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## TDI's Block 185 Work Will Invite Occupants to Sail Away

BY JOHN MESENBRINK OF CONTRACTOR'S STAFF

AUSTIN, TX — There is a new eye-catching addition to the Austin skyline. Block 185—purported future home to a tech giant—is a 38-story building with 814,000 sq. ft. of usable space, with a striking, sail-inspired envelope that will cushion the gentle winds sweeping off of Lady Bird Lake.

"It's a landmark building in the downtown Austin skyline," says Shaun Joseph, Austin  
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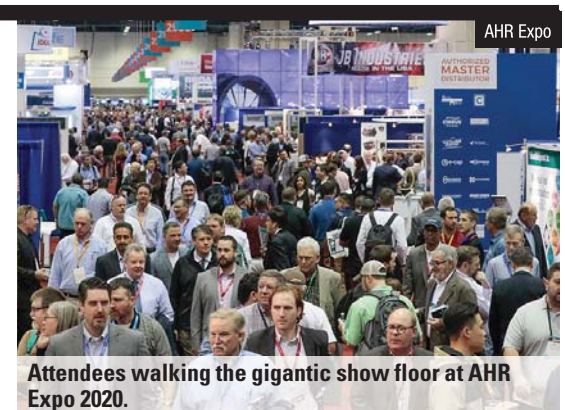
Block 185, still under construction, is attempting to achieve a LEED Gold Rating under LEED v4 for BD+C: Core and Shell.

## The Big Show is Back - AHR Expo Returns to Las Vegas

SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

LAS VEGAS, NV — The last Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Expo was held in early February, 2020, in Orlando, FL, just as the coronavirus was beginning to make its impact felt. The 2020 Show welcomed over 50,000 attendees, and more than 1,900 exhibiting companies (577 international and 295 first time exhibitors).

By 2021, the pandemic was in full effect, and the event co-sponsors, ASHRAE  
 ▶ Turn to AHR, page 64



Attendees walking the gigantic show floor at AHR Expo 2020.

## VMA Announces New Leadership

SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

WASHINGTON, DC — The Valve Manufacturers Association of America membership elected the 2021-2022 Board of Directors, following the announcement of the slate of candidates at its Annual Meeting, which took place in October. VMA's Chairman of the Board for the 2021-2022 year is Ron Warren, President/COO of Bray International Inc., based out of Houston.

Warren has over forty-five years of international experience in the flow control  
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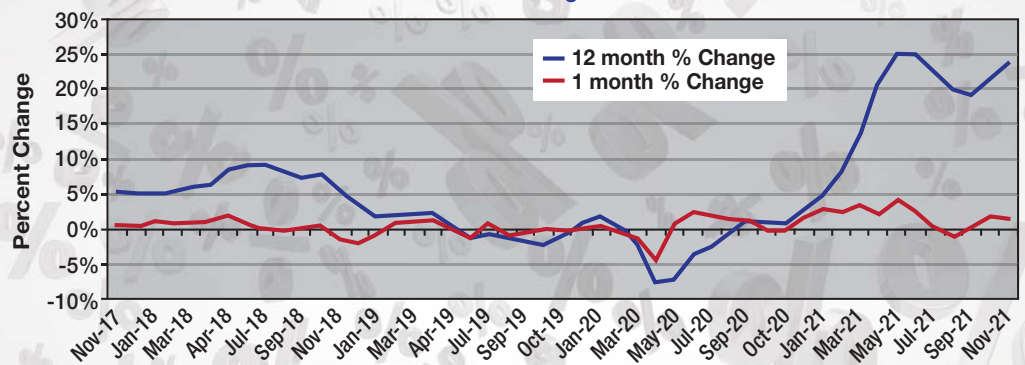


Ron Warren

### CONTRACTOR INFOCUS

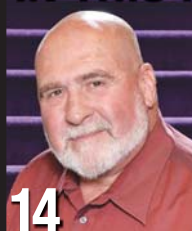
#### Producer Price Index Percent Change Inputs to Construction Industries

November 2017 through November 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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# Reedy Industries Acquires Hays Service

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DEERFIELD, IL — (GLOBE NEWS-WIRE) — Reedy Industries, a leader in commercial and industrial HVAC, plumbing, and building controls services, has acquired Hays Service, a fourth-generation, family-owned HVAC services company in Macon, Georgia. With this acquisition, Reedy Industries expands their services density in the Southeastern U.S., maintaining focus on meeting the needs of customers in the commercial, industrial, health care, education, government, and senior living market segments.



Founded in 1945, Hays enjoys a proud heritage of customer loyalty, safety and operational excellence. The company provides HVAC maintenance services, including preventative and predictive maintenance programs, energy solutions, project design and retrofit, and specialized services, including

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# John W. Danforth Company Lends Helping Hand to Salvation Army

SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

BUFFALO, NY – With a rush of holiday magic, a local company made a special delivery today for Western New York families.

Employees from the John W. Danforth Company, one of the largest mechanical contractors in the northeast, pulled up in front of the Salvation Army headquarters on Main Street in a firetruck filled with donated items. In all, the company delivered more than 100 toys, blankets, hats

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Members of the John W. Danforth team making a delivery to the Salvation Army in the company fire truck.

# Hiller Donates Over \$10,500 in Toys to Toys for Tots

SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

Hiller Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electrical (Hiller), the largest residential plumbing, HVAC, and electrical provider, in the Tennessee region, has partnered with Toys for Tots for the third consecutive year. During the holiday promotion, Hiller is donating toys to Toys for Tots with the purchase of each new tankless water heater. This year,

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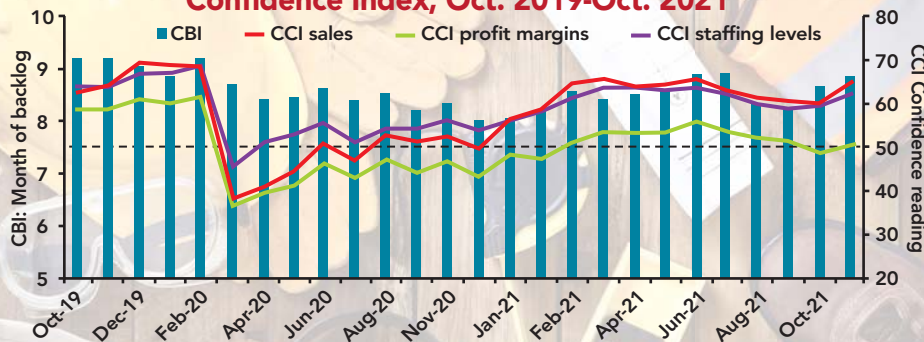
# CONTRACTOR

(ISSN 0897-7135)  
 Canadian GST #R1264431964. Volume 67, Number 1 is published monthly by Endeavor Business Media, 1233 Janesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, WI, 53538. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Atkinson, WI, and at additional mailing offices.  
 Postmaster: send address changes to P.O. Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257 U.S.; call 847-513-6022 (U.S.) or Toll Free 866-505-7173 (Outside U.S.), Fax 847-291-4816 or e-mail to contractor@omeda.com.  
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## CONTRACTOR INFOCUS

### ABC Construction Backlog Indicator & Construction Confidence Index, Oct. 2019-Oct. 2021



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In Brief

**Niagara**, a leader in high-performance, high-efficiency, water-saving toilets, accepted a 2021 SEAL (Sustainability, Environmental Achievement & Leadership) Business Sustainability Award under the Sustainable Product Award Category. Niagara is the first and only plumbing manufacturer to bring home this prestigious honor.

**WorkWave**, a provider of SaaS software solutions is expanding its Board of Directors with the appointment of three recognized industry leaders: Sheryl Hoskins, Sejal Pietrzak and Eric Palmer. Expanding the existing board from four members to seven reflects the company's continued growth during a period of increased investment and acquisition.

Leading merit shop mechanical services contractor **Manhattan Mechanical Services** was recently awarded the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association (TRMA) Gold Award for a second consecutive year. TRMA, the leading manufacturing association in the Chicagoland area, focuses on promoting manufacturing excellence.

In November, **The Unified Group** hosted its 2021 Annual Meeting & Owners' Forum in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Owners, presidents, CEOs and more leaders from 23 member companies nationwide flew to Puerto Rico for to take part in the informative sessions and enjoy the opportunity to reconnect with friends and meet new members.

**LIXIL**, leading plumbing manufacturer and home to iconic kitchen and bath brand American Standard, has been listed on CDP's Water Security A List, leading the way to a net-zero, nature positive and equitable future. The Water Security A List is published by CDP, a global non-profit organization that runs the world's leading environmental disclosure platform.

**The U.S. Green Building Council** has announced that the **Institute for Market Transformation to Sustainability** has assumed ownership and management of the RELi resilient building and design standard. The system was developed in 2012 by design firm Perkins+Will, MTS and others and was operated under USGBC since 2017.

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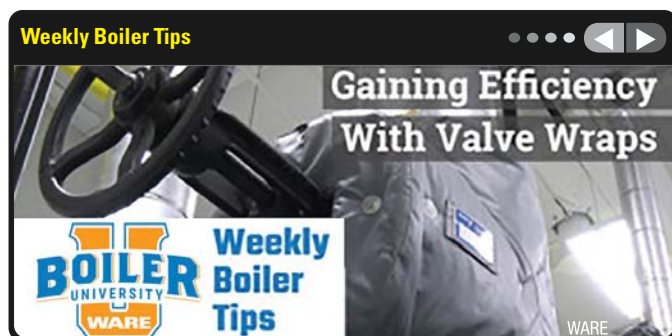
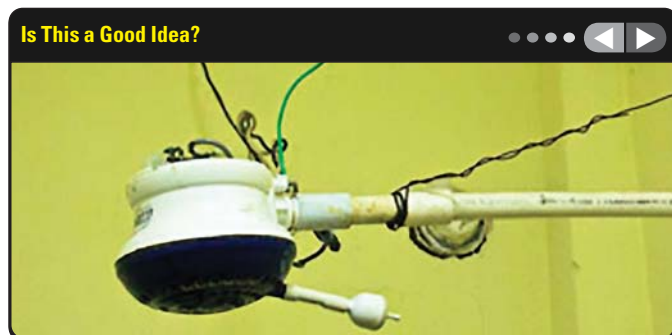
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## Top Stories

- Rocking AHRExpo 2022 in Las Vegas
- Munch's Supply Acquires Ontario-based TML Supply
- Liane Randolph to Present Keynote Address at Green Truck Summit 2022
- Limbach Holdings Acquires Jake Marshall, LLC

## Videos & Media Galleries



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For the latest news on the federal and local response, code and regulation developments, opinions and best practices from industry experts and more, bookmark CONTRACTOR'S Coronavirus News Page: [www.contractormag.com/covid-19](http://www.contractormag.com/covid-19).

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## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

- ▶ Want to know what is on the mind of Ed O'Connell, business coach and consultant?
- ▶ Want to know about how to get the flow rates right in hydronics from master trainer Steve Swanson?
- ▶ Want to know what the 14 characteristics are of a professional plumbing company? Matt Michel will tell you.

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# Economic Forecast 2022

SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR



**M**ost contractors and subcontractors are looking back at a better-than-expected 2021. After the bottom fell out in the first half of 2020 when coronavirus-related shutdowns stalled the nation, the economy came roaring back in the second half with enough demand—driven mainly by consumer spending—to carry over into 2021.

The coronavirus spurred new housing starts; many workers, suddenly gone virtual and untethered from their physical workplaces, saw the opportunity to relocate and took it. Many city dwellers suddenly denied access to the things they lived in cities for (restaurants, sporting events, entertainment venues, high-rise office buildings) decided to give suburban or even rural living a try. Many who didn't relocate still decided to invest in making their baths and kitchens—places they reasoned they'd be spending a lot more time in—more comfortable, giving a boost to the remodeling market.

But now, as the country starts in on its third year of the pandemic, most of that pent-up demand has been met.

While growth will continue in 2022—and while another recession seems unlikely—the rate of growth will most likely decrease.

Here are a few key indicators that support that view, followed by a few “wild cards” to keep in mind as we start 2022.

## GDP

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis ([www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov)), real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 2.3 percent in the third quarter of 2021, following an increase of 6.7 percent in the second quarter. The increase was revised up 0.2 percentage point from the “second” estimate released in November. This deceleration in real GDP in the third quarter was led by a slowdown in consumer spending.

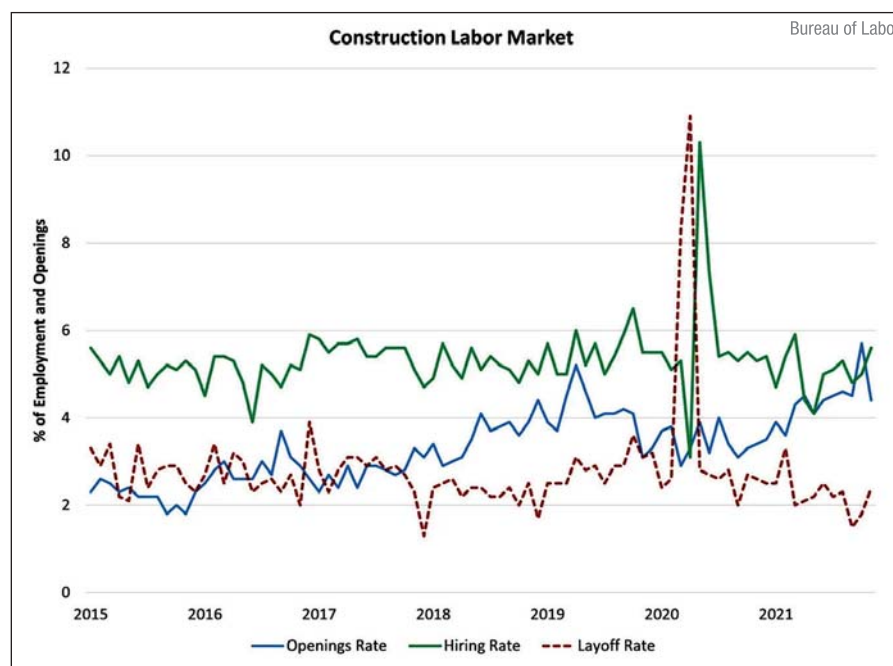
Also in the third quarter, government assistance payments in the form of forgivable loans to businesses, grants to state and local governments, and social benefits to households all decreased, a tapering off from assistance programs that were pushed out during the initial

phase of the pandemic. With the current resurgence of cases thanks to the new Omicron variant, it remains to be seen if this assistance will be ramped back up.

According to investment firm Goldman Sachs, the firm now sees 2022 gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.8%, down from 4.2% previously on a full year basis, and Q4/Q4 growth of 2.9%, down from 3.3% before. Most

percent in Q1 2022 before decelerating to 3.8 percent by the end of 2022.

Keep in mind, a certain amount of inflation is already “priced into” the economy. Also, if wages are keeping pace with inflation, it blunts the effect of rising prices. Inflation can also motivate consumers to buy and invest NOW, rather than wait for time to rob their money of value.



**Demand will most likely flatten, labor remains tight, and the virus is still the wildcard.**

of the predicted deceleration is, again, due to concerns around the coronavirus and its new variants.

## Inflation

Annual inflation rate in the US accelerated to 6.8% in November of 2021, the highest since June of 1982, and in line with forecasts. It marks the 9th consecutive month the inflation stays above the Fed's 2% target. Some of the reasons for increase included a rally in global commodities, rising demand, wage pressures, and supply chain disruptions.

Projections from mortgage lender Fannie Mae have inflation averaging 7.0

The classic method of dealing with rising inflation is through monetary policy. Fannie Mae expects 25 basis point Fed interest rate hikes in the second and fourth quarters of 2022 and continuing quarterly through 2023. There may be more aggressive tightening if inflation fails to decelerate in coming months due to supply chain issues taking longer to resolve, consumer spending remaining more robust, or if energy prices spike. More expensive loans may make consumers less likely to purchase—but the *immediate prospect* of more expensive loans, again, may push them to make that purchase sooner, rather than later.

## Residential Construction

Total home sales, driven by a late-year surge in the sale of existing homes, are now expected to rise 7.1% in 2021. The compares to projections in the previous year from Fannie Mae of a 5.3% increase. Home sales are forecast to soften in 2022, declining by 1.4% with limited listings and affordability becoming growing constraints for buyers, and then by another 3.8% in 2023.

This jibes closely with information from the National Association of Home Builders. As of November (and due mainly to supply-chain effects) there are 152,000 single-family units authorized but not started construction—up 40.7% from a year ago. The reason for not starting? Supply chain constraints.

In December, single-family builder confidence increased one point to a level 84 (after a three point gain in November) on strong buyer demand, according to the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). After peaking at a level of 90 in November 2021, builders have reported ongoing concerns over elevated lumber and other construction costs, as well as delays in obtaining building materials.

## Commercial Construction

In early January, Associated Builders and Contractors reported that National nonresidential construction spending was virtually unchanged in November month-over-month, according to an analysis of data published by the U.S. Census Bureau. On a seasonally adjusted annualized basis, nonresidential spending totaled \$820.6 billion for the month.

“While the monthly data is overall not jarring, the year-over-year numbers are more noteworthy,” said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. “After declining during much of the pandemic, spending in the office segment has stabilized and is up 3.3% from a year ago. That may reflect data center construction spending more than traditional office space construction, however.”

➤ **Turn to Forecast, page 8**

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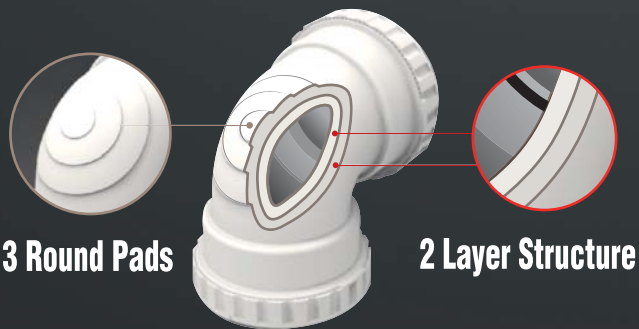
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# Economic Forecast 2022

► **Continued from page 6**

With business travel still slow to return the lodging and hospitality sector will remain subpar for months to come. The nonresidential construction category experiencing the largest year-over-year growth in spending is manufacturing, a reflection of the ongoing efforts of producers to expand supply to meet demand. That growth is expected to carry over into 2022.

## The Supply Chain

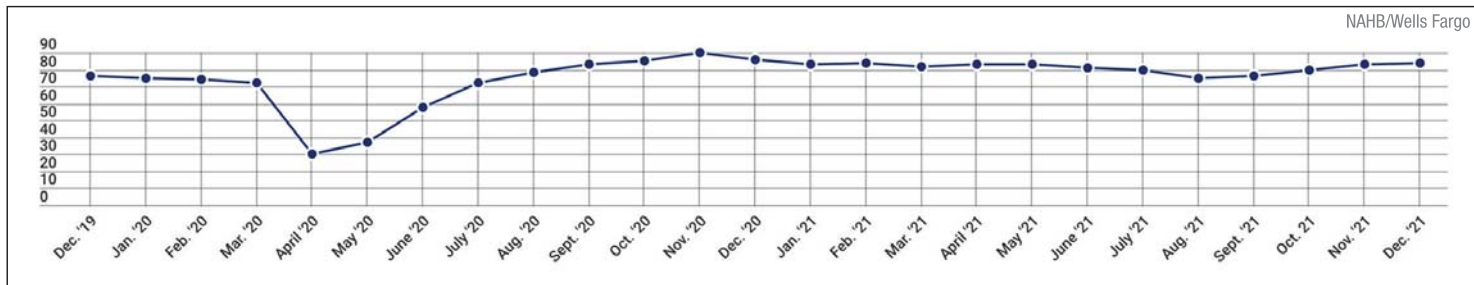
According to the latest data from the American Supply Association, supply chain flows have started to improve for some sectors, but there is still a tremendous backlog to work through. There are still nearly two million containers still headed inbound into the United States, which will help replenish inventories in some sectors (those without chronic raw material shortages).

Steel, particularly supplies of carbon steel pipe, has been in limited supply. Hot-rolled coil prices have fallen 12% in the last month, 20% off its one-year high, and lead times have returned to their historical norms. Carbon steel pipe prices are still holding firm, but the ASA anticipates prices to decline soon. In general, bearish sentiments are prevalent in the carbon steel market.

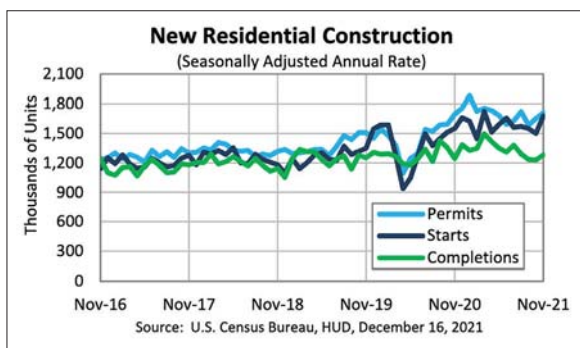
President Biden agreed to allow the UK to import more than 3 million annual tons of steel tariff-free. Japan and Korea have asked for a similar allowance. Increasing steel imports could help lower costs but may cost U.S. jobs.

As for iron, Tyler and Charlotte Pipe, the two leading domestic producers of cast-iron pipe and fittings, have settled on list price increases beginning in January 2022; superseding September, 2021 list pricing. No-hub coupling prices have remained stable since Sept. of 2021.

Thermoplastic PVF manufacturers are still seeing rolling product and pricing disruptions heading into 2022. The pace of price increases has slowed as resin plants push to catch up to



The NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) is based on a monthly survey of NAHB members that asks respondents to rate market conditions for the sale of new homes at the present time and in the next six months.



market demand. Facilities damaged during winter storms in Texas back in February are largely back to fully operational. Global shipping and raw material supply concerns will continue to stress product availability forecasts.

CPVC pipe and fittings realized a 5%-10% increase in late Q4 2021 related to raw material availability tied to shipping delays. PVC will likely see an increase in early Q1 related to the availability of critical additives.

For more information and updates on prices throughout the year, visit the ASA web site at [www.asa.net](http://www.asa.net).

## The Labor Market

In November the Labor Department reported that an unprecedented 4.5 million Americans, or about 3% of the US workforce, quit their jobs, matching the high from September. That's up from 4.2 million in October and tops the previous record of 4.4 million in September.

Despite some narratives attributing the mass exodus to Millennials or Gen Z, it is the Baby Boomers that are having the largest impact on the numbers. In 2021, more than five million people over the age of 55 exited the labor force, with about 1.5 million of those choosing to take early retirement.

Hiring in the construction sector remained solid in November, rising to

a 5.6% growth rate. Quits in the construction sector (as reported to the Bureau of the Labor) increased somewhat in construction, rising to 207,000 in November, a data series high.

As difficult as finding and hiring has been in the past decade, 2022 promises to be even more challenging. If there is a silver lining, it's an influx of young people without four-year college degrees into the labor market who have decided to try something better for themselves and their careers than working retail, hospitality or food service.

## Federal Regulation

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in November, record amounts of money will be spent in the coming years on plumbing products and services. That including over \$55 billion to expand access to clean drinking water through new infrastructure and to remove lead service lines. While the bidding process alone may take up all of 2022, many plumbing contractors, large and small, are in position to take on some of that new work.

At the same time, legislation at the state and federal level is, on the one hand, incentivizing alternative energy systems (geothermal and solar), and de-incentivizing fossil fuels such as natural gas. Some areas of California and New York have already outlawed the installation of natural gas appliances (which includes water heaters) in new construction.

The push towards electrification is all part of overall efforts to control CO2 emissions. Expect heat pump systems in particular, and high-efficiency system of all kinds, to see various incentives and subsidies in 2022 and the years ahead.

## The Unexpected

At the time of this writing, hospitalization rates in most states are setting records thanks to the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus. At the same time, death rates have either plateaued or declined. Data from the latest wave of infections show the vaccines have been effective in limiting both the spread of the virus and mitigating the worst of its symptoms.

The unexpected emergence of the new variant combined with its rapid spread has caused a new wave of uncertainty as to what the future will hold, and what the response of elected officials will be. Still, world financial markets seem stable, many posting record highs.

Other areas of concern include foreign affairs. China has shown a new belligerence in the South Pacific and has kept a heavy hand on dissidents in the run-up to the Winter Olympics. North Korea is preparing a new ballistic missile test. Russia appears determined to invade the Ukraine. Any of these could lead to a downturn in the market and possible disruptions to the supply chain.

Domestically, the country remains sharply divided politically. 2022 is a midterm election year, and it looks very likely the Republicans will retake the House. Whether or not this sparks serious violent confrontation—and whether that reaches a level that affects the day-to-day operation of business—is anyone's guess.

The best advice for the coming year was probably given by keynote speaker Conner Lokar at this year's PHCC Connect: "Take a good hard look at your markets and decide if they are heading for a soft landing or a hard landing. Stay on top of aging receivables. Revisit capital expenditure plans."

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# TDI's Block 185 Work Will Invite Occupants to Sail Away

## ► Continued from page 1

Construction Project Manager IV, TDIndustries. “For us, as TDIndustries Austin Construction, it’s our latest entry into larger projects in Austin and a way to put our name as a key contributor in the downtown scene, and it’s exciting to work with developer Trammell Crow, GC DPR Construction and all our other partners on such an impressive building. It’s the start of something special here in Austin, and we’re pleased to put our modern mechanical capabilities to work on such a high-profile stage.”

According to the DPR project team, the shape of the building and the design of our systems meant all items needed to be coordinated early so that long lead items, like the curtainwall, didn’t hold up production of the project.

And that included a concerted effort with everyone on the jobsite. Collaborating with architects Pelli Clarke Pelli and STG Design, the virtual design and construction (VDC) effort was cooperation between TDIndustries, DPR Construction, the interior framing sub, electrician, fire/sprinkler contractor and the controls contractor. “We were probably the largest and led many of the efforts in coming up with solutions,” says Joseph. “We had four to five VDC partners on each call so we could speak on any issues. The teams were all collaborative and forward thinking. We were coming up with solutions, not just pointing out issues.”

## Virtual Design & Construction

According the DPR Construction project team, VDC was a major component in the planning and success of the project. All MEP trades, structural and skin trades modeled content and participated in the BIM effort. With the complex shape of the building, BIM was not only critical for the success of MEP systems, but also structure-to-skin coordination.

TDIndustries’ VDC team coordinated the entire building in 3D. From there, TDIndustries would produce its shop drawings and then it would issue spool drawings to the 85,000-sq.-ft. Dallas prefab shop on what would get fabricated there. “This was a job fully



Off-site staging was a key factor in hitting crucial delivery windows.

**Set to open in May 2022, Block 185, with its sail-inspired exterior design, will become downtown Austin’s tallest office tower.**

modeled—we modeled all our access zones, maintenance areas, around equipment so everything was signed off in 3D prior to any of the construction activities taking place,” Joseph says.

What you won’t see while visiting the building, however, is the work and design detail that went in behind the “bones” of the building. As a design-assist contractor, TDIndustries came in during the planning in February 2019 and expects its work to be substantially completed by spring 2022. “We’re doing the piping, plumbing and sheet metal, and we’ll be there up until the very end,” Joseph says.

There are three 900-ton water cooled chillers in the central plant of the building, and TDIndustries was responsible for procuring, installing and then piping up the entire system. The cooling tower is on the roof so the chilled water and condenser water risers went all the way down from central plant up to the roof. Air handlers are located on every office floor that will supply the main cooling for each office area. In addition, there are stair pressurization ducts for all the stairwells, and toilet exhaust systems for all the bathrooms.

On the plumbing side, there’s a domestic water booster system to get the city water all the way up the tower. There are point-of-use water heaters on every floor and a bathroom on every office floor from level 11 up to 35.

The job required a lot of logistical planning because it was a tight building footprint in downtown Austin. “There is no laydown space, so there’s not an area where we can stack all our pipe and store all of our equipment here on site. So, depending on our freight companies—one of the initial challenges is that we would schedule deliveries—when you are at the mercy of a truck driver, if we missed our window, they would reject our delivery and go to the next guy on the schedule,” Joseph says.

TDIndustries decided to order equipment in advance and stage it off-site. “That allowed us to have more control and to hit our tight delivery windows. That was a logistical challenge for us. The same thing applied for all our prefabrications, whether they are bathroom batteries or prefabricated central plant piping. We coordinated up front to get our truck drivers in a tight delivery window or staging off-site and

planning ahead to control the process from beginning to end,” continues Joseph.

## Prefabrication Was Key

For downtown projects, says Joseph, the footprints are tight so it’s a challenge to get personnel, material and equipment here in a coordinated fashion. “The most complex parts of this building are the central plant and the roof, and 100% of all our rough-in for the central plant—was prefabricated,” Joseph says. All of the project’s sheet metal, plumbing batteries and chiller and condenser water piping were prefabricated in TDIndustries’ Dallas shop. “In addition, we purchased 40-ft. sticks of pipe from our local supplier and utilized the job site tower crane to fly the risers into place. Instead of doing individual floors, we were able to do four floors at once,” says Joseph.

TD has been investing in automation equipment and is manufacturing from 3-D models in Revit to create parts and products. TD’s shop has Watts Mueller and Tiger Stop automation equipment for prefabrication, as well as a Redi 2 Weld and plasma tables. “That allowed us to reduce the manpower on-site. Because it’s a downtown job, right in the heart of Austin, logistics were difficult. Parking is an issue and getting trucks in and out is an issue. Prefabrication allowed us to pre-plan all of that. We brought in those pieces for just-in-time delivery,” Joseph says.

Finally, setting the chillers was a logistical challenge. A coordinated effort from TDIndustries’ VDC team and its field team provided information on what needed to happen with the concrete in order for the units to fit. “To get the units in place with a tight delivery window, like everything else, was a challenge. We plan everything out, but when you take a step back and look at it, it was really cool to be able to do that within a small working environment without affecting downtown traffic, keeping everyone safe,” Joseph says.

The project is attempting to achieve a LEED Gold Rating under LEED v4 for BD+C: Core and Shell. **G**

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# Lincoln, Nebraska, Adopts 2018 UPC

LINCOLN, NE — Nebraska's second most populous city, Lincoln, has chosen to maintain the highest level of health and safety standards available for plumbing by formally adopting the 2018 edition of the *Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC®)*, updating from the 2012 editions effective Dec. 27. By doing so, Lincoln recognizes that IAPMO's *Uniform Codes* represent the gold standard as the *UPC* is the only plumbing code accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

The *UPC* embodies a carefully constructed balance between prescriptive and performance requirements, all while maintaining effective, seamless integration with all model building codes, no matter the developer.

Further, the *UPC's* new Appendix M Water Demand Calculator™ (WDC) (<https://www.iapmo.org/water-demand-calculator/>) represents the first major update to plumbing sizing requirements since the 1940s and enables Lincoln plumbing professionals the opportunity to see firsthand how IAPMO



The Nebraska State Capitol Building in downtown Lincoln.


is committed to developing new provisions toward improving water quality and safety, reducing construction costs, and saving consumers energy, water and money. The WDC predicts peak water demand for single- and multi-family dwellings when water efficient fixtures are installed. An independent study found notable cost savings when applied to residential structures.

“After careful review of the plumbing code, amendments were drafted to fit the needs of the industry and citizens the code serves,” said Rex Crawford, Lincoln chief plumbing inspector. “The 2018 *UPC* with amendments embodies the provisions, guidelines and innovative methods that will best serve our residents. We recognized our industry prefers using the *UPC* and feel

this code, as adopted, brings the greatest benefits for residential and commercial buildings. I'm very grateful for the hard work and cooperative effort our dedicated advisory board members and city departments displayed throughout the process.”

**The adoption of the 2018 UPC provides the highest level of health and safety protection and will benefit Lincoln citizens well into the future.**

The adoption of the 2018 *UPC* provides the highest level of health and safety protection and will benefit Lincoln citizens well into the future, according to Brian Rogers, IAPMO vice president of Field Services. “I applaud the work of Chief Plumbing Inspector Rex Crawford and his team for ensuring Lincoln residents have access to the most progressive, sustainable and resilient plumbing code available,” he said.

Introduced in Los Angeles in 1928 and formally published as the *Uniform Plumbing Code* in 1945, followed in 1967 by the introduction of the *Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC®)*, the *Uniform Codes* are developed using the ANSI consensus development procedures. This process brings together volunteers representing a variety of viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus on plumbing and mechanical practices. Developed and subsequently republished at the conclusion of each three-year code cycle, the *UPC* and *UMC* are designed to provide consumers with safe and sanitary plumbing and mechanical systems while, at the same time, allowing latitude for innovation and new technologies. 

## VMA Announces New Leadership

➤ **Continued from page 1**

industry, Warren has served in a senior executive position at Bray International, Inc. for the last 10 years. Upon assuming the chairmanship, Warren issued the following statement:

*Our job is to work together to grow the industry and, as VMA members, we must be more inclusive in growing our membership and be more effective in how we use our united industry voice. Bryan Burns of DeZURIK served during the challenging first part of the pandemic as chairman and Arie Bregman of DFT has done a great job during the remainder of the pandemic. Nathan Burnell of Baker Hughes worked closely with our VMA president and members of the Strategic Planning Committee to write a detailed, three-year strategic plan. Because of the work of these members and our Board of Directors, I believe the organization is stronger, better organized and on the precipice of great growth going forward. Our responsibility for the coming should be to enact the new adopted strategic plan.*


Matt Theil, president, AUMA Actuators, Inc., will serve as the 2021-2022 Vice Chairman of the Board and Treasurer. Other members of the Executive Committee include:

Nathan Brunell, Product Line General Manager, Baker Hughes, Andy Duffy, Vice President Sales, Emerson/ASCO; and Arie Bregman, vice president and general manager of DFT Inc., who serves as Immediate Past Chair.

In addition to the Executive Committee, the following VMA members are returning as Board members:

- Alejandro (Alex) Alcala, Senior Vice-President, Crane Co.
- Mark Claffey, President, Trillium Valves USA
- Andrew Duffy, Vice President Sales, ASCO
- Seth Guterman, CEO, American Valve
- David Loula, Director, Global Products and Markets, ITT Engineered Valves

- Kevin McKown, General Manager, Curtiss-Wright Nuclear
- Kevin J. Tinsley, SVP Global Operations, Neles
- Rob Velan, Executive Vice-President, MRO & Aftermarket and Vice-Chairman of the Board, Velan Valve Corporation
- Kirk Wilson, President, Flowserve, Flow Control Division
- Brian Wright, President/CEO, A-T Controls

The Board of Directors also approved Danilo Garcia, President, RF Valves, Inc., Hanover, MD, to the Board, serving a three-year term. Danilo has 20+ years of management, sales, and engineering experience in the Valve and Industrial markets, with a focus on Mining, Industrial, Municipal, Chemical, Power. Danilo became President of RF Valves in 2013, after serving in sales roles for 3 years. Prior to that he was with General Electric - Dresser-Masoneilan; Synqor, Inc. and Maritech Inc. 

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by Al Schwartz  
PLUMBING CONTRACTOR



# The Rise of “Virtual Experts”

The world wide web, or Internet as we all refer to it, has brought the accumulated knowledge of humanity within reach of just about everyone at the click of a mouse or the tap of a computer keyboard. While the jury is out on whether having such power is a good thing or a bad thing or something in between, it’s obvious that the “net” has changed our lives in ways that we are still discovering.

In our country, changing from a manufacturing society to a service society has impacted our social fabric, and our industry. If you follow my column, you know that I am an advocate of “whole trade” training and craftsmanship, and that the current state of our trade/industry, as it relates to the hiring and training of new people, is abysmal... and not getting better at any appreciable rate.

So, what do the internet and the sad state of our labor issues have in common? Transfer of knowledge. The existing old guard are leaving the trade due to age and/or other factors. Because of the lack of new people entering the trades, the “graybeards” are not able to pass their accumulated knowledge on to the next generation of craftsmen, as had been the case for thousands of years prior. The lack of interest in a trade career by the younger generations has created, for lack of a better description, a knowledge vacuum.

While it is true that all the knowledge accumulated by the trades is available via the Internet, the ability, indeed the desirability, to access it and understand it is lacking. YouTube videos can teach only so much and then only for a small fraction of common tasks associated with the trades. The vast storehouse of accumulated trade craft knowledge, hard earned by journeymen over decades, is slowly fading away. Not only are we unable to fill the ranks of the trades with qualified and quality apprentices, but we are surely losing the ability to pass on this vital knowledge and the skills required to use it.

## Enter the “Virtual Expert”

Given the foregoing, the cyber world has seen an opportunity to fill a void



Today, there is a relatively new and growing sector of interactive commerce that is a boon to both the trades and the consumer.

that many do not even know exists. In times past, advertising in products like the Yellow Pages, local newspapers and other print media were the primary avenue for most service shops to get their names in front of prospective customers. Today it is the Internet that people go to for everything **that they need or want.**

The introduction and rise of web sites like Angie’s List brought the referral of trades services to people who needed a way to find and vet craftsmen to hire. Of course, the fact that anyone (or almost anyone) who could afford the subscription fee could get on the list meant that not everyone who was referred represented the best and the brightest for a given discipline. Yet the concept was solid enough to spawn a slew of web sites along the same or similar lines. Despite some glaring problems with the quality of referrals, people and businesses had found a new type of marketplace to interact in.

Today, there is a relatively new and growing sector of interactive

commerce that is a boon to both the trades and the consumer. Taking the “list” concept a step further, companies as varied as Home Depot and Nationwide have developed or are developing a virtual platform to allow consumers the ability to interact with professionals from the building trades, in real time, on-line, through Zoom-like portals. Bringing seasoned pros face-to-face with customers who have a specific need for their expertise is a win/win for all concerned.

It is also a way for experienced trade craftsmen to share their knowledge with customers, even though they either no longer work in the field or are retired. That knowledge is still germane and would otherwise be lost. More importantly, the consumer is the one who benefits by getting the very best advice available from an experienced pro. The wisdom earned from decades of craft experience is distilled into a single on-line chat.

Full disclosure: for the past year I have been working with Nationwide on their product called ANEW. While

the exact details are closely held as development of the platform is perfected, I can tell you that my interactions with customers, through a virtual user interface has been enlightening... and gratifying. People want and need the knowledge and expertise experienced tradesmen can offer, and they are thrilled to speak to a human being who can not only understand their problem but can empathize, help them to solve it or, at the very least, point them in the right direction.

Think of it as having a human encyclopedia (remember those?), a resource where you can ask a question and get the right answer, as if you were standing in the same room. How many times did you wish you had that ability when you were in the field trying to solve a knotty problem and that old master tradesman who you apprenticed under wasn’t there to ask?

It is an advantage to the service shops to have a customer who has visited one of the sites and has spoken with a seasoned pro about their problem. That customer is then in a knowledgeable position about the “what” and “how” of their issue when they hire you. It eliminates a lot of “why?” and “how much???” that we deal with more often than we would like.

As is common with the internet, these companies are sometimes in danger of providing too much information, so be aware of that. The following are some of the more notable sites and their formats:

**1. ANEW** ([www.app.helloanew.com](http://www.app.helloanew.com)) is a Nationwide product that is still under development at this writing. Their primary focus is plumbing, electrical and HVAC, using virtual experts who are fully vetted, experienced professionals with a minimum of 15 years in the field.

**2. Porch** ([www.porch.com](http://www.porch.com)) This site requires a membership and there are no specifics or virtual expertise availability.

**3. Home Advisor** ([www.homeadvisor.com](http://www.homeadvisor.com)) a subsidiary of Angi (used to be Angie’s List [www.angi.com](http://www.angi.com)) which are trade specific but do not offer virtual contact for troubleshooting.

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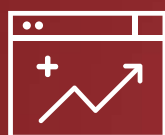




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by Ryan Moore and Ryan Miller



Ryan Moore



Ryan Miller

# Brownfield Construction and Water Contamination

New construction at vacant, former industrial properties, referred to as brownfields, has increased dramatically over the past decade. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the growth of e-commerce was driving a revolution in the new construction of industrial warehouses and last-mile distribution centers, which has only accelerated since early 2020. According to one source, the United States will need one billion square feet of industrial warehouse space over the next five years to keep up with e-commerce demand.<sup>1</sup> Mixed-use residential/commercial redevelopment of brownfields also continues steadily in many areas across the U.S.

Due to the continued need for affordable land in areas accessible to highly populated areas, and fueled by tax incentives, many of these future buildings will be constructed on or near brownfields where chemical releases have occurred. Chemical vapors form when chemical substances containing chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, or other volatile compounds, commonly used in industry, are spilled or improperly disposed. Over time, these chemicals often migrate through the soil, contaminated groundwater, and form chemical vapor plumes.

Building occupants might be at risk of exposure to indoor air containing these vapors if a building is constructed within a contaminant vapor plume footprint. Inhalation of chemical vapors is often hazardous to human health, even at indoor air concentrations not detected by smell (i.e., below the odor threshold).

Additionally, in just the last five years, there has been an increased awareness relating to a class of chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and their widespread impact on public and private drinking water supplies. According to the Environmental Working Group, over 200 million people may be drinking water tainted with these “for-



Above, an abandoned foundry.

**Risks from chemical contamination—including PFAS—are real, but can be mitigated through planning and new technologies.**

ever” chemicals that do not degrade, resulting in PFAS accumulations in nearly all Americans’ bloodstreams.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons, some species of PFAS are on track to be designated as hazardous substances by the Environmental Protection Agency. Many states have regulations on the books or in development, treating several PFAS compounds as such.

Some of the highest PFAS exposure threats that could require active mitigation in the future may be found at or downstream of former or current military bases, airports, landfills, petrochemical facilities, pulp and paper mills, metal plating facilities, textile and plastics manufacturers, to name a few. At many of these facilities, PFAS impacted areas are often associated with shallow groundwater near discharge source locations or sewer collection basins where fire training or testing was conducted using aque-

ous film-forming foams (AFFF) that contain PFAS.

Once in groundwater, it is up to chance whether PFAS contaminants pose an environmental or human health risk, depending on factors such as the species and concentration of PFAS, the speed of groundwater movement, and the distance to the drinking water well or other receptors.

*[Editor’s Note: The recently passed Infrastructure Bill includes a \$10 billion provision to clean up PFAS.]*

## Proactive Steps to Mitigate Environmental Liability Risk

It starts with due diligence. It is vital that property owners and developers understand the property’s history. This understanding generally involves a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), which includes information gathering and interviews to understand what chemicals were stored,

where they were stored, and how they were used. When it comes to PFAS, it is critical to know whether fire training or fire prevention systems tests ever occurred on the property and if manufacturing operations included use of potentially harmful chemicals.

Also, the current and potential future regulations that could impact the facility should be understood. Research guidelines regarding the groundwater use local to your facility and whether potential receptors (i.e., a potable well or a stream) are located near a facility. Retaining environmental legal counsel expert in PFAS matters is advised before undertaking any subsurface investigation activities to assess PFAS contamination or before a property transaction requiring an environmental site assessment (Phase 1 or Phase II ESA).

## Safe, Economical, and Effective Means to Address Vapor Intrusion Risk

Years ago, vapor mitigation industry leaders assessed the trends and foresaw the need for contaminant vapor barriers to address the increased vapor intrusion risk resulting from construction on brownfields and other environmentally distressed properties. Advanced vapor intrusion mitigation systems incorporate the latest technological innovations to offer the highest chemical protection available. These advanced systems comprise patented, state-of-the-art materials, including metallized films and nitrile-advanced asphalt latex (developed by Land Science®) that offer up to one-hundred times more chemical protection than traditional vapor intrusion mitigation systems.

While offering the highest level of protection against vapor intrusion, these advanced systems are often easier and faster to install than older systems and are priced competitively. Brownfield property developers and building contractors are rapidly

➤ **Turn to Brownfield, page 66**



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**CONTRACTOR is proud to announce its 2022 Contractor of the Year.**

# GSM Services: Rising Above

by John Mesenbrink

**G**ASTONIA, NC — You could say that GSM Services has had quite the past couple of years. Moving forward from an unspeakable tragedy in April 2020 when two employees were killed in a mass shooting, the company has navigated through a worldwide pandemic, with all of its moving parts. Joel and Steven Long, co-owners, have exhibited steadfast leadership throughout the ups and downs of running the company.

“The aftermath of April 7th for us was devastating in the short term, and we are still seeing issues with our people and teams because of that terrible day.

Months later, as we evaluate the positive support we have received from all over the country, we are left with a better understanding of just how caring Americans can be when helping people who are suffering. It is amazing and we are grateful beyond words,” says Joel Long, who also serves as the current president of PHCC-National Association.

Day-to-day, there is much more good in this world than is understood, continues Joel Long, and all we need to look for it more and let ourselves see it. “I think I have mostly learned that finding the small wins each day is a wonderful way to overcome the major issues we have all faced this past year. Find the wins and stay positive,” says Joel Long.

## The Foundation

Founded in 1927 as a metal and tin roofing company, GSM’s humble beginnings started with Joel and Steven’s grandfather, Fred W. Long, buying tools and a truck in the early 1940s. The company added residential heating in the 1950s and residential air conditioning services in the mid-1960s.

Fred Long passed away suddenly in the mid-1970s and Joel and Steven’s father, Ronald Long Sr., took over the business. “We were basically bankrupt in the mid-1970s and my mother came into the business and started running the financial aspects of the

**Joel and Steven Long, co-owners of GSM Services.**





company so dad could focus on operations and day-to-day management. She is credited with saving the company," says Joel Long.

GSM added commercial HVAC services in the early 1980s. Joel and Steven came into the company in the early 1990s after graduating with engineering degrees from North Carolina State. Steven took over the Residential Divisions and Joel took over the Commercial Divisions. "Both of us grew up working in the field with the company and have worked in all facets and levels of our business," says Joel Long.

As far as working together professionally as brothers? "I am asked this all the time and we know we are blessed to trust each other to the level we do. In many ways we are opposites in our personalities, but our love for the company, our focus on how we want the company to operate, and how we want to treat co-workers and customers, we are 100% in alignment," says Joel Long.

### Navigating Uncertain Waters

The Long brothers talk about four things specifically that have helped define the company throughout these past couple of years. "First and foremost, we have attempted to stay focused on customer service with both our internal and external customers," says Joel Long. "We base everything we do on our core values and we attempt to meet those values each day. This has been a massive struggle with all the outside noise between COVID, social unrest and general tension that is out there in our society, but we have really focused on building our teams and making sure our team members know we are here to help them win and our customers win," says Joel Long.

Second, Joel and Steven have talked a lot with their team members about worrying and focusing on items that they can control, and not let the items



### Raising Money for the YMCA by taking the Polar Plunge.

that are out of their control dominate the focus. "For instance, we cannot control the CDC guidelines and the constant external political chatter about COVID. We can control our positive focus on our caring about our customers and coworkers and how we keep them safe," says Joel Long.

"Third, I think we have really tried to listen a lot to how our people are seeing the reality of their stress and what is happening to their families. I am not sure we have had many good answers, but our teams know we are listening," said Steven Long.

### The Lifeblood

Joel and Steven both agree it's the employees that make the company. "We build our teams from a lot of different paths and sources. These people have some pretty diverse backgrounds and we look for good people to see how they fit into our culture first. It takes so much partnership, work ethic and desire for success at all levels for a team like ours to be successful, and all of these people make massive contributions to our customers winning," says Joel Long.

A unique approach to this year's Contractor of the Year is hearing from some of these employees—employees that hold key position within the company. Of the 235 employees from seven divisions at the company, here are seven that were chosen to tell their story:

#### ▶ **Scott Bradley**—Division Leader—Commercial HVAC Division



Bradley began working at GSM in November of 1978, at the age of 19. He was employed from November 1978 to February 1982, left the company and returned January 1983 until today. Bradley was educated in drafting and carpentry through vocational schools, and mechanically inclined through his father.

Bradley came to Gastonia with a wife and small

child looking for work to provide them with a home and was given an opportunity by the Long family. "I found myself in a place to grow and enjoy doing what was required to complete tasks, then small jobs into projects—working in all divisions in the '70s and '80s. The experience and exposure with co-workers created the perfect opportunity to lead projects, and men, as a project manager in the mid-'80s. As my years wind down in my professional life, I'm reminded of the accomplishments; I bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with all my co-workers. The unity given to me so many years ago has allowed me to raise a family in Gaston County and be a proud member of the GSM family," says Bradley.

#### ▶ **Alex Case**—Commercial Service Technician



Case is an HVAC technician, and he is responsible for maintenance, repairs and service calls for GSM's commercial sites in the Charlotte area. Case started as a maintenance apprentice and progressed to a service technician where his responsibilities include diagnosing and repairing systems for commercial clients. "I have been with the company for five years, and working for GSM has given me the educational opportunity to learn and expand my knowledge in the trade while I provide for my family. I am proud of how far I have come in the company, and I look forward to even more opportunities for professional growth," says Case.

#### ▶ **Adrian Garcia**—Shop Fabricator



Working for GSM for approximately six years, Garcia works in the shop as a sheet metal fabricator. "My job consists of producing top quality ductwork for both residential and commercial services. Being as we are a production shop, we must meet the deadlines that are given to

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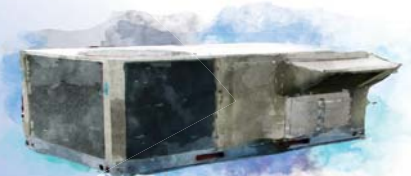
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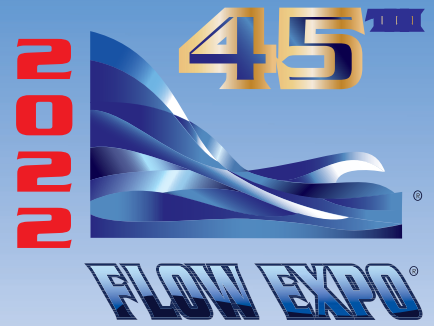
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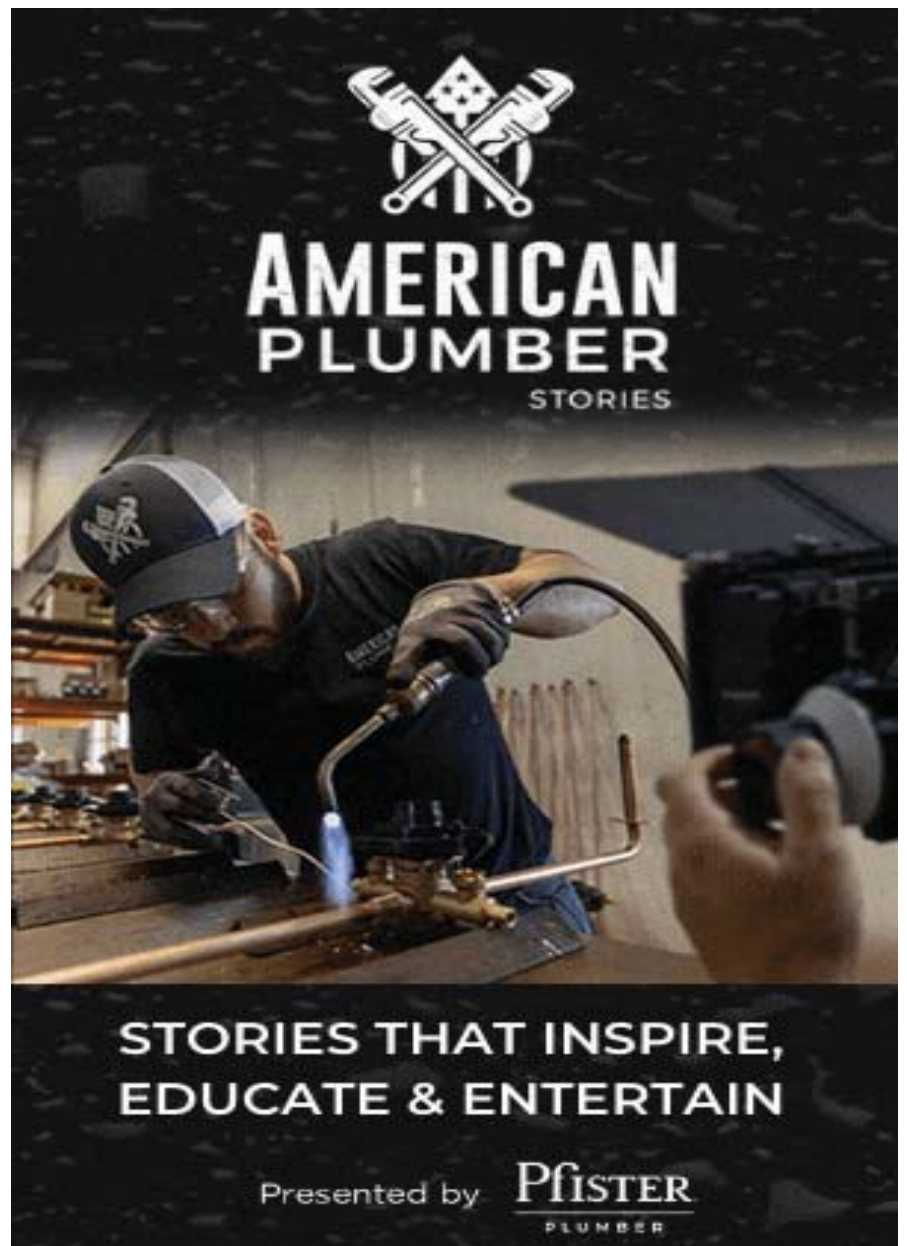


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us. The quality of our work is what we strive for; if it doesn't meet our standards then it will not be on the jobsite," says Garcia.

Being in this field has been a real game changer for Garcia. "Getting to be hands-on, and seeing that all of our hard work provides comfort to all of our customers, is what makes it worthwhile. The shop is a crucial part of GSM Services, and our team strives to do the best that we can day in and day out. I am proud to say that I work for this company, and I am proud to be a part of such a great team," says Garcia.

► **Nygel Kendall**—Assistant Project Manager—Commercial HVAC Division



Kendall's high school invited recruiters for various career professions and he wasn't interested in college at the time. GSM offered the opportunity to work as an administrator in the estimating department, and it was there he gained his love for construction at the age of 18. Watching blueprints turn into physical buildings, Kendall felt like he was doing something meaningful. After two years of working at GSM, Kendall decided to join the Marine Corps.

"The military taught me many things, but one trait that I will never lose is attention to detail. When it comes to construction, having very close attention to detail is very important. We live in a day and age where things move fast, and the little things can be missed. Mistakes can be mitigated by simply taking a step back and slowing down," says Kendall.

As an assistant project manager, Kendall handles purchasing equipment, pulling material for the crews, project coordination with customers, and much more. "GSM has been home for me for more than six years now, and I couldn't ask to work for a better group of leaders. GSM has a signature experience that sets us apart from many other companies, and that is with one simple concept, 'Service Before Self.' Our leaders have equipped us with a set of morals and ethics that makes this company remarkable," says Kendall.

► **Sherry McKinney**—Director of People and Culture



McKinney's position is to take the lead on culture practices at GSM, and her job is to provide support in the areas of Performance Management, Employee Relations, Employee Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion, Policy and Procedure Development, and HR Compliance.

"GSM is committed to its core values, which I believe is what makes GSM successful. The company is focused on creating a great place to work and providing career opportunities for all co-workers. Co-workers are treated like family and not just resources," says McKinney.

Moving forward, McKinney would like to build on GSM's current recruitment and hiring processes to attract quality diverse employees. "I also believe we can enhance current leadership training programs

and practices to make GSM an even more equitable and inclusive workplace where employees feel valued and can be successful," says McKinney.

► **Brandon Purdee**—Commercial HVAC



Division—BIM Coordination

Graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology in 2019, Purdee's first job was working with a Robotic Total Station—which is GSM's new form of technology—on projects that lay out hangers for duct systems on jobsites. "I was asked to take ownership of the new equipment to make it happen. After gaining experience in the field and with the Total Station, I was brought into the office so that I could see how the shop drawings were created. After some time, I started producing shop drawings, using REVIT and working in the field at the same time," says Purdee.

As a mechanical designer, Purdee creates shop drawings, works with duct fabrication, runs lead on BIM coordination jobs, and works with GCs on BIM projects. He has gone from laying out hangers to helping design the layouts of systems that GSM installs. "Working at GSM means that I am not just working on the theoretical, but on what will exist and be part of every building that we work on," says Purdee.

► **Sam Vagnozzi**—Director of Education & Learning



With 17 years under his belt, working with GSM has provided Vagnozzi with a great opportunity to create, build and direct its training and safety programs. GSM Services lives by the philosophy that "you are in charge of your career growth." It has been rewarding

to be able to see our people, especially entry level co-workers, grow their technical skills through the use of these programs.

"We have apprenticeship programs for both HVAC and roofing, which provide an incredible opportunity for entry level co-workers to quickly gain the knowledge and skills necessary to advance their skills from apprentice level to technician," says Vagnozzi.

"Programs such as this through community colleges costs thousands of dollars. Apprenticeship through GSM will achieve the same result with zero cost to the apprentice. Beyond training opportunities in technical areas, GSM University exists to allow all co-workers to gain the skills necessary for any position," says Vagnozzi.

## The Last Key

Oh, and that fourth key to success? "Fourth and maybe most importantly, in December 2020, my brother and I realized we were very concerned about the disconnection that was going to take place in 2021 because we were not meeting in large groups with co-workers," says Joel Long.

In the past, GSM conducted monthly in-person meetings with the entire company, and these

stopped during the pandemic. The team decided it had to find a way to get its messaging out directly to its members in 2021, or they would face larger than normal issues.

"We felt we were getting out of touch with them," says Joel Long. "We decided to start a leadership-focused series of Zoom meetings with our entire leadership team. We held these all year on the first and third Monday of the month and recorded the sessions so our people could either watch them live or view later. We picked four books to focus on in 2021 and laid out the entire year of meetings," says Joel Long.

The four books were: *The Dog Poop Initiative* by Kirk Weisler; *The Energy Bus* by Jon Gordon; *The Way of the Shepherd* by Kevin Lehman and William Pentak; and *The Power of a Positive Team* by Jon Gordon. "We bought the books for all our leaders and distributed them a few weeks before each presentation. We believe this has helped us stay in touch during the pandemic and stay closer as leaders," says Joel Long.

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*"Our industry is facing major changes, and the next three to five years will see many companies thrive, and others go away," continues Long. "I believe the companies that embrace change and focus on building people will be the most successful going forward."*

---

## The Future

GSM Services will turn 100 years old in 2027 and the leadership team has spent a lot of time focusing on what it wants to be known for in that year: a company that provides the highest quality services and the "Best Place to Work in the Region." "We believe that type of continuous focus will help us weather the current storms and keep our teams focused on constant improvements," says Joel Long.

"Our industry is facing major changes, and the next three to five years will see many companies thrive, and others go away," continues Long. "I believe the companies that embrace change and focus on building people will be the most successful going forward. This new generation wants to find a place to work that will help them make a difference socially, as they are performing work they see as important and exciting individually. The companies that can develop exciting careers for young people will be the most successful," says Long.

To conclude, Joel Long wanted to share one last thought regarding the GSM community. "I grew up in our business and have always loved the people working with us. They get up every day with a mission to perform high-quality work, with high standards, and do it to make a better life for their families, and our customers. This past year has been another opportunity to witness how tough they are and can be. We also see how caring they are of each other and our community. I don't believe GSM coworkers are unique in that, I just think that is what makes us Americans in many ways," says Long. 



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THE ORIGINAL INNOVATORS

by Patrick Linhardt  
HYDRONICS MANAGER AT CORKEN STEEL PRODUCTS CO.



## Only Expansion Tanks in the Building

It started with a typical call and a typical request from a favorite contractor. He wanted pricing on a pair of high efficiency boilers which is pretty routine, but in this case would be replacing a pair of 16-year-old high efficiency boilers, which isn't very routine. One of the existing was having a few issues, and the homeowner wanted to replace both, since she could afford to.

We were wrapping up the call when he said that his service tech couldn't find the expansion tank. Since it is a hot water job, it has to have some type of expansion tank. When water in a closed loop hot water heating system heats up, it increases in volume. In rough terms, the volume increases approximately 2.5% for a 100-degree F temperature rise.

If you start at an ambient temperature of 70 degrees F in a system that holds 100 gallons and raise it to 170 degrees F on a cold day, the volume of water increases to 102.5 gallons. If the expansion tank is there it accepts that extra volume. If it's *not* there—or waterlogged, or undersized—the system pressure increases to the point that the relief valve opens. Since it's a safety, we don't want that happening on a regular basis.

### Hydronic Mystery

Modern hot water systems use expansion tanks that are usually, but not always, in the boiler room. Since the job had high efficiency boilers already, I figured the expansion tank would be in the boiler room. But the contractor's tech said it wasn't there. Now I was interested and had a mystery to solve, just like a good mystery podcast, or a TV series based on a mystery podcast like *Only Murders in the Building*.

Steve Martin and Martin Short are some of my favorite comedic actors and star in the recent series (hence the title of this column). Podcasts and crime dramas always start with some obvious suspects that seem to be the culprit... until they aren't. Not until the end do you find out the murder was done by someone you never suspected.



Expansion tanks in boiler-room.

## Podcasts and crime dramas always start with some obvious suspects that seem to be the culprit... until they aren't.

### The Usual Suspects

The first usual suspect in the case of a missing expansion tank is an open tank above the highest radiator in the house, which could be the attic. The earliest examples of hot water heating systems used this technique. As the volume increased because of temperature rise, the water level of the open tank would also rise. If the coal fire got out of control and water temp went way up, the tank had an overflow that sometimes went out through the roof to the gutter, or down a pipe to the basement laundry tub.

Seems pretty simple, but works quite well. Unfortunately, homeowners didn't like forty gallons of water up in the attic, because when the tank eventually leaked or ruptured, it made quite a mess of the lower floors. The tank moved to the boiler room in the basement soon after the turn of the previous century.

But not all the tanks. One of the things I look for on a hot water job is

the expansion tank and I didn't see one recently. It was a six-story apartment building built mid-century with the boilers in the basement. I asked the tech if he knew where it was. He told me that he had never seen one like it before and that it was in the attic. I wasn't expecting it to be up there.

### Hot on the Trail

The contractor and I decided to meet on the job to look at the piping for the new boilers and look for an expansion tank of some kind somewhere in the house. He took me to an outside entrance to what looked like the basement of the house. However, this boiler room was a fraction of the size of the house, had the two high efficiency boilers but no expansion tank.

The two boilers were hung on the wall near the door, while the piping to the various zones was across the room in the opposite corner. There were also two steel doors up on different walls for access to two different crawl spaces.

Maybe the expansion tank would be in one of the crawl spaces...

These are two of the cleanest, driest crawl spaces I have seen, but there was no expansion tank in sight. We took a closer look at the piping to the various zones. It was a two-temperature system, using a three-way mixing valve to lower the water temperature going to a radiant floor zone. We could match a supply line to a return line for the various zones based on the pipe size *except* for one  $\frac{3}{4}$ " line that ran through a wall into one of the crawl spaces. It fed off the supply manifold.

I swung the steel door open and climbed into the crawl space with the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " line to investigate. None of the pipes were insulated, so I naturally put my hand on them. (Heating guys always feel the pipes. We can't help ourselves.) The zone pipes were warm to the touch, but the mystery  $\frac{3}{4}$ " line, which fed off of the same supply header as the zone piping, was much cooler.

Either it fed a zone that hadn't called for heat for a while, or it could be the connection to an expansion tank. I crawled along for twenty feet until the pipe disappeared through another wall. I reached a dead end. The wall seemed to be part of the original house, so I crawled back out to report the findings so far.

We had to get to the other side of that wall and see if that  $\frac{3}{4}$ " line would lead us to our missing expansion tank. Unfortunately, the homeowner wasn't home. We would have to come back another day. So just like a mystery podcast, this concludes this episode and you will have to wait until next month to find out if this suspect is the culprit, or just another distraction to prolong the story. **C**

*Patrick Linhardt is a thirty-seven-year veteran of the wholesale side of the hydronic industry who has been designing and troubleshooting steam and hot water heating systems, pumps and controls on an almost daily basis. An educator and author, he is currently Hydronic Manager at the Corken Steel Products Co.*

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## Tricky Hydronic Piping Job Made Possible with Press Tools

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That's what contractors working on St. Joseph Villa in Salt Lake City, Utah, discovered. Rich Lobrovich and Chad Hustad, Project Managers for First Service Mechanical, used ProPress and MegaPress products in the building. The ease of use, plus the time saved with Viega, was huge.

"Our pipefitters had to work around existing steam pipes to do this project, so they were working in confined areas," Lobrovich said. "Installing large lengths of carbon steel pipe and using a threading machine in the boiler room would have been very difficult. There was so much intricate piping that it would have been a lot of cut and threaded pipe. So we decided to use MegaPress."



Photos by Viega LLC

The mechanical room at St. Joseph Villa.

**First Service Mechanical does a heat-exchanger swap under tight confines for healthcare facility.**

### First Service

**First Service Mechanical (FSM)** was founded in 2006 as a provider of heating, air conditioning and mechanical services, primarily in the commercial, industrial and institutional market sectors. The company prides itself on being a full-service HVAC company serving the Wasatch Front and surrounding areas in Utah.

With over 100 years of combined experience, First Service technicians are



Tight confines, high temperatures and tricky pipework were just some of the challenges facing First Service Mechanical.



Another view of the mechanical room at St. Joseph Villa.

ers and replacing them with hydronic flat-plate heat exchangers. An engineer determined there was enough capacity on the existing hydronic boilers for this suggestion, so the First Service Mechanical crew got to work.

"There was so much intricate piping," Lobrovich said. "We used a lot of sizes, from 1/2" up to 2", that we pressed.

There was very little space to work with, in the back corner of an area. We didn't even look at doing this project with anything other than Viega."

### Right Tool for the Job

First Service Mechanical has used ProPress several times in the past, but this

► Turn to Tricky, page 34

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## ABMA Taps Astronaut Chris Cassidy to Keynote 'BOILER 2022'

By **SHAUNICA JAYSON**  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, ABMA

The American Boiler Manufacturers Association (ABMA) is excited to announce that Capt. **Chris Cassidy** (USN-ret.) will be the keynote speaker at BOILER 2022's Opening Session on Tuesday, April 12.

Now open for registration, BOILER 2022 – ABMA Boiler Technology Conference & Expo will take place April 11-13, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Dallas, TX. It will be the first and only event ever focused exclusively on the boiler supply chain.

Capt. Cassidy is a decorated veteran of the sea, air, land, and even outer space. As a member of an exclusive and distinguished group of accomplished astronauts, he had made an impact on and beyond this world. "Chris will inspire BOILER 2022 attendees to believe that it's in all of us to thrive in clutch moments and successfully lead when challenges arise," said ABMA President **Scott Lynch**.

Cassidy's career began as a member of the U.S. Navy SEAL team where he

spent 11 of his 28 years in the Navy, making two six-month deployments to Afghanistan and two additional deployments to the Mediterranean. He served as Ground Assault Force Commander for combat missions, and amassed several hundred hours underwater as a navigator or mission commander of a two-man flooded submersible SDV.

Following his decorated Navy Seal career, Cassidy transitioned from Earth to the Cosmos, becoming a NASA Astronaut in 2004 where he accumulated 378 days in space. That included 54 hours, 51 minutes of spacewalk time, which placed him in yet another elite group of astronauts who had performed at least 10 spacewalks. In 2015, Cassidy was named NASA's Chief Astronaut, a role in which he was responsible for flight assignments, mission preparation, and in-orbit support of U.S. crews. His



Capt. Chris Cassidy.

NASA career culminated in 2020 when he took over command of the International Space Station.

### Two Packed Days of Quality Content

With two days of exhibition and insightful educational content, BOILER 2022 offers a unique occasion for the supply chain to connect with the leading manufacturers in the boiler industry and where engineers, operators, facility managers, heads of procurement, EPCs, technicians and consultants will learn about boiler room solutions and energy efficiency opportunities. Day two of the expo will feature a student component where the next generation will engage with the boiler supply chain.

"BOILER 2022 addresses an industry need by bringing together the boiler supply chain to educate our customers and those working with boilers to ensure the safe and efficient operation of

our products," added Lynch.

More than 65 of the leading boiler industry manufacturers have already confirmed their participation in BOILER 2022 and ABMA expects to sell out the exhibit hall in the coming months. Due to overwhelming demand, exhibit sales are limited to members only. Non-members interested in exhibiting are encouraged to contact ABMA directly to discuss membership options.


"If you're involved with or responsible for a boiler room operation, it's going to be a can't miss event," says **John Viskup**, CEO of Victory Energy.

BOILER 2022 will feature timely sessions on all facets of the boiler room, from new product selection and energy efficiency to maintenance and retrofitting, along with best-in-class tours of boiler rooms and a new awards program recognizing excellence in boiler projects. ABMA is offering a pre-conference workshop on Boiler Types and Applications presented by the instructors from WARE's Boiler University.

Session Topics Include:

- Boiler Contingency Plans
- Role of Steam Plants in the Decarbonization of the Energy Intensive Industries
- The SCR approach for Ultra-Low NOx Compliance
- Evolution of the Boiler Technician
- Preparing for a Boiler Inspection
- Analyzing the Investment – When Does a Retrofit Make Sense
- Effective Use of Drum Level Instrumentation
- The Future of Alternative Fuels in the Boiler Room.

An All-Access pass enables an attendee to fully experience BOILER 2022 that includes the keynote session with Capt. Cassidy, timely educational sessions, 75+ boiler industry exhibitors in the expo hall, industry tours, social events and much more. Supply chain partners can also purchase one- and two-day expo only passes.

To register or for more details, visit [BOILER2022.com](http://BOILER2022.com) where you can also access a schedule of events and a current list of exhibiting companies. 

## Hydronic Job Made Possible with Press Tools



Photo by Viega LLC

Another view of the mechanical room at St. Joseph Villa.

### ➤ Continued from page 30

was their first venture with MegaPress. Hustad said his crew felt comfortable with it, since they already knew the tooling and process.

"With this big job, we knew MegaPress would be a way to save on labor.


We saved on an extreme amount of labor," Lobrovich said. He estimated 150 MegaPress fittings were installed for the hydronic heat-exchanger project.

"The time you'd need to measure, walk in another room, cut and thread the pipe and come back, it would have

been time-consuming," Lobrovich said. "We were able to cut the pieces and press and be done in probably 20 percent of the time it would have taken us to thread that pipe."

The company replaced another heat exchanger at the St. Joseph facility a few months later and is preparing to re-pipe the building next year, which will mean a lot more Viega fittings.

Viega wasn't specified to start with, but Hustad said First Service Mechanical offered it as a good way to make the project work, given the space confinements and time savings. The success of the hydronic heat-exchange project spurred the subsequent work at St. Joseph.

"From our customer's perspective, the tie-in was very quick in the middle of the winter. None of their live-in occupants were aware of the system downtime," said Lobrovich. "This reduced the overall cost of the project." 

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## Rinnai Reaches Four Year Milestone in Folds of Honor Partnership

PEACHTREE CITY, GA –Rinnai America Corporation, a leading manufacturer of tankless water heaters, has been an established partner with Folds of Honor since 2018. The premise of the partnership—which remains in effect today—is to offer educational scholarships to spouses and children of America’s fallen and disabled service members to support their continued education and professional development. The program with Rinnai has been highly successful, awarding nearly 80 recipients over the past four years and culminating in more than \$400,000 in donations. Capping off this year’s activity Rinnai made an incremental donation of \$50,000 to further support those interested in the building trades.

“Our brand promise is *Creating a healthier way of living®*, and our

partnership with Folds of Honor has assisted military families across the country to pursue their educational and professional dreams,” said Frank Windsor, President, Rinnai America Corporation. “Our engagement with Folds of Honor is meaningful to us both as an organization and as individuals. We are deeply passionate about finding and feeding new talent into the building trades and partnering with Folds of Honor allows us to do so while also supporting veterans.”

### Skilled Labor Gap

The skilled labor shortage continues to be a challenge faced not only by Rinnai but by the building category as a whole. Through the partnership with Folds of Honor, the tankless water heater manufacturer supports military families, as well as the trades. Currently, 42



students are attending trade or technical schools made possible through Rinnai’s engagement with the nonprofit. And

with the company’s 2021 incremental donation, an additional ten individuals interested in the trades, including future welders and electricians, have been enabled to take the next step in their training and educational journey.

“We are extremely pleased with the partnership with Rinnai,” said Lt. Colonel Rooney, Founder and CEO of Folds of Honor. “Their involvement directly helps students interested in the trades and is a testament to Rinnai’s commitment to their industry. 100% of Rinnai’s donation goes directly towards those seeking a career in the trades. We’re so humbled and honored to serve people in need and having companies like Rinnai support our cause helps us move one step closer towards serving more.”

For more than fourteen years, Folds of Honor has helped support education for 35,000 students, creating career opportunities across diverse categories including cooking to mass communications to cosmetology. This year, Folds of Honor raised \$32M and awarded 7,000 scholarships to military families. Folds of Honor is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization, rated a four-star charity by Charity Navigator and platinum on Guide Star.

To learn more about Rinnai, visit [www.rinnai.us](http://www.rinnai.us). To learn more about Folds of Honor, visit [foldsofhonor.org](http://foldsofhonor.org).

## Ariston Group Launches IPO

NEW BEDFORD, MA – The Ariston Group, a global player in sustainable hot water and space heating comfort solutions, announced it launched an initial public offering as it seeks continued growth after more than 90 years in business on the international stage.

The Ariston Group, which was founded by Aristide Merloni in 1930, plans to use the assets to support and develop the growth of the company. The company, based in Italy, runs its American operations out of New Bedford, Mass.

“With a history of more than 90 years, the company has established itself as a unique global player in sustainability,” Executive Chairman Paolo Merloni said. “Ariston has a global reach and a unique renewable and high-efficiency proposition of heating and hot water solutions.”



Ariston Group Executive Chairman and former Minister of Executive Chairman, Paolo Merloni (right), ring the bell as it announced it launched an initial public offering.

The company selected Goldman Sachs, Mediobanco and Intesa Sanpaolo as its global coordinators for its initial public offering. The group was listed on Euronext Milan in Italy.

“The listing on the stock exchange is a recognition of the dedication, professionalism and passion of all of our people who have made the achievement of this milestone possible,” Merloni said. “Thanks to the listing we will

strengthen our growth potential, continuing our solid path of organic and inorganic development.”

The Ariston Group’s US brands include HTP, American Standard Water Heaters, and Ariston branded products. HTP has a wide range of highly efficient products and system components for space heating and water heating. American Standard Water Heaters manufactures high quality gas and electric commercial and residential water heaters.

“We believe that Ariston can play and will play a key role in the consolidation process of our sector, further accelerating what we have successfully achieved over the last decade,” Merloni said. “Our goal is to continue to be a reference player in solutions for sustainable comfort in hot water and heating.”

For more information, visit the Ariston Group website. [G](http://www.ariston.com)

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by Patti Feldman  
COMPUTER AUTHORITY



# Construction, Field Service & Field Surveys

**Contractor Foreman** ([www.contractorforeman.com](http://www.contractorforeman.com), 503/922-2204, ext. 2) is construction management software with capabilities for both office and field and provides for unlimited projects and unlimited employees.

The software, which integrates with QuickBooks and supports export of data to other programs, addresses estimating, project scheduling, project management, GPS-based timecards, and invoicing and progress billing, has a client portal, and comes with mobile apps for Android and iOS.

The solution also manages estimating, submittals, service tickets, work orders, change orders, subcontracts, bills, punchlists, RFIs and schedule notices, checklists with templates, vehicle and equipment logs, and CSI or NAHB and custom codes in a two-tiered system (over 37 modules in total). In addition, users can generate and maintain incident and OSHA 300 logs from within the solution. There is also the ability to manage and hold safety meetings with 800+ safety topics pre-loaded.

A custom dashboard can show a variety of variables, including clocked in employees and location, appointments and calendar, project snapshots, and access to Live Chat.

The client portal offers clients a direct way to view online estimates, request, review or approve change orders, and pay invoices online. They can also view project photos and the project schedule and interact with your company via online messaging. You decide which items to share.

In creating work orders, you can import data from materials, equipment, labor, and service databases, and can capture the approver's signature right on the form. You can also track costs on a small project. Both field and office workers can use pre-built PDFs. Each user can select their own language in the App.

Change orders, generated in industry standard form, support inline item editing. You can import data from materials, equipment, labor, service database

ITEM #	TYPE	ITEM NAME	QTY	PRICE UNIT	TOTAL TAX	COST CODE	ACTION
1	MFL	Siding	5000	\$2.25 sqft	\$11,250.00	Aluminum Siding	
2	MFL	4x4 CP 15ft	20	\$10.46 pcft	\$209.20	Framing Beams & Girders	
3	MFL	3/4" Drain Rock	45	\$2.28 CUYD	\$112.86	Base	
4	LBR	Labour 1	45	\$100.00 hr	\$4,500.00		

The estimation window in Contractor Foreman.

## Reviews of Contractor Foreman, the SurveyMonkey basic plan and an update on Salesforce field service (Field Service Lightning).

and can attach it to an estimate. You can also import approved change orders into invoices.

Files and photos can be attached to each record for work order and change order or any other module, as well as automatically stored in a central repository.

Punchlists and to-dos sent direct from the field or office can include annotatable photos. You can email, push or send punchlists as text notifications and use tags, statuses, and priorities to stay up-to-date.

Users can also create checklists for inspections, with the option to attach files, photos, and other supporting data, and can generate one-button reschedules. Service tickets include the ability to dispatch, track customer history and check/in/out times on jobsites, and invoice and log payment directly from the Service Ticket module.

Pricing: per month, paid annually: Standard, Plus, Pro, or Unlimited plan, differentiated by number of users and level of integration with QuickBooks. Free 30-day trial available.

So, how are your crews out in the field doing? One way to find out is through surveys emailed direct to customers upon completion of jobs.

**SurveyMonkey Basic plan** (*free*, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) allows a single user to create and send a survey with up to 10 questions of elements (including question types, descriptive text, or images). The user can collect as many responses as they want for free, with view-only access to 40 responses per survey. Under the free plan, extra responses over the response limit are not viewable and each response over the limit will be deleted 60 days after it is received. Various Paid plans give access to all responses and other features on the platform, such as expanded number of surveys and responses, custom colors and survey URL, and the ability to hide the Survey Monkey footer.

**Update: Salesforce Field Service** (<https://www.salesforce.com/products/service-cloud/field-service/>) is an enterprise-class platform (part of Salesforce Service Cloud suite of solutions) that handles intelligent scheduling and dispatching, work order management,

asset tracking, account details, and safety protocols, with mobile apps available for Android and iOS. (The software was covered under the name Field Service Lightning in Sept. 2019 tech column.)

New features include dynamic priority scheduling and dispatch enabling prioritization based on rules, service level agreements, and traffic. Field Service recommends the best technicians for the job and relies on AI to find the right parts for the job based on previous work. Contractors can store warranties and assign them to products, facilitating creation of standard warranties customizable with extensions, exclusions, and void terms.

Visual Remote Assistant Two-Way Video enables collaboration between onsite and off-site participants in real time to troubleshoot issues (optional at additional cost).

Appointment Assistant allows customers to book their own appointments via self-scheduling and confirm, cancel, or reschedule. The software in real time will find the next best appointment times based on the customer's preferences and the technician schedule and service resources automatically adjust. Customers, with Appointment Assistant, can be automatically updated on the technician's arrival time (optional at additional cost).

The mobile app provides field service mobile workers details on the customer, job, and steps needed for the job, along with access to knowledge articles and collaboration tools such as Slack. Field Service mobile workers have the ability to log work hours for time sheets and receive notifications.

Pricing: Field Service licenses for contractors carry a per user per month fee with that purchase requiring at least one Salesforce Service Cloud Enterprise (or above) license and at least one Field Service Dispatcher user license per organization. [G](#)

*Patti Feldman writes articles and web content for trade magazines and manufacturers of building products. She can be reached at [productpad@yahoo.com](mailto:productpad@yahoo.com).*



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by Matt Michel  
MARKETING AUTHORITY



# 11 Tips to Make AHR Profitable

The AHR Show is back in-person this year, which is awesome. If you are going to attend, do it with a purpose. The reason to attend AHR, or any show, is to help your business. Here are 11 tips you can use to make AHR profitable.

## 1. What are Your Objectives?

Why are you going? Is it just an excuse to write-off a trip to Las Vegas or do you have a business reason? For example, you might go to explore field service management software options. You might go to see what's new in tankless water heater technology. Maybe you are looking for new service tools. It might be easier to complete the sentence, "After leaving AHR, I want to be able to \_\_\_\_\_."

It is likely that you will have multiple objectives. If so, prioritize them. Make certain that the primary objective is accomplished.

## 2. Take Notes and Pictures

Use your mobile phone to take lots of pictures and to record notes about things you see that were interesting. There is too much to see. Do not trust your memory.

## 3. Bring Business Cards

Contractors often forget to bring



business cards to trade shows. Pull them out now and put them with something you know you will take. You will have opportunities to exchange business cards with a number of people. There will also be times when you stop by a booth and the person you want to talk with is on a break or in a meeting. At times like that, it is nice to be able to leave a card.

When you collect a business card, take a picture of it as soon as you get an opportunity. Text the image back to the office for an assistant to load into your contacts.

## 4. Preset Meetings

One of the advantages of attending a large industry show is almost everyone attends. You can conduct more business in less time than anywhere else. Make a list of people you have been wanting to meet with and reach out to them in advance of the show. See if

you can set an appointment to meet at their booths or a hotel lobby.

## 5. Plan Your Top Ten

Identify the top ten exhibits you want to visit. Using a map of the show floor, plan your route so that you can cover the most ground in the least time. This is a BIG show. It takes time to walk from one side to the other. A little advance planning will increase your efficiency and save your feet.

## 6. Walk Around

Part of the reason for attending a show like AHR is to learn about new products and service, which can include old products and services you are not familiar with. The way to discover these is to wander around. But you should do it with purpose and a plan. If you are looking for innovative business solutions, the smaller booths are more likely to hold newer companies, which often have smaller budgets.

## 7. Network

The best part of attending an in-person show is the networking opportunities. These occur as you walk the floor, but they also occur at night. There will be several hospitality parties at AHR. Some are come one, come all. Others are by invitation. When you are

visiting supplier exhibits, ask about hospitality parties. These present much better business opportunities than the casinos.

## 8. Attend Educational Sessions

AHR features many educational seminars that are free for attendees. Visit the *AHRExpo.com* website and see what can help you and your business. These also give your feet a welcome break after walking the floor.

**Why are you going? Is it just an excuse to write-off a trip to Las Vegas or do you have a business reason?**

## 9. Wear Comfortable Shoes

Speaking of feet, pick shoes for comfort. You will be only your feet and concrete a lot. Comfortable shoes will enhance your show experience. You will be able to spend more time on the floor and get more done as a result.

## 10. Bring a Comfortable Mask

Sigh. Las Vegas and AHR have masking requirements. Bring your favorite (or least hated), most comfortable mask. You'll need it for the plane if flying and for the show. Like comfortable shoes, a comfortable mask will mean more time on the floor and lead to more accomplishments.

## 11. Debrief Yourself

At the end of each day go over your notes and pictures. Write out an action plan of things to do when you get home. At the end of the show, prioritize your actions based on impact to your business, cost of implementation, and ease of implementation. Then, take action!!!

Be sure to visit the Service Roundtable's booth in the North Hall at 11620 (N11620). Pick up some great swag and special offers for AHR.

## The Rise of "Virtual Experts"

► Continued from page 14

**4. Houzz** ([www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com)) Sells subscriptions to the pros but is more or less an advertising clearing house and not trade specific.

**5. Consumers Checkbook** ([www.checkbook.org](http://www.checkbook.org)) Very broad-based information and not trade specific.


**6. Service Whale** ([www.service-whale.com](http://www.service-whale.com)) Broad based referrals that cover just about everything to do with your home (including things like hiring handy men to clean gutters, etc.). The site picks up your zip code from your IP address and tailors the information and ads to your area.

**7. Pro Referral** ([www.proreferral.com](http://www.proreferral.com)) This is a product of the Home

Depot so if you are familiar with their referral options, you know what this is about. Vetting of the pro referrals is very unclear and, if past is prologue, it would be wise to double check them.

**8. Fiverr** ([www.fiverr.com](http://www.fiverr.com)) A clearing house open to any trade or service.

These are just a few of the websites that cater to the consumer online. Some provide interactive services which, in some cases, utilize the knowledge of trade professionals with the experience and expertise not available to most shops today, let alone the consumer. Given the speed at which sites like these are advancing, it would seem to be a good way for brick and mortar shops to get more and better

quality business by working with, not for, these platforms. This is where service businesses are headed. You might as well learn as much as you can about this way of prospecting and advertising as you can. Stay ahead of the curve. 

*The Brooklyn, N.Y.-born author is a retired third generation master plumber. He founded Sunflower Plumbing & Heating in Shirley, N.Y., in 1975 and A Professional Commercial Plumbing Inc. in Phoenix in 1980. He holds residential, commercial, industrial and solar plumbing licenses and is certified in welding, clean rooms, polypropylene gas fusion and medical gas piping. He can be reached at [allen@proquilldriver.com](mailto:allen@proquilldriver.com).*



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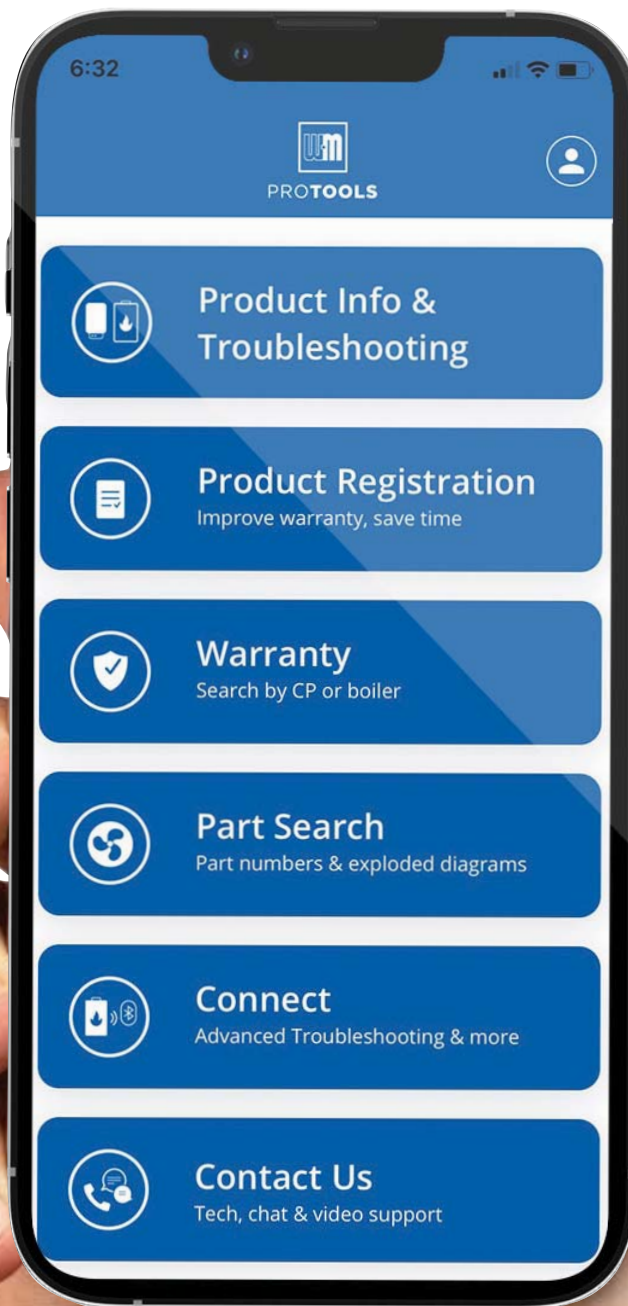
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by Jeff Plant  
HEAD COACH AT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES (BDR)



# Building Authentic Culture

Everybody talks about company culture these days, but very few people in the industry understand what it really means. Even fewer people know how to build one.

An effective, authentic culture means each team member is continuously living out the mission, vision and values of the company. Whether it's answering the phone or talking to clients, every single task should be aligned with the company's goals. You and your team members should constantly be asking three questions:

- Does this action help us accomplish our mission?
- Does it help us reach our vision?
- Does it support our values?

When you and your employees are making decisions based on fulfilling the company's mission, vision and values, it creates a highly productive environment, where technicians, office staff, management and leadership are all working toward the same goals.

## Culture begins with trust

The key element for building that environment and developing a genuine culture that lives up to your company's values is trust. Teams have to trust the leadership of the company, and you need visionary leadership that can cast the right vision and get team members to buy into it.

Ultimately, trust and loyalty start with leadership. The trust exchange that's needed to build authentic culture starts at the top. Expect the best from your team and show them they can expect the same from you, and you've taken the first big step in leading your company to an authentic, productive culture.

A common question I've heard in training sessions is, "What if I spend time and money to train my techs and then they leave?" My response is always the same: "What if you don't train them and they stay?"

I've also heard contractors say there's no loyalty in the industry. "My techs would jump ship for the next company that offers them another dollar an hour," they say. But 99% of the time it's because the employer doesn't value the employee.



The key element for building that environment and developing a genuine culture that lives up to your company's values is trust.

The costs of high turnover and employee apathy, which results in negative impacts for customers, will be more detrimental in the long term versus investing in culture now through developing your team. When employees have the tools and knowledge to contribute, they begin to feel they're part of something bigger that goes beyond a wage.

How do you do this? You must get them to buy into your vision and include them in company decisions. If there's an issue that needs a solution, ask all the team members involved to come back with two or three ideas to fix the situation. If you ask for one idea and don't use it, you risk discouraging some employees. If you can include elements from multiple ideas, they'll feel like part of the solution and be empowered to take action.

## Lead by example

A critical part of building culture through effective leadership is personal accountability. The leaders of a company must meet the same high

standards of character and performance they expect their employees to live up to.

- **If you make a mistake, own it.** Acknowledge your misstep, rally your team, and move forward.
- **Do what you say.** Follow through with decisions. If you constantly implement big changes and then let things slide back to normal, your team will notice. If you promise a bonus or added benefit for achieving benchmarks, deliver.
- **Back your team.** Don't automatically let techs or dispatchers take the heat from dissatisfied customers. Review the situation and make a fair assessment before assigning blame.
- **Act decisively.** Don't let difficult decisions linger. Don't tolerate behavior that's detrimental to the company or individuals.
- **Stick to the vision.** Sometimes a leader's instinct in a difficult

situation is to change the vision — to adapt their long-term goals for the company based on temporary circumstances. In most cases, the better solution is to change your path toward the vision. Did you hit a bump in the road? Get your team together and figure out why you hit that bump and how to get past it. Then take steps to make sure you don't hit any more bumps like that.

Several years ago, I called one of my branch managers in Southwest Florida for an update. "Everything's good," he said. I called again a few weeks later and he said the same thing. When I called him the third time, he said, "Everything's good, man."

"Let me tell you something," I said. "If I call you one more time and you say, 'Everything's good,' I'm going to fire you. I've been in business long enough to know that everything's not always good and now you've got me worried, so I'll be down there in a couple of days to check."

And guess what? Everything wasn't good.

Every business faces challenges. How you respond during tough periods is the ultimate opportunity to lead a team to a trust relationship and build a better culture. When the people at the top of a company fall short and fail to lead, employees notice. When they see managers and leadership embodying the company's values, they see that too. When they see leaders who know where they're going and how to get there, a team has a reason to stick together and work toward a long-range vision. **G**

*Jeff Plant, a head coach at Business Development Resources (BDR), has 26 years of experience in the contracting trades, including 20 in HVAC. With roles in installation, service and building automation for the residential, commercial and industrial markets, Jeff rose from an entry-level position to chief operating officer for a \$40 million business. Jeff's success reflects his professional drive, organizational skills and commitment to strengthening his business education and HVACR technical skills.*

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FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF LANCE SURETY BOND ASSOCIATES, INC.



# 6 Things to Know About Construction Bonds

For most contractors working in the U.S., construction bonds are one of the major requirements they need to meet in order to even apply for a project. Still, they are often confused by these bonds, and not without reason. Namely, construction bonds are tricky to define and even trickier to understand. That's why in this article, we'll do our best to present everything you need to know about construction bonds.

## 1. What Are Construction Bonds?

Construction bonds are a class of surety bonds used in the construction industry. The main purpose of these bonds is to make sure that a construction project is completed in accordance with all terms and conditions stated in the contract.

What is more, if a contracting company (aka the principal) fails to meet its contractual obligations, the construction bond holds it responsible for any financial losses that came as a result of this failure. In other words, if the project owner (aka the obligee) can prove that work wasn't performed as agreed, they can use these bonds to access funding and hire another contractor.

## 2. How Do Construction Bonds Work?

As we've mentioned, if the outcome of a construction project doesn't resemble the plan outlined in the contract, the obligee is entitled to file a bond claim. Afterward, the surety company that issued the bond has to conduct an investigation into that claim. If this investigation shows that the claim is valid, the surety can address the problem in two ways.

The faster and easier way to resolve the issue would be through the mediation of the surety. However, if mediation isn't possible, the surety will swiftly make financial compensation to the obligee so that the project can continue without further interruptions. Still, the principal is ultimately the one that covers these losses since they need to repay the surety for the claim.



We'll do our best to present everything you need to know about construction bonds.

## 3. Different Types of Construction Bonds

The term construction bond refers to a whole class of surety bonds. Furthermore, this class encompasses several different types of bonds, each related to a different set of risks. Three main types of construction bonds provided by a surety are bid bonds, performance bonds, and payment bonds.

### • Bid Bond

This type of construction bond is used as a guarantee that the bonded contractor will not back out of the project if they win a bid. In addition, it can serve as an assurance that the contractor is able to meet the performance requirements outlined in the project plan. Bid bonds are usually only required for public projects, although private project owners could also make them mandatory.

### • Performance Bond

Performance bonds are required once a construction company signs a contract and starts working on a project. This bond guarantees that the contractor will be able to finish the project adequately, timely, and without going over a specified budget. In addition, if any of these conditions aren't met, the project owner can use the bond to cover their financial losses.

### • Payment Bond

The main goal of this bond is to ensure that the construction firm

compensates its subcontractors, laborers, and suppliers. So, unlike the previous two types of construction bonds, the payment bond does not protect the owner of the project. Still, some project owners require contractors to have this bond, as the success of the project largely depends on the third-party agents.

## 4. How Much do Construction Bonds Cost?

Surety bond cost depends on different factors, from the principal's industry experience to their credit and financial strength. What's more, different types of construction bonds will have different price tags, with bid bonds being the least expensive ones. Finally, the bond rate will vary based on the surety company and the size of the contract. Generally speaking, the cost of a construction bond can go anywhere from 1% to 4% of the total contract amount.

## 5. Are Construction Bonds Obligatory?

Although this question is fairly straightforward, the answer couldn't be more complex. First of all, in the case of public projects, construction bonds will, more often than not, be required by the local or federal authorities. However, if a construction project is commercial, the project owner can choose whether the contractor should

be bonded or not.

Another issue that makes the answer to this question even more complicated is the type of bond required for a specific project. Namely, project managers might demand a performance bond but not a payment bond or vice versa. Therefore, contractors need to check the project requirements closely before they submit their bids.

## 6. What Are the Benefits of Construction Bonds?

Even though getting a construction bond may seem like a waste of resources, these documents are far from worthless. In fact, they can benefit both the contractor and the project owner. And as a project owner, it's easy to see why hiring a bonded contractor would be favorable. However, the advantages that construction bonds have for contractors aren't as obvious. Still, they are far from nonexistent, and they include:

### • Easy Access to Public Projects

As we've mentioned, most public construction projects require a construction bond. Therefore, a contractor with a bond to their name will have no problem accessing any public bids. And seeing how valuable public projects can be, having a surety readily available can truly pay off.

### • Fewer Contract Disputes

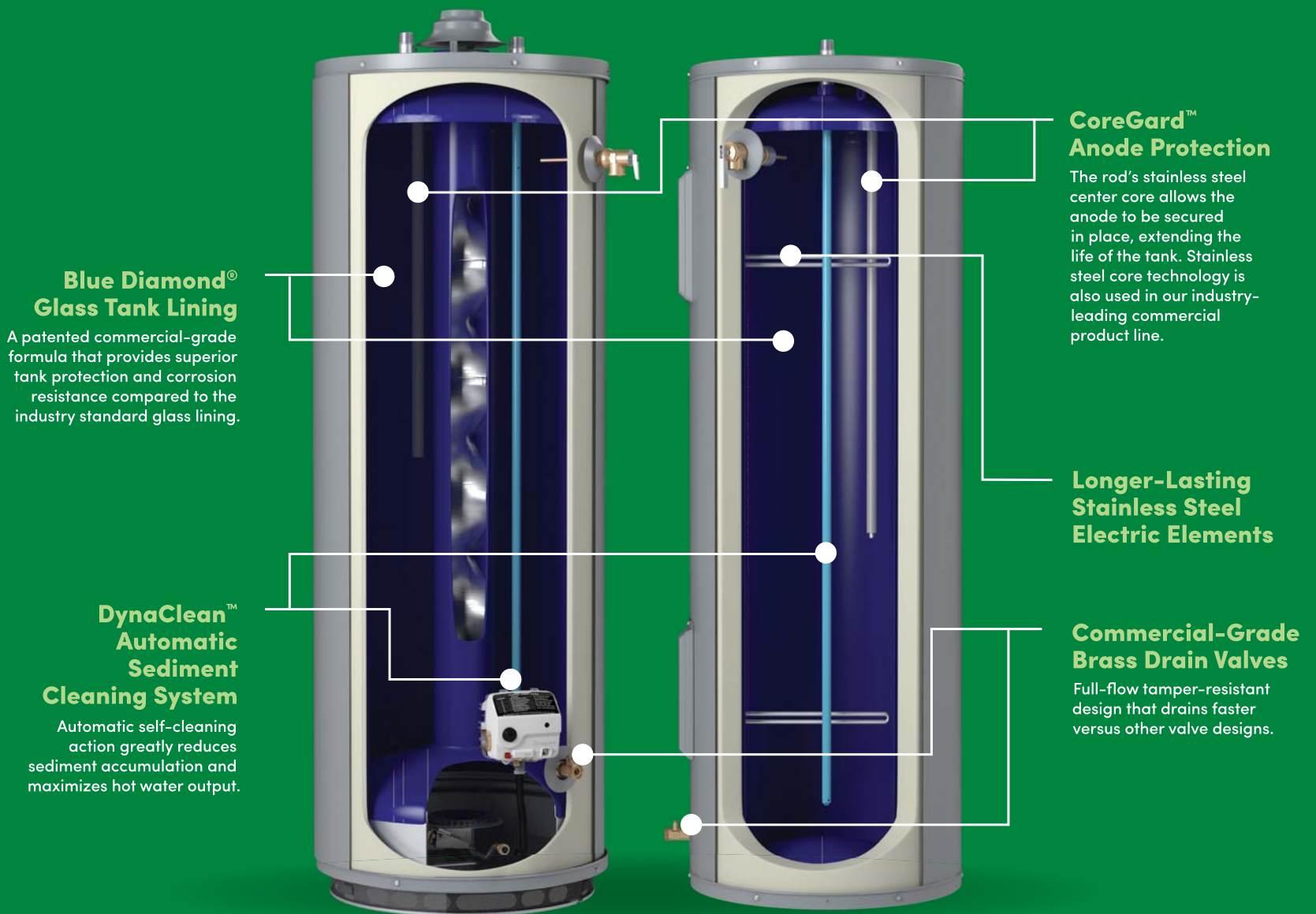
When a contractor is neither insured nor bonded, it's easy for a project owner to dispute one of the performance parameters covered by a contract. Furthermore, they will sometimes misuse disputes to withhold payments or get additional services. However, once the contractor has the surety behind them, they can be sure that those situations will occur less often. Namely, the surety will thoroughly investigate every contract dispute, which makes abuses impossible.

### • Better Employees and Partners

As we've previously explained, payment bonds guarantee that a contractor will compensate its subcontractors, suppliers, or laborers. Thus, a contractor with this bond is seen as both a stable partner and a desirable employer. Furthermore, project managers will always

➤ **Turn to Bonds, page 48**

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by Oswaldo Flores  
PRODUCT MANAGER AT TELETRAC NAVMAN



# Five Steps to Rewarding Your Best Drivers

**D**rivers are the lifeblood of any successful fleet, and—just like topping off the oil in an engine—it pays to keep drivers happy by recognizing when they go the extra mile in their day-to-day. Raising morale among a fleet's drivers isn't just a matter of doing the right thing; data has proven that it can also positively affect the business's bottom line.

As a fleet manager, the best way to show your truckers that you appreciate their efforts is to make sure your best drivers are properly rewarded for their hard work. Here are some simple steps to make sure your truckers feel appreciated:

## 1. Determine How You'll Reward Excellence

There are many different ways to reward drivers who go above and beyond, but higher pay is always a safe bet. The approach will change depending on the fleet, but a reliable method is paying drivers a higher per-mile rate based on their safety record. This is ideal in that it ensures more miles convert to more pay while ensuring safety and compliance don't slip in a rush to add miles. Other fleets may make use of a driver safety incentive program, offering perks and bonuses in exchange for spotless records. The key to maximizing morale with these efforts is to ensure that they always feel like rewards, rather than punishments. For example, getting a bonus for safe driving may be a



Here are some simple steps to make sure your drivers feel appreciated.

great feeling for a driver, but if those bonuses end up being an expected part of their monthly pay, they may lose that special feeling and conversely feel punished if they lose it to an infraction.

## 2. Know Who Your Best Drivers Are

It can be very difficult to reward your top drivers if you don't know who they are. You can only directly oversee so much when your drivers are miles away, but today's telematics offerings make it easy to track numerous behaviors across an entire fleet. Quality

telematics will tell you if a driver is adhering to speed limits, stopping to get enough rest, avoiding harsh braking, taking corners smoothly and much more. These insights can be further customized to focus on particular areas that may need improvement, opening the door to conversations on how the fleet can improve.

## 3. Generate a Driver Scorecard

Once you have all your data, it's time to put it into action. Driver scorecards track and measure your fleet drivers' behaviors to make sure they don't have any dangerous driving habits. These

scorecards rank drivers based on individual violations, painting a clear picture of who is excelling and who needs assistance. Fleet owners can incorporate this information into their incentive programs, providing tiered rewards for drivers who rank better on focus areas such as stop sign violations, or speeding. Performance trends can be made visible – anonymously – throughout the fleet, giving struggling drivers something to strive for while bestowing a sense of pride on those who are at the head of the pack.

## 4. Coach Your Drivers

Driver scorecards provide a clear picture to the whole fleet of what top performance looks like, but going a step further and directly coaching those who are lagging behind will be what closes the gap. Managers can use the data from scorecards to provide direct feedback at the end of any given trip, day, week or month. With the right system, drivers will be notified whenever they make an error while driving, so they also know what areas they can focus on improving.

## 5. Keep It Going Year-Round

Making a special gesture out of recognizing your best drivers is sure to have an impact even if you just do it once, but the greatest reward of all would be to continue showing that appreciation year-round. Implement the practices above and stay consistent with them—and don't be afraid to brainstorm other custom-made initiatives that will let your drivers know you care about them. Happy drivers that feel appreciated on average stay with their companies longer, are more efficient in their daily jobs and demonstrate more commitment and ownership towards their tasks. **G**

Oswaldo "Ozzie" Flores is the safety and compliance product manager for Teletrac Navman. As a former fleet supervisor, Flores has first-hand experience managing drivers and vehicles, ensuring his fleet maintained adherence to all internal and external regulations, policies, and guidelines, including DOT compliance, ANSI/OSHA certifications, and CHP Biennial Inspection of Terminals.

# 6 Things to Know About Construction Bonds

## ► Continued from page 46

go for someone that has strong relations with their associates and workers, which is another advantage of payment bonds.

### • Signaling Stability and Reliability

Finally, having a construction bond as a contractor sends a strong signal to potential customers. Namely, it tells them that you are certain that you can do your job without any issues. On the other hand, an unbonded contractor appears both unstable and

unreliable, even if they promise the same results.

## Final Thoughts

As a contractor, you have to deal with piles of paperwork every single day, and the construction bonds aren't making things easier. Hopefully, this article helped you understand more about these bonds and their role in the construction industry. So, whether you want to work on public projects or appear more reliable, contact a surety company such as Lance Surety Bonds today. **G**

Victor Lance is the founder and president of Lance Surety Bond Associates, Inc. He began his career as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, serving two combat tours. As president of Lance Surety, he now focuses on educating and assisting small businesses throughout the country with various license and bond requirements. Victor graduated from Villanova University with a degree in Business Administration and holds a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

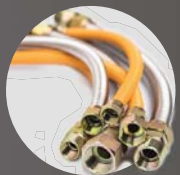
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# Lync Engineered System Solutions

Engineered solutions that provide safe, reliable domestic hot water, mitigate risks of waterborne pathogens, and simplify planning and installation to deliver maximum efficiency and ROI will be on display by Lync, a Watts brand (North Hall – N9926) during AHR 2022. Headlining the solutions from Lync are the world's first Hot Water Wellness Solution – Element® Q – and Aegis®, North America's first commercial CO<sub>2</sub> heat pump water heaters.

## How Water Wellness Solution

World-class scientists with years of industry expertise have engineered a way to fit an entire mechanical room into a smart, compact appliance that can be installed through a standard doorway. The result is Element Q.

Element Q provides safe, reliable, hot water, energy and water efficiency, and improved water quality in an ultra-compact, fully designed and assembled system. The solution sustainably mitigates waterborne pathogens, such as Legionella, reduces risks of scalding, and aids in full building sanitation.

Specifying Element Q in a project shrinks a typical



mechanical room footprint by up to 75%. It simplifies installation, operation and maintenance with a unique, supervisory controller, Edge® SC, and reduces installation time by up to 65%.

## CO<sub>2</sub> Heat Pump Water Heaters

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CO<sub>2</sub>, Aegis produces

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layer and is one of the cleanest,

most efficient and environmentally friendly ways to heat domestic water.

Aegis addresses emerging decarbonization and renewable energy initiatives. The heat pump water heater offers high-temperature production for space savings, as well as higher capacities than most commercial offerings. Remote operation of the heat pump water heaters can be done through a building automation system (BAS).

**Visit booth N9926 in the North Hall** to learn more.

You can also visit [www.lyncbywatts.com](http://www.lyncbywatts.com) or contact [order@lyncbywatts.com](mailto:order@lyncbywatts.com).



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Simplifies design, installation and operation



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See us at AHR Booth N9926

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by Veronica Johnson  
FREELANCE WRITER



# 9 Ways to Build Your Brand Without Breaking the Bank

As a contractor, you're competing in an industry with many different players, and it can be hard to differentiate yourself from the rest of the pack. But building your contractor brand doesn't have to be difficult; there are simple things you can do to make your company stand out from other contractors in your area. Let's go over some ways that you can build your contractor brand image without breaking the bank!

## #1 Define Your Persona: Be Unique!

Create a unique brand image by creating an avatar for your company. Having a brand persona you can work towards will allow others to easily identify with your brand and ultimately increase sales! For example, if you are targeting homeowners who have young families try using the phrase "The Family Builder" in all of your marketing materials or even use "Family" themed graphics to help create your company's unique brand.

## #2 Create an Attractive Logo: Be Engaging

A logo is the face of your company. If you are not creating a professional-looking one, then people will assume that you operate in an unprofessional manner with no regard for quality or customer satisfaction. A contractor logo maker will do more for your brand than you may realize. It helps in getting inspiration or even find the right logo for your brand.

## #3 Don't Rush the Process: Be Deliberate

Creating a unique contractor brand image doesn't happen overnight; oftentimes, it can take months or even years of consistent branding efforts before you start seeing top results. If possible, try to choose just one marketing channel that you will focus on for a set amount of time before moving onto another channel; this allows your branding efforts to have the best chance of being noticed. Once you



There are simple things you can do to make your company stand out from other contractors in your area.

have established yourself in one area, try branching out into other areas such as social media or blogging!

## #4 Develop A Website: Be Professional

Having a website is the best way for homeowners to get a feel of who you are and what your company represents. Having an up-to-date design that accurately reflects your brand will help boost conversions, so it's important to invest in having a professional-looking site. You can always use web hosting services such as GoDaddy to help you get started.

## #5 Develop A Social Media Presence: Be Communicative

An important aspect of building your contractor brand image is establishing a social media presence that will allow you to connect with current and future customers in the area where they are most likely to interact on these platforms. You can do this by using hashtags, having posts related specif-

ically to your business, posting photos/videos that show your company in action, and responding to customers' comments/questions.

## #6 Determine Your Business Goal: Be Focused

Once you know what your goal is, there are many different strategies to consider when trying to achieve it. Through the use of online resources and people who have been in a similar situation as yours, you can be sure that each strategy has been tested for effectiveness and will help lead your company toward achieving its goals.

## #7 Market Research: Be Informed

Promoting your company is important, but it's even more important to make sure you know what kind of services are most in-demand. You can do this by being aware of any changes or developments happening within the industry, attending networking events for contractors where possible, and

asking current customers about how they heard of your business so that you can get an idea of what marketing strategies are the most effective.

## #8 Keep Up with The Trends: Be Active

As a contractor, you're constantly working with your customers to build/renovate homes and other buildings. It can be easy to get stuck in a routine, but it is important that you keep up with the latest trends so that your business stays relevant and competitive within the industry. By keeping current on new building materials, construction technologies, and industry news, you can stay ahead of the curve and ensure that your business is always providing customers with top-quality services.

## #9 Develop A Uniformed Message: Be Consistent

Having a uniform message will help you to brand your business and make it easier for people to recognize. This can be done by using the same fonts, colors, verbiage in all of your marketing collateral so that potential customers know what kind of services you provide. You can also utilize social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram, where users are able to find and interact with businesses in their area. Having this uniform message will allow potential customers to recognize you when they see your ads, fliers, website, etc.

As you can see, building your contractor brand image doesn't have to break the bank! There are several things that you can do in order to make sure your company stands out from other contractors in your area without having to spend a lot of money. **C**

*Veronica likes reading, writing and exploring through her travel. With her freelance guest writing, she hopes to achieve both her passion and career in online content marketing. She writes on topics like business, advertising and digital marketing.*



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- Easy to install
- All connections on top
- Low pressure drop
- Magnesium anode rod
- Smooth stainless steel coil
- Minimal standby losses
- Welded stainless steel cold water dip tube (factory installed)
- Stainless steel aquastat well, T & P and drain valve (factory installed)

## Glass Lined Indirect Hot Water Heaters



- Low Pressure Drop
- Magnesium Anode Rod offers additional Corrosion Protection
- Enameled Coated Steel Tank and Coil
- Minimal Standby Losses
- Temperature Pressure Relief Valve
- 1" Tappings for Higher Flow Rates
- Blue and Red color coded trim rings to identify the supply and return lines.
- Built in tapping for recirculation loop results in less piping for the installer.
- Tank water temperature gauge.

# John W. Danforth Company Lends Helping Hand to Salvation Army

► **Continued from page 3**

and gloves to the Salvation Army to help bring the warmth and spirit of the holiday season to those in need.

[Editor's note: the John W. Danforth Co. was *CONTRACTOR Magazine's Contractor of the Year 2021.*]

"There are few communities that embody and embrace the spirit of giving like Western New York," said Danforth CEO Robert Beck. "As a local company and as Western New Yorkers, Danforth and our employees want to share that spirit with as many people as possible, especially at this special time of year with community partners like Salvation Army."

Today's donation continues the strong partnership developed between Danforth and the Salvation Army over the last several years, including annual holiday drives to collect food, toys, clothing and other items, since 2018.

Major Annette Lock, Salvation Army



John W. Danforth

Director of Operations, Erie County, emphasized the importance of community support.

"We are thrilled to once again partner with the employees at John W. Danforth in providing toys to those in need this holiday season. The

Salvation Army is a part of the WNY Holiday Partnership, and we will provide toys to 1200 families that have registered to receive assistance at our location."

For more information about how you can help the Salvation Army



John W. Danforth

Filling the bins at the Salvation Army.

## Hiller Donates Over \$10,500 in Toys to Toys for Tots

► **Continued from page 3**

Hiller purchased over \$10,500 in toys.

During the promotion—available from November 15th through the end of the year—Hiller set aside \$50 from each tankless water heater sold to purchase toys for donation. And, as a special incentive to homeowners, Hiller offered a \$250 Visa gift card with every purchase.

Toys for Tots, a non-profit organization launched by the U.S. Marine Corps, is dedicated to providing Christmas gifts to children and families in need during the holidays. Since 1947, the organization has collected new toy donations, then distributed those to children and young adults who may otherwise not receive presents. To date, Toys for Tots has supported over 272 million children with over 604 million toys.

Earlier this week, Founder and Chief Executive Officer Jimmy Hiller, his wife Michelle, their children, and their grandchildren took the funds raised and went shopping for toys at a

local Target. The donation totaled over \$10,500, filling over 14 shopping carts with new toys and electronics to fulfill the wish list provided by the Toys for Tots organization. This donation, made possible by the community's

stress and to make sure that every child experiences the magic and joy of the Christmas season".

Launched in 1990 with a single employee and just \$500, Hiller has grown to include over 500 trucks,

### Plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical contractor's promotion now in its third year.

support, follows a donation of \$5,500 in 2020 and a donation of \$5,000 in 2019.

"Shopping for toys to donate to Toys for Tots is something my family and I look forward to every year", remarked Mr. Hiller. "We are so blessed to be able to give back to the community that has supported us so well for the past 30 years. For many families", he continued, "the holidays can be a financially stressful time. It is incredibly rewarding to be able to alleviate some of that

14 locations, and more than 700 employees across four states.

**Hiller Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electrical** provides residential and commercial service and repair throughout Tennessee, Southern Kentucky, Northern Alabama, and Northern Georgia. Hiller, a 12-time honoree to the Inc. 5000 List, employs more than 700 team members, boasts a fleet of 500 "Happy Face" trucks across 14 locations, and has responded to over 1.5 million service calls. **C**

**Holiday donation of toys, blankets, hats and gloves delivered via company firetruck.**

during the holidays, and other events call 716/888-6213

Founded in Buffalo, New York in 1884, Danforth has more than 1,000 employees across a geographic footprint that includes its Buffalo headquarters and regional operations in Rochester, Syracuse, Poughkeepsie, and Albany, New York, and Columbus, Ohio. The company works collaboratively with its union labor partners including the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers, and several other labor partners across many local union jurisdictions throughout the northeast and beyond. Danforth operates an Employee Stock Ownership Plan, giving the company's workforce an ownership stake in the company. **C**

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# Franklin Electric Acquires US Groundwater Distribution Company

FORT WAYNE, IN — (GLOBE NEWS-WIRE) — Franklin Electric Co., Inc. (NASDAQ: FELE) announced today that on December 31, 2021 its wholly owned subsidiary Headwater Companies, LLC acquired Blake Group Holdings, Inc., a Connecticut corporation, for \$27.1 million in cash. Blake is a professional groundwater distributor operating fourteen locations throughout the northeast United States. Blake has approximately \$74 million of consolidated annual sales.

DeLancey Davis, President of Headwater Companies, the wholly owned Distribution Segment of Franklin Electric, commented:

“We are pleased to add Blake to the

Headwater family. Blake has served the pump industry and related water resource markets for over 40 years and has an outstanding reputation within the industry for quality service and technical depth. The acquisition of Blake adds to Headwater’s commitment to the critical groundwater channel, provides geographic expansion in the New York and New England markets and furthers our objective of being the leading source of distribution for water systems solutions in the U.S.”

Headwater Companies, LLC is a collection of leading groundwater distributors. Headwater is a focused groundwater distribution organization that



## Franklin Electric

delivers quality products and leading brands to the industry, providing contractors with the availability and service they demand to meet their application challenges.

Franklin Electric is a global leader in the production and marketing of systems and components for the movement of water and fuel. Recognized as a technical leader in its products and services, Franklin Electric serves customers around the world in

residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, municipal, and fueling applications.

*Any forward-looking statements contained herein, including those relating to market conditions or the Company’s financial results, costs, expenses or expense reductions, profit margins, inventory levels, foreign currency translation rates, liquidity expectations, business goals and sales growth, involve risks and uncertainties.* **C**

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# Reedy Industries Acquires Hays Service

► **Continued from page 3**


industrial piping and millwright services. Cal Hays, president of Hays Service, joined the company in 1977 after graduating from Georgia Tech. "We're proud to join the Reedy Industries family of companies," Cal says, "and ap-


preciate the opportunity to be part of an organization that shares our values and operating principles. We look forward to joining Reedy's other leading regional HVAC service providers across the country to create a brighter future for our customers and teams."

"Cal Hays and his son Calvin have done an amazing job of building on a long history of service excellence," says Joe Kirmsler, Reedy Industries CEO. "They have preserved the family values the company was founded on while adopting the latest technologies

to help their loyal customers reduce operating costs and improve energy efficiency."














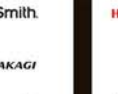







Hays Service is the seventeenth acquisition for Reedy Industries since 2019. "This partnership further extends our growth in the Southeast U.S.," Kirmsler added, "and we look forward to adding even greater density in the region through strategic add-on acquisitions."

Reedy Industries serves critical environments in the commercial and industrial market spaces by focusing on HVAC, plumbing, and building controls services and solutions. Reedy Industries is actively expanding the services it provides within the building envelope and is doing so through both organic growth and acquisitions. Reedy Industries was founded in 1930 and is headquartered in Deerfield, IL, just outside Chicago. For more information, visit [www.reedyindustries.com](http://www.reedyindustries.com). 



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## ABC Appeals Vaccination and Testing Argument

WASHINGTON, DC —Associated Builders and Contractors on December 20th issued a statement announcing its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to stay OSHA's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Emergency Temporary Standard.

"ABC is deeply disappointed that the 6th Circuit Court lifted the 5th Circuit's stay of the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Emergency Temporary Standard," said Ben Brubeck, ABC vice president of regulatory, labor and state affairs. "ABC today filed an emergency appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to stay the ETS because it creates excessive compliance costs and regulatory burdens for job creators and threatens the national economy... ABC continues to encourage vaccination but rejects the damaging regulatory overreach that exceeds the Department of Labor's statutory authority." 



# Advanced Boilers, Water Heaters from AERCO at AHR 2022

AERCO®, a Watts brand, will display its industry-leading condensing boilers and water heaters in North Hall – booth N9926 – during AHR 2022.

## Benchmark® Condensing Boilers

Among the products that will be shown is the Benchmark Platinum commercial condensing boiler that:

- **saves time and money** on installation and operating costs
- **simplifies** startups and maintenance
- **strengthens** system efficiency and performance

Benchmark Platinum optimizes hydronic systems by delivering up to 9% additional efficiency through patented technology and

innovative features. It enables precise combustion by self-correcting problems caused by external variables. The choice for retrofit and new construction, Benchmark Platinum has multiple unique features:

- **AERtrim®**: patented O<sub>2</sub> trim technology
- **Edge® Controller**: advanced features such as EZ Setup and Combustion Calibration Assist
- **Edge Mobile App**: enables full unit setup and control; freedom to move around the unit when configuring, diagnosing and troubleshooting
- **Dual Returns**: enables maximum efficiency and application flexibility



- **onAER® Predictive Maintenance**: analytics tool ensures system operates at peak performance

- **Industry-best Warranty**

## SmartPlate® EV Tankless Indirect Water Heater

Also on display at AHR 2022 will be the SmartPlate EV tankless indirect water heater that offers direct two-way communication with the Benchmark Platinum models. The solution creates a combination plant that promotes greater system-wide energy efficiency.

SmartPlate EV meets the needs of commercial and institutional domestic water-to-water heating installations. At 24" x 32", SmartPlate EV features a sleek, compact footprint and incorporates simple, real-time, load tracking and responsive controls to maintain accurate hot water temperatures under diversified load patterns.

AERCO integrated advanced technology to optimize SmartPlate EV. The result is accurate temperature control of +/-4°F under diversified loads. Plus, the water heater can utilize boiler water as little as 5°F above the desired DHW temperature.

**Visit booth N9926 in the North Hall** or visit [www.aerco.com](http://www.aerco.com) to learn more.



# Oatey Co. Recognized by nonprofits, press, for Commitment to Community

CLEVELAND, OH — Oatey Co., a leading manufacturer in the plumbing industry since 1916, was recently recognized by several local organizations for its commitment to a culture of community involvement and inclusion. The awards, which include those from local nonprofit and news publications, reflect Oatey's ongoing support for its associates and the communities in which it operates.

As a winner of the 2021 **Northeast Ohio Pillar Award**, presented by *Smart Business*, Oatey was recognized for its outstanding contributions to the Northeast Ohio community.

Oatey's community engagement across Northeast Ohio is multi-faceted, ranging from formal corporate activities to grassroots, associate-driven initiatives. Examples from 2021 include volunteerism with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Cleveland Food Bank and FrontLine Services; company programs such as the Associate Matching Gifts Program, VeloSano sponsorship, and nonprofit board membership; and associate-driven activities, such as events with nonprofits like the Animal Protective League and Cleveland Rape Crisis Center.


Among Oatey's largest community



partners in Northeast Ohio is VeloSano, a "Bike to Cure" event to support lifesaving cancer research at Cleveland Clinic. VeloSano recently honored Oatey with its "**All In Award**," which is given annually to an individual, team or group for their exceptional efforts and contributions to VeloSano. Oatey has been a proud supporter of VeloSano since its inception in 2014, and 2021 marked the company's largest impact yet. With 155 riders, virtual riders and volunteers at the company-sponsored rest stop, Team Oatey raised more than \$145,000, putting it among the top 4 teams in terms of fundraising for the year.

Oatey has also remained focused on supporting its own associates through diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives throughout 2021, and the

company was recently named a 2021 **Crain's Notable Business Championing in Diversity & Inclusion**. The award is given to organizations in Northeast Ohio that lead by example and hold themselves and others accountable on diversity and inclusion initiatives, actively attempting to cultivate a culture of inclusion. Oatey's DE&I efforts in the past year included the formalization of a robust DE&I strategy; establishment of a Women's Resource Network; unconscious bias training; a pay equity audit; and a monthly Inclusion Forum series, featuring community partners and thought leaders in the DE&I space.

"Despite the challenges and disruptions of the past year, Oatey remains committed to living our values, giving back to our community and supporting one another," said Neal Restivo, Chief Executive Officer at Oatey. "I want to thank our outstanding associates for their commitment to living out our company purpose to Deliver Quality, Build Trust, and Improve Lives, and congratulate them on the well-deserved recognition they have received for their efforts." 

## Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Names Hooper Hardison as CEO

CHARLOTTE, NC – On December 15 the Board of Directors of Charlotte Pipe and Foundry elected Hooper Hardison to succeed Roddey Dowd Jr. as CEO of the Company. Hooper joined Charlotte Pipe in 1988 and

working full-time in 2022 in his new role as Vice-Chairman of the Board. Frank Dowd, IV will remain as Chairman of the Board.

"I am extremely proud to be part of an organization that values hard work, cares about its associates, and gives back to the communities in which we live and work," Hardison said. "It has been an honor to be a part of this great company, and I am excited about our future."

### CHARLOTTE PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

has held a variety of sales and management positions with the Company over more than three decades of service.

Roddey Dowd Jr. assumed the CEO role from Frank Dowd, IV in 2012 and served in the position for nine years. Dowd Jr. will continue




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BOOTH C3142

# Rheem Announces 15th Anniversary in NASCAR Racing Sponsorship

ATLANTA, GA – Rheem will mark its fifteenth consecutive year of sponsorship in NASCAR® racing in 2022 with

driver Christopher Bell was first to cross the finish line at the Daytona road course.

**Customers, business partners and employees will celebrate at 2022 races.**


hospitality events to recognize and reward contractor and plumbing customers for their business and loyalty. Rheem began its hospitality program at the 2007 Daytona 500 where guests were thrilled with a trip to Victory Lane. During the 2021 season, Rheem Racing had its first win as a primary Cup sponsor, again at Daytona, when

Over the years, Rheem Racing has partnered with Champions and Hall of Fame drivers, teams, and team owners in every NASCAR national series, including Joe Gibbs, Kyle Busch, Kevin Harvick, Richard Childress, Austin Dillon, Christopher Bell, James Buescher, Ron Hornaday and many other outstanding partners. During the last 15



years, Rheem has provided an unparalleled NASCAR hospitality experience to nearly 40,000 guests from every Rheem business unit at nearly every NASCAR-sanctioned racetrack in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

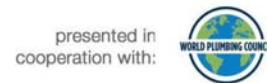
“NASCAR racing has provided us with a unique opportunity to connect on a more personal level with our customers and business partners,” said Rheem President and CEO Chris Peel. “With the extraordinary level of entertainment and fan-engagement value NASCAR provides, it continues to be an important element of our brand development strategy.”

During its 15-year racing history, Rheem-sponsored cars have won 17 races in Cup, Xfinity and Truck series, with two being in Cup Series. 

**Keeping our water systems safe requires a keen understanding of the emerging technologies and best practices that are working to mitigate today’s threats to water safety.**

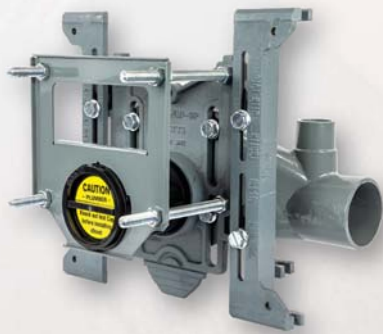
The EWTS provides a unique opportunity to meet well-known experts from across the globe. Participants are able to discover ideas and approaches about emerging technologies coming to market; learn about innovative green plumbing and mechanical concepts; view presentations; and engage in timely discussions on how the water utility, manufacturing, engineering and trade industries have found solutions through emerging technologies for the water efficiency, plumbing and mechanical industries.

**We invite you to join us May 10-11 in San Antonio, TX! [Learn more at ewts.org](http://ewts.org).**



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# AHR Expo Returns to Las Vegas

► **Continued from page 1**

and AHRI, were forced to cancel. “The Board of Directors has carefully considered what course of action would be best for ASHRAE members, the committees that conduct the Society’s business, the industry we serve and the AHR Expo,” said 2020-21 ASHRAE President Charles E. Gullledge III, P.E. in announcing the cancellation. “The pandemic has affected everyone, requiring that we adapt to existing conditions in our personal and professional endeavors and our decision to cancel the 2021 AHR Expo is a reflection of necessary adjustments.”

But the big show is back on for 2022, January 31st through February 2nd at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Extensive planning was conducted by sponsors and show management with the health and safety of attendees the top concern.

“We want exhibitors and attendees of the 2022 AHR Expo to be assured that safety is a top priority as we return to our first in-person show since 2020,” said Jeff Littleton, ASHRAE Executive Vice President. “While we are aware of the concerns regarding the evolving state of the COVID-19 pandemic, AHR Expo Show Management, AHRI and ASHRAE are committed to taking every precaution possible to provide a safe, inclusive, and welcoming atmosphere, in full compliance with all public health guidelines. We are thrilled to welcome everyone back to this industry-leading event, where ideas and emerging HVACR technologies will be shared.”

## COVID Precautions

As of this writing, the show is still more than a month out. Based on current rules and regulations set forth by the state of Nevada, Clark County, the city of Las Vegas and the Convention Center:

- Masks are required for all attendees indoors, including vaccinated individuals
- No masks are required in outdoor spaces
- There are no required temperature screenings
- There are no capacity limits or one-way aisles
- There are no crowd density requirements

There will be a designated first aid area for immediate medical issues. Hand sanitizer stations will be

construction or retrofit with solar thermal-assisted hydronic systems. Learn how hydronic projects can leverage solar thermal collectors for high-end, high-efficiency maximum comfort and energy efficiency.

## 5G Hydronics

**Monday, January 31 • 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**Location: N238/240**

The fifth generation of district systems is an expansion of proven building and campus systems utilizing energy sharing and heat repurposing to create environmental neighborhoods, community heat pump loops, and District ATL’s. Taking advantage of ground temperature and thermal opportunities to

deliver bidirectional energy flow, real energy credits, reduce new power use.

## Role of Boilers in the Age of Decarbonization

**Monday, January 31**  
**1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**  
**Location: N234/236**

Learn ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero, the benefits and

challenges of carbon capture, the availability of renewable fuels, and how electric/electrode boilers play a role in decarbonization. *(Presented by the American Boiler Manufacturers Association.)*

## With Chilled Beams Safer Air Doesn’t Have to Cost You More

**Tuesday, February 1 • 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM**  
**Location: N234/236**

Taking a whole systems approach can provide increased ventilation, safer indoor air and reduced energy costs. We will explore the science behind chilled beam systems including induction air flow, sensible cooling and heating and air distribution optimization. *(Presented by the Radiant Professionals Alliance.)*

## Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) for Boilers

**Wednesday, February 2 • 10:15 AM - 10:35 AM**  
**Location: Theater B - Booth N11931**

Selective Catalytic Reduction is a well-established technology that is proving its prowess in de-noxing the power plants. It plays a pivotal role in cleaning flue or exhaust gases and reducing the emission.

## The Day That Turned Their Business Around

**Wednesday, February 2 • 11:15 AM - 11:35 AM**  
**Location: Theater C - Booth N11936**

Five stories on how five contractors turned their business and lives around and never looked back! Learn how Success Group International has helped HVAC contractors put every next goal within reach.

For those readers of online columnist Ken Sinclair and subscribers to the Connected Contractor newsletter, the AutomatedBuildings.com crew has an entire slate of sessions onbuilding

**Extensive planning was conducted by sponsors and show management with the health and safety of attendees the top concern.**



An educational session from AHR Expo 2020.

located throughout the convention center. Also, the Expo will be offering on-site testing for return flights (reservations are required).

## Sessions and Events


More than 200 educational sessions will be offered at the Expo between Sunday, Jan. 30th and Wednesday, Feb. 2nd. Most are free to attendees, although some offered through the ASHRAE Learning Institute do require a fee. For a full list of the Expo’s educational offerings, visit [https://ahr22.mapyourshow.com/8\\_0/explore/session-fulllist.cfm#/](https://ahr22.mapyourshow.com/8_0/explore/session-fulllist.cfm#/).

While there never seems enough time to hit every session of interest, here are just a few that seem of particular interest to contractors working in the plumbing and heating industry.


## Solar Thermal Hydronic System Technology

**Monday, January 31 • 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM**  
**Location: N238/240**

Increase occupancy comfort level, whether new



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automation and the future of smart buildings that can be viewed at <http://automatedbuildings.com/news/oct21/reviews/210925125701ahr.html>. Of note, on Tuesday, Feb. 1st, from 3:30 – 4:30 PM, room N239 will be the site of the ninth annual Connection Community Collaboratory. Mark Petock, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer for Lynxspring will lead “an open conversation with industry influencers who will discuss a variety of subjects that are playing a role in making our built environment smarter and sustainable.”

And of course, the AHR Expo is held in conjunction with the ASHRAE Winter Conference. For a full conference schedule, visit <https://www.ashrae.org/conferences/2022-winter-conference-las-vegas>.

## New Products

Much like with educational sessions, attendees looking to see the latest and greatest products and innovations from around the industry are spoiled for choice. Just a few highlights that the editorial staff of *CONTRACTOR* are interested in seeing include:

**Ariston Group's** Engineering and Quality teams introduce the Everlast Elevate, a new flexible capacity water heater from **HTP**. The unit delivers the highest output of any residential resistance electric storage water heater on the market after the enforcement policy covering electric water heaters greater than 55-gallons in NAECA III expires on Dec. 31, 2021. The Elevate combines energy efficiency, durability, and maximum comfort in one easy-to-install package.

For the first time in North America, **Daikin** is launching a home comfort product featuring R-32, a refrigerant with one-third the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of the most common refrigerants currently being used in the United States and Canada.

The new Daikin *ATMOSPHERA* system featuring R-32 refrigerant from Daikin North America LLC is a single zone, ductless system that gains impressive efficiencies over its R-410A predecessor line, the LV Series, with up to 27.4 SEER, 13.8 HSPF and 16.3 EER ratings for ultra-efficient cooling and heating. Four sizes of indoor and outdoor heat pumps are available, from 9,000 to 24,000 BTU.

New hybrid cooling technology efficiently controls humidity, even in low-cooling loads, and maintains dehumidification effect after the target temperature



**The Everlast Elevate flexible capacity water heater.**



Daikin



**The ATMOSPHERA single zone, ductless system.**

## Innovation Awards

The AHR Expo Innovation Awards is an annual competition that honors the most inventive and original products, systems and technologies showcased at each year's AHR Expo. Winners are selected by a panel of third-party ASHRAE member judges. This year the winners (by category) are:

- **Building Automation**

iSMA CONTROLLI S.p.A. / iSMA-B-MAC36NL Hybrid IoT Controller powered by Niagara Framework

- **Cooling**

Danfoss / Danfoss Turbocor® VTCA400 Compressor

- **Heating**

Carrier / Infinity® 24 Heat Pump with Greenspeed® Intelligence

- **Indoor Air Quality**

Antrum / AntrumX™ IAQ Facilities Monitoring System

- **Plumbing**

Franklin Electric / Little Giant, Inline SpecPAK, Multi-Pump Pressure Boosting System

- **Refrigeration**

ebm-papst Inc. / AxiEco 630-910 Axial Fan

- **Software**

Bluon, Inc. / Bluon Support Platform

- **Sustainable Solutions** (formerly Green Building)

Engenuity Power Systems Inc / E/ONE Home Power System

- **Tools & Instruments**

Fluke Corporation / Fluke 378 FC Non-Contact Voltage True-rms AC/DC Clamp Meter with iFlex

- **Ventilation**

Aldes / InspirAIR® Fresh

On the second day of the show, one winning product will be named AHR Expo's Product of the Year.

is reached. Daikin *ATMOSPHERA's* novel “CLEAN” operation dries the interior of the indoor unit to reduce the amount of condensation present, while a detachable drain pan allows for easy cleaning.

The Heat20™ Heat Pump Water Heater from **Mitsubishi Electric/Trane HVAC US** is designed to produce high volume domestic hot water for commercial facilities in any climate.

The all-electric system is both highly efficient and environmentally friendly, featuring a COP up to 4.52 powered by natural CO2 refrigerant. With Intelli-HEAT dual-fuel furnace integration system, an all-electric heat pump serves as the primary heating source, but natural gas is available for extremely cold events.



**The Heat20™ Heat Pump Water Heater.**

**Rapid Water Technologies** will introduce its patent-pending Nanobubble Generators to the Power Generation and HVACR industries at AHR Expo. The innovative Nanobubble Generators naturally

remove and prevent the buildup of bio-film and other deposits in commercial and industrial water use.

When installed on cooling towers and heat exchangers, they transform the noncondensable gases that already exist in the water into millions of nanobubbles/ml of water. The flow of nanobubbles through the system creates cleaner water, improves heat transfer, makes chemicals more efficient, lowers maintenance costs and extends equipment life.

The NEXUS-LP Discrete Valve Controller from **SVF Flow Controls** provides an integrated solution,



**Nanobubble Generators.**

with switches, sensors, pilot and spool valve all in a single platform. It is suitable for use on rotary applications for double acting or spring return actuators. It features NAMUR and ISO 5211 adjustable bracket mounting, 5/2 aluminum spool valve, and 2”X 1/2” NPT conduit entries.

For those weary attendees who have gotten tired of marching from booth to booth, new product and technology presentations will be offered throughout the Expo at theaters A, B, and C (rooms N11926, N11931 and N11936 on your show planner).

Remember to stay hydrated, wear comfortable shoes, and bring snacks in case you can't take a break for lunch. Safe travels, and we'll see you at the show! **C**

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# Brownfield Construction and Water Contamination

► **Continued from page 18**

increasing the incorporation of these systems into their building plans to address any potential vapor intrusion risk, known or unknown, and to ensure the construction project stays on schedule and re-

and are designed to stop the continued transport of PFAS in groundwater for decades. Additionally, performance warranty options for the CAC treatment are available from the manufacturer.

As brownfield redevelopment continues to increase, so will the occurrence of previously unknown environmental contamination. Understanding the potential environmental liability risks and the methods for mitigating these risks is the key to ensuring a safe environment for future building occupants and avoiding unnecessary and potentially very costly environmental exposure. **G**

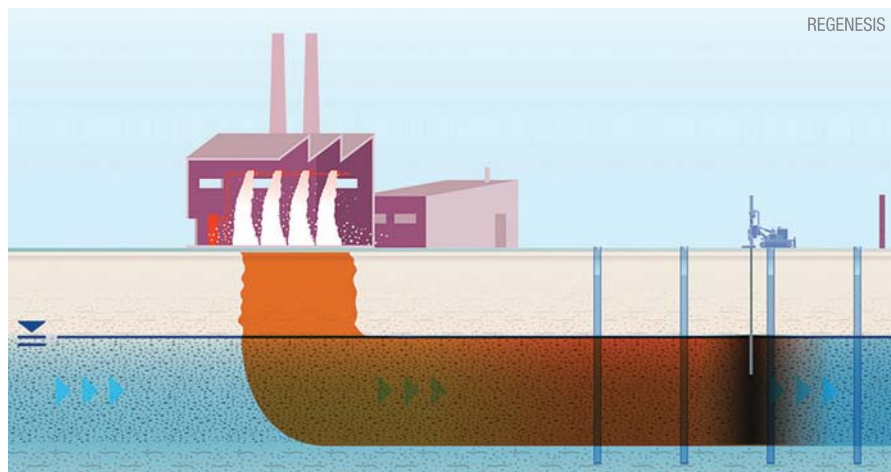


Figure depicting an in situ CAC PRB preventing migration of PFAS to sensitive receptors.

duce any potential future liability. Additionally, comparative cost analyses have shown that it is often less expensive to pre-emptively mitigate vapor intrusion rather than investigate and mitigate after a problem is found.

## If PFAS Impacts on Groundwater is Confirmed Act Quickly

If an investigation resulting from the due diligence activities described above has detected PFAS contamination in groundwater at concentrations requiring remediation, one approach has demonstrated long-term effectiveness and economy for removing PFAS, and other organic contaminants, from groundwater. This remedial approach involves an in situ PFAS treatment method using a colloidal form of activated carbon applied directly to or ahead of a contaminated zone in groundwater. In this process, aquifer materials are transformed into filtering media, cleaning the impacted groundwater as it migrates through the treatment zone. As the treatment is driven by the natural movement of groundwater and requires no mechanical pumping, it is also highly economical.

Colloidal activated carbon (CAC), a proprietary, patented technology commercially available as PlumeStop® through REGENESIS®, quickly removes PFAS constituents from groundwater and contains them immediately. The treatment, therefore, eliminates risk by removing the potential exposure to these chemicals by a downstream receptor. These CAC applications have been applied at numerous PFAS-contaminated groundwater sites

## References

1. Latest Trends in the Industrial Real Estate Sector Here to Stay - Area Development. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.areadevelopment.com/manufacturing-industrial/Q2-2021/latest-trends-in-industrial-real-estate-sector.shtml>
2. Andrews DQ, Naidenko OV. Population-Wide Exposure to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances from Drinking Water in the United States. *Environ Sci Technol Lett.* 2020;7(12):931-936. doi:10.1021/acs.estlett.0c00713

*Ryan Moore - As the REGENESIS PFAS lead, Moore focuses on collaborating with environmental professionals and the industry in communicating effective, proven approaches to manage sites where PFAS contaminants exceed regulatory standards. He has more than 20 years of in situ remediation, environmental project management, and laboratory account executive experience relating to multimedia contamination sites throughout the U.S. He has presented at multiple conferences and environmental symposia on PFAS in situ remediation.*

*Ryan Miller - As the East Region Manager of the Land Science® division of REGENESIS, Inc., Miller's role includes providing technical support in the design and installation of TerraShield, Nitra-Seal, MonoShield and Retro-Coat vapor mitigation systems, and educating the environmental community on the advancements in vapor intrusion barrier technology, implementation, and quality control. He has extensive experience in the environmental consulting industry, focusing his career on brownfield redevelopment projects and specializing in vapor intrusion mitigation.*

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adds three new models: PeakFlow S, PeakFlow A and PeakFlow C. PeakFlow S (standard) is available as a point-of-use residential solution installed at the cold water supply line before the water heater to prevent scale buildup within a water heater system for a flow rate up to 6 GPM. The PeakFlow A (advanced) and PeakFlow C (commercial) can be installed at the cold water line leading into a water heater system to prevent scale buildup for flow rates up to 10 GPM (A) or 20 GPM (C). PeakFlow A also can be installed as a whole house point-of-entry system. PeakFlow C is designed for commercial water heating systems.

Navien

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## THE BIOARMOR WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

is a UV-C, point-of-use water treatment system that helps reduce the number of dangerous microorganisms in building water systems. The system attacks pathogens using UV-C light to render them microbiologically inactive.

Chicago Faucets  
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**1100 INLINE SPECPAK** is a multi-pump pressure boosting system that connects easily to nearly any plumbing configuration. Its smaller footprint allows it to be housed in a compact utility closet or wall hung to preserve critical floor space. The self-contained design delivers a plug-and-play solution that is part of a complete package centered around easy installation, operation and durability.

Franklin Electric Co.  
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**THE WAGS VALVE** is designed to shut off the water supply (plus gas supply for gas-fired heaters) in the event of a water leak from a water heater. It sits in a drip pan under the water heater and is activated when leaking water accumulates to a predetermined level in the pan.

Aquaguard

WWW.WAGSVALVE.COM



## ICON ANYSTREAM SHOWERHEAD

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comes with 1-in. copper and 1¼" NPT iron pipework, perfect for protecting 150,000 to 300,000 Btu boiler ranges from damaging black sludge (magnetite). The filter features a rare-earth magnetic core and two nonmagnetic capture zones to capture both magnetic and nonmagnetic debris. The filter has no moving parts.

Adey

WWW.ADEY.COM/US



## THE DELUXE MINI-SPLIT TOOL KIT

is designed for all mini-split refrigerants (R22/404A/410A). It includes the Yellow Jacket digital adjustable torque wrench, with a second wrench head for tube fittings up to 41mm hex size.

Ritchie Engineering Co./Yellow Jacket  
WWW.YELLOWJACKET.COM

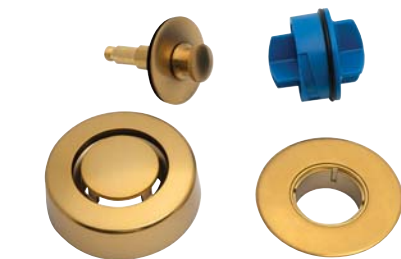


## BASEMENT GUARDIAN HALO

is a smart sump pump that is Alexa-compatible to give homeowners real-time control of the operation of their basement sump pump. An embedded IoT controller constantly monitors the pump's electrical signature for issues and transmits the analysis wirelessly to a mobile app. The dashboard displays metrics on the pump's frequency and duration of use and tracks its operating history.

Wayne

WWW.BASEMENT-GUARDIAN.COM



## TRUE BLUE BATH WASTE KITS

include a new finish: brushed gold. The line is made with integrated locking features that reduce the number of tools needed for installation. The existing portfolio includes bath-waste kits in matte black, chrome, white, brushed nickel and oil-rubbed bronze.

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## THE RUSH AND CLARK STREET WALL-MOUNTED FAUCETS

feature multi-laminar spray, 0.35 GPM and 0.5 GPM flow rates, an easy-to-replace sensor assembly and a soap dispenser. Battery or hardwired models are offered to enhance a range of restroom styles.

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from Merit Brass features shorter lay lengths, easily identifiable markings on the fitting to ensure proper application installation, and no burn permit is required because no anti-fire measures are needed. CopperPress has a patented visual leak before press ring and is available in ½" to 4". The stainless-steel line is available in the highly corrosion-resistant 316L. Available in IPS ½" to 2", the IsoTubi-USA brand mates with schedule 5 or 10 stainless-steel pipe. **Merit Brass Co.**



[WWW.MERITBRASS.COM/PRESSFTG](http://WWW.MERITBRASS.COM/PRESSFTG)



▲ **COPPERHEAD SLIP REPAIR COUPLINGS** are suitable for copper, PEX and CPVC tubing. For most repairs, only a single coupling is needed, compared to the two sweat copper fittings traditionally used. There is no need to find and prepare a length of a specific pipe type to go in between. **QuickFitting**

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▲ **BOILER MOVING SOLUTIONS** take the strain out of moving boilers, geothermal units, heat pumps, water heaters and more. They can help reduce the physical effort used to move loads, reduce the chance of injury while improving job efficiency. **Powermate**

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▲ **THE EXTENTION LADDER WALKTHRU** is a ladder accessory that allows users to make an ergonomic transition area from extension ladder to roof. It allows the user to step directly from the ladder onto a roof, without stepping to the side, bracing the transition from the roof to ladder. **Werner**

[WWW.WERNERCO.COM](http://WWW.WERNERCO.COM)

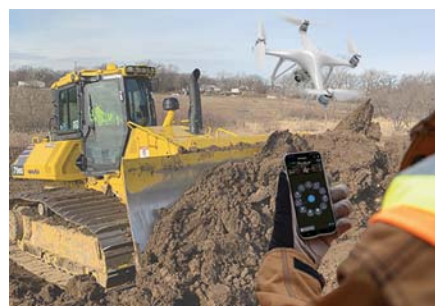
▲ **EXPANDED LINEUP OF INDUSTRIAL PLIERS** includes 18 new tools: eight VDE insulated pliers, four mini pliers, three plastic-cutting pliers, two long-nose pliers and a wire stripper. The VDE insulated pliers include lineman's, long-nose, diagonal, and a 7" insulated wire stripper. **Crescent Tools**

[WWW.CRESCENTTOOL.COM](http://WWW.CRESCENTTOOL.COM)



▲ **MINI-MILLHOG PIPE BEVELING TOOL** is a compact, portable pneumatic I.D. clamping tube and pipe beveling tool with a weight of 27.5 lb. that provides high torque with low RPM. This tool is capable of any angle of prep and produces a clean continuous chip. **Esco Tool**

[WWW.ESCOTOOL.COM](http://WWW.ESCOTOOL.COM)



▲ **THE SMART CONSTRUCTION DRONE AND SMART CONSTRUCTION FIELD** are part of the company's suite of jobsite technologies. Smart Construction Field is an app that analyzes operational efficiencies. **Komatsu**

[WWW.KOMATSU.COM](http://WWW.KOMATSU.COM)

▼ **THE CUTIX UNIVERSAL SNAP KNIFE** features a stabilization bar that keeps the blade from bending for quicker cutting. The extendable bar can be engaged or retracted, and allows the user to apply more pressure directly on the blade. **Knipex Tools**

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▲ **101M CENTRIFUGAL PUMP** features pump housings and mounting brackets made from cast aluminum or bronze alloy. The rotor is made from stainless steel with a hard chrome plate for improved wear properties. The stator is made from molded Nitrile. The seal is a carbon and ceramic mechanical rotary-face-type for positive sealing. **Gardner Denver/Oberdorfer**

[WWW.GARDNERDENVER.COM](http://WWW.GARDNERDENVER.COM)

▼ **THE JM-1450 ELECTRIC WATER JET** uses high-pressure water to clear drain lines clogged with grease, sand, sludge and ice. Overall height of the JM-1450 is 34"; remove the detachable hose reel and height drops to 14½". It is powered by a 1½ hp (13 amp) sealed motor with GFCI. **General Pipe Cleaners**

[WWW.DRAINBRAIN.COM](http://WWW.DRAINBRAIN.COM)



▶ **THE SUPERSCAN WX SERIES WALL SCANNERS** feature Target Control technology that locates wood studs. It helps avoid dangerous targets such as metal pipes, screws, and PEX—

minimizing false positive indications. **Zircon**

[QR.ZIRCON.COM](http://QR.ZIRCON.COM)



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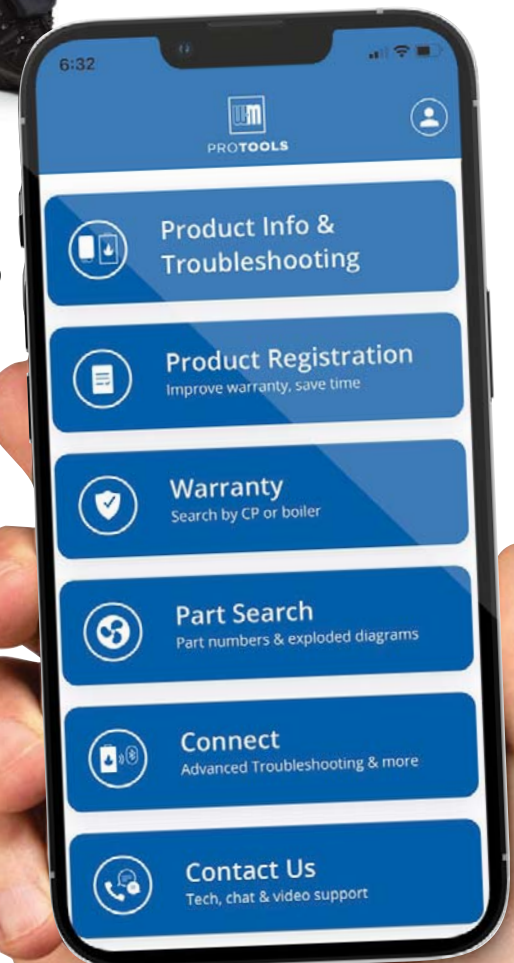
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# The Wisdom to Know the Difference

First and foremost, let me wish a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022 to all our readers. We've somehow managed to make it around the sun one more time. 2021 had more than its fair share of crises and disappointments, but if you were in the plumbing and heating business, odds are you had a good year.

2022 looks to be another good year, although maybe not as strong as 2021. We try to read the tea leaves in our annual economic forecast which starts on pg. 6. The leading indicators present something of a mixed bag. On the one hand, slowing GDP, worries about inflation, and continued difficulties finding skilled workers. On the other hand, the supply chain seems to be working through its problems, material prices are returning to the mean, and there looks to be a big raft of federal money in the pipeline thanks to the passing of the infrastructure deal.

But of course, looming over everything—as it did last year and the year before—is the pandemic. As I type this, US hospitalizations due to COVID have once again topped six figures and are

expected to rise as the new omicron variant sweeps the country. The variant, while fast-spreading, does not seem to create as severe a level of illness. And, luckily, vaccines and booster shots—which have now been available for more than a year—offer protection against the disease and seem to reduce the severity of symptoms.

when I get to feeling that way, I take a deep breath and recite (sometimes in my head, sometimes out loud) the Serenity Prayer:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.*

**Put your focus, your mental effort, into what you can actually accomplish, instead of wasting it on things beyond your control.**

(And yes, I know some people are saying, "If you can still catch COVID, why bother to get the vaccine?" Well, you can still die in a car crash even if you're wearing your seat belt—but you better your chances if you buckle up.)

However, as we enter our third year of the pandemic, with more than 850,000 deaths in the US, with a return to normalcy seeming almost as distant as it did a year ago, a lot of people are in despair. This is going to sound corny, but

Little bit of trivia, the Serenity Prayer was written by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. In his original version he puts courage first:

*Father, give us courage to change what must be altered, serenity to accept what cannot be helped, and the insight to know the one from the other.*

I'm not too religious a person, but the thing that appeals to me about the prayer—that I think appeals to most people—is its practicality. The idea of putting

your focus, your mental effort, into what you can actually accomplish, instead of wasting it on things beyond your control.

That attitude is a hallmark of our 2022 Contractor of the Year, GSM Services (you can read their profile starting on pg. 20). After the tragic loss of two team members in a mass shooting, the company re-committed itself to serving its employees and its customers.

"For instance, we cannot control the CDC guidelines and the constant external political chatter about COVID," says Joel Long, co-owner of GSM. "We can control our positive focus on our caring about our customers and coworkers and how we keep them safe."

Even when they don't have good solutions to some of the difficult situations their team members are experiencing—even when there are no solutions to be had—management at GSM makes a point of listening, because simply being heard can actually be a help.

It's an attitude I think we all could borrow to get us through the tough times—whenever those times show up—and into the better days that lie ahead. **C**

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