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GETTING THE WORD OUT

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Plumber Profile

Getting the Word Out

Wisconsin plumber relies on word-of-mouth advertising and a solid network to drive his company's successes.

- By Giles Lambertson



On the Cover

Master plumber Chris Bontempo, owner of Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning, in West Allis, Wisconsin, uses a Clog Dog, a high-speed milling machine, and a Milwaukee Pipeline Inspection System to see what blockages remain in a sewer lateral in a home in St. Francis, Wisconsin.

(Photography by Michael McLoone)

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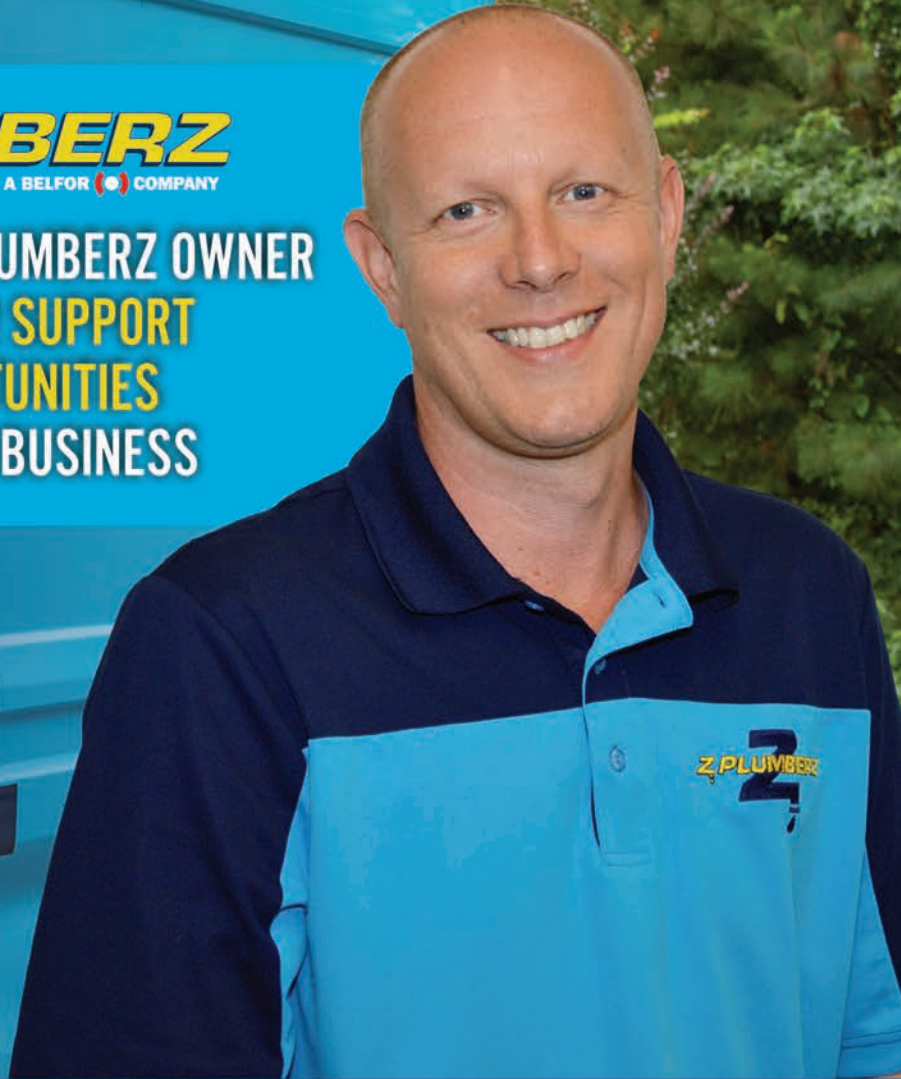
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Cory Dellenbach

Handling the Calls

Building a good reputation requires customer interaction from phone calls all the way through job completion

W

hat is your biggest pet peeve? Mine is when I don't get callbacks in a timely manner from a service company.

There is nothing more frustrating for a customer when you have to leave five, 10 or more messages — either voicemail or texting — until the service company you need help from finally gets back to you. That is not how plumbing companies build a good reputation.

Just answering calls and other messages isn't going to build your reputation alone, you'll have to do other things too — like being on time for service work, doing the work in a timely manner, and ensuring that the job is completed to the customer's satisfaction.

With all of the technology and business services available, there should be no reason this should be happening. A service company could have an answering service, or phones transferred to cellphones. You could have automated text responses for those who text you as long as you remember to reach back out to that customer in person.

STARTING WITH INITIAL CONTACT

The subject of our profile in this issue, Wisconsin-based Bontempo Plumbing, knows how to build a good reputation and owner Chris Bontempo takes pride in it. It's so good, in fact, that he doesn't need to advertise his services through TV, radio or other advertising methods.

When I reached out to him for the initial story request, Bontempo got back to me within an hour of reaching out.

If I were a potential customer of theirs, it probably would have led me to using them for plumbing services.

If you don't have someone at the office that can answer incoming calls, right now might be the best time to try adding that person. With the holidays upon us, you probably want to take time off of work and don't want to be there all the time to answer calls, so why not find someone that can work through the holidays as temporary help?

Let them answer the calls and texts and any social media contact that might come in and have them leave messages for you or your plumbers. It could be a great way to see if someone is a fit for the company, too.

CONTINUE BUILDING

Just answering calls and other messages isn't going to build your reputation alone — you'll have to do other things too, like being on time for service work, doing the work in a timely manner and ensuring that the job is completed to the customer's satisfaction.

Being responsive in a timely manner is just the first step — an important one — of building what your company could become. Don't let that step slow you and your growth down.

What are some ways your company has handled the incoming customer's calls, emails or text messages? Email me at editor@plumbermag.com.

Enjoy this issue! 📧

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TRENCHLESS TECH

What Method is Best for Pipe Rehab?

Looking to add a trenchless pipe rehab method to your service offerings, but can't decide between pipe bursting and CIPP lining? Both are useful tools. It depends on exactly what you are trying to accomplish. This online exclusive weighs the pros and cons of each method.

▶ plumbermag.com/featured

OVERHEARD ONLINE

"The biggest challenge is that few people know how to properly provide feedback, so they either don't say anything or do it poorly, which makes it even worse."

— *Creating a Culture of Accountability*

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Sharing the Best Content

We're always on the lookout for relevant and interesting plumbing content across the internet and social media. In our e-newsletters, we regularly highlight that and share what else out there we're reading and watching. For example, this video one plumber shared on YouTube about how he sets up his hand tool bag. Be sure to sign up for *Plumber* e-newsletters if you haven't already.

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ON THE JOB

Tackling Various Drain Clog Types

In this online exclusive, master plumber and regular contributor Anthony Pacilla runs through the different tools he prefers to use on drain cleaning jobs.

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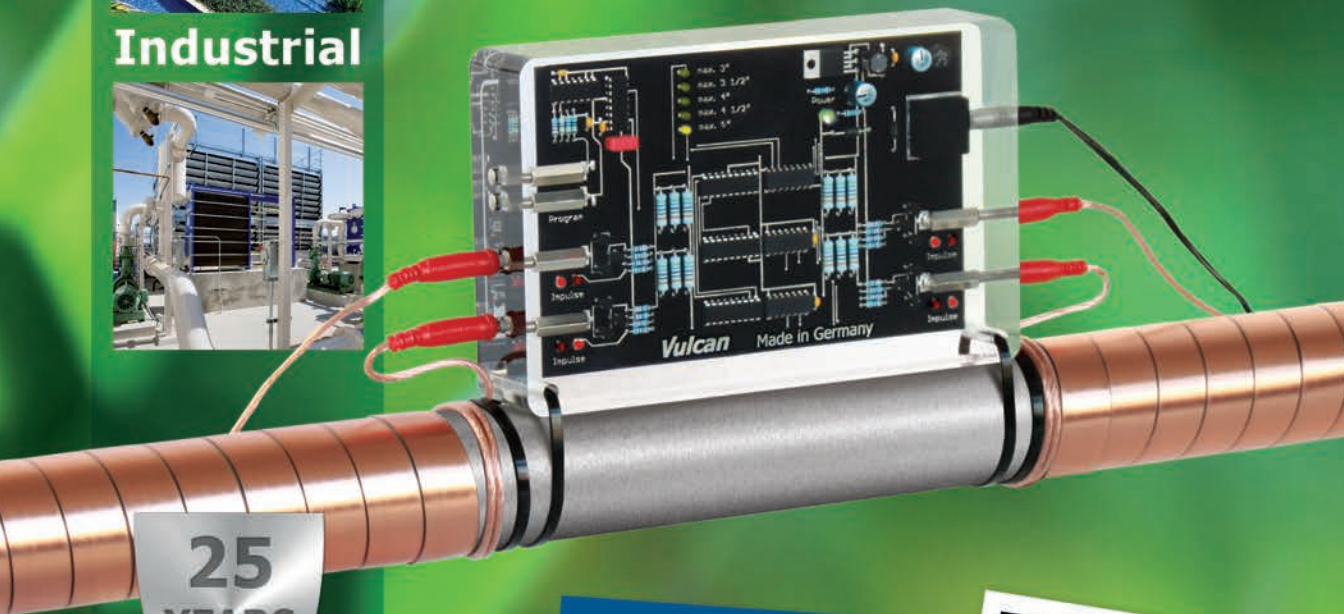


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GETTING THE WORD OUT

Wisconsin plumber relies on word-of-mouth advertising and a solid network to drive his company's successes

By Giles Lambertson

Photography by Michael McLoone



Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning, West Allis, Wis.

MAJORITY OWNER

Chris Bontempo

YEARS IN BUSINESS

12

EMPLOYEES

2

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SERVICE AREA

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WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/bontempoplumbing

▶ Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning owner Chris Bontempo stands near one of his service trucks at a job site near West Allis, Wisconsin.

Twelve years into running his own business, Chris Bontempo is so busy he doesn't bother to advertise. No website. No ads. A little social media. "We can barely keep up with work. We are currently running two weeks out for scheduled appointments. I'm a firm believer that word-of-mouth advertising is going to serve you best. It works."

It clearly is working for Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning. There may be several explanations for the success of the company, but it all begins with Bontempo being a hard-working entrepreneur. From the launch of his company in 2010, he was willing to burn candles at both ends to meet customers' needs and establish the business. He didn't burn out at that stage, fortunately, and now only has to work hard, instead of extra hard, to stay on course.

"I did everything in the beginning," Bontempo says. That is, he continued to work as a master plumber for another company while he built up a drain-cleaning business on the side. After his day job, he would clean drains at night. "It was just me. My day began at 4 a.m. and I tried to get home by 6 o'clock and be there when the kids went to bed. Then I'd do paperwork and clean the truck and get ready for the next day."

Last November, the enterprise found a business home on South 56th Street in West Allis, a community of about 60,000 people on the outskirts of Milwaukee. The company office fronts a 2,600-square-foot warehouse where equipment and work trucks spend their nights.

"Before we moved there, I worked from my home, my garage and a storage unit," says Bontempo. "It's great not having everything parked at home."

Now when he goes home in the evening, he can leave work behind.

▶ Zach Bojewski puts away the Clog Dog after using it at a home to clean remaining roots out of a sewer lateral. The Clog Dog product was purchased by RIDGID and is no longer manufactured in this form.

BUILDING A NETWORK

Bontempo was a plumber before he began working on drains and his mix of business reflects that priority today. He estimates that 55% of his workload is purely traditional plumbing calls, with the other 45% consisting of drain work. They are not mutually exclusive tasks, with some of his plumbing business coming to him from what originally were drain-cleaning calls.

Three quarters of his plumbing service calls are to residences, with one in five calls from restaurants and other commercial houses and the remaining 5% industrial. Whatever the type of call, however, Bontempo's service runs take him all around West Allis and into Milwaukee and nearby Waukesha — basically anywhere within a 45-mile radius of his office-warehouse.

So how do people with leaking pipes in Waukesha know about a plumber in West Allis who doesn't market his business? Word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied customers, says Bontempo, and customers who call him again when another leak occurs. He estimates that 85% of his business comes from return customers.

Still, hearing about Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning in the first place — how does that work?





◀ Second-year apprentice Zach Bajewski, with Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning, cleans the old wax ring off before a new wax ring and toilet are installed in a home in Cudahy, Wisconsin. Bontempo Plumbing was founded 12 years ago by Chris Bontempo. The company covers a 45-mile radius around its office in West Allis.

This plumbing trades network is one reason reliance on word-of-mouth is a winning formula for Bontempo.

In the network are specialists of one kind or another who are tapped as needed by the other plumbers. Bontempo, for example, also cleans drains and repairs lines using the PipePatch product (Source One Environmental), which he began offering in 2017, so drain cleaning and pipe-repair jobs are sent his way. On the other hand, if one of Bontempo's customers needs a line dug up, the work is subbed to the plumber in the network

who has a mini-excavator in his equipment yard.

Another source of work for Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning are several contractors who remodel homes and call on him to run the pipes and install the fixtures. Occasionally, he also plumbs newly constructed custom homes.

In short, the 46-year-old business owner stays busy. Part of his job security comes from the relatively old housing stock in Milwaukee County. He says the oldest house he worked on was built in 1870. Aging housing in the area

Part of the answer: friends in the industry. Some of Bontempo's references come from other plumbers. When the company founder went out on his own, he left word with plumbers he knew at a plumbing supply house to call if there was something he could do for them.

"That just gradually grew into a network of plumbers. We work together, do everything for each other, sharing customers. It works." Six other plumbers are in the network, four of them nonunion, two being union shops.

Just Another Day

A day in the life of a plumber is different from shop to shop depending on clientele. At Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning, the days are both busy and varied.

Because the Bontempo shop is located in Wisconsin — West Allis, to be exact — weather sometimes determines what the Bontempo crew will be doing on a winter day. Every freeze brings calls to the shop about frozen pipes, a situation exacerbated by older housing stock in the community.

Business owner Chris Bontempo says probably half of those calls end up being thaw-jobs using electric warmers or a propane torch and installation of some insulation. The other half have pipes too vulnerable to the elements for such fixes and new pipe is run in a less exposed area. One of the frozen pipe service calls takes far longer than the other and determines what other jobs might be accomplished that day.

At least once a week, the company's trailered jetter is hauled to a property for emergency cleaning of a pipe jammed tight or nearly so. "Sometimes we jet more than one pipe a day. We had a call for a jetting today, but we couldn't get to

it and they couldn't wait, so they called someone else," Bontempo said.

Sometimes relatively simple plumbing calls to fix a leak turn into major repairs and scramble the schedule. The aforementioned jetting job was turned down because of a call to descale a pipe. The pipe was located under a floor and Bontempo determined it had been leaking for some time.

"We dug it out and replaced the pipe, then we poured some concrete that we'd broken up," Bontempo says.

Leaving the job to let the concrete set, the crew went to another home and repaired a leaking toilet and, at a third location, a leaking outside faucet. The next day, the crew returned to the house with the rotted lumber and put the floor back together before heading over to a property where a shower line was clogged. Once cleared, however, the line was found to be leaking. The day finished with Bontempo fixing a leaking trap under a bathroom sink.

A day in the life.

was one reason he began working for himself as a drain cleaner.

“I saw the infrastructure was going to start failing and drain cleaning seemed like a logical starting point for me,” Bontempo says.

Not all of the housing is old, of course. The day of the interview, he was plumbing a remodeled basement in a home that was built two years ago.

CREATING THE TEAM

“I wouldn’t be able to do what we’re doing without the team I have,” the company owner says. Bontempo is the master plumber the company’s expertise is founded on. He has an apprentice plumber, Zach Bajewski, who has worked with him for two years.

In the office on South 56th Street is his office manager of three years, Melissa Wittliff, who does it all. “She handles all the paperwork — accounts receivable and payable, billing, payroll, scheduling of service calls,” Bontempo says. “She’s a huge portion of this team.”



▲ Chris Bontempo, right, and Zach Bajewski load up an old toilet from a residential property. Bontempo was hired to replace the old toilet with a new Kohler toilet.

In her spare time, Wittliff studied up for and recently was awarded a cross connection-backflow testing license. The certificate lets her inspect the valves that prevent contaminated water from backing up into a water system when



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“We are currently running two weeks out for scheduled appointments. I’m a firm believer that word-of-mouth advertising is going to serve you best. It works.”

Chris Bontempo

an office-showroom featuring a brand. He says he prefers Rheem water heaters, Moen faucets and showerheads and Kohler toilets.

His toolbox also has a mix of tool brands, mostly RIDGID and Milwaukee Tool. This includes RIDGID inspection cameras and a couple of SeeSnake units. A RIDGID SeekTech SR24 locating receiver is what the company uses to locate pipes. Bontempo occasionally does locating work for electricians because the unit’s mapping feature gives them printouts for long-term information on a piece of property.

The company owner pulls out Picote descaling equipment when a corroded pipe is the problem. For clearing drainlines and other clogged pipe, the company has a trailered Jetters Northwest Eagle 300 jetter with 4,000 psi and 18 gpm flush power. The jetter is cranked up and utilized at least once a week.

The trailer and tools are carted from place to place using one of two vehicles bearing the company’s orange-and-black logo. One is a Dodge Ram 2500 with a service body, the other a Ford Transit with extended wheel-base and roof.

▲ The company often uses a Jetter Northwest Eagle 300 sewer jetting machine, to clean the sewer lateral of homes. Here, Chris Bontempo also uses a RIDGID SeeSnake to look at the inside of the pipe as he cleaned it out.

water pressure drops. She does all the backflow testing for the company.

Then there is Allison, an unofficial team member. She’s one of three daughters in the Bontempo family. The 17-year-old likes to help Dad. She knows how to run the RIDGID locator and can operate the camera inspection system. “She sometimes works right beside me and says, ‘I got this, Dad,’” Bontempo says. Allison’s older sister is in college. Her younger sister is 11.

THE GO-TO EQUIPMENT

When it comes to appliances, Bontempo is not a one-brand man — and doesn’t have to be since he doesn’t have

TWO PUZZLES

Bontempo has run into a couple of attitudes in the course of operating his company. One of the attitudes benefits him, the other puzzles him.

First, the puzzler. A short while after he began plumbing on his own after years of working for someone else, the business owner encountered resistance when he approached commercial customers about signing up for a preventive maintenance program. The idea of such a contract is to pay a set fee for routine evaluation and cleaning of pipes and systems instead of having a bigger expenditure when a pipe becomes thoroughly clogged or a water system fails.

▶ Chris Bontempo installs a new comfort height Kohler toilet in a home.



“But most of the places around here don’t want to get into preventive maintenance contracts,” says Bontempo. “They would rather wait until something happens and then pay to fix it.” To date, 10 years after opening his business, Bontempo has exactly one maintenance contract customer.

The other attitude is not exhibited by customers, but by some of his fellow plumbers.

“Most plumbers around here don’t want to do any drain cleaning,” he says. That’s not unheard of, of course, though the jobs of plumbing pipes and cleaning pipes are not exactly foreign to one another. In fact, one sometimes leads to the other.

Still, Bontempo has had difficulty hiring plumbers to work for him because his workload includes cleaning and repairing drain and sewer pipe. “Not interested,” potential hires say. The upside to the situation, of course, is that the fewer plumbers in West Allis willing to work with drains, the more drain business that comes to Bontempo. Pretty good consolation prize.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Bontempo has the equipment he needs for the diverse services he offers, but he’s not done. He is toying with the idea of buying a pipelining system. Already looking for another plumber, he says he might have to find two if he starts lining.

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“I wouldn’t be able to do what we’re doing without the team I have.”

Chris Bontempo

If things continue to develop as he foresees, he one day will be able to leave the field to his plumbers, sit at a desk in the company office and plan customer shower stalls with multi-function fittings and lots of body space. Such design work is a favorite task.

Growth and expansion all depend on Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning staying busy through its word-of-mouth marketing, which is dependent on fostering and maintaining good relationships with customers. Bontempo describes it as a proven system of growing a business.



▲ The staff at Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning includes, from left, Chris Bontempo, owner and master plumber; Allison Bontempo, Chris’ daughter; Melissa Wittliff, office manager; and Zach Bajewski, second-year apprentice.


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“It goes back to the good old days of treating everyone with respect. When I get a new customer, I like to educate the person on what is going on in the home. The better educated customers are, the better decisions they can make. If you don’t treat customers with respect, they aren’t going to call you back.” 

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Lighten the Load

Drum machine's stair-climbing feature gives drain cleaners a lift

By Ken Wysocky

After wrestling 250-pound drain machines in and out of service vehicles and up and down customers' basement stairs, drain cleaner Billy Oudshoorn says his back and knees are shot — and he's only 30 years old.

"Those older big machines will throw you around a bit," he says.

But now he's getting a reprieve of sorts, courtesy of the new Milwaukee Tool MX Fuel drum machine with POWERREDZ stair-climbing, lift-assist technology.

"If I would've had a machine like this 20 years ago, I'd still have a healthy back and knees," says Oudshoorn, lead field supervisor at Drains R Us of southeastern Wisconsin. Oudshoorn's father, David, established the Racine-based company in 1995.

"It's a total game-changer for me," he adds. "It'll also change the game for younger guys coming into the industry because they won't have to worry about all that wear and tear on their bodies."

In addition, the machine has literally doubled productivity because Oudshoorn no longer needs two people on his drain cleaning jobs. That frees up an employee to do other revenue-generating activities and reduces labor costs, which helps make the company more competitive.

"It's nearly impossible for one guy to deal with a 250-pound drain machine," he says. "Now I'm in or out of the truck or up and down stairs with the push of a button."

"You double your productivity with a one-man truck. We're so busy these days that we sometimes have to turn away work. So being able to one-man a truck is huge."

NO MORE HEAVY LIFTING

The lift-assist function is easy to engage. Just flip a switch on the top of the machine from cleaning mode to climbing mode, then set another switch on either ascend or descend mode. The operator then uses a small trigger by the handle to engages the unit's two rubber treads, which feature cleats



▲ Drains R Us of Southeastern Wisconsin technician Kenny Szczesny guides the Milwaukee Tool MX Fuel drum machine with POWERREDZ stair-climbing, lift-assist technology into a customer's home. (Photo by Ken Wysocky)

"It's a total game-changer for me. It'll also change the game for younger guys coming into the industry because they won't have to worry about all that wear and tear on their bodies."

David Oudshoorn

that grip the lip of stair treads, as well as control how fast the treads rotate.

“You really only have to guide it, not pull it,” Oudshoorn explains. “And you have to find the right angle.”

The lift-assist feature works great on trucks, too. Drains R Us runs three service trucks — two Ford E-350s cargo vans and a GMC Savana 3500 cutaway van equipped with a CVS body made by Reading Truck Group. The beds on the E-350s are higher than on Savanna’s, but the lift-assist still works well, he says.

The machine features include a fully enclosed drum that can carry 100 feet of 5/8- or 3/4-inch-diameter cable; a 3Ah lithium-ion battery; fatigue-reducing automatic cable feed and retraction; 200 rpm cable spin-speed; a brushless motor; and a quick-release button that disengages the motor almost immediately.

The machine is designed to clean pipes from 3 to 8 inches in diameter. It weighs 125 pounds and measures roughly 32 inches long by 22 inches wide by 47 inches tall.

Oudshoorn says one of his favorite features is the almost instant cable-drive release function. “When you’re rodding a line and you hit something hard, or maybe the cable gets



Kenosha, WI

- COMPANY** Drains R Us of Southeastern Wisconsin (Kenosha, Wisconsin)
- OWNER** David Oudshoorn
- MACHINE** Milwaukee Tool MX Fuel drum machine with POWER TREDZ
- FUNCTION** Cleaning sewer lines
- FEATURES** Cleans pipes from 3 to 8 inches in diameter; fully enclosed drum; reel holds 100 feet of 5/8- or 3/4-inch-diameter cable; a lithium-ion battery; automatic cable feed and retraction; 200 rpm cable spin-speed; brushless motor; quick-release drive disengagement; weighs 125 pounds; measures roughly 32 inches long by 22 inches wide by 47 inches tall.
- COST** Approximately \$3,500
- WEBSITE** www.drainsruswi.com

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bound up while going from a 6-inch-diameter pipe to a 4-inch pipe, you want it to disengage right away or you're in trouble. And this one steps within seconds."

An outer casing that fully encloses the cable drum enhances customer service by eliminating potential drips and spray. "Cleanliness is huge with customers," he says. "No one wants sewer juice spit all over their basement walls and ceiling or dripping onto carpets or floors."

He also applauds the unit's direct-drive technology, which eliminates the need for belts that can either break or slip if they get wet.

PLENTY OF POWER

Battery power also offers another convenience. There's no potential for electrical cords falling in water or posing trip hazards, and Oudshoorn says he also no longer contends with hard-to-find electrical outlets or outlets that aren't compatible with three-prong grounded cords.

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The battery recharges in about 45 minutes and Oudshoorn says he can do six drain jobs on a fully charged battery. "I rarely do more than six jobs a day, so running out of juice isn't an issue."

If anyone thinks battery-powered drain machines aren't powerful enough, guess again, he says.

"I recently cleaned an 8-inch sewer line at a big-box, home-center retailer that was clogged with wipes and all kinds of other foreign objects. Commercial clogs usually are the worst kind, especially in a line that big — and this clog was huge.

"At first, I thought about going back to our shop to get our water jetter. But I decided to give the MX Fuel machine a shot. And I cleared that clog after about an hour of rodding.

"That's when I knew it was the real deal."

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

The technically advanced machine also provides a less tangible but equally important benefit: It impresses customers when they see it climb stairs and clear clogs, which boosts the company's image as a professional and progressive outfit, Oudshoorn says.

"I've actually had customers say, 'This thing is awesome — what a crazy piece of machinery,'" he says. "They're used to seeing those old bulky machines and then I bring in this one.

"In the end, we're salesmen, too, and this machine helps us sell jobs."

In short, Oudshoorn definitely would recommend the machine to other drain cleaners.

"In a heartbeat. With the way they designed this, Milwaukee Tool really hit a lot of things right on the head. I'd put it up against any drain machine out there." **PI**

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Heritage Home & Plumbing

Lompoc, California

After recently purchasing the family's plumbing business, Ricci Hancock changed the name from Ron's Plumbing Heating & Air Conditioning to Heritage Home & Plumbing. The new name, as Ricci says, better fits his goals for the company based in Lompoc, California, in Santa Barbara County. The original company started in 1975 before Ricci was even born. The company specializes in water conditioning, water heaters, some smaller remodels and all of a home's plumbing needs. Heritage Home & Plumbing service area is on the central coast of California. Their current service vehicle is a 2015 Ford Transit 350HD, with a Hackney aluminum box. "Being able to be so organized makes us that much more efficient and better to service our great customers," Hancock says. There is no missing their truck on the road as the box is wrapped by a local vinyl wrap shop called ProTint. Ricci is pictured on the back of the truck waving with a smile because as he says, "there's always a smile on my face because I love what I do!" For more information on Heritage Home & Plumbing, go to www.ronsplumbingservices.com. 



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Anthony Pacilla

Figuring Out the Smell

It will take some trial and error when determining where a foul smell may be coming from with a well system

By Anthony Pacilla

A large percentage of the homes in America get their water from an auxiliary source of water. The most common auxiliary water source is a private well. Private wells are great for the homeowner because the water is free. Wells are also unpredictable when it comes to the quality of the underground water you are drawing from since the water is not treated by a controlled treatment plant.

Since the quality of water varies from well to well, the home's plumbing system will react to what it is given. Sometimes this can result in a rotten egg smell coming from fixtures throughout the house. This is more common in well systems than with city water systems.

What the customer is smelling is hydrogen sulfide gas. Hydrogen sulfide gas is a naturally occurring gas produced by water's decaying chemical reaction with certain rocks and soil. This creates sulfur bacteria. This sulfur bacteria comes straight from the well and into the home's plumbing system.

Hydrogen sulfide odors require sulfur, hydrogen and bacteria. If you can remove at least one of those three elements from the equation the smell will dissipate.

NARROWING DOWN THE SOURCE

The bacteria coming in from the well may not be the dominant force causing a strong smell in the house. You will have to narrow the biggest source of smell by some simple diagnostics steps. Is it smelling from the cold-water system only? Is there an existing water filter or softener system? Is the smell coming from the hot water distribution system only? Does the smell go away after a few minutes, or does it stay permanently?

First run some cold water out of multiple faucets or spigots in the house. If you get a strong odor when only running cold water, you know the primary source of the smell is coming directly from the well.

Go to where the water enters the house and see if there is a water filtration system. If there is a filtration system of any type, notice whether the entire distribution system runs through this filter or is there a take-off before the filtration system? If there is a takeoff before the filtration system, what fixtures does that takeoff supply? Maybe you are only getting raw unfiltered well water to that specific fixture and it needs to be re-piped. Does the water filtration system need to be replaced? If the well water filtration system needs replacing, the best thing to do is send the water away to be tested. You can't effectively filter out contaminants if you don't know exactly what you're trying to filter out.

Since the quality of water varies from well to well, the home's plumbing system will react to what it is given.

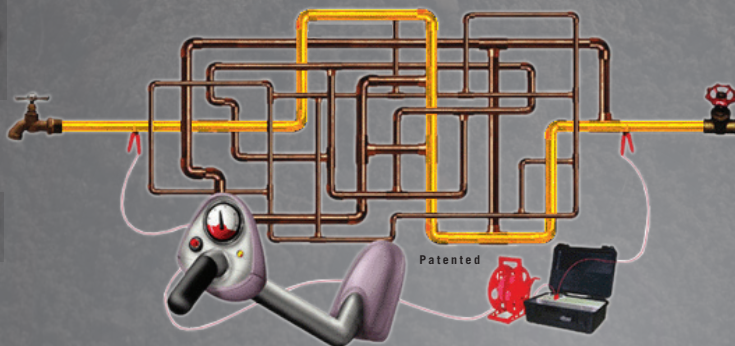
HOT WATER SIDE ONLY

If the rotten egg smell is only coming from the hot water distribution system, the issue is coming from the water heater.

A water heater has an anode rod that protects the tank from corrosion by sacrificing itself. This anode rod is typically made from magnesium. Decaying magnesium generates enough hydrogen to create an odor problem. To fix this problem you need to consult with the manufacturer's instructions on both anode rod replacement and chlorinating the water heater and the plumbing system. Each water heater manufacturer has their own step by step process on how to accomplish these two items

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and it's important to follow them to avoid voiding the warranty of the water heater.

Typically, the manufacturer wants you to do two things. First, they want you to replace the magnesium anode rod with a different type of metal anode. Second, they want you to chlorinate the water heater and the connected distribution system.

Replacing the anode rod is a very straightforward task, but one that requires some risk. Most anodes screw out from the top with a hex nut that is visible. The standard size of that hex nut is 1-1/16 inch. I suggest getting a deep well socket with a 1/2-inch drive breaker bar and applying constant steady pressure for removal. The risk of removing the anode is that it may start to come out and break off at the threads leaving you with a serious leak and a night's worth of fistfighting to salvage the threads. The homeowner should be made aware of this prior to the attempt (prior to beginning the work and in writing).

To chlorinate the system, the manufacturers often ask you to turn off the power or gas to the unit, drain a few gallons of hot water out of the unit, remove the magnesium anode rod, pour a gallon of bleach into the unit through the hot water outlet, replacing the anode rod with the new manufacturer recommended rod, reconnecting the hot water piping, running the hot water spigots until you get chlorine smell at each spigot, waiting

a period of time (usually an entire day), and lastly running a ton of water until all the chlorine is out of the system.

This process will kill the bacteria causing the smell but is not guaranteed to totally get rid of the smell. Sometimes the only cure is to start from the beginning and work your way to the end by having a well company shock the well itself, install/replace/chlorinate the existing water filtration system, chlorinate the water distribution piping and work on the water heater as stated above.

The most important thing to remember is that you are adding nonpotable chemicals into a potable water system that people are going to be drinking and showering after you leave. Make sure you follow every step of the manufacturer's processes. **PI**

Anthony Pacilla has been in the trades since he was 9 years old (family business). He started cleaning toilets, mopping floors and putting fittings away in the warehouse. As he picked up skills, he would add becoming a ground man and laborer. When he was ready, Pacilla became an apprentice and then a journeyman plumber. He graduated college with a business and economics degree and immediately wanted to come back to work in the family business. A few years ago, Pacilla became a licensed master plumber. To contact Pacilla, email editor@plumbermag.com.

Tips to Stop Being a Micromanager

Just like in any small business environment, some plumbers too closely oversee their crews and create an uncomfortable workplace

By *Kate Zabriskie*

He gives me a project and tells me to do it my way. I only wish he meant it. My way doesn't seem to hit the mark. He changes the smallest details. I dread each new job.

I've had this job for six years. At this point, I think I understand how it works. It's so frustrating to be treated like someone who just walked in the door.

Yesterday, I found her checking my work when she thought I was at lunch. It feels terrible not to be trusted. I need to look for a new job.

Regardless of their intentions, business owners who micromanage often create an environment of fear, mistrust and disengagement. The constant oversight, checking in and nitpicking wears down even the strongest employee.

Micromanagers exact control. In the short term, they have command of the future. Long term, however, many micromanagers find themselves stuck in roles, unable to take vacation without calling in, and essentially tied to their jobs.

Turnover goes up, engagement goes down and all the while, the managers who micromanage may not even know they're the source of the problem.

The good news is that with a little self-awareness and some hard work, micromanagers can learn to let go.

Step One: Recognize the behavior pattern

If your employees don't take initiative and always wait for you to delegate, you may have created a culture where they don't feel comfortable taking the next step without your say so.

If you find yourself redoing work, checking and rechecking assignments, or insisting you have to sign off on every project, chances are you have some micromanaging tendencies.

Step Two: Think about the consequences

Micromanagers exact control. In the short term, they have command of the future. Long term, however, many micromanagers find themselves stuck in roles, unable to take vacation without staying in contact, and are essentially tied to their jobs.

Recovering micromanagers have a better chance of self-rehabilitation when they know how they will benefit from changing their behavior. Ask yourself: Where do you want to be in a year? How about three? Do you have a replacement identified? Is that person ready to take over for you? If not, there is work to do if you plan to move on or at some point have a life outside the job.

Step Three: When delegating, ask yourself if "how" is important

Once the recovering micromanager recognizes the problem and knows why change is important, it's time to get practical and start focusing on what instead of how.

In other words, if how something is done doesn't matter, treat people like the adults they are, and let them complete work in a way that works for them.

For jobs or tasks that do require that a specific procedure be followed, explain why that is.

Step Four: Show people what A-grade work looks like

Recovering micromanagers will reduce their propensity to backslide if their employees deliver great work. What exactly does great work mean? Good question. If the micromanager has not explained what makes an A an A, how can that person possibly expect employees to produce a stellar work product with any regularity? Take the time to be complete, and you may be surprised at your team's ability to rise to the occasion.

Step Five: Work on accepting different approaches

Old habits die hard, and change takes time without some help. A little narration can go a long way toward steering the brain in the right direction. “James is not me, and I am not James. It’s okay that we don’t work the same way.” A mantra such as that can serve as a gentle reminder and help you recalibrate. Eventually, these new mental tapes will start to replace old thinking patterns. With hope, the updated mental map will positively influence the manager’s choices and behaviors.

Step Six: Perform the Goldilocks test

Recovering micromanagers aren’t mind readers, so it’s important that they get comfortable with feedback. A multiple-choice approach is often the best way to encourage candor. For instance, “I’d like to get some feedback from you about how you like to work. Am I too hands-on, too hands-off or just right? I’m asking because everyone operates differently, and it’s important to me that we work well together.”

A word of caution: Even with the Goldilocks approach, if you’ve micromanaged your team for a long time, it may take a while for them to give you frank feedback. Check in often and get specific. “Chuck, let’s talk about this last project. Do you feel we got the delegation balance right or do we need to make some adjustments?”

Step Seven: Don’t argue with the feedback

When someone gives you feedback you don’t like or don’t agree with, don’t argue. Your employee’s perception is the reality you must work with. So instead of fighting or withdrawing, ask questions. For example, “What I’m hearing is you would like me to focus more on the number of jobs you complete each day. Do I understand correctly? If I explained why in this case the process matters, do you think you might feel differently?”

Step Eight: Look for ways to let go and take on new tasks

Leaving the micromanaging lifestyle behind is a process and not an event. Self-development requires regular

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assessment and planning. In addition to asking for feedback, pay attention to where you spend your time that you shouldn't and where you could spend more time but don't. Are you working on strategic initiatives or navigating deep in the weeds? Are you developing people or hoarding work? Are you controlling or empowering? The questions are numerous and important to ask.

YOU CAN DO IT

To sum it up, any activity that requires change can be hard work and at times even a little scary. For micromangers, this can be especially true. Nevertheless, as most rehabilitated micromangers will profess, it's a lot more productive and rewarding to work in a place where people have the freedom to do their best work. If you're a micromanager or think you might be, now is the time to do something about it. **PI**

 Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works, a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at www.businesstrainingworks.com.

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“Honestly, their support is the most valuable resource for us... I’m not just saying that. NuFlow is always there to help us.”

Lindsey highly recommends adding pipe lining with NuFlow Technologies to your list of services.

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Lindsey and Christian Rushing,
Peerless Plumbing Company, Phoenix, AZ

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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

ADEY Innovation MagnaClean Pro 2XP

The **MagnaClean Professional 2XP** from **ADEY Innovation** comes with 1-inch copper and 1 1/4-inch NPT iron pipework, suitable for protecting 150,000 to 300,000 Btu boiler ranges from damaging black sludge, i.e. magnetite. The magnetic filter features a rare-earth magnetic core and two non-magnetic capture zones for capturing both magnetic and nonmagnetic debris. The filter has bidirectional 360-degree isolation valves, meaning either port can be used as the inlet/outlet, the valves can be rotated to adapt to pipework at any angle, and the filter can be serviced without the system being drained. Ideally, this magnetic filter should be installed on the return just before the boiler, to capture any particles before they hit the heat exchanger. **844-378-0442; www.adey.com/us**



Aquaguard WAGS Valve

WAGS Valves from **Aquaguard** can stop a leaking water heater tank from continuously refilling and dripping, or until the tank fails catastrophically. The shut-off valve halts the incoming water supply, and on gas-fired units, shuts off the gas supply to ensure the home's safety from water heater failure. They are mechanically operated; meaning no maintenance, no electricity or no battery checks are required. They sit in a drip pan under the water heater and are activated when leaking water accumulates to a predetermined level in the pan. Once activated, the industrial-duty, one-shot safety valve shuts off the water and gas supply if so equipped. A red tab pops out to indicate valve activation. **844-438-9247; www.wagsvalve.com**



AquaMotion AMH1K-60DRZT1 hot water recirculation kit

The **AquaMotion AMH1K-60DRZT1** is a hot water recirculation kit for tankless heaters with an ODR undersink bypass valve. The circulator for this tankless one-pipe system includes a flow control to bypass 1 gpm to



the cold inlet of the tankless water heater. When set for "On Timer" operation, the heater will fire when the temperature setting is reached. The stainless ODR Superflow bypass valve installs under the sink on the cold angle stop and provides sufficient flow to operate the tankless. This product provides instant hot water comfort and saves 12,000 to 15,000 gallons of potable water annually. The entire kit is UL and NSF listed. **401-785-3000; www.aquamotionhvac.com**

Aquor Water Systems VI+ Hydrant

The **VI+ Hydrant** from **Aquor Water Systems** is leak-proof, frost-free and lays flush against siding. Unlike compact threads, the hydrant's connection system is quick and easy — simply push and twist to engage the hose connector. To disconnect, untwist and the water stops instantly. According to the EPA, a faucet dripping once per second can waste over 3,000 gallons of water annually. Its hose bibb uses water pressure to keep its valve closed, rather than a screw-tightened assembly. As soon as the hydrant is disconnected, the outlet automatically seals, drains and winterizes. The faucet stops water deep inside the home's wall for maximum insulation. Stainless steel provides ideal thermal insulation, so the hydrant does not need to be covered, even when temperatures reach -30 degrees F. **800-458-1749; www.aquorwatersystems.com**



Asahi/America Asahitec PP-RCT

Asahi/America's Asahitec PP-RCT piping system provides greater pressure capabilities at higher temperatures than conventional PP materials. It offers superior corrosion, scaling and abrasion resistance, which eliminates the possibility of harmful particles entering in water systems or adversely affecting other system components, such as pumps, valves, faucets and radiators. Additionally, it has a higher Hazen-Williams



flow coefficient than steel pipe, which increases flow capacity. It is joined through socket and butt thermal fusion methods. Therefore, the welding process produces no noxious fumes, making it suitable to install and weld in enclosed spaces or buildings that wish to participate in LEED certification. It is 3.5 times lighter than steel pipe, making it more cost-effective and sustainable to transport and install. It is available in socket (1/2 to 5 inches) and butt fittings (6 to 24 inches). It is NSF 14-pw certified for potable water. 800-343-3618; www.asahi-america.com

Ashland Pump sump pumps

Ashland Pump offers sump pumps in different options including the PS series, B series, the SPV series and sump basin package systems. The pumps are built of corrosion-resistant anodized aluminum or rugged cast iron construction. All are equipped with permanent split capacitors, continuous duty-rated motors for higher efficiency.



They have an upper and lower ball bearing design for longer life and smoother operation. The vortex impellers are made of thermoplastic or cast iron to better handle up to 1/2-inch solids. They have professional, contractor grade vertical or wide-angle piggy-back float switches for quick and easy field servicing. The sump basin packages come complete with the sump basin, sump pump, check valve and discharge piping. They are suitable for new or replacement installations. 855-281-6830; www.ashlandpump.com

Bosch Thermotechnology Greentherm 9000



The Greentherm 9000 gas tankless water heater from Bosch Thermotechnology offers a UEF efficiency rating up to 0.96, and top water connections for easy tank replacement. The colorful, clear text display and app make it easier than ever to control the water heater.

800-283-3787; www.bosch-thermotechnology.us



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Bradford White Water Heaters AeroTherm Series

With 50-, 65- and 80-gallon capacity units available, the **Bradford White Water Heaters ENERGY STAR-certified AeroTherm Series** offers value, efficiency and versatility. The water heaters are easy to install and maintain and feature an integrated smart control panel plus four operating modes (heat pump, hybrid, electric and vacation). Units are fully compliant with California's Title 24 energy-efficiency standards and are eligible for many local and state utility rebates throughout North America. They include Vitraglas lining, an exclusively engineered enamel formula that provides superior tank protection from the corrosive effects of hot water. **800-523-2931; www.bradfordwhite.com**



CORRO-PROTEC Powered Anode Rod

CORRO-PROTEC Powered Anode Rods

made of titanium stop corrosion, rotten egg smell and limescale buildup inside hot water tanks. Designed to last over 20 years, they are a long-term solution that don't require any maintenance. The power supply, plugged on top of the titanium anode rod, provides small electrical current that completely stops corrosion. With that unlimited source of protection, it can double the life of the tank and prevent unwanted reactions like the sulfur smell in hot water, limescale buildup inside the water heater and air in water pipes. Since the anodes won't deteriorate over time, they are 12 inches long and easy to install in a wide range of water heaters starting from 10 gallons to 120 gallons, including a specific model for Bradford White tanks. They fit on electric, gas, solar, hybrid, indirect and geothermal water heaters. **877-466-6660; www.corroprotec.com**

Dallas Specialty Green Coupling

The **Green Coupling** from **Dallas Specialty** was designed to handle high temperatures and chemical drainage. It will withstand intermittent temperatures up to 266 degrees F, but maintain temperatures at 212 degrees F. It is resistant to chemicals such as chlorine, hydrochloric acids, nitric and sulfuric acids and many other harsh chemicals. It will fit a wide range of pipe such as stainless steel, CPVC, Duriron, glass, copper



and other drainage pipes. They have been installed in bottling plants, food processing plants, hospitals and school laboratories, refineries and areas where abnormal contaminated soil exists. **800-222-5644; www.dallasspecialty.com**

Facilities Resource Group TTS Synergy Series

The **TTS Synergy Series** line from **Facilities Resource Group** offers high-performance tankless rack systems in a wide range of configurations, with one point of connection for water, power, gas, venting and a condensate drain. Its compact footprint and pre-manifold system present a worry-free installation, resulting in increased efficiency, cost and time savings. **877-554-0004; www.webfrg.com**



Heat-Flo HO Series

The **HO Series** of indirect water heaters from **Heat-Flo** are designed to operate with low primary water temperatures. These tanks are equipped with an oversized coil, allowing for more heat transfer to the potable water. When paired with a high-efficiency boiler, the water temperature being delivered to the coil can be set to 150 degrees F or lower, thus allowing the boiler to condense during the domestic hot water cycle, while keeping performance in the high efficiency range. They are equally effective when paired with an air-to-water heat pump, as the oversized coil is a match for the lower temperature outputs of this equipment. This series is available with an optional electric backup, offering peace of mind regardless of the type of installation. **508-278-2400; www.heat-flo.com**



Jomar Valve RecircSetter

Jomar Valve's RecircSetter is a field-adjustable thermostatic balancing valve for hot water recirculation system applications. Made of corrosion-resistant lead-free alloy, it utilizes a thermostatic balancing cartridge that eliminates the need for pressure ports and allows the valve to balance on temperature rather than pressure or flow. It is certified to NSF 61 and NSF 371 for use in potable hot water systems. It comes standard with a thermostatic balancing cartridge and drywell thermometer with a desired balancing temperature range from 95 to 140 degrees F, and can be equipped with an optional



thermostatic disinfection cartridge for thermal disinfection treatment at a fixed temperature of 160 degrees F. It is available in six different models with various configurations. Options include disinfection cartridges, axial valves, actuators for a BMS, check valves and dual isolation with integral check valves. 586-268-1220; www.jomarvalve.com

Oatey LO-VOC X-15 PVC Solvent

Low VOC refers to volatile organic compounds that are not harmful to the environment and humans. **Oatey LO-VOC X-15 PVC Solvent** provides a permanent, watertight seal that is ideal for use in custom-built showers, adhering pan liner seams and dam corners over the shower curb. Formulated with a mixture of solvents and resins that allow maximum adhesion and extended working time, this fast-acting adhesive creates a strong lasting bond. The in-lid applicator eliminates the mess. 800-321-9532; www.oatey.com



PRIER Products P-156 Exposed Pipe Angle Sill Faucet

The **P-156 Exposed Pipe Angle Sill Faucet** from **PRIER Products** has an inlet option on both the top and bottom of the faucet, easily connecting pipe that is exposed from the wall. It is simple to install and easy to maintain with an integral stop that allows for shut-off without turning off the water supply. A brass plug is included for easy close-off and a drain down system. It comes with ASSE 1011 and ASSE 1052 certification options, as well as a loose key or handle operation. Made with high-quality, durable brass, it is finished with a satin nickel plating that maintains a smooth and sturdy finish over time. It is suitable for parking garages, warehouses, fire stations, airplane hangars, greenhouses, basements, boat docks and anywhere else there is an exposed pipe. 800-362-9500; www.prier.com



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Rheem IKONIC

Rheem's IKONIC series of super-high efficiency condensing gas tankless water heaters offer homeowners smart control. They deliver a 0.96 UEF, resulting in up to a 36% reduction in energy use and carbon footprint and up to 65% reduction in NOx emissions. Also featuring a built-in recirculation pump (in SR models), they offer homeowners no-wait access to continuous hot water, preventing up to 12,000 gallons of water from being wasted down the drain each year. With integrated Wi-Fi technology, the water heater provides users with control of the unit from anywhere. This includes temperature adjustments, energy usage tracking and modifying recirculation modes, all using the EcoNet Mobile app. **800-621-5622; www.rheem.com**



boot that provides a dual-seal design for an extra layer of protection to keep connections clean and dry. Sealing plugs are available for unused manifold port(s). **888-342-5753; www.sjrhombus.com**

Uponor ProPEX Ball Valves

Manufactured from premium, lead-free, dezincification-resistant brass, full-port ProPEX Ball Valves from Uponor have positive tube stops that ensure installers insert the valve into the pipe far enough without overextension. The valves all offer a blowout-proof stem design to ensure a lifetime of trusted reliability. In addition, the ASTM F1960 connection method offers a solid, strong seal without the need for glues, torches or fire watch, providing greater safety and cost savings on job sites. The residential valves are available in sizes from 1/2 to 1 inch and feature a chrome-plated ball along with a stop and drain (waste) option. The commercial valves are available in sizes from 1/2 to 2 inches and feature a stainless steel ball and stem along with stem extension kits to accommodate insulation thicknesses up to 2 inches. **800-321-4739; www.uponor-usa.com**




Saniflo Sanicompact

The ADA-compliant Sanicompact toilet from Saniflo installs quickly and easily anywhere in the home, with no venting required. In addition to handling toilet waste, it can also pump water away from a nearby sink. This fixture saves space through a sleek design that measures

14.5 inches wide and 21.5 inches deep and combines a macerating pump and a tankless toilet bowl into a single fixture. Operating with only 1 to 1.28 gpf, the self-contained toilet uses approximately 38% less water than a standard 1.6 gpf toilet. **800-363-5874; www.saniflo.com**



Viega ProPress Automatic Recirculation Balancing Valve

Viega's ProPress Automatic Recirculation Balancing Valve ensures balanced domestic water recirculation by changing with varying conditions. It keeps water temperatures more uniform by adjusting flow with changes in temperature. The results are faster hot water delivery, minimized waste energy and water and less stagnation and chance of contamination. Temperature can be set once and be maintained automatically. Settings can be changed easily, if needed. It can be installed on risers or branches. Remote monitoring is possible with a temperature sensor. An optional thermometer provides visual indication of valve setting. Threaded ends allow use with ProPress or PureFlow fittings systems. It includes a bypass for thermal disinfection. **800-976-9819; www.viega.us** 

SJE Rhombus EZconnex 4-port Float Switch Connection System

The EZconnex 4-port Float Switch Connection System from SJE Rhombus is a manifold/float connection system designed for easy installation of float switches. The system includes an electrical wiring manifold with mounting bracket and hardware. The manifold features four quick-release float switch connection ports. Red-blue-yellow-white wire pairs match a color code system on the manifold housing for easy identification and field wiring. The system is rated for short term water submersion. The mounting bracket is designed to allow quick access to the manifold and float switches for easy maintenance. The system can be used with one to four float switches. Each float switch includes a protective rubber



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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

Tankless water heaters lead to gas savings at large hotel



Problem: The Hilton San Francisco Airport Bayfront is a bustling hotel four miles from the SFO airport. Offering views of the San Francisco Bay and skyline, it has 15 floors, 402 rooms, on-site dining and 11,000 square feet of event space. The hotel desperately needed redundancy in its water heating system. It was running with a single 10 million Btu/h, 80% efficiency steam boiler. Replacing the system would require installing two steam boilers to provide sufficient redundancy. This option would be inefficient, very costly and completely unnecessary. At the time of the project the hotel had a 98% occupancy rate.

Solution: The hotel turned to **Intellihot** via representatives of California Hydronics Corporation. Eight **iQ1001** high-output, tankless, on-demand water heaters were installed for the guest rooms totaling 8 million Btu/h at 94% efficiency with a turndown ratio of 264-1. Four **iQ 751s** were used for the restaurants, public spaces and meeting facilities. The systems are designed to always function at peak efficiency; from as low as 30,000 up to the maximum Btu/h output.

Result: “We are very happy with our Intellihot hot water system,” says John Kellites, Hilton general manager. “Over the past six months the hotel has had 65% gas savings, plus uninterrupted hot water.” **877-835-1705; www.intellihot.com**

New toilets help apartment complex save thousands on water bill



Problem: Aqua Savers, a company that specializes in retrofitting water-efficient products in water savings for multifamily properties, completed a water efficiency program at the Jane Apartments, located in Greenbelt, Maryland in August 2021. The 52-unit, three story property was built in 1937 and serves the local community with affordable housing. They found that the facility’s outdated toilets were one of the biggest water-wasting culprits.

Solution: Aqua Savers replaced the old, high flow toilets with **Niagara’s The Original** model that flushes at 0.8 gpf. Because The Original uses a vacuum-assist technology, it can flush up to 800 g of miso in as little as 0.8 gpf. This model has Niagara’s Stealth Technology, and can come in both round and elongated options.


Result: Thanks to Aqua Savers’ services and Niagara’s low-flow but high-performing toilets, the property was able to realize a 52% reduction in consumption and a 55% decrease in water/sewer costs, saving them nearly \$20,000 annually. **833-812-0908; www.pro.niagaracorp.com**

Contractor chooses linear shower drains for luxury-hotel bathroom renovation



Problem: The Ritz-Carlton St. Louis renovated its Club Level accommodations in a two-phased approach to the tub-to-shower conversion project. As more tubs were removed, the team realized that the process required core-drilling additional drain holes. The team wanted to avoid this, since it would only increase labor and extend the project time span, so they decided the best route would be to customize the drain system to adapt to existing plumbing rough-ins.

Solution: Once the project managers learned that the drain body could be customized to fit existing drain holes, they felt **QuickDrain USA's ShowerLine PVC System** was the best solution. The drain system features a fully sloped trough in which water exits through either a vertical or a side waste outlet, making it easy to accommodate existing plumbing. PET rigid-foam shower floor panels, fabricated from 100%-recycled plastic, were also used in the renovation. "All we had to do was prefab the drains and wait for the tile guys to lay the PET panels," says project manager Ralph Hoxworth. "Then we placed all of the drains in the holes lined up for the tile guys to match."

Result: Standalone showers are especially well-suited to a clean, contemporary look, particularly when equipped with a sleek linear drain. The new bathrooms met this expectation and have been running smoothly since the project's completion. In addition to time-savings, "the ease of installation and allowing for the entire crew to work cohesively were huge benefits from this system," says Hoxworth. 866-998-6685; www.quickdrainusa.com 



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Product Spotlight

Popular hard water treatment system undergoes upgrades

By Craig Mandli

Not only does hard water cause homeowner complaints, it can prematurely shorten the life span of water heaters and household piping. That's why treating hard water is important.

Aqua-Rex has been on the forefront of hard water treatment for years, and recently announced an upgrade for their commercial electronic water conditioners. The two largest standard models, WK4 for treating pipes up to 4 inches and the WK5 for treating pipes up to 6 inches now feature a fault recording system that can be accessed through the LCD display. It provides a complete operating history including times that the unit has been disconnected and brought back online.

This data logging feature is especially valuable in large facilities with interdepartmental and contract workers who might inadvertently disconnect the system and leave it offline, according to Jonny Seccombe, president of Aqua-Rex. The upgrade is further enhanced by a digital monitoring feature that informs the user if any aerials have been disconnected or grounded to the pipe they are treating. In addition to recording a fault, the controller will also alert the user in real time on their building management system by a failsafe connection. The other significant upgrade is



the use of a USB connection for the power supply. In place of the previous 120V power input, necessitating expensive UL certification, the low-voltage power supply can be connected to any USB outlet or transformer, eliminating the need for UL certification, as well as reducing energy consumption.

“Aqua-Rex is proud of its record as a leader in developing alternatives to traditional softeners which are wasteful of water and bad for the environment,” says Seccombe. “These new upgrades

place us in the forefront of technology. We call it tomorrow's water softener you can buy today.”

In essence, Aqua-Rex uses radio waves to change the behavior of hard water scale so that it forms in suspension in the water instead of encrusting surfaces. It also descales plumbing and heating systems when retrofitted to existing buildings and generates softer water for washing and laundry. According to Seccombe, it delivers similar benefits as a conventional water softener at lower cost and requires no ongoing servicing or maintenance. There is no environmental damage caused by chlorides being dumped into the wastewater stream nor is water wasted during regeneration. 702-304-2170; www.aqua-rex.com

Superior 5-E Electric Smoke Blower Finds Faults, Odors, Leaks and Inflow

When testing laterals, building plumbing or pumping or inspecting septic tanks, smoke testing is a quick and effective way to find plumbing faults that lead to odors, leaks and inflow. Superior Signal Company's Superior 5-E Electric Smoke Blower easily connects to any clean-out, port or vent to smoke test the entire system in just a few minutes. The Superior 5-E Electric smoker gently pushes smoke through-



out a system to find cracks or leaks and quickly identify problems. Made in the U.S., the durable Superior 5-E Electric smoker is competitively priced and comes complete with 8 feet of industrial-grade hose. Used with Superior Smoke Candles, this cost-effective solution is ideal for hard-to-find odors, leaks and other faults in commercial, residential and municipal facilities.

732-251-0800; www.superiorsignal.com



RIDGID RP 115 mini press tool

RIDGID, part of Emerson's professional tools portfolio,

introduces the RP 115 mini press tool. Designed for residential and lightweight commercial plumbing use, it completes the majority of press connections installed in the market with ease, while getting professionals to their next job faster. The RP 115 can press 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch copper and stainless steel fittings. It is 14.6 inches long, 2 1/2 inches wide and weighs only 5 1/2 pounds with battery and jaws. The RP 115 has a SlimGrip handle and optimized trigger for balance and control; one-handed jaw opening and operation for reach and ease of use; and 210-degree head swivel for access to tight spaces. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com**

DENIOS SpillGuard leak recognition system

The SpillGuard Leak Recognition System from DENIOS instantly alerts users when a leak is detected. The FM-approved technology is placed within the sump of a spill containment device, or near the equipment to be monitored, and alerts users with an audible and visual alarm for a minimum of 24 hours when contact is made with a liquid. It is easy to use: Just switch it on and place it into position. Designed for use with all essential and common liquid hazardous substances, the explosion-proof SpillGuard features intelligent, robust sensor technology in a highly resistant, electrically conductive housing. The battery lasts up to five years and provides an audible signal to alert users of the need to replace it. Ideally used with temperatures from 32 to 104 degrees F, and has a red LED light to indicate that the unit is operating safely. **877-388-0187; www.denios-us.com**



Cash Acme EB25 Plus pressure regulating valve

Reliance Worldwide Corp. launched the Cash Acme EB25 Plus pressure regulating valve that replaces both parallel or series system installations and automatic control valves with a single valve, providing fast setup and maintenance. With its 10:1 pressure reduction, the co-axial double spring design eliminates the need for a parallel or series system installation, regulating low flow to maximum flow with a single valve. Pressure can be adjusted in the field in less than five minutes by pulling the cap off and adjusting the nut to achieve the desired pressure. Replacing the need for an ACV, the EB25 Plus can be installed at any orientation — vertical, horizontal,

upwards or inverted. The single-valve design reduces the cost of materials, as well as setup and maintenance time. The single-cartridge design can be serviced with the valve body in place. **877-700-4242; www.cashacme.com**

Assured Automation BFY sanitary butterfly valves

Assured Automation's BFY Series is a sanitary butterfly valve constructed of 316 stainless steel, available with tri-clamp or butt weld end connections. A manual version comes equipped with a 304 stainless steel manual handle with a 13 position locking device. An automated version is available with pneumatic or electric actuators. Accessories available include limit switches, solenoids and positioners. The series is available in 1/2- to 12-inch line sizes. Maximum temperature is 200 degrees F and maximum pressure is 110 psig. **800-899-0553; www.assuredautomation.com**




Franklin Electric SubDrive QuickPAKs

Franklin Electric's new SubDrive QuickPAK solutions are for water system installers looking to deliver reliable constant water pressure while maximizing efficiency. The QuickPAKs are powered by a 4-inch MagForce high efficiency motor for unparalleled performance in jobs up to 5 hp. They feature a Franklin Electric motor, pump and drive all in one package for operational compatibility and optimized operation. They are ideal for residential water systems, irrigation, constant pressure boosting or geothermal systems. The total assembly is compact and light. A 5 hp is 7 inches shorter and 18 pounds lighter than a standard induction motor. That aids groundwater professionals with ease of transport and installation. The predetermined motor, pump and drive combination choices match a variety of flow and total dynamic head requirements, ranging from 7 to 90 gpm. **866-271-2859; www.franklinengineered.com**



FieldBin field service management solution

FieldBin, a field service management software provider, rolled out its application designed to help HVAC, plumbing, electrical, landscaping, and other trade companies manage their business in one easy-to-use platform. FieldBin features include work order scheduling, invoicing, inventory management, estimating and quotes, payments processing, service portal and customer management with a simple-to-use interface, intuitive navigation, and easy drag-and-drop functionality. It is accessible from anywhere on any device. In addition to HVAC, plumbing, electrical and landscaping, FieldBin is ideal for painting, cleaning, roofing, fencing and handyman service businesses. **541-754-3010; www.fieldbin.com** 

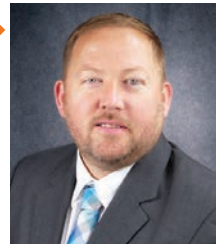
BrassCraft appoints Mike Roberts VP of Sales and Marketing

BrassCraft Mfg. announced the retirement of George Werner, vice president of sales, after 27 years of dedicated service. Assuming the responsibilities of Werner, Mike Roberts now leads a unified global sales, marketing and product development team as vice president of sales and marketing. As a 12-year Masco veteran, Roberts joined BrassCraft as vice president of marketing and product development in 2018, after managing the fixtures business at Delta Faucet for nine years. Roberts brings over two decades' experience in the home improvement industry, both in the U.S. and Europe.



Thompson Joins SJE as regional sales manager


Chad Thompson joined SJE as its newest regional sales manager. He will be responsible for the Southeast region, including North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, Florida and Alabama, after Tim Callander's retirement at the end of the year. Thompson has over 15 years' experience in the water industry, seven of which have been in sales.



Herkowski Stickler selected to represent Bradford White Water Heaters

Herkowski Stickler & Associates, a Milwaukee-based family-owned business that serves as a plumbing industry manufacturer's representative in northern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin, announced it has been selected by Bradford White Water Heaters to represent the company's residential and commercial products in the greater Chicago, northern Illinois and northwest Indiana markets. HSA has served the plumbing industry since 1931.

GEARWRENCH Bolt Biter screw extractors receive PTIA Award

The GEARWRENCH Bolt Biter screw extractors were recently named a Pro Tool Innovation Award winner. This is the latest piece of hardware awarded to the Bolt Biter family of extraction products, which continues to turn its innovative design into new and useful products for the most demanding tool users. The annual Pro Tool Innovation Awards began in 2013 and are judged by a panel of professional tradesmen and trade media representatives in plumbing, electrical, MRO, landscaping, general contracting, mechanics and building. This year, over 465 products were submitted in dozens of categories for a chance to be recognized. 

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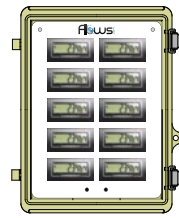


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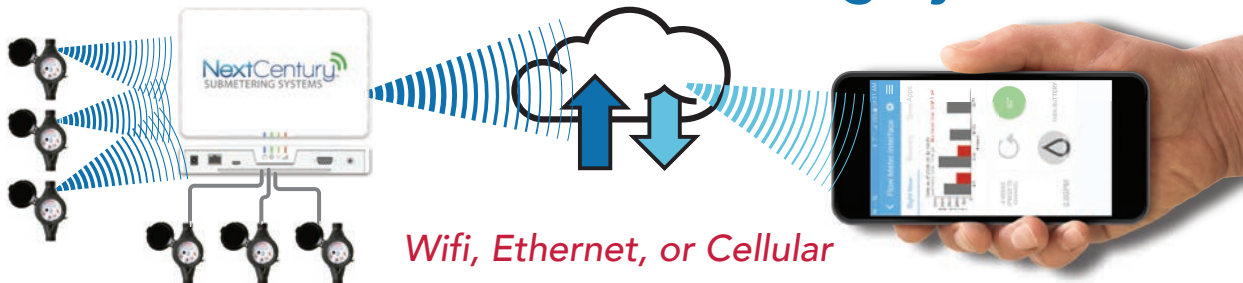


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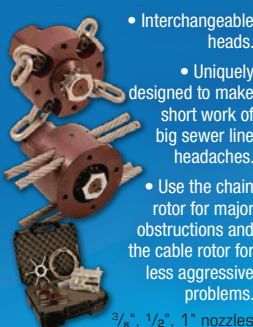
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Dec. 7-8
Charlotte Build Expo, Charlotte Convention Center,
Hall B, Charlotte, North Carolina. Visit www.buildexpousa.com

Jan. 17-19
Safety Directors' Conference,
The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego.
Visit www.mcaa.org/events/

Jan. 31-Feb. 2
**National Association of Home Builders
International Builders' Show**,
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.
Visit www.buildersshow.com

Jan. 31-Feb. 2
Kitchen & Bath Industry Show,
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.
Visit www.kbis.com

Jan. 31-Feb 2
National Hardware Show,
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.
Visit www.nationalhardwareshow.com

Feb. 1-2
Austin Build Expo,
Palmer Events Center, Austin.
Visit www.buildexpousa.com

Feb. 6-8
AHR Expo, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta.
Visit www.ahrexpo.com

Feb. 20-23
**Water & Wastewater Equipment
Treatment & Transport Show**,
Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis.
Visit www.wwetshow.com

March 17
Illinois PHCC Expo North, Drury Lane Conference Center,
Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. Visit www.ilphcc.com

March 26-30
**Mechanical Contractors Association of America
Annual Convention**, JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge,
Phoenix. Visit [www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/mcaa-2023-
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