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# Plumber™

## Building a **LEGACY**

Training academy and appetite to provide services for all help Louisville company expand far beyond what owner imagined  
Page 12



▲ Shop Talk  
TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS  
DRIVE GROWTH AND  
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
Page 20

▲ Smart Business  
IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO  
START PLANNING FOR YOUR  
COMPANY'S FUTURE  
Page 26

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**Plumber Profile**

**Building a Legacy**

Training academy and appetite to provide services for all help Louisville company expand far beyond what the owner imagined.

- By Giles Lambertson



**On the Cover**

Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric service supervisor Justin Price looks over an HVAC unit at the company's training office in Louisville, Kentucky. Tom Drexler Plumbing prides itself on its Drexler Academy, a training facility for those starting in the plumbing and HVAC industry. Tom Drexler Plumbing opened in 1982 and now has over 300 employees and services a six-county area surrounding Louisville. **(Photography by AJ Mast)**

**Coming Next Month - Drain Cleaning**

- ▲ Plumber Profile: John Snyder Plumbing & Heating (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
- ▲ Industry Insider: Randy Lorge

**8 From the Editor: A Different Kind of Maintenance**

Updates to devices and software will make sure your company and your team can continue to function without pause.

- By Cory Dellenbach

**10 @plumbermag.com**

Check out our exclusive online content.

**20 ShopTalk: Sound Investments**

Contractor has long operated according to a key business lesson learned from his father — reinvest profits into new equipment.

- By Ken Wysocky

**26 Smart Business: Planning for the Future**

It's never too early to look ahead and think about how the family business should work into a living trust or will.

- By Joan Koehne

**30 Industry Insider: Carving Out a New Service**

Unlocking the value of aging in place solutions for residential service contractors.

- By Dave Bailey

**32 Rolling Billboard: Castlewood Plumbing**

Wildwood, Missouri

**34 Product Focus: Service Vans, Fleet Management, Franchises and Software**

- By Craig Mandli

**38 Case Studies: Service Vans, Fleet Management, Franchises and Software**

- By Craig Mandli

**40 Product News: Product Spotlight: Point-of-use water heater designed to attack Legionella**

- By Craig Mandli

**42 Industry News**

**46 Calendar**

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# ADVERTISER INDEX

## ALLAN J. COLEMAN SINCE 1905

Allan J. Coleman Co. .... 11  
American Jetter ..... 44



AQUAGUARD LLC ..... 33



Cam Spray ..... 29



Central Oklahoma Winnelson ..... 37  
Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Co. .... 24 & 25



Delta Capital Group ..... 17



Duracable Manufacturing Co. .... 5  
Essency Water Heaters ..... 43  
FastEST, Inc. .... 37  
Flows.com ..... 23



General Pipe Cleaners,  
div. of General Wire Spring ..... 48  
Hermann Sewerin GmbH ..... 45



HotJet USA ..... 3, 44  
Intellihot Inc. .... 39



IPP Solutions, LLC ..... 43



MaxLiner ..... 19



Nexstar Network, Inc. .... 22, 45



NuFlow Technologies ..... 9



Picote Solutions ..... 21



Premium Service Brands - RooterMan ..... 15



Pulsar 2000, Inc. .... 27



Rheem Mfg. Co. .... 7



Root Rat ..... 44



RootX ..... 22



Service Nation ..... 31



Spartan Tool LLC ..... 2  
Sq Nuts - New Tools ..... 41



SuppliesDepot.com ..... 47



Supply Smart ..... 29

Thunderbolt Locks ..... 33

Western Drain Supply ..... 41



Z PLUMBERZ ..... cover

Classifieds ..... 44

# Plumber

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Cory Dellenbach

## A Different Kind of Maintenance

Updates to devices and software will make sure your company and your team can continue to function without pause

A

s I'm sitting down to write this month's column, my smartphone is sitting next to me updating the 30-some apps I have on it.

It's a painfully long task to wait for, but it's a necessity. It's a "tool" that I use daily and I would be lost without it. Updating the apps and software on the phone make it so I can continue using it without issues.

Thinking of the plumbing industry, there are probably many items that need regular updates. Just a few of those things could be your office computers, tablets and phones (especially those the techs are using in the field), and software on the trucks and vans.

It's the 21st century, it seems as though everything needs to be updated. Here are three reasons why you need to make sure it is getting done.

### 1. USABILITY

The number one reason you need to make sure your software and equipment is getting updated regularly is to ensure you can continue to use it.

Without doing regular updates, it could cause those devices — or the apps on them — to stop working. The last thing you'd want is a technician to be out in the field and not be able to access the billing software, or something else important.

This also pertains to any software on the company's vehicles — like GPS. It's something that is typically overlooked, but it helps your team accurately find the location of a job.

### 2. SECURITY

Many of the updates hitting apps and devices are to boost security on them. There are new viruses and malware coming out daily and the software developers are constantly creating safety features to block them.

Without updating, you could be opening yourself up to someone gaining access to your sensitive information and

your customer's information.

Installing updates may add new features and remove old ones that are no longer necessary. Technology is constantly changing, and updates offer the latest features and improvements.

Can you imagine having to call a customer and tell them their credit card information was stolen from your computer system because you didn't regularly update your computer or tablet. It would not be a good feeling at all and that customer could use confidence in working with you anymore.


### 3. NEW FEATURES DEVELOPED

Installing updates may add new features and remove old ones that are no longer necessary. Technology is constantly changing, and updates offer the latest features and improvements.

For example, a billing app you've been using for years has been great, but it's been lacking the option to share easily with the customer through email. A future update could include that option, or others to make your job easier. That, in turn, could be a great feature your company offers a customer and they like it and spread the word to others how tech savvy your team is. That's a big benefit to your company.

### SET UP A SCHEDULE

Most software and apps will alert you when there is an update, but if they don't or you have notifications turned off, you can check any app or device and look for updates once a month through the settings. If you don't know how to do that, check with who you bought the device or software from, or just ask someone who knows about technology.

Enjoy this issue and remember, you don't need a fancy app to check out our website, [www.plumbermag.com](http://www.plumbermag.com)! 

# “THE PROFITABILITY OF PIPE LINING HAS BEEN A HUGE PART OF OUR SUCCESS.”

## Profile NuFlow Certified Contractor

When Greg Copas and Spencer Drake opened Big Cat Plumbing, they wanted to run things differently than their previous employer. One of those differences was adding pipe lining to their list of services, so they called NuFlow.

**“The biggest reason why we went with Nuflow is because of the support that we got from the very beginning.”**

Now entering their third year in business, the duo couldn't be happier with their choice.

**“The profitability of pipe lining has been a huge part of our success. It's allowed us to invest in more equipment and hire more people.”**

While adding pipe lining was a great tool to add to their portfolio, they agree that choosing the right partner was also an important factor.

**“Absolutely do it, but make sure you do it with a company like NuFlow because of the support they offer. We wouldn't have landed some of the bigger jobs and wouldn't be as successful getting the projects done if it wasn't for their support. The most valuable thing about NuFlow is contacting someone directly and getting a response right away.”**



Greg Copas and Spencer Drake,,  
Big Cat Plumbing, Southern Colorado

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## NEW TOOLS

### Contractors Learn Potential Value of A.I.

How many of you have heard of ChatGPT? That was a question framed earlier this year to the attendees of the PHCC Educational Foundation's popular Super Foremen Workshop. "Foremen in our industry are comfortable with the tools that they keep in the job site box," said Kirk Alter, professor emeritus at Purdue University, who led the workshop. "But as the first line of company management, please realize that your best tools now are going to be technology and software. Artificial intelligence, A.I., is one of those software tools that foremen should be using. You just haven't seen why yet."

▶ [plumbermag.com/featured](http://plumbermag.com/featured)



## STREAMLINING

### Plumber Modernizes Operations With Field Service Management System

Keith McDonald Plumbing, profiled in the June issue, used to log and schedule jobs on spreadsheets, then post them so that technicians could see their itinerary for the day. But it could be a clunky process for keeping finances and cash flow in order, especially when technicians forgot to submit invoices. Today the company uses a field service management system called Housecall Pro. "It's the biggest lifesaver ever," says owner Lindsay Goodson. "And I can actually do what I need to do instead of chasing paperwork." Read more about how it benefits Keith McDonald Plumbing in this online exclusive.

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## OVERHEARD ONLINE

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◀ Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric founder Tom Drexler, left, poses for a portrait with company President Terry Henson II at the company's office in Louisville, Kentucky.

# Building a LEGACY

Training academy and appetite to provide services for all help Louisville company expand far beyond what owner imagined

By Giles Lambertson | Photography by AJ Mast



## *Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric, Louisville, Kentucky*

<b>FOUNDED</b>	1982
<b>OWNER</b>	Tom Drexler
<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Terry Henson II
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	310 (86 in plumbing and drain-cleaning)
<b>SERVICES</b>	Residential plumbing services, drain-cleaning, sewer line repair, residential bathroom remodeling, furnace and AC repair and replacement, and residential electric services
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	Six-county area surrounding Louisville, with branches in Elizabethtown and Frankfort
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.tomdrexlerplumbing.com">www.tomdrexlerplumbing.com</a>



I

n the beginning, Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric was just Tom Drexler Plumbing. More to the point, it was just Tom Drexler.

Yet when 23-year-old Drexler decided in 1982 that his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, needed another plumbing shop, he was building on a legacy for he was a fourth-generation master plumber. Even so, he was the first Drexler to hang his name on a company. Today, his eponymous company sits astride the industry in Louisville and all of Kentucky, with customers only needing to remember his name to have his number — Dial 1-Tom-Drexler.

With company growth nowhere near topping out, the Tom Drexler Plumbing legacy continues to build. The one-man, one-truck plumbing shop in the Highlands neighborhood of Louisville has grown into a multistate, multitrades service company with 225 service trucks rolling out each day from three locations.

When the company founder opened a branch location in Elizabethtown last fall — and Frankfort a few months later — he talked about “the company’s innovative vision for tomorrow’s value-added service. Navigating the complexity of home service installation, repair and replacement can be challenging and stressful to homeowners and we aim to be a helpful resource...”

A more succinct way to put it is, we are your one-stop shop. A plumbing outlet, yes, but it is, after all, Tom Drexler plumbing and heating and cooling and electric. And that list of services doesn’t even mention something the firm has offered for 30 years — bathroom remodeling.

Company President Terry Henson II says Tom Drexler Plumbing’s vision for what services to offer its customers developed naturally, what he calls “a natural progression.”

## THE ADDITION OF SERVICES

After starting his company, Tom Drexler for years operated just as a plumbing services provider before getting into drain and sewer cleaning. Adding those services was a no-brainer inasmuch as service calls then and now about clogged home sinks or toilets often turn into unclogging of drainlines or sewer lines outside the home.

Drexler took it one step further, though, when he began to remodel bathrooms. “People would tell our service techs when they were working on a leaking faucet, ‘Gee, I wish I could change the color of a sink or upgrade a shower.’ And so we got into that. We used to do tile work, but we use the acrylic wall systems now.” In 2023, the company has seven two-person remodeling crews upgrading bathrooms.

▶ Team members, from left, Lauren Nielsen, Justin Price and Justin Jaco talk about a toilet valve assembly in the training room. Half of the company’s licensed plumbers have come from their own Drexler Academy.



## Plumber Profile



- ▶ Tom Drexler, addresses a training class at the company's Drexler Academy classroom. The company's basic plumbing training program can be completed in six months. Master plumber certification requires two more years.
- ▶ Tony Homrich, plumbing service install manager, looks at the control panel of a boiler system in the company's training facility.

The next swerve into adjacent trades came about a decade ago when the company owner became involved in the best-practices business training and coaching association called Nexstar Network. "When Tom joined that, he was told that he really ought to offer HVAC services," Henson says, "A year later, he did."

Eventually, the erstwhile plumbing shop began to offer electrical service work. Explains Henson: "After we added HVAC, sometimes we had to add an electrical circuit or something for a heating or cooling unit and it progressed from there."

Today, about 40% of Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric is plumbing and drains. HVAC work constitutes another 40%, with electricity service and bathroom remodeling each pulling in about 10% of revenue. Of 310 employees at Drexler, 45 are field service plumbers, 20 are installation plumbers, 12 are drain techs and 18 work on sewers.

And who is calling for all these services? "Ninety-nine percent are residential customers," Henson says. "We do



a little light commercial, but even that is, say, an attorney's office adding a shower or something. On the other hand, we do a lot of commercial HVAC work. We really go after that."

Every plumbing shop has its go-to brands for tools, appliances and fixtures. Drexler plumbers use RIDGID cable machines and cameras and RYOBI (The Home Depot) and Milwaukee power tools. Kohler and American Standard fixtures and Delta faucets are stocked. Bradford White and Navien water heaters are preferred.

Though most service calls are related to leaking pipes and faucets, water heater installations generate more service call revenue, according to Henson. "We love those water heaters."

Continued ▶



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## A Company on the Move

Companies get bigger for a reason, or for several reasons. Growth doesn't just happen. If it is organic — as opposed to resulting from an acquisition or merger — the fundamentals must support it. Only increasing sales warrant expansion of a company's workforce or its footprint.

Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric is a growing company. The leadership team of the Louisville, Kentucky, company has aggressively positioned it to take advantage of sales and customer satisfaction and push ahead toward new sales horizons.

"We are growing as fast as we can grow and having a good time while we're doing it," says Terry Hanson II, company president. "We want to be the biggest and best trade services provider in the Midwest. We already are that in Kentucky, the biggest player in the state."

Henson says the distinction of being the largest plumbing house in Kentucky was achieved about a decade ago. The company now has set its sights on Ohio, the president says. "We're about to go to the Cincinnati market. We hope to be operating there by Aug. 1. We have a building acquired and have started recruiting." In the same breath, Henson mentions the possibility of opening stores in Indianapolis and Nashville, Tennessee.

Clearly, this is a company on the move. The impetus for the movement is the success Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric has experienced in Louisville and environs. An indicator of that success is customer satisfaction, which can be measured partly in the number of Google five-star reviews given the company — more than 11,000 to date.

"We have more five-star reviews than all the other companies in Louisville combined," Henson says, with understandable pride.



▲ From left, team members Davey Harrison, Lauren Nielsen and Cody Webster look over some furnace training material in the training room. When the company was first founded it only did plumbing, but has since expanded to drain cleaning, heating and air and electrical services.

## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Henson joined the company four years ago and today, as president, is mostly responsible for day-to-day operations. His background is in another home service trade, pest control — which, he says with a laugh, the company is not going to get into. Confined now mostly to the office overseeing company growth and other administrative aspects, Henson says he can't often visit customers' homes and he misses it.

"I don't get out into the field as much as I used to. I love it out there," he says. However, Henson does try to meet every morning with service crews who are headed for the field. "Every day of the week, one of the groups of tradesmen has a morning meeting at 7 a.m. We do a lot of training there, celebrate good news, become more familiar with new equipment and review customer feedback. I try to get in there each morning because that's where you can get the pulse of the business."

While the morning training sessions are important, it is the company's apprenticeship programs that are notable. Tom Drexler heard of a Columbus, Ohio, in-house apprenticeship school operated by another multitrade service company, ECO Plumbers-Electrician-HVAC Technicians. He drove there, talked with company executives and returned to Louisville ready to open his own center.

"We didn't copy that program, but Tom's visit catapulted us into the thinking behind it," Henson says of the beginnings of what became Drexler Academy. The academy was a local response to the industry's ongoing struggle to attract and retain capable young technicians. The company's experience is typical for the industry.

"Our typical hiring routine at the time, about four years ago, was that we would look for a laborer, a warehouseman or someone, and hire him," the president says. "He would work for six months, become an apprentice and then try to get a license. We were struggling to get applicants. We were overbooked for service calls and needed bodies."

The company used a workforce program developed by Nexstar — called NexTech. It offers teaching modules and videos for classroom learning. For example, to teach how to install water heaters, the academy

instructor would use the training module in the classroom. Academy students then would practice the procedure in-house before, finally, going out on a service call for an actual water heater installation — with a licensed plumber standing by.

On the second floor of the company facility in Louisville, a classroom was created and a Drexler service manager and master plumber, P.J. Hardin, became the academy's training manager. He built out a program that could be completed in six months. Master plumber certification requires two more years.

Henson says the company didn't know what to expect when it publicly announced the creation of Drexler Academy. It advertised the program as a no-tuition, earn-while-you-learn trade school and hoped for the best. The best happened. "When we opened enrollment, the very first day we had 82 applicants!"

Out of that first group, Tom Drexler Plumbing came away with 20 plumbers. Once a year — this is the fourth year of operation — the academy



▲ Company founder Tom Drexler, left, goes over a set of plans with company President Terry Henson II to start the work day.

“Half of our licensed plumbers have come from Drexler Academy. We wouldn't even be close to where we are today in our staffing without the academy.”

*Terry Henson II*



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▲ The management team at Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric pose for a portrait at the company's office in Louisville, Kentucky. From left, Kaita Renwick, director of business development; Mike Wells, regional HVAC director; Heath Murray, Elizabethtown branch manager; Cody Webster, HVAC service assistant manager; Marvis Hall, director of customer service; Josh Toon, sales manager; Mike Fox, electric service manager; Tonya Bryant, warehouse supervisor; Justin Price, drains and camera manager; Lauren Nielsen, plumbing service manager; Tony Hommrich, plumbing service install manager; Rebecca Birchfield, install coordinator supervisor; Todd Ruxer, regional director of operations; Mike Birchfield, production manager; Scott Montgomery, electric service manager; Jason Frost, remodel install manager; Darren Batman, regional plumbing director; Mike Hall, HVAC service assistant manager; Chris Hardin, HVAC install manager.

enrolls more plumbing applicants. Eight more graduated in the most recent class. “Half of our licensed plumbers have come from Drexler Academy. We wouldn’t even be close to where we are today in our staffing without the academy.”

The company has managed to retain most of its plumbing graduates, though some have moved from residential plumbing to one of the other options. Six months after the inaugural class, an HVAC curriculum was offered. From all of the academy classes, about 80% of graduates are on the Drexler payroll.

The company’s surrounding service area includes several counties across the Ohio River in Indiana. The cross-border character of the service calls could have been a complication for the academy because of differing state regulations on certification of plumbers. However, Indiana and Kentucky reciprocate on honoring trade certificates, so academy graduates can work anywhere in the service area.

### A CHANGED COMPANY

Tom Drexler Plumbing, Air & Electric headquarters is just a mile or two down the street in Louisville from

where Tom Drexler first set up his shop. But it is a whole different company now than it was in 1982 — a fuller-service company, turning out its own trade techs, operating in three locations and two states.

Pretty much all that the startup company has in common with the present one is ... Tom Drexler. **P**

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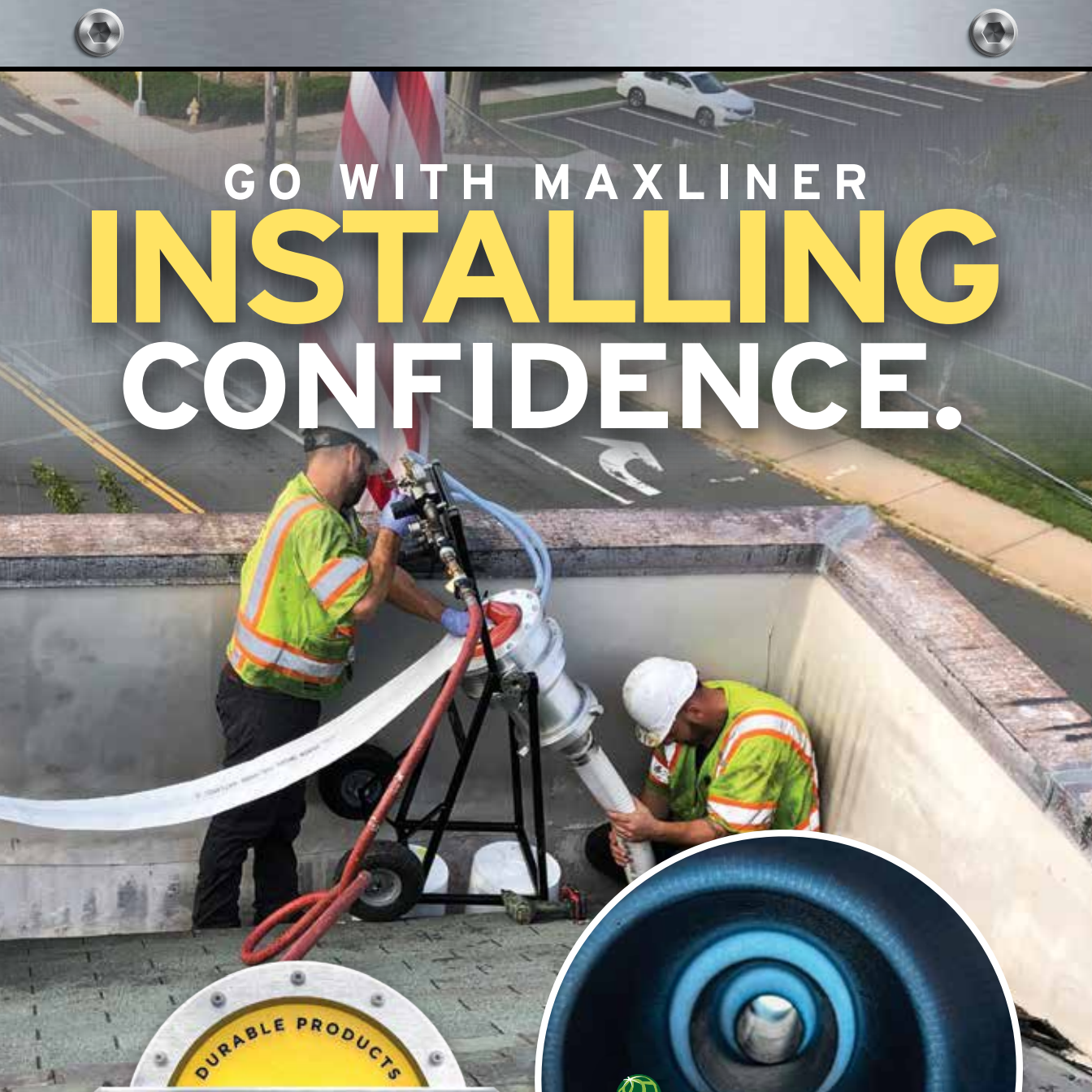
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## Sound Investments

Contractor has long operated according to a key business lesson learned from his father – reinvest profits into new equipment

By Ken Wysocky

**R**ick Hedge learned a lot during the decades he's worked with his father, Dick Hedge, who started the company that the younger Hedge now owns, The Plumber's Plumber in Fort Myers, Florida.

One of the most valuable lessons was to keep reinvesting company profits into machines and technology that not only improve productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction, but that can open up new markets for growth, too.

A good example of the company's technology-centric mindset is the recent investment in a ROVVER X crawler pipeline inspection camera from EnviroSight.

### PAYING FOR ITSELF

The camera cost \$70,000 — a considerable investment. But Hedge believes it will more than pay for itself by serving as a steppingstone into a new market for the company: trenchless repair of larger-diameter pipes than the company typically fixes.

"Our specialty is rehabbing small-diameter, 2- and 4-inch cast iron residential lines," Hedge says. "But this



▲ Rick Hedge, pictured here with the ROVVER X crawler inspection system, was inspired by his father to pursue a career in drain cleaning, and now owns The Plumber's Plumber in North Fort Myers, Florida. (Photography by Steven Martine)

◀ Hedge believes his investment in the ROVVER X crawler inspection system from EnviroSight will more than pay for itself by opening a new market for the company: trenchless repair of large-diameter pipes.

camera will help us establish a new division that will handle 6- to 8-inch-diameter pipes.

“My plan is to make \$1,500 a month with it and pay the camera off in five years. But if we can find someone to run the camera full time, it’ll pay for itself in a year; we’ll get there fast. The potential is unlimited.”

## OTHER INVESTMENTS

The company’s roster of equipment reflects the Hedges’ philosophy of continually reinvesting in revenue-enhancing equipment. For drain cleaning, the company relies on PipeHunter Lil Boss and Big Boss trailer-mounted water jetters (24 gpm at 4,000 psi and 35 gpm at 3,000 psi, respectively); a RIDGID drain machine; an Electric Eel cable machine; a RotoMidi milling machine from Boldan Pipe Technologies; Mini and Maxi Millers from Picote Solutions; and a milling machine built by Renssi Finland Oy.

The company also relies on a variety of inspection cameras, including push cameras from Forbest Products Co., Rothenberger Werkzeuge GmbH, and RIDGID and CamTronics (a brand owned by EPL Solutions). It also

“We mix and match the best technologies from all over the world. I got beat up real bad when we first start lining pipes, but I kept getting back up, and found the best products in the world and put them all together to create our own systems.”

*Rick Hedge*

owns a Superior smoke detection machine from Superior Signal Co.

The company also owns a MidiCoater pipe coating system from Sprayoxy Oy in Sweden. In addition, it has invested in pipe lining equipment made by Renssi and Sacpro and uses T-liners from Repiper AB in Sweden and felt Brawoliner liners from Brawo Systems GmbH.

“We mix and match the best technologies from all over the world,” Hedge explains. “I got beat up real bad



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when we first start lining pipes, but I kept getting back up, and found the best products in the world and put them all together to create our own systems.

"I'm a reflection of what I learned at places like Picote, Sacpro, Boldan and Renssi. They taught me what I preach every day. They're all awesome, top-notch, amazing companies."

Hedge also points to a Brute 4009 propane gas-powered portable water jetter (9 gpm at 4,000 psi), from Jetters Northwest, as another good investment. The machine expanded the company's drain cleaning capabilities and market because it can be operated inside buildings, an attractive option for customers that would rather not have a dirty jetter hose meandering through their businesses.

"I paid about \$12,000 for that machine around two years ago, then landed a contract to flush the deli drains at three stores in a grocery chain at \$5,000 a store," Hedge says. "So it paid for itself right away. They think it's awesome that we can bring in the Brute, put it right over a drain and go after it without a greasy, 300-foot-long hose snaking through the produce aisle and past the registers." 



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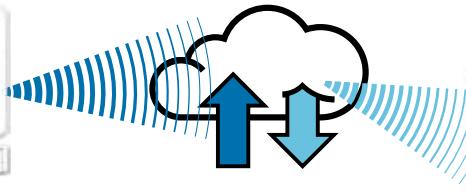
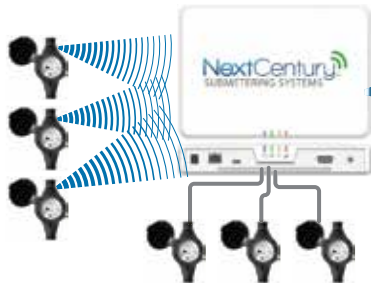


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Joan Koehne

## Planning for the Future

It's never too early to look ahead and think about how the family business should work into a living trust or will

By *Joan Koehne*

**E**ven on Day 1 of a new business, it's important to start planning for the future.

"You need some sort of backup plan for 'just in case,' because 'just in case' doesn't wait for a convenient day to happen," says Devin Shanley, attorney for Peterson, Berk & Cross in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Shanley encourages business owners to create clear-cut plans describing what happens if they die or become incapacitated. These estate and succession plans should be in place years before the owner exits the business. By adequately planning before their death, owners ensure that their family business will be preserved in the manner they want. Additionally, careful planning protects them and their company from unexpected, potentially large tax liabilities. Lastly, advanced planning ensures that a company can continue operations, even after an unexpected death.

Successful entrepreneurs need to remember that, like their homes and retirement accounts, their business is an asset.

"They might think of it as a job or an extension of themselves," Shanley says. "They should consider how they want to pass along this asset — or break it apart after their death."

### REVOCABLE LIVING TRUSTS AND WILLS

A good place to start is understanding your organization's size and structure.

"Be aware of what sort of business you have," Shanley says.

How big is the company? How much is the owner involved? What is the ownership structure? Is the owner a sole proprietor, partner, member of an LLC, or stock owner in a corporation?

Once owners understand the key elements of their

business, they can take the next steps. One of these steps is to ensure that someone can act on their behalf and continue business operations if they die or become incapacitated unexpectedly. Most likely, business owners grant this authority as part of a revocable living trust, an estate planning tool that determines how assets are handled after death. Compared to a will, a trust has several advantages. Trusts provide more depth than wills and are more fluid as circumstances change. Additionally, trusts are more private.

"Wills are public documents. If you want to announce to everyone in the world how your business is being broken down, then write a will," Shanley says.

Many trusts are effective immediately when signed and

*"You need some sort of backup plan for 'just in case,' because 'just in case' doesn't wait for a convenient day to happen."*

*Devin Shanley*



funded. These are often referred to as living trusts because they are in effect while the person who created the trust is alive, and the same trust continues to be effective after that person dies.

"A will, on the other hand, is a document of the dead," Shanley says. "It is a document that only has power and relevance when the drafter of the document has died and a court of law verifies that it is, in fact, the last will and testament of the drafter."

This doesn't mean that all trusts will be in effect immediately or that trusts that would wait until death would go into effect quicker than a will. Both wills and trusts wait until death to become active, and therefore someone will need to prove that the death has occurred.

“Generally speaking, using some form of trust mechanism is going to allow for more responsive authority transfer if you have a business that relies on a sole owner,” Shanley says.

Additionally, there may be benefits to workflow in having the business in a trust versus a will. A trust can often transition administration to a trustee quickly after the death of the previous trustee, usually the business owner. A will, on the other hand, will need to be verified by a court, which may take longer to complete.

Shanley offers two items to consider for business owners with a will.

“Make sure your personal representative knows where your will is in order to move as quickly as possible, and be mindful of who the personal representative is because that individual will have the authority to run your business,” he says.

With a trust, business owners can select individuals as standby trustees, granting them the authority to finalize the company’s sale or transfer. Using a trust to manage property helps to ensure that the business hand-off goes smoothly.

“If the buyer is someone in the family, that’s wonderful. If it’s a key employee, then you have to start thinking about how to keep that key employee, especially in today’s labor market,” Shanley says.

If the business will be sold to an employee, Shanley suggests drafting legal documents to lock in the employee and start transferring the business to him or her.

## FAMILY TIES

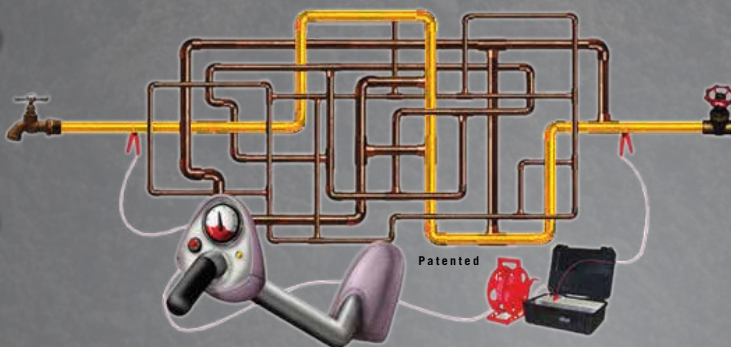
Oftentimes, business owners work their whole lives to build their companies, and they want the organization to stay in the family. If this is the case, they should craft a succession plan for a smooth transition to the next owner in the family.

But what about heirs outside of the family business? Sibling squabbles over the family inheritance happen everywhere. These squabbles can multiply when a family business is part of the estate.

Business owners can preserve sibling harmony — or at the very least, minimize bad feelings — with fully developed estate and business succession plans. These plans outline two important outcomes. The first is how to pass business

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assets and leadership to the next family member in line, in order to maintain continuous operations. The second is how to fairly distribute assets among the heirs who won't be part of the business moving forward.

The fair distribution of assets among the heirs can be accomplished in a number of different ways. One relative might buy out another, or relatives not associated with the family business can be named beneficiaries of a life insurance policy.

"It depends on the goals of the business owner — what's important to them," Shanley says.

Owners might want as little family friction as possible, so their estate and succession plans need to be crafted for a harmonious outcome. Perhaps no one in the family wants to take over the business. Then the best strategy might be selling the whole business and dividing the proceeds equally among the heirs.

"That can be a very viable succession plan," Shanley says.

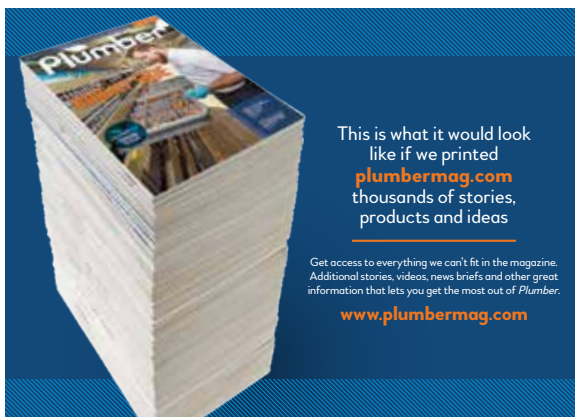
## EXPERT ADVICE

However, a small mom and pop business, where the owner does most of the work, probably isn't salable because the key employee is the owner. Still, the business owner's estate plan will reflect his or her wishes regarding the sale or distribution of equipment, facilities and other assets.

"Because you have so many options and so many goals, every estate and succession plan is its unique thing," Shanley says.

He recommends talking with an attorney, instead of relying on legal advice from the internet, to develop highly personalized strategies.

"You're going to want a knowledgeable adviser to help you through that process," he says.



People tend to think that they need a certain amount of money to benefit from talking to a lawyer about an estate plan, but Shanley disagrees.

"Everyone should do that. But the more money you have, the more the need increases," he says.

A multi-million-dollar business has complex issues involving spouses, heirs and estate taxes.

"You're going to need a sophisticated plan to reflect these sophisticated needs," Shanley says.

Estate tax and gift tax laws are complicated and subject to change, so expert advice is critical. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a good example. Business owners who have close to \$5 million or more in assets should be aware of the potential for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to sunset in 2025. Enacted in 2017, the legislation allows a person to avoid paying federal estate tax on up to \$10 million in assets, adjusted for inflation and doubled to \$20 million if the person is married. If Congress doesn't act on this legislation before it expires at the end of 2025, the federal estate tax exemption reverts to \$5 million in total assets per person, adjusted for inflation.

Business owners who are at the \$5 million value for a taxable estate may want to take advantage of current tax laws to transition out of the business — or at the very least, be aware of the estate tax exemption as 2025 approaches.


"The most sound advice is to start planning now. No matter what takes place in politics, take advantage of the laws in effect right now," Shanley says. "Be sure to schedule time with an estate planner or succession planner in order to start working through these issues."

Shanley tells business owners to thoughtfully determine what they envision for the future of their business.

"Take a moment to form that initial plan, and find an adviser that you trust. Inform them of your values and general desires, so that the adviser can ask questions and provide depth and sophistication," he says. "What are your values, and how do you want people to benefit? You need to have the big picture drive the little picture."

## PLANS CAN CHANGE

Business owners also need to change the plan as circumstances evolve from the company's Day 1 to, say, its Year 25.

"The more your business demands attention and has more business assets, your plan needs to match that sophistication. As the business grows, the estate plan should grow with it," Shanley says. 

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Dave Bailey

# Carving Out a New Service

Unlocking the value of aging in place solutions for residential service contractors

By Dave Bailey

**A**s the hands of time keep turning, we're witnessing a seismic shift in our demographic landscape. More and more homeowners are choosing to enjoy their golden years within the familiar walls of their homes.

This trend, known as "aging in place," is carving out an expansive territory within the residential contracting industry. It's about time we, as service contractors, familiarize ourselves with this development and the wealth of opportunities it presents. So, let's roll up our sleeves and delve into the burgeoning world of aging-in-place products.

## SAFETY: THE FOUNDATION OF AGING IN PLACE

When it comes to aging in place, safety is not just a key concern; it's the foundation. Bathrooms, in particular, can pose numerous hazards for those with reduced mobility. As residential service contractors, we can step in and transform these spaces from potential accident zones to sanctuaries of safety and ease. A wide range of innovative aging-in-place products can help us do this.

Walk-in tubs, for instance, come equipped with a door for easy access, removing the need for precarious climbing over high tub walls. Modern versions are far from clinical; they're designed with comfort and luxury in mind.

Next, we have grab bars. Today's grab bars are stylish and sleek, designed to fit seamlessly into any bathroom aesthetic. When correctly positioned near toilets, showers and tubs, these handy tools can prevent falls and give homeowners the confidence to navigate their bathrooms independently.

Comfort-height toilets, standing a few inches taller than their standard counterparts, offer an easier and more comfortable experience, especially for those who struggle with joint or back pain.

Handheld showerheads make a world of difference in the shower, providing flexibility and ease for those who

Installing aging-in-place products now is a strategic move for the future. It's about helping homeowners plan ahead and ensuring their homes are ready for their later years.

need to shower seated or have difficulty reaching overhead.

Lastly, nonslip flooring is crucial. Options like slip-resistant tiles, rubber matting, or textured acrylic can drastically reduce the likelihood of falls.

## HOME COMFORTS PRESERVED

Aging in place is also about retaining the comforts and conveniences of home. This is where products like thermostatic mixing valves and touchless faucets and toilets come in. These additions can significantly enhance the daily living experiences of homeowners.

## THINKING AHEAD: FUTUREPROOFING HOMES

Installing aging-in-place products now is a strategic move for the future. It's about helping homeowners plan ahead and ensuring their homes are ready for their later years.

By offering this thoughtful service, we're able to meet a demand that is only set to grow.

## A MARKET READY FOR THE TAKING

With over half of U.S. households now led by someone aged 50 or older, the market for aging-in-place products is ripe for the picking. By offering these products, we can differentiate ourselves in a competitive market and meet the unique needs of this expanding demographic.



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## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A WIN-WIN SITUATION

The provision of aging-in-place products allows us to deliver a service that resonates with our customers on a personal level. By understanding their needs and offering solutions that make their lives safer and more comfortable, we earn their satisfaction, repeat business and valuable referrals.

In essence, the growing trend of aging in place is an opportunity with immense potential for residential service contractors. As homeowners increasingly choose to spend their twilight years in the comfort of their homes, we're presented with a chance to make a significant difference in their lives. By equipping homes with aging-in-place products, we're not just providing a service; we're enabling an improved quality of life.

This is about more than just business expansion; it's about embodying a role that goes beyond being service providers. As residential contractors, we have the chance to become advisers, guiding customers toward decisions that will secure their future comfort and safety.

Moreover, this shift in focus is not just a fleeting trend but rather an enduring change in the residential contracting landscape. The demographic data speaks for itself. With over half of U.S. households headed by someone age 50 or older, the demand for aging-in-place products is set to

grow exponentially. By embracing this change now, we can establish ourselves as leaders in this burgeoning market, differentiating our businesses from the competition.

Furthermore, the increased customer satisfaction that comes from offering these products creates a positive feedback loop for our businesses. By addressing the real needs of our customers and enhancing their daily living experiences, we're likely to see a rise in repeat business, positive referrals and overall customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, the aging-in-place phenomenon is not just shaping the present of residential contracting; it's paving the way for its future. It's an opportunity to provide a service that resonates deeply with our customers while also propelling our businesses forward. So, let's seize this moment, embrace the age of aging in place, and step into the future of residential contracting that is not only profitable but also profoundly impactful.

Dave Bailey is the vertical market manager, plumbing for Service Nation Inc. and has 25 years' experience working in the plumbing industry — 23 in the field. If you would like to send a message to him, email [dbailey@servicenation.com](mailto:dbailey@servicenation.com).



## Castlewood Plumbing

Wildwood, Missouri

**R**ebranding is a huge moment for any service company, but Matt Thome knew it was his chance to rise to local royalty with his plumbing company that has been family owned and operated for over 30 years. Being raised in Castlewood, Missouri — a suburb of St. Louis — Thome knew that paying homage to such an important part of his upbringing was only proper by creating the newly designed Castlewood Plumbing. Having “Artie,” the Plumbing Knight in Shining Armor be the center of attention was only appropriate, along with his trusty plunger and majestic cityscape behind him. Everyone would notice the handsome, regal-looking knight with a huge smile. The wrap on the company’s Mercedes Sprinter vans was designed by KickCharge Creative and installed by BMG of O’Fallon, Missouri. Castlewood Plumbing, which offers residential and commercial plumbing and drain services uses Sprinter vans because of the high roof for easy movement and the aluminum shelving, compartments and drawers (Ranger Design) keep the fully stocked vans organized. “We pride ourselves on customer service and fast, quality work,” Thome says. For more information on Castlewood Plumbing, go to [www.castlewoodplumbing.com](http://www.castlewoodplumbing.com) 



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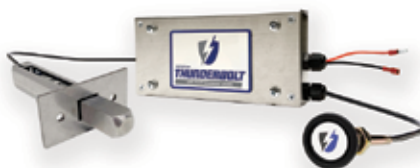
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# Service Vans, Fleet Management, Franchises and Software

By Craig Mandli

## GPS/Fleet Tracking

### DPL Telematics AssetCommand Base

**AssetCommand Base** from **DPL Telematics** is designed to increase driver safety and productivity while decreasing the costs and risk of vehicle accidents and theft. Managers can remotely shut down their machines, wirelessly locate them anytime via GPS, collect odometer/runtime readings, track service intervals and receive real-time alerts for speeding or potentially dangerous driving. Driver ID options include iButton or RFID badges to restrict access to authorized drivers and correctly log each driver's activity. Users can also receive alerts for loss of power and boundary or curfew violations to curb unauthorized use. It is palm-sized, has no external antenna and contains an internal backup battery to continue operating the unit if disconnected. Customers are allowed to deactivate and reactivate anytime without penalty. **800-897-8093; www.dpltel.com**



### Fleetio

**Fleetio's** suite of cloud- and mobile-based fleet management solutions enables fleets of all sizes to automate fleet operations and manage asset life cycles. Users can instantly access and update data regarding inspections, scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, parts, fuel and drivers. It improves communication and streamlines issue resolution with its mobile app, email notifications and reminders. It also integrates with telematics solutions for automated odometer updates, DTC handling and fuel location reporting that pairs with fuel cards to automatically log transaction data at fuel up. Fleet managers, drivers, technicians, parts managers and other personnel have access to the tools and information they need anytime, anywhere. **800-975-5304; www.fleetio.com**



### GPS Fleet Consulting Full Spectrum Tracking

**Full Spectrum Tracking** from **GPS Fleet Consulting** includes GPS-based tracking products for vehicles, equipment and trailers including fleet maintenance; field management software for scheduling, dispatching, estimates and invoicing; route optimization computing for improved efficiencies and response times; and AI-based onboard cameras providing livestreaming video and optional real-time driver coaching to ensure seatbelt compliance, prevent distracted driving and prevent smoking. It is fully customizable to meet the needs of each individual business. **800-609-7935; www.gpsfleetconsulting.com**

## Business Software/Services

### FieldBin

**FieldBin** is an easy-to-use field service management software to help small-to-medium HVAC, plumbing, electrical, landscaping and other field service companies win more jobs and be more profitable. The cloud-based solution manages every aspect of your business — from work order scheduling, dispatching, and inventory management to estimating, invoicing and payments processing — using a simple-to-use interface, intuitive navigation and easy drag-and-drop functionality accessible from anywhere on any device. It recently added several new features, including GPS stamping for location and time tracking, inventory management for multiple locations, custom tax rate capabilities support for foreign countries using a VAT tax system, and increased customer messaging capabilities via email and text confirmations, “on my way” notifications, technician reminders, and live chat support 24/7. It also enables companies to build a price book of services offered and easily apply them to an invoice or estimate later. **202-596-9910. www.fieldbin.com**





### McCormick Pro

**McCormick Pro** is a fast, customizable estimating and digital takeoff software for plumbing contractors — offering the tools needed to create accurate, scalable plumbing estimates. It is one program for

estimating, takeoff and change orders, and is cloud-based for multi-user networking. It has easy point-and-click digital takeoff for engineered drawings, design-build capabilities for non-engineered digital drawings, a complete prebuilt database of items and assemblies with built-in material pricing and labor units, and has a fully customizable database, with custom reporting and change order tracking. **866-396-3512; go.mccormicksys.com/plumbing**



### My Service Depot Smart Service

**Smart Service** from **My Service Depot** is a software system that functions as a direct add-on to QuickBooks. It adds scheduling, dispatching, invoicing and customer management to QuickBooks Pro, Premier, Enterprise and Online. This allows users to schedule and dispatch work to their

customers using their preferred QuickBooks platform. It empowers drain cleaning businesses to streamline their operations and eliminate waste. When a customer calls, an office dispatcher will create a job in the scheduler, filling in notes and assigning it to a field technician. This sends an electronic work order to the technician's phone or tablet. When that technician arrives at the customer's location, they'll build up the work order, collect a customer signature, collect payment and send the completed paperwork back to the office. **888-518-0818; www.smartservice.com**

### Right Way Answering Service

**Right Way Answering Service** is a 24/7 answering service and call center customized to fit all business needs. They offer a variety of services and plans that can fit into any budget, and call agents fulfill customer needs in a friendly and professional manner. You no longer have to worry about after hours, weekends, or holidays. They provide live support with our highly trained and professional customer service representatives, answering calls 24/7 and capturing caller information. Messages are then distributed per your request. When a call comes in, the business is alerted via phone call, text or email based on your preferences. They can also answer overflow calls during business hours and connect calls over to the

personnel that they requested. They can schedule appointments within your CRM based on your instruction. They are also capable of dispatching technicians based on the information provided. **808-281-2795; www.rightwayanswering.com**

### ServiceCore Software

**ServiceCore Software** offers waste or roll-off businesses with a tool designed to cut wasted time, manage jobs, optimize routes, track inventory and provide automated billing. **888-691-1333; www.servicecore.com**



### Successware

The **Successware** platform is an all-in-one business management software solution that was designed specifically for the plumbing industry. It offers everything needed to manage and grow a business, including an enhanced inventory management feature. Save valuable time by being able to perform all inventory functions in one location. View stock and transfer, return, requisition or adjust inventory all from one convenient screen. Easily create physical warehouses or vehicle warehouses to know exactly where parts and equipment are located, ensuring plumbers always show up prepared and ready to tackle the job at hand. The team can also view transactions that need to be completed that day in order for plumbers to have what they need. **888-272-8009; www.successware.com**



## Franchises

### Z PLUMBERZ

**Z PLUMBERZ** is a full-service plumbing franchise specializing in all types of plumbing, drain and sewer solutions. The franchise model focuses on sustainable growth and profitability, with paths designed for those starting brand-new plumbing businesses, as well as for existing plumbing or drain contractors. Owners develop their businesses in four key verticals, including retail plumbing, drain and sewer cleaning, project plumbing and pipe lining and trenchless technologies. Franchise owners are provided with the training, resources and support needed to win more jobs, provide exceptional customer service and become their market's go-to expert. **866-625-1323; www.zplumberzfranchise.com**

## Zoom Drain Franchise

**Zoom Drain Franchise** pulls from a larger pool of willing and capable people because it doesn't need skilled techs. Its "green" apprentices practice in training centers, on trucks and in the field with techs, using comprehensive digital manuals as the training curriculum. Graduating from apprentice to tech is the first step on a career path. The manuals match the specialized configuration of the trucks. The software, tools, equipment and materials are specifically referenced in the procedures and systematically updated on tablets. 877-855-5100; [www.zoomdrain.com](http://www.zoomdrain.com)

## Shelving and Bins

### Milwaukee Tool PACKOUT Modular Storage System

**Milwaukee Tool's PACK-OUT Modular Storage System** revolutionizes tool transportation and organization on the site, in transit, and in the shop. Trucks or vans can be fully customized with racking kits and wall plates, featuring modular connectivity with a variety of toolboxes and organizers. The racking shelves are e-track compatible for versatile mounting and feature integrated tie-down points to keep contents secure during transportation. A 50-pound weight capacity, a metal-reinforced frame and impact-resistant body provide maximum durability. When mounted in vehicles, the large wall plates have a 75-pound weight capacity and are constructed with metal-reinforced mounting points, ensuring the plates are secure when traveling from site to site. The quick-alignment tabs make installing rows or columns of multiple wall plates easier, allowing users to customize their storage system and keep their storage solutions organized. 800-729-3878; [www.milwaukeetool.com](http://www.milwaukeetool.com)



## Truck Parts/Accessories

### Thunderbolt Locks Lightning Bolt Lock Pin

The **Lightning Bolt Lock Pin** from **Thunderbolt Locks** inhibits the movement of a roller wheel, making it virtually impossible to open the roll-up door. The strategic design of the locking device makes it easy to install on practically all box trucks and simple to operate. It boasts a tamperproof head and key tool to match. Every part is made of stainless steel, and has an extensive tool kit available for hassle-free installation. The lock location is so inconspicuous that thieves won't know where it's engaged or why they cannot lift the door. It is ideal for nighttime protection when your box truck is parked or throughout the workday. 765-652-6587; [www.thunderboltlocks.com](http://www.thunderboltlocks.com)



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### ROEDA vehicle graphics

Permanent and removable vehicle graphics from **ROEDA** are an effective way to advertise a business on the road. They are made from high-quality vinyl materials that resist fading, peeling, and wear and tear. These graphics can last several years, and are ideal for businesses that frequently update their messaging or branding. They are easy to apply and remove without damaging the vehicle's body. They are visually appealing and can create a lasting impression on potential customers, helping to increase brand awareness and generate leads. Graphics can match branding requirements with color options, fonts, and other design elements. 708-333-3021; [www.roeda.com](http://www.roeda.com)



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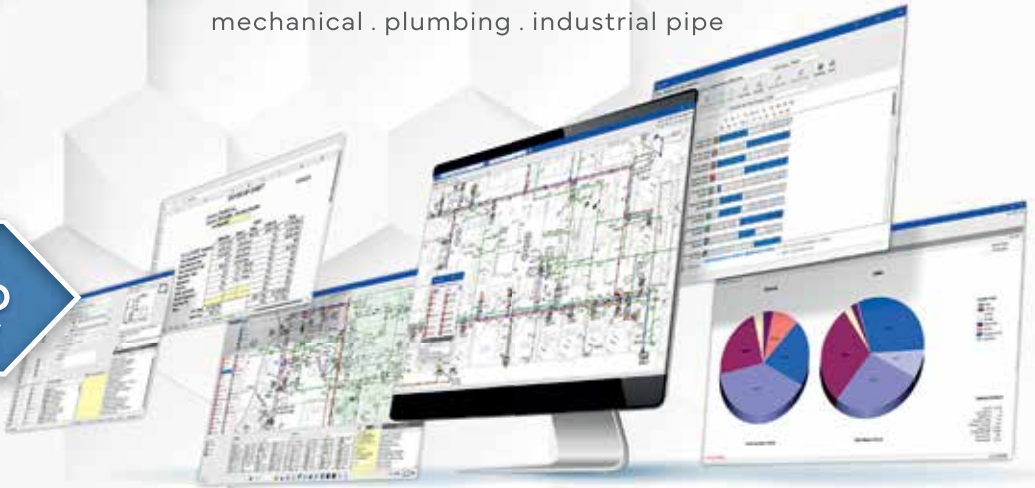
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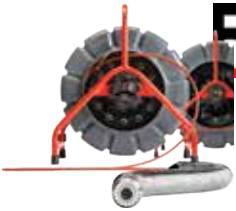


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# Service Vans, Fleet Management, Franchises and Software

By Craig Mandli

## Plumber eliminates guesswork with estimating software



**Problem:** Joe Nickle, CEO of Niccon Industrial Plumbing in Arlington Heights, Illinois, has 35 years' experience working with large commercial plumbing contractors. He knows that an inaccurate proposal can cost a company hundreds of thousands of dollars. He needed a tool that assists his team with producing quick, accurate and detailed quotes.

**Solution:** Nickle chose **FastPIPE Estimating Software** for Niccon's estimating needs. Nickle had used FastPIPE for more than a decade before starting Niccon, so he knew it was the right choice for his new business venture. FastPIPE easily imports PDF plans and provides the takeoff and reporting tools needed to create an accurate and timely quote. Robust material libraries complete with pricing, fully customizable specs, and pre-built assemblies come included with the software and help to produce accurate and detailed estimates.

**Result:** "FastPIPE allows our estimators and design engineers here at Niccon the ability to deliver sound, quick, accurate design-build budgets by drawing in systems and delivering cost-effective pricing" says Nickle. "The commercial plumbing industry has evolved over the years and is a highly technical, fast-paced environment where detailed take-offs and accurate pricing are required for success. FastPIPE allows us to eliminate guesswork." **800-828-7108; [www.fastest-inc.com](http://www.fastest-inc.com)**

## Security lock helps foil robbery attempt



**Problem:** Late one night in February 2023, a street in southern Florida became a target for some vicious cargo theft. Vehicles up and down the street got broken into and thousands of dollars worth of equipment, tools and other possessions were stolen.

**Solution:** With all the vehicles having been broken open with a crowbar, there was one vehicle on the street that didn't get robbed, despite an obvious effort. What was different about this plumber's van? It was equipped with a **SecuriLock** from **Legend Fleet Solutions** on each door.


**Result:** The SecuriLock held together and the contents of the van were left untouched. The robber tried desperately to gain entry to the vehicle and was unsuccessful in the end. The cost of repairing the doors on the plumber's van was much more manageable than replacing all the parts and equipment that are stored inside. **866-223-2256; [www.legendfleet.com](http://www.legendfleet.com)**

## Franchise affiliation and business management software help scale plumbing company



**Problem:** Adam Dassau, the owner and operator of RooterMan of Chattanooga, Tennessee, wanted a better way to market and scale his plumbing business.

**Solution:** Becoming a **RooterMan** franchise helped him acquire more customers as a nationally recognized and trusted plumbing brand. Combined with **ServiceTitan**'s robust suite of enterprise-grade software solutions specifically designed for the plumbing industry, he was finally able to scale his business and achieve success. RooterMan and ServiceTitan serve as a combination of marketing effectiveness and operational efficiency that can allow a plumbing company to scale quickly and profitably.

**Result:** "ServiceTitan does everything from marketing to streamlining my bookkeeping processes; it has allowed me to streamline my operational processes more efficiently as well as create multiple estimates for a single job to fit different budgets customers may have," says Dassau. "I attribute ServiceTitan as being one of the largest factors that have allowed us to scale our revenue by over 800% into the multiple seven-figure ranges and expand from a single van to 11 and counting in under 16 months." **800-700-8062;** [www.rooterman.com](http://www.rooterman.com) 



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# Product Spotlight

## Point-of-use water heater designed to attack Legionella

By Craig Mandli

One of the leading causes of reportable waterborne disease outbreaks in the United States today is Legionnaires' disease, a type of potentially serious pneumonia caused by the *Legionella* bacteria. Homeowners can take precautions to keep the bacteria out of their home's water system Intellihot with The Legionator, a new point-of-use disinfection tankless water heater from Intellihot. According to Intellihot CEO Sri Deivasigamani, the water heater goes on the offensive to eliminate potential bacterial contamination.

"Safe water is a priority for us, and Intellihot tankless water heaters have earned a reputation for their effectiveness in fighting *Legionella*," he says. "With the invention of the Legionator, we're taking the fight to the point of use."

The Legionator is designed to significantly reduce the potential for *Legionella* at the point-of-use using technology developed by Intellihot, including a built-in ozone generator and quartz scale-free heating. Plumbers and HVAC contractors are generally familiar with the most common breeding pools for *Legionella*: stagnant, lukewarm water found in cooling towers, spas/hot tubs, fountains and traditional tank-type water heaters. But, depending



on a building's water system usage, *Legionella* can also grow in faucets, valve seats, and showerheads. Hard water scale in such locations exacerbates the problem. Once colonization occurs, it is extremely difficult to eliminate *Legionella*.

A set of high-quality quartz tubes heats water to a comfortable temperature when there is water demand. As the water is exiting the unit, ozone gas is automatically injected into the water. Not only does the ozone gas kill the bacteria in water, it is also carried in the water to the faucets and kills the bacteria present within the faucet valve seats and aerators.

The result is good, clean, safe and efficiently heated water ensuring a building and its occupants are protected from waterborne bacteria illnesses.

Due to its tankless design, the Legionator doesn't store water; thereby delivering an endless supply of clean water on-demand and saving energy. Its space-saving footprint makes it easy to install under a sink or in a nearby closet. In addition, the built-in ozone generator generates ozone from ambient air using on-board power and doesn't require any refills. Its precise metering electronics ensure that the correct amount of ozone is added at any flow rate. **866-692-6791; [www.intellihot.com](http://www.intellihot.com)**

## REHAU EVERLOC+ CPVC and copper press adapters

REHAU has added CPVC and copper press adapters to its EVERLOC+ compression-sleeve fitting system, allowing efficient transitions between piping materials. The product line extension includes 12 CPVC adapters with six socket and six spigot configurations and seven copper press male adapters, all available in 1/2- to 2-inch sizes. They are designed for use with RAUPEX cross-linked PEXa pipe in potable and nonpotable applications. The adapters allow for quick,



secure transitions from rigid CPVC or copper pipe to flexible RAUPEX PEXa pipe. Each PEX connection contains multiple sealing edges, a feature of the EVERLOC+ fitting system that provides enhanced security. The EVERLOC+ system further uses a textured

PEXa compression sleeve that delivers an extreme grip and immediate seal. Connections are made quickly using a consistent, two-step expansion and compression process with battery-powered EVERLOC+ compression-sleeve tools. **703-777-5255; [www.rehau.com](http://www.rehau.com)**



## General Pipe Cleaners Speedroooter XL

Now with easily interchangeable drums, the Speedroooter XL from General Pipe Cleaners clears

tough clogs in 3- to 10-inch lines up to 200 feet. The rugged, easy-to-manuever Speedroooter XL sports a powerful 3/4 hp motor and 100-foot capacity drums for Flexicore cable. To change drums to add cable lengths or swap cable sizes, simply loosen three knobs and remove the drum. Users can switch between 3/4- or 5/8-inch cables in the large drum design — General's see-through inner cage lets you quickly gauge how much cable remains — or substitute the small drum with 100 feet of 1/2-inch cable for smaller lines. Variable speed cable feed offers raw driving and pulling power for long, tough jobs, feeding and retrieving 3/4-, 5/8- and 1/2-inch cables. The durable design features a braced frame at key stress points, front and rear drum supports for longer bearing wear and Flexicore cable. **800-245-6200; www.drainbrain.com**

## Taco Comfort Solutions domestic water booster pump packages

Taco Comfort Solutions' new and improved, fully-integrated domestic water booster systems are the ideal pressure-boosting solution for multiresidential and commercial buildings. Each system comes with a range of features and benefits, including an integral controller in every drive that offers complete built-in redundancy and minimizes downtime. A grooved pipe coupling between the pump and header permits greater design flexibility and minimizes installation and maintenance time. Also, an electrical mechanical disconnect allows isolation of an individual pump and drive, enabling the system to continue to run while maintenance is performed. Available in simplex, duplex, triplex or quadruplex configurations, the booster packages offer capacities between 125 to 2,000 gpm. **401-942-8000; www.tacomfort.com**



## Infinity Drain specialty finish collection

Infinity Drain launched a specialty finish collection which offers designers the ability to match on-trend finishes in bathroom settings. Infinity Drain studied trends in conjunction with designer custom orders to create the formulations for five

new specialty finishes: matte white, gunmetal, satin champagne, polished gold and polished brass. **516-767-6786; www.infinitydrain.com**



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## Recipients of the Explore The Trades Skills Lab, Built by Ferguson grants announced

The Explore The Trades Skills Lab, Built by Ferguson grants were announced in May. Explore The Trades is a nonprofit focused on bridging the technical talent gap to the plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical service trades. Ferguson is committed to strengthening the communities in which their branches are located. Together, both organizations are dedicated to building the next generation of plumbers and HVAC technicians. The following schools received grants this year for plumbing programs: Bronx Design and Construction High School, New York; Franklin Co. High School, Virginia; Hastings High School, Michigan; Lyman High School, Florida; Milford Mill Academy, Maryland; Roxbury High School, New Jersey; West Lincoln Middle School, North Carolina; and Western School of Tech and Environmental Science, Maryland. These schools were awarded for the HVAC programs: Carroll Co. Career and Technical Center, Maryland; Somerset Co. Technical High School, Maryland; and SVHEC Career Tech Academy, Virginia.



## New Watts Works Learning Center opens in Ft. Worth

The latest of the Watts Works Learning Centers, now with over 200 employees, has opened in Ft. Worth, Texas. The 250,000-square-foot facility — customized for broad training purposes, administration and manufacturing — joins several other Watts Works Learning Centers across North America. In addition to a working mechanical room with pressurized water lab, the facility includes a 3,600-square-foot learning center, office areas and a wide range of product manufacturing and assembly, including robotic welding and cutting, metal passivation, sheet metal rolling, precision laser metal cutting, CNC machining and ASME testing.

## Uponor announces new VP of marketing and strategy

Uponor North America announced Anna Picchetti as its new vice president of marketing and strategy. In her role, she will oversee channel marketing, portfolio, analytics, sustainability, segment, engagement, brand and communications. She will report to Uponor North America President Andres Caballero and be a key member of the company's senior management committee. Picchetti joins Uponor with 20 years' experience in marketing and operations across industrial, technology and medical device industries, including Tennant, SPS Commerce and Honeywell.



## Bradford White introduces QR codes on pocket catalogs

Bradford White Water Heaters introduced new printed and digital pocket catalogs that use QR codes to ensure contractors and distributors have quick access to the most recent product specifications and documents. Traditional pocket catalogs, like other printed assets, can quickly become outdated as product specs are updated, new products are introduced, or older products are taken out of production. Bradford White's new pocket catalogs equipped with QR codes allow users to immediately retrieve and view the most recent and up-to-date spec sheets, manuals and other product documents available.

## Protective Industrial Products promotes Sean Weil to CFO

Protective Industrial Products has promoted Sean Weil to the position of global chief financial officer. Weil has been with the company for nine years and previously served as global vice president of finance. As CFO, he will be responsible for overseeing the PIP global finance organization and managing all financial operations, including budgeting, forecasting, accounting, tax, treasury and financial reporting, while partnering with the regional business units to optimize results. He will work closely with the executive team to develop and implement financial strategies that support the company's growth and profitability goals.



Continued ▶





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**Oatey names Davenport Associates as New England rep**

Oatey has named Davenport Associates as its manufacturer representative for rough plumbing and showroom in the New England states. Led by brothers Ryan and Dan Davenport with support from an accomplished leadership team, Davenport Associates has robust outside and inside sales teams made up of an experienced salesforce, as well as master plumbers on staff, in-house training, and warehouse and distribution capabilities.

**Lytix celebrating its 25th anniversary**

Lytix is celebrating 25 years in business. From its inception in 1998, Lytx's vision has been to help fleets get drivers safely home through the utilization of cutting-edge technology. Over the past 25 years, Lytx has developed and introduced many technological advancements that have awarded the company over 195 issued and pending patents. Its machine vision and artificial intelligence technology, first introduced in 2015, helped companies looking to detect distractions and risk, inside and outside the vehicle. 📺

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# CALENDAR

**Aug. 30-31**

**Atlanta Build Expo**, Cobb Galleria Centre - Halls C & D, Atlanta. Visit [www.buildexpousa.com](http://www.buildexpousa.com)

**Sept. 24-28**

**International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials 94th Annual Education and Business Conference**, Hyatt San Antonio, San Antonio. Visit [www.iapmo.org/ibu/events](http://www.iapmo.org/ibu/events)

**Sept. 28 - Oct. 1**

**American Society of Plumbing Engineers Tech Symposium**, Maydenbauer Center, Bellevue, Washington. Visit [www.aspe.org/conventions-symposiums/](http://www.aspe.org/conventions-symposiums/)

**Oct. 3-6**

**Service World Expo**, Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix. Visit [www.serviceworldexpo.com](http://www.serviceworldexpo.com)

**Oct. 3-5**

**WaterSmart Innovations**, South Point Hotel and Conference Center, Las Vegas. Visit [www.awwa.org/events-education/water-smart-innovations](http://www.awwa.org/events-education/water-smart-innovations)

**Oct. 17-20**

**World Plumbing Council**, Shanghai Convention & Exhibition Center of International Sourcing, Shanghai. Visit [www.worldplumbing.org](http://www.worldplumbing.org)

**Oct. 22-25**

**Mechanical Service Contractors of America Annual Education Conference**, JW Marriott, Marco Island, Florida. Visit [www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/msca-2023-annual-educational-conference/](http://www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/msca-2023-annual-educational-conference/)

**Oct. 25-27**

**PHCC Connect 2023**, Huntington Convention Center, Cleveland. Visit [www.phccweb.org/connect](http://www.phccweb.org/connect)

**Nov. 9-11**

**Service Edge Conference**, Plano Event Center, Plano, Texas. Visit <https://serviceedgeconference.com/>

*Plumber invites organizations and associations to submit details about upcoming industry trade shows and conferences for our calendar of events. [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com).*



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