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## Batter Up! Baseball Stadium Gets the Most Out of High-Efficiency Fixtures

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

MESA, AZ — Since its opening in 2014, Sloan Park has been the Spring Training home of the Chicago Cubs. The 15,000-seat park, which features many sim-

ilarities to the iconic Wrigley Field, hosts thousands of fans each spring to watch the Cubs gear up for the upcoming baseball season.

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Sloan Park in Mesa Arizona.

## ABMA Elects New Officers, Revamps Strategy, Mission

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

[This story originally appeared in HPAC Engineering -- Ed.]

At its 2023 Annual Meeting, held this January at the Park Hyatt Aviara in Carlsbad, CA, the American Boiler Manufacturers Association (ABMA) elected new officers and adopted a three-year strategic plan through 2025-26 fiscal year.

**Mark Colman**, President & CEO from RENTECH was elected

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Mark Colman, President & CEO from RENTECH

## Cindy Sheridan Named CEO of PHCC—National Association

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

FALLS CHURCH, VA — After a little more than three weeks as interim chief executive officer of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association (PHCC), Cindy Sheridan, CAE, was named the organization's chief executive officer during the Jan. 27 PHCC Board of Directors Meeting in Texas. Cindy Sheridan, CAE, was named the organization's chief executive officer during the Jan. 27 PHCC Board of Directors Meeting in Texas.

"Everyone who knows Cindy has a deep respect for her experience, knowledge, and commitment to the betterment of the" ➤ **Turn to Sheridan, page 10**

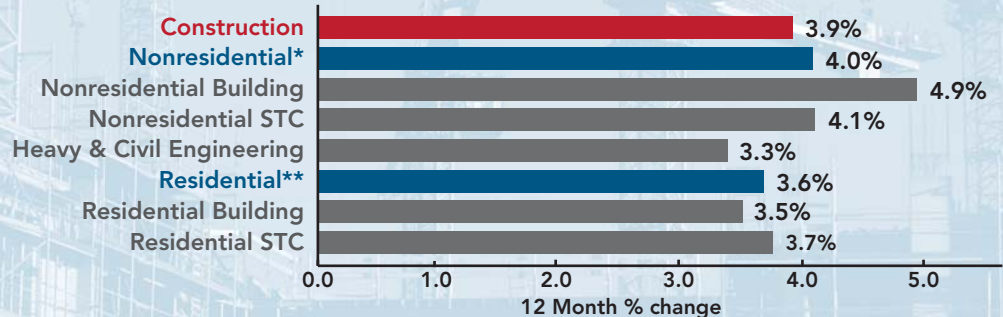


Cindy Sheridan, CEO of PHCC

### CONTRACTOR INFOCUS

#### Construction Employment Growth:

January 2022 vs. January 2023

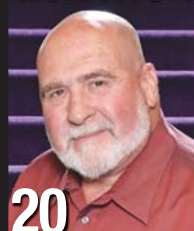


\*Includes nonresidential building, nonresidential STC, and heavy and civil engineering

\*\*Includes residential building and residential STC

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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# Construction Workforce Shortage Tops Half a Million in 2023, Says ABC

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

WASHINGTON, DC — The construction industry will need to attract an estimated 546,000 additional workers on top of the normal pace of hiring in 2023 to meet the demand for labor, according to a proprietary model developed by Associated Builders and Contractors.

“The construction industry must recruit hundreds of thousands of qualified, skilled construction professionals each year to

➤ **Turn to Story, page 48**



# NIBCO Acquires Matco-Norca LLC

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

ELKHART, IN — On Jan. 31, NIBCO INC. announced it has completed the acquisition of Matco-Norca LLC.

“This acquisition supports our strategic long-range goal of growth through acquisition, expanding our market reach and providing customers with access to a broader portfolio of products,” said NIBCO Chairman Rex Martin. “This is an extraordinary time in NIBCO’s evolving history.”



Matco-Norca will continue to operate separately as a wholly-owned subsidiary of NIBCO INC., and its leadership team will remain in place.

“This is an important and positive milestone in our company’s history,” said Matco-Norca President Jack McDonald. “Throughout this process, we’ve recognized many similarities between our history, culture, and our

➤ **Turn to NIBCO, page 8**

# SkyKnight Launches FirstCall Mechanical

■ SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — (BUSINESS WIRE) — SkyKnight Capital, L.P. (“SkyKnight”), a private equity firm with a track record of building market-leading businesses alongside exceptional entrepreneurs and employee shareholders, announced that it has launched FirstCall Mechanical Group (“FirstCall” or the “Company”), a rapidly growing commercial services platform providing mission critical HVAC, refrigeration, electrical, and plumbing services to commercial and industrial customers including distribution centers, universities, industrial facilities, and government

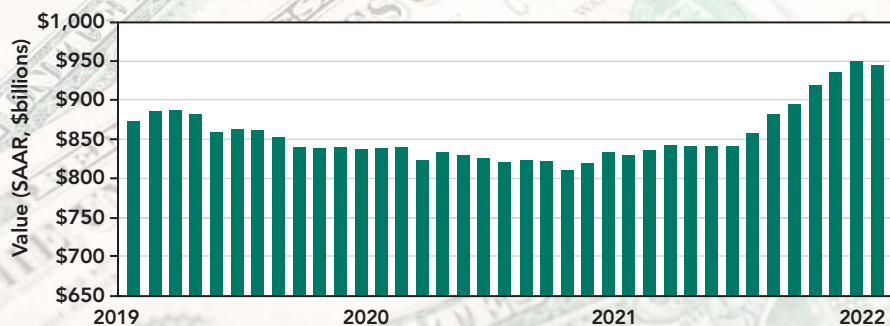


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## CONTRACTOR INFOCUS

### Total Nonresidential Construction Spending

Dec 2019 - Dec 2022



Source: U. S. Census Bureau

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## In Brief

**Weather Guard** has been named the title sponsor of the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race at the Bristol Motor Speedway in April and the Official Truck Tool Box for Bristol Motor Speedway. In the entitlement portion of the partnership, The Weather Guard Truck Race on Dirt is scheduled to take the green flag at 8 p.m. on April 8.

**BoomNation** announces more than 100,000 skilled workers are now using the platform to connect with other tradespeople and employers and to find jobs. BoomNation is a skilled-community platform connecting tradespeople with employers.

Each year, there are approximately 22,000 workplace injuries related to ladder misuse and hundreds of fatalities. National Ladder Safety Month, held every March, was created to raise awareness and encourage safety training. The month-long event is spearheaded by the **American Ladder Safety Institute**. Register for training at [www.laddersafetytraining.org](http://www.laddersafetytraining.org).

**Hydra Service**, a manufacturer of Dynapower pumps, motors and turbine starters, announced the company has been purchased by a local manufacturing investment group, led by business professional Mick Webber. The team has manufactured thousands of units in its 40 years of service. The new ownership and existing management are committed to servicing and replacing old equipment, and developing new products.

**Buyers Products**, a manufacturer of work truck equipment, has promoted Dave Torcasi to the role of chief commercial officer. Torcasi's responsibilities will encompass sales team leadership, accelerating Buyer's revenue through expanding its presence with existing customers and in new geographies, and contributing to the company's marketing and business strategies.

**Interplay Learning** has partnered with **Dominium Management Services** to offer highly effective, engaging, and scalable training solutions. Dominion is one of the nation's leading affordable housing developers, owners, and managers, and is offering Interplay's training solutions to its technicians of all experience levels.

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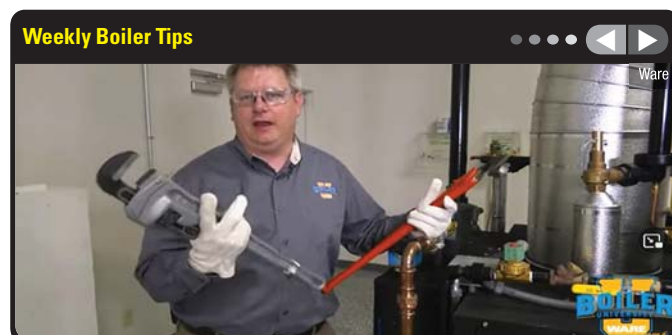
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## Top Stories

- Rinnai Ups Keven McCook to VP
- Carhartt Opens Applications for "For the Love of Labor" Grants
- The New Flat Rate's Business Uncensored to Partner with Service World Expo
- VDMA Valves: Dr. Laura Dorfer to Become New Managing Director

## Videos & Media Galleries



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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- ▶ The engine that could: how contractors can produce a solid business plan
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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.

If so, our Industry Perspectives page is the place for you! Visit Industry Perspectives today at

[contractormag.com/industry-perspectives-0](http://contractormag.com/industry-perspectives-0)

Want to converse with experts in the plumbing and hydronics industries? Then check out **CONTRACTOR's Industry Perspectives**, serving up thoughtful, conversational content from the industry experts you have gotten to know so well at [www.Contractormag.com](http://www.Contractormag.com).



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# Leak Detection - Strategies and Solutions

BY STEVE SPAULDING OF CONTRACTOR'S STAFF

Leak detection is big business—which is no surprise, since it's big money. Plumbing leaks are responsible for more than \$13 billion in claims paid by US insurance companies each year. About 8.1% of homes in the US will experience a plumbing leak each year—1 in 12. Compared to burglary (1 in 36) and fire (1 in 333), water damage is by far the most likely.

Aside from direct damage, and even mold damage (which can jeopardize future insurance coverage), consider the money lost from the leak itself. According to the US EPA roughly 12% of water entering homes is wasted due to leaks. Money down the drain!

All of this can be prevented with a properly installed leak detection system. There are a wide variety of solutions available with different methods, features and price points. The following list by no means exhaustive, but should give you some idea of what's available.

## Lync by Watts

The Trident wireless water leak detection system from Lync (a Watt subsidiary) uses a moisture



A collection of moisture detectors used in the Lync system.

sensor (the small metal “feet” you see on the two smaller units pictured). Sensors can be placed almost anywhere in a basement, mechanical room or bathroom. In public spaces, plastic isolation covers are available to prevent vandalism.

When Trident's wireless sensors detect a water leak it immediately communicates the precise location so a property owner or building manager can take action. Trident is the first and



Leak detection systems can save home- and business-owners thousands, but what system is right for the job?

only wireless water leak detection platform to receive FM Approval.



When a leak occurs, Trident will set off an on-site audible alarm and uses its own secure RF network to send out real-time phone, email, and text alerts. The system can watch hundreds of locations within a single building. A remote management platform allows the user to update and monitor the status of the system from home or the office.

## FloLogic

The FloLogic system uses an automatic shut off valve with an integrated sensor. The main body is a cast bronze, US-made valve available in sizes up to 2”.

The FloLogic system monitors all water flow events starting as small as a half-ounce of flow per minute in real time. Normal water use is episodic, whereas leaks cause abnormal continuous flow. FloLogic's Home and Away modes flag abnormal flow events based on property occupancy



The FlowLogic valve, sensor, and app.

and automatically shuts off the water to prevent catastrophic leak damage. FloLogic bills itself as the only flow-based system that can precisely see and therefore catch small leaks in real time (meter-based technologies have a real time low flow blind spot).

FloLogic's flow sensitivity can be adjusted to begin monitoring from 0.5 to 48-plus ounces-per-minute, allowing the system to ignore the small trickle of water required for evaporative humidifiers or for a leaky faucet that hasn't been fixed.

FloLogic comes equipped with battery backup and the ability to integrate with security systems and automated

water-use devices such as irrigation systems as a standard feature. FloLogic's integrated low temp sensor will alert the user when the room temperature reaches a user-set level and will automatically shut off the water at a programmed temperature to prevent frozen pipe leak damage.

Installing is very similar to installing a traditional manual valve. The system plugs into a 110-volt outlet for power. FloLogic also offers contractors attractive dealer pricing that helps improve the profitability of installing leak detection.

## Mikrofill by Stuart Turner

The Mikrofill system from Stuart Turner (a UK company making rapid inroads in the North American market) is a sealed-system pressurization unit. The Mikrofill 3 (pictured) is suitable for LPHW/CHW applications of any size.

Unlike “pump type” pressurization units the Mikrofill 3 is designed to be connected directly to a buildings incoming mains/boosted water supply and fill a heating or chilled water system without the use of a pump. The Mikrofill 3 consumes as little as 10 watts/hr on standby and 30 watts/hr fully operational.



The Mikrofill 3 pressurization unit.

The Mikrofill 3 pressurization unit incorporates:

- Fluid Risk Category 4 backflow prevention
- The ability to fill directly from mains/ boosted water supply any LPHW or CHW system from empty
- Comprehensive electronic pressure management

That comprehensive electronic pressure management operates, naturally, as a leak detection system. The Mikrofill 3 acts on a drop in the system pressure, the sensitivity of which can be set to suit the specific needs of the

➤ Turn to Leak, page 18

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# PHCC Educational Foundation to Award 56 Scholarships

FALLS CHURCH, VA – This year, the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association (PHCC) Educational Foundation scholarship program plans to award 56 scholarships totaling over \$140,000. Awards are available to plumbing and HVACR apprentices working for PHCC—National Association

members, trade school or community college students taking plumbing or HVAC classes and college students pursuing majors directly related to the plumbing-heating-cooling industry.


The Foundation's scholarship program has been rapidly growing and to better handle that increased demand,

a new online application system has been built. The new system will make applying easier and streamline the evaluation process.

All applicants are required to answer a few questions about their interest in the trades and career plans, plus provide a letter of recommendation.

Apprentices can get that recommendation from their contractor employer, while trade school or college students can have an instructor or guidance counselor write their recommendation. Awards range from \$1,500 to \$10,000; with the most awards set at \$3,000 each. The deadline for all submission materials is May 1st and the application can be found at <https://phccfoundation.org/scholarships>.

## The Start of a Great Career

The scholarships are funded by contractor donations to the PHCC Educational Foundation and by these corporate sponsors: A. O. Smith, Bradford White Corporation, Delta Faucet Company, InSinkErator, RIDGID, Scorpion Home Services Marketing, State Water Heaters, SupplyHouse.com and Viega. 

## NIBCO Acquires Matco-Norca

➤ **Continued from page 3**

long traditions of operational excellence and outstanding customer service making for a smooth transition."

With its corporate headquarters in Brewster, NY, Matco-Norca has long been a pioneer in sourcing valves. Today Matco-Norca is the leading supplier of globally sourced, code-compliant Plumbing & PVF products for use in residential, commercial and industrial applications. Matco-Norca is one of the largest independent sourcing companies for fittings, pipe nipples, valves and plumbing specialties to wholesalers serving contractors and municipalities throughout the USA.

The acquisition also includes the purchase of Matco-Norca's sister company, SVF Flow Controls LLC, a recognized leader in flow control technology. In total, Matco-Norca offers more than 20,000 SKUs and operates five distribution centers located in California, Texas, Illinois, Georgia and New York.

BlackArch Partners of Charlotte, North Carolina, acted as the financial advisor to Matco-Norca LLC and SVF Flow Controls LLC.

For more information, visit [www.matco-norca.com](http://www.matco-norca.com). 



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\*Comparing 66-gallon heat pump against pre-2015 similarly sized standard electric using DOE EF to UEF conversion rates. Savings may vary.

# Cindy Sheridan Named CEO of PHCC—National Association

► **Continued from page 1**

industry,” said PHCC President Dave Frame. “With her guidance, we will be strongly positioned to fulfill our strategic goals of public awareness, workforce development, valuable member resources, and organizational impact—and to make sure PHCC members are recognized as the ‘contractors of choice’ in the industry.”

Sheridan is a Certified Association Executive with more than 30 years of association management experience. She most recently was the PHCC Educational Foundation’s chief operating officer, where she oversaw the development of innovative programs to help develop a highly skilled and

well-educated industry workforce.

A frequent speaker on workforce issues, Sheridan is a strong proponent of initiatives to close the skills gap and promote the value that p-h-c industry careers offer. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Partnership for Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Accreditation (PAHRA), the Association of Career and Technical Education Business Advisory Group, and the Plumbing Technical Committee for SkillsUSA.

Sheridan was hired as the PHCC membership director in 2000, was promoted to vice president of member services in 2009, and became the PHCC Educational Foundation chief


operating officer in 2010. Before joining PHCC, Sheridan was associate director/division manager at the Bank Marketing Association in Washington, DC, and director of membership and marketing for the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives. Prior to that, she held sales positions at the Mayflower Hotel and Hyatt Hotels in Washington, D.C.

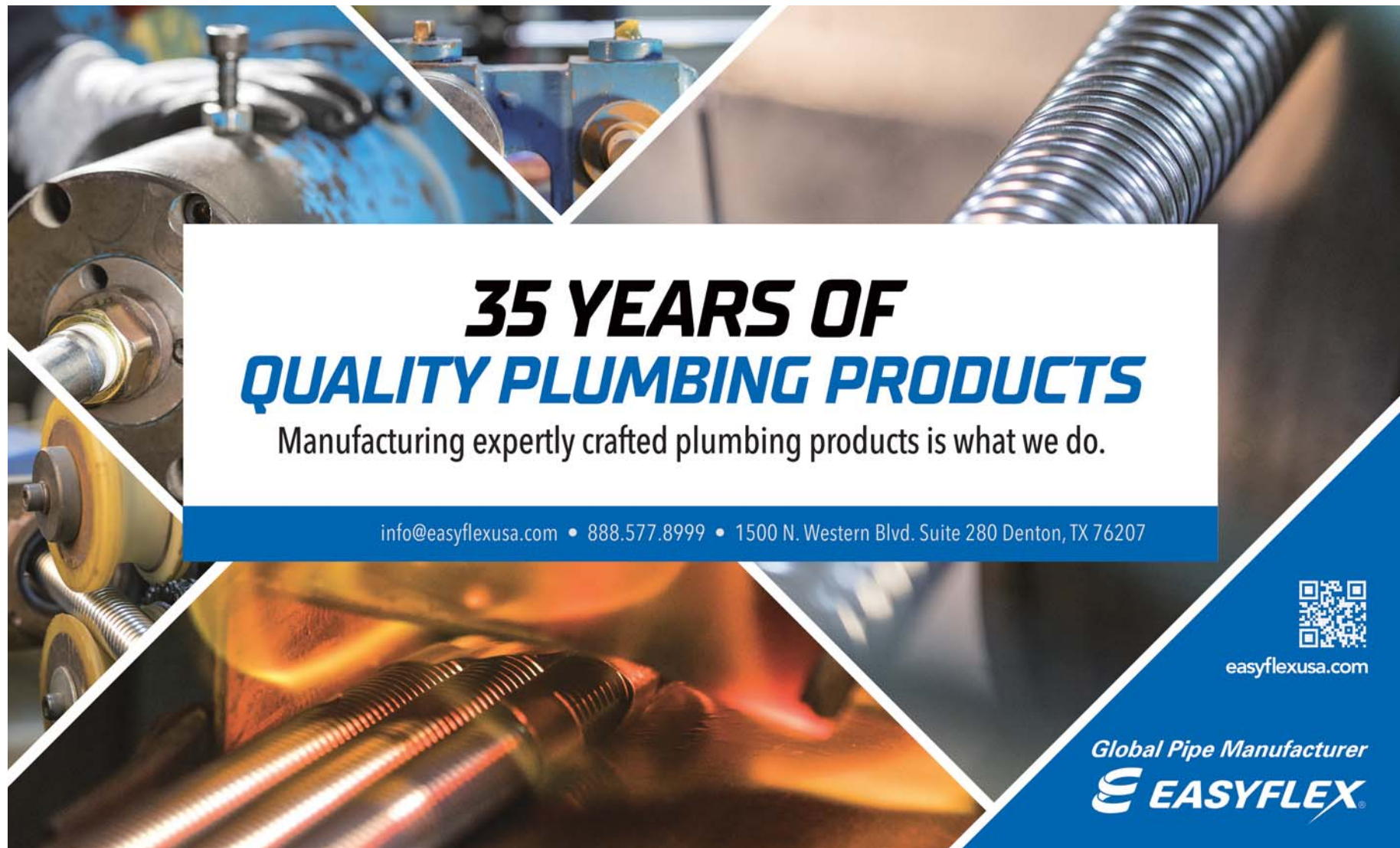
A native of Frederick, Maryland, she received her bachelor’s degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from West Virginia University and completed graduate classes at George Washington University.

“I am excited about the opportunity to serve as CEO on a longer-term basis



**PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING  
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**

to serve our members and advance our association and industry,” Sheridan said. “After 22 years of working for PHCC and the PHCC Educational Foundation, I feel uniquely qualified to take on this role. I look forward to collaborating with our PHCC leaders, members, chapters, and staff on initiatives to make our great association even stronger.” 



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# SkyKnight Capital Launches FirstCall Mechanical Group

► **Continued from page 3**  
entities. SkyKnight has partnered with **Evan Eachus**, FirstCall's Founder and CEO, in launching the platform.

## Local Ownership - National Organization

Headquartered in Austin, Texas, First-

Call is a leading commercial services platform providing preventative maintenance programs and re-occurring pull through services to a diverse base of blue-chip commercial and industrial customers across the Southeast. FirstCall believes in the power of local ownership and

branch operations, while bringing the resources and back-office support of a larger, national organization. SkyKnight has committed significant strategic resources to support FirstCall's organic growth and M&A strategy.

To date, FirstCall has welcomed

four leading regional operations to the platform: STR Mechanical in the Carolinas, Technical Services in Virginia, TimCo Heating and Air in Georgia, and the services assets of JAX Refrigeration in Florida. The platform currently has approximately 150 employees and operations across Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. FirstCall is actively building its presence throughout the Southeast. Under FirstCall's leadership, the family of companies will continue to operate in their respective markets, while benefiting from FirstCall's resources and support.

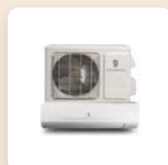
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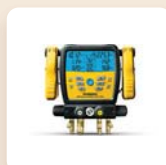
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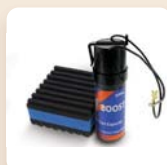
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## Firm acquires assets in Carolinas, GA, FL & VA.

### Resources to Expand

Evan Eachus, FirstCall's Founder and CEO said, "I am thrilled to be launching FirstCall Mechanical in partnership with SkyKnight. Our initial acquisitions serve as a strong foundation for FirstCall and support our vision of being an exceptional partner to our customers, our team-members, and our network of business owners. We provide business owners, who have spent decades building their companies, with the resources to expand their businesses and create a durable legacy. SkyKnight Capital shares this same vision and commitment to build FirstCall into the market leading commercial services platform nationally."

"We are excited to launch FirstCall alongside Evan as an emerging platform in the mission-critical commercial services sector. At SkyKnight, we seek to build industry-defining companies, and we'd like to welcome our initial acquisitions into the FirstCall family as a foundational step in that journey," said **Jordan Milich**, Partner at SkyKnight.

# AMERICAN-MUSCLE. TYLER TOUGH.



## ONE TOUGH DUDE

Tyler Pipe and Coupling is an American manufacturer of cast iron soil pipe and fittings used primarily in commercial construction DWV plumbing systems. Made from nearly 95% post-consumer scrap makes it environmentally friendly, and it's 100% recyclable at the end of its long service life. American Muscle and Tyler Tough.

LEARN MORE [TylerTough.com](https://www.TylerTough.com)



# Saniflo USA Announces Donation to Thurgood Marshall College Fund

EDISON, NJ (FEBRUARY 15, 2023) — Saniflo SFA, a division of Group SFA, the world leader in above-the-floor macerating and grinding toilets and drain pumps, recently donated to Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf), the nation's largest organization exclusively representing the Black College Community.

"We're proud to support Thurgood Marshall College Fund, as they continue to provide opportunities for students to go to college and start a career," says Regis Saragosti, CEO of SFA Saniflo North America. "As part of Saniflo's continued commitment to social responsibility, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute to incredible organizations like TMCf."


Through scholarships, capacity building and research initiatives,



Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) is the nation's largest organization exclusively representing the Black College Community.

innovative programs, and strategic partnerships, TMCf is a vital resource in both K-12 and higher education. The organization is also a resource for larger employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs.

To date, the organization has awarded more than \$300 million in assistance to its students and member schools.

"While over a third of all college students drop out before graduation, we are pleased to announce that 97% of TMCf Scholars graduate," says Harry L. Williams, President and CEO of TMCf. "Saniflo's donation contributes to that success. On behalf of the entire TMCf family, we thank you for investing in our mission and demonstrating your commitment to making a difference." 



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# Uponor North America Makes Donations Honoring 'Unsung Heroes'

APPLE VALLEY, MN — Uponor North America (Uponor), in partnership with its corporate offices in Finland, recently announced a global donation of €25,000 euros – approximately \$26,600 USD—that will be split between five charities in countries Uponor serves as part of the company's 'Unsung Heroes' campaign.

This internal campaign recognized employees who volunteer and serve as ambassadors for organizations that serve their local communities. While more than 30 organizations nominated by Uponor employees, the following Minnesota-based non-profit groups will be receiving a \$5,320 USD (€5,000) donation from Uponor:

- The American Red Cross on behalf of Logan Chapman, maintenance technician, Supply Chain; Cristin Erdman, employee experience

director, HR; Melinda Sprute, associate manager, Product Data Management; Diane Jordan, trade compliance manager, Legal Services; and Tom Ryan, warehouse supervisor, Supply Chain;

- Stand with Ukraine MN, benefitting the Protez Foundation, on behalf of Alex Khrystych, supervisor, Operations Training;
  - Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) for its efforts in supporting military veterans across the state of Minnesota;
  - Emmaus Europe and Down Madrid Association will also be receiving donations on behalf of Uponor Corporation.
- "These organizations are supported



Recipients of the Uponor North America Unsung Heroes donations gathered in Apple Valley, Minn., to be honored with their donations. From L-R: Alex Khrystych, Sarah Qualy, David Nguyen, Yakov Gradinar, Nate Martineau, Aubrey Mozer, and Yury Aroshidze.

by countless Uponorians who serve many hours each year as part of our Volunteer Time Off (VTO) program," noted **Andres Caballero**, president, Uponor North America. "We are honored to

be able to make these financial contributions to each of these organizations, who tirelessly support the communities Uponor is connected to. While our own 'Unsung Heroes' go the extra mile with these groups personally, we are eager to see the impact these financial gifts will make in 2023 and beyond."

The **Uponor Unsung Heroes** program launched in 2022 and aims to recognize the selfless, community-focused efforts of Uponor employees around the world. Each year, Uponor employees are given 24 hours of paid VTO to use as they choose. In 2022, Uponor employees spent more than 1,100 hours of VTO to serve more than 75 organizations across North America. **C**

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# St. Louis Updates Plumbing Code to 2021 Uniform Plumbing Code

ST LOUIS, MO — City of St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones has signed legislation adopting the 2021 *Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC)*, updating the city's code from the 2009 edition of the *UPC*. The adoption was recommended by the city's Committee of Plumbing Code Review and has the enthusiastic support of St. Louis' plumbing industry.

Alderman Bret Narayan (Ward 24) sponsored Board Bill 182 and guided it through the adoption process. The legislation unanimously passed out of the St. Louis Health and Human Services Committee and moved forward to the Board of Aldermen for consideration, passing overwhelmingly on Feb. 3 and 7.

## Meeting Today's Demands

"I applaud the work of Alderman Narayan, the St. Louis Health and Human Services Committee and the Board of Aldermen in updating the city's plumbing code from the 2009 *UPC* to the 2021 *UPC*," said Brian



The adoption was recommended by the city's Committee of Plumbing Code Review.

Rogers, IAPMO senior vice president of Field Services. "This action helps ensure the residents of St. Louis have access to a newer code that reflects changes in water conservation and plumbing technology. The adoption of the 2021 *UPC* will benefit citizens

throughout St. Louis and reaffirms the city's commitment to help ensure that all buildings have safe and cost-effective plumbing systems that meet the demands of today's consumers."

One of the many significant updates found in the 2021 *UPC* is the


addition of the Water Demand Calculator™ (WDC) (<https://www.iapmo.org/water-demand-calculator/>). The *UPC* is the only national model plumbing code with significant updates for water pipe sizing in buildings since the development of Hunter's Curve more than 80 years ago. It is the result of a multiyear, IAPMO-led effort to develop a new statistically based pipe sizing method stemming from a need to address profound water safety and wasted water and energy concerns due to oversized water supply pipes in homes and buildings.

Other noteworthy updates in the 2021 edition include:

- Alternate Water Sources for Nonpotable Applications
- Nonpotable Rainwater Catchment Systems
- Alternate Plumbing Systems
- Potable Rainwater Catchment Systems
- Sustainable Practices

"Updating the *Uniform Plumbing Code* as recommended by the city's Committee of Plumbing Code Review ensures St. Louis residents have access to the most progressive, sustainable, and resilient plumbing code available," Alderman Narayan said. "The adoption of the 2021 *Uniform Plumbing Code* is the highest level of health and safety protection and will benefit all citizens of St. Louis well into the future."

The *UPC* was introduced in Los Angeles in 1928 and formally published as the *Uniform Plumbing Code* in 1945. It is developed using IAPMO's consensus development procedures accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). This process brings together volunteers representing a variety of viewpoints and

interests to achieve consensus on construction practices. Developed and subsequently republished at the conclusion of each three-year code cycle, the *Uniform Codes* are designed to provide consumers with safely functioning systems while, at the same time, allowing latitude for innovation and new technologies. 

## Leak Detection - Strategies and Solutions

### ► Continued from page 6

application site. If the MK3 detects a drop below that of the commissioned coldfill setting, the unit will allow mains water to enter the system to compensate for a given time (which, again, can be set to suit the site specifics).

If the preset target is not achieved during the given time frame, the unit will go to fault and a signal will be sent to the connected plant (the boiler, for example). If a catastrophic leak occurs (an immediate drop in system pressure that shoots straight to the low-level alarm), the MK3 will isolate the connected plant.


The system alerts registered by the MK3 initially switch off the connected plant and can, if installed, convey a fault message to a building management system to inform remote monitoring staff.

### WINT

The WINT3 system (WINT stands for Water Intelligence) detects and stops leaks at the source using Artificial Intelligence. Intended for industrial/institutional/commercial scale applications, the heart of the system is its sophisticated algorithm, while most of the hardware (valves, sensors etc.) is off-the-shelf.

The system alerts the user when water is leaking and can automatically shut it off. Intelligent real-time monitoring identifies sources of leaks and waste preventing damage, reducing consumption and cutting the resulting carbon emissions. The system offers unparalleled anomaly detection and analytics, as well as enterprise-grade management for operation in large and mid-sized facilities. Other features include:

- Backup power to ensure uninterrupted water management and valve activation even during power outages.
- Autonomous operation in case of communication failures.
- Flexible communication options, including Wi-Fi, Ethernet, 4G and 5G cellular.
- Ability to monitor and detect anomalies on all types of water systems in the facility, including main feeds, domestic cold water, irrigation, cooling towers, sprinklers, and HVAC.

The WINT system is constantly collecting data in a manner that allows users to continuously improve the water footprint of their buildings, which can result in impressive water savings (as much as 25% of water bills). 

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by Al Schwartz  
PLUMBING CONTRACTOR



# Trade Craft

I have written about, spoken of and discussed manpower problems in the trades, the need for proper education, basics and specific business issues, ad infinitum, ad nauseum, for the past fifteen or twenty years. There are articles on strategies for recruitment, retention and training new hires into the trade. There are as many opinions about these subjects as there are people in the industry. There may be a consensus on a few of those issues, a lot of them or none at all.

## Trade Craft

The one area that I believe will garner the most, if not universal, agreement is the need for teaching, developing and encouraging trade craft. Defining trade craft is easy—it is a general term that refers to a skill acquired through hands on experience in a trade. It is the bedrock foundation of the profession. One can become a subcontractor by being a good businessman with not much adequate trade craft, but one cannot stay in this business very long without employing skilled tradesmen or being one himself. Trade craft is the glue that binds the business together, and having a work force of poorly trained, semi-skilled craftsmen will get you projects that will reflect that lack of expertise.

As has been noted in my columns on manpower shortfalls, the general opinion of non-trade people toward the construction trades is one of disdain at worst and outright indifference at best. It is a sad commentary on a craft that has been around since before the Roman Empire. How much do you think that opinion would change if people knew that an apprentice plumber, as an example, who availed himself of an apprenticeship training program in the trade while working full time, got more hours of education than the average MBA student?

## By the Numbers

Some might think it bold to compare an apprentice plumber to an MBA



## Trade craft is the glue that binds the business together.

student. Or at least an MBA student who has a real-world major course of study. However, consider that the apprentice, if he works a full 40-hour work week and attends classes in the evening, averages over two thousand hours of hands-on experience in a very specific, focused curriculum every year of the four-year training program. If the apprentice is in a five-year program (there are, sadly, only a few of these programs out there) he would acquire over 10,000 hours of training and education in his field of study.

Compare that with the average 20-hour class week and, maybe, 10 hours of homework per week for two four month semesters for six years that the average MBA candidate puts in, and dilute that time with classes that are not specific to the student's field of study, such as required or elective classes, and one could make the case that the apprentice plumber is better educated and skilled at his trade than the MBA student is at the end of their respective training/college regimens.

The apprentice plumber is not only versed in the various manual and mechanical aspects of the trade, he also has, at the minimum, a real world working knowledge of algebra, trigonometry, geometry, chemistry, fluid dynamics and thermal dynamics. Additionally, the apprentice has (or should have) developed the manual skills to competently layout, install and put into operation the many complex systems that comprise an operational plumbing/mechanical system or systems, according to a standardized code or codes.

## It's in the Hands

So, the apprentice has all of this great knowledge and, one would assume, a modicum of skill. Not all apprentices are created equal. Not all have the aptitude, attitude and mental acuity that, when combined, produces a skilled, competent journeyman. This is where the model begins to break down. An apprentice who is good with his hands, as well as knowledgeable in the trade is the ideal outcome. A

combination of a good attitude, manual talent and applicable knowledge, then, is the standard to be sought.

As a businessman, you are the face of your company, but your people (or you, if you are a one-man show) are who the customers see, watch and deal with on the job. If a customer sees workmanship that looks good, installed by an individual who is obviously competent and able, that customer will come away with a positive image of you and your company and be ready and willing to refer you to their friends, family and business associates. The flip side of that coin is the apprentice or journeyman who is sloppy, careless, scattered in both his work habit and ap-

pearance, or downright incompetent. Such an individual will seriously damage your company's credibility and subsequently its bottom line, not to mention your peace of mind.

The upshot of this column is to take another look at our trade, its history and its future. Be cognizant of your field personnel and be demanding in your expectations of their trade craft as well as their performance. Remember: you are not only the "keeper of the flame" of a long and illustrious craft, but you also carry the responsibility to pass on the skills to the next generation. As cruel or mercenary as it may sound, cull your employees to make sure that you are only retaining or training the very best people you can hire. You owe it to yourself to hire, train and retain only the best representatives of our trade. **C**

*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.*

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By Paul Tully

FIELD TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHARLOTTE PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

# Cast Iron Soil Pipe for Aggressive Sanitary Applications

In the 1890s, cast iron soil pipe emerged as the plumbing pipe material of choice in the United States. The term “soil pipe” was used as it described the functional purpose: to remove soiled effluents from the building. Over the years there have been many advances in soil pipe production and quality, but functionally it continues to be the predominate pipe for removing waste from a building.

Soil pipe systems are required to convey an increasing amount of aggressive waste. Today, stronger cleaning products are commonly used by hospitals, schools, and other institutions, often with less dilution. Viral and biological events like COVID have led to an increase in the use of hand sanitizer and subsequently, a decrease in hand washing with soap and water. This, combined with low-flow water fixtures, greatly reduces the amount of clean water used to flush the drainage system. By their very nature, the food service industry drains fats, oils, and greases, and oftentimes these drainage systems are compromised due to undersized or improperly maintained grease interceptors, resulting in hydrogen sulfide gas build up. So, while the cast iron pipe itself has not changed much over the years, the effluent being introduced into the soil pipe has changed dramatically. Cast iron systems today are required to convey effluents with a pH of anywhere from 2 to 12. Traditional cast iron can handle pH of 4.3 to 10. New requirements necessitate a new product.

Over the last several years, engineers and facility operators have moved away from traditional cast iron soil pipe in favor of various sanitary Drain, Waste, and Vent (DWV) piping materials. Products like PVC, CPVC, and stainless steel are being specified more often. While these alternatives can be effective in some applications, each have drawbacks. These downsides include limited temperature capability, susceptible to chemical attack, or dramatically increased cost. The most recent solution gaining popularity is enhanced coated cast iron soil pipe.



**Enhanced coated cast iron soil pipe products offer all the benefits of traditional cast iron while negating the major drawback of cast iron in aggressive applications: corrosion.**



Many manufacturers have sought out more rigorous coating requirements to ensure adequate performance.

## Coated Cast Iron Soil Pipe

Enhanced coated cast iron soil pipe products offer all the benefits of traditional cast iron while negating the major drawback of cast iron in aggressive

applications: corrosion. On the surface, this seems to solve the problem. However, specifying any enhanced coating by any application method does not solve the problem. While the coatings

offered by both domestic and foreign pipe manufacturers offer excellent corrosion protection, that protection is only effective if the coating remains on the pipe. Experience has proven that the most important factor in protecting the iron from the corrosive environment is not the coating itself. Rather the effectiveness of the protection is based on how the coating is applied. Before selecting an enhanced coated product, one should consider the coating application process.

Enhanced coated cast iron soil pipe products are all made to the existing cast iron soil pipe manufacturing standards used in the United States: ASTM A74 for Service and Extra Heavy cast iron and CISPI 301 or ASTM A888 for Hubless (No Hub) cast iron. These standards have vague requirements for coatings. In essence, they require coatings to be “suitable for the purpose” and applied evenly. These general requirements worked well on traditional cast iron soil pipe for decades. However, with the necessity for a high-performance coating in aggressive DWV applications, many manufacturers have sought out more rigorous coating requirements to ensure adequate performance. All the enhanced coated cast iron soil pipe products offered in the US have utilized a European standard, EN 877, *Cast iron pipes and fittings, their joints and accessories for the evacuation of water from buildings - Requirements, test methods and quality assurance*, to provide a specification for the coating performance by providing a quantifiable method to determine the quality of the coating and coating application.

## Coating Processes

There are several enhanced coated cast iron products available in the US market. Most of the manufacturers who offer these products employ different processes to apply the coating. Pipe and fittings have different coating requirements, so they will be discussed separately.

The one common step employed in  
➤ **Turn to Overview, page 46**

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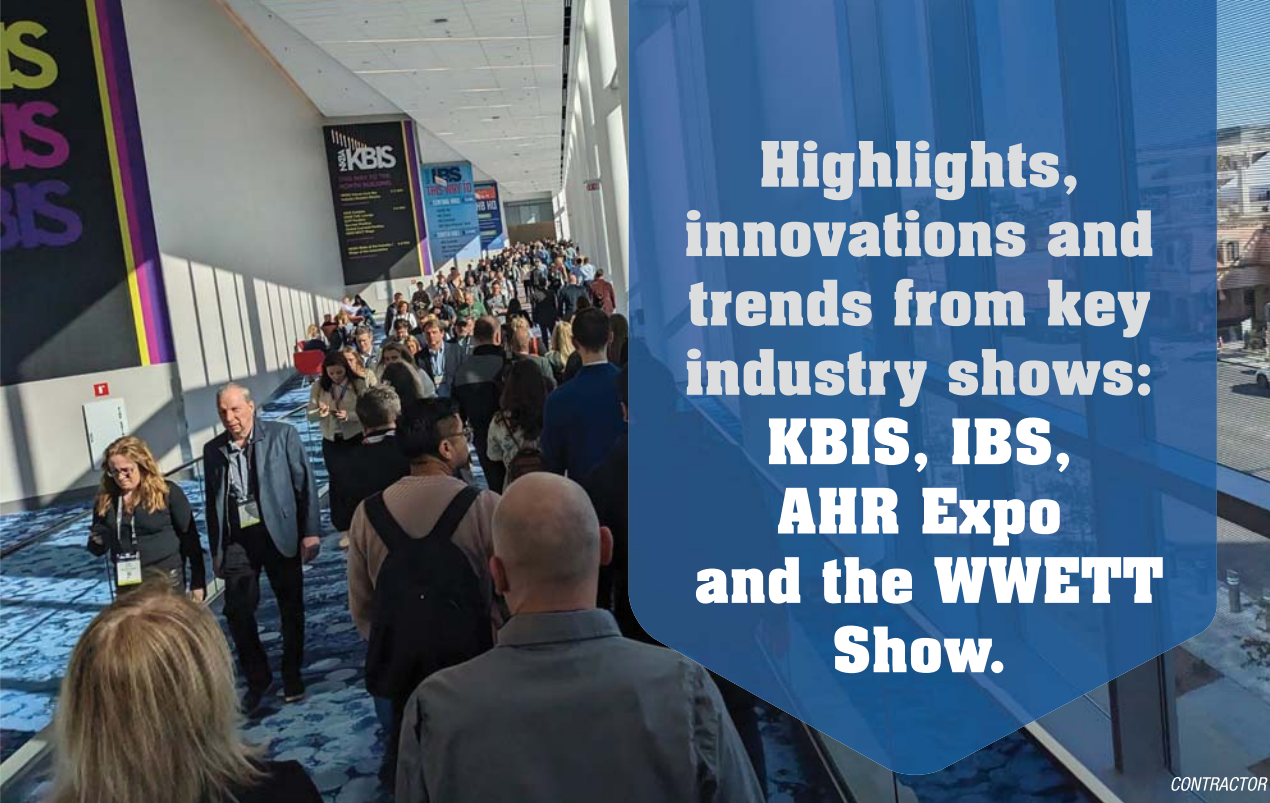
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## Highlights, innovations and trends from key industry shows: KBIS, IBS, AHR Expo and the WWETT Show.

CONTRACTOR

### Las Vegas - KBIS and IBS

The National Kitchen and Bath Association's annual Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) was held at the Las Vegas Convention Center January 31st through February 2nd. This year—as it has for 10 years running—the show co-located with the International Builders Show (IBS) for Design & Construction Week. (New events recently added to the DCW lineup included the National Hardware Show (NHS), The International Surfaces Event (TISE) and the Las Vegas Winter Market.)

This year's show boasted the highest attendance in DCW's 10-year history. Overall attendance totaled 40,000 KBIS attendees, while IBS drew nearly 70,000. DCW attendees visited more than 1,800 exhibitors showcasing the latest housing products across about 1 million net square feet of exhibit space.

"It's truly remarkable what we have accomplished these past 10 years in our industry," said **Bill Darcy**, Chief Executive Officer of NKBA. "Tradeshows are back and this year in Las Vegas proves just that. You could feel the positive energy flow through the show floor."

"What an incredible way to celebrate 10 years of Design & Construction Week with this record attendance," said **Jerry Howard**, Chief Executive Officer of NAHB. "Walking the show floor and attending the education sessions and networking events, you could feel the energy and enthusiasm from exhibitors and attendees alike."

### Best of KBIS

The Best of KBIS Awards, which recognize the most innovative new kitchen and bath products presented at KBIS, were announced from the KBIS NEXT Stage, February 1, 2023, at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. Sponsored by Luxe Interiors + Design, the largest network of regional shelter magazines across the country, Kathryn Given, Luxe Interiors + Design, Style Director, hosted the awards ceremony.

"The Best of KBIS Awards is one of my favorite parts of KBIS," said Suzie Williford, EVP of Industry Relations and Chief Strategy Officer, NKBA. "It's amazing to see these high-quality, innovative products for both the kitchen and bath spaces. Each year we continue to be amazed by how many brands apply for consideration, and the tough choices the judges must make in picking out the BEST of the applicants!"

The Best of KBIS 2023 Awards recognize products in eight (8) categories. The Best of KBIS 2023 Winners Are:

- Best of KBIS – Bath Gold: **inFINE Column Shower by S.G. sri**

◀ The crowds making the long long walk from the South Hall to the West Hall at KBIS.

- Best of KBIS – Bath Silver: **The ABSTRA Collection by Kohler WasteLAB**
- Best of KBIS – Kitchen Gold: **Baveno Kitchen Sink System by BOCCHI**
- Best of KBIS – Kitchen Silver: **FOTILE Insert Self-Adjusting Range Hood**
- Best of KBIS - Connected Home Technology Gold: **MOEN Smart Sprinkler Controller and Smart Wireless Soil Sensors**
- Best of KBIS - Connected Home Technology Silver: **GE PROFILE 36-inch Touch Control Induction Cooktop**
- Best of KBIS – Impact Award (Judge's Choice): **inFINE Column Shower by S.G. sri**
- Best of KBIS – Best in Show: **Baveno Kitchen Sink System by BOCCHI**

### PMI

Plumbing Manufacturers International attended KBIS to spread the word about the association's Rethink Water initiative. The mission of Rethink Water is to address the effects of climate change and crumbling water infrastructure by building a coalition sharing a vision of sustainably managed water.

"All across the globe, we all need to rethink how we use water every day," said **Kerry Stackpole**, PMI's CEO and executive director. "Not only how do we use it, but how do we save as much as possible and make it safe for those who will need it in the future. Of all the facets of climate change, its impact on water may be the most profound."

PMI's first Rethink Water project is legacy product replacement—replacing older, inefficient products with new, more-efficient WaterSense models. At



▲ Drew & Jonathan Scott, the Property Brothers, speak at the NKBA's State of the Industry Address.



▲ An overhead view of the convention hall in Atlanta.

KBIS, PMI hosted a Power Break and Briefing today to inform members, policymakers, other guests and media about the urgency of this project and the need to establish a robust public-private partnership to accomplish it.

PMI Board of Directors President **Sal Gattone** of LIXIL is working closely with Stackpole and the PMI board members on the legacy product replacement challenge. "During this time of climate change and uncertainty, we all need to acquire the role of a conservationist," Gattone said.

### The Code Council

"AHR is good," **Shahin Moinian**, Executive VP for the Code Council said during an exclusive interview with *CONTRACTOR*, "but it is not like this. We have about 25 people working the show. It is our biggest show of the year by far."

KBIS, Moinian said, is a crossroads for experts in all aspects of the plumbing, mechanical and building industries, all areas in which the Code Council is heavily involved. Moinian serves in the ICC's Conformity Assessment Group, partnering with regulatory bodies both in the US and around the globe to facilitate the development of safe, sustainable and resilient communities.

Currently, ICC is already accredited to provide WaterMark Certification and is capable of conducting evaluation to the Australia and New Zealand building codes. ICC intends to offer the new market its NSF 372 (lead-free plumbing requirements standard) for free to its clients.

Next year, DCW will return to Las Vegas from February 27-29, 2024.

**Turn to pg. 54 for CONTRACTOR's Best of KBIS gallery.**

## Atlanta - AHR Expo

The Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Exposition was held January 6-8 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

"This year's show is one for the books," said Show Manager **Mark Stevens**. "We heard it in every corner of the industry - HVACR is gearing up for an exciting path forward. As a collective force, we are focused on change and growth inside our industry,

as well as anchoring our combined efforts on serious developments to set the course for the future of HVAC. It's hard to miss the excitement."

The 2023 AHR Expo hosted 42,794 verified visitor and exhibitor personnel, 1,779 total exhibitors, 425 of which were international, and filled 486,000+ square feet of exhibit space. While these numbers are still recalibrating from pre-Covid years, the strong showing from new audiences is seen as a welcome sign of growth and a hopeful indicator for future workforce development.

Atlanta also hosted 17 industry podcasters in the show's Podcast Pavilion. Industry podcasters dedicated their time at the show covering trending topics and speaking to leaders across the industry with the added excitement of a live audience. The pavilions remained active all three days, resulting in exciting content to roll out in the coming weeks. Full session recordings will be available on [ahrexpo.com](http://ahrexpo.com) once produced content is released by hosting podcasters.

### Awards

At the Caleffi booth, two industry icons were honored. **David Hughes** was presented with the distinguished Carlson-Holohan Industry Award of Excellence. Hughes is the ninth recipient of the award. Hughes serves as a technical adviser with the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating and is a past chair of the Canadian Hydronics Council. **John Siegenthaler, P.E.**, was presented with the Legacy of Excellence Award for his contribution and authorship of *idronics™*, a technical journal of design innovation now in its 32nd edition.

Iconic Carlson-Holohan founders and past recipients were on-hand to present the award to Hughes. The ambassadors included **Robert Bean**, **Dan Holohan**, **David Yates**, **John Barba** (Taco Comfort Solutions), **John Siegenthaler** (Appropriate Design),



▲ The popular Podcast Pavilion at AHR Expo.



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System M is an air-to-water heat pump system that provides comfortable, efficient heating, cooling, and plenty of domestic hot water to your home without the use of fossil fuels - so it doesn't create CO<sub>2</sub>. And since System M is smart grid and solar PV ready, you can tap into green, renewable energy sources to reduce your HVAC carbon footprint even further.

When it comes to comfort, System M uses gentle, lower temperature water to heat your home, so you avoid the extremely high heat of a gas furnace as well as the dry, uncomfortable air that it produces. System M also enables the addition of even more comfortable heating and cooling options, like radiant floor heating, towel warmers, or integration into a central cooling system.

Learn more at [www.tacomfort.com](http://www.tacomfort.com)





▲ A few industry professionals winding down at the Viega party in Atlanta.

**John Goshulak** (Weil-McLain Canada), **Ingrid Mattsson** (Uponor North America) and **Bob “Hot Rod” Rohr** (Caleffi North America). **Mark Eather-ton** and **Kenneth Webster** (Viessmann-Canada) are also prior award recipients.

In the spirit of **Gil Carlson** and the vision of Dan Holohan and Robert Bean, the Carlson-Holohan award was conceived in 2006. The award is presented every two years to a nominee with attributes including technical mastery and a passion for hydronic technologies, demonstrated leadership as an educator and mentor, and an aptitude for cultivating fundraising opportunities for industry causes.

In a bittersweet moment over at the Taco Comfort Solutions booth, John Hazen White III was posthumously awarded the 2023 Dan Holohan Lifetime Contribution to Comfort Award. The award’s namesake, Dan Holohan, personally presented the award to John’s wife, Katelyn, and their daughter, Madison Marie.

The award is given annually to an HVAC professional or company that has made a substantial contribution to comfort technology, advancement, or training while displaying exceptional good humor and love of people—traits exhibited by Dan Holohan throughout his long career. Past award winners include Dan Holohan, Robert Bean, Bruce Marshall, Dan Foley, **John Barba**, and Bob Barbour.

[For winners of the AHR Expo Innovation Awards, announced before the show, please visit us online at [contractormag.com](http://contractormag.com)]

## Education Sessions

The 2023 AHR Expo offered more than 100 free education sessions to attendees, as well as panel discussions, new product and technology presentations, and ASHRAE Learning Institute Courses. Only a few of the highlights included:

In the session, *HVACR State of the Industry Leadership Panel Discussion: Today’s Market, Challenges, Opportunities and What’s Ahead*, leadership from AHRI, ASHRAE, HARDI, NCI and PHCC discussed gaps in the industry that need to be addressed in order to continue on a progressive path. Bryan Orr of HVAC School moderated as the group highlighted what is working, areas for improvement and what lies ahead.

In *Resilient HVAC Systems Meet Today’s Demands and Tomorrow’s Need*, Richard Medairos, P.E., of Taco discussed how hydronic heating and cooling methods are resilient alternatives to traditional HVAC systems using outdoor equipment. Water is an efficient material to transfer heat, and hydronic systems respond well to building modifications and various controls.

In *Financing Your Succession Plan: Seller and Buyer Options*, Jordan Cordero of Live Oak Bank discussed a common problem for HVACR service companies, how to transition the business once the owner decides to retire. One of the best ways, he said, is through a Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) loan. This SBA flagship program is easier for contractors to get approved than through a traditional loan. Using these funds for succession planning can provide a smoother transition of business ownership while preserving the name or legacy of the business, he added.

The HVACR industry has a tremendous opportunity to recruit women into the industry, but the industry also can make adjustments so women are more comfortable contributing their ideas, noted a panel of Women in HVACR members. Erica Leator (Goodleap), Laurelyn Arriaga (*Women in HVACR* board member) and Kristin Gallup (Carrier) explained that the organization is focused on providing HVACR women with networking, education and

mentoring opportunities to advance their careers.

This year, AHR Expo expanded its education programming to Wednesday. The headliner panel, *HVAC & Social Media: Strengthening the Trade with a Community Mindset*, featuring social media influencers of the industry, was the first of its kind discussion. Hosted by some of the industry’s most active content creators and trade mentors, the panel was a deep dive on how all shareholder roles can work together to better the industry as a whole.

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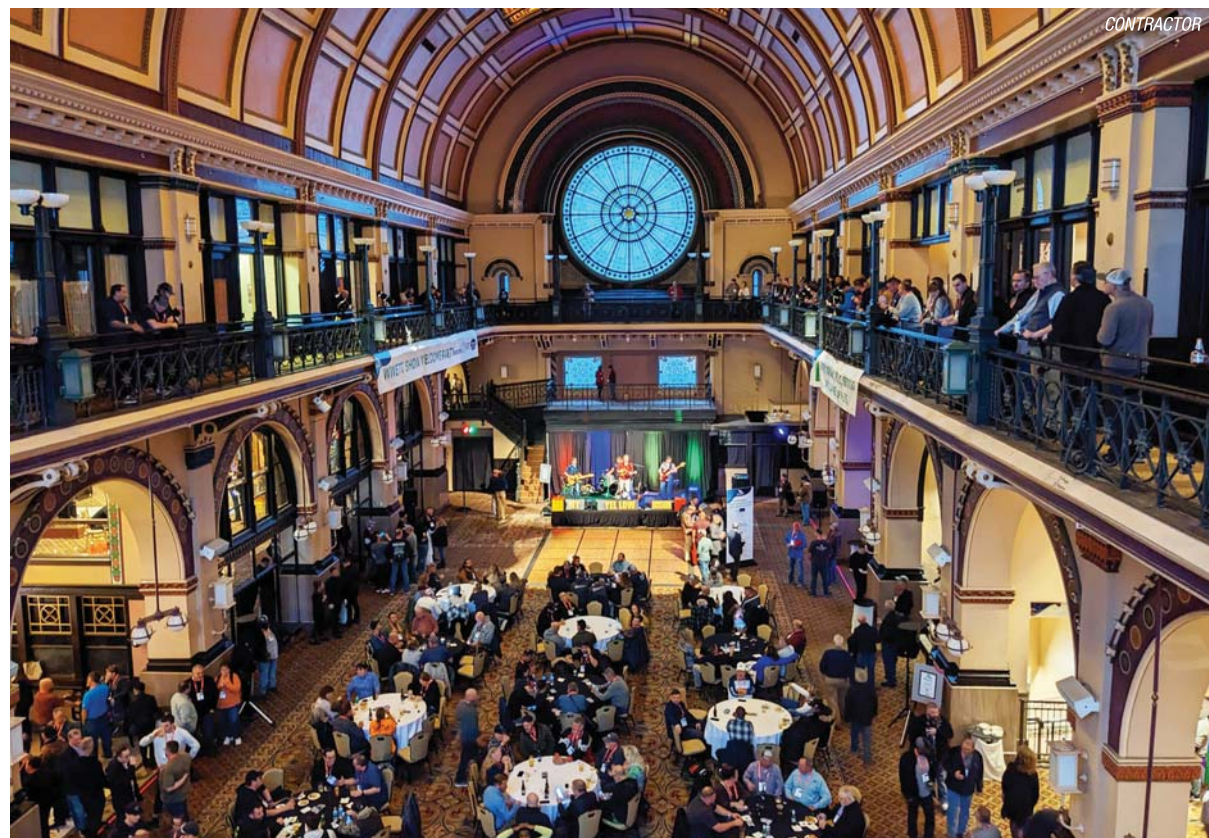
In 2024 the AHR Expo comes to Chicago, Jan. 22-24. Registration is expected to open early summer.

**Turn to pg. 55 for CONTRACTOR’s Best of AHR Expo gallery.**

## Indianapolis - The WWETT Show

Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment and Transport (WWETT) Show is the world’s largest annual trade show for wastewater and environmental service professionals. It hosted more than 600 exhibitors showcasing new and innovative products and services February 20-23, at the Indiana Convention Center.

The WWETT Expo Hall showcased exhibitors from around the globe including Federal Signal, Environmental Solutions Group, Satellite Industries, Vac-Con, Inc and CUES, Inc. aimed to address the growing industry, now estimated at 301.77 billion USD. A wide variety of products and service categories available at WWETT include Septic Pumping, Portable Sanitation, Sewer, Waterblasting, Safety Equipment, Pumper Trucks, Dewatering and Software.



▲ The WWETT Show welcome party in the Grand Hall at Union Station, Indianapolis, sponsored by Custom Truck and Tornado Global Hydrovacs.



CONTRACTOR

#### ▲ Competitors in the backhoe ROE-D-HOE show off their precision skills at the WWETT Show.

“There has been tremendous advancement in the waste and wastewater industry since our last event, including innovations in maintenance, design and installation,” says **Marc Acampora**, VP & Market Leader, WWETT Show. “With a robust conference program, Expo Hall, and specialized industry events, WWETT provides wastewater and environmental service professionals with information on pertinent industry trends and solutions.”

This year the show was proud to partner with Operators Without Borders, an organization that provides certified, volunteer water and wastewater operators who can support utilities in developing countries following emergency and disaster situations to ensure that safe drinking water and wastewater management services are resumed. On February 21a special Happy Hour General Session was held in the Expo Hall to discuss the current situation of water and wastewater utilities in Ukraine and how the industry can help.

### Education

The WWETT Show offered close to 100 sessions spanning four days, covering a wide variety of industry and professional topics, and all are included with a full education package. Session tracks included Business Strategy and Leadership, Confined Space Training, Diversity, Municipal Sewer and Water, Sewer and Pipe Rehabilitation Relining & Repair, Vacuum Truck Operations and much, much more.

Sessions were led by top industry experts and professionals from leading associations, businesses and manufacturers. Many sessions count toward fulfilling required continuing educational units (CEUs) and professional development hours (PDHs).

**Rodney Koop**, founder and CEO of The New Flat Rate, and **Danielle Putnam**, president of The New Flat Rate, were both guest speakers. Koop’s session, *Time to Eliminate Flat Rate Frustration*, focused on explaining how pricing could be holding companies back. During the presentation, Koop will also

discuss pricing logic for the trades, Fortune 500 pricing, and define a pricing system that could work for attendees.

In her presentation *Process Building in 20 Seconds*, Putnam laid out the groundwork for creating simplicity and success in a business so their energy converts to revenue. She will explained process writing, process implementation and value building while teaching the audience how to implement them in 20 seconds.

### Special Events

The WWETT Show included live product demonstrations, a film screening, a welcome party (hosted by Custom Truck One Source and Tornado Global Hydrovac, with live music by My Yellow Rickshaw), a live interview series, and even two industry-specific competitions.

The first, the NAWT (National Association of Wastewater Technicians) Shootout, is designed to bring awareness to the updated Federal Regulations regarding Pre-Trip inspections. Individuals were given a pre-trip checklist sheet with truck sections listed, and then given a truck to inspect. Contestants needed to identify any issues they found.

And, back by popular demand, NOWRA (the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association) held the National Backhoe ROE-D-HOE® Championship Competition, a three-day open event where attendees who are skilled backhoe operators compete by using the backhoe bucket to skillfully and smoothly move small objects such as a golf ball or bowling pin in an extreme race against time. The competition is timed and culminates with the contestants with the top three times winning belt buckles—in addition to up to \$1,000 in cash prizes.

### Keynote

After a welcome from Marc Acampora, former Navy SEAL **Chad Williams** took the stage to deliver his keynote speech.



CONTRACTOR

#### ▲ Navy SEAL Chad Williams delivers the keynote speech at the WWETT Show in Indianapolis.

Williams opened with a story about his time serving in Iraq training the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF). His SEAL team and a group of ISOF soldiers had set out to clear a house. It was a “graduation” mission for the team he’d helped train, and was set to be one of the last operations he was scheduled to be part of during his time in the country. Little did he know it at the time, but Iraqi insurgents had set up an ambush that quickly turned into a deadly firefight.

Williams then backtracked to talk about how he decided to become a Navy SEAL, about the drive and determination it required of him, and about the lessons he learned along the way—and how some of those lessons can be applied to business, or to any challenge life may hand you.

Some of key points were:

- **Aim small, miss small.** The more clearly defined your goals are the easier it is to achieve them, and the better your results will be along the way.
- **Servant leadership.** The best leaders are about the team’s success, not their own. They lead by example, and build true loyalty by helping their followers achieve their own goals.
- **Earn your trident every day.** The trident is the Special Warfare Insignia of the Navy SEALs that they earn upon graduation. But in a war zone, the enemy is always adapting, improving, changing their tactics, and SEALs are expected to grow, develop and adapt in turn. Continuous improvement is the hallmark of any successful organization.

.....

In 2024, the WWETT Show returns to Indianapolis Jan. 25-27. [C](#)

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by Patrick Linhardt

HYDRONICS MANAGER AT CORKEN STEEL PRODUCTS CO.



## Recollections of Coal

**M**y favorite uncle was my mother's youngest brother Roger. He brought the sailboat for our two-week vacations on Lake Erie. Our two families would share a large cottage for fun in or on the water. Uncle Roger taught me the basics of sailing his one sail Sunfish. The local kid taught me the excitement of tipping it up on its side and consequently the art of righting the ship when it would tip over completely.

Recently, one of my cousins from my mom's older brother sent the "Childhood Remembrances of Roger". Written over two years, it covers his life from earliest memories to high school. It is a great read full of sled riding adventures and home sleeping arrangements. Being the youngest, he slept on a "metal cot that drooped in the middle" for quite a few years.

### Hand Fired

The part that I enjoyed the most, being a steam heating geek, was his descriptions of his experience with coal. To really understand the old steam systems, you have to think of them as hand fired with coal rather than automatically fired with oil or gas.

They heated up much slower and therefore had more time to vent the air. Today we over size the venting for better operation. They were sized to bring the house up to temperature from a cold start. Today we can size closer to the heat loss since the system won't normally be completely off.

I have often wondered about some of the most basic aspects of coal systems, like moving the coal around, storing it, firing it, cleaning up after it and how dirty the air must have been. Uncle Roger explains it all. I hope you enjoy this trip to the past as much as I did. The house had a furnace and not a boiler, but a coal fire is very similar. He was a kid in the 1930s.

### Loading the Bin

"At an early age it was my desire to be like my big brother and load the coal bin. The way it worked was that you



**To really understand the old steam systems, you have to think of them as hand fired with coal rather than automatically fired with oil or gas.**

would call for delivery. They would deliver by dumping the coal in the street. Your job was to load a wheelbarrow with coal and wheel it maybe 30 feet over concrete walks and wood planks laid on the grass and dump it in the window to the coal bin. That was simple enough until the coal bin started to fill up. Then you had to push from the outside or pull from the inside to get the coal away from the window so you could dump more in. A full year of coal was almost up to the rafters (boards would be put on the doorway to the coal bin). At the beginning of the heating season a board would be removed from the bottom and coal extracted. Once you got to the point where you could no longer get coal you would remove another board. In time all the boards would be removed and you would actually enter the coal room to get coal. Needless to say I was thoroughly disenchanted after loading the coal bin one time.

"The operation of the coal furnace was simple in practice. You would bunch

up some newspapers and put kindling wood (as I recall dad brought this home with him from work on the traction—it was from scrap boxes from another company in the same building) on top of that. After making sure the flue and the damper were open you lit the newspaper. If all went well the paper caught the wood on fire and then you would add the coal. After the coal was going good you turned the damper down so that the fire did not get too hot. You also made sure the water container on the side of the furnace was full (humidity infusion through evaporation).

### Dampers

"At night you would push all the coals to one side, called banking, and turn the damper almost closed. In effect you went to sleep with no heat. It was usually dad who got up first and got the furnace heated up in the morning. If you were lucky, in the morning there were some hot coals that could be used to start the fire again. During the day

if you wanted more heat you would open up the damper. This would allow more air to feed the fire. On more than one occasion we would forget to turn the damper back down and a neighbor would come over and tell us that sparks were coming out of the chimney. This was very dangerous, as it could have caught our house or a neighbor's house on fire. You used a handle to shake the fire grate to dislodge the ashes. They went to a collection area at the bottom of the furnace. Once a day you would shovel them into a container. Needless to say with coal and ashes the basement was very difficult to keep clean.

"For economy, the ashes from the furnace were used to put on the sidewalks when it snowed. Talking about economy, the total ashes from the furnace were contained in a bucket about one-third of a regular size garbage can. The total of the garbage from the house was contained in a can about one half the size of a current size garbage can.

"There was a hill where Whittington Terrace came off Hamilton Ave that the city would close off the street and we would sled ride down it when there was snow. We would also sled ride at the end of the street and on the (Hancy) farm that was located further down in that direction. As all the homes were heated with coal there was considerable smoke and soot. Naturally the soot would settle out onto the ground or snow. Each time it snowed there would be a layer of soot. It was like layered if it snowed more than once before it melted off. I think it snowed more then than it does now."

Obviously things have changed quite a bit. The air is cleaner, it doesn't snow as much in Cincinnati, and our heating is much less hands on. I wonder what heating will be like in a hundred years? **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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## Holiday Rush

BY THOMAS RENNER, SPECIAL TO CONTRACTOR

The lack of hot water in winter is a potential nightmare that would raise the blood pressure of any homeowner. The problem is magnified tenfold when the interruption occurs for a hotel owner, particularly during the holidays.



Because the new system required fewer heating units, all the electrical wiring needed to be re-established along with a new

That's precisely the issue a Philadelphia-area hotelier experienced when the water heating system for an 88-room building failed just a few days before Christmas. Plumbing contractors are used to emergency service calls, but this situation—a snowstorm brewing, guests arriving, holidays on the immediate horizon—needed swift attention.

Workers from Affordable Fixes Heating Cooling Plumbing rose to the challenge and installed two HTP Phoenix 119 gallon, 199K BTU high efficiency gas water heaters. The project required the removal of four water heaters that were leaking and causing carbon monoxide development in the hotel.

"There are always challenges but replacing four and putting in two meant we had to put in a new exhaust, re-pipe the system, and re-do the electric units," said Val Savkin, owner of Affordable Fixes Heating Cooling Plumbing. "It was supposed to be a one-day job. It took three, which was very efficient given the scope of the project."

### Aging System

Savkin had been in contact with the building owner previously, so when the urgent phone call came in just before Christmas, he knew the system needed immediate attention.

"This was an emergency project," Savkin said. "The water heaters that had been in place had deteriorated. They couldn't be repaired any longer. It was just wear and tear, they were outdated. Just two days before Christmas we were out there in



The Phoenix water heater's modulating burner operates at a five to one turndown ratio, which provides high system efficiency even during low load conditions. The heaters also comply with SCAQMD Rule 1146.2 – ultra low NOx emissions – making it eco-friendly.



## Philly area contractor helps hotel escape nightmarish heating system failure.

the snow getting the project finalized."

Savkin considered alternatives before selecting the HTP Phoenix units. "These HTP units were new to us, but we wanted a high efficiency, fast recovery water heater. If we had used another system, we would have to put in at least three units," Savkin said. "We saved the customer about \$12,000 by selecting this system."

The scope of the project was elaborate. Savkin sent five workers to the site to expedite the repair, including four plumbers and a scrapper to remove debris. The first step included the disassembly and removal of the existing units.

The second phase was just as challenging. Because the new system required fewer heating units, all the electrical wiring needed to be re-established along with a new exhaust and gas line.

HTP National Training Manager John Monaghan supported the quick work by determining the heat calculation for the building and recommending two Phoenix 119-gallon tanks. "That not only saved the building owner a lot of money, but it also allowed us make the installation a little bit quicker."

The challenging part of the installation centered on getting the units in place in the hotel's basement. "It was a very tight fit. We were fortunate to have an elevator handy," Savkin said. "We had to disassemble the new units, put them in a box, put them in the elevator and then re-assemble them. If there had not been an elevator, we would've gone old school and roped them down."

### Efficiency and Durability

Several factors played a part in the decision to install the HTP Phoenix water heaters. Efficiency, durability and fast recovery will help keep the cost down for the hotel owner while also maintaining the thermal comfort of the hotel guests.

"We didn't know much about them, but we recently had training with them and I really liked their efficiency," said Savkin, who has been in business in the Philadelphia area for more than three decades. "They were a great fit with a nice integrated control and easy to replace."

The HTP Phoenix has a 96 thermal efficiency rating, which means that 96 cents of every dollar are used toward heating, compared to a standard efficiency unit, which can have a 60 percent efficiency rating. The modulating burner operates at a 5:1 turndown ratio, which provides high system efficiency even during low load conditions.

The HTP Phoenix also includes a 316L stainless steel tank to resist corrosion. It is supported by a 7-year residential warranty and a 3-year commercial warranty, with a 5-year commercial warranty available.

"Most times you'll get 8-12 years out of units, but like anything else it depends how much you take care of it," Savkin said. "I could see these lasting 12-20 years. It's all about the maintenance of the equipment, but it's important to look at the water quality, too. The hardness and chemicals of the water has a lot to do with the longevity of the system."

### Crisis Averted

Savkin, and all other plumbers, are used to urgent calls requesting service. No customer likes to be without heat or hot water for any duration. Especially at the height of the holidays.

➤ Turn to Holiday Rush, page 36



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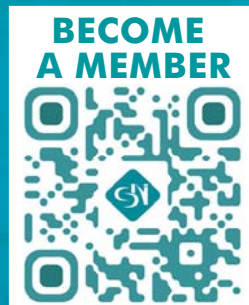
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## A. O. Smith to Expand Lebanon Facility



The current Lochinvar facility in Lebanon, TN.

MILWAUKEE, WI — A. O. Smith Corporation (NYSE: AOS), a leader in water heating and water treatment, has announced plans for a new Product De-

velopment Center at its Lebanon, Tennessee, location. In the next six months, construction will begin at the existing Lochinvar campus to include a state-of-

the-art engineering facility where next-gen water heating and boiler technologies will be developed. The company will also be expanding the Lebanon

manufacturing facility to support future production lines, including space for new decarbonization products.

The new center will bring together the company's North America Water Heating commercial engineering, platform electronics, product support and product management functions with Lochinvar engineering and product management.

### Collaborative Workspace

"Co-locating these teams in one central location with collaborative working space will enable us to not only leverage synergies between engineering teams but also enhance knowledge sharing to support future product innovation," said Kevin Wheeler, chairman, president & CEO.

## Caleffi Introduces the 32nd Edition of idronics™: Troubleshooting Hydronic Systems

MILWAUKEE, WI — Caleffi North America, Inc., a leader in state-of-the-art engineered solutions for hydronic and plumbing systems and committed to providing Excellence in Education, has introduced the 32nd edition of idronics™: Troubleshooting Hydronic Systems. This newest edition discusses the physical processes at work in hydronic systems and presents a process for troubleshooting issues in residential and light commercial settings.



In coordination with the journal launch, Caleffi will be hosting an idronics book signing event with issue author

John Siegenthaler, P.E. The signing will take place at the AHR Expo on Tuesday, Feb. 7 at 11 a.m. EST (Booth B3317 of the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta). Siegenthaler, a seasoned industry leader and principal of Appropriate Designs, will host a 20-minute keynote conversation about the issue from the show floor.

Subscribers to the journal will receive a hard copy of the new edition in February. Caleffi also provides an interactive experience for the journal, optimizing access for mobile, tablets and desktop devices. The interactive edition can be found at idronics.caleffi.com.

A set of Coffee with Caleffi™ webinars will discuss this topic in more detail. Siegenthaler will present Part 1 on Thursday, Feb. 23 from 12 – 1:00 p.m. CST. Registration is open now.

idronics is a complimentary journal provided semi-annually and is written for industry professionals to aid them in system design, component application and selection.

**\$30 million investment in new product development center will prioritize commercial water heating, hydronics.**

With plans to start this summer, construction of the expanded facility will take approximately 20 months to complete. Its projected cost of \$30 million represents a significant investment in talent and resources to create an environment where innovation is the focus.

"Just as the Corporate Technology Center in Milwaukee was designed to showcase our advanced water heating and water treatment research and development efforts, this new facility will serve as a hub for commercial water heating and hydronics new product development," said Dr. Bob Heide-man, senior vice president and chief technology officer.

When fully operational, it's anticipated that the Product Development Center will house more than 150 employees.

## Holiday Rush

► **Continued from page 34**

"When we first looked at this project, we gave the owner a price and he didn't get back to us right away," Savkin said. "Then he called back and said he needed to have it done immediately. It's an occupied hotel, and we are right around the corner. With the snow, the holidays

and people traveling, this could have been a bad situation for him. We were glad to help him out and fix it quickly."

*Thomas Renner writes on building, construction, engineering and other trade industry topics for publications throughout the United States.*

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by Patti Feldman  
COMPUTER AUTHORITY



# Field Service, Leads & Learning

Cloud-based **BigChange** field service management software ([www.bigchange.com](http://www.bigchange.com), 855/472-3035) addresses planning, tracking, and managing jobs for a field-based workforce with numerous capabilities accessible by management and/or crews in the office and in the field.

The fully digital job management platform features drag-and-drop scheduling of jobs on a calendar (working via day, week, and month views) and takes into consideration the skills and tools required as well as location and time-frame requirements and features. You can schedule a single technician or automatically configure teams or multiple teams to work together.

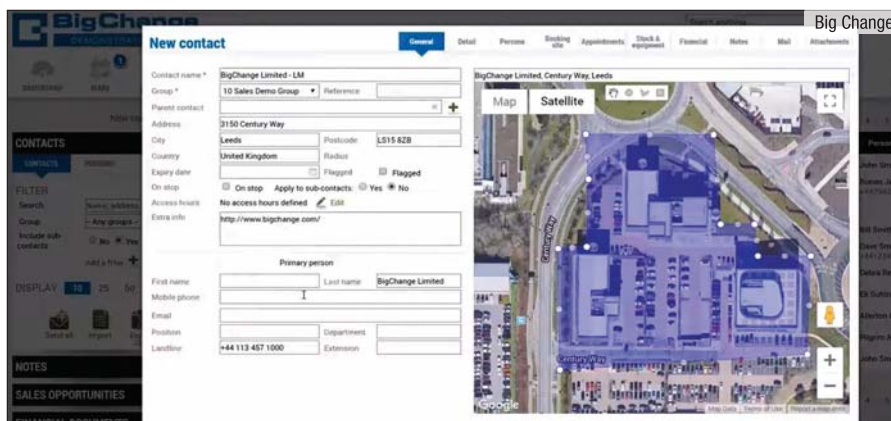
Job and work locations are automatically inputted via integration with GPS. The software, which supports geo-fencing, features live tracking of field teams, vehicles, and assets, enabling intelligent route planning and optimized response time to urgent jobs.

The integrated mobile app enables allows technicians in the field to generate quotes and purchases in real time, view past customer job history including photos, capture photos in real time, log parts, and upload receipts of purchases associated with the job. While onsite, they can add pre-defined items to a job, including parts and additional services offered during upsell.

Technicians also have complete visibility of the inventory associated with each job. Parts and equipment can be assigned directly to jobs, with the ability to check availability at various locations. In addition, team members in the field can create and book new jobs from scratch or modify a scheduled job.

Upon completion of the work, the technician can sign off on the job, create an invoice, email it to the customer and accept payment on the spot from the integrated billing and payment platform BigChange Pay, which streamlines invoice collections by giving customers payment choices, including many major credit and debit cards and digital wallets.

Management can configure custom alerts for technicians and can link



The Big Change new contact management window.

## Reviews of Big Change field service management software, the Leadferno lead conversion platform, and the Interplay Learning online training platform.

fuel card transactions to actual vehicle mileage, verified by integrated vehicle tracking.

Customers can request work via a personalized online customer portal, view job progress live, and make new job requests. Other CRM capabilities include job confirmation and ETA updates, viewing of invoices, and service reminders.

Graphical business management dashboards addressing job performance, customer service, quotes overview, and sales opportunities (currently in beta testing stage) feature screens with graphs and charts that can be customized with the ability to drill down (beta testing stage at press time).

The solution also features pre-formatted business intelligence reports, including those detailing various aspects of performance and profitability, for example costs and profit by job, by technician, and by customer, as well as reports that track stock inventory.

BigChange integrates with QuickBooks, Xero, and Sage and other 3rd party solutions.

**Pricing:** fee per month starting with vehicle tracking and driver mobile app and escalating for complete

all-in-one workforce management system including a fully managed rugged Samsung tablet.

### Leadferno

**Leadferno** ([leadferno.com](http://leadferno.com)) is a conversion platform that utilizes business texting and messaging to close more leads faster. It is accessible to visitors of your website allowing them to start SMS conversations for real-time questions, answers, and help.

The shared inbox allows you to read and reply to text messages and messages from Facebook Messenger and Google's Business Messages all in one place.

The LeadBox is a customizable text widget that appears on every page of your website as an always-visible set of contact buttons. Customers can start text conversations, click-to-all, request a call, appointment bookings, estimate forms and more. It features auto-replies based on your business hours to capture business hours, after-hours, and weekend leads.

The solution includes the ability to use internal notes, saved reply templates of common answers, replies, questions, reminders and scheduled messages, and allows you to

transfer text conversations from one team member to another.

You can track and report on your messaging leads and integrate with Google Analytics for advanced reporting. The platform includes the ability to access contacts and stores a full history of your conversations.

You can request Google reviews from your customers with a single click and Leadferno can also be integrated with other reputation management tools. The software integrates with CRMs using Zapier, a no-code platform to automate apps and workflow, and Leadferno's API, a software interface.

Leadferno has three account plans based on your level of messaging, contacts, text number type, and integrations.

**Pricing:** monthly fee scaled based on edition. Free 14-day trial.

### Interplay Learning

**Interplay Learning** ([www.interplaylearning.com](http://www.interplaylearning.com)) is an online training platform for apprentices, technicians, and office staff in skilled trades, including HVAC and plumbing industries. The platform provides learning opportunities through experiential video courses and immersive 3D simulations. Using a desktop, laptop, or VR (virtual reality) headset, learners operate responsive hand-held "tools" to perform steps for a specific task, such as diagnosing a problem with a piece of equipment through the simulated use of a probe or other hand-operated tools.

More than 200 courses targeting the HVAC and plumbing market, led by experts, address a range of topics, including skills assessments and beginner basics and advanced troubleshooting scenarios, and jobsite safety topics. Administrators assigning a course can receive a notification when it is completed or late.

**Pricing:** per user annually, five-seat minimum. Fee covers all courses, custom learning paths, analytics and reports, and certificates of completion.

*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



# 10 Steps to Turn Trade Shows Into Opportunity Shows!

**T**he greatest opportunity for contractors to learn about new products, services, and methods that can give their company an edge is at trade shows. To make a trade show an opportunity show, you should follow these 10 steps.

## 1. Identify Associated Seminars of Interest

Usually, any trade show has accompanying seminars. This is where the latest and greatest best practices and products will be presented. Look over the seminars to see if any are of particular interest and block out the time they are held.

## 2. Look for Quality Information in Seminars

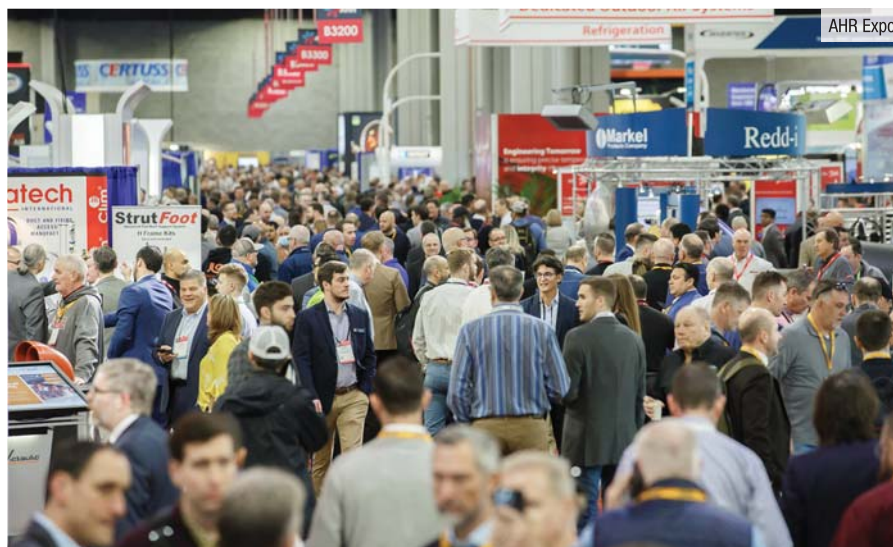
Sometimes the best speakers deliver the least information. They are great at entertainment, but light on substance. Conversely, some of the most powerful information is poorly delivered. Often, this is when a fellow contractor is speaking. Few contractors are trained on giving presentations, so be prepared to endure bad slide decks and rambling from time to time for information from someone who has been there, done it, and collected a closet full of t-shirts. Just like you should never judge a book by its cover, do not judge the quality of a seminar by the slickness of the presenter.

## 3. Do Not Hesitate to Walk Out

Sometimes you pick the wrong seminar. Maybe, it's not what you expected. Maybe it doesn't fit your company and circumstances. Whatever the reason, do not sit through something that wastes your time. Quietly leave and find something better suited. Do not worry about offending the speaker. They wear big boy pants. They can handle it if you get up and leave.

## 4. Target Your Most Attractive Exhibitors

For the trade show, get ahold of an exhibitor list in advance. Identify who



Attendees crowd the floor at the 2023 AHR Expo.

**Collecting information at a trade show can make you smarter. Taking action is what makes you better.**

you really want to talk with and prioritize the list. It might be an exhibitor with a new product or service. It might be a chance to talk with someone from the executive suite of a particular manufacturer.

Once you have your list of more important exhibitors, hit them in order of priority for smaller shows. For larger shows, map out the most efficient route.

## 5. Set Appointments

If there is someone you really want to talk with and you believe the person will be attending an upcoming show, reach out in advance and ask for a meeting. It may only be 15 minutes at the exhibitor's booth, but some advance planning will ensure you reach the people you want. Schedules fill up. If you wait until the day of the show, a busy executive might not have an opening.

## 6. Be Ready for the Unexpected

Part of the reason for attending

a trade show is to learn about new things. The exhibitors at the show are making significant investments to be there because they believe they have products or services that are so compelling and can make such a difference in your business that you would buy them if you only knew about them. Unfortunately, a lot of contractors march through shows with their eyes straight ahead, ignoring all exhibitors, because they might try to sell them something. If that is your attitude, you are better off staying home. The whole point of the show is to learn new things.

## 7. Ask the Right Questions

If you approach a trade show booth the right way, you can turn it into a mini-seminar. No one knows more about the exhibitor's niche in the market. This is your chance to learn from him. Think through the questions you want to ask in advance. Ask, how can you help me make more money? Or, ask how the exhibitor can make your life easier. Ask distributors

and manufacturers what trends they are seeing in the marketplace. Ask about the most innovative practices they see contractors deploying. Remember, these guys talk with a lot of contractors and they can be fountains of knowledge.

## 8. Bring Business Cards

While more and more shows are using QR codes and other means of scanning badges, it is still a good idea to carry business cards, lots of business cards. You never know when you might run into a contractor from another state who faced and solved your most perplexing problem. You might run into a guy who has a valued employee relocating to your community. In all cases, you want to collect and hand out business cards for follow up.

## 9. Sit with People You Do Not Know

When you get your overpriced concession stand lunch, find a table with people you do not know and ask if it's okay for you to join them. Meet everyone. Ask about their businesses. Make connections.

## 10. Prepare a Follow Up List

After the show, make a list of things you want to do as a result of the show. Identify the single most important or the single easiest to accomplish. Work on that item until it is done before worrying about the rest. Then work on the next most important item. Collecting information at a trade show can make you smarter. Taking action is what makes you better. **C**

*Want more insight on how to improve your business? Join the Service Roundtable. It's only \$50 a month and delivers more value for the dollar than any other group or program. Ask about their free Success Days, which are held around the country to learn more about their best practices group as part of a day long seminar. Call 877/262-3341 for more information or visit [www.ServiceRoundtable.com](http://www.ServiceRoundtable.com).*

by Jeff Prince  
VP OF ENGINEERING FOR XO! TECHNOLOGIES



# Training, Technology are What Will Drive Effective Recruiting

Over the last decade, the traditional roles have reversed when it comes to job interviews. Because of record-setting demand for workers across the economy, applicants in nearly every industry typically have more leverage at the negotiating table. Many of them will field multiple offers before accepting a new position, driving employers to develop new strategies for attracting and retaining team members.

That volatility is especially prevalent in field service industries, where an existing skilled labor gap has been widened in recent years by the overall workforce shortage.

With this shift, many business owners and leaders in field service are paying closer attention than ever before to the people on the front lines of the industry: their technicians.

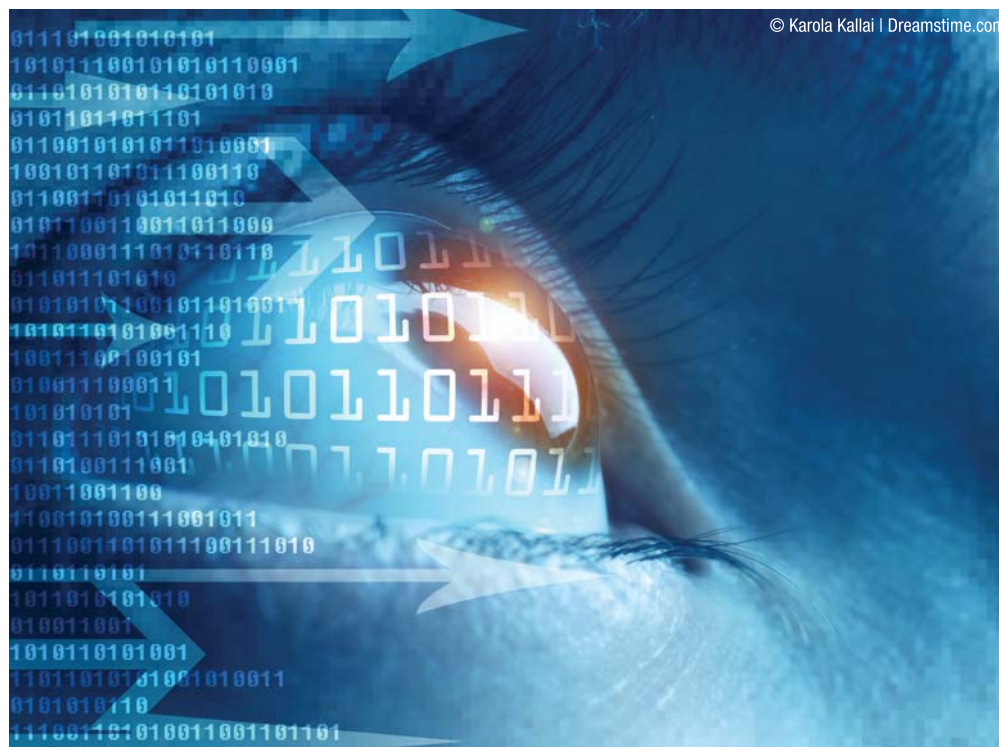
Not that long ago, a benefit package for field service techs might include free uniforms, tools and training. These days, potential team members expect those as the basic terms of employment. Incentives that, until recently, many contractors regarded as a luxury have become table stakes.

Today, workers prioritize their experience. They want to know that their employer shares their values and supports their success and career goals. Jobseekers can increasingly consider overall quality of life and career factors. As a result, contractors are exploring a variety of alternatives that help them stand out in a crowded job market and also demonstrate their commitment to their team.

## Tech Enablement Takes Off

Service business owners and management should keep all this in mind when they consider technology solutions.

Traditionally, field service techs have not always had significant input into decisions about the digital tools they use every day. Too often, the office and operations are prioritized over techs



**Tech enablement simply means starting with technicians' point of view and making decisions based on their curb-to-curb experience.**

in technology applications. Techs are frequently the last team members consulted on technology decisions, even when it's technology they'll be using more than anyone else.

That helps explain why so many techs are resistant to software solutions. In their experience, new digital tools don't make their jobs easier. Field management software adds to their workflow instead of streamlining it. And no one ever asks them what they need.

The shifting dynamic of the job market, however, has helped the concept of "tech enablement" emerge as a key consideration in more and more decisions about field service technology.

Tech enablement simply means starting with technicians' point of view and making decisions based on

their curb-to-curb experience. Service companies must think about the value software provides to the people who use it. Software should enhance and optimize the work experience, not just create another checklist.

## Training for Tomorrow

Effective training for the 21st century can be a critical differentiator in today's hypercompetitive job market. Potential employees want to be confident that a new job will allow them to develop skills that will serve them as they advance their careers—even if that means at a different company.

Traditionally, in field service, training is episodic. It happens once or twice a year, often in a formal classroom setting with a highly structured format.

There's another view that training is a journey, not a destination. Increasingly, experts in field service think about training and education as something that is happening all the time. Designed properly, and supported by the right digital tool kit, workflows can provide continuous training so techs get better every day.

Contextual digital tools empower this kind of organic, ongoing learning. The most advanced tech-enablement solutions not only deliver instant access to a wealth of relevant information, from equipment specs and service records to video and live remote support.

Truly innovative platforms deliver support and equipment information in formats designed to elevate technician skills, not just provide a quick fix in order to close out a call. Every time a tech troubleshoots a new issue or solves a problem, that becomes a data point for that company. No other company has it, and that team has instant, democratized access. And the tech has added to his or her knowledge of the field with firsthand experience.

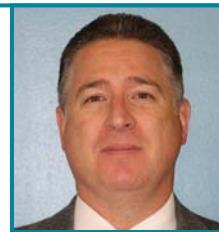
## Accelerating Transformation

Leverage in the employment market gives technicians leverage on the job and in the field, too. And that's changing the way business owners and managers make decisions.

These issues won't go away. The velocity of transformation in our industry will only increase in the future. Business owners need to be prepared for continuous adaptation in order to recruit and retain the talent necessary to remain competitive. **G**

*Jeff Prince is the EVP of Engineering for XO! Technologies. With a BS-BA in Information Systems from Appalachian State University, Jeff has accrued over two decades of experience in software, moving through software development into technology and business leadership.*

by Mike Licastro

MANAGER OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION - COMMERCIAL BUILDING  
SYSTEMS/HVAC AT XYLEM - BELL & GOSSET

# Commercial Building Industry is the Key to a Greener Future

**W**hen it comes to shrinking carbon footprint and maximizing return on investment, water-based systems provide the most efficient and sustainable solution. Based on tried-and-true principles with more than a century of success, hydronics is a demonstrated heating and cooling solution. With rising energy prices and new legislation escalating demand for more efficient buildings, modern hydronics presents a viable solution to reduce HVAC systems' negative impact on the environment and promote renewable energy sources.

Carbon reduction in building design is critical to reducing energy consumption and ensuring a more sustainable future. In the United States, direct combustion of fossil fuels accounts for at least 34% of all energy used in commercial buildings.

Not only do HVAC systems account for nearly half of the energy used in commercial buildings, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), they also fall in the top five sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

These statistics are alarming enough to warrant drastic action by the commercial building industry, but there are other factors pushing the industry to switch to more environmentally friendly heating and cooling systems.

A wave of new building codes, policies and regulations are driving change and creating new challenges for the existing commercial building market. Yet, this also presents an opportunity for the commercial building industry to rethink how it does business by investing in smarter, better systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while achieving maximum ROI.

## Legislation Spurring Change

Over the past decade, regulatory pressures have increased the speed at which efforts to achieve "net zero" carbon emissions are happening. Growing concern around climate change, along with the declining cost and improved performance of renewable energy technology, has prompted many



## Addressing decarbonization challenges through hydronics.

states to create clean energy programs and policies.

According to the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), there are currently 21 states, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, that have adopted policies to move to either all-renewable or zero-emission electricity supplies.

Case in point, New York City and Boston, two of the largest commercial building markets in the US, have adopted stringent requirements for building emissions. New York's Local Law 97 mandates cutting emissions 80% by 2050, with numerous benchmarks set along the way. The first benchmarks must meet new energy requirements by 2024, with more restrictive 40% reduction demands by 2030. Meanwhile, Boston's Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) aims for net zero by 2050.<sup>1</sup>

## HVAC at the Forefront

HVAC systems account for 39% of the energy used in commercial buildings in the United States. With that in mind, HVAC system selection is an important

component in both new construction and retrofit projects to keep costs in line and realize energy-efficiency targets. When HVAC systems are designed with energy efficiency in mind, they use less electricity and produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

In an effort to propel the HVAC industry forward, the US Department of Energy (DOE) launched a new national initiative in 2021 to advance clean heating and cooling systems in buildings, making it easier to afford and install high performance heat pump solutions. As part of its E3 initiative, the DOE will be working closely with stakeholders nationwide over the next 10 years to transform the heating and cooling marketplace, making affordable, clean and efficient solutions easily available across the United States. That includes a strong emphasis on systems that can deploy effective hydronic heating and cooling technologies that already exist on the marketplace today, such as water source and geothermal heat pump systems, heat pump water heaters

and the implementation of hydronic thermal storage strategies to further enhance savings potential.

## Water – the Lifeblood of Buildings

Hydronic systems as a room comfort technology have been in use in some form for over 100 years. These installed systems open the door for engineers, architects and building owners to easily adapt to changing demands, as well as the desire to participate in the global movement towards decarbonization/electrification. Hydronics provide the most adaptable, efficient delivery of heating and cooling regardless of the source and are already compatible with a wide variety of current and future energy sources, including refrigerant-based, thermal and electric heating and cooling sources.

Lower first cost, longer lifespan and lower operating cost combine to deliver the lowest lifecycle cost of any system. Hydronics are the ultimate open system, meaning building owners aren't locked into any one manufacturer to provide the necessary components required for a complete properly operating system.

(And yes, you read that right, *lower* first cost. Proprietary VRF systems require specialized technicians for installation and maintenance—which can drive up costs—compared to hydronic water systems designed with universal components that can be installed and serviced by any HVAC service technician. Components in a hydronic system are factory made and tested, reducing rate of failure after installation.)

As interest in renewable energy sources like solar and geothermal increases, building owners and designers are recognizing that hydronics provides the ideal distribution system for these alternative technologies to perform. Moreover, hydronic system efficiency is already well-documented in thousands of real-world applications, making it an extremely convenient option.

➤ **Turn to Commercial, page 43**

# Wrench Group Cos. Make Top Workplace List

MARIETTA, GA --(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Morris-Jenkins Air Conditioning, Heating, and Plumbing, and Service Champions Heating & Air Conditioning, both Wrench Group companies, were recently named to the Top Workplaces USA 2023 list.

The Top Workplaces USA award celebrates nationally recognized companies that make the world a better place to work together by prioritizing a people-centered culture and giving employees a voice. The Top Workplaces USA award is based entirely on feedback from an employee engagement survey completed by the employees of

participating workplaces, which is then compared to other firms around the country.

Morris-Jenkins, based in Charlotte, NC., ranked #39 in the nation among firms with 500-999 employees, and was the nation's top-ranked home services company on the list. Service Champions, serving the Bay Area and Sacramento in northern California, ranked #71 in the 150-499 employees category.

"We're so proud of the leadership and teams at both Morris-Jenkins and Service Champions for this national recognition," said Ken Haines, CEO of Wrench Group. "We always seek out




firms with great company cultures to partner with, and the Top Workplaces USA award shows that Morris-Jenkins and Service Champions are among the country's elite."

Morris-Jenkins was also ranked as the #2 Top Workplace in the entire Charlotte metro area among companies with 500 employees or more in 2022, their sixth time receiving recognition

as a regional top workplace. President Jonathan Bancroft also won an individual award as Charlotte's Top Workplaces Large Company Leader in 2022. In addition, Morris-Jenkins won a Top Workplaces USA award in 2021.

Service Champions was recently named as the #6 Top Workplace in the Bay Area in 2022 among companies with 150-499 employees and have received a regional Top Workplaces award seven consecutive years. They also won a Top Workplaces USA award last year.

To see open positions and apply to work at a Top Workplace, visit Morris-Jenkins site at <https://morrisjenkins.com/about/careers/> or Service Champions site at <https://www.servicechampions.net/careers>. 

► Continued from page 42

## Poised for Exponential Growth

Hydronics are applicable in a wide variety of buildings across the commercial sector. In structures like multifamily buildings or high-rises where the level of heating and cooling is unbalanced due to the number of stories and tenants, hydronic systems are a high-efficiency system of choice. Radiant heating and cooling systems use a fraction of the energy of a forced-air system.

With the advent of new hydronic products and technology, the HVAC industry is anticipating an opportunity for rapid market growth. According to Research and Markets, the global hydronic systems market is expected to grow \$1.3 billion by 2025. Propelling that market growth is the growing need for energy-efficient cooling and heating systems and an increase in construction activities worldwide.

## Future-Proof


Reducing wasted HVAC energy consumption is an important element in the push for greater sustainability in the commercial building sector. It is also a solution to significantly reduce operating costs.

Knowing that hydronics are a reliable energy source that outperforms other HVAC systems is key to addressing decarbonization challenges and future-proofing buildings or specific systems within them. Future-proofing focuses on flexibility to handle changing standards and occupant needs, scal-

ability for expansion and the ability to maintain equipment efficiency. Longer lasting equipment that continues to meet the changing needs of occupants reduces costs and improves ROI.

## Effecting Sustainable Change

The legislative and economic incentives intended to advance electrification and decarbonization, and the accompanying demand for low-energy and net-zero buildings, collectively represent one of the greatest opportunities for the US hydronics market in decades.

Whether it's designing an optimized system from the ground up or supplying intelligent pumps capable of adjusting performance to handle challenging environments, hydronic solutions ensure reliability while protecting people and buildings and safeguarding valuable resources for the future. With modern hydronic technology positioned to drive sustainable change, it's now up to HVAC contractors and commercial building owners to take meaningful action. 

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Rocky Mountain Institute

*Mike Licastro is Manager of Training and Education - Commercial Building Systems/HVAC at Xylem - Bell & Gossett. He is currently in a leadership role for the Bell & Gossett Little Red Schoolhouse, regarded as the premier Hydronic and Steam systems training and education facility in the Industry since 1954.*

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by Gregg Hicks  
VICE PRESIDENT OF MODERNIZE HOME SERVICES



# Aging-in-Place Remodeling – A Growth Opportunity

Interest for aging-in-place projects continues to climb. Our research has shown that demand for walk-in tubs is growing at double-digit annual rates. Many contractors consider walk-in tubs to be the backbone of their business, and the reason they expect to flourish, even in an uncertain economy.

## Walk-in tubs Mean Big-Ticket Projects

As aging-in-place remodels go, the walk-in tub is the single largest component. It requires removal of the old tub, new plumbing and electrical, a multi-person team to deliver and set up, plus the material and labor for the bathroom's repair or retrofitting. The products themselves often cost \$5,000 to \$6,000, with a total all-in project cost typically upwards of \$15,000.

## Upsell Opportunities

Walk-in tubs are usually part of a comprehensive aging-in-place renovation that also includes grab bars, ramps, or even lifts. Such tubs can also drive the need for a new water heater; a standard 40-gallon heater will not be sufficient for an 80-gallon walk-in tub.

## High Demand

If a slow-down in housing sales reduces opportunities, this segment of homeowners can provide more project



**Whenever the economy is uncertain, savvy contractors look for new ways to drive business.**

leads. Walk-in tubs improve the safety of what can be the most dangerous part of a house, allowing those with arthritis, balance issues, or a disability to safely get in and out of the tub. An aging-in-place renovation can make all the difference for people who want

to maintain their independence and avoid the cost and stigma of moving into an assisted living center. And the audience you sell and market to extends beyond elderly homeowners; it includes proactive friends and family of these homeowners, too.

## Be Sure You Are Ready

There are questions you must answer before deciding to promote walk-in tub renovations.

- What supplier to go with?
- Does your state or local government require specific licensing?
- Can you demonstrate to homeowners that you will do a quality job?

## Showcase Your Capabilities

To connect with aging-in place prospects, start by adapting your current marketing and sales systems to showcase your capabilities. For instance, update your website and social listings to prominently feature walk-in tubs or "aging in place" bath renovations. Consider buying ads on Google, Facebook, or other digital platforms.

Another alternative is to purchase leads specifically interested in walk-in tubs from companies that connect homeowners with home improvement professionals. Those are usually delivered on a pay-per-lead basis, and some providers can pre-qualify the leads before handing them off to the sales team. This can be valuable for dealing with customers that have done their own Internet research, and are buying a product they have not used or purchased before.

Whenever the economy is uncertain, savvy contractors look for new ways to drive business. The market is yielding an opportunity with aging-in-place projects. Take a serious look into whether you should offer these projects as part of your menu of services. **C**

## Watts Launches 6-Week eLearning Campaign on Irrigation

Watts has announced "Learn Today, Grow Tomorrow!" a 6-week eLearning campaign for irrigation professionals. From February 13 – March 27, customers will earn double tokens for free lifestyle merchandise by completing select FEBCO and Watts irrigation-focused eLearning modules on Watts Works Online. Also, those who complete at least 15 select modules during the promotion will earn a free FEBCO hat.

- Modules cover a variety of Irrigation-focused solutions and average less than 7 minutes to complete.
- Customers can earn FREE lifestyle merchandise twice as fast with Double Tokens.
- 34 modules are available in English and 13 in Spanish.

To register for Watts Works Online training and to participate in the promotion, visit [training.watts.com](https://training.watts.com). To



explore all training opportunities provided by Watts, go to <https://www.watts.com/training>. **C**

*Gregg Hicks is a longtime marketer of home improvement services. He is a business leader for Modernize Home Services and has 20 years of experience across web analytics, SEO, social, SEM and affiliate marketing. His role as a spokesperson is to explain the value of thoughtful matchmaking between homeowners and home improvement professionals that forges positive and productive connections between the parties.*

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# Cast Iron Soil Pipe for Aggressive Sanitary Applications

► Continued from page 22



Pipe and fittings have different coating requirements.

the coating of pipe is surface preparation to the interior and/or exterior. Some, but not all, manufacturers use a special slurry in the pipe casting process. This makes the pipe OD more receptive to the coating. Next, all manufacturers ream the interior of the pipe. Some manufacturers will ream it twice and one even adds a shot blast to the OD in the process. Preparing the pipe's surfaces prior to coating is crucial for proper adhesion and performance.

After surface prep, there are two basic coating application processes used. The more common approach is to spray on the coating. This process entails applying one or two coats of either an epoxy or urethane coating on the interior of the pipe. If the exterior of the pipe is coated as well—and not all manufacturers provide this—it is applied in a separate step. In this process, the coating is mechanically joined with the metal. In order to work properly, the pipe must have a 4 – 6 mil anchor pattern and be free of debris prior to spraying on the coating. While cost-effective and efficient, mechanical adhesion can be easily compromised in a commercial DWV system. More on that later.

The second method is a much more sophisticated, multi-stage process known as electrocoating. In this process, the iron is first rinsed and then coated with zinc phosphate, a corrosion inhibitor. Then, the pipe is given an electrical charge and the coating is given the opposite charge. Through a series of immersion tanks, the coating

is micro layered until it achieves a certain specification. Then the polarities of the metal and coating are reversed, and the process is repeated. The benefit of this process is that the coating is not mechanically bonded to the metal. Rather, it is fusion bonded. This technology has been used in the automotive industry for decades due to the effectiveness of protecting metal parts.

For fittings, again there are two basic methods for coating application. The more common application process is to mechanically bond the coating to the fitting by an immersion (dip) or spray on process. Unlike the pipe coating process, no special fitting preparation is employed. The other method for enhanced coated fittings is employing both electrocoating and a powder topcoat. While fittings are not reamed like pipe, they are cleansed in an immersion tank and receive a zinc phosphate layer. The fittings and coating are then charged with opposite electrical charges. Finally, a powder topcoat is applied as an additional layer of protection.

## Protecting Cut Ends of Pipe

When pipe is cut in the field, uncoated ends are exposed to the effluent flowing through the piping system. While the pipe stops incorporated into the neoprene fluid seals provide a limited degree of protection from the aggressive effluents, some manufacturers and / or resellers require additional protection.

A reseller of enhanced coated pipe using the spray on method requires the use of a special polybutylene fleece tape in any application where the pH of the effluent is below 4.3 or above 7.1. As stated previously, cast iron soil pipe and fittings are well suited to handle effluent with pH levels ranging from 4.3 to 10.0, so this requirement indicates that extra protection

must be employed to prevent delamination even in some non-aggressive applications.

One of the manufacturers of spray-on coated pipe does not address the issue as part of the installation process but offers a resource to secure additional coating if coating the cut edges is desired or specified.

A manufacturer of the electrocoated pipe does not require pipe cut ends to be protected. The electrocoating process ensures that the effluent will not get under the coating and cause any delamination. However, they too offer a resource to secure additional coating if protecting the cut edges is desired or specified.

With the various requirements of different manufacturers and resellers, it is important that specifiers and installers understand the requirements of the particular system they are using. It is also important for installers to account for the additional labor and materials necessary to protect cut pipe ends.

## Mechanical Cleaning

As with any sanitary system, solids can build up or clog drainage lines. Typically, clearing these lines requires the use mechanical devices like augers or snake heads. While the cutters on these devices are intended to break up solids and move them downstream, they can also remove the interior coating on the pipe and fittings. Coatings that rely on mechanical adhesion are apt to chip off with repeated passes of these devices. Coating that is electrically fused to the metal perform much better with mechanical cleaning.

## Analysis

When the two coating processes, spray on / immersion and electrocoating, are analyzed objectively, the choice is clear. Spray on / immersion is a quick and economical process that requires minimal capital investment. It is an inexpensive method for a manufacturer to bring an enhanced coated product to the market at a lower price. However, for the specifier and, more importantly, the end user, this process does have an issue with delamination.

Because the spray on / immersion processes rely on a mechanical bond,

it is susceptible to peeling, chipping, or flaking from snap cutting, handling on job sites, or mechanical cleaning with auger bits and snake heads. Once the coating is removed, the aggressive effluents are in direct contact with the bare metal and corrosion occurs. The corrosion will propagate throughout the pipe as the effluent gets under the coating, exacerbating the problem. Remember, the coating is only effective as long as the coating stays on the metal. To mitigate delamination, some manufacturers who employ the spray on / immersion method require the cut ends of the pipe to be coated.

With electrocoated pipe and fittings, delamination is a non-factor. Since the coating is permanently bonded to the metal, delamination of the ecoat layers is not possible. The only way to remove the coating is to take away metal from the pipe wall.

## Conclusion

As with any new product, it is important that specifiers, installers, and end-users understand the characteristics and capabilities of the materials under consideration. While the technologies involved, both spray-on / immersion and electrocoating, have been successfully used in many different industries for decades, the application of enhanced coatings on cast iron soil pipe is an emerging product category. Since these new products are handling aggressive effluents typically installed below the slab or other hard-to-access locations, material selection is critical. While both coating applications provide excellent protection, remember that protection is only effective as long as the coating remains on the pipe and fittings. **C**

*Paul Tully is a Field Technical Representative for Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Company, where his primary focus is educating engineers, designers, contractors, and code officials on products, industry trends and issues. He also assists with resolving job site issues. Paul has been in the plumbing industry for over 30 years. He graduated from the University of North Texas with a BBA in Strategic Management.*



It is important for installers to account for the additional labor and materials necessary to protect cut pipe ends.

# Survey from Bradley Corp. Finds Americans Believe Handwashing Essential for Health

MENOMONEE FALLS, WI — While Americans don't agree on much these days, the overwhelming majority do agree that handwashing is important. According to the Healthy Handwashing Survey™ from Bradley Corporation, 93% of adults believe handwashing is essential to maintaining their overall health—a sentiment that's nearly universal across gender, age and geography.

The survey also found that many Americans turn to handwashing to stay healthy before a trip, while they are traveling and before special occasions.

During road trips, 75% of adults make a conscious effort to wash their hands wherever they stop along the way. 69% are diligent about sudsing up when at an airport and 63% do the same as a special occasion or the holidays approach.

"Handwashing, using soap and warm water, is an easy and effective way to reduce the spread of disease-causing organisms," says medical microbiologist Michael P. McCann, Ph.D., professor and chair of biology, Saint Joseph's University. "Given the ease with which some of these organisms can be spread on solid surfaces, in food, and by other means, handwashing is something that everyone should do after activities like using the restroom."

In addition to the physical benefits, there are emotional upsides. Almost 70% say they feel healthier or safer immediately after washing their hands.

## Handwashing Personas

To get a better understanding of Americans' handwashing routines, the Healthy Handwashing Survey asked respondents to identify their typical behavior.

- 51% categorize themselves as "Rule Followers." They apply soap, lather it up, scrub completely, rinse and then dry.
- 35% put themselves in the "Lather and Linger" group, meaning they do a very thorough job of lathering and washing.
- 33% relate to "Twice as Good,"



The Verge faucet and soap dispenser.

**The survey also found that many Americans turn to handwashing to stay healthy before a trip, while they are traveling and before special occasions.**

saying they always use two pumps of soap.

- 20% utilize the "Human Dryer" method of wiping their hands on their clothing after washing and 17% selected "Air It Out," admitting they wash but rely on air drying.

Finally, two categories made the bottom of the list. 14% self-identified as "Rinse and Run," using just water but forgoing soap and drying and put themselves in the "Skip It All" camp due to not having time to wash their hands.

## Negative Impressions

There are definitely drawbacks to the "Skip It All" approach.

The survey found that 65% of Americans have a particularly negative

impression when they see someone who doesn't wash their hands after using a restroom. 40% say someone who frequently touches their nose, mouth or eyes is also a turn off.

For businesses, poor restroom maintenance makes more than just a negative impression; an unclean or unpleasant restroom can be a sales inhibitor. 52% say an unkempt restroom impacts whether or not they'll

return to the establishment again.

On the flip side, nearly 60% say they are likely to spend more at a business that has clean, well-maintained restrooms and the same percent will make a point of stopping at a location that offers pleasant facilities.

## Germ Avoidance Techniques

In public restrooms, Americans are keenly aware of coming into contact with germs and take a variety of evasive measures.


62% use a paper towel to avoid touching toilet flushers and faucet and door handles. 43% operate the flusher with their foot, especially women. 31% hover over the toilet seat and 27% open and close doors with their behind to eliminate contact.

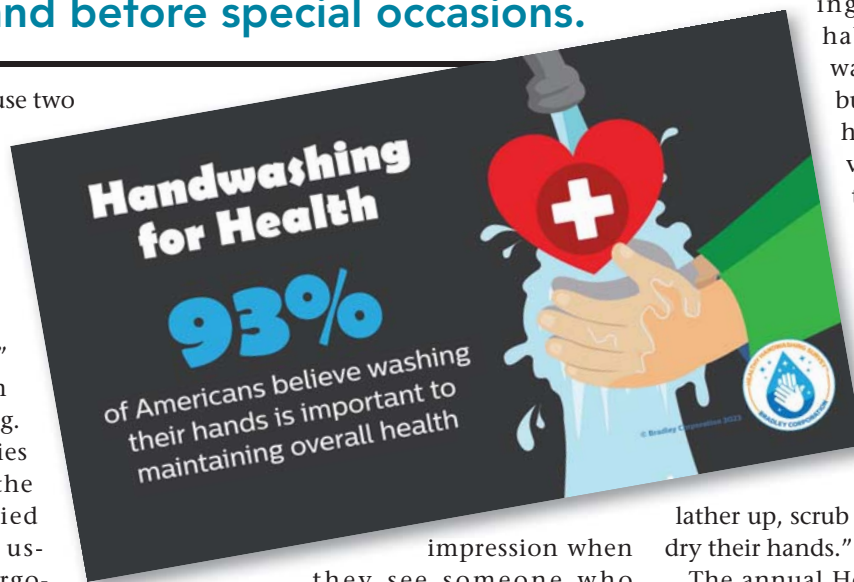
With so much effort going into evading germs, it's no wonder that 82% of adults believe it is important to have touchless fixtures in a public restroom.

"Germ avoidance and handwashing diligence are two habits that should always be a priority, and businesses can support hand hygiene by providing well-maintained restrooms," says Jon Dommissie, vice president of marketing and corporate communication for Bradley Corp. "No matter where you are or what you're doing, everyone should

lather up, scrub thoroughly, rinse and dry their hands."

The annual Healthy Handwashing Survey from Bradley Corp. queried 1,025 American adults Jan. 4-10, 2023, about their handwashing habits, concerns about the coronavirus and flu and their use of public restrooms. Participants were from around the country and were fairly evenly split between men (45%) and women (55%).

For more information, visit [www.bradleycorp.com/handwashing](http://www.bradleycorp.com/handwashing). 



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## Construction Workforce Shortage Tops Half a Million in 2023, Says ABC

► **Continued from page 3**

build the places where we live, work, play, worship, learn and heal," said Michael Bellaman, ABC president and CEO. "As the demand for construction services remains high, filling these roles with skilled craft professionals is vital to America's economy and infrastructure rebuilding initiatives."

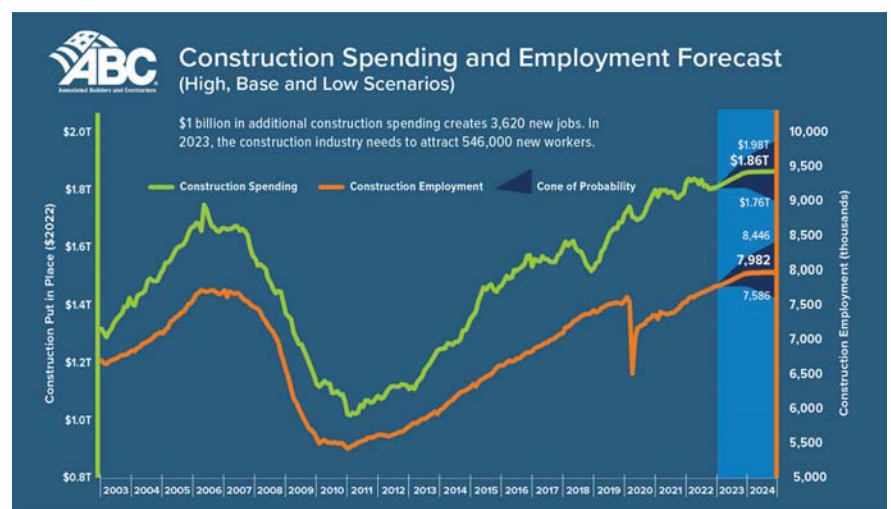
ABC's proprietary model uses the historical relationship between inflation-adjusted construction spending growth, sourced from the US Census Bureau's Construction Put in Place survey, as well as payroll construction employment, sourced from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, to convert anticipated increases in construction outlays into demand for construction labor at a rate of approximately 3,620 new jobs per billion dollars of additional construction spending. This increased demand is added to the current level of above-average job openings. Projected industry retirements, shifts to other industries and other forms of anticipated separation are also embodied within computations.

The construction industry averaged more than 390,000 job openings per month in 2022, the highest level on record, and the industry unemployment rate of 4.6% in 2022 was the second lowest on record, higher than only the 4.5% unemployment rate observed in 2019. National payroll construction employment was 231,000 higher in December 2022 than in December 2021.

### Shortage Set to Persist

"Despite sharp increases in interest rates over the past year, the shortage of construction workers will not disappear in the near future," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "First, while single-family home building activity has moderated, many contractors continue to experience substantial demand from a growing number of mega-projects associated with chip manufacturing plants, clean energy facilities and infrastructure. Second, too few younger workers are entering the skilled trades, meaning this is not only a construction labor shortage but also a skills shortage."

"With nearly 1 in 4 construction workers older than 55, retirements will continue to whittle away at the construction workforce," said Basu. "Many of these older construction workers are also the most productive, refining their skills over time. The number of construction laborers, the most entry-level occupational title, has accounted for nearly 4 out of every 10 new construction workers since 2012. Meanwhile, the number of skilled workers has grown



**The construction industry averaged more than 390,000 job openings per month in 2022, the highest level on record.**

at a much slower pace or, in the case of certain occupations like carpenter, declined.

"To fill these important roles, ABC is working hard to recruit, educate and upskill the construction workforce through our national network of more than 800 apprenticeship, craft, safety and management education programs—including more than 300 government-registered apprenticeship programs across 20 different construction occupations—to build the people who build America," said Bellaman. "ABC members invested \$1.6 billion in 2021 to educate 1.3 million course attendees to build a construction workforce that is safe, skilled and productive."

In 2024, the industry will need to bring in more than 342,000 new workers on top of normal hiring to meet industry demand, and that's presuming that construction spending growth slows significantly next year.

View ABC's methodology in creating the workforce shortage model. [C](#)

# ABC's National Construction Craft Championships to be Held in March

WASHINGTON, DC — Nearly 200 of the nation's best carpenters, electricians, pipefitters, plumbers, welders and other construction craft professionals are set to compete at the premier skilled trades contest in Kissimmee, Florida, on March 16 at Associated Builders and Contractors' 34th annual National Craft Championships.

ABC's NCC recognizes the craft professionals who represent the future of the construction industry and highlights the career opportunities that construction can provide, whether it is a graduating high school student seeking an alternative to college, a veteran exploring their next chapter after completing military service or an



A contestant in the plumbing portion of the 2022 National Construction Craft Championships.

individual rejoining the workforce or seeking a career change.

**WHAT:** 2023 National Craft Championships, a construction trades competition that takes place during ABC Convention 2023

**WHO:** Nearly 200 of the best construction craft professionals from across the nation

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 16, 12-3 p.m. ET

**WHERE:** Gaylord Palms Convention Center, 6000 W. Osceola Parkway, Kissimmee, Florida, 34746

**WHY:** Craft students and apprentices travel from across the country to demonstrate their superior skills, education and safe work practices and compete for top honors. The NCC

features craft professionals in 16 competitions representing 12 crafts, including a team competition with four journey-level craft professionals per team working to complete a joint project. Competitors first take an

intense, two-hour online exam and then compete in a six-hour practical performance test.

ABC offers more than 800 education programs across 68 chapters to help train the next generation of construction workers. Its flexible, affordable craft and safety training leads to industry recognized, national credentials for today's most sought-after construction positions. ABC is committed to showing the promising career path the industry provides, from apprenticeship to journey-level worker to business owner.

**REGISTRATION:** Members of the press must register by emailing Erika Walter, ABC's director of media relations, by Wednesday, March 15. Media is invited to attend the event from 12-3 p.m. ABC Convention 2023 is by invitation only. [C](#)



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# Kohler Co. Celebrates 150 Years



Throughout the year-long celebration Kohler will pay homage to its unique 150-year heritage while looking ahead to an innovative future.

KOHLER, WI – Kohler Co., founded in 1873, has forged a legacy of creating innovations for kitchen and bath spaces, energy resiliency products, luxury hospitality experiences, and major championship golf.

Kohler's teams of creators around the world are the foundation of the iconic KOHLER brand, along with consumers and trade communities who bring the company's products to life in creative and artistic ways. As Kohler embarks on its 150th anniversary, the global organization invites all associates, partners, and customers to participate in the celebration through a series of special events and activations around the world, including limited-edition product releases, commemorative apparel, and storytelling through digital content—all captured under the anniversary theme of Come All Creators.

"Bold moves and an entrepreneurial spirit are in our DNA and have deep meaning within our organization—starting with our founder John Michael Kohler who formed our company in Wisconsin together with an immigrant workforce creating new and better lives for their families," said Chair and CEO David Kohler, the fourth generation of Kohler family leadership, and only the ninth person to lead the company. "As we celebrate our 150 years of achievements, learnings, and growth, we encourage all passionate creators to join our pursuit of continuous improvement in providing gracious living for future generations through better design, innovation, wellness, and sustainability."

"The ingenuity and passion of our associates and customers are the catalysts to creating new ideas, effective partnerships, and a better world for future generations," said Chief Sustainability and DEI Officer, Laura Kohler. "Looking back on Kohler's many pioneering milestones inspires us to look forward and create new avenues to improve our planet, our lives and communities—one idea, one product, one partnership, one act of impact at a time."

Throughout the year-long celebration of Come All Creators, Kohler will pay homage to its unique 150-year heritage while looking ahead to an innovative future joined by valued partners,

talented artists, and explorers. To help bring the initiative to life, Kohler Co. partnered with American artist and innovator Daniel Arsham to conceive the commemorative 150th anniversary creative identity through logos and marks, typography, and lettering to meld the company's storied heritage with its "leading boldly" approach to the future. Kohler previously collaborated with Arsham on Rock.01 an exclusive 3D-printed sink, and 'Divided Layers', a globally acclaimed installation featured in 2022 at Milan Design Week.

## 2023 "Come All Creators" Initiatives include:

### KOHLER Heritage Colors Product Launch

Kohler will launch some of the company's most iconic and best-selling designs in two signature Heritage Colors to be announced this spring, and available for purchase in summer of 2023. Kohler's introduction of vibrant, colorful products was received with great acclaim in 1927 and remains an innovative movement within the company's design leadership today.

Visit [www.kohler.com/forever-in-color](http://www.kohler.com/forever-in-color) for more information.

### Heritage Colors Pop-up Events in New York City

On Thursday, January 26 at 2:00 p.m. Daniel Arsham will make a special appearance outside the Kohler Experience Center at 6 W. 22nd Street in New York City for a Heritage Colors pop-up

truck experience that runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Arsham will sign and gift 300 limited-edition T-shirts he designed featuring the Kohler 150th Anniversary logo and Heritage Colors.

On Friday, January 27, the Heritage Colors pop-up truck will be in Union Square on the north west corner at E 17th & Broadway from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. KidSuper founder Colm Dillane, a visionary in the world of fashion with a fearless approach to design and unexpected use of bold and vibrant color, will be onsite at 10:00 a.m. greeting guests with his limited edition KidSuper x Kohler Original Recipe Chocolates in Heritage Colors.

### Kohler Home Generators with Color and Pattern Options

Celebrating Kohler's longstanding leadership within color innovation, Kohler expands its home generator offering to include 10 new exclusive colors and 3 Mossy Oak camouflage pattern options, along with the popular cashmere color. KOHLER colors and patterns help homeowners make their standby generator complement the aesthetic of their home or stand out to make a statement. KOHLER home generators run automatically, connected to a home's fuel sources (natural gas or propane), providing hassle-free peace of mind during an outage, adding to the overall sense of wellbeing in the home.

### KOHLER x Robert Swan

Modern day explorer Robert Swan,

the only person to walk to both the North and South poles, partnered with Kohler on his successful Undaunted Expedition across the Antarctic landmass. Swan reached the Geographic South Pole on January 10, 2023, relying solely on KOHLER renewable energy solutions. Swan's trek pays tribute to Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, aviator and the first polar explorer to walk to Antarctica in 1929, who also relied exclusively on KOHLER generators to power his journey

### "Toilet in the Road" Campaign

In the early 1970s, Herb Kohler, longtime company leader and innovator, created a force with THE BOLD LOOK OF KOHLER that transformed the American bathroom from a utilitarian space into one of design, style, sophistication, and craftsmanship. His provocative advertising campaigns challenged conventional norms and targeted consumers directly verses the industry practice of targeting professionals and distributors. One of the most iconic ads from the 1980s came to be known as "the toilet in the road" and Kohler plans to reprise that ad in 2023 with breakthrough imagery and video featuring its award-winning Numi smart toilet.

### Global Market Events

Several other 150th anniversary activations and events are planned across the globe over the next year at KOHLER Experience Centers, Kohler Signature Stores, and at various trade shows and events in 2023 including: Kitchen & Bath Industry Show, CONEXPO, Design Shanghai, Milan Design Week, Design Miami/, Kohler Wellness Retreats, and Kohler Food & Wine to name several. The company is also planning celebrations with its associates—past and present—and a communitywide celebration in the Village of Kohler, the company's global headquarters.

Go online to learn more:

- Kohler Co. 150th Anniversary
- Kohler Co.: Our History
- Kohler Kitchen & Bath, Decorative Products, Power, Golf + Resort Destinations. [C](#)

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# Batter Up! Baseball Stadium Gets the Most Out of High-Efficiency Fixtures

► **Continued from page 1**

In fact, single game tickets for 2023 Chicago Cubs Spring Training games at Sloan Park are on sale now. The Cubs will host 18 games at Sloan Park in 2023 with the home opener against the San Francisco Giants Saturday, February 25.

According to the Arizona State Climate Office, Arizona is currently in its 21st year of long-term drought, so Sloan Park has placed a special emphasis on water-saving restroom products. Sloan provided the ballpark with 1.28 GPF flushometers for water closets, which save 14% more water than 1.6 GPF flushometers, as well as .125 GPF flushometers for urinals, saving 50% more water than .25 GPF flushometers. Together, these fixtures are helping to reduce the ballpark's water use by over 30%.

## Clutch Savings

Sloan Park saved water, space, and energy all with one game-changing product: the AER-DEC® integrated sink. These sinks—located in Sloan Park's public restrooms behind the Suites and Party Deck level—include BASYS® sensor-activated faucets, soap dispensers, and high-speed hand dryers deck mounted on an AirBasin sink.

All these parts of the sink work together as one touch-free, hygienic system that promotes sustainability throughout the restroom. In addition, the groundbreaking design of the AER-DEC sinks helps



The AER-DEC® integrated sink.

**Sloan Park, the spring training grounds of the Chicago Cubs, reduces water use by over 30%.**

Sloan Park save water, reduce energy consumption, and eliminate the need for paper towels, resulting in a clean and sleek restroom aesthetic for fans to enjoy.

## All-Star Technology

Sloan Park is not just home to the Cubs—it's also home to next-generation commercial restroom technology. Paired with the Sloan Connect App, Sloan



SOLIS 8111 Flushometer with ST-2459 Water Closet.

Optima® ETF Faucets and SOLIS® 8111 Flushometers (installed with ST-2459 Wall-mounted Water Closets) and SOLIS 8186 Flushometers (installed with SU-1009 Urinals) feature sensor technology that allows facility managers to collect data, monitor battery strength, and unlock predictive maintenance, all from the touch of a button.

The connected technology, operates as an Internet of Things (IoT), placing Sloan Park at the cutting edge of what modern restrooms can achieve in terms of efficiency and reliable, sanitary operation. **C**

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# PMI Makes Leadership Appointments

Plumbing Manufacturers International today appointed **Belinda Wise** to secretary/treasurer of the PMI Board of Directors and **Lowell Lampen** as a new board member.

The director of business development, North America, for Kerox, Ltd., Wise succeeds **Cambria McLeod**, a long-time employee of a PMI manufacturing member who is stepping down as part of a planned career transition. According to the PMI by-laws, only individuals who are employed by PMI manufacturing members can serve on the board. New board member Lampen is a strategic technical partnership manager at Kohler Co. who has served as the co-chair of the PMI Advocacy/Government Affairs



Committee for the past four years.

Other members include board president **Sal Gattone**, LIXIL; immediate past board president **Martin Knieps**, Viega LLC; board vice president **Chip Way**, Lavelle Industries; and at-large

directors **Kevin Campbell**, Moen, Inc.; **Daniel Gleiberman**, Sloan Valve Co.; and **Bob Neff**, Delta Faucet Co.

"We welcome Belinda and Lowell to their new responsibilities and thank Cambria for her dedicated service to the board and as an active PMI member these past many years," Gattone stated. "We encourage all PMI members to follow their example as volunteer leaders. Your participation will make our association stronger and more effective." **C**

# ABMA Elects New Officers, Revamps Strategy, Mission

► Continued from page 1



Nancy Simoneau, Groupe Simoneau.



Doug Wright, President & CEO of Superior Boiler



Connor Lokar of ITR Economics updated attendees on the latest market forecast for this year and beyond.

to advance ABMA and the boiler industry.”

Simoneau becomes the first female elected to the role of Vice Chair and brings a unique perspective on the North American market as a Canadian manufacturer.

In addition to the officers, the following individuals were elected to their first or second term on the ABMA Board of Directors: **Rocky Bahramzad**, Cleaver-Brooks; **Tom Garbarino**, BFS Industries; **Phil Griggs**, Honeywell; **Steve Kemp**, Autoflame; **Paul Ingham**, Thermogenics; **Bryan O’Toole**, Burnham; **Tricia Staible**, Robinson Fans; **Mark Wehmeier**, Webster Combustion Technology.

The balance of the board includes **Larry Day**,

Nationwide Boiler; and **Rich Simons**, Laars Heating.

## New Strategy, Mission & Vision Adopted

Also at the annual meeting, the ABMA Board adopted a three-year strategic plan that will run through the 2025-26 fiscal year. In addition, ABMA revised its mission, adopted a new vision, and incorporated organizational values to align its new direction and focus.

This process had begun with engaging McKinley Advisors, a well-respected consulting firm in the association community. Their team was led by **Allana Tievsky McKee** and **Ankur Ponda** and their methodology aligned perfectly with ABMA’s goals and objectives.

To ensure a comprehensive voice in the development process, ABMA surveyed each member company and conducted targeted interviews with members of various tenure, members both past and prospective, supply chain partners and other key influencers.

With survey and interview insights in hand, ABMA brought together the leaders in the boiler industry from the membership this past October for two days of dialogue and building consensus.

In the end, four major focus areas became apparent and are now the overarching goals for ABMA over the next three years:

- Become the Home for the Boiler Supply Chain;
- Innovate the Boiler Technology Expo to be THE Industry Destination for Community and Learning;
- Invest in Workforce Development Initiatives to Ensure a Thriving Industry;
- Establish the Boiler Industry as an Integral Part of Society and Environmental Sustainability.

With consensus around the new goals, it was evident that ABMA also needed a refresh of its mission and the adoption of a new vision. The revised mission now is “to lead, advance and provide solutions to the boiler industry.” The new vision is to see that “boilers are recognized for advancing energy sustainability and for powering people’s lives.”

In addition to its new mission and vision, ABMA was also excited to set new organizational values. These values will become ABMA’s north star and share what makes it unique. They are:


- **Anticipatory:** We stay ahead of the curve;
- **Impactful:** We are mission-driven and results oriented.



Manufacturer Reps Panel, moderated by Scott Lynch. From left: Scott Carberry, PBBs; Steve Graves, Campbell-Sevey; ABMA’s Lynch; Jim McDonough, Delval Equipment; Kyle Stell, Gulf Coast Boiler.

- **Inclusive:** We welcome everyone to be a part of our community.
- **Innovative:** We embrace outside the box thinking and don’t settle for the status quo.
- **Passionate:** We love what we do and the industry we serve.

Over the coming months, ABMA staff will work closely with the team at McKinley Advisors and our new officers to craft a work plan for implementing the new strategy that will include goal and initiative prioritization and estimating resource allocation. This work plan will be adopted alongside the budget and scope for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

For more information on the annual meeting and all things boiler-related, go to [www.abma.com](http://www.abma.com). 

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## editor's choice

### TRIBUNE BATH COLLECTION

features modern lines and subtle curves. Bathroom sink faucets have a discreet vertical lift rod that offers a sleek appearance and streamlined operation. A clear, no-splash laminar flow offers a more hygienic experience. Reliable ceramic disc cartridges ensure smooth operation and drip-free performance. Integrated supply lines on single handle faucets and a longer shank platform accommodate thicker countertops.

**Gerber**

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▲ **PURIST SUSPEND KITCHEN FAUCET** pushes the is mounted from the ceiling for a striking aesthetic. The faucet's hose is mounted on the ceiling with a precise pivoting arm that can be adjusted to any preferred hanging height for 8' to 10' ceilings and stays at the height previously used.

**Kohler**

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▼ **CENTER-DRAIN PRO SERIES** has been expanded. Originally launched in a 5" size available at an accessible price point, the addition includes a 4" series with four styles in five finishes. They are made from 16-gauge stainless steel.

**Infinity Drain**

[INFINITYDRAIN.COM](http://INFINITYDRAIN.COM)



### ▲ VERVE WIDESPREAD FAUCET

from Pfister® Faucets offers a myriad of handle and finish combinations to transform any space. Build your bathroom fixtures with cross handles, T-handles or lever handles. Infuse with a second finish for a dual-tone look.

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**Delta Faucet**

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### ▶ THE VERSO RAINSHOWER SHOWERHEAD

features Moen's innovative Magnetix magnetic-docking technology. Simply remove the showerhead to soak in a cleaning solution and wipe clean, then snap back into place—no tools are required. The Infiniti Dial offers a customizable shower with limitless spray pressure and coverage options.

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features an elegant linear design to accentuate any bath space with its classic, clean lines. Its sophisticated silhouette with a full-cover lid and precise design lines provides a distinctive, dignified presence.

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### ▼ PHANTOM ONE PIECE TOILET

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is designed for independent living, assisted living, and memory care facilities to provide better care for patients and efficiencies for the staff. It delivers automated, consistent cleansing and is ideal for use in settings where caregivers are assisting residents with toileting.

**Bemis**

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### ▲ BLISS GUNMETAL BATHROOM SINK

is part of the company's Precious Metals Collection. The fireclay sink is protected with custom formulated sealers and built to last. The sink is OD - 16"x4.5", ID - 15.25"x4", and is compatible with any of the company's drains.

**Native Trails**

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

### ▼ THE SENSORIPLUS DIGITAL THERMOSTATIC CUSTOM SHOWER

allows for four separate user profiles with multiple presets to control temperature, flow, duration and optional spa options. Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connect to virtual home assistants.

**Brizo**

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



## editor's Choice

### THE SMATRIX PULSE WIRELESS RADIANT AND AIR-SIDE CONTROL

from Uponor offers precise wireless comfort control of radiant heating and cooling along with forced-air heating and cooling in multiple zones. Auto-balancing technology adds greater efficiencies for installers, while also providing faster system reaction times and greater energy savings for homeowners. A single controller configures up to six thermostats, eight actuators and one remote relay using local networks. Adding an expansion module adds six more thermostats, eight more actuators and one more remote relay to the controller. For extremely large residences, a controller with antenna can connect up to four controllers and expansion modules for a total of 48 zones.

**Uponor**

[WWW.UPONOR.COM/SMATRIXPULSECONTROL](http://WWW.UPONOR.COM/SMATRIXPULSECONTROL)



### ▲ KAGAMI MINI-SPLIT AND VRF CONTROLLER

from Fujitsu offers modern, touchscreen control of Airstage H, J and V-Series systems, designed to blend with interior designs. It features a backlit touch panel that displays room temperature when activated, along with current time and a variety of other information.

**Fujitsu General America**

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



▼ **MEGAPRESSG VALVES** are approved for use in gas and fuel oil applications. They are suitable for use with ASTM Schedule 5 to Schedule 40 carbon steel pipe. Available in sizes ½" to 2", the new valves are approved for commercial, industrial and residential applications.

**Viega**

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### ▲ 0034E, 0034EPLUS ECM HIGH-EFFICIENCY CIRCULATORS

have a maximum of 34' of head and 50 GPM and offer up to 85% energy savings over a conventional circulator. They are ideal for closed-loop hydronic heating systems as well as domestic hot water recirculation systems.

**Taco Comfort Solutions**

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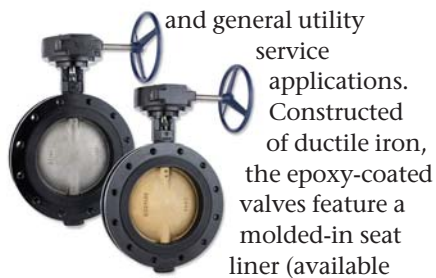


### ▼ LD-3000, LD-7000 SERIES BUTTERFLY VALVES

are designed for commercial mechanical construction and general utility service applications. Constructed of ductile iron, the epoxy-coated valves feature a molded-in seat liner (available in either EPDM or NBR) that is rated for full-pressure, end-of-line service.

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### ▲ ECO TEC SERIES 2 WITH MULTIBOILER FUNCTIONALITY

from Weil-McLain features integrated control software that allows for multiple boiler configurations without the need for a third-party control component. Designed to meet the demanding needs of residential replacement applications, the unit features a 95% AFUE rating, a long-lasting, stainless-steel fire tube heat exchanger, built-in zone control, and heating system presets.

**Weil-McLain**

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### ▲ HT-VCL SERIES PLENUM-RATED CONDENSATE PUMPS

include an external pump switch test lever to help installers ensure the pump is functioning without needing to fill the tank. The 14' lead wires provide

connection to a power supply with separate leads for the overflow detection switch. Available in 1/8 HP and 1/3 HP models.

**Franklin Electric Co./Little Giant**

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### ▶ ELECTRON COMMERCIAL TANKLESS HEAT PUMP WATER HEAT

from Intellihot use electric heat pump technology with CO2 as the refrigerant paired with a specially designed thermal battery. Units include the iE1, an integrated unit with a thermal battery that can be installed indoors or outdoors.

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### ▼ CBEX-3W STEAM BOILER

from Cleaver-Brooks offers an operating efficiency of 85% on natural gas and 88% on No. 2 oil. The burner enables the boiler to attain 10:1 turndown while maintaining 3% excess oxygen across the full operating range and includes engineering advancements to further improve efficiency, such as an integral economizer and a pre-piped and wired feedwater control valve. It requires less heating surface to achieve the same capacity output, facilitating a more compact design. It is 10% smaller in length than standard boilers and weighs 8% less than the competition. The Cleaver-Brooks Hawk integrated control system offers leading features available on a steam boiler, such as historical data trending and high resolution graphics.

**Cleaver-Brooks**

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▲ **HYBRID HOT SERIES** merges the benefits of storage in a standard tank water heater with the efficiency of tankless water heater.

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**Noritz America**

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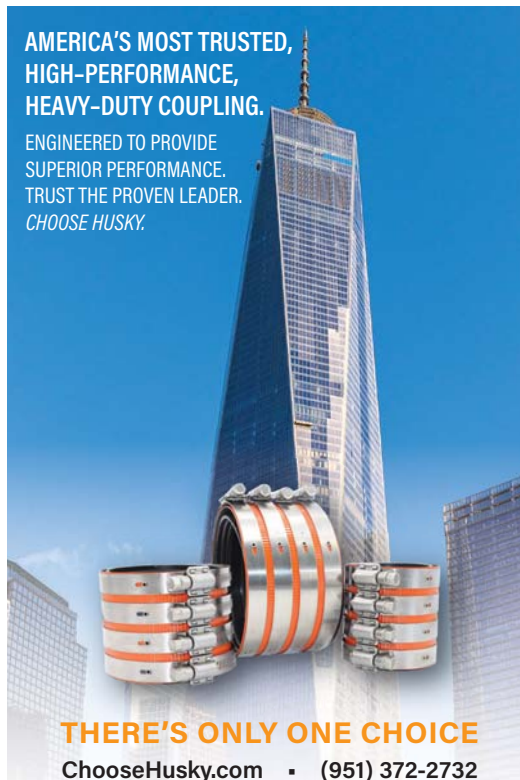


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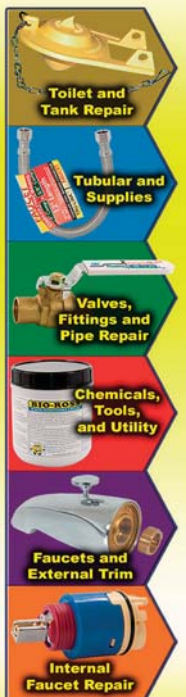
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by Steve Spaulding  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



# Earn Your Trident

Let me tell you a little secret that might get me in trouble with upper management. The first time I heard “continuous improvement,” I thought it was a scam.

I guess it might not have been the first time I heard the phrase, but the first time I had to give it serious consideration was when *CONTRACTOR* was acquired by our now-parent company, Endeavor Business Media. It was, in fact, one of my new company’s core values.

Cynic that I am (and in my defense, nearly three decades working in the trade press would make anyone cynical), this sounded to me like corporate-speak for, “We would like you to keep working harder and harder, always taking on more and more—without thanks or additional compensation—until you reach your breaking point.”

But in practice, continuous improvement has made my life easier. It’s every bit as much about quitting those things that aren’t moving the needle on your key goals as it is about finding better,

more efficient ways to reach those goals.

Also, it’s incremental. Deliberately so. It’s not about revamping the entire system (and think of the havoc that would cause even if a more efficient system was the result). It’s about making small changes, seeing if they work, and

only 13 made it to graduation. At graduation they’re given their special forces insignia, which for the SEALs is a badge with a trident.

But that graduation is only the beginning. SEALs are constantly in training, constantly refining their skills, adapting

**In the shows I’ve attended evidence of continuous improvement has been everywhere I turned to look.**

then incorporating them into the process. But, over time, those incremental changes can achieve huge results.

I was reminded of this during part of the keynote at this year’s WWETT Show. (We have a huge feature this month that combines our coverage of KBIS, IBS, AHR and the WWETT Show that begins on pg. 24.) The keynote was given by Chad Williams, a former Navy SEAL.

SEALs go through a hellish training program—out of Williams’ class of 173

their techniques. Why? Because in a warzone the enemy is doing the same; always probing for weakness, always developing new strategies and methods. So the saying among the SEALs is, “You earn your Trident every day.”

In the shows I’ve had to attend the last month-and-a-half, evidence of continuous improvement has been everywhere I turned to look. And almost all of these improvements were in response to feedback from contractors.

I remember at AHR a presentation at the Watts booth for a valve where the product manager said, “We had to go back to the plant and change the color on that end to blue.” When I asked why she replied, “That’s the cold side—blue is the color of cold.” Just a small, simple thing to make the end users happy.

At the General Pipe Cleaners’ booth at the WWETT Show the company has introduced routers with flexible shaft technology. Why? It’s what their customers wanted. At KBIS, at the L. R. Brands booth, their ProLine linear bathroom drains featured multiple outlet configurations and adjustable height to make things easier on installers dealing with different tile thicknesses.

A step here, a handle there, an easily-removable panel—just a thousand little things to make a product easier to carry, to install, to inspect or maintain.

Big changes can lead to big improvements—but never discount the little things. It’s a valuable approach, no matter what your business might be. **C**

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