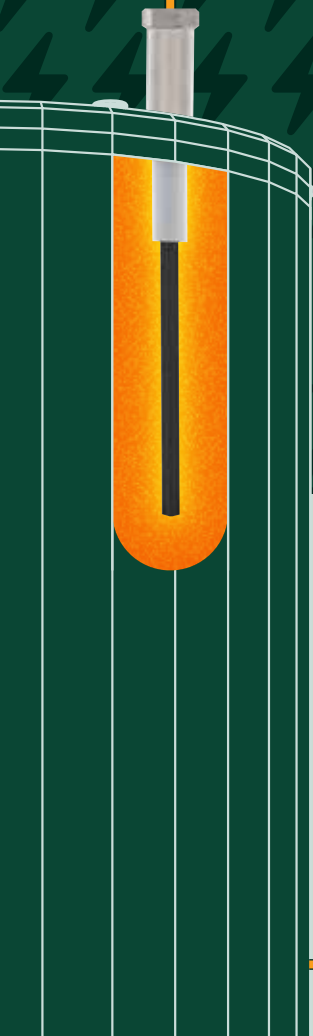
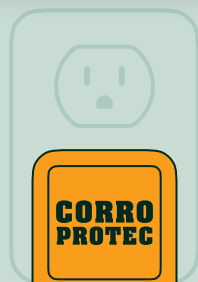
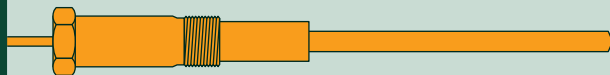


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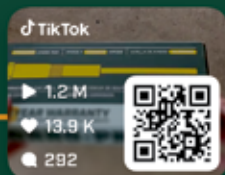
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FROM NOVICE TO PRO

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Plumber Profile *From Novice to Pro*

Armando Ramos got his start offering cheap drain service via Craigslist ads, but his company quickly grew thanks to a savvy rebranding and some sound third-party business advice.

- By Ken Wysocky



On the Cover

Plomero en Phoenix plumber Bryan Estrada removes a toilet in order to access the drain in a residential property in Phoenix. Plomero en Phoenix's service focus includes plumbing, drain cleaning, camera inspections, and sewer line replacement and repair. The company, with six employees works in the metro Phoenix area.

(Photography by Mark Henle)

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Cory Dellenbach

Welcoming New Talent

Nurturing growth and innovation in your plumbing team starts with a new hire

I've been hearing from more and more of you that as your plumbing companies grow, you're getting more equipment and trying to find more employees to help keep pace with the work coming in.

That is great to hear, and it's a positive for the industry. The addition of new team members is a critical step that can shape the future of your company and bring fresh perspectives and skills into the fold. This is an opportunity for you to enhance the capabilities of your team if you hire the right person.

Actually, we're introducing a new member to our "team" at *Plumber* magazine. Joining our team of Industry Insiders in this issue is Ken Dickerson.

Ken brings a wealth of knowledge as he teaches plumbing apprenticeship at Waukesha County Technical College in Waukesha, Wisconsin, which is near Milwaukee. In 2022, he was named Instructor of the Year by Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin.

Welcoming Ken to the team got me thinking about how plumbing companies bring on new team members.

STARTING RIGHT

It's important to get those new team members started on the right path. The onboarding — or training — process is the first step in introducing new team members to the intricacies of your business.

Beyond the standard orientation to policies and procedures, consider incorporating elements that emphasize your company's values, mission and what makes your team a community. This sets the stage for a positive and engaging work environment, making new hires feel like valued contributors from the start.

Pairing a new team member with an experienced one will also help them navigate the nuances of your company and also provide them a way to see what you expect of your team in the field. The veteran employee can share insights,

best practices and industry wisdom.

It's important to recognize that each new team member brings a unique set of skills and experiences to the table. Embrace diversity and encourage an environment where individuals can share their perspectives.

New team members often bring fresh perspectives that can lead to innovative solutions and improved processes. Create opportunities for brainstorming and collaboration to tap into the creativity of your team.

KEEP IT GOING

You can make veteran employees feel like new employees if you encourage educational opportunities. Continuous learning is at the heart of any thriving plumbing team.


Develop a culture that encourages professional development, both in technical skills and soft skills. This can involve regular training sessions, workshops and access to resources that keep your team up-to-date on the latest industry trends and technological advancements.

By investing in the growth of your team members, you not only elevate their individual capabilities but also contribute to the strength of your team.

LET'S CHAT

The addition of new team members is not just about filling roles; it's an opportunity to enrich your team with diverse skills, fresh perspectives and a shared commitment to excellence.

By encouraging collaboration, learning and innovation, you lay the groundwork for a dynamic team that can navigate the industry with confidence. Embrace the potential that each new team member brings, and watch your team thrive in the face of challenges and opportunities alike.

What have you done at your company that helps when you bring on a new hire? I'd like to hear your tips and suggestions. Email me at editor@plumbermag.com. 

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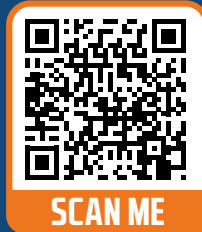
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RAISING AWARENESS

Girl Scouts Event Encourages Trades Interest

Oatey and its Women's Resource Network recently hosted an event at its home base in Cleveland aimed to help local Girl Scouts complete a "The House That She Built" patch, encouraging their interest in construction and raising awareness of opportunities in the trades. plumbermag.com/featured



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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 YouTube video about anchoring a new toilet flange to concrete. Be sure to sign up for *Plumber* e-newsletters if you haven't already.

OVERHEARD ONLINE

"Start encouraging financial literacy early in the employee life cycle. Ensure that your onboarding efforts include details about retirement savings options, health savings accounts and other resources that employees have at their disposal."

— *Looking at Financial Wellness as a Key Employee Benefit*

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MONEY MATTERS

Navigating Equipment Financing

Have you priced out new equipment lately? Talk about sticker shock. Equipment prices jumped during the pandemic — sometimes 30% to 40% — and remain high. Interest rates climbed also. If you're soon going to be in the market for some new equipment, this online exclusive covers some tips regarding the current lending environment. plumbermag.com/featured



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FROM NOVICE TO PRO

Armando Ramos got his start offering cheap drain service via Craigslist ads, but his company quickly grew thanks to a savvy rebranding and some sound third-party business advice

By Ken Wysocky | Photography by Mark Henle



Plomero en Phoenix, Phoenix, Arizona

OWNER	Armando Ramos
FOUNDED	2010
EMPLOYEES	6
SERVICES	Plumbing, drain cleaning, camera inspections, sewer line replacement and repair
SERVICE AREA	Phoenix metro area
WEBSITE	www.miplomeroenphoenix.com

When Armando Ramos decided at age 19 to open a plumbing business in Phoenix in 2010, he was the definition of a business rookie — a one-man operator who unclogged drains for \$50 a pop and relied on Craigslist ads to attract customers.

Now the owner of Plomero en Phoenix (Plumber in Phoenix), Ramos, 31, is an experienced businessman, not a novice. He employs six people; runs three professional-looking service trucks, replete with eye-catching vinyl wraps; manages an effective marketing campaign centered on social media; and generates more than \$1 million in gross revenue annually.

Not bad for a self-made entrepreneur with little formal education.

A combination of key factors drove his transformation from small-time operator to big-time contractor: a strong work ethic, an innate sense of marketing savvy, business coaches and investments in durable and efficient equipment.

“Honestly, I didn’t have any other options,” Ramos says when asked what made him think he could build a

successful business. “I had no other career path to follow. What could go wrong?”

He started out with only a 1992 Toyota Tundra pickup truck and a RIDGID drum drain cleaning machine.

“I already was making minimum wage at my job as a maintenance technician at an apartment complex,” Ramos says. “So in my head, I figured if I did three or four drain jobs a day for \$50 apiece, I was making much more money.”

Ramos was inspired by the high prices he saw contractors charge for cleaning drains at the apartment complex where he worked. During his time there, he also gained basic plumbing knowledge from a longtime elderly employee.

“I’d talk to technicians and ask them about their jobs, which intrigued me,” Ramos says. “And money-wise, they would take maybe 30 or 40 minutes to unclog a drain and then charge \$250, which seemed like a lot of money to me. It opened my eyes to the opportunities.”

Those prices are what prompted him to charge only \$50 per cleaning. The low price



▶ Plumber Bryan Estrada unloads equipment, including a RIDGID SeeSnake, at a job in Phoenix.

“I was proud of telling people that I did the same thing as other contractors, but for a much cheaper price. But then we had a hard time paying the bills. Charging people too little for your services is one of the biggest mistakes a business owner can make.”

Armando Ramos

helped him “buy” market share, but he later realized it was unsustainable from a business standpoint.

WILLING TO WORK HARD

At first, Ramos cleaned drains only very early in the morning or after finishing his shift at the apartment complex. But after about five months of working and building his confidence, Ramos quit his regular job and worked full time on building TCI Solutions, the first iteration of Plomero en Phoenix, by running Craigslist ads.

Even then, Ramos displayed a commonsense aptitude for marketing by writing his own ad copy as well as using different phone numbers for different ads so that he could track which ones performed better than the others. He used a free app called Google Voice to funnel all phone calls to his cellphone.

“I spent a lot of time at night trying to figure out how to stand out with my Craigslist ads,” Ramos says. “I had to think outside the box.”

After dabbling in a couple of other advertising platforms, Ramos achieved a breakthrough when he

created a Google My Business profile and a website page in Spanish.

“After about two weeks, the phone started ringing,” he says. “I figured out it was the Spanish website and Google profile. So when I saw how many people wanted a Latino plumber, I switched gears and rebranded the company from

TCI Solutions [which he had envisioned as both a plumbing and a handyman business] to Plomero en Phoenix. At that point, making the change was a no-brainer.”

At first, Ramos feared he might lose his English-speaking customers. But that didn’t happen. In fact, he says many customers call the company because they want to support a minority-owned business.

THE PRICE WASN'T RIGHT

Ramos credits much of the company’s success to several business coaches he’s hired over the years. They taught many important basics of business, including how much to charge customers for various services.



▲ Plumbers Scottin McCabe, left, and Bryan Estrada do work in a bathroom.

No dance moves required

TikTok isn't just for teens who perform eye-catching dance moves or lip-sync to the latest jams. Contractors like Plomero en Phoenix (Plumber in Phoenix) find the social media platform to be a great marketing tool, too.

"TikTok helps you connect with an audience on a more personal level," says owner Armando Ramos. "You can do things on TikTok you wouldn't do on Facebook. Like if I talk like a plumber, it would be inappropriate on Facebook. But on TikTok, viewers just think I'm being real — they find it authentic."

Ramos started using TikTok in 2020. He shoots his own videos and has almost 150 posted on his account. Most of them are educational and all are spoken in Spanish.

For example, one video — which starts with Ramos using a large circular saw to cut open an old water heater — explains what an anode rod is. The video, which is one minute and 27 seconds long, has more than 96,000 views.

What are some keys to successful videos? Keep them short and simple and focus on things people can identify with or might find interesting, Ramos says.

"You need to give them information no one has given them before," he says. "It engages them because no one has ever explained these things to them."

Ramos' most popular post uses time-lapse video to show

him replacing an old exterior hose bib on a house in a dizzying 58 seconds, with country music artist Aaron Tippin's "Working Man's Ph.D." playing as he works. The video so far has garnered 11,700 likes, 186 comments, and a whopping 499,000 views. A similar video that features a catchy Plomero en Phoenix jingle garnered more than 59 million views, more than 1.8 million likes and more than 7,800 comments.

In all, Ramos' TikTok account has collected nearly 247,000 followers and more than 2.3 million likes. And it's entirely free exposure, Ramos points out.

"All it costs me is the time to do the videos, which is time well spent compared to the amount of work we get from it and how effectively it brands our company," he says. "It really drives revenue."

Ramos knows this because employees who take phone calls are trained to always ask people how they heard about the company, so it's apparent which marketing efforts are working the best.

"I'm well known locally. People have stopped me at gas stations to take photos with me," he says. "They congratulate me and say they love what I'm doing. It totally surprised me. I never expected it would take off like this. I was kind of shocked at the beginning and I'm still kind of shocked now."

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◀ Scottin McCabe works on a bathtub drain repair.

In short, Ramos learned that was selling himself short by doing drain cleaning jobs for only \$50.

“I went really low with my prices to be competitive,” he says. “I was proud of telling people that I did the same thing as other contractors, but for a much cheaper price. But then we had a hard time paying the bills. Charging

margin on top of that.

“Now we’re not the cheapest contractor around,” Ramos says. “But the other day, we won a job even though we were \$1,000 more than two other competitors. How? It was the way we treated them — provided a full evaluation and different options with no sales pressure.”

“I’m not afraid to spend money on outside consultants. ... I’m investing in my company by hiring the right people who can teach us how to do things right and help get us where we want to go.”

Armando Ramos

people too little for your services is one of the biggest mistakes a business owner can make.”

Ramos says he knew he needed help when he eventually realized his profit margins were consistently too small.

“I thought we were making money, or at least it looked like we were,” he recalls. “But when we’d do our taxes at the end of the year, we’d realize we didn’t make that much money after all. It looked like I didn’t even own a company. We were doing a lot of jobs and trying to stay competitive, but we weren’t making much money. So I realized we needed someone to show us some better business practices.”

KNOW THE NUMBERS

Enter Matthew Barbosa, a business coach and trainer from a company called Service Excellence.

“Matthew taught us how to price jobs properly and build value for customers,” Ramos says. “He taught me that we have to create value so that at the end of the day, price no longer is a factor because customers understand the value of what they’re getting for their money.”

Barbosa also showed Ramos how to factor in all business expenses when setting prices, including salaries for him and his employees then a 12% to 15% profit

SPEND MONEY TO MAKE MONEY

Ramos also pays for a coach from Power Selling Pros that provides ongoing coaching for employees who take service calls. The result? A 20% increase in job bookings, he says. In addition, once a year for the last two years, he’s hired a coach from Service MVP who holds a five-day “boot camp” for technicians.

The company spends roughly \$2,100 a month on coaching, but Ramos says it’s a worthwhile investment because it helps him see his business in a totally different light.

“If you don’t know your numbers, you don’t know your business,” he says.

Ramos also hired an outside marketing firm, KickCharge Creative, for his rebranding campaign.

“I wanted to go full bore on the rebranding,” he says.

Based in New Jersey, KickCharge Creative specializes in branding and advertising services for home-service contractors. The company developed Plomero en Phoenix’s eye-catching logo and vinyl wraps for service vehicles.

“I’m not afraid to spend money on outside consultants,” Ramos says. “The way I look at it, I’m investing in my company by hiring the right people who can teach us

▶ Owner Armando Ramos (right) talks with Scottin McCabe, left, and Bryan Estrada, center, during a morning meeting at Plomero en Phoenix's office.

how to do things right and help get us where we want to go. They've all been a huge part of our success."

PRODUCTIVE EQUIPMENT

Technicians drive three service vehicles: a 2021 Isuzu NPR chassis with a Hackney box body and 2021 and 2006 Chevrolet Express cutaway vans, one with a WorkMaster utility body from Harbor Truck Bodies and the other with a utility body made by Knapeide Manufacturing Co.

Each truck is equipped with a K-60 portable cable machine and K-45 hand-held drain machine from RIDGID and a wheeled model 100 cable machine from Spartan Tool.

"I like RIDGID machines because they're so durable — real workhorses," Ramos says. "The K-60 is light enough



that you can carry it up to a rooftop without dismantling the machine. And I love the automatic feed and retrieve functions on the Spartan 100. I don't have to use my back to pull back the cable."

The company also owns a larger Spartan Model 300, designed for 3- to 6-inch-diameter lines, for jobs the other machines can't handle, like severe root blockages.

In addition, Ramos has invested in a trailer-mounted Brute water jetter (9 gpm at 4,000 psi) and a PlumberJet



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See How It Works.



▶ Part of the team at Plomero en Phoenix includes, from left, plumber Scottin McCabe, owner Armando Ramos, and plumber Bryan Estrada, standing in the company shop in Phoenix.

“I was just a solo guy in a truck who could barely pay his bills and now I employ five guys and run three trucks.”

Armando Ramos

cart-mounted jetter (5 gpm at 3,000 psi), both from Jetters Northwest.

“Overall, they’re very dependable and they’re powerful — they get the job done,” Ramos says. “Every time I turn them on, they work.”

The company also relies on three inspection camera systems — one RIDGID SeeSnake Mini Pro and two SeeSnake Minis — that Ramos describes as “real moneymakers” for the business. Technicians use RIDGID Pipe Patch Repair kits for point repairs in pipelines. A Bobcat E20 compact excavator rounds out the company’s equipment fleet. For handtools, Plomero uses a combination of Milwaukee Tool and DeWalt brands.

How did Ramos initially afford equipment? Largely with lines of credit, he says.

“But all the machines paid for themselves very quickly,” he notes.

JUST GETTING STARTED

Looking back, Ramos says he’s both amazed and proud of how far his company has come in the past decade.

“I was just a solo guy in a truck who could barely pay his bills and now I employ five guys and run three trucks,” he says. “But it’s not just me. At the end of the day, I’m even prouder of everyone who works around me, including my

brother, Bryan, and my wife, Triny. You’re only as good as your employees.”

As for what lies ahead, Ramos is eager for more growth. In five years, he says he wants to be a \$5 million-a-year company.

“I want to bring on more technicians, bring trenchless pipe rehab in-house [the company currently subcontracts for that] and keep growing our market and keep making the right investments,” Ramos says. “We just want to keep growing.” **P**

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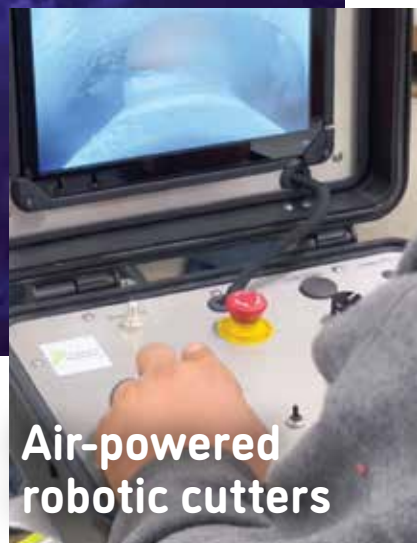
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Tax Time Tips

The pandemic-related Employee Retention Tax Credit, and other federal programs, may be worth looking at leading up to filing time

By Joan Koehne

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted business operations like nothing we've experienced in the modern era.

As providers of essential services, some companies like plumbers remained on the job, but the demand for peripheral services perhaps declined. The business slowdown led to reduced hours, employee layoffs and less revenue. Pandemic relief programs, like the Employee Retention Tax Credit, helped cover some of the losses. This past fall, the ERTC generated renewed attention, and not all of it favorable.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

The ERTC is a refundable tax credit designed for businesses that suffered losses during the height of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This tax-relief program is incredibly complex, but employers who meet the eligibility requirements can recoup thousands of dollars per employee.

"The numbers get pretty big, pretty fast," says Peter Haukebo, a tax attorney at Frost Law in Maryland. Haukebo has been practicing law for 12 years and currently serves as chair of the Maryland State Bar Association Taxation Section.

"In a perfect scenario, someone can get up to \$26,000 per employee," Haukebo says.

But the "perfect scenario" is elusive for the average employer because it requires fastidious recordkeeping and a keen understanding of employment tax law. Taking shortcuts can get employers into big trouble, as can filing fraudulent claims.

Aggressive marketing campaigns targeted U.S. businesses in the summer and fall of 2023, using predatory tactics to pressure employers to apply for the ERTC. Inundated with bad claims, the IRS stopped processing ERTC claims in September and didn't plan to start again until January 2024, at the earliest. During the moratorium, the IRS pursued fraudulent claims and added more safeguards to prevent future abuse. But for employers with legitimate claims, applying for the tax credit is still worth the effort.

"I've seen credits of a couple thousand dollars to millions of dollars," Haukebo says.

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is based on two factors: being an eligible employer and paying qualified wages.

"You really have to start with, 'Why am I eligible?' There are three ways," Haukebo says.

The first way to qualify is based on a decline in gross receipts in 2020 or the first three quarters of 2021. Specifically, employers are eligible if gross receipts dropped 50% in a pandemic calendar quarter compared with the same calendar quarter in 2019.

"The numbers get pretty big, pretty fast. In a perfect scenario, someone can get up to \$26,000 per employee."

Peter Haukebo

"You remain eligible until gross receipts pop up to 80% of what they were in 2019," Haukebo says.

The gross receipts comparison is the most straightforward of the three eligibility requirements.

"That's the most black-and-white eligibility," Haukebo says. "As long as you're booking your receipts to the correct calendar quarter according to your method of accounting, there's not much argument there. The next test is very difficult, and Congress has made this very easy to do incorrectly and very hard to do correctly."

The second way to qualify for the ERTC is to show that the company experienced a full or partial suspension of business operations due to a governmental order limiting

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commerce, travel, or group meetings in response to the pandemic. The test is whether the portion of the business that closed was more than nominal. Nominal means 10% or more of total gross receipts or total hours worked came from that shuttered part of the business in 2019. Related to this test is the nominal effect analysis. Employers can qualify for the ERTC if the restrictions had more than a nominal — 10% again — effect on the ability to provide goods and services.

“It’s a 10% test, but now it’s a test of ability, and this is where the stuff goes off the rails,” Haukebo says. “Because how do I test my ability? What are the metrics? What are the key performance indicators?”

A professional tax preparer can help employers determine if they’re eligible under this requirement, but it may not be so cut and dried, Haukebo says.

“It may be challenging to go back and find that data and confirm those numbers,” he says.

The third way to qualify for the ERTC is as a recovery startup business that opened after Feb. 15, 2020, and generated less than \$1 million in annual gross receipts.

“Even that has some devil-in-the-details,” Haukebo says. “This is all built on existing tax laws, so that really gets into the qualified wage analysis.”

MAKING A CLAIM

Employers who meet the eligibility requirements can claim the credit on IRS Tax Form 941X. In the realm of tax forms, the 941X is short — only five pages — without a worksheet showing any computations. Despite this simplicity, Haukebo recommends working with a professional tax preparer to submit an ERTC claim.

The tax preparer should provide employers with several documents: copies of the governmental orders with language highlighted that relates to the employer’s specific claim; a work paper that lists each employee in each quarter who earned a qualified wage; payroll costs for purposes of Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness, if applicable; and a work paper showing how the preparer calculated any permissible health care expenses.

“There’s a ton of work done off of any government form,” Haukebo says.

Once the 941X form is complete, it is mailed to the IRS to be hand-processed. There are no digital interfaces or E-filing systems for the ERTC, and the IRS mails paper checks to employers with successful claims. Because of the

manual nature of these claims, errors sometimes occur.

“To give you an example, we had a client who was eligible for \$160,000, and whoever keyed this in didn’t put a decimal,” Haukebo says.

Instead of \$160,000, the IRS was ready to issue a check for \$16 million. Frost Law called the IRS to report the error before the check was cut.

FILING A BAD CLAIM

IRS slip-ups are one thing, but filing a bad claim is another. A substantial number of recent ERTC claims are, at best, incorrect, and at worst, fraudulent. Some businesses will face penalties and interest payments stemming from bad claims pushed by promoters. In October 2023, the IRS announced an ERTC withdrawal process for employers who have “a come-to-Jesus-moment and say, ‘I actually wasn’t eligible,’” Haukebo says.


The withdrawal process is designed for employers who were misled by ERTC marketers and fell victim to scams. The withdrawn claims will be treated as if they were never filed and will not be subject to penalties or interest.

However, not every employer gets off the hook so easily. If the IRS processed the claim and an IRS audit revealed the employer was ineligible for the ERTC, the employer must return the tax award and pay any penalties and interest. These costs don’t include fees paid to the aggressive ERTC promoters, some who took a 25% contingency fee.

OTHER TAX CREDITS TO CONSIDER

Haukebo encourages employers to check into other available tax credits as well. For example, employers who install solar panels at their facilities may qualify for solar energy tax credits.

Additionally, the work opportunity tax credit is worth \$2,400 to \$9,600 per employee. Employers can claim this credit if they hire from certain groups like veterans, the recently incarcerated, and people on public benefits. In addition to the federal tax credits, every state offers various tax credits, also.

Applying for tax credits like the ERTC can be a complicated process, but the rewards can be great. Tax credits reduce a tax bill dollar-for-dollar, giving employers more money to operate and grow their business. By working with a certified tax preparer, employers can take advantage of beneficial tax-saving opportunities that contribute to the bottom line. 

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Randy Behle has been a NuFlow Certified Contractor since 1997. He investigated NuFlow when he was on a nursing home project with a pipe that was almost impossible to dig up and repair.

“I was recommended by another Roto-Rooter Franchise. I tried sample products from other companies, but I wasn’t impressed.”

“We have got to know the NuFlow Team well over the years. We can talk to them about upcoming jobs and walk through all of the steps. They give us regular support over the phone, through classes and from time to time on specific jobs.”

“As soon as I got the first lining job done, the same nursing home called with another location that was bigger and we more than doubled our initial investment! It took just two jobs to turn a profit.”

“Now I’ve got 15 guys and lining is a major piece of our overall business!”



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SCAN ME





Julian Scadden

Building a Network

Nexstar Network builds on long history by continuing to support home service companies in the plumbing, HVAC and electrical industries

By Cory Dellenbach

It's often said that there is power in numbers, and Nexstar Network is proving that true in the plumbing industry.

Nexstar Network, headquartered in Bloomington, Minnesota, was founded by a group of home-services business owners in 1992 who believe in the power of helping business owners in the plumbing, HVAC and electrical home services industry achieve success through education and sharing.

Fast-forward 32 years and Nexstar Network has now grown to approximately 1,000 members throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

"Nexstar shall continue to guide and develop second-stage businesses," says Julian Scadden, president and CEO of Nexstar Network. "That is our DNA and our pleasure."

Scadden recently talked with *Plumber* magazine about Nexstar Network and what it does for the plumbing industry.

Plumber: How does Nexstar Network help those in the plumbing and drain cleaning industry, what does it do for them?

SCADDEN: Our mission sums it up quite well, which is to help turn the world's best tradespeople into the world's best businesspeople. What that means is we take small businesses with tons of energy — led by ambitious owners — and help them direct their momentum and strengths in the most efficient areas to rapidly impact their business with lasting results. We also help businesses that have grown stagnant and re-energize them. In these situations, we're helping our members see clearly, and often reimagine, their achievable success with guided support and focus.

To offer a tangible example of how Nexstar supports our members in their day-to-day business, I'd like to highlight the theme of our annual Super Meeting last October: workforce development. Not only is creating a sustainable workforce a hot topic in the trades, it's also a key driver for member growth and success in today's economy.

“The deeper our members engage in our services the faster they grow while maintaining profit and we are honored to go along for the ride.”

Julian Scadden

Our Super Meeting programming was centered on presentations, best-practices, solutions and conversations around how to recruit, train and create a culture to retain the best. One of my favorite Super Meeting moments happened during a candid panel discussion featuring three members, all of whom started their own in-house training academies to build a workforce pipeline of homegrown technical talent.

Seeing how these business owners embraced a solution to build their company, team, and community was remarkable. They — with Nexstar's support — are reshaping the trades landscape in their respective markets. For owners of plumbing service companies reading this, who are genuinely curious about how Nexstar may help their business, I ask, how will you sustain growth in the next several years? We offer a tangible solution through our NexTech Academy portfolio of products and services — including a successful in-house training resource, enabling our member leaders to be ahead of the curve.

Plumber: When a plumber signs on for a membership, what happens? What is the process from that point on?

SCADDEN: As a former member, I can tell you this can be an overwhelming experience, so we deconstruct the process — step by step — and enlist our coaches to guide our newest members throughout their membership journey.

Continued ▶



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One of the first things that happens during onboarding is connecting the business owner and their leadership team with their Nexstar business and implementation coaches at an onsite kickoff. Our coaches debrief new members and typically help immerse their team in all things Nexstar. Together they proactively plan and identify the training and resources best suited to meet their business goals.

There are other key priorities as well, such as setting a cadence with their coaching team to review or create their business blueprint; becoming familiar with our member website, which is our communications hub of resources, information, and connections opportunities; enrolling them in our partner program to offset their Nexstar investment; and identifying nearby members with whom they can begin to build relationships.

Plumber: Is there a plumbing company size that Nexstar Network is best for?

SCADDEN: Nexstar is built to serve second-stage businesses that are independently owned and operated. We define the second stage as 10-99 employees and \$5-50 million in annual revenue. And while we are proud to help businesses just below that scale, and while we do have members that have well surpassed the \$50 million annual mark, we make the most impact through our ability to help those second-stage businesses accelerate toward their goals and dreams.

Plumber: How would a plumber start if they want to proceed with Nexstar Network or have more questions?

SCADDEN: I invite the interested plumbing business owner to visit our website at nexstarnetwork.com/contact. From there, they may choose to schedule an exploratory call with our team to ask questions, gather more information on membership availability in their region, and learn more about our services.

Plumber: Nexstar has grown a lot over the years. What's next for the company?

SCADDEN: Nexstar shall continue to guide and develop second-stage businesses. That is our DNA and our pleasure. Said differently and possibly quite grandiosity, that is how we serve this nation one community at a time. Great businesses create great opportunities, and we are proud to be part of that legacy. The future will resemble the past with the names and locations changing over time. We are not built to serve all; we have market area restrictions associated with the number of members we have in a given geography. With that being said, our growth comes from helping our members grow and offering them more value across their business functions, departments and technologies.

The deeper our members engage in our services the faster they grow while maintaining profit and we are honored to go along for the ride. We do not seek growth for growth's sake, we seek to serve, to be of value, and the rewards have always followed. 📍

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Pipeline and Lateral Rehabilitation

By Craig Mandli

Bursting

Pow-R Mole Trenchless Solutions PD-33M

The PD-33M pipe bursting machine from Pow-R Mole Trenchless Solutions is designed to replace existing underground pipes 2 to 6 inches in diameter. Its nonslip, cylinder-activated jaws prevent cable damage while providing 60,000 pounds of pulling force. It offers a cost-effective alternative to open-cut excavation, reducing customer disruption and increasing company profits. The process replaces the existing pipe with a fused HDPE pipe, which eliminates all joints and allows the operator to pull through bends such as 45-degree fittings. This system is modular and can be easily disassembled and reassembled for manhole and basement applications. With a compact design and very small footprint of only 20 by 20 inches, this unit can be used in tight locations. **800-344-6653; www.powrmole.com**



RODDIE R8

The R8 pipe bursting system from RODDIE is easy to use and lightweight, can be set up vertically or horizontally, and can also be adjusted to use three different size cables. This unit can replace 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, 6- and 8-inch pipes with ease and speed. Inexpensive cable grabbing inserts last 70 to 120 jobs, which reduces costs. High-quality tool steels on articulating bursting heads promote rare resistance for long-lasting service. The pulling rate is 8 feet per minute and is hydraulically powered from your tractor, providing a pulling force of 30 tons. The wireless remote system is reliable and has a signal strength that moves through any cellar wall. Maintaining the system is simple, as the user only needs to rinse off and re-grease six Zerk fittings. **888-406-3821; www.rodzieunderground.com**



CIPP Equipment

Emagineered Solutions THE SHOOTER

THE SHOOTER from Emagineered Solutions is a continuous air-inverter for CIPP. THE SHOOTER 12 has a range of 4 to 12 inches and up to 15 inches with the conversion kit, and a knife gate for after the liner tail passes. It comes with either the self-lubricating hand truck or basic non-oiler cart. THE SHOOTER 24 for 15 to 24 inches is trailer-mounted and comes with a knife gate and remote operating station on the fender. An optional conversion kit expands its range from 6 to 24 inches. Additional equipment offered includes full steam packages with portable dry steam generators, steam hose, A and B stations, water cure flanges and LED UV Y adapters. **541-504-0416; www.theshootercipp.com**



MaxLiner GhostLiner

GhostLiner CIPP liner from MaxLiner becomes transparent during wet-out and reduces LED light-cure times without sacrificing strength. It offers a faster and higher quality cure due to transparency once saturated, and negotiates pipe bends up to 45 degrees. It is a uniquely manufactured synthetic fiber felt with a TPU coating designed to maximize LED light-cure capabilities. Tube forming and seam bonding are achieved by an overlocking chain-stitched seam with an extruded taped joint, creating a high-performance impermeable liner designed for sweeping bends up to 45 degrees and very minimal stretch. **877-426-5948; www.maxlinerusa.com**



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Built to help power and fiber-optic contractors easily create a clean, narrow trench in one pass, the **Ditch Witch MT164** microtrencher attachment offers maximum compact cable installation performance. Equipped with a standard hydraulic plunge and option to offset the frame, the MT164 provides variable depth control and allows contractors to cut right up next to a curb. It can trench up to 2 inches wide by 16 inches deep to cut deep enough to get through a standard-sized curb. It can also be set up for push or pull applications depending on the job site. The microtrencher's compact footprint provides increased flexibility with minimal disruption to surrounding infrastructure in urban areas. **580-336-4402; www.ditchwitch.com**



stainless steel. Available in couplings, flange adaptors and reduction couplings from 2 to 42 inches, the system's wide range can connect different outside diameters with ease. It is corrosion-resistant and can be used above or below ground. The system accommodates 16 degrees of angularity (8 degrees per socket), allowing the coupling to handle dynamic deflection after installation without compromising functionality. It has easily accessible bolts and can be installed and uninstalled without special tools, making it suitable for temporary installations or multiple reuses. It is engineered and designed for a minimum life expectancy of 50 years, leak-free and maintenance-free. **800-854-4090; www.gfps.com**

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Max push-to-connect fitting from **SharkBite (RWC)** can help quickly fix burst pipes, making emergency pipe repairs faster and stronger than ever. Re-engineered and enhanced, the fittings build on the brand's push-to-connect technology while adding a higher pressure threshold to withstand double the burst pressure. The re-engineered fitting body lets you insert piping using half the insertion effort. A stainless-steel collar adds double the strength and durability. Ideal for leak repairs, the slip and transition fittings are compatible with PEX, copper, CPVC, polybutylene, PVC and HDPE pipe, and can be installed in wet lines. **877-700-4242; www.sharkbite.com**

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Pipe Relining Equipment



Flow-Liner Systems Neofit+Plus Expandable Pressure Pipe

Neofit+Plus Expandable Pressure Pipe from Flow-Liner Systems is a trenchless technology that creates an impenetrable barrier between drinking water and the existing host pipe. Host pipes (like lead and copper) can leach dangerous levels of toxic materials in your drinking water. The Neofit+Plus EPP structural material has been scientifically proven by examining extensive hydrolysis testing, indicating it will last well over 100 years. It often only requires a single small access pit, saving yards, trees, sidewalks and floors from demolition. The speedy process allows for many installations a day and immediate return to service. **800-348-0020; www.flow-liner.com**

FORMADRAIN Formapox 101

Formapox 101 from FORMADRAIN is a durable steam-cured liner that eliminates the mess and cost of traditional dig-and-replace methods. It is made from a watertight, thin, yet



extremely strong composite material and a specially formulated resin. The liner is bright blue in color. It is the mainstay of the company's pushed- or pulled-in-place, steam-cured, fiberglass and epoxy underground pipe repair system. It can be used in line sizes from 2 to 48 inches. The repair is so thin that pipes sustain their original flow capacities, even with a liner installed in such small diameters. **888-337-6764; www.formadrain.com**



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Picote Xpress Brush Coating System

The Picote Xpress Brush Coating System provides a solution for refurbishing pipes ranging from 1 1/4 to 12 inches in diameter, boasting rapid curing times, zero waste and quick setup providing savings in both cost and time. Used in conjunction with Picote Millers, the heart of the system is the Xpress Coating Pump featuring dual hydraulic resin cylinders for the new 1-1, single color epoxy. It has a built-in, extended-life battery and internal resin heater providing several hours of working time. The system also includes a motorized delivery hose reel with 131 feet of delivery hose, allowing for easier setup, movement and storage. The Xpress Epoxy is applied at approximately 1 mm thickness per layer, and curing time is as low as an hour between coats, resulting in a minimal number of coats needed, little time between coats, and a quick return to service. **864-940-0088; www.picotegroup.com**



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Pipeline Renewal Technologies SpeedyLight+

SpeedyLight+ from Pipeline Renewal Technologies is LED-based UV light-curing technology for trenchless pipe rehab that requires less time and energy and is less disruptive to communities

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Spartan Tool LightRay LR3

The **LightRay LR3** LED UV system, a collaboration between **Spartan Tool** and **Waterline Renewal Technologies**, provides the time and flexibility to install, then cures in as little as 10 minutes when the light is activated. The technology can significantly reduce costs and risks when compared to traditional thermo-setting or ambient-cured CIPP liners, creating new opportunities for drain cleaning contractors. The curing process doesn't start until the UV light is activated, giving the operator time to place and readjust the liner in the pipe as needed. Its non-VOC resin is pre-impregnated into the high-performance fiberglass liner and shipped ready to install, so there's no mixing or measuring of resin. **800-435-3866; www.spartantool.com**



Warrior Trenchless Solutions Thermoform

Thermoform from **Warrior Trenchless Solutions** is a PVC-alloy structural pipe lining system designed for the trenchless rehabilitation of failing sewer and culvert pipes. It is an environmentally friendly, styrene-free thermoplastic. There are no harmful emissions, and it does



not rely on any chemical reaction during installation. Factory-controlled production with rigorous material testing ensures a consistent quality product that conforms to and exceeds the expected standards. The material is highly flexible, allowing it to expand and fit tightly to the host pipe, including changes in shape and dimensions. It is produced in sizes ranging from 4 to 36 inches in diameter, and the wall thickness can be varied according to the application. All installers must be accredited and audited to ensure the highest quality work possible. **716-601-7760; www.thermoformliner.com**

Rehabilitation

CPI Products URS1

The **URS1** roller skid from **CPI Products** protects a wide variety of push cameras and enables them to safely go further down the pipe. A durable plastic enclosure around the camera body with wheels enables the cameras to move smoothly down the pipe, around corners and seams from 6- to 12-inch pipes. It has movable arms that expand and contract to center the camera and jump over debris, seams and negotiate elbows and maneuver around bends. A waterproof LED light kit is available to improve the camera image, and a large wheel kit enables it to be centered in pipes up to 14 inches in diameter. Cameras up to 2 inches fit inside, and for larger cameras the Endzo adapter can handle camera heads up to 2.5 inches. **413-443-0925; www.cplasprouds.com**



Enz USA 10.125TR Turbine

With operating flows as low as 13 gpm at 2,000 psi, the **Enz USA 10.125TR Turbine** nozzle is a powerful cleaning tool. The turbine design allows for lower flow and less water usage while still maintaining high torque for effective pipe cleaning in lines ranging from 5 to 12 inches. Because of its sealed bearings, this nozzle can be operated with both clean and recycled water while being relatively maintenance-free. This compact, efficient nozzle is a powerful root remover and conquers grease, solids, mineral deposits, concrete and grout. Its complete kit offers a selection of pre-cut chains, skids and two head styles to competently clean pipes efficiently. **877-369-8721; www.enz.com**



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Hydra-Flex Reaper

The **Reaper** from **Hydra-Flex** is built for residential plumbing all the way to mainline cleaning. The 1/4-inch version is built for 2- to 4-inch pipes, 3/8-inch is built for 3- to 6-inch pipes, 1/2-inch for 4- to 8-inch pipes, and the 1-inch for 6- to 18-inch pipes. These tools are built with optimized spray angles designed for maximum pulling, thrusting and cleaning power. Most have a 30-degree front rotating stream, while the 3/8-inch version has a 24-degree stream, and all have 20-degree rear jets. The nozzles are built with a stainless-steel housing and tungsten carbide wear surfaces, which make them durable to take on roots, blockages, paraffin wax and FOG in the harshest environments, and all are field repairable. 952-808-3640; www.hydraflexinc.com



Milwaukee Tool M18 FUEL High Speed Chain Snake

Delivering full power at max distance, **Milwaukee Tool's M18 FUEL High Speed Chain Snake** for 1 1/2 to 4-inch pipes can descale up to 75 feet out for the easiest, most controlled wall-to-wall clean. It has a variable speed dial and durable electronic foot pedal for more control in the line, along with a mechanical clutch to protect the cable in the application. The partially enclosed drum allows for mess containment and easy access for cable cleaning and field repair. The telescoping handle and the durable wheelbase provide easy transportation on and off the job site. With the power to complete multiple jobs on one charge, the chain snake can clear up to 150-feet of scale buildup when paired with an M18 REDLITHIUM HIGH OUTPUT HD 12.0 battery pack. 800-729-3878; www.milwaukeetool.com



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Currahee Cutters 2.0 from CUES provide a number of solutions for pipe inspection and rehabilitation – from clearing blockages, debris, protruding laterals, and roots, to reinstating laterals in a CIPP liner. The cutters function in a range of 5.25- through 12-inch pipe, are equally effective in CIPP or fold-and-form liners and can be installed on a K2 truck-mounted cutter system. The system performs optimally using 1,000 to 1,500 feet of cable and is operated with the CUES gamepad controller. 800-327-7791; www.cuesinc.com

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Ken Dickerson

You've Planned a Vacation, Does Your Plumbing Need to Know?

From turning off components to cleaning, there are several options you can do to prepare your water system for non use for a day or longer

By Ken Dickerson

I've always thought that it was our job to be the expert in plumbing and inform the public of everything they want to know about our trade. Now don't get me wrong, some of our customers truly don't care what it's like to be a plumber. All they want is for you to be on time and fix their problem.

However, there are many of our customers that really appreciate every word that comes out of our mouth. When they listen, I like to bring up how they can save money and get some preventive maintenance done all in one shot.

TURNING WATER OFF AND PERFORMING MAINTENANCE

I don't know about you, but I have this incredible fear of a waterline leaking or a toilet running the entire time I'm on a vacation. Between having property damage or just putting all that extra water in my private onsite wastewater treatment system, I always turn my water off if I'm going to be gone for over 24 hours.

Now since my water is off, is there anything I should be doing to my plumbing system that will help with preventive maintenance? Now is a great time to be replacing filters, whether for a RO system or an entire house.

The one piece to the plumbing system that often gets overlooked until it's too late is the water heater. Is there anything that I can do with my water heater that doesn't

take much time for maintenance that I can do prior to a vacation? This is something we can sell as a service or have the owners do themselves. Water heaters require annual drainage to help prevent buildup in the water heater itself making them more efficient. So, prior to a vacation is a great time to drain down the water heater. And with what we know about water age, it's a great idea to start with fresh water when we come back from vacation.

WASTE OF ENERGY?

I know what you're thinking, isn't that a waste of water and energy? Yes, technically it is a waste of water. In the future, I will talk about how water age affects our health maybe more than we know or want to know. Now let's truly look at the energy cost. What is the temperature loss per hour on a no-flow water heater? While there is no exact number for degree loss per hour, the approximation is about 1 degree per hour. We've come a long way with the insulation of a water heater.

So, if you are on vacation for one week, the degree loss during that time would be 168 degrees, since you're gone 168 hours. If the temperature drop between firing cycles is 10 degrees, from off at 120 degrees and on at 110 degrees, that means your water heater will turn on approximately 17 times when there is a no-flow situation. This is also not including a circulation pump and return line that will lose Btus and make the water heater cycle even more times. You should always turn it off before you leave for a vacation.

What is the startup gas usage to raise the water temperature 60 degrees? I am from Wisconsin where the incoming water is usually around 55 degrees.

Fifty gallons of water heater weighs 415 pounds, one Btu will raise one pound of water one degree, so to heat the 50 gallons of water to raise the temperature 60 degrees will use approximately 24,900 Btu. If you leave your water heater on it will cycle 17 different times and use about 4,150

Between having property damage or just putting all that extra water in my private onsite wastewater treatment system, I always turn my water off if I'm going to be gone for over 24 hours.



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Btu per cycle using 70,550 Btus when no one is even home. Six different cycles would equal the same Btu's as one cycle of raising water temperature 60 degrees. That would be the same as 2.5 days. So, once you are on a vacation and have a no-flow condition of 2.5 days or greater it would be more cost efficient to turn off the water heater and once you get home let it fire up and raise the temperature 60 degrees in one cycle.

OTHER CHECKS AND MAINTENANCE

When you are draining down a water heater it's a great time to actuate the temperature and pressure relief valve. Water heaters are required to have a T&P relief valve for safety. In order to maintain the safety aspect, it is required to be opened at least annually. It should also be replaced every three to five years. I know that some plumbers never want to actuate them because sometimes they will not reseal themselves properly and will leak. I'm here to tell you that it's way more important to see if they work and replace as necessary if it leaks rather than have it blow through the roof like a rocket.

I do mention to my customer what an anode rod is and that it should be checked annually and replaced as needed. When I explain that this is the sacrificial rod that prolongs the life of the tank and that it does fail, they usually want this done. This is one part of the maintenance that I usually tell them needs to be done by a professional.

Since I live where we get a good amount of precipitation annually, I always make sure to check my groundwater sump pump. I check to see if the float can freely move up and down without anything adversely affecting it. I also pour a 5-gallon bucket into the sump to see if it turns on and listen to what it sounds like when it's running. I listen for anything other than a perfect hum.

Most water treatment devices are demand-initiated which shouldn't be a problem if we turned water off prior to vacation, however we may need to turn off the manual day override, most are preset at 14 days but you never know when the last cycle was. 

Ken Dickerson teaches plumbing apprenticeship at Waukesha County Technical College in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He is the 2022 Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin Instructor of the Year. He is also a U.S. Air Force veteran and also a proud husband and father of two. To reach Ken, email editor@plumbermag.com.



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Pipeline and Lateral Rehabilitation

By Craig Mandli

Senior living community's water supply protected by insertion valve



Problem: When engineers at the Santa Margarita Water District in Las Flores, California, identified a need for a new control point near a senior living community, they reached out to Western Water Works.

Solution: SMWD had heard of the benefits of the **Advanced Valve Technologies EZ Valve** insertion valve and requested a demonstration of the system. Once that was complete, they decided to invest in the installation equipment required along with valves for this project and those in the future. They wanted to create a new isolation point on the 8-inch asbestos concrete pipeline to ensure that as and when maintenance and repairs were required, they would be able to safeguard the water supply of the 130 properties within the senior living community. EZ Valves are insertion valves that are installed without the need to shut off the water flow. The valves use integrated isolation gates, which when closed after a slot has been milled across the pipe, allows the low-profile end milling machine to be removed and the bonnet with a resilient wedge to be installed, all while the flow is maintained.

Result: As well as installing the insertion valve, the team at SMWD accessed Advanced Valve Technologies' training program, which includes an online training workshop followed up by face-to-face training. This means the four-man crew that completed the install are now fully qualified to install further EZ valves across the region. **877-489-4909; www.avtfittings.com**

Electric mini-excavator a fit for indoor environments



Problem: Jim Brinkman, owner of Brinkman Plumbing Contractors in Quincy, Illinois, does a lot of plumbing excavation, and his team of 30 employees often needs to work in challenging indoor environments like factories, restaurants and other commercial buildings. Brinkman asked Luby Equipment for recommendations on an emissions-free machine that could operate safely in any indoor environment and fit through a 36-inch doorway.

Solution: The **CASE Construction Equipment CX15EV** electric mini-excavator was the right fit. The compact, 1.5 metric-ton unit gives contractors a powerful machine for working in indoor and outdoor environments where a minimal footprint is required. It fits through almost any entryway and offers the same working performance as a diesel machine — all while delivering the benefits of electrified construction equipment: zero on-site emissions, minimized noise and less maintenance. It is easy to transport and can operate in a wide range of environments. It's also compatible with numerous attachments — including various buckets, augers and hydraulic hammers — making it an extremely versatile tool for getting more work done efficiently. And, with no diesel engine, contractors can reduce downtime and improve productivity with simplified daily checks and maintenance.

Result: "This excavator is going to make us more competitive and will save us a lot of headache, time and backache on indoor jobs," Brinkman says. "This machine comes with a lot of advantages. It's safer for our guys and it's more productive. It's a win all the way." **866-542-2736; www.casece.com**

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Pipe patching saves koi pond



Problem: An Oklahoma homeowner reached out to Antonio Delacerda, master plumber, contractor and owner of A-Team Plumbing after reaching out to several plumbers about an issue he was having at his home that was threatening to destroy his koi fishpond in the repair process. “It turned out it was the city main that was cracked, and the customer’s sewer line where the tee met the city line needed repair and it was under the koi pond,” says Delacerda. “They didn’t want to dig up their pond, but the city said they had to until we were able to help.”

Solution: The A-Team decided to utilize the **RIDGID Pipe Patching System**, an all-inclusive, start-to-finish solution that can perform up to 6-foot fiberglass repairs in 2- to 6-inch pipe in straight sections, bends, transitions and P-traps. Pipe patching is an efficient, durable repair solution that saves time and labor, while also providing minimal disturbance to landscaping and business productivity, making it suitable for residential, commercial and industrial markets.

Result: “We made two holes 10 to 15 feet in from the pond and then put in a 3-foot patch and we saved the fish!” says Antonio, who prefers to do pipe patching to not disrupt the client’s yard. “All you have to do is access a clean-out; from the clean-out you can then push that patch into place.”
800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com

Structural liner used to rehabilitate 220 linear feet of storm pipe



Problem: The city of Carmel, Indiana was in a dire situation when a rusted water pipe ruptured, creating a massive sinkhole in the road at a major intersection. Fortunately, officers arrived at the scene and secured the area surrounding the 12-by-18-foot hole before any accidents occurred. The storm pipe was removed and replaced, but the city was faced with another obstacle: there were another 220 linear feet of storm pipe from the replaced section to a drainage lake that could collapse at any time.

Solution: Removing the remaining pipe was not a practical option due to the location of utilities in the area. Conco Spray Solutions provided the city with an alternative solution: a structural liner that would hold infiltration back and provide a long-term structural solution with a 50-year design life. Once the lake was pumped down, the Conco team prepared the pipe. Conco pressure washed the pipe surface at 5000 psi. Mortar was then used to repair the rusted voids in the invert and eventually, a chemical grout was utilized. Conditions dictated a fully deteriorated protocol with H20 traffic load. **Sprayroq’s SprayWall** lining was applied at a thickness of approximately 630 mils.

Result: By providing quick rehabilitation and not removing the existing structure, Conco Spray Solutions minimized the disruption of traffic flow and preserved the natural landscape.
205-957-0020; www.sprayroq.com

Pipe bursting used for hillside sewer easement replacement



Problem: Roughly 200 linear feet of 12-inch clay sanitary sewer main connecting Marietta Drive and Del Vale Avenue in San Francisco was taking on a lot of groundwater on a steep hillside easement between the two streets. A good portion of this easement was steep enough to make open excavation impractical, or at least a significantly more complicated last resort.

Solution: Flores Construction of San Francisco called for pipe bursting as the best and most cost-effective option for this easement project. They subcontracted TRIC Tools to do the sewer replacement with their M100 pipe bursting assembly.

Result: The Flores crew worked with TRIC technicians over a four-day period, replacing the old 12-inch clay line in two stages and connecting four brick manholes. Ground conditions were ideal, allowing the relatively short bursting head assembly and flexible 12-inch SDR17 HDPE replacement pipe to follow elevational changes and stay inside the existing pipe path, minimizing excavation in the street and facilitating a very efficient easement rehabilitation. 888-883-8742; www.trictools.com

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NIBCO promotes Chris Mason to senior vice president, supply chain

NIBCO INC. has promoted Chris Mason to senior vice president, supply chain. In his new role, Mason will be responsible for product engineering, advanced technology, continuous improvement, safety and compliance, global procurement as well as the Matco-Norca, SVF Flow Controls and Webstone teams. Mason will continue to report to Ashley Martin, president and COO of NIBCO. Mason joined NIBCO in 1994 as an industrial engineer. During his career at NIBCO, he held several positions of increasing responsibility including productivity improvement manager; project manager, packaging services; director, supply chain eBusiness; operations manager, Columbus Distribution Center; project integration manager, CPI project; vice president, supply management; vice president, global procurement and business development; and vice president, human resources. He was promoted to his most recent role as vice president, supply chain services in October 2015.



Bradford White joins Junior Achievement celebrate innovative curriculum

Bradford White joined Junior Achievement of the Michigan Great Lakes and other supporting area organizations to celebrate a ribbon cutting for the Karl & Susan Hascall JA Finance Park on Dec. 4. Bradford White supports JA Finance Park through Industry Forward, its signature charitable giving initiative, developed to help advance workforce development and increase public awareness of career opportunities in the plumbing and HVAC industries. Bradford White has pledged \$125,000 over the next five years as a storefront partner in the “home improvement” category. At JA Finance Park, middle and high school students can learn about the financial consequences of life choices as they’re introduced to important information about careers in STEM and the skilled trades.

APS partners with Rich Galgano and Jake Galgano

American Pipelining Supplies announced the acquisition of a minority ownership stake by Rich Galgano and Jake Galgano of Carefree Capital. In a release, Jake Saltzman, CEO of APS, says, “We are thrilled to join forces with the Galgano’s. Our combined vision and leadership will introduce a new dynamic of innovation and growth at APS. Leveraging Galganos manufacturing, sales and support expertise, coupled with our strong focus on industry education and training, positions us to elevate our client services to unprecedented levels. We are excited for what the future holds as we embark on this transformative journey together.”

Franklin Water Treatment acquires Action Manufacturing and Supply

Franklin Electric announced that its wholly-owned subsidiary, Franklin Water Treatment, has acquired the assets of Action Manufacturing and Supply, a manufacturer and wholesale distributor of residential water conditioning, filtration, and indoor/outdoor aeration systems with operations in Florida and North Carolina. The operating results of the acquired business will be reported in the company’s Water Systems business segment.

Jones Stephens welcomes Paul Tuff as VP of sales

Paul Tuff joined Jones Stephens as vice president of sales in August. Bringing over 30 years’ experience in the industry, he has worked extensively with manufacturers and wholesale distributors in the plumbing industry across the country. He most recently held the title of senior director for residential trade for a large coast-to-coast manufacturer/distributor.

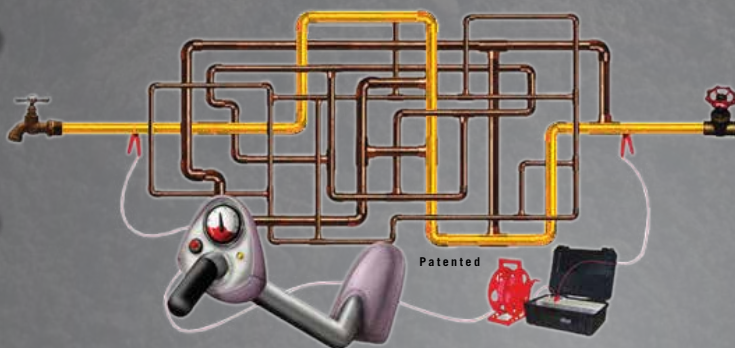


Legend Valve and Fitting announces sale to ESOP

Legend Valve announced it has completed the sale of the company to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. The ESOP transaction was officially closed on Nov. 14, 2023, making Legend Valve and Fitting an employee-owned company. This decision was driven by the desire to align the employees’ interests with the business’s overall success, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration.

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It's a jumble out there.

www.Pulsar2000.com
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Zoom Drain appoints Joseph Schneeweis as VP of franchise operations

Zoom Drain has appointed Joseph Schneeweis as vice president of franchise operations to lead the company through its next phase of growth. Schneeweis comes to Zoom Drain after serving several years as the franchise operations manager of ServiceMaster Corp., an umbrella franchisor with seven brands consisting of more than 3,200 franchisees across 4,600 locations.



and advanced within the organization to regional manager where he was responsible for growing the company's product portfolio in Eastern Canada. Neil most recently worked with Taylor Walraven, onboarding the Walraven family of products within the Canadian market. 📧

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GWBD Operations names Chad Neil national sales manager - Canada

GWBD Operations, a holding company that owns PRIER Products, Stern-Williams and FIAT Products, announced that Chad Neil is assuming the role as national sales manager - Canada for the company based in Grandview, Missouri. With over 25 years' sales experience throughout the Canadian market, his professional career began back in 1999 as a customer service rep for Weil-McLain. He found his way to RWC



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Product Spotlight

Snap-lock coupling provides smooth, leak-free connection

By Craig Mandli

Plumbing is all about trust – which means employing tried and true methods to ensure that pipe connections will not leak. Plumbers are often skeptical about adopting new technology until it checks all the boxes and is proven to work. The 2-Part Snap-Lock Coupling from Exact Fit Coupling checks out.

According to Bobby Ryan, Exact Fit owner and inventor of the fitting, the coupling is the perfect last fitting when doing a drainline installation or as part of a drain line repair. Not only does it provide a fast and permanent solvent-weld solution without compromising inside diameter, it is easy to cut in a wye or sanitary tee to an existing stationary pipe without the use of a flexible rubber coupling. These factors make it ideal for remodels and additions, and installing cleanouts and backwater valves.

“It’s true to its name,” explains Ryan. “When you install it, you get an exact butt-to-butt connection so the inside of the pipe remains smoother than a standard coupling. So when water runs through it, it runs smoothly with no obstructions.”

The coupling is, in essence, an alternative to a rubber coupling when the plumber seeks a true 100% solvent-welded joint. Rubber couplings are susceptible to leaks, movement, offset and root intrusions over time. According to Ryan, the Snap-Lock fitting removes the weakest link from the situation because it’s solvent-welded.



“In the world of plumbing repairs, it makes a permanent repair versus a repair that could potentially be affected by roots in the future when used underground,” he says. “It’s a connection that doesn’t flex like with a rubber coupling because it’s a welded connection like any other plastic drain line connection.”

The coupling is currently available in ABS in 3- and 4-inch sizes with PVC and additional sizes coming soon. Ryan says it is ideal for use in new construction, as it allows plumbers to work from both directions and can come to a common point, where the pipes are both stationary.

“Plumbers know that rubber couplings are the weakest point in the drain system,” he says. “Our fitting removes the weakest link from the situation because it’s solvent-welded like any other coupling. In addition, plumbers who have used our product tell us it makes the job go faster.”
888-893-9228; www.exactfitcoupling.com

SFA Saniflo Sanipit 24 GR retrofit pump kit

Designed to replace faulty sewage pumps and its components from major manufacturers in North America, the new Sanipit 24GR offers an easy, mess-free and reliable replacement solution. The new retrofit pump kit offers a built-in 1 hp grinder motor and air pressure mechanism that fits most 24-inch basins. With the ability to retrofit into 24-inch basins from Liberty Pumps, Zoeller and Myers, the pump



kit offers versatility and compatibility with existing pump systems. The current basin stays in place while the Sanipit 24GRs retrofit cover easily adapts to it. One of the key differentiators of the Sanipit 24GR is its ability to create a dry cavity within the pit. SFA Saniflo’s design keeps the components and the motor separate, ensuring a hassle-free and mess-free experience for plumbing installers and service technicians. **800-571-8191; www.saniflo.com**

HammerHead Trenchless Helium Scrim liner

The Helium Scrim liner by HammerHead is a reinforced liner that minimizes longitudinal stretch and assures accurate inversion lengths. It is engineered to reduce overshooting, allowing users to hit an exact mark without going into the main or needing to remove excess liner. The product requires lower inversion pressure, making it easier to invert onsite. The Helium can be used with all curing methods, a trait that is reflected in the name: heat (HE); light cure (LI) and ambient (AM). Currently available in 4-inch and 6-inch diameters, Helium Scrim is suitable for straight shot applications and bends up to 45 degrees. The product will be available in either dry rolls or prewet-out options and sold in two roll lengths: 165 feet and 330 feet. **800-331-6653; www.hammerheadtrenchless.com**



Watts ArmorTek advanced coating system for ACVs

The ArmorTek advanced coating system for ACVs from Watts comes with an eight-year microbiologically induced corrosion warranty. The technology is now available on Watts Classic and Mustang valves, providing three layers of protection to create an effective barrier, dramatically increasing resistance to corrosion. Watts ArmorTek includes an anti-corrosion primer containing an electrochemical corrosion inhibitor that significantly slows the spread of corrosion should the metal substrate become exposed from wear or impact. It also features a microbial inhibitor which curbs the growth of bacteria that causes microbial-induced corrosion. This further slows the spread of corrosion and limits the growth of tubercles that can clog or foul downstream equipment. ArmorTek also has a robust topcoat specially designed to bond to the primer below, providing a high-strength barrier between the iron substrate and water. **978-688-1811; www.watts.com**



Rheem Maximus high-efficiency smart water heaters

Rheem introduced two new products within its Maximus lineup of super high-efficiency gas water heaters, the Maximus Heavy Duty with LeakSense and the Maximus plus models. The HD with LeakSense is a high-capacity offering at 75 gallons. It provides the same efficiency, performance features and smart options as the original



Maximus with LeakSense in a high-capacity version for homes with three or more bedrooms. The MaxMode feature gives homeowners up to 15% more hot water when demand is high. The Maximus plus models are designed to give homeowners a lower cost, super high-efficiency option with powerful performance. Available in 40- and 50-gallon sizes, the new models provide the same performance found in premium models but with streamlined features, allowing homeowners to get the most for their money. **800-621-5622; www.rheem.com**

Matco-Norca braided stainless steel closet connectors

Matco-Norca has expanded its line braided stainless steel closet connectors, and now offers a new length of 16 inches. Previously available in 9-, 12- and 20-inch (brass nut only) the new 16-inch connector gives an extra option for those hard-to-reach spots. The durable, braided closet connector requires no cutting or soldering during installation and has a reinforced PVC inner hose which is braided stainless steel. Available with chrome brass nuts or chrome plastic nuts, both are UPC certified. **800-431-2082; www.matco-norca.com**



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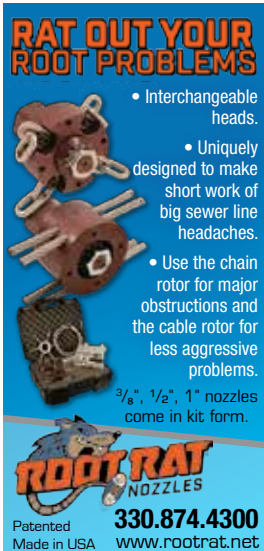


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WaterReuse Symposium, Hilton Denver City Center, Colorado. Visit watereuse.org/news-events/conferences/2024-watereuse-symposium/

March 11-14

Air Conditioning Contractors of America 2023 Conference & Expo, Universal Orlando's Sapphire Falls Resort, Florida. Visit accconference.com

March 17-21

Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCCA) Annual Convention, JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes, Florida. Visit mcaa.org/events/calendar/mcaa-annual-convention-2024/

March 22

Illinois PHCC EXPO North, Drury Lane Conference Center, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. Visit ilphcc.com/expo

March 26 - 28

National Hardware Show, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Visit nationalhardwareshow.com

April 24-25

Dallas Build Expo, Dallas Market Hall, Dallas. Visit buildexpousa.com/dallas-build-expo/

May 14-15

Emerging Water Technologies Symposium, Scottsdale Plaza and Villas, Arizona. Visit ewts.org

May 22-23

Austin Build Expo, Palmer Events Center, Austin, Texas. Visit buildexpousa.com/austin-build-expo

June 10-12

Women in the Mechanical Industry 2024 Conference, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. Visit mcaa.org/events

June 10-13

AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition, Anaheim Convention Center, California. Visit <https://events.awwa.org>

June 16-18

Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating Annual Business Conference, Delta Grand Okanagan Resort, Kelowna, British Columbia. Visit www.ciph.com

June 26-27

Houston Build Expo, NRG Park Center (Hall E1/E3), Houston. Visit buildexpousa.com/houston-build-expo/

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