scirica, left, goes over a written estimate for a job with customer Brett Bourguet of Gladden Farms in Marana, Arizona.



“In school, I was in special education because of a learning disability. I’m a slower thinker than many others and need more time to process things,” Scirica says. “When I assemble pipe, it takes me longer to visualize the process and procedure, so I operate to the beat of my own drum. I’m not a fast person when it comes to either thinking or plumbing, but by moving more slowly, it gives me an opportunity to think ahead, to plan out the steps of what needs doing before I pick up a tool and get to work.

“I can’t keep up with a bunch of calls back-to-back, but I do excellent work on one job at a time,” he adds. “I wanted to separate myself from the typical high-speed, back-to-back volume companies. Each job I do represents my unique form of installation art, and that’s the way I envisioned my company would work.”

In the beginning, he did what was necessary, and that involved emergency service calls from late-night or all-hours businesses like restaurants and bars with clogged toilets and urinals.

## Using all the tools

Bobby Scirica, owner of Dinosaur Plumbing, refers to himself as a new-school, millennial plumber who relies on new tools and technology to make jobs easier and faster.

On the marketing end, a telephone book ad is so yesterday. Instead, his Tucson, Arizona-based company is everywhere on social media with options ranging from Google to Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, the Nextdoor app, and a local directory called the Tucson A List.

"I generate a lot of leads through group networking via Business Network International, Success Group International, and Plumbers' Success International, a membership organization for residential plumbing contractors," Scirica says.

The 30-year-old Business Network International is the world's leading referral organization while Success Group International deals with plumbing/HVAC/electrical/roofing industries where business owners look to improve their success rate by working together and employing cutting-edge strategies and systems.

Plumbers' Success International gets even closer to the core because its members are all residential plumbing contractors who, according to its website, "enjoy a competitive

edge through proprietary tools and techniques, management expertise, marketing systems, and buying clout."

So, as part of the contemporary generation of plumbers, Scirica goes high-tech in his advertising, networking, and prospecting methods to attract new customers. He keeps current clients through the level of service provided. The company has an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau and positive reviews on Yelp.

He stays generational and state-of-the-art in his technology toolkit.

"Portable battery-operated expansion tools are neat — part of the trend toward lighter, stronger, and faster tools of the trade," he says. "I don't need a big honking drill anymore because I can now use one half the size with the same amount of power. Camera technology has taken a big leap with color monitors and self-leveling heads. And the industry is getting more advanced with a closed cutter apparatus that has its own drain port.

"And I'm keeping my eye on the new backpack-mounted, battery-operated sewer snakes," he says. "Theoretically it's an awesome leap forward and very possibly a future addition to our service trucks."

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► Dinosaur Plumbing owner Bobby Scirica works on a waterline replacement at a residence near Tucson, Arizona.



“The early days were a real grind, sometimes working two months without a day off,” Scirica says. “Emergency plumbing availability is arduous, but you do what you have to do to get started. It was brutal, but it worked like a diet because I lost 30 pounds.”

Today, 90 percent of Dinosaur Plumbing calls are service-oriented with the remaining 10 percent representing new installs in custom homes and a personal niche for Scirica doing water filtration hookups.

Scirica has been involved with wrenches and trenches since he was 15 years old, so when it came time for a company name, he referenced his lineage and his childhood.

“I used to play video games, specifically Super Mario Bros., where two Italian plumbers went their way through a sewer system with the help of a dinosaur named Yoshi,” Scirica says. “That was my favorite character, but I couldn’t name the company Yoshi Plumbing or use that logo because

“I’m seeing a rise in the number of handy men doing plumbing work because not a lot of people are formally getting into the trades. America is short on skilled laborers and that’s why the industry is booming for trained tradesmen. We almost get paid like doctors.”

**Bobby Scirica**

Nintendo would probably have gotten pretty mad, so I called it Dinosaur Plumbing.”

Today there are four full-time technicians (Scirica, John Hall, Clay Flowers, and Donn Coltrin) and five company vehicles (all wrapped with a dinosaur image) including cargo vans, a large-body service vehicle, and a pickup truck used for sales calls.

## RELEARNING SOME SKILLS

It wasn’t just the educational process that slowed his professional ascendency; fate intervened in a couple unexpected ways. Coming home early in the morning from an overnight job snaking out a mainline, he was T-boned by another vehicle. “I got smacked pretty bad and didn’t work for several months.”

Then came the biggie. Doing an apartment complex behind-the-wall leak repair between the first and second

story, he was drilling through the wall, trying to get to the pipe, when his boot string got caught on the ladder and he fell through a single-pane window.

“It literally ripped my right arm off — nerve, tendon, muscle, and bone damage,” Scirica says. “I had to learn to convert from

being right handed to left-hand dominant, but the good that came out of it is I’m now ambidextrous.”

Each time he got knocked down, he got back up again.

“My ability to keep moving forward and keep my focus on the job at hand came from my strict Italian parents, what I learned in ROTC training, and service in the National Guard where I learned to persevere against all obstacles,” Scirica says. “Sure, there have been setbacks, but they’ve only slowed me down, not stifled my spirit. I’m not a quitter. Never quit anything in my life. Never washed out or walked out until the mission was completed. There’s so much opportunity available if you’ll just persevere. Anything I might want to do, it’s available if I apply myself.”

## USING THE TOOLS

When it comes to equipment, “I’m a RIDGID brand loyalist,” he says. “As a pioneer in the plumbing tool

Continued ►





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business, they make the best wrench on the planet, as well as other flex tools that help me finish a project without needing a lot of strength. I also use some items from the Milwaukee product line. It's just those two brands for me."

The company has a RIDGID SeeSnake Plus and a Model KJ-3100 hydro jetter to help with debris blockage in sewer lines. Scirica also relies on another of his favorites, a Milwaukee brand M18 ProPEX Expansion Tool and RectorSeal pipe sealant on many of his jobs.

The response protocol patterns that of other well-respected plumbing entities. Vehicles are identifiable as are the technicians with their company logo shirts. They call 20 minutes before the scheduled arrival time. The shoe booties go on as the doorbell rings. Problems are analyzed, fixes proposed and a cost-estimate prepared. Given authorization to proceed, work gets underway. And when it's done, out come the brooms, vacuums, and trash disposal bags. Everything is as the techs found it, with one exception, the plumbing problems have been solved.

"In addition to the half-dozen cold calls we get off Google every day, calls that we slot into our daily schedule hopefully within a couple hours of receipt, we also book several maintenance inspection visits every week of the year for our Dino Club members who pay a monthly fee," Scirica says. "We're cost competitive with our market, a \$69 service fee gets us on site, unless it's after hours (5 p.m. to 8 a.m.), weekends, or holidays when the rate goes up to \$99."

One thing plumbers at Dinosaur Plumbing don't do is dig. Whether it's in grass, soft dirt, or hardpan, none of its workers touch a shovel. That's left to specialty subcontractors. Being a plumber in a hot, dry climate with hard-packed caliche soil presents its own set of problems, but also helps jobs.

"It's hard to dig, but because it's so compacted, we don't see any sagging in installs and that's a good thing for sewer piping," Scirica says.

## TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

Scirica says it's becoming easier for plumbers to do their jobs.



▲ Bobby Scirica uses a M18 ProPEX expansion tool (Milwaukee Tool) to expand the end of the new water pipe for the fitting.

"You're no longer required to sweat copper or open joint connections," he says. "I'm seeing a rise in the number of handy men doing plumbing work because not a lot of people are formally getting into the trades. America is short on skilled laborers and that's why the industry is booming for trained tradesmen. We almost get paid like doctors."

The company grossed \$650,000 last year, and he expects more in the next five years.

"I intend to branch out in Arizona, to Phoenix, as well as outlets in Texas and Nevada," Scirica says. "I'd like to franchise the brand name and become a coach in Plumber Success International, to help newcomers learn how to run an efficient plumbing business. In my case, I've been there, done that, and I would like to put wrenches in the hands of the new guys." 📍

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# Get a Handle on Toilets

Tools for moving and setting bulky toilets reduce the risks of injury and product damage *By Ken Wysocky*

It's not unusual for today's one-piece toilets to tip the scales at more than 100 pounds and cost more than \$500. As such, these beasts are unwieldy to carry and install and expensive to replace if dropped and damaged — not to mention putting technicians at risk for back injuries.

But thanks to the TK300 Toilet Kart and Pick Up Stix Toilet tool, these concerns are a moot point at Budiac Plumbing and Heating in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, and Home Team Plumbing in St. Petersburg, Florida. Technicians at Budiac Plumbing — owned by master plumber Larry Budiac and his wife, Margie — rely on the Toilet Kart, made by Pipe-Tytes. And at Home Team Plumbing, the aptly named Pick Up Stix Toilet tool, made by Stickman Tool, gets the job done.

Budiac says his company, which was established in 1998, owns six Toilet Karts. They're a handy tool for a company that installs an estimated 500 toilets a year. (The company does both service and repair plumbing, as well as high-end remodeling throughout the Milwaukee and surrounding metro area, and it employs 12 people).

"There's a Toilet Kart on every one of our trucks," says Budiac, who runs six service vehicles, either Ford F-450s or GMC 3500 box vans with bodies made by Grumman Olson, Midway Specialty Vehicles or Supreme.

"They collapse, so they don't take up a lot of room; you just pull out two pins and fold it up.

"We use them mostly for skirted or concealed-trap-way toilets," he continues. "They're heavier toilets, and you're leaning over to set them. They're easy to break. And we do a lot of high-end remodeling where people

*“We believe in investing in tools that makes our lives easier.”*  
**Larry Budiac**

**COMPANIES** Budiac Plumbing and Heating in Cedarburg, Wisconsin; Home Team Plumbing in St. Petersburg, Florida

**TOOLS** Toilet Kart from Pipe-Tytes and Pick Up Stix Toilet tool from Stickman Tool

**FUNCTION** Transport and set toilets faster, less risk for injuries

**FEATURES** **TK300 Toilet Kart** — 4 feet tall, 23 1/2 inches wide and 20 inches deep; weighs 27 pounds; maximum load of 100 pounds; foldable plated-steel frame; 8-inch-diameter rubber wheels; 3-inch caster wheels on front.

**Pick Up Stix** — weighs almost 1 pound; made from aluminum; 18 1/2 inches long; spring-loaded with protective rubber tips on each end

**WEBSITES** [www.facebook.com/budiacplumbing](http://www.facebook.com/budiacplumbing) and [www.hometeamplumbing.com](http://www.hometeamplumbing.com)

**COST** \$269 for the Toilet Kart; \$35.99 for the Pick Up Stix tool (discounts available when three or more units purchased)

have no problem paying \$800 for a toilet, so the last thing we want to do is break one. In that regard, the Toilet Karts pay for themselves."

## LESS LABOR REQUIRED

Moreover, the Toilet Karts — which take only a minute or two to set up — improve on-the-job safety by reducing the potential for back and other injuries incurred while

▶ The Pick Up Stix Toilet tool from Stickman Tool.

▼ Larry Budiak, co-owner of Budiak Plumbing and Heating, uses a Toilet Kart from Pipe-Tytes to maneuver a toilet into place at a residential job site in Cedarburg, Wisconsin.



lifting such heavy and bulky items. In addition, it makes moving and setting toilets a one-man job as opposed to a two-man job, he adds.

“We believe in investing in tools that makes our lives easier,” Budiak says. “The Toilet Kart is pretty nice for resetting even the smaller standard toilets when you’re working in tight spaces, where it’s often difficult to pick them up, clean off the wax ring and reset them.” (Note that the Toilet Kart will not work on some newer toilets that don’t have a rear rim.)

“It’s one of those tools where you stop and think, ‘Holy crap — the guy who thought of this is a genius.’”

*Bryan Hammons*

At Home Team Plumbing, which was established in 2016 and focuses primarily on service and repair plumbing and drain cleaning in the Tampa Bay (Florida) metro area, Bryan Hammons says the Pick Up Stix tool has proven to be a simple, but effective and hygienic solution to moving heavy toilets. The tool is an 18 1/2-inch-long aluminum rod with one rigid end and one end that’s spring-loaded; protective tips made from recycled rubber cover each end to protect the toilet from damage. It weighs just under 1 pound.

Here’s how it works: Put the rigid end of the tool under one end or side of the toilet bowl rim, then compress the spring-loaded end so it fits under the other end or side of the rim. After that, release the spring-loaded end so it firmly nestles under the rim.

For elongated-bowl toilets, the tool can be placed lengthwise in the bowl; for smaller standard toilets, it can be installed from side to side. In either case, the rigid end of the tool should always be inserted toward the user.

## IMPROVES EFFICIENCY

“It’s one of those tools where you stop and think, ‘Holy crap — the guy who thought of this is a genius,’” says Hammons, who co-owns the company with Jeff Grzetchik.

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It employs eight people and runs six service trucks, either Chevrolet 2500 Express vans or Ford Transits. "It makes it so easy to lift a toilet, especially one-piece toilets, which are kind of awkward to carry. It's not a tool that looks like something really great until you try it. Then you think it's amazing."

Hammons says there's a "night-and-day difference" between carrying a toilet with the tool and without it. "You don't have to wrap yourself around the toilet and risk hurting your back — no more awkward carrying," he explains. "It provides a good surface to grab onto and gives you a good center of gravity. I'd say it makes jobs 20 to 25 percent faster."

Since the company's inception, employees have incurred several back injuries from carrying toilets or scratched themselves badly enough on broken toilet remnants to require stitches. But technicians haven't suffered any more such injuries after the company invested in 10 Pick Up Stix tools, Hammons says.

"I would absolutely recommend this tool to other plumbers," Hammons says. "I rave about them all the time. It's one of those things where I wonder why I didn't think of it." **PI**

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# Controlling Cash Flow

Instead of going to collections or court right away, explore all other ways of getting paid first *By Neil Feldman*

**Y**ou completed your latest plumbing project on time, sent an invoice to your demanding client, and are eagerly awaiting payment ... and waiting ... and waiting ... and waiting. Does this scenario sound all too familiar?

For any business, every penny counts whether times are good or bad. Probably nowhere is this mindset more prevalent than in the contracting industry, where low profit margins require contractors to protect working capital any way they can. Success, however, often depends on whether you have an effective billing and collection system. Without one, your cash flow can quickly turn sporadic and unpredictable, leading to a siphoning of cash reserves. This can become a dangerous slippery slope that leaves a contractor with insufficient working capital and often no recourse other than to seek hard-to-obtain — and increasingly expensive — loans.

Accounts receivable systems, and the cash flow they generate, are the best measurements of a contractor's overall efficiency. At companies where cash flow is not tightly controlled, overall performance tends to be weak.

## ESTABLISHING A COLLECTION POLICY

When it comes to protecting cash flow, it's critical for a plumbing contractor to have a reliable payment collection system. However, even good collection systems are doomed if a client is in poor financial shape or has a history of delaying payments. "Before signing any agreements, contractors should review a potential clients' credit status through reliable report sources," says Paul Lynch, a business and collections attorney in Boston. "If there are notable flags, it's important to take them into account and request deposits or upfront payments or pass on the business altogether."

Once a potential client has been vetted and proven trustworthy, contractors need to make certain their accounts

receivable systems are efficient. Contractors who don't have a collection policy that establishes actions triggered by specific conditions should develop one. In general, the basics should include establishing when and to whom bills are sent, the type of follow-up to be used and how collections personnel should respond to payment delays.

"The best way to avoid payment problems is for owners and contractors to decide at the beginning of a project how and when bills will be paid," says Dean Kaplan, president of The Kaplan Group, a commercial collection agency. "This provides the contractor assurance they will be paid on time and prevents owners from being ambushed by sudden demands."

Before agreeing to a payment schedule, Kaplan notes, contractors need to remember they will be paying wages, overhead, and material and equipment costs for the duration of the project. "The payment schedule should comfortably cover those expenses," he says.

It is especially important, collection experts note, that subcontractors and suppliers are paid with revenues from the projects on which they work, not an unrelated project. Job borrowing — paying from funds generated by previous jobs — nearly always signals that the contractor is experiencing major financial problems.

Continued ▶

“Before signing any agreements, contractors should review a potential clients' credit status through reliable report sources.”

*Paul Lynch*



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If the contract does not establish exactly when payments must be made, there are diplomatic ways contractors can protect their interest. One of the best steps is for the accounts receivable staff to call the client a week or so after the bill has gone out and inquire as to whether the invoice was received or if the client has any questions. That's courteous and not heavy-handed, and it also eliminates any reason for the client to delay payment because of confusion.

"If there is no agreed-upon repayment schedule and the owner is more than 30 days late, another bill requesting immediate payment should be sent," says Adrienne Odierna, a business and collections attorney with Lynch, Schwab & Gasparini, a White Plains, New York-based business law firm. "If the check still isn't received within a reasonable period, contacting an attorney or a collection agency is an option, but it should be an absolute last resort. It may get the check delivered quickly, but it also risks severing a relationship."

Though cutting ties with a habitually bad paying client may not be a major concern, quite often a client that's delinquent on a payment or two may just be going through a short-term rough patch and is not really a bad account.

Collections and credit experts all agree that good communication is an essential ingredient to steering clear of lawyers and collection agencies. If a particular account is having cash flow issues, partial payments and payment plans are options that show good faith, get some money in your hands, and avoid the time, cost, and pain involved in getting lawyers and/or collection agencies involved.

## COLLECTION TOOLS

When plumbing contractors are working with general contractors and payments are late despite repeated follow-ups, contacting the owner directly is a viable option. "Contracts with general contractors typically have payment clauses that read 'paid-when-paid,' meaning the general contractor is only obligated to release funds once they have been paid by their client," Lynch says. "But general contractors will sometimes delay payments even after they have been paid, and that violates the contractual terms."

Lynch says once you have realized the general contractor has indeed been paid, that information can be used to obtain prompt payment. He further notes that if the general contractor still doesn't provide a date to issue the check, sometimes owners will be willing to contact the general contractor on your behalf.

*"If the check still isn't received within a reasonable period, contacting an attorney or a collection agency is an option, but it should be an absolute last resort. It may get the check delivered quickly, but it also risks severing a relationship."*

*Adrienne Odierna*

"That almost always releases money immediately since general contractors will not want to jeopardize their relationship with a client," Lynch says.

Commercial projects often have payment bonds or mechanics liens as available tools and can be very useful in collecting payment under certain circumstances.

A payment bond is required on many construction projects and forms a three-way contract between the owner, the contractor, and the surety to make sure that all subcontractors, laborers, and material suppliers will be paid leaving the project lien-free. A mechanics lien is a legal claim that you, as a plumbing contractor who worked on a piece of property or provided materials to, can file against the title of the property if you remain unpaid for work performed after a certain period of time. Bonds are typically used on public projects whereas liens are more often filed on private projects, though there are exceptions to both.

Odierna advises initially threatening these avenues rather than attempting to invoke them without notice, as they can also lead to a severed relationship in the same manner using collection agencies or filing a lawsuit can.

"Communication is so important with collections," Odierna says. "Having a good, open dialogue can often avoid going down these more invasive avenues." ■

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## Fourth Time Is a Charm

Plumber finds a unique approach for cleaning out a stone-filled pipe while also installing a new pipe

By Cory Dellenbach

**S**cott Kuhns knew it wouldn't be a normal run-of-the-mill job when he found out his company was the fourth one called in to try and find the cause of a sewer lateral blockage.

"We were referred to the customer by the third plumber who had been there," says Kuhns, co-owner of R.I.C. Plumbing in Lockport, New York. "Two other companies tried to snake it. One guy got his jetter stuck, cut it off and left it in there. Another guy tried it and couldn't get it open. The third guy came in, looked at it and referred the customer to us."

R.I.C. Plumbing, which Kuhns owns with his brother, focuses on underground construction, including pipe bursting, lining, sewer jetting and vacuum excavation.

Using their experience and not being afraid to try something new, the team from R.I.C. Plumbing took on the challenging job and used a combination of a vacuum excavation trailer, HDPE pipe and cameras to repair the line for the customer in only one day.

### GETTING IN QUICK

After meeting with the property owner, it was determined that the sewer was full of water and the break was in the street.

The line had an inside trap with no clean-out after it. Kuhns told the customer that his crew would need to remove the trap, then jet and vacuum the debris that was in the sewer in order to get the cameras in for an inspection. The customer agreed but wanted the work done quickly.

"They asked that we try and do it soon because it was an active property with a barbershop in the front and a two-unit apartment in the back," Kuhns says. "We were able to move things around and got back out there the next day."

After clearing the water and debris from the sewer line, the R.I.C. Plumbing crew of four inspected the line using one of the company's four Vivax-Metrotech cameras. The



**PROJECT** Clearing a sewer lateral that had crushed stone about 100 feet in

**CUSTOMER** Private property owner with barbershop in front and two-unit apartment in back of building

**CONTRACTOR** R.I.C. Plumbing, Lockport, New York

**EQUIPMENT**

- FX30 vacuum trailer, Ditch Witch, 800-654-6481, [www.ditchwitch.com](http://www.ditchwitch.com)
- Fusion equipment, Gorlitz Sewer & Drain, 562-944-3060, [www.gorlitz.com](http://www.gorlitz.com)
- PipePatch, Source One Environmental, 810-412-4740, [www.sleonline.com](http://www.sleonline.com)
- Camera system, Vivax-Metrotech Corp., 800-446-3392, [www.vxmt.com](http://www.vxmt.com)

**RESULTS** After a full day on the job and having to vacuum crushed stone out of the line twice, crews were able to install new HDPE pipe into the lateral and saved the customer money by having to just enter through the basement and not going with the pipe bursting route

camera got in about 100 feet before running into the problem. A 4-foot section of the original 6-inch clay tile sewer was missing and filled with clean No. 1 round stone. The bad spot was under a new 16-inch water main and 120 feet away from the exit of a new roundabout that the state had just built.

“We were looking at a lot of alternative ways to do this job. Sometimes you have to think out of the box.”  
*Scott Kuhns*

## NO DIGGING ALLOWED

Upon discovering the problem, Kuhns went to the state Department of Transportation to see what options there were for correcting the situation.

“They said absolutely no digging could take place in that area,” Kuhns says. “We showed a copy of the break to state officials and they said the problem is that of the property owner. The sewer main was also across the street in the right of way.”

Kuhns went back to the homeowner with the news and began brainstorming ideas of how to repair the break.

The first idea was to dig pits on both sides of the roadway and pipe burst a new pipe in. The second idea was to try and enter through the property owner’s basement on that side of the street. “If we could get it from the homeowner’s location it would be a lot less costly, and it would only be a day rather than a few days on the job,” Kuhns says.

Kuhns and the property owner decided to go with the second option.

## VACUUMING THE STONE

The R.I.C. Plumbing crew excavated where the sewer exited the house in the basement. Right after the trap, the crew was met with 6-by-4-inch clay tile reducer, which then moved into 6-inch clay tile pipe. The reducer was broken off to make it 6-inch the entire way. Crews then inserted the tube from the Ditch Witch FX30 vacuum trailer into the pipe and pushed it through to where the break was and started to pull out the crushed stone.

“We did that for an hour or two and got a ton of stone out,” Kuhns says.

A camera was then put back into the pipe to check on progress and crews could see the other side of the break.



▲ A crew from R.I.C. Plumbing in Lockport, New York, holds the new HDPE pipe being inserted into an existing pipe lateral where crushed stone had collapsed in. Crews used a vacuum excavator with its hose attached to the end of the HDPE pipe in order to vacuum out the crushed stone and push the HDPE pipe through.

They then fused 120 feet of 4-inch HDPE pipe, using fusion equipment from Gorlitz Sewer & Drain and pushed it through the sewer line.

“When we got to the bad spot, we found that the stone had caved back in again,” Kuhns says.

Not giving up, the R.I.C. Plumbing crew hooked up the vacuum to the new HDPE pipe. They then turned on the vacuum and began clearing the stone again until they could see a shot.

“Once we did that, we just started hammering and spinning the HDPE pipe until we got it to go through,” Kuhns says. “We got it into the other side of the pipe, but the main was still another 15 feet beyond that, so we just kept hammering until we got about 4 feet from where the drop was down to the main.”

## STEERING THE PIPE

A combination of a camera and a 1-inch steel rod were used to help steer the HDPE pipe through the old pipe.

“If we ran into snags or hung up on anything, we would check on the camera to see what we were hitting and then we would steer around it,” Kuhns says.

To help steer, the pipe crews hole-sawed a piece of 1-inch steel through the end of the pipe horizontally on



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the end not in the pipe. They then used that as a steering wheel. For the end in the pipe, crews cut a 45-degree angle on the pipe to help spin it around the joints in the clay tile. For the camera, R.I.C. Plumbing technicians cut a slit in the HDPE pipe to put the camera reel in and just left the camera in the pipe instead of inserting and removing the camera constantly.

“We were looking at a lot of alternative ways to do this job,” Kuhns says. “Sometimes you have to think out of the box.”

### WRAPPING UP THE JOB

After getting the HDPE pipe to the main sewer line, a PipePatch from Source One Environmental was used to seal off the end of the pipe and grout was pumped in to seal the void in the road.

“We hung the sewer in the basement and installed a sump pump to finish off the job,” Kuhns says. “It was a challenging job, but one we are all very proud of.”



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Anja Smith

# Hard-Earned Lessons on Software Change

If you're ready to make a change, be ready to learn about the program and be ready for some long days of training *By Anja Smith*

**O**ur ever-evolving company is in the process of changing back-office software. In plumbing, the software-as-a-service all-inclusive options have officially taken over. The power of the cloud, right?

I've heard these referred to as "an operating system for your business" — a clever and apt description. At a minimum, we are talking about scheduling, dispatching, customer management, and invoicing that integrate with your bookkeeping software. The best of the best also include marketing automation, documentation, advanced reporting, inventory management and much more.

A high level of integration between departments can save you a ton of time and administrative costs. There is no way to automate plumbing labor, but you can automate certain office functions. Streamlining processes like this can reduce your office-to-field ratio, reducing your overhead costs. That's a big win.

When you outgrow software though, it can slow the growth and potential of your business. For us, that time has come. The experience of making that switch, even in the hands of a capable provider, has felt nearly apocalyptic. As the person spearheading this transition, I yearn for the days when a simple calendar and a spreadsheet could run things.

It's easy to drool over bells and whistles during the sales process, but implementing the software is big task. Here are some lessons I've learned along the way:

## CHANGE IS HARD

The challenge, I have found out, is that no two software providers organize your customer data the same way. That means when you move from one platform to another, getting all of your data imported may be painful. Sometimes it's impossible. Historical customer records, I probably don't have to tell you, are crucial to our business.

Because of this data organization mismatch, changing software platforms is often a difficult task. Be prepared to spend hours on data conversion or pay dearly for it. When considering a platform change, do your best to understand

There is no way to automate plumbing labor, but you can automate certain office functions. Streamlining processes like this can reduce your office-to-field ratio, reducing your overhead costs. That's a big win.

the capabilities and limitations of data conversion ahead of time so you can plan accordingly.

Regardless of where you are in the software journey — just moving from a handwritten calendar all the way to considering a custom platform — take data extraction into consideration when making your initial buying decision. That may seem counterintuitive, to consider leaving the platform before you even started using it, but the reality is that you won't use it forever. You will make a change eventually. Don't underestimate the importance of those customer records, visit history, job notes, etc. Set future you up for success.

Even if you have the best-case scenario and the data conversion is a breeze, you still have to consider that change is hard. Communicate with your team and get their input. Be firm about the change not being optional, but show compassion for the challenge of the task. Overall, make sure they are getting the training they need to be successful and give them plenty of time to adjust.

## PROMISES, PROMISES

Lesson two is to get everything in writing. Sales people, bless their pea-pickin' hearts, love to make vague promises. The longer they spend with you, the more invested they are in the sale. The more invested in the sale, the more they are likely to get liberal in their interpretations of your questions





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to give you the answers you want to hear. If you feel you need more clarity on an issue, ask for the clarity. Beat that horse until you are very sure you understand.

Industry terms and jargon often have soft definitions. Most were invented by marketers to sound like whatever your heart desires. Learn to recognize these vague phrases and ask for details, ideally in email form.

They won't answer in an email? That's fine. At the end of the phone conversation, send a summary email of your expected deliverables and request a reply with any corrections. This creates a paper trail that you might need later.

Don't be afraid to ask for more demos. More clarity. More explanation. More examples. They are going to push you to wrap up the sale. They are going to tempt you with time-bound offers. Resist. Make an informed decision.

### **BE FLEXIBLE**

All that being said, it is important to realize that with new software comes new possibilities. Don't be so tied to a process that you dismiss a good option that will give you the same end result but use a different path to get there. Remember that the result is what matters.

Try to be objective enough to look at the big picture and understand the trade-offs and benefits. If you understand the capabilities, you can trust the process. When you come upon something that you think is a deal breaker, challenge yourself to see past the obstacle and envision the payoff. If the end-game payoff is worth it, then maybe it isn't a deal breaker after all.

### **TAKING THE DRIVE**

A few final pieces of wisdom, if you are going down this road:

- **Time your decision well.** The go-live date should happen in your slowest month.
- **Take the time to train.** Your employees should be comfortable and confident on launch day. Proper training will also ensure that you are getting what you are paying for and that all of the bells and whistles are used.
- **Duplicate the important stuff.** Don't blindly transition something like payroll without a backup. Suffer one or two weeks' inefficiency if it means happy customers and employees.
- **Create a task force for implementation.** It's nearly impossible for one person to handle the entire transition. Create a task force of individuals who can provide input for each department and ensure that every employee has buy-in with the process.

It is not underestimating the power of these platforms to say that a good all-in-one back-office software can transform your business. Painful or not, the change is typically worth it. Just be mentally prepared and learn from my hard-earned lessons of change. 📧

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*Anja Smith is managing partner for All Clear Plumbing in Greenville, South Carolina. She can be reached at [anja.nicole.smith@gmail.com](mailto:anja.nicole.smith@gmail.com).*

# Creating a Maintenance Plan

Tips for effective fleet maintenance planning that you and your crews can easily establish *By Jeff Langley*

**M**ost fleet managers know that vehicle maintenance takes two forms: scheduled and unscheduled. In the same way that regularly scheduled health checkups can detect and fix minor medical problems before they become big ones, scheduled preventive maintenance can help prevent, detect, and repair small problems before they become serious and expensive issues.

On the other hand, unscheduled checkups — for both you and your vehicles — usually only happen after some sort of breakdown. They're almost always more expensive than routine checkups, involve significant “downtime,” and may have been prevented with routine, preventive maintenance.

Developing and implementing an effective fleet maintenance plan can be easy. There are tools and technology available that can make it easier than ever before. It will help save your company plenty of time, frustration and money. When developing your fleet's maintenance plan, ask yourself these five questions:

1. What should be covered in the preventive maintenance checkup?
2. Who will be responsible for preventive maintenance service?
3. When will the service take place?
4. How can you simplify your recordkeeping?
5. Where can you find more information?

## Tip 1: Develop a comprehensive maintenance checklist for your vehicles

What should be included in routine preventive maintenance service? Many checklists include these items, but you'll want to edit yours based on your fleet's needs.

- Engine oil and filter changes
- Transmission fluid
- Fuel system
- Cooling system
- Engine and transmission mounts
- Drive shafts or CV joints
- Belts and hoses
- Tuneups

Continued ▶

◀ A fleet maintenance plan should start with the driver and expand into knowing what technology and options are available for companies.



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\*Versus RP 330-B

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- Seat belts and seat structures
- Fluid leaks
- Auxiliary systems.

### **Tip 2: Make this a team effort between your drivers and your repair technicians**

Who will be responsible for preventive maintenance? Your drivers are the first line of defense against unexpected breakdowns and repairs. It's critical that they immediately report any vehicle problems to help keep your vehicles on the road. Drivers can and should be trained to monitor basic vehicle safety items (tires, brakes, steering, etc.); vehicle performance issues (including misfires and rough idling); and miscellaneous items (such as the heater or radio). Your repair technicians — whether in-house or outsourced — can perform more detailed inspections on each vehicle's components and systems.

### **Tip 3: Examine both your routine and unscheduled maintenance data to develop a schedule that works for your fleet**

When should preventive maintenance take place? Miles traveled, engine hours, fuel usage and calendar time are the typical guides used to create a schedule. By also tracking the number of breakdowns, jump-starts, tows, and emergency repairs, you might see patterns that require adjustments to your schedule.

### **Tip 4: Take advantage of technology**

If you're still entering and tracking data manually, seriously consider upgrading to a digital system. Manual systems can be tedious and time-consuming, no matter the fleet size. Computerized systems are a more efficient method for compiling reports, allowing you to make faster, better decisions. Telematics allows you to examine your drivers' performance, so you can offer important feedback and

Developing and implementing an effective fleet maintenance plan can be easy. There are tools and technology available that can make it easier than ever before.

make recommendations. The technology you need is out there, and it can be surprisingly affordable; a little research and legwork from you can make your job much easier.


### **Tip 5: Go online for additional details about fleet maintenance schedules**

Where can you find more information? Here are a few informative sites to get you started:

Travelers ([www.travelers.com/resources/driver-fleet-safety/fleet-maintenance-planning](http://www.travelers.com/resources/driver-fleet-safety/fleet-maintenance-planning))

Government Fleet ([www.government-fleet.com/article/story/2006/09/how-to-implement-a-fleet-preventive-maintenance-program.aspx](http://www.government-fleet.com/article/story/2006/09/how-to-implement-a-fleet-preventive-maintenance-program.aspx))

Decisiv (<https://blog.decisiv.com/3-tips-to-improve-your-routine-maintenance-scheduling>).

Finally, don't forget the "why." Why should you spend so much effort on a fleet maintenance plan? The time you spend now to develop your fleet's preventive maintenance plan could save your company a considerable amount of lost time in the future. In addition, the money you spend on implementing a preventive maintenance plan will be small in comparison to what you could spend on unscheduled, preventable repairs. In this case, a dime of prevention is definitely worth a dollar of cure. 

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*Jeff Langley is a fleet account executive for Adrian Steel and has been working with the company since 2007. Jeff has a Bachelor of Arts in finance from Michigan State University. Adrian Steel is a leading manufacturer of cargo management solutions, including ladder racks, steel partitions, heavy-duty shelving and more.*



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# Industrial and Commercial Plumbing

By Craig Mandli

## Boilers/Components

### Eclipse Tools North America BoilerMag

The **BoilerMag** from Eclipse Tools North America is an NPT threaded air, dirt, and magnetite separator used to prevent the buildup of black sludge, also known as iron oxide. Ferrous metal contamination is attracted to the magnetic rods, removing the smallest particles, down to submicron size from circulation. Its magnetic core ensures that despite the amount of contamination, it can never block, thus increasing energy efficiency, significantly prolonging the boiler life, protecting pipework, and considerably reducing maintenance calls. It also catches nonmagnetic contamination, such as dirt and debris, using a mesh filter and is easily cleaned in minutes without fully removing the pipework. It has an automatic air vent to release air from the boiler system. The user-friendly application can be easily installed in any heating system, residential or commercial. **905-664-5585; www.eclipsetoolsinc.com.**



and racked on top of each other for up to 4,000 mBh in a small footprint. **800-900-9276; www.laars.com.**

### Parker Boiler 204WW Direct Fired Hot Water Wall Boiler

The **204WW Direct Fired Hot Water Wall Boiler** from Parker is available in sizes from 500,000 up to 2,000,000 Btu input with a bent tube all-welded design. The efficient units are designed to fit through a standard 36-inch doorway without disassembly. They are available as straight gas fired, straight oil or combination gas oil with a conventional power burner. The “L” Model has a specially designed pre-mix metal fiber burner system for sub 20 ppm NOx levels. The Low NOx models are SCAQMD 1146.2 certified and incorporate a variable-speed blower. **323-727-9800; www.parkerboiler.com.**



## Fitting

### Shark Bite EvoPEX System

The **Shark Bite EvoPEX System** is a push-to-connect plumbing solution for new construction. It allows installers to plumb an entire structure without the need for special tools, crimping, glue, or solder, improving job site efficiency and reducing the risk of installation errors. Designed as a PEX pipe system, it extends beyond traditional pipe-and-fitting solutions to include fittings, PEX pipe, outlet boxes, valves, and other accessories needed to install a complete potable water plumbing system from meter to fixture. A green-colored visual indicator ensures the pipe seal has been permanently engaged and that the connection is sound, resulting in cleaner installations, fewer potential leak points, and fewer chances of customer callbacks. **877-700-4242; www.cashacme.com.**



### LAARS Heating Systems Pennant

The **Pennant** line of fan-assisted, modular boilers and volume water heaters from **LAARS Heating Systems** are available in seven sizes from 500 to 2,000 mBh. They are fueled by natural or LP gas and deliver efficiency levels up to 85 percent, with stage firing of up to 4-1, and cascade with auto redundancy. Systems also qualify as low-NOx emission-rated, below 10 ppm. They include the LINCTM intuitive control system with an auto cascade setup feature that easily configures lead lagging of up to eight units. The color touch-screen homepage displays key boiler performance measurements, easy-to-use and -navigate control structure, USB input, easily connects to building automation systems via BACnet and a quick start option. Units can be vented from the top, or back, and can be installed indoors or out



## Fixtures

### ASHLAND PolyTraps 4800 Series

The polyethylene **4800 Series** grease interceptor from **ASHLAND PolyTraps** is an option when corrosion resistance is needed. The grease interceptor utilizes a hydromechanical process to prevent grease, fats and oil from entering sewage lines. It comes standard with an external flow control to ensure the waste flow doesn't surpass gallons per minute recommendations. Units are tested and certified to PDI-G101 standards and are able to withstand continuous usage with temperatures up to 212 degrees F. Units have a smooth, nonstick surface for complete cleaning. Designed for flush-with-floor or on-the-floor installation, units are offered in a wide range of sizes from 4 gpm with a 2.3-gallon holding capacity, to 350 gpm with a 560-gallon holding capacity. **800-541-8004; www.ashlandpolytraps.com.**



EcoQUATTRO flushing system with high-performance gravity-assisted flushes, with an oversized 3-inch flush valve, a fully glazed 2 1/8-inch internal trapway, and a large 9-by-7-inch water surface area with optimized jets for a clean bowl. **855-444-2372; www.icerausa.com.**

### T&S Brass & Bronze Works EC-3142

The EC-3142 sensor faucet from **T&S Brass & Bronze Works** offers a sleek, compact design for lavatory sinks and other areas where hygiene and water conservation are crucial considerations. With above-deck electronics and point-of-use temperature mixing handle, it comes standard with a 2.2 gpm vandal-resistant aerator and offers a water-resistant control module with internal flow control switches, customizable auto time-out and shut-off delay settings, plug-in AC transformer or battery-power options, a low battery LED indicator light, and a polished chrome-plated brass body for durability. An optional auto-flush feature flows water for 30 seconds after every 12 inactive hours. In addition to decreasing the spread of germs through contact with contaminated surfaces, sensor faucets can contribute to significant water and energy savings, reducing water use by up to 1 gallon per hand wash. **800-476-4103; www.tsbrass.com.**



### BK Resources Evolution Series faucets

**Evolution Series** faucets from **BK Resources** offer T-304 stainless steel precision-machined construction, making them rust- and corrosion-resistant. Stainless steel is more durable than brass, giving these faucets superior longevity. They are lead-free and safe for all types of drinking water. They are available in 4- and 8-inch on-center, as well as splash and deck mount. A full list of replacement parts is available. **888-310-4393; www.bk-resources.com.**

### Taco Comfort Solutions 006e3

The **006e3** from **Taco Comfort Solutions** is a high-efficiency, ECM-powered circulator. The infinitely variable, wet-rotor circulator is designed to make installation and operation of domestic hot-water recirculation systems easier and more efficient. It has a dial to select from three performance curves to best match the application and a setting selection guide to make the choice simple. The whisper-quiet, permanent-magnet ECM motor uses up to 85 percent less electricity than conventional pumps of the same size. Whether used in a new construction hot-water recirculation system with dedicated return lines or in a retrofit application where water is returned via the cold waterline, installation is easy. The pump's compact design is ideal for tight spaces, and multiple connection options are available. The circulator is double-insulated so that a ground wire is not necessary, and a three-color LED indicates status. SureStart technology automatically unblocks and purges air from the line. **401-942-8000; www.tacomfort.com.**



### Icera Palermo II 1.0 gpf

The **Palermo II 1.0 gpf** toilet from **Icera** uses just 1 gallon of water per flush, earning its designation as an ultra high-efficiency toilet, or UHET. It has been updated with a new, contemporary look, creating a sleek exterior style that complements smart plumbing technology on the inside. It is ADA-compliant with a chair-height bowl that is compact and elongated for comfort. This model includes a silent-close, quick-release seat and cover, and it has been factory flush-tested to ensure optimum performance. Crafted of vitreous china, the toilet is available in a white or balsa glaze and with a choice of five metal finishes on the tank lever and hardware. It includes an



### Woodford Mfg. Co. Model 19

The Woodford Mfg. Co. Model 19 freezeless, anti-burst residential wall faucet prevents burst pipes, even if the hose is attached in freezing temperatures. The outdoor faucet has a pressure relief valve that prevents pressure buildup and burst tubes. **800-621-6032; www.woodfordmfg.com.**

## Pipe/Tubing

### Uponor AquaPEX Reclaimed Water Tubing

To help building professionals meet the growing demand for sustainable systems, Uponor offers AquaPEX Reclaimed Water Tubing for graywater systems. Now, the purple pipe (industry-designed color for reclaimed water systems) is available in sizes up to 2 inches. The complete offering, which offers the flexibility and corrosion-resistance, includes 1/2-, 3/4- and 1-inch pipe in 300-foot coils, as well as 1-, 1 1/4-, 1 1/2- and 2-inch pipe in 10- and 20-foot straight lengths. **800-321-4739; www.uponor-usa.com.**



## Pump



### Saniflo - part of SFA Group Santicubic 2 lifting station

Capable of handling multiple fixtures throughout a small commercial structure, the Saniflo - part of SFA Group Santicubic 2 lifting station consists of two 1 hp motors housed inside a compact, but durable plastic enclosure. Each independently operating grinder has its own high-performance grinding system — a fast-rotating cutting blade to reduce solids in the drainage stream from toilets, tubs and showers, sinks, washing machines and dishwashers. The two grinders inside are engineered to operate alternately, taking turns handling the incoming waste so that neither is more heavily used over time than the other. **800-571-8191; www.saniflo.com.**

## Sprinklers/Alarms

### RuB C-Leak

The C-Leak cloud-based wireless water leak and plumbing protection and management system from RuB helps protect buildings from water damage. The system detects and protects against water leaks and interacts with a mobile phone or computer monitoring station for operations, event notifications, and general system monitoring. When a leak is detected, the system disconnects the water supply wirelessly, closing the shut-off unit, and alerts of the event via the easy-to-use app in a mobile phone or computer monitoring station. The three main components include a shut-off unit that connects directly to plumbing by or near the water main shut-off valve, a hub to manage all communications between all of the devices and also with the cloud, and flood sensors to be placed near where water leaks may occur. It is easy to install and can accommodate up to 32 devices. **800-468-4131; www.rubinc.com.**



### SJE-Rhombus Xpert Alert

The Xpert Alert indoor alarm system from SJE-Rhombus helps protect from potentially costly damage due to flooding, pump failure or freezing pipes. When the level rises in the tank, the high-water float activates the alarm (audible and visual) to alert of potentially threatening liquid level conditions. The sleek design incorporates an LED alarm light ring that illuminates red for alarm 1 and amber for alarm 2. The red low-temperature indicator activates at 40 degrees F to alert of potential freezing conditions and may be deactivated when temperature monitoring is not required. The easy-to-use design offers a large test/silence button located conveniently on the front of the alarm. It is CSA certified. **888-342-5753; www.sjrhombus.com.**





## Tools

### McElroy Polygon

The **Polygon** from **McElroy** is a manual machine for miter, butt and socket fusion, and offers DataLogger capability, which allows contractors to meet the growing requirement for better traceability and assurance that joints are fused according to standard. It can produce miter and butt fusion joints for 63 to 160 mm polypropylene pipe from zero- to 45-degree angles and offers additional socket fusion capability for 63 to 125 mm polypropylene pipe and fittings. It is equipped with quick-clamp pivoting jaws for easier setup and pivoting pipe supports to keep pipe level in the jaws. It is ideal for use in close-quarter mechanical rooms in new construction, as well as older structures on pipe replacement projects. It includes a cordless feature for the facer powered by a battery-operated drill included in the package. Power is only required for the heater, which keeps electrical needs minimal. **918-836-8611; www.mcelroy.com.**



### Milwaukee Tool M18 Force Logic Press Tool

The **M18 Force Logic Press Tool** from **Milwaukee Tool** is small, light and intelligent. A pre-press battery check prevents the user from starting a press the tool cannot complete, while auto-cycle ensures a full press every time and indicates to the user via a green light that the connection is complete. The press tool and compatible jaws are designed to work with all major fitting manufacturers, currently compatible with 13 unique systems and continuing to expand. Powered by REDLITHIUM batteries, the tool is fully compatible with the entire M18 line, now offering more than 100 power tool products. **800-729-3878; www.milwaukeetool.com.**



### RIDGID thermal imagers

**RIDGID** thermal imagers offer easy-to-use interfaces to predict problems before they happen and prevent costly downtime. Ideal for diagnosing HVAC failures, finding hidden moisture in walls, and locating pipe blockages, the product line includes four thermal imagers — RT-3, RT-5x, RT-7x and RT-9x — that range from providing 160 x 120 to



320 x 240 pixel thermal images. All models include SuperResolution that effectively doubles the resolution of the camera for saved images, allowing greater detail to detect anomalies. Select models also show a digital camera image alongside the thermal image and include e-Assist and the RIDGID Thermal App. With e-Assist, the imager can recognize a placed reference sticker, determine emissivity and reflected temperature, and set both automatically. The app allows users to view, edit and analyze captured images from the thermal imager directly on a mobile device. **800-769-7743; www.ridgid.com.**



### Water Cannon Inc. - MWBE indoor application pressure washer

The industrial-duty line of indoor pressure washers from **Water Cannon Inc. - MWBE** are powered with a Baldor Electric 20 hp motor and the General Pump TSP Series pump. Three models are available offering up to 5.5 gpm and 7,000 psi. The attachment kit includes a 50-foot hose, trigger gun and wand, and the washers come with quick-connect nozzles. The auto-stop/start feature shuts down the motor and pump when the trigger gun is closed. **800-333-9274; www.watercannon.com.**

## Water Heaters

### Bradford White Water Heaters AeroTherm

The **AeroTherm** heat pump water heater from **Bradford White Water Heaters** uses both heat-pump technology and backup electric heating elements to heat water. This integrated system drives economical and efficient operation to provide considerable energy while reducing the cost of water heating. During heat pump operation, a fan draws heat from the air into a compressor and evaporator to heat refrigerant. Once heated, the refrigerant travels through a coil that fully surrounds the water storage tank. It is Energy Star certified and eligible for most U.S. rebate programs, with efficiencies up to 3.48 UEF resulting in significant energy- and money-savings throughout the product lifetime. It offers first-hour delivery ratings up to 87 gallons, ultraquiet operation and four different operating modes. It has top water connections



and convenient height and weight for quick and easy replacements and installations by plumbing professionals. 215-641-9400; [www.bradfordwhite.com](http://www.bradfordwhite.com).



### Bradley Keltech Tankless Water Heaters

Keltech Tankless Water Heaters from Bradley deliver instantaneous ANSI-required tepid water for emergency safety showers and eye/face washes. Drawing energy to heat water only when needed, they are highly efficient and precise in supplying tepid water at a second's notice, even in extreme work environments. They provide reliable fluid heating for commercial, industrial and safety applications. Installation is easy since only one electrical connection and a cold waterline are needed, saving labor time and costs. Designed for dependable, long-lasting performance, all models are precision-engineered with copper tubing and robust brass

castings, exceeding the standards of any application. 800-272-3539; [www.bradleycorp.com](http://www.bradleycorp.com).

### Lochinvar ARMOR

Lochinvar has expanded its ARMOR commercial condensing water heater product line with models that range from 1.25 to 4.0 million Btu/h. They are available in indoor or outdoor construction and offer 98 percent thermal efficiency. These stainless steel-constructed models offer an enhanced low-profile, horizontal heat exchanger, which is heavier, more robust, and offers easy access to the combustion system. The advanced 316L water tube design enhances flow delivering performance and reliability for large commercial applications. They come standard with the CON•X•US remote connectivity platform with SMART TOUCH control. The 8-inch touch screen and multicolor interface make setup and navigation of parameters easy. As many as eight heaters can be cascaded together for redundancy, providing peace of mind without third-party controls or complex logic programming. 615-889-8900; [www.lochinvar.com](http://www.lochinvar.com).



### Noritz America NCC1991

The NCC1991 tankless water heater from Noritz America offers a thermal efficiency of more than 94 percent and saves money on both the installation and ongoing operations. Using a special Quick Connect cable, two NCC199-DV units can be coupled to provide an input of nearly 400,000 Btu, with a turndown ratio of more than 36-1. Designed for a wide variety of commercial applications, both new and replacement, it contains a secondary stainless steel heat exchanger that preheats incoming cold water with heat from escaping flue gases. 714-433-2905; [www.noritz.com](http://www.noritz.com).

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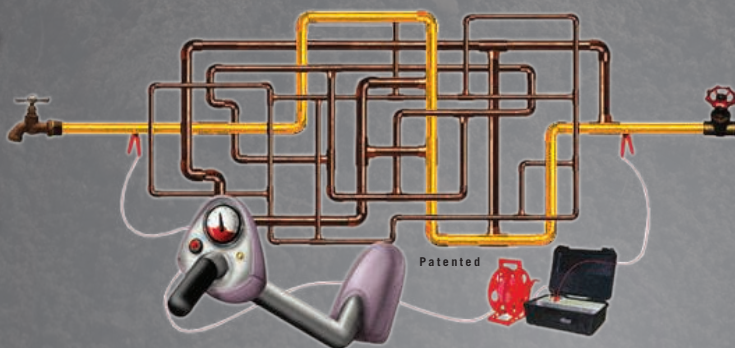
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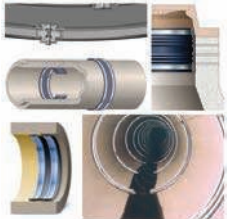
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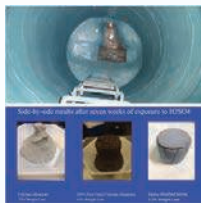
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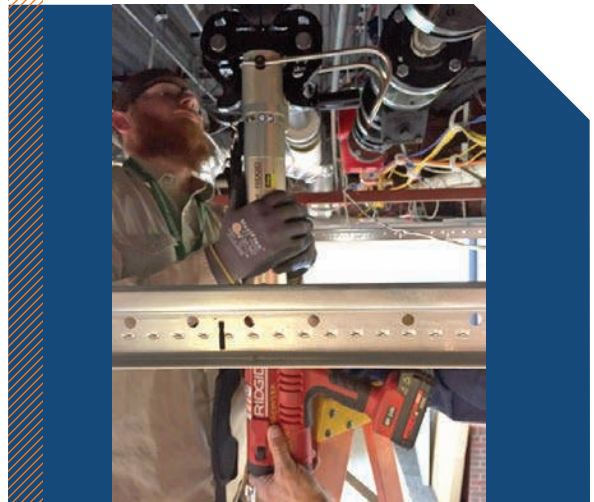
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# Industrial and Commercial Plumbing

By Craig Mandli

## Press fittings speed repair job



**Problem:** The Iliff School of Theology in Denver required an update and repair at its aging building, sections of which are more than 100 years old. It had many parts of the mechanical system that needed to be replaced.

**Solution:** A crew from Braconier Mechanical & Plumbing Services removed an old pump and reconfigured the system for the replacement air-cooled chiller on the roof of the building. New air handlers were installed in the attic. Braconier Mechanical & Plumbing Services used **Viega MegaPress XL** fittings, which are carbon-steel press fittings offered in sizes up to 4 inches in diameter. The crew used the **MegaPress XL PressBooster**, an extension for 300 Series RIDGID tools to press larger-diameter fittings.

**Result:** Because part of the installation was located in the ceiling of a main hallway, using press fitting made sense so as to shorten the repair time and make conditions safer for staff and students, without having to close down the area for welding. "This is new technology," says Paul Swango, foreman at Braconier Mechanical & Plumbing Services. "To stay competitive in the industry, we have to grab ahold and run with it." 800-976-9819; [www.viega.us](http://www.viega.us).

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## Product Spotlight

### Quality microinspection

By Craig Mandli

**I**nspiring kitchen sink drains and toilet P-traps requires extremely small equipment. Until recently, inspection cameras small enough to fit into those tight areas didn't exist. However, as technological advancement continues, not only are cameras getting more powerful, they are getting more compact. The 5/8-inch Ultra Micro camera from Ratech Electronics provides high-resolution inspections with a camera that is smaller than the head of a dime.

"It's the smallest camera we've ever manufactured," says Frank D'Andrea, Ratech Electronics president. "Every year customers are asking for smaller cameras. This delivers on that."

Developed as a low-cost system, the Ultra Micro maintains the quality of Ratech Electronics' high-end units in a small, compact, and affordable package. The optimized color camera measures just 5/8-inch diameter by 1 inch in length. Due to its small size, the camera is capable of inspecting pipe diameters as small as 1 inch or 1 1/4-inch straight runs and will negotiate multiple bends in 2-inch pipes and services. Lighting is provided by four super-bright, high-intensity LED lights producing a detailed picture.

"It's a great fit for plumbers and drain cleaners who need to get a camera into tight fixtures," D'Andrea says.



"It's a fit for inspecting swimming pool lines too."

The camera is compatible with any of the company's control units, including the Elite USB with Wi-Fi that lets users record pipe inspections directly to a USB flash drive and wirelessly via an app to an iOS or Android device while taking live video and digital still photos, which can be immediately uploaded to YouTube. It's available with a sun-readable, 10-inch LCD monitor. Systems come in cable lengths of 100 feet. D'Andrea says the small size of the camera surprises plumbers and drain cleaners seeing it for the first time.

"They are impressed that something so small is so effective," he says. "It brings the wow factor."

The camera head includes an anti-scratch sapphire viewing lens and comes housed in a durable stainless steel housing with a centering skid. The push cable is a 0.33-inch diameter combination pushrod/video cable with a low-friction polypropylene overall jacket. The total weight of the system comes in at a light 25 pounds, even with a full 100 feet of cable. The frame has a durable powder-coat paint finish, and options include a 512 Hz transmitter, 512 Hz receiver with depth readout, and monitor carrying case. **800-461-9200; [www.ratech-electronics.com](http://www.ratech-electronics.com).**

### Milwaukee Tool M18 FUEL drills and drivers

Milwaukee Tool's M18 FUEL drill driver, hammer drill, and impact driver combine three innovations — the POWERSTATE brushless motor, REDLITHIUM battery pack, and REDLINK PLUS intelligence. To deliver these drilling and fastening solutions, Milwaukee Tool re-engineered the motor and electronics packages to deliver seamless communication



with the battery and the best performance catered to these tools and their applications. The motors pack more overall power in the smallest footprint to date. The REDLINK PLUS Intelligence reduced the size of the electronics to save space and increase thermal capacity and communication between the tool, motor and battery. Both drill and impact mechanisms have been optimized to deliver power in the smallest package possible. **800-729-3878; [www.milwaukeetool.com](http://www.milwaukeetool.com).**

## RIDGID Quick-Acting Pipe Welding Clamps

The Quick-Acting Pipe Welding Clamp from RIDGID is designed for quick setup and easy alignment of pipe from 2 to 12 inches. It comes in two sizes, 2- to 6-inch and 4 1/2- to 12-inch, giving contractors a range to choose the clamp best suited to their needs. Both sizes feature quick-release buttons and integrated handles for fast adjustment, alignment, and easy switching between pipe sizes. They also include spring-loaded winged setscrews for precision three-point alignment and an integrated size gauge for simple pipe measurement. ACME threaded screws transmit ample clamp force while the heavy-duty steel construction is built to withstand rugged job site applications. **800-769-7743; www.ridgid.com.**



## Franklin Electric SSI Series submersible pumps

The new SSI Series submersible pumps from Franklin Electric are a cost-effective, high-flow option that are available in 6-, 8- and 10-inch models with flows from 85 to 1,300 gpm at a maximum 1,250 feet of head. The stamped stainless steel pump family is fully serviceable and corrosion-resistant. Its I-Blade technology increases the structural integrity of the pump's internal components, pumping more water per horsepower and improving efficiency when compared to traditional impeller designs. Utilizing TIG progressive welding, the metal materials are mixed during the process, creating a stronger bond for durability in harsh environments. **260-824-2900; www.franklinwater.com.**



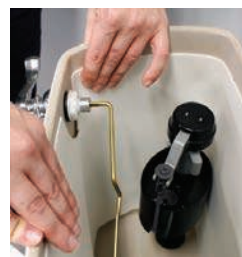
## Webstone, a brand of NIBCO, Thermostatic Mixing Valves



Webstone, a brand of NIBCO, expanded its Thermostatic Mixing Valve line to include a total of eight different end connections: MIP, SWT, press, compression, F1807 PEX, and now F1960 PEX, FIP, and push. The end connections come in three different temperature ranges. The line also includes the new High Temperature Hydronic model, with temperatures ranging from 104 to 176 degrees F. A full selection of G1 union accessories and isolation kits are available, and all products are certified lead-free. **800-255-9529; www.webstonevalves.com.**

## Keeney Mfg. anti-condensation toilet tank liner

The anti-condensation toilet tank liner kit from Keeney Mfg. prevents water from forming on the outside of a tank by creating a barrier between the warm outside air and cold water inside, keeping floors dry and preventing water damage. The liner features closed cell foam material and an easy-to-install adhesive backer. The liner measures 16 by 48 inches and can be cut down to any size with scissors. **800-243-0526; www.keeneymfg.com.**



## Armstrong Fluid Technology integrated tower control system



Armstrong Fluid Technology's ITC 9521 integrated tower control system is designed to transform an HVAC installation into an intelligent system for a variety of heat rejection applications. The system is fully complementary with other automation systems, provided they use an open front-end for configuration of the heat rejection system and setpoints to another higher-level plant automation. It ships preprogrammed and has a user-friendly screen interface that enables easy field configuration. The application can transform an HVAC installation into an intelligent system that provides notifications for remote troubleshooting, onboard diagnostics and support via internet. **800-356-9845; www.armstrongfluidtechnology.com.**



## RectorSeal Dura G-O-N models

RectorSeal has added 3- and 6-inch diameter Dura G-O-N models to its Glue-On-Nozzle product line of decorative downspouts for commercial building roof drains. Dura G-O-N is a high-impact polymer version of the original nickel-bronze G-O-N and offers the same easy, cost-saving installation features. Dura G-O-N and the original G-O-N are decorative downspout nozzles with a theft-resistant glue-on design that can be installed after the wall or building is completed. All of the models feature the integration of an aesthetic patina-like bronze color during the polymer injection molding process, which makes its simulated oil-rubbed finish indistinguishable from a metal downspout. The Dura G-O-N is for retrofits, less-visible back-of-building applications, or smaller projects with only a few roof drains. **713-263-8001; www.rectorseal.com.**

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**Product  
NEWS**



## Mansfield Plumbing Products Vanquish toilet

Mansfield Plumbing Products' new, high-efficiency version of Vanquish uses only 1.28 gpf and was designed specifically for families, with efficiency and cleanliness kept at the forefront. Side-mounted seat hinges provide a top surface that's easy to wipe and cleans up quickly. Using either 1.28 or 1.6 total gpf, Vanquish directs twice as much water to rinse the bowl to keep it clean and makes clogs less likely. The Quick-Wipe PuraClean Glazed Surface is an engineered glazed surface with a smooth finish that wipes down quickly and is resistant to bacteria. The high-gloss finish sheds stains and debris, keeping the bowl cleaner longer. 877-850-3060; [www.mansfieldplumbing.com](http://www.mansfieldplumbing.com).

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## Redesigned HammerHead Trenchless website launches

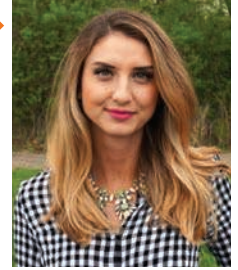
The newly redesigned [www.hammerheadtrenchless.com](http://www.hammerheadtrenchless.com) website provides customers in a wide range of industries faster, easier access to in-depth information and resources regarding trenchless methods and products. In addition to improved navigation and design, other new features include a dealer locator tool; enhanced product pages; links to purchase products on the e-commerce site; industry-specific content to help users find trenchless solutions to match their needs; and access to the HammerHead Trenchless resource library, with user manuals, product literature, and other documents.

## GPS Insight recognized for outstanding customer service

GPS Insight was acknowledged for its exceptional customer service from the 2018 American Business Awards. GPS Insight won the Bronze Stevie Award for Customer Service Department of the Year in the software category. This is the sixth award for customer service GPS Insight has won in recent years. The company was also the only telematics company that received an award for customer service this year.

## PRIER Products announces new marketing manager

PRIER Products announced the promotion of Katherine Cornick as its marketing manager. She has been with PRIER Products the last year as marketing coordinator, growing the brand, managing communications, and enhancing PRIER's social media presence. In her new position, she will lead PRIER Products' marketing efforts in advertising, social media, trade show, marketing collateral and more. She will oversee the creation of all of PRIER Products marketing material, including product communications, press releases, packaging, videos and signage.



## Brasscraft celebrates partnership with Empire State Associates

In 2018, Brasscraft celebrates a 40-year partnership with Empire State Associates. Empire State Associates is a manufacturer's agent covering the plumbing and HVAC industry across New York state in the wholesale distribution channel promoting the Brasscraft, PlumbShop and Cobra brands.



▲ Bill Frenzel (left) from Empire State with Brasscraft's Mark Duford.

## Keeney Mfg. launches catalog mobile app

Keeney Mfg. announced the launch of its new mobile catalog app. The free app puts an expanded catalog of Keeney Mfg., Plumb Pak, Stylewise, and Bélanger products in view while also offering product information as up to date as the internal systems.

## RIDGID names new director of product management

Steven Shepard was named director of product management for RIDGID in Elyria, Ohio. In this role, he will manage the development of new products from creation through launch; lead global, cross-functional new product development teams; and design and implement a growth strategy for RIDGID hand, tubing, and pipe fabrication tools. Shepard, formerly with Black & Decker, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Sam Houston State University. 



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**Indiana PHCC Convention,**  
French Lick Resort, French Lick, Indiana.  
Visit [www.iaphcc.com/convention](http://www.iaphcc.com/convention).

**Sept. 21**

**Northeast Wisconsin Plumbing Seminar,**  
Liberty Hall, Kimberly, Wisconsin.  
Visit [www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars](http://www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars).

**Sept. 28-Oct. 3**

**American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE)  
Convention & Expo 2018,**  
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta.  
Visit [www.aspe.org](http://www.aspe.org).

**Oct. 5**

**Western Wisconsin Plumbing Seminar,**  
Sleep Inn & Suites, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.  
Visit [www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars](http://www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars).

**Oct. 10-12**

**PHCC Connect 2018, Albuquerque Convention Center,**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico. Visit [www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org).

**Oct. 26**

**Northeast Wisconsin Plumbing Seminar,**  
Holiday Inn, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.  
Visit [www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars](http://www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars).

**Nov. 9**

**Central Wisconsin Plumbing Seminar,**  
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Rothschild,  
Wisconsin. Visit [www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars](http://www.phcc-wi.org/plumbing-seminars).

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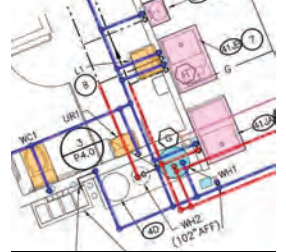
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One source, multiple solutions to clean and rehabilitate drain, waste and vent piping from 1½" – 4" pipe. This compliments our Quik Shot™ lateral lining system to address the lateral from the building to the sewer main.

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