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PAGE 40



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TECH PERSPECTIVE

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root-cutting tools

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at year's end

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Booth 1202

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By Mary Shafer

On the cover: BioRemedies in El Paso, Texas, started as a supplier of grease-trap bacterial treatments. Today, the company has a large business line in pipe diagnostics and repair, serving plumbing contractors and commercial enterprises. Here, technicians Anthony Lopez (left) and Jose Ortiz inspect restaurant drain line to determine the cause of recurring blockage. (Photo by Christ Chavez)

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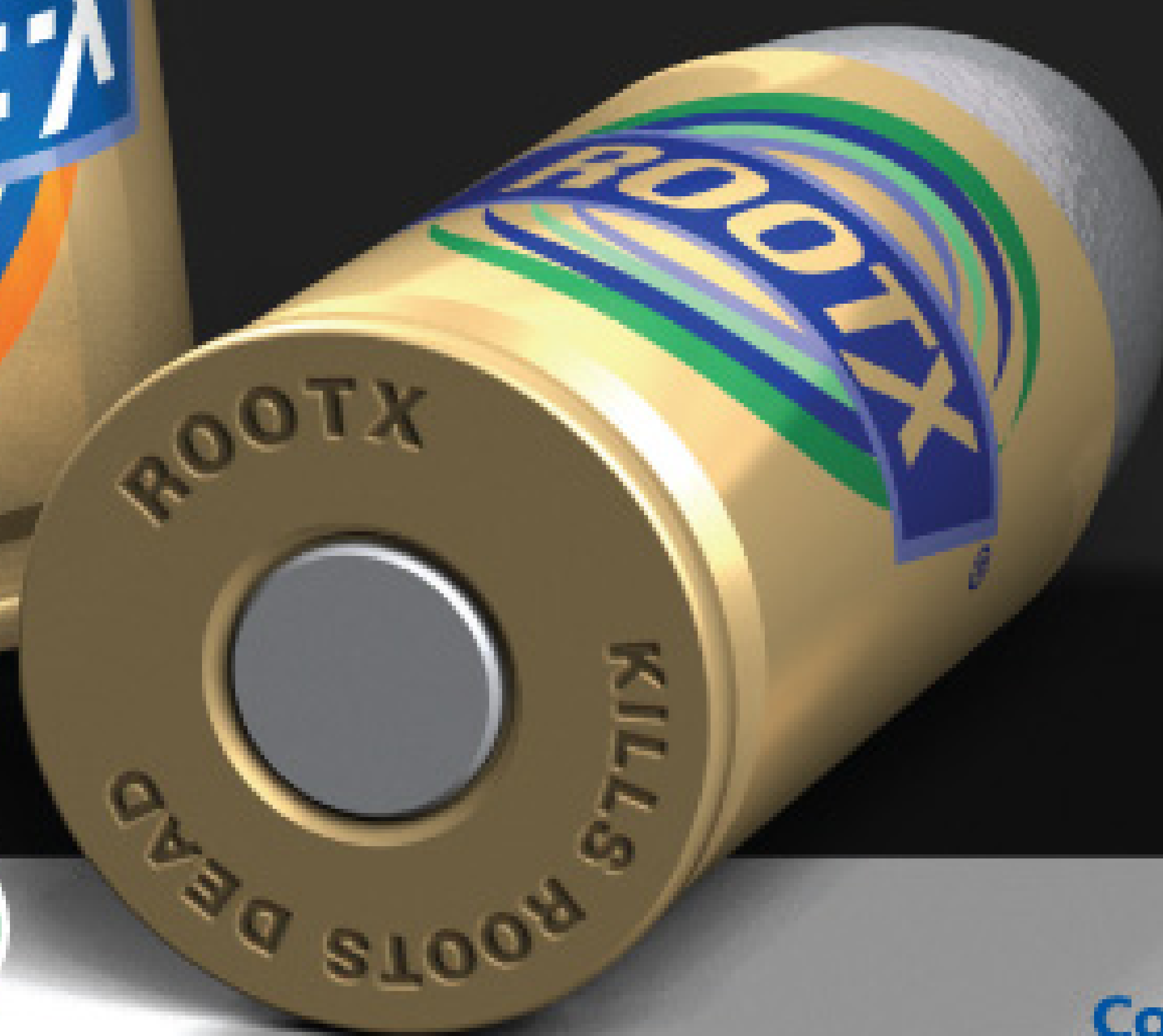
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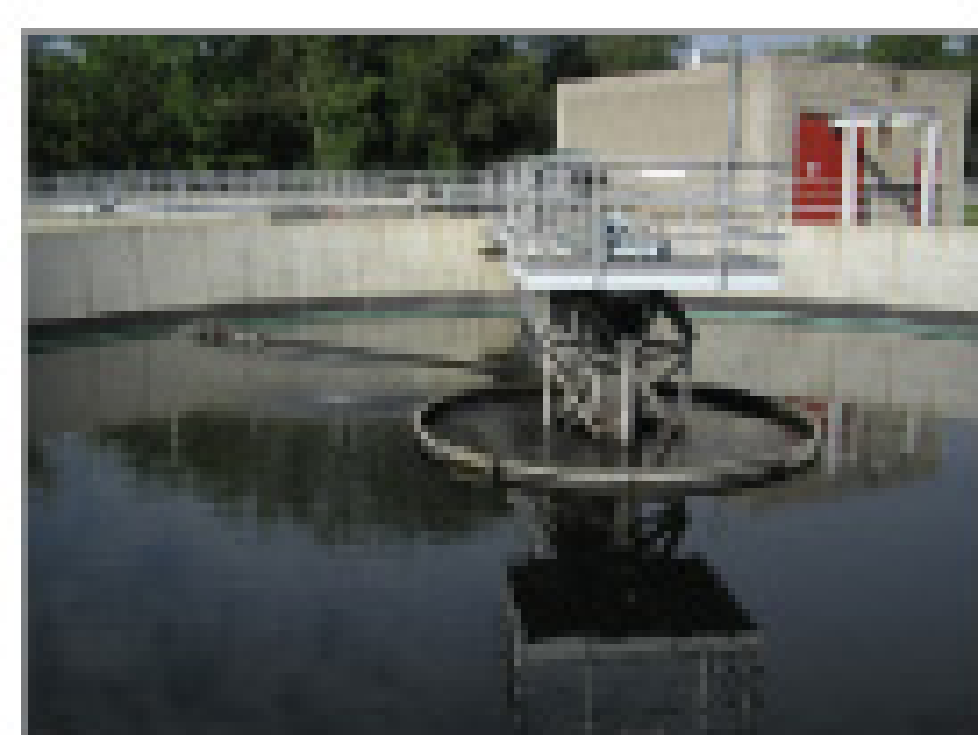
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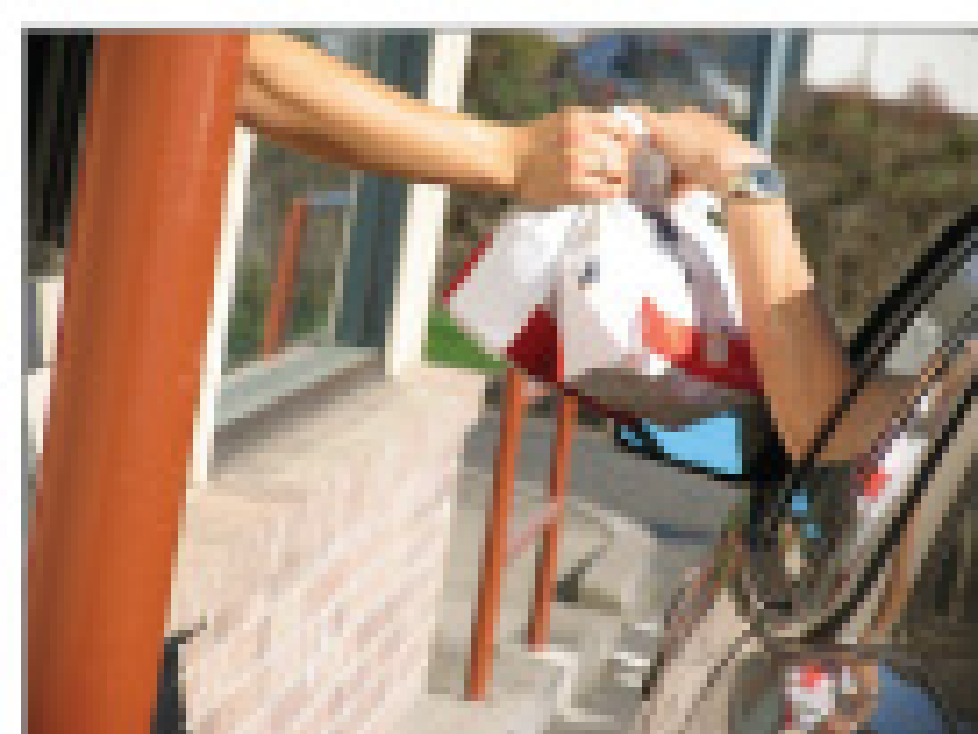


Booth 134

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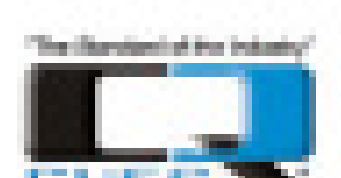
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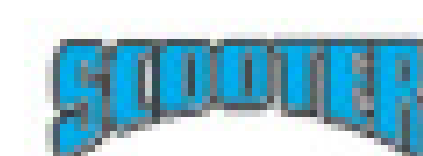
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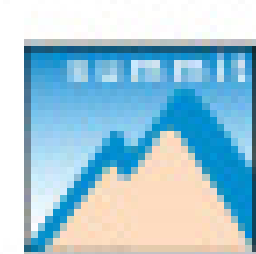


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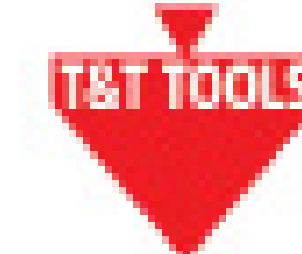
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What Did the Past Year Teach You?

Before letting 2008 slip into oblivion, it can be worthwhile to look back and reflect on the year's events and any lessons they may carry

Yesterday it was my birthday. I hung one more year on the line.

I should be depressed, my life's a mess, but I'm having a good time.

Paul Simon

I tend to think of that song by Paul Simon, "Have a Good Time," around birthdays and around year's end. So we're all about to hang one more on the line. But what does that mean?

I'm not a big one for New Year's resolutions, but I do believe in going back over the year just passed, not for nostalgia but for the same reason it would pay to go immediately back over notes from a lecture when I was in college, or still pays to review right away the notes from a business meeting.

glance back over the year. My wife would pull out the diary she kept, and we would touch on the notable events – the highlights and the lowlights. It was mostly a pleasant way to revisit and remember our blessings.

I've done something similar to that on a few occasions with my business life. It's not difficult. You just take your planner or whatever you use to record appointments and page on through, front to back or back to front. Odds are you'll encounter reminders of things you did that helped make you successful, and mistakes you wish you could take back. Such items come in all shapes and kinds.

Let's see. Here's a time where I had a nasty flare-up with a colleague. It was so out of character for both of us that on reflection I decided just

come back refreshed on Monday. Lesson: When you need some free time, take it.

A lot to learn

How about your calendar? What can it teach you? Growth and wisdom are not just the sum of momentous events. More often they're the slow accumulation of small lessons, the kind that we'll forget if we're not careful, and as they say, when we forget the past, we're doomed to repeat it.

A look back can restore to memory those smaller teachable moments and help us make the learning part of who we are. So, one day before this month expires, consider taking a little quiet time to reflect. Find a comfortable spot, at home or at the office. Grab a coffee. Shut the door. Page through the year, whether on paper or digitally.

Have a notepad with you. Maybe you'll recall a promotion idea you wanted to share with your team but never did. Or a great bit of language you used to close a sale, but had forgotten. Or a new material supplier you'd wanted to check out. Write it all down and resolve to act on it.

Besides reviewing your own year, maybe it's worthwhile to share the exercise with your team, the way I used to do with my family. It could be a great experience if you keep it light and keep it positive. Who knows what good things your people may remember – ideas you can use that otherwise might have been lost forever.

When you're done, before hanging that year on the line, you'll have wrung all the value from it that you can. ■



Ted J. Rulseh

You just take your planner or whatever you use to record appointments and page on through, front to back or back to front. Odds are you'll encounter reminders of things you did that helped make you successful, and mistakes you wish you could take back.

Timely reminders are good for the memory banks. What we don't revisit we quickly forget. It's better not to forget things that can teach us worthwhile lessons. (That's why certain books are worth rereading at various stages of life – one such book for me is Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.)

Making it a tradition

For a number of years my wife and kids and I made it a ritual on or around New Year's Eve to

to erase it from memory as if it never even happened – in much the same way, when compiling statistics, you throw out the one or two figures that simply don't make sense. In the words of a Spanish-speaking acquaintance, *No pasó nada. That didn't happen*. It was a good decision.

Here's a Friday where I had planned a fishing trip, but later put a big "X" through the calendar square because I thought I was "too busy." I should have taken the long weekend: I was a burnout case in the office that Friday. With the break I would have

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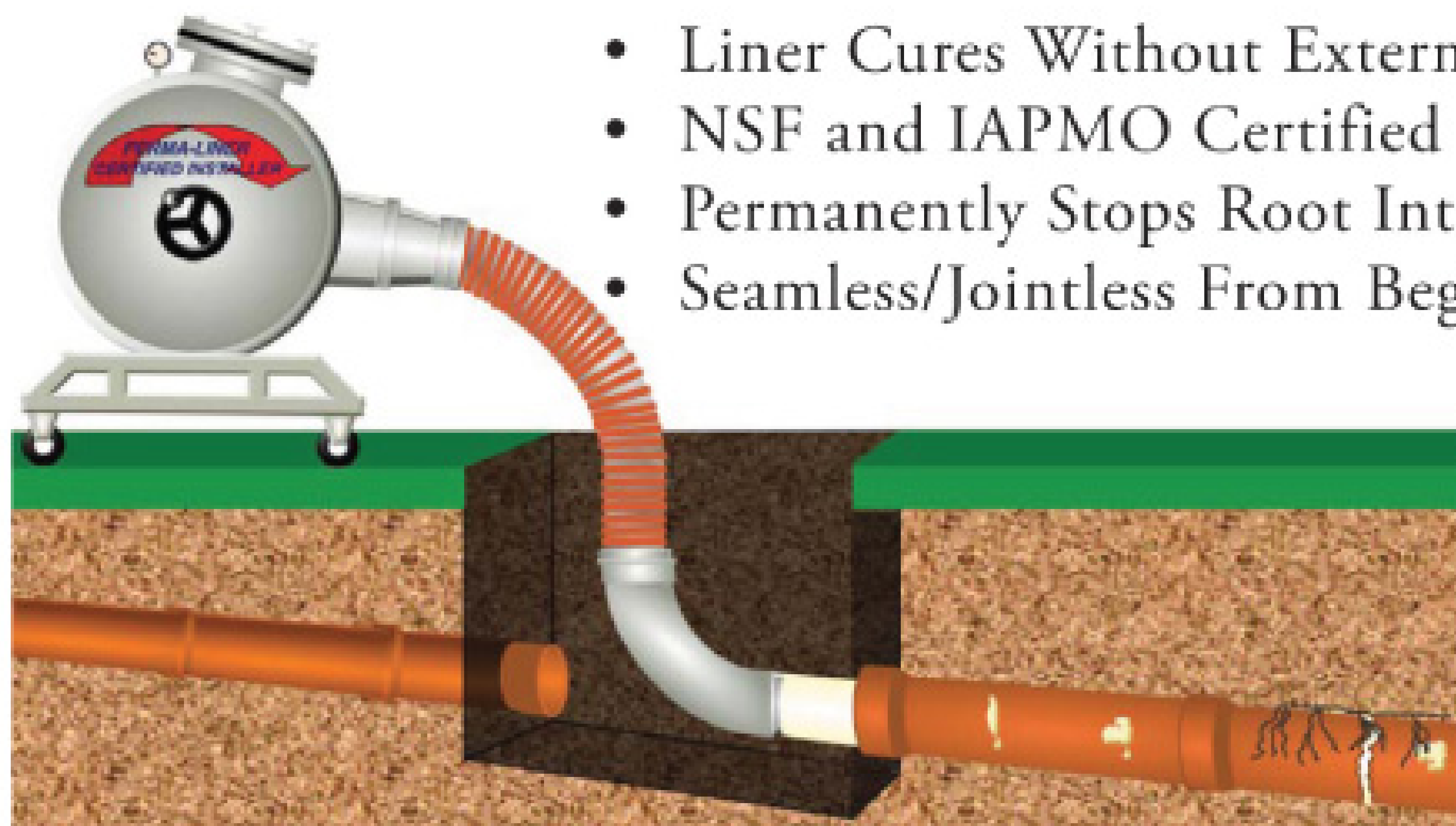
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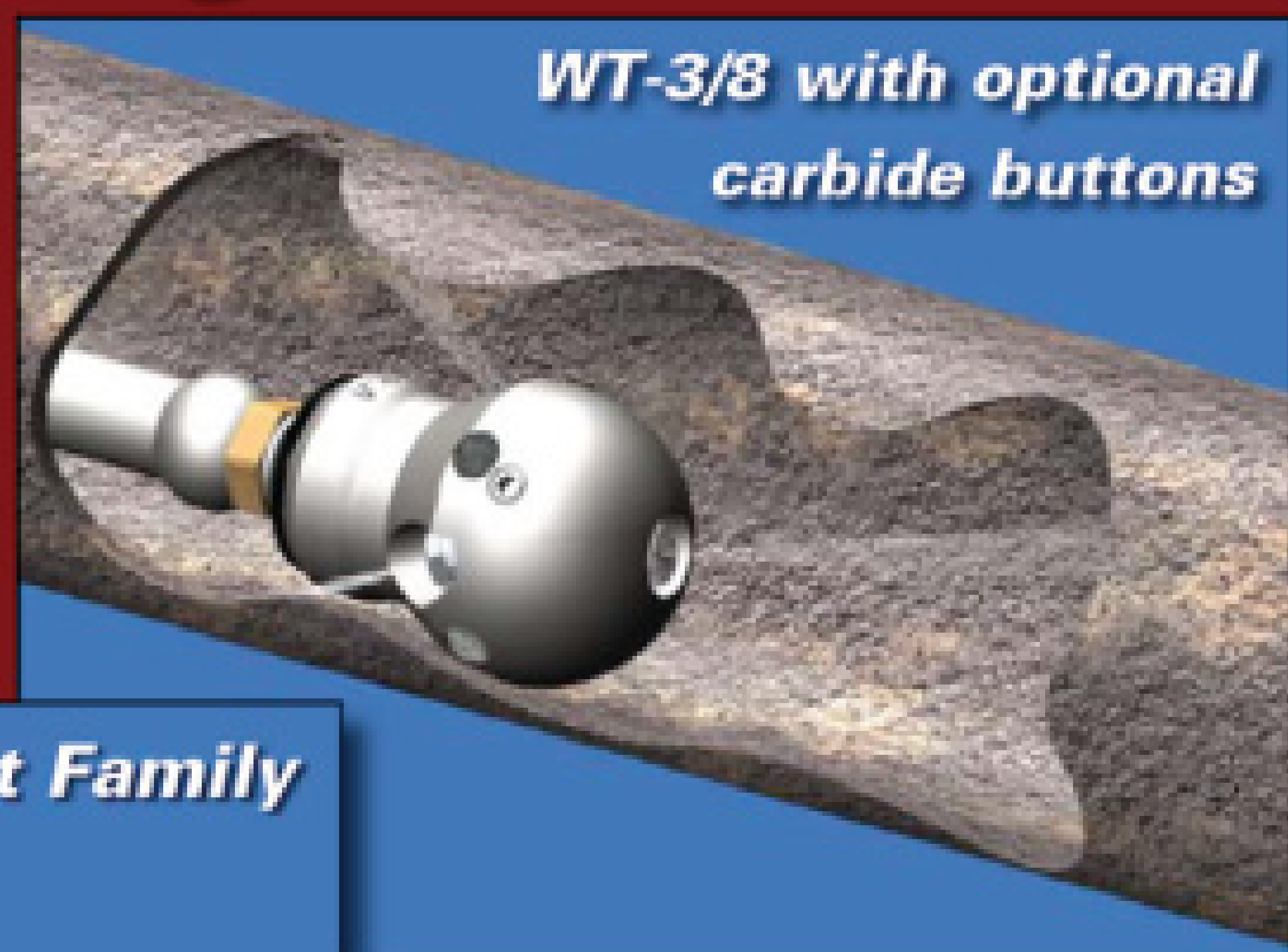
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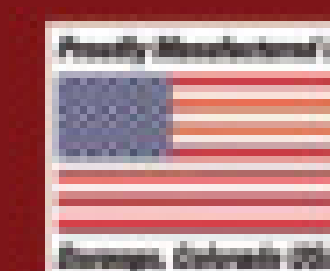
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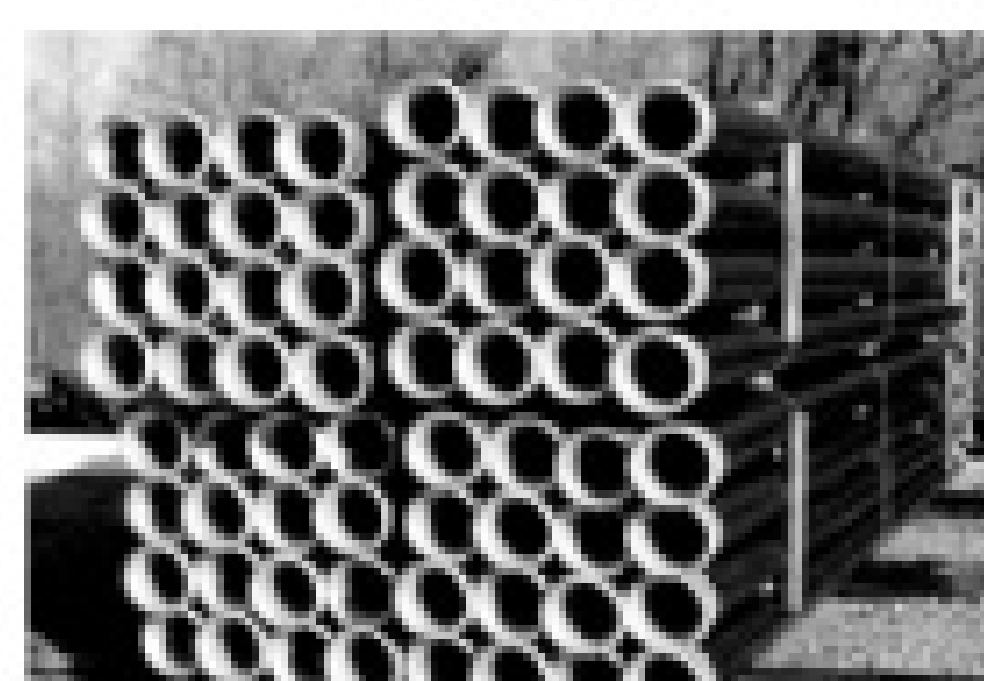
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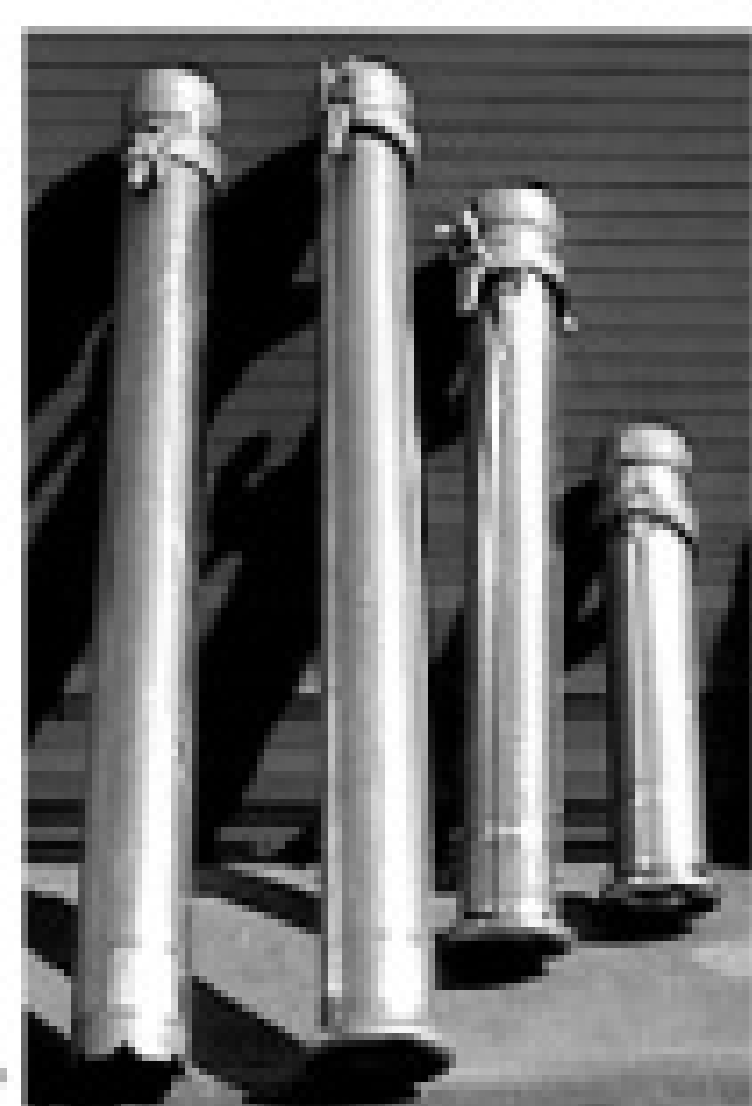


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A Dangerous Place

Outdoor workers face far more hazards than those who spend their days under a roof

By Ted J. Rulseh

All right, maybe it's obvious, but working outdoors exposes people to many types of hazards. Those hazards differ by work type, geography, season and length of time outside. But workers for companies that deal in drain and pipe maintenance face a wide range of risks, from traffic out in the streets to poisonous plants and critters on remote, off-road jobsites.

Safety FIRST

Of course, at this time of year, outdoor hazards include hypothermia and frostbite. The National Institute

of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) says employers should train outdoor workers about the hazards they're likely to encounter – including ways to identify hazards and limit their exposure.

So many threats

Have you thought about the many hazards that go with the mere fact of working outside? A NIOSH Safety and Health Topic bulletin, Hazards to Outdoor Workers, says physical hazards include extreme heat or cold, noise, lightning and ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

"Extreme heat conditions can cause heat stroke, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat rash and other problems. ... Too much noise exposure may cause a temporary change in hearing or a temporary ringing in

workers' ears (tinnitus). Repeated exposures to loud noise can lead to permanent, incurable hearing loss or tinnitus.

"Lightning kills about 80 people in the United States each year and injures hundreds. UV radiation can cause problems such as sunburn and skin cancer."

And then there are biological hazards. There are diseases carried by mosquitoes or ticks. Mosquito-borne diseases include West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis, western equine encephalitis and La Crosse encephalitis.

Among ailments carried by ticks are Lyme disease, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, southern tick-associated rash illness, tularemia, tick-borne relapsing fever, anaplasmosis, Colorado tick fever, Powassan encephalitis and Q fever.

Snake-bite

And let's not forget poisonous reptiles, poisonous insects and poisonous plants.

Venomous snakes, spiders, scorpions and stinging insects are found in many geographic regions and are especially dangerous to workers allergic to the toxins.

"Anaphylactic shock is the body's severe allergic reaction to a bite or sting and requires immediate emergency care," NIOSH says. "Thousands of people are stung each year, and as many as 40 to 50 people in the United States die each year from severe allergic reactions.

"Venomous U.S. snakes include rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths/water moccasins and coral snakes. Stinging insects include bees, wasps, hornets and fire ants. Venomous spiders include black widows, brown recluse and hobo spiders.

"Poisonous plants found in the United States include poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac.

These plants can cause allergic reactions if the leaves or stalks are damaged and come in contact with workers' skin. These plants can also be dangerous if they are burned and their toxins are inhaled by workers.

NIOSH says nearly one-third of forestry workers and firefighters who battle forest fires in California, Oregon and Washington develop rashes or lung irritations from contact with poison oak, the most common poisonous plant in those states.

Then there's the job

And of course there are those hazards directly related to working with machinery, entering confined spaces, using electricity and more.

Since winter is at hand, it's worth remembering the specific hazards of prolonged exposure to cold. There are two basic items to be concerned about.

Core temperature. The body tries to keep its internal temperature at about 98.6 degrees F. In extreme cold, blood vessels in skin, arms and legs constrict, and blood flow to the arms and legs decreases. This keeps the blood from cooling and keeps internal organs warm, but extreme reduction in blood flow to the extremities can result in lower skin temperature and increase the risk of frostbite, NIOSH reports.

Wind chill. Here, air movement increases heat loss from exposed skin. The stronger the wind and the lower the temperature, the more risk and the more protective clothing is required.

You can brush up on cold-weather safety precautions for your workers at www.cdc.gov/niosh or at www.osha.gov. ■

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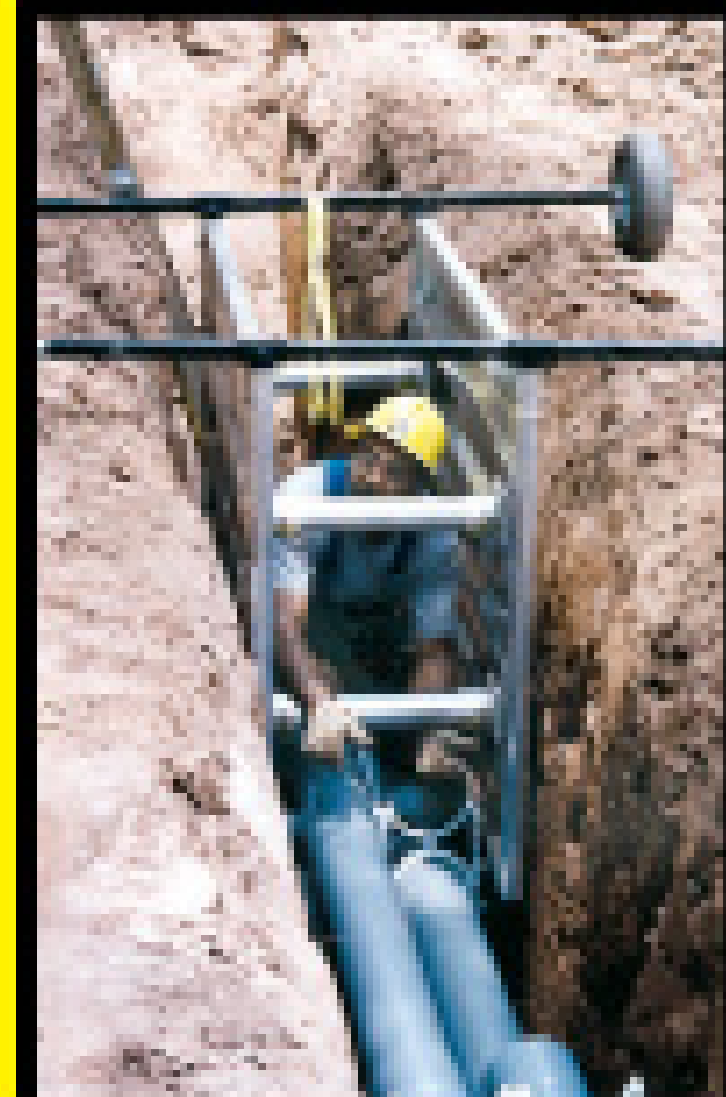
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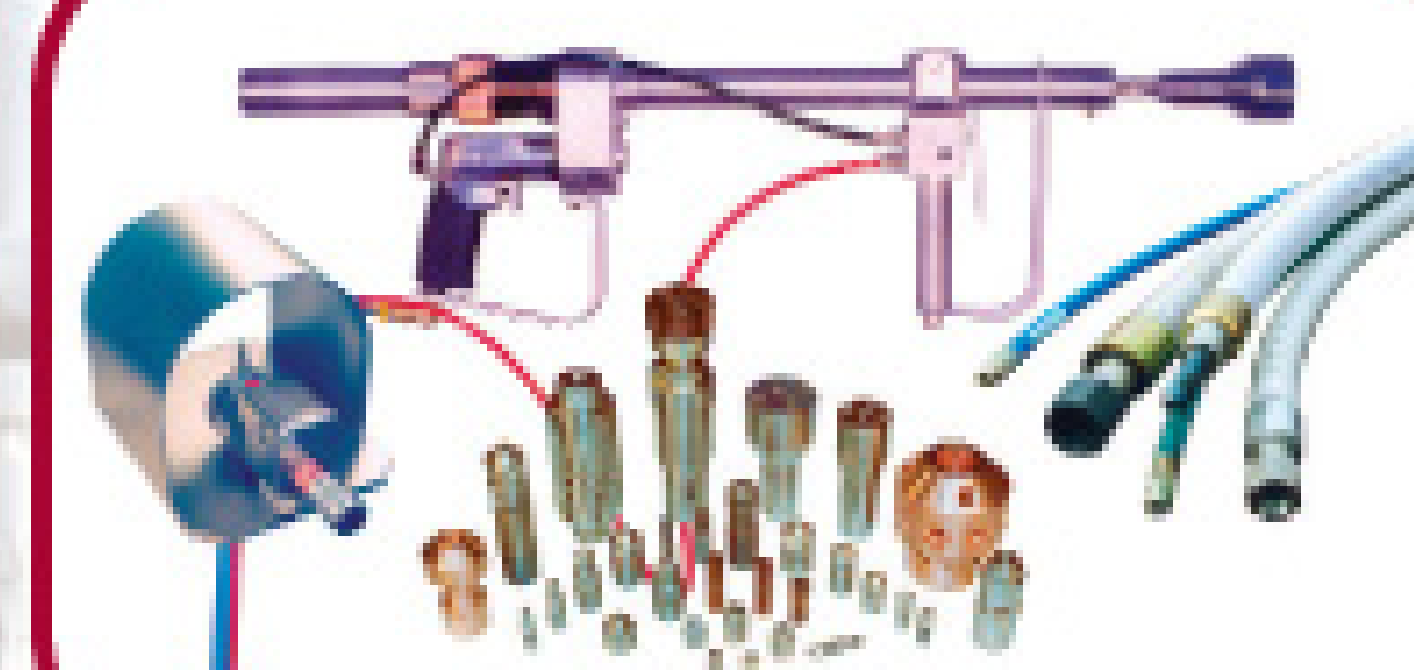
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Closing the Books

December is a good time to get a handle on the year's expenses and income, and to make decisions that can affect your tax liability

By Erik Gunn

It's that time of year again – for holiday shopping and festivities, yes, but also for the annual ritual of every smart business owner: Closing the books. Yes, that can feel like drudgery, enough to make you put it off and go watch a football game instead.

But if you want to stay on top of your business and make the most of the time you put in every day serving your customers, this is one of those essential tasks. Here's how you can make the job easier.

Separate accounts

Perhaps the most important reason to close your books at year's end is also the worst reason: to keep your personal and business expenses straight. Believe it or not, many small business owners still try to run the business out of their personal bank accounts, or mix personal and business expenses on the same credit card. That is a terrible idea, and owners who do it should stop right away and establish separate accounts.

"It's very important to make sure you do not commingle personal transactions with business transactions," says Brian Jenke, a certified public accountant at Sanford, Baumeister and Frazier in Fort Worth, Texas. Keep a separate bank account and a separate credit card for business use only, and keep business expenses out of your personal bank account and off your personal credit card.

Until you take that step, an annual book-closing exercise is critical to making sure you accurately track all of your expenses and all of your income. Now let's assume you already do those things. Let's also assume you have an outside accountant who works with you, especially at tax time, because if you don't, you really should get one.

Even in this situation, you're not off the hook: Closing the books is still important. And the more you do yourself to organize your records, the less you'll have to pay in accounting fees. "Clients have a choice," notes Jenke. "They can do it themselves, or pay us our standard billing rate."

Review your expenses

Step 1 is to review all your expenses. With separate accounts, these should be easy to capture. But you have a bigger opportunity here. Look for trends and habits that could affect the ongoing operation of your business.

Are you spending more on certain supplies (fuel, for instance)? Are you spending too much stocking up on inventory that then sits around unused? Are you making the most of seasonal price fluctuations for certain purchases?

One expense that many small businesses often fail to capture, Jenke says, is refundable deposits they pay out, such as damage deposits on leased equipment. Business owners may assume it's an expense, ignoring the fact that they're supposed to get it paid back when the leased item is returned in good condition.

"A lot of times, these deposits are never requested back, because the business owners never put it on their balance sheet," Jenke says.

"You want to make sure you do a good year-end close. Track that you've generated all of your bills properly and collected all of them, or know which ones are not collected."

Brian Jenke

Review your income

Step 2 is to examine your income. Are all your customers paid up? Are you keeping track of those who haven't paid? Did you forget to bill anyone? (Yes, that does happen.) Are your billings keeping up with past years? Or is business slacking off? And if so, is that a warning sign that you need to take some steps to turn it around?

If you tend to have steady income and expenses from year to year, this may be a routine task, but don't skip it. On the other hand, your income may have taken a big leap this year. That makes this year-end review particularly important. "You want to make sure you do a good year-end close," Jenke says. "Track that you've generated all of your bills properly and collected all of them, or know which ones are not collected."

Plan for tax time

Step 3 is to analyze the tax implications of the year that's just ending – and that's the big reason you're better off closing the books in December, rather than waiting for the New Year. One decision

Erik Gunn is a magazine writer and editor in Racine, Wis., where he operates Great Lakes Editorial Services, consulting for businesses, nonprofits and individuals. Readers may direct inquiries to him by contacting this publication at 800/257-7222 or e-mailing editor@cleaner.com.



you might have to make is how to depreciate big-ticket capital expenses you made during the year.

Say you bought a truck for \$40,000. Normal IRS rules require you, instead of deducting that expense all from this year's income, to spread the expense over several years according to an established depreciation schedule set by Uncle Sam.

But what if you had a particularly huge income boost in the same year? It will be better for your tax bill if you can take the entire deduction in the current year. If you've made a profit rather than lost money, that's also perfectly legal, if you follow the IRS rules for doing so.

Here's where your accountant can really help you, and you'll get much better help if you make that appointment now instead of waiting until the New Year. "A CPA has more time to consult with clients in November and December," says Jenke. "Once January comes around, we're closing people's books, we're doing people's income taxes. We have a clearer focus in December to help them out."

That timing also gives you the opportunity to make decisions that could cut your tax bill. For instance, if you've had a banner year, you can move some big expenses you would pay for anyway into the current year. After January 1, it's too late.

Keep it going

But if you really want to get the most out of this task, don't stop now. Put yourself on a schedule to close your books not just once a year, but every month. That's the real secret to a smooth business operation. Jenke compares it to lawn care.

"It's not that hard to cut your grass every week," he says. "What if you waited three months before you cut it? Think about how big it is, all the weeds that are in it, all the extra trimming that has to be done. You'll keep putting it off because the mountain's too big to climb. But if you cut your grass every week, it always is manageable."

Accounting is the same, he concludes. "If you close your books and review them every month, it's a whole lot more manageable task. Plus you get used to them and it no longer frightens you. Slow and steady wins the game." ■

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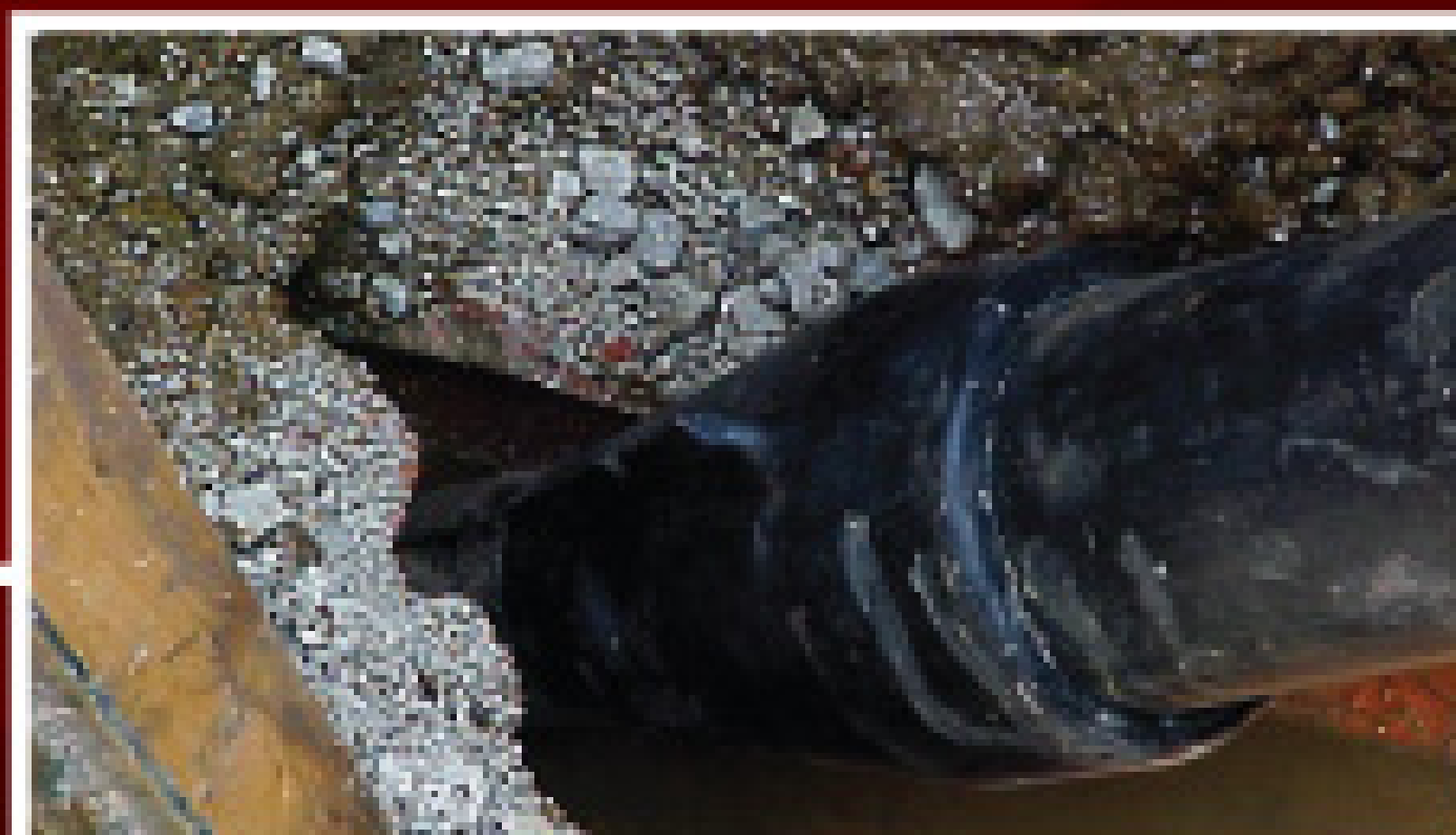
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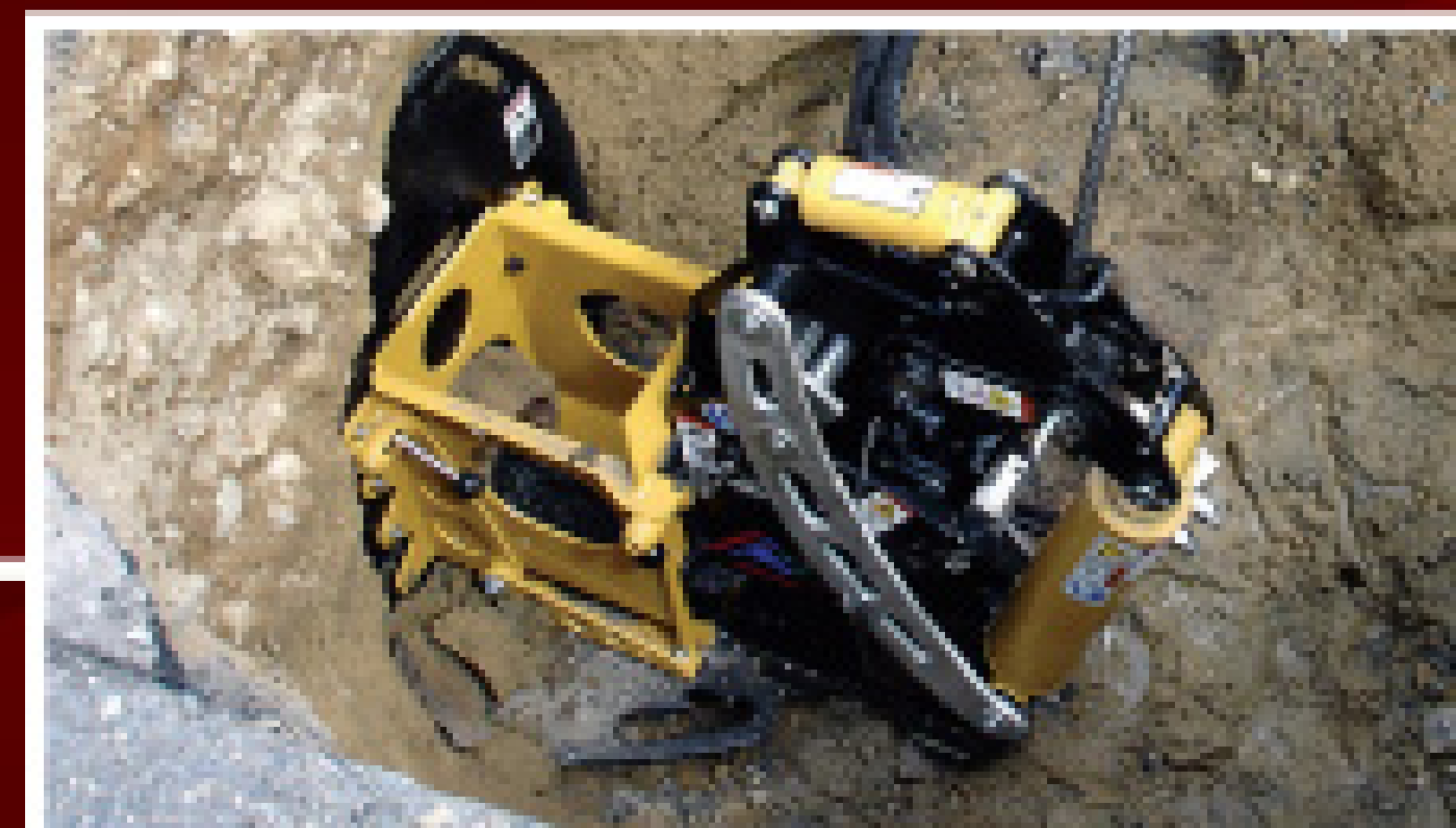
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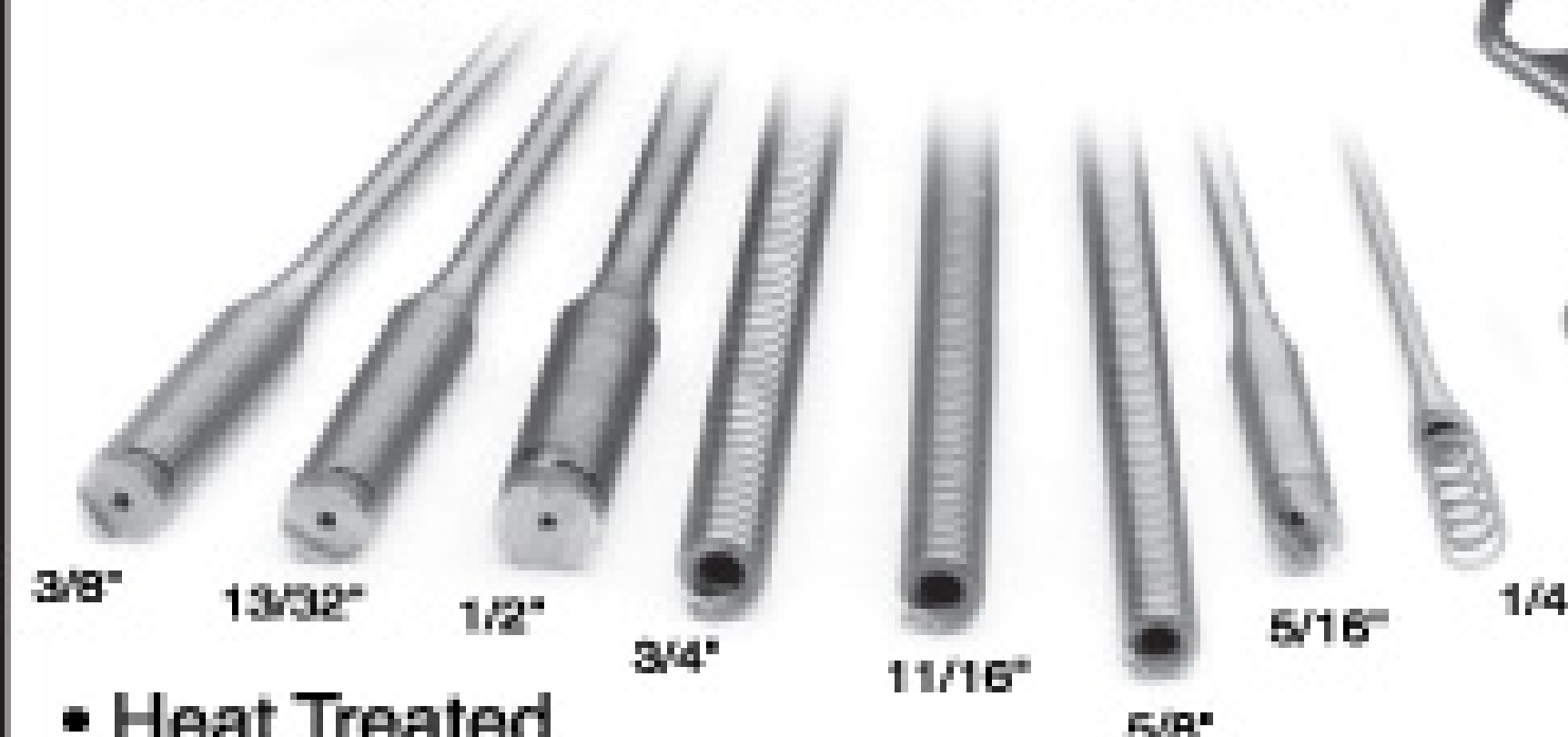


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— Paul and Saunda Kitchen, Santa Rosa, Calif.

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* The above averages are based on the actual results of Mr. Rooter stores open for a full 12 months in 2007. For those franchises open for at least one full year and up to two full years, 19 franchises, or 28% of the franchises in that group, attained the stated average annual revenue level for calendar year 2007. For those franchises open for at least one full year and up to two full years with a territory population of more than 400,000, 8 franchises, or 32% of the franchises in that group, attained the stated average annual revenue level for calendar year 2007. For franchises open for at least six full years and up to seven full years, 16 franchises, or 42% of the franchises in that group, attained the stated average annual revenue level for calendar year 2007. For full details, request a copy of the Mr. Rooter Franchise Disclosure Document. Individual franchisee's financial results may differ from the results stated herein. This advertisement is not an offering. An offering can only be made by a prospectus filed with the Department of Law of the State of New York. Such filing does not constitute approval by the Department of Law of the State of New York. Mr. Rooter Corporation, 1020 N. University Parks Dr., Waco, TX 76707, 800-298-6855; MN Reg. No. F-2356.

The Education Edge

Seminars during the 2009 Pumper & Cleaner Expo focus on robotics, pipe cleaning and repair, rehabilitation technologies and other vital topics

By **Scottie Dayton**

A track of seminars presented by the National Association of Sewer Service Contractors (NASSCO) highlights the education lineup at the 2009 Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International, Feb. 25-28, in Louisville, Ky.

The NASSCO program is part of Education Day on Wednesday, Feb. 25. The complete program includes 46 seminars presented by industry experts across the full range of environmental service industries. Seminars are also offered on Thursday and Friday mornings. A summary of the NASSCO program follows. For a complete seminar schedule, see the Expo pages in this issue of *Cleaner*.

Robotics for the Future: What Do They Mean for You?

Scott Thayer, chief technology officer, RedZone Robotics

Although CCTV inspections are important for detecting many pipe defects, many problems are revealed only by more sophisticated methods: sonar for sediment and debris, laser

for ovality and corrosion. New technologies are revolutionizing the ability to inspect and rehabilitate underground infrastructure. Advances in robotics, in particular, enable pipe inspections using multiple technologies simultaneously.

"Multi-sensor inspection (MSI) data can be fused into a more complete representation of pipe condition than is possible with individual sensors," says Thayer. "Contractors using MSI data will improve their ability to diagnose problems and predict impending failures before they erupt on the surface. The next revolution in inspection technology is robotic platforms that collect data from all sensors in a single pass, while synchronizing the data in time and space."

Small-Diameter Epoxy Coatings: How to Rehab 1/2- to 2-Inch Lines **Brian LeMaire, president, CuraFlo**

In the mid-1990s, a new technology arose that enabled contractors to restore water mains, fire lines, and larger-diameter water supply lines. Now, similar technology can be used to restore small-diameter lines inside

buildings without disrupting walls, woodwork, plasterwork and finishes.

"The epoxy lining process for restoring potable water systems is often the only quick, cost-effective solution in homes, apartment buildings, commercial and institutional structures, and municipalities," says LeMaire. His seminar will describe a three-step process rehabilitation in which the interior of the pipe is dried with heat, cleaned with an abrasive, and coated with a two-part epoxy mixed on site and applied through a computer-controlled device.

Root Control: How Does It Work and Why Is It Needed?

John Fletcher, Atlantic regional manager, Duke's Root Control Inc.

Sanitary sewers create an environment in which roots thrive and cause blockages, creating havoc for municipal sewer departments and homeowners. "Over the last two decades, the need for chemical root control became obvious as we gained understanding of how rodding and hydraulic cutting only worsened the problem," says Fletcher.

His seminar looks at the basics of how chemical root control works and why it is needed. He will describe how strong, comprehensive root control programs can reduce emergencies caused by root stoppages. He will also tell how such a program became the foundation of a complete preventive maintenance program for a wastewater utility.

OSHA Regulations Need Understanding

Kathy Romans, national sales manager, Trelleborg/NPC Pipe and Manhole Repair Products Division

OSHA reports that its proposed confined-space rule for construction workers is expected to reduce fatali-

ties and injuries by 90 percent. Although there is a general industry standard for confined spaces, the agency does not consider it protective enough. Proper implementation of the new rule is expected to prevent six fatalities and 880 injuries from confined spaces annually.

The proposed regulation may affect workers entering manholes. Jobs once considered routine may require additional personnel, bypassing or plugging of lines, and onsite rescue teams. Romans' presentation will highlight the proposed changes and their potential impact on employers, employees and multiple-contractor projects.

Choosing the Correct Chemical Grouts for Municipal Applications **Ed Paradis, regional sales manager/director of municipal sales, De Neef Construction Chemicals Inc.**

Chemical grouts, specified and applied in various applications throughout the nation's infrastructure for more than 40 years, may have been less than optimally effective. "Like any repair material, the correct product must be specified to ensure that the repair is long-term and in the best interest for industry," says Paradis. "History has proven that incorrect use of a particular material may solve the short-term problem, but may not last as long as it should." The course will help contractors understand how to choose the right chemical grout for a given application.

Trained Technology Inspectors: How Can They Ensure a Better Job for the Customer and Higher Profits for the Contractor?

Gerry Muenchmeyer, principal, Muenchmeyer Associates LLC

Inspecting products has been part of society for many years. Everything that is manufactured,





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produced, and constructed is inspected for safety and quality. In many cases, government regulations dictate inspection requirements to protect the safety and health of the public. Muenchmeyer, technical director for NASSCO, will describe how trained technology inspectors ensure a better quality project by enforcing specifications. Better-quality work results in higher contractor profits, in part because they are less likely to be called back for repair work after projects are completed, he says.

Education Day also includes an entire track of seminars from the Southern Section Collection Systems Committee, a part of the California Water Environment Association. Those programs are:

- Trenchless Pipe Rehabilitation: Pipeline Problems and an Overview of Trenchless Lining Solutions – Dave Badgley
- Pipeline Inspections: Getting the Most out of the CCTV Operator Position – Jim Aanderud
- Nuts and Bolts of GIS – Mark Hill
- Nitty-Gritty on Pipeline

Cleaning – Duane Johnson

- Conforming to Confined Space and Personal Protective Equipment Safety Requirements in Wastewater Collections – Rick Lewis
- Manhole Inspections, the Sometimes Forgotten Link in Collection Systems – Denis Pollak

Here are several other presentations of interest to pipe-cleaning, repair and maintenance contractors:

Wednesday, Feb. 25 (Education Day)

- What an Air Mover Can Do for You and Your Business – Gary Toothe, Waterjet Technology Association
- Basics of High-Pressure Waterblasting – Gary Toothe, WJTA
- Waterjetting Applications: What You Can Do from 5,000 to 50,000 PSI – Scott Coleman, WJTA
- Crossbores of Gas Lines in Sewers: Reducing the Risk of Injury and Damage – Mark Bruce, Cross Bore Safety Association

Thursday, Feb. 26

- Study of Rotary Jets for Material Removal – D. Wright, J. Wolgamott, and G. Zink, StoneAge Inc.

Friday, Feb. 27

- High-Pressure Hose Safety and Proper Use – Tony Bessette, Spir Star
- The Better Jetter: Secrets to Marketing and Selling Jetting – Nick Woodhead and Ken Bryson, US Jetting
- Eliminating SSOs with Chemical Root Control – Bill

Fuller, Douglas Products

- Keys to Proper Power Take-Off Selection – David Douglass, Muncie Power Products Inc.
- How to Choose Vacuum Tank, Chassis and Pump Configurations – Brian Amthor, Amthor International

To find out more about the education program or any other Expo offering, visit www.pumpershow.com. Register online or by calling 800/257-7222. ■

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EDUCATION DAY

Wednesday
February 25th, 2009

- Full day of seminars
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- Schedule subject to change

ROOM C201 & C202

LRN Leaders Resource Network

8:00 - 9:00	How to Become a Value Leader
9:30 - 10:30	Credit Collections: Getting Paid
11:00 - 12:00	The Value of Internet Marketing
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	Selling Value
2:30 - 3:30	How to Add Value to Every Customer You Have and Future Customers
4:00 - 5:00	How to Determine Your Operating Costs

ROOM C203

WJTA / PSAI / CBSA

8:00 - 9:00	What an Air Mover Can Do For You
9:30 - 10:30	The Basics of High Pressure Waterblasting
11:00 - 12:00	Waterjetting Applications
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 3:30	Understanding Your Cost to Insure Profitability (PSAI)
4:00 - 5:00	Cross Bores of Gas Lines in Sewers (CBSA)

ROOM C204 & C205

SSCSC Southern Section Collection Systems Committee

8:00 - 9:00	Trenchless Pipe Rehabilitation
9:30 - 10:30	CCTV Pipeline Inspections
11:00 - 12:00	The Nuts and Bolts of GIS
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	The Nitty-Gritty on Pipeline Cleaning
2:30 - 3:30	Confined Space and Protective Equipment Safety Requirements
4:00 - 5:00	Manhole Inspections

ROOM B101 & B102

NAWT National Association of Wastewater Transporters

8:00 - 9:00	What are My Disposal Resources
9:30 - 10:30	Treatment Processes, What is Out There?
11:00 - 12:00	Evaluating Costs as Part of the Decision Making Process
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	Meeting Part 503 Requirements
2:30 - 3:30	Turn Grease Trap Waste Into Gold
4:00 - 5:00	Developing a Business Plan

ROOM B103 & B104

NOWRA National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association

8:00 - 9:00	NOWRA Overview & Industry Trends
9:30 - 10:30	Soil & Site Evaluation Overview
11:00 - 12:00	Septic Tanks: Function, Inspection, Installation & Trouble Shooting
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	Aerobic Treatment Units & Filters
2:30 - 3:30	Pumps & Controls
4:00 - 5:00	Operation & Maintenance of Systems

ROOM C101 - C104

NASSCO National Association of Sewer Service Companies

8:00 - 9:00	Robotics For the Future, What Does it Mean for You?
9:30 - 10:30	Small Diameter Epoxy Coatings
11:00 - 12:00	Root Control, How Does it Work and Why is it Needed?
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	OSHA Regulations
2:30 - 3:30	Choosing the Correct Chemical Grouts
4:00 - 5:00	Trained Technology Inspectors

ROOM C105 - C108

NEHA National Environmental Health Association

8:00 - 9:00	How to Work With Regulators and Regulations
9:30 - 10:30	Pumpers: Operation & Maintenance
11:00 - 12:00	Routine Maintenance Inspections
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	Using the Certified Installer Credential to Help Your Business
2:30 - 3:30	T.B.D.
4:00 - 5:00	T.B.D.

ROOM C109 - C112

SCOTT HUNTER Business Track

8:00 - 9:00	The Art of Personal Sales
11:00 - 12:00	The Art of Personal Sales (Part 2)
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 2:00	Yes, We Have to Work Together, but Does it Have to be So Painful?
4:00 - 5:00	The Art of Being Outrageously Successful!

FEBRUARY 25-28

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09



THURSDAY

February 26th, 2009

ROOM C101-C104

Portable Toilet Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Portable Sanitation Start Up
Hampel
- 9:30 - 10:30 Selling Portable Restrooms Services
Satellite Industries
- 11:00 - 12:00 T.B.D.

ROOM C105 - C108

Liquid Waste Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Decentralized Wastewater Sustainability - **Aquatest**
- 9:30 - 10:30 Discover the "GREEN ERA" and capitalize on it! - **Lenzyme**
- 11:00 - 12:00 Modular Waste Water Treatment
Big Fish Environmental, LLC

ROOM B103 & B104

Municipal Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Why Measure Sewer Flows from Private Services? - **City Meter**
- 9:30 - 10:30 Polymer Solutions for Wastewater Treatment - **Fort Bend Services**
- 11:00 - 12:00 Rotary Jets for Material Removal
StoneAge

ROOM C109 - C112

Sewer & Drain Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Bacteria Mythbusters -
ProClean by Durable
- 9:30 - 10:30 Solutions for Nineteenth Century Manholes - **AP/M Permaform**
- 11:00 - 12:00 Manholes & Leakage Solutions
Sealing Systems

FRIDAY

February 27th, 2009

ROOM B101 & B102

Sewer Cleaning Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 High Pressure Hose Safety & Proper Use
Spir Star
- 9:30 - 10:30 The Better Jetter, Secrets to Jetting
US Jetting
- 11:00 - 12:00 Chemical Root Control
Douglas Products

ROOM B103 & B104

Business Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Maintenance Agreements for Commercial Accounts
Spartan Tool
- 9:30 - 10:30 First Rate Customer Service
RooterMan
- 11:00 - 12:00 Insurance and Risk Management
Heffernan Insurance

ROOM C101-C104

Miscellaneous Track

- 8:00 - 9:00 Keys to Proper Power Take-Off
Muncie Power Products
- 9:30 - 10:30 Vacuum Tank, Chassis and Pumps
Amthor International
- 11:00 - 12:00 Lateral Replacement Program
TT Technology

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What Old-Time Doctors Can Teach Us

Of course there are differences in “house calls” by a doctor and a drain-cleaning contractor – and yet many of the customer service skills are the same

By Peter Morici

How do you handle the diagnosis portion of a service visit? Do you take a quick look at the problem area and bark out a price because you have somewhere else to go?

What do you say and how do you say it? Do you have a particular demeanor when you're face to face with the customer during that diagnosis?

Before there were hospitals on every corner, there was the doctor's house call. It was no different than the service calls you take today. If you didn't feel well, even with a headache, the family doctor would respond. Doctors came to our homes from the beginning of our country on horseback until the mid-1960s.

The old-time doctor was respected. He was a professional we depended on. The performance of the old-time doctors can be broken down into four phases.

- Approach
- Meet and greet
- Diagnosis
- Consultation and prescription

Right on time

The customer or patient would call the doctor's office and schedule an appointment. At the designated time, the doctor would roll up into the driveway.

He would then walk up to the front door wearing a suit and carrying a black leather doctor's bag – where all the mysterious tools and potions were kept. He would knock gently on the door.

As you opened the door, his genuine smile gave you the feeling that you were old friends. It was a soothing smile that gave the comfort that help had arrived. You were glad to see him, and he gave the feeling that he was glad to see you, too.

After the brief ice-breaking ceremony, he would ask to be taken to the patient. Now, the bedside manner would begin. Upon greeting the patient, he would either pull up a chair next to the bed or sit on the edge of the bed. He tried to be eye to eye with the patient, never looking down.

Projecting concern

He would ask the patient questions like: How are you feeling? How long have you felt this way? Have you felt this before? Where does it hurt? He

would listen intently, even though he had heard it all before. He understood that patients had a need to tell their story and share their pain. His warm smile projected a sense of gentility, warmth and caring to all the others in the room.

He would then place his hand on the patient's forehead. But now, his facial expression would change from a smile to an expression of concern. He was now in his diagnostic phase. He opened his bag and carefully removed a thermometer from its wrapping. He held it between his thumb and his fingertips. Then, he shook it vigorously with a few quick snaps of the wrist. He then placed the thermometer beneath the patient's tongue – the testing phase had begun.

Others in the room would watch intently as

The old-time doctors knew how to fix the customer, and they embodied the soft skills we must embody on every service call. The only difference between what you do today and what the old-fashioned doctors did is on the technical side. Different hard skills, but the same required soft skills.

this important person displayed his craft. Almost in a trance, they watched every move, noticing every facial expression, trying to get a feeling for what he was thinking. Everyone knew he had studied a lifetime to acquire those skills. They were all trying to read his mind.

He would take the patient's pulse as he studied the second hand on his wristwatch. He would remove the thermometer, hold it up to the light, and gaze at it with a serious and determined look. His eyebrows would go up, ever so slightly, and everyone in the room would gasp at the hidden meaning.

Careful words

Then he carefully wiped the thermometer, preparing it for its return to the dark corners of his mysterious bag. You knew that all the while he was formulating his opinion. He was getting ready to tell everyone his diagnosis. You would wait with patience and nervousness all at the same time. You hung on his every word.

Before uttering his carefully chosen words, he would lean closer to the patient and say something like, “You'll be fine, everything will be OK. I'll make sure of it.” The patient would smile, and everyone would feel as though a great weight was lifted.

Peter Morici is a business coach and sales trainer based in Shelby Township, Mich., providing resources specifically for the service-contracting community. Readers may direct inquiries to his Web site at www.DrainBiz.blogspot.com.



Now began the consultation phase. He would make notes and sometimes write a prescription. But, he would always explain what he observed and what he believed to be the cause of the symptom. He talked so everyone could understand.

He would tell you what the next step was, and if there was anything you had to watch out for. He would say, “Call me right away if anything gets worse” or “Call me if the pain doesn't go away.”

You always got the feeling that he was there to watch over everyone. He was the family's protector. He was on your side and right there if you needed him.

Those doctors were masters at dispelling our fears, even under the worst conditions. That was very comforting. Sometimes he would collect his

fee, and other times he would bill you. But rarely did anyone ever question the cost of his visits, because the perception of the value of what he delivered far outweighed the money.

The same basic skills

There was a genuine sense of value for his services. Price was never an issue. He had an image that commanded respect. He had warmth about him that made you feel safe in his care. He calmed your fears.

The old-time doctors knew how to fix the customer, and they embodied the soft skills we must embody on every service call. The only difference between what you do today and what the old-fashioned doctors did is on the technical side. Different hard skills, but the same required soft skills. The formula is always the same. The formula is always consistent.

The next time you're in a customer's home to diagnose a problem, remember the doctors of yesterday. Make your customers feel the way they made their customers feel. And develop a bedside manner that makes them hang on your every word. ■

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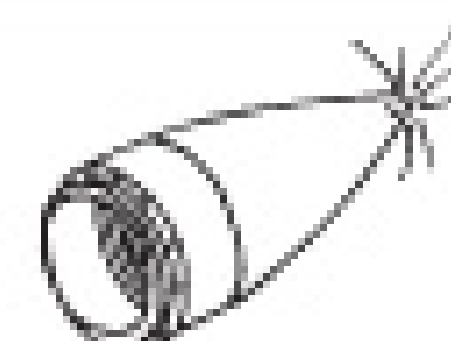
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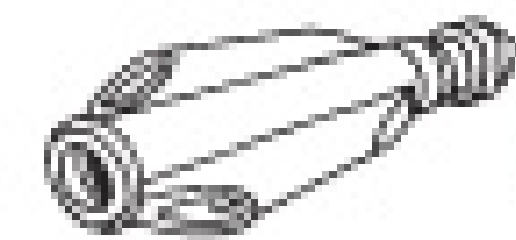
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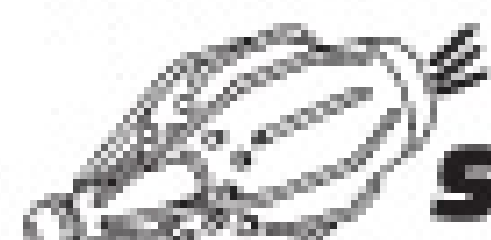
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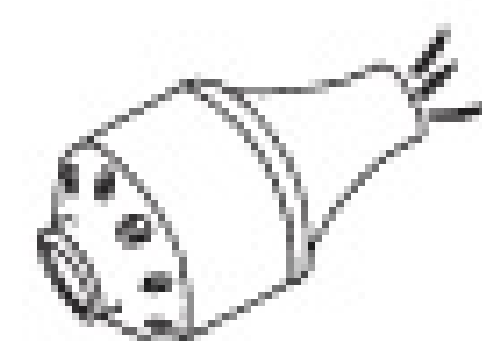
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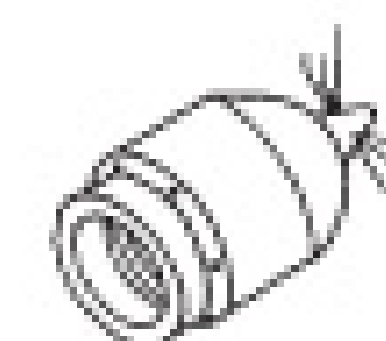


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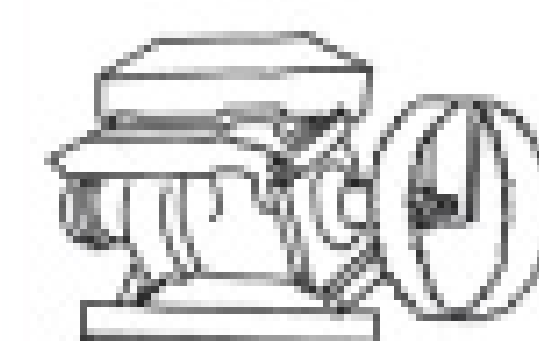


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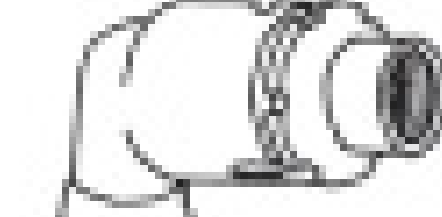
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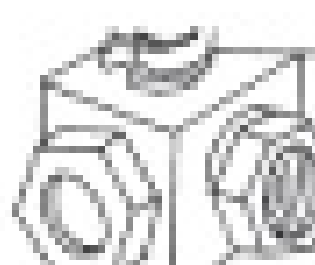
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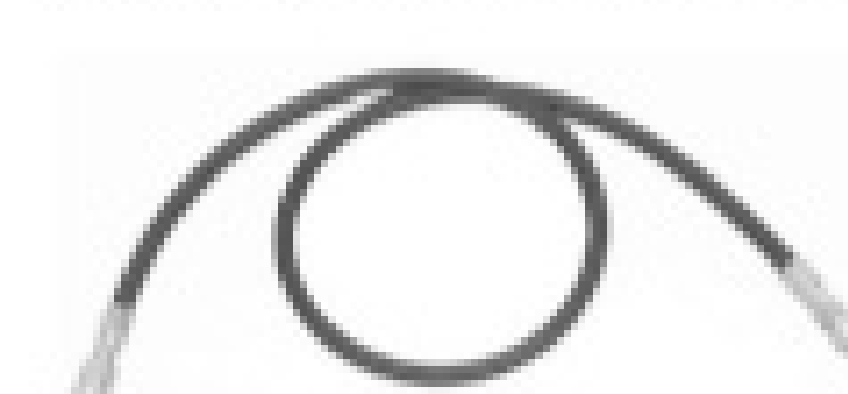
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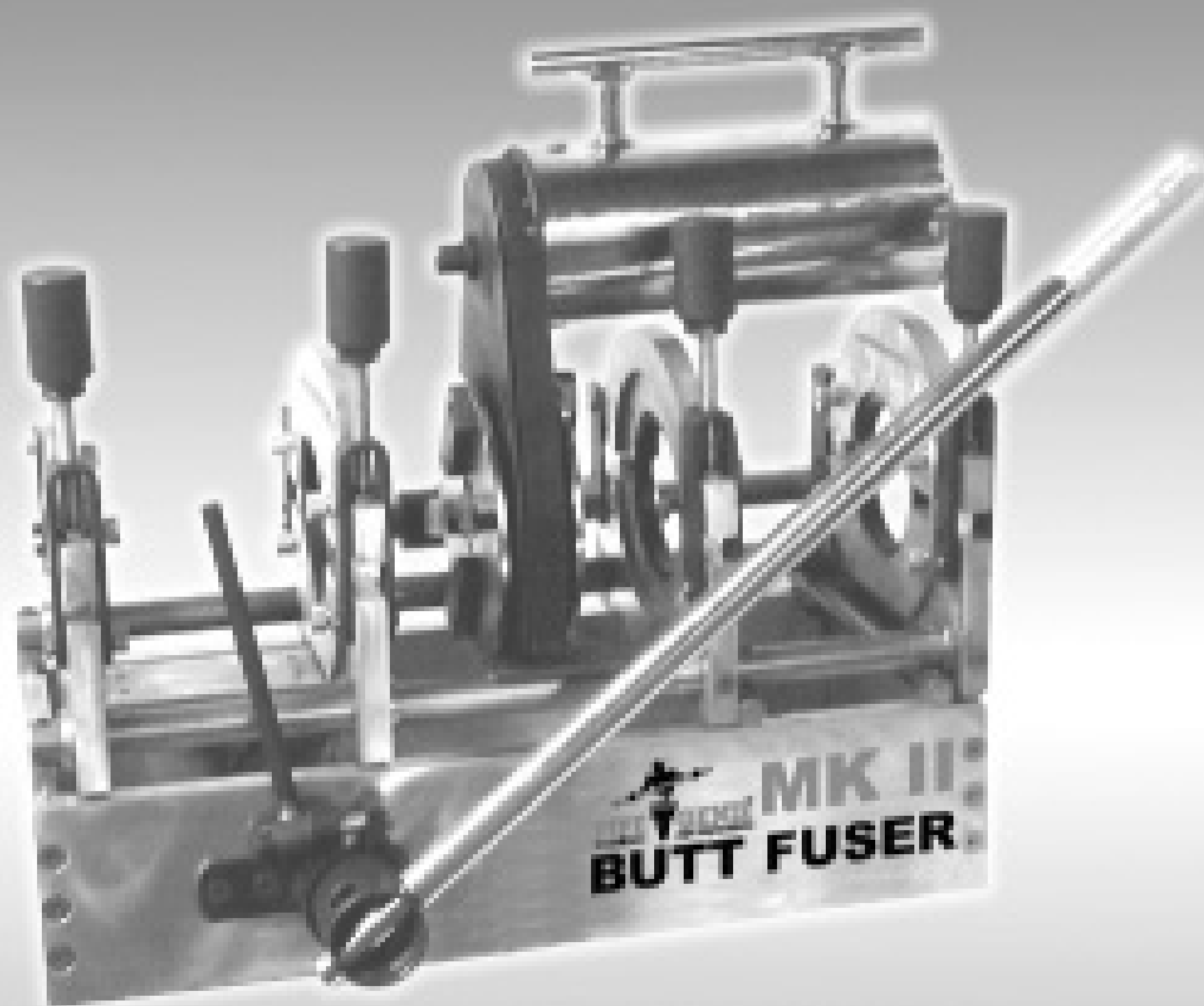


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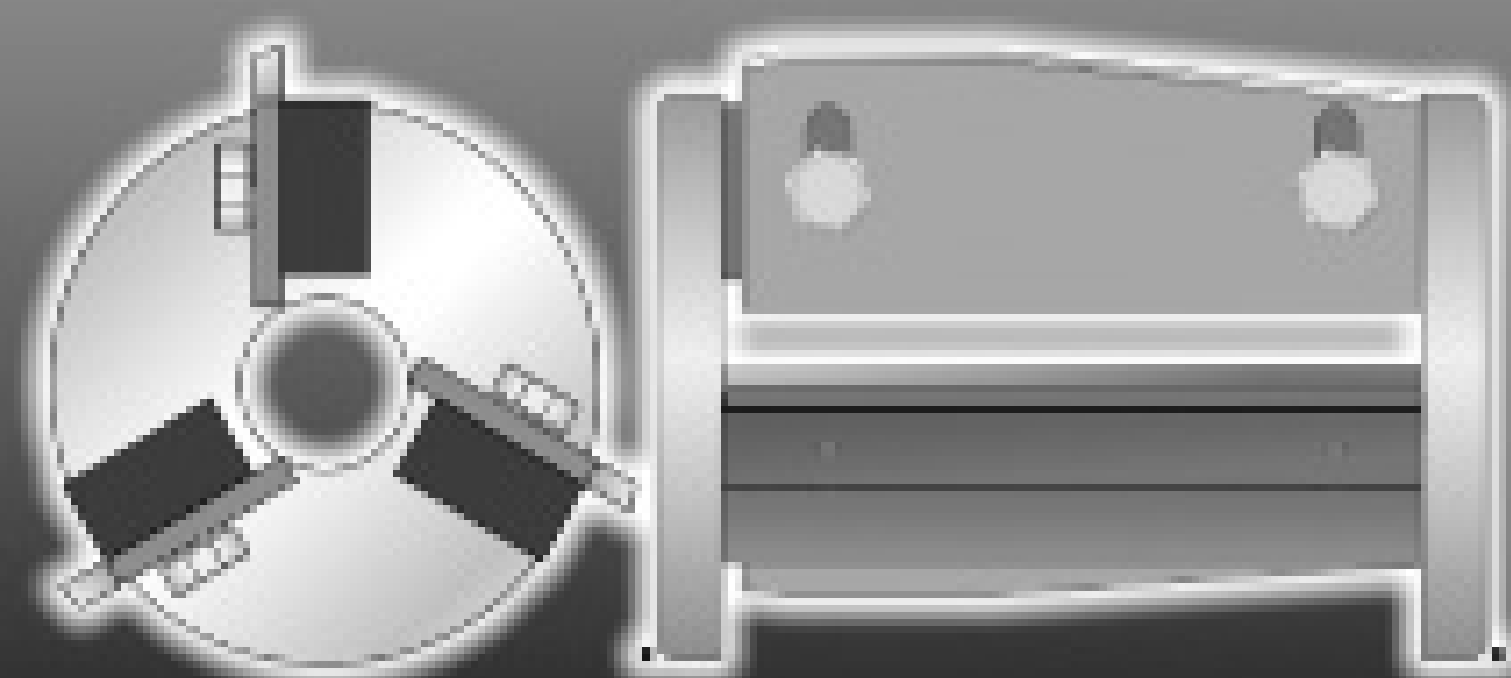
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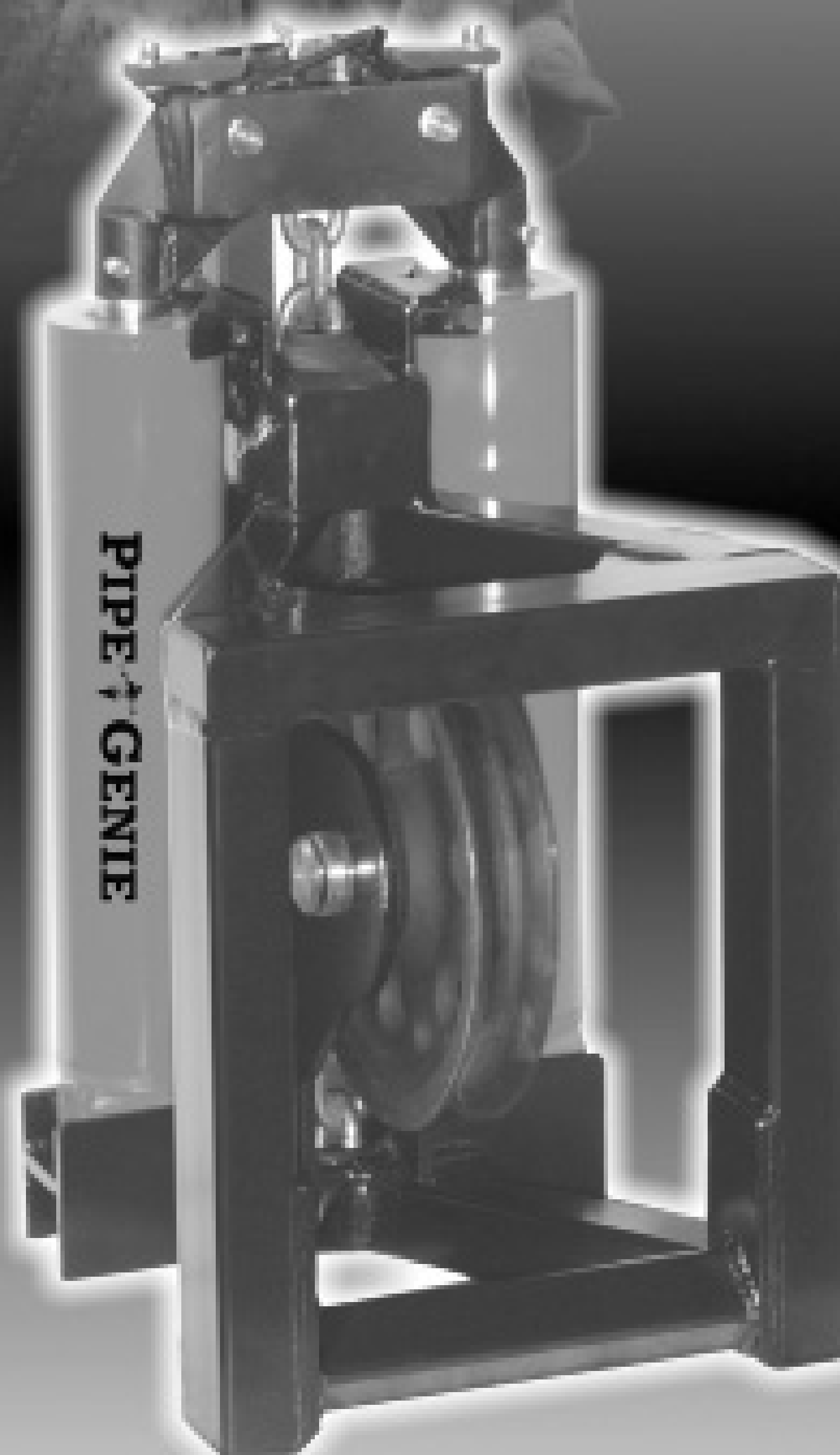
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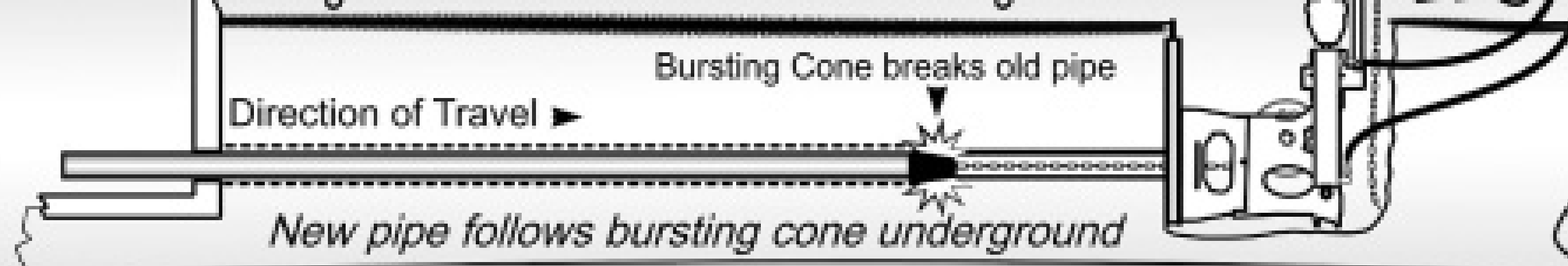
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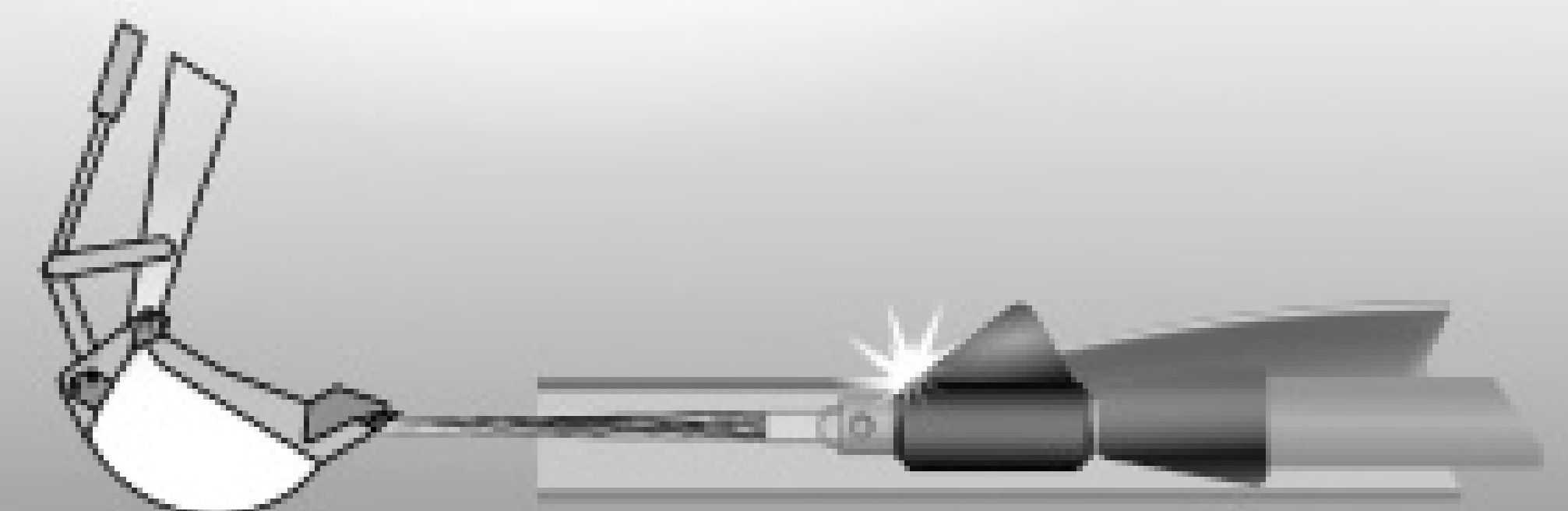


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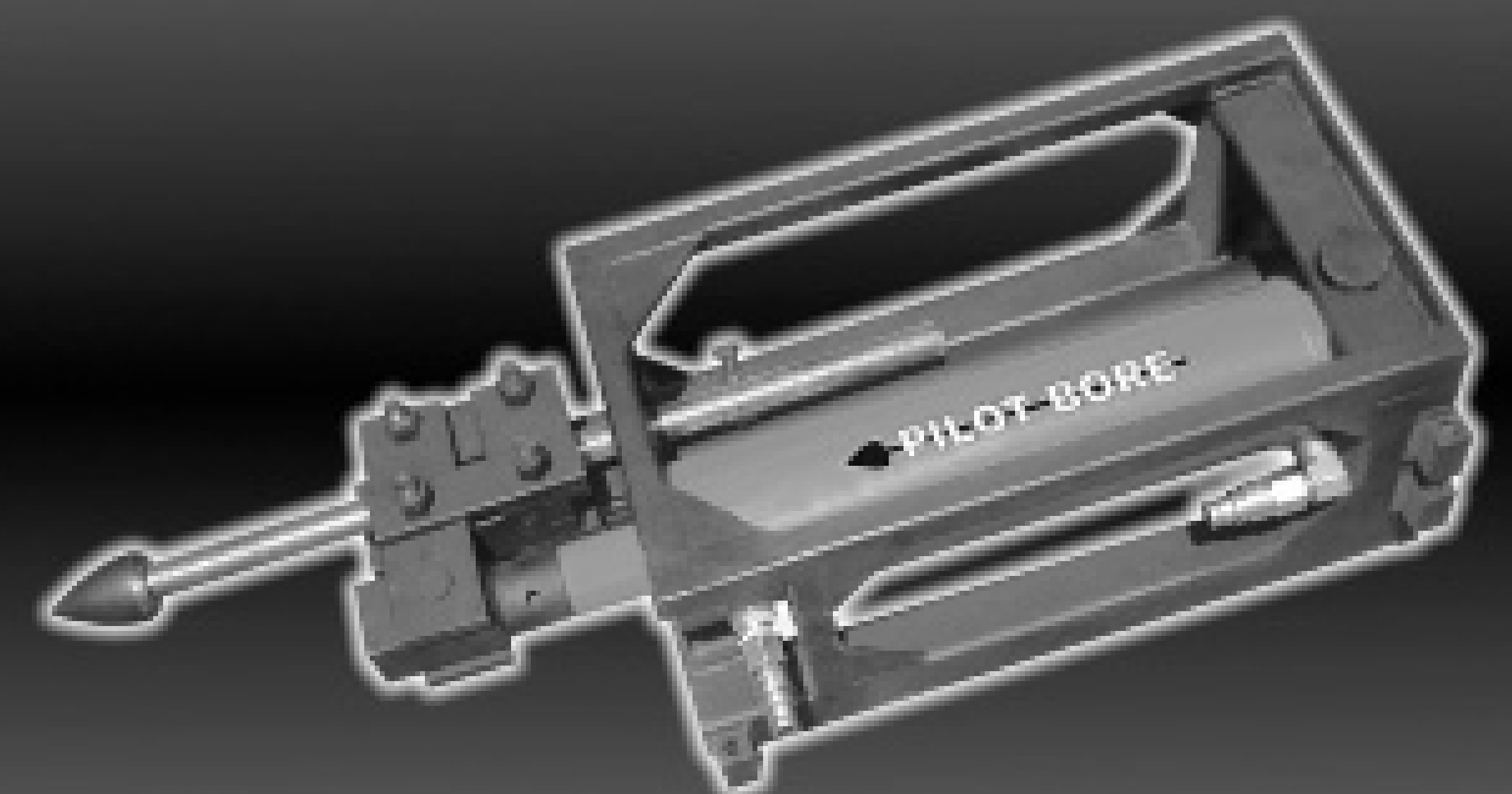


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Jose Ortiz (left) and Antonio Lopez of BioRemedies hydrojet a storm drain to prepare it for the next rainfall. (Photography by Christ Chavez)

COVER
STORY

Micro to Macro

BioRemedies expands from grease-trap bacteria sales to pipeline diagnostics and rehabilitation in and around El Paso, Texas

By Mary Shafer

Under Jerry Fannon's guidance, BioRemedies of El Paso, Texas, has leveraged improving technology to evolve into a regional powerhouse.

Despite a market riddled with unlicensed competition, the company has evolved from a waste line treatment retailer into a full-blown line rehabilitator since Fannon joined the firm 14 years ago. He has taken an active role in business development since his first day, and he continues to assume a larger role in management each year.

Owners Pam and Lloyd Fannon have trusted their sons with moving their company in the right direction, and it has paid off. "My parents have been good about letting me learn by taking risks," says Jerry Fannon, general manager of the firm. "If I said I could do something, they let me do it. That's why we're where we are today – out there with major contracting companies for big customers – because we moved the business forward and diversified into

new technology.

"But we've approached it with a balanced head," Fannon says. "There have been jobs we've walked away from because they were too big or complex, or simply couldn't be completed correctly with what we do. My brothers and I have had leeway to grow, but we've done it responsibly.

"Our youngest brother, Steve, runs our operations in Tucson, Ariz. His focus is mainly on providing our

services to larger plumbing contractors and commercial entities such as supermarkets, restaurants, property management companies and hospitals. While the majority of his work is in and around Tucson, he does spend a lot of time in Phoenix. His diagnostic and problem-solving skills are among our greatest assets."

Technology matters

As the name implies, the company started out in packaged bacteria system sales, under one of the Fannons' other sons, Ken. The company installed pumps on restaurant walls with timers that released bacteria into the drain system to keep grease trap lines clean. The system was sold

PROFILE

BIOREMEDIES, EL PASO, TEXAS

OWNERS:	Pam and Lloyd Fannon
FOUNDED:	1991
EMPLOYEES:	14
SERVICE AREA:	El Paso, Texas; Tucson and Phoenix, Ariz.
SPECIALTIES:	Sewer and drain cleaning, diagnostics and rehabilitation
WEB SITE:	www.bioremedies.net





BioRemedies owners Lloyd and Pam Fannon (front row right) stand with their team and the company's fleet of service vehicles outside headquarters in El Paso, Texas.

via maintenance contracts, and BioRemedies warranted the operability of the lines.

Jerry Fannon joined the business in 1993 and noticed a climbing rate of profit-busting warranty service calls. "We used a snake and a little bitty jetter to clear them," he recalls. He took a look at how the systems were working to see if he could improve results, for customers and for the company.

"I realized the bacteria wasn't eliminating the grease fast enough,

Mini to mighty

Slowly, the company's foundation evolved toward regular cleaning contracts, though bacteria has remained part of the mix. The firm still uses it on monthly programs, cleaning and direct shocking lines in larger restaurants.

The evolution has led to a running debate between Fannon and his father about whether to change the business name. "It doesn't really reflect what we do anymore," argues Lloyd Fannon.

"But it's still part of what we do,"

"My parents have been good about letting me learn by taking risks. If I said I could do something, they let me do it. That's why we're where we are today – because we moved the business forward and diversified into new technology."

Jerry Fannon

so I suggested that we also shock treat each individual drain to distribute the bacteria more evenly through the system," he says. "It worked, allowing the company to replace the pumps with manual monthly treatments."

In the mid-1990s, the company was considering building a grease-processing plant. A colleague asked Fannon to go with him to the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo, and it was there that he saw inspection cameras. He dropped the processing plant idea and decided simply to expand the services the company already offered. "We got a bigger snake, then a bigger jetter, and a camera. Each year, we'd add something new," Fannon says.

his son counters, "and we have a lot of commercial currency with that name now." The decision: "We're sticking with the name as it is," Jerry Fannon says. "People know it and we don't want to scare anyone off."

BioRemedies now tackles bigger jobs with larger equipment, concentrating on pipeline inspection, diagnostics and rehabilitation. "The things we've added are pipe lining and pipe bursting, and a crawler camera," Fannon says. "It's really taken us into a different realm, where we're a lot more reputable when we walk onto a jobsite."

The camera outfit includes two Plumber's Elite cameras from Ratech Electronics Ltd., one with 200 feet of cable and the other with 400 feet.

The company also has a SeeSnake self-leveling camera and two SeeSnake Micro models from RIDGID, and a Saturn III crawler from Aries Industries, Inc.

The vehicle fleet includes nine Ford vehicles, including three Econoline vans, an E350 service body van, a Ford F350 truck, four full-size pickups, and one compact

pickup. Waterjetting equipment includes a 2006 Ford cab-over truck with a built-in US Jetting 4018 jetter, a US Jetting 4018 trailer-mounted jetter, a 1998 Sniper 4018 jetter from Sewer Equipment Co. of America, and a Spartan 758 trailer jetter.

Skills and training

All that equipment helps the company tackle a wide range of cleaning jobs in a competitive market. In May 2004, Texas legislation was revised to define a drain cleaner as "an individual who has completed at least 4,000 hours working under the supervision of a master plumber." BioRemedies signed on a master plumber to cover the new requirement.

"That's how we got into pipe lining and bursting," Jerry Fannon explains. "It was no longer cost-effective to give that repair work away. So we can legally do that now, too. All of our guys are progressing toward their licenses. I received my master license in 2007."

Poor regulation has been a constant source of irritation to the Fannons and other plumbers who

ON THE BLEEDING EDGE

BioRemedies started out small and grew carefully as the business expanded into trenchless pipe rehabilitation.

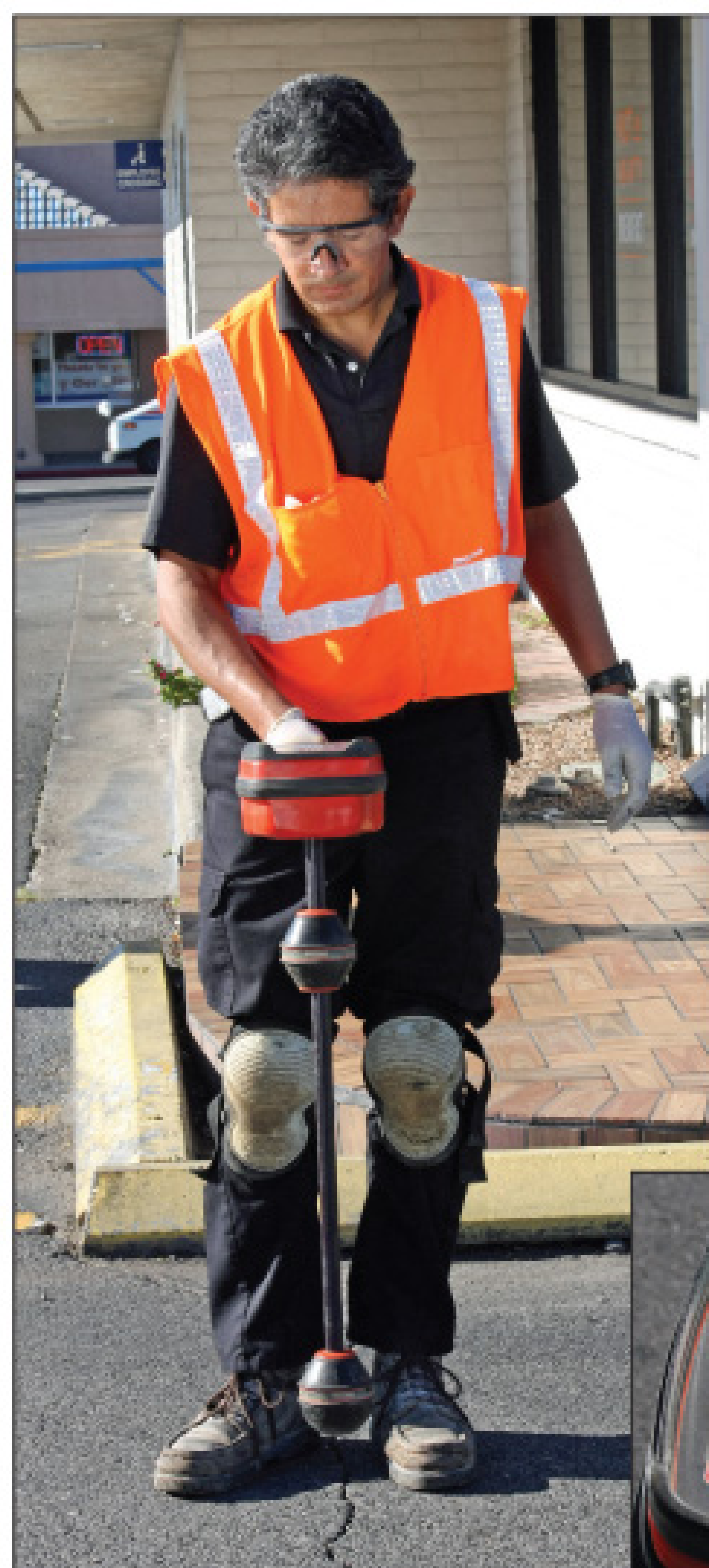
"Before more firms offered trenchless repair in our region, we had to be inventive, because that was when we were first doing this kind of work and didn't have any experience with it," recalls Jerry Fannon, general manager.

"We got called to do a pipe-lining job for a hospital about six or seven hours away. We couldn't burst the pipes without a costly and time-consuming certified removal, because the flooring had asbestos in the mastic," he says. "They couldn't dig up all the places where the connections were because the collapsed pipe ran beneath the X-ray and CT scan labs, so we chose to line."

"We cleaned it first to remove the scale, so the new lining wouldn't warp. As we were doing that, the snake broke through the pipe and got stuck under the soil beneath the CT machine. We dug under it and made a spot repair with the Perma-Liner sectional point repair system."

All the laterals still had to be taken out with the robotic drill, and the only access the workers had was through a manhole 150 feet downline. "I couldn't see what I was doing 400 feet away," says Fannon. "We ended up having to set up a radio frequency signal network to patch the video signal back there, which did work. That was a crazy job, a new technology with new users. It was pretty stressful."

"Since then, we've done a lot bigger projects, and we have more experience. The key is prep work, prep work, prep work. Once you mix that resin, you'd better have everything ready to go. That knowledge comes with experience and training. We've actually dug a hole in our parking lot to train our guys in real conditions before they make it to the jobsite. Consequently, we've never had a relining job failure."



Technician Jose Ortiz uses a NAVITRACK line locator from RIDGID to locate a broken drain line. Information provided by the locator makes estimates and repairs easier. Inset below: The locator's data screen.



as drain cleaners.

"I've moved almost exclusively into sales myself, bidding and marketing – running the business – and I only have three guys I could send on certain diagnostic jobs without supervision," he says. "That makes growth a limited venture, because of the time it takes to train the guys and just expose them to all the possible situations."

operate inside the law. A border town, El Paso receives a steady cross-border influx of laborers willing to work cheaply and under less-than-ideal conditions.

"In general, everybody around here has a cousin who knows how to install a water heater or unclog a drain," Fannon says. "This illegal competition – the guy who drops off his kids at school, then loads up his van with a drain snake or monkey wrench – makes customers think legitimate companies like ours are ripping them off. If the economy goes south, these illegal operators will become more of a problem."

This provides an added challenge on top of the age-old labor problem. "Finding anybody qualified or experienced is impossible," says Jerry Fannon, "which is what led me to do my own training. I never hire plumbers. I hire guys who don't have any bad habits, and train them my way. My guys are all registered as plumber's apprentices, and after two years, they can be registered

Trenchless pioneer

Jerry Fannon says it's difficult to offer trenchless pipe repair and rehabilitation as a competitive service because so much cheap manual labor is available. Though BioRemedies has been a pioneer in trenchless in its region, until now Fannon has only used it for jobs where digging was impossible. Still, he foresees growth in that area coming from a different approach to selling the work.

"We're trying to make our trenchless work rate competitive by marketing in areas where people have some money and want to keep their neighborhoods nice," Fannon says. "It's a challenge because we're in the desert, so municipalities are encouraging xeriscaping, which means using native plants that grow well in dry areas. Residentially, there aren't a whole lot of manicured lawns, so no one is trying to protect their yards. If there are buried pipes, it's no problem to just dig a trench.

"Residential customers find the cost of pipe bursting and relining prohibitive, so we're getting most of that work from commercial companies and municipalities," he says. "Still, we try to use it on select jobs for another reason: The maintenance contracts are covered work, but sometimes it's more of a public relations issue. It helps keep the customer happy, while still allowing us to solve the problem."

He explains the value of regular maintenance and tries to get the customer on a contract customized to the location's needs and budget. "I make it a short introduction, leave them with food for thought and make a scheduled appointment to come back later, when they're not busy," he says. "They appreciate that."

"The key is this face-to-face contact. I don't like faxing bids or pro-

"The key is this face-to-face contact. I don't like faxing bids or proposals. It's harder for a person to tell me no to my face. Unless we're dealing with larger contractors that require certain types of bid formats, we almost always deliver our bids in person."

Jerry Fannon

Jerry Fannon believes the more his company can demonstrate the positive applications of trenchless, the more demand will grow. He's also confident that such work is helping cement BioRemedies' position as a leader. "We only have one franchise operator that has the same equipment we do, and no one else here offers any kind of maintenance contract like ours," he says.

Another thing that sets BioRemedies apart is that "We're not second- or third-generation plumbers, so we still think about things from the customer's point of view. We don't just tell them, 'This is the way it is.' I try to explain the problem, what the options are, and make recommendations," Fannon says.

"I want them to feel comfortable and that they're being treated with respect. A lot of companies talk about image, but we take it one step further. We've left money on the table before, and offered to tear up invoices to prove that we've done only the work that needed to be done. The upshot is we end up not usually having to compete on our bids. Our reputation precedes us."

Getting the work

That reputation is the main springboard to new jobs. "We don't do marketing, other than having our trucks lettered and having our crews wear branded shirts and caps," Fannon says. "Mostly, I just drive over to restaurants, introduce myself to the managers, and let them know what we do."

posals. It's harder for a person to tell me no to my face. Unless we're dealing with larger contractors that require certain types of bid formats, we almost always deliver our bids in person."

In a rapidly evolving industry dominated by technology, BioRemedies offers a hopeful story that proves slow and steady with a personal touch can still win the race. ■

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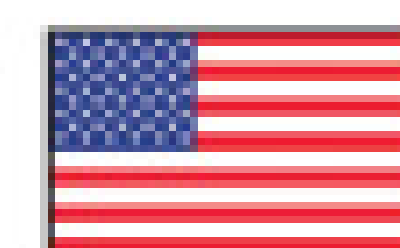
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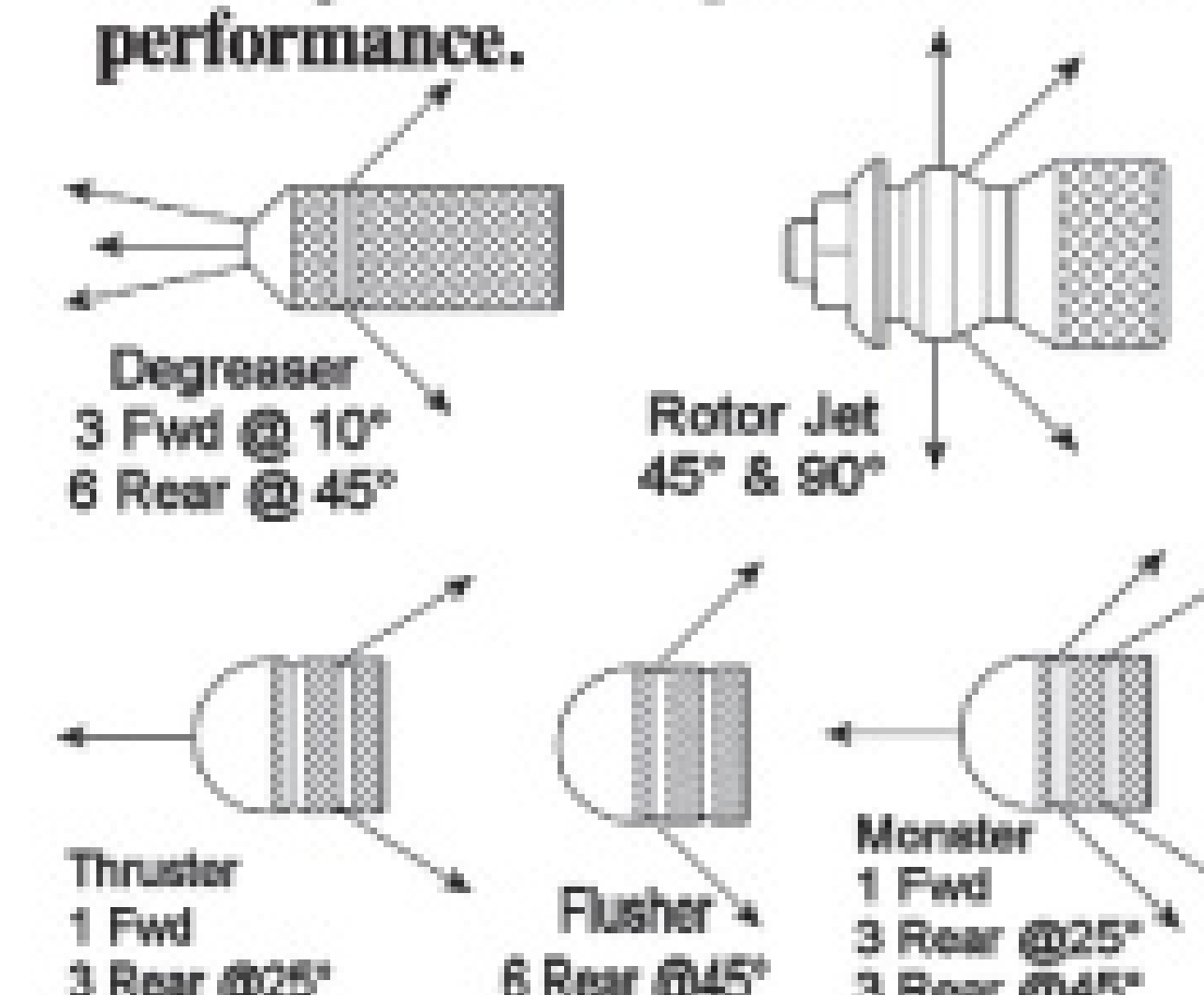
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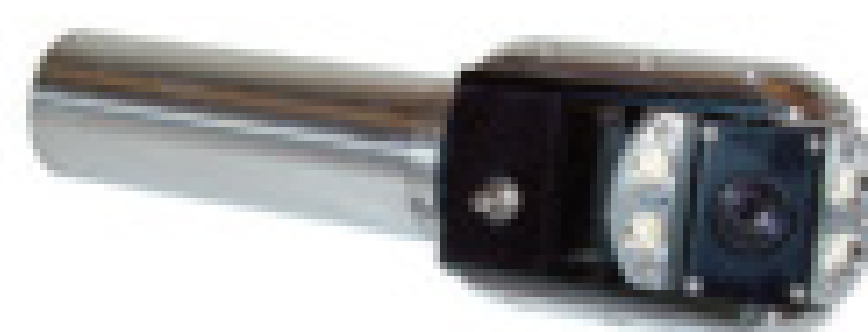
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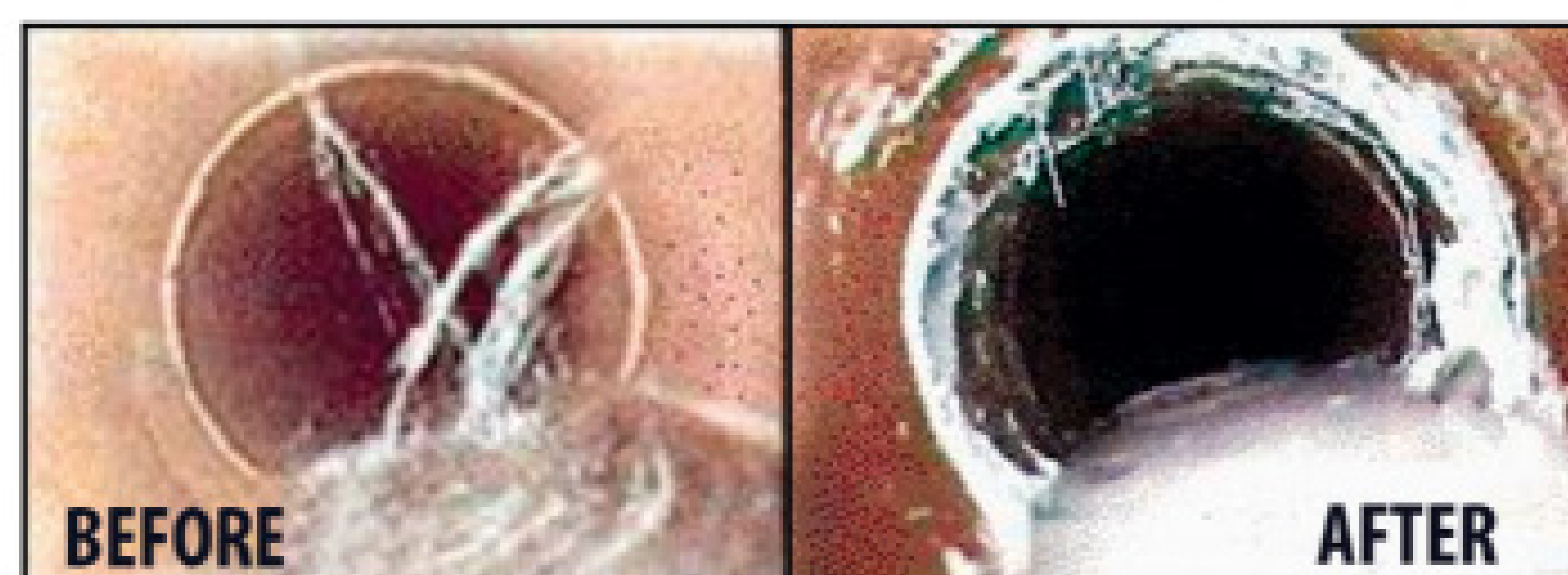
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Young Company, Old-Time Values

Whether clearing roots, lining pipes or jetting drains, A Rooter Pros thrives on a business approach that treats every customer as important

By Mary Shafer

There's something to be said for clarity of vision. Brian Rivera, in his early 30s, has always known what he wanted to do, and how. That single-mindedness has brought him a thriving drain-cleaning and plumbing business in Hillside, N.J.

A high regard for customer satisfaction, combined with a solid training and an early-adopter mentality, has placed A Rooter Pros in a strong position. Sewer and drain cleaning and repair account for 80 percent of annual revenue. That includes chemical and mechanical root control for commercial and residential customers.

Commercial work in apartments, office buildings and restaurants makes up about 60 percent of total business, and the rest is residential.

A firm foundation

In high school and for several years after, Rivera served the equivalent of a plumbing apprenticeship with a business in Cicero, Ill., owned by his uncle and brother. He enjoyed the work. "It was problem-solving," he recalls. "Some of the systems and installation techniques in the old houses in Chicago were more complex, so I learned on the tough stuff."

Rivera found himself missing home, so in 2004 he moved back to New Jersey and worked for several contractors. After a year, he found he had the chops to work for himself. "I wanted to be able to decide when a job was really done," he says. "I like

to make sure everything is done right and to spend the time it takes with each person."

"You meet some really great people (at the Expo) and bounce ideas off each other. You might not get another chance to talk with someone who runs a multimillion-dollar company and benefit from everything he's learned."

Brian Rivera

Rivera believes customer interaction is at least half of what makes a successful business. "Customer time is as important as the time spent in the pipes," he says. "Usually, in an emergency, people are frustrated, they're annoyed, their personal effects are being damaged. You need to guide them through that situation, and lots of times that just means being a good listener."

"My job is to be an advocate for customer concerns," he says. "Even if the information they want to share is



Crew members perform a video inspection prior to liner installation. (Photography by Ed Marciante)

irrelevant, people don't want to be dismissed. They want to be part of the process. I listen, then explain the situation in a simple, understandable way. I ask afterward if they understand, and only then do we move on to the next step."

Due process

Rivera says it's critical to learn the history of a house or building. "If they've lived or worked there for years, it's important to ask them about the nuances, like if water comes up the drain while they do laundry, or sinks make funny noises," he says.

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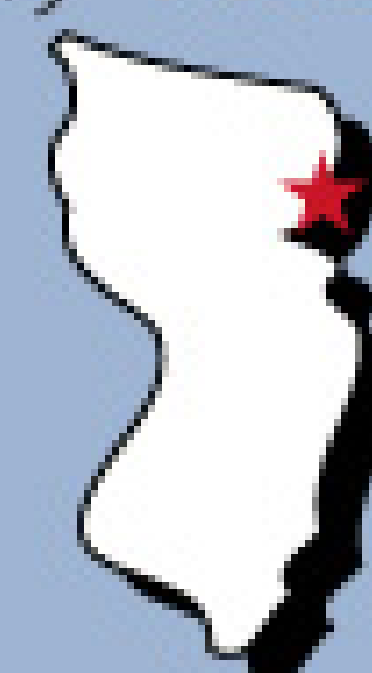
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“In the long run, these permanent repairs will save my customers money. But sometimes they just can’t afford it, so I always give them the option of going on a regular maintenance program.”

Brian Rivera

“They’ll know these things.”

His experience is that getting customers to concentrate on such details also settles them down. “We decide together how to handle it. When we’re done, I let them know how to prevent more of the same problem. I write down recommendations if I feel we need to do a video inspection or any other costlier services.

“I tell them if something needs immediate attention, but I don’t take a forceful approach,” Rivera says. “Most of the time, they go ahead and have the repair done, and they end up thanking me for letting them know about it. They’re expecting the worst possible news, and being given the option to wait gives them a comfort level.”

One tactic A Rooter Pros uses to engender confidence is tailoring solutions for commercial customers. For hydrojetting work, Rivera offers clients a service contract. “We explain that sewer lines are often the most overlooked area where problems can happen, and that preventive maintenance is the way to avoid real problems,” he says.

He prescribes the appropriate level of maintenance each firm needs, whether quarterly or twice per year. His crews will also work at night or early in the morning if the customer wishes. “It’s our job to accommodate

them as much as humanly possible,” he says. “We don’t want to shut down their operations unnecessarily. If they’re not making money, I’m not making money.”

Technology makes the difference

Rivera credits technology as a large success factor. “The video cameras and trenchless technology have to be our biggest time-savers and selling points,” he says “I’m always looking for the next thing that will help me do less damage, or make our jobs easier and faster.”

Root control is a common remedy for backups and the company offers a few options. “If they’re looking for a maintenance or temporary solution, we come out and hydrojet the line with different heads, or snake it, if need be,” Rivera says. “Then we’ll use chemical treatment, depending on the severity of the problem and the customer’s budget. That will maintain a line, but it won’t open it up if it’s heavily clogged.”

Small, springy roots respond to chemical treatment, but larger ones need mechanical persuasion. “If we pull back root when we snake out the line, we’ll get the camera in there to see how bad it is and decide how we want to take care of it,” Rivera says. Sometimes the next step is to use a jetter with a cutting tool.

When the line is damaged beyond salvation, A Rooter Pros offers a more permanent solution. “We’ll explain to the customer why it’s not a simple root-removal job anymore,” Rivera says. “We’ll camera the line and show them what they need is repair or replacement of a given section. No one wants to hear they’re facing that kind of expense, but there’s no arguing with the camera.”

Rivera will line the damaged pipe if possible. If not, he’ll excavate and replace. “In the long run, these permanent repairs will save my customers money,” he says. “But sometimes they just can’t afford it, so I always give them the option of going on a regular maintenance program.



Arnaldo Clavero and Elfego Dominguez with the inversion unit and liner supplies.



A Rooter Pros owner Brian Rivera hooks up the inversion unit for lining.

HEAVENLY SOLUTION

Brian Rivera leans heavily on his trenchless lining system for spot repairs. “Our customers love the trenchless ability,” he says. “They really appreciate us being able to complete a project without ripping up their property.”

One such job for A Rooter Pros was at a nursing home experiencing constant backups in the kitchen. The culprit was a 4-inch cast iron line with trench rot. “That’s when I was really glad we offer pipe relining,” recalls Rivera. “One hundred and twenty feet of the broken line ran right through their dining hall.”

Next to the dining hall was a chapel, unused at the time. “We got to a piece of pipe in the chapel and made a small excavation there,” says Rivera. “From there, we shot the liner through the dining hall section, and it came out beautifully.”

Another customer had Orangeburg pipe alongside her house. The original sewer line ran from the back of the house, alongside the dwelling, and then in front of it out to the street. “We rerouted it to run directly out the front of the house, then lined from there out to the street,” Rivera recalls. He estimates the homeowner saved thousands of dollars.

Another trenchless application is in apartment building projects. “We got a call to one that’s kept really immaculate,” Rivera says. “It has marble hallway flooring. The owner was thrilled not to have his floors dug up.”

The trenchless process allows A Rooter Pros to complete large jobs in stages so no part of the building is shut down for long periods. “We also work during the day when most people are away at work, so it’s least disruptive for them,” Rivera says.

"I'll lay it out, explaining how often we'd come out for regular maintenance and what that would cost, letting them know that eventually they'll almost surely have to do a major repair or replacement. This gives them some time to budget for that without being up against a wall right now," Rivera says. "Others just want to get it over with and opt for the big job."

Technology of choice

Rivera is unequivocal in his embrace of trenchless technology. "Some people just don't want to invest in the equipment, but it pays off in the long run," he says. "It's really a customer relations tool."

He shopped extensively before settling on Global Pipeline Systems, a cured-in-place pipe repair that uses epoxy resin to impregnate a felt liner. It is designed for 2- to 10-inch lines.

"We were impressed with its versatility," Rivera says. "We did an 8-inch steam line repair that had been quoted using traditional means at \$30,000, and we were able to do it for \$17,000. Better yet, we avoided having to take out a big tree that would have had to come out using traditional excavation."

The company's other tools include a Model 4018 trailer jetter from US Jetting Inc.; SeeSnake color camera and black-and-white camera from RIDGID; two GatorCam push



Arnaldo Clavero assists other A Rooter Pros team members as they prepare for liner installation on a lateral.



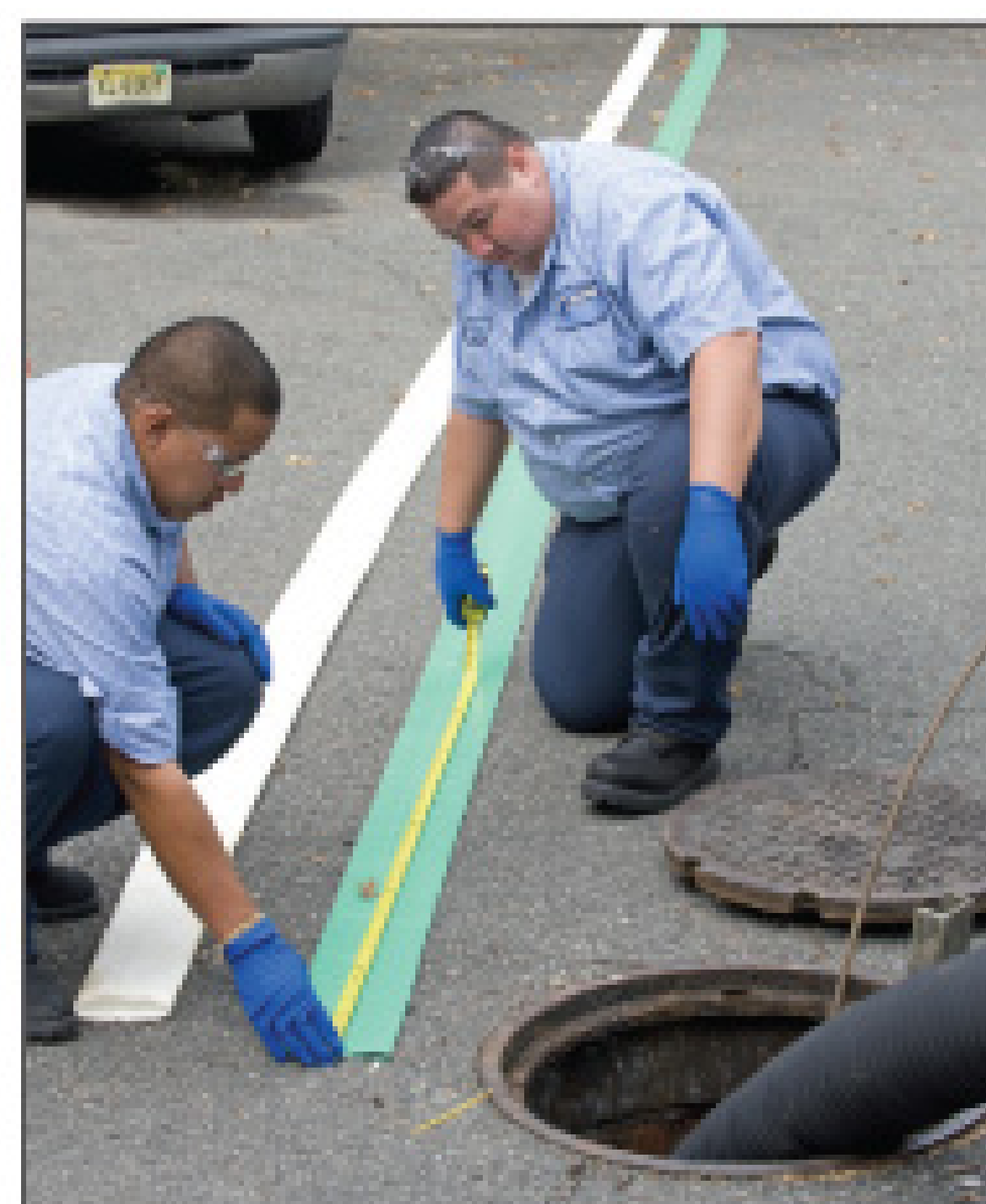
A portion of the 4-inch cast-iron pipe that experienced frequent root intrusions due to age and condition. A Rooter Pros installed a liner in the cast-iron lateral to prevent future intrusions.

Rivera believes his approach to customers has built a solid reputation for A Rooter Pros. "You make sure you serve each customer with the individual time they need," he says. "It's hard not to have the mentality of just taking care of what you're doing and hurrying on to the next job. But I tell the guys to treat each customer like they're your only one for the day, and make sure they're happy when you leave."

Overall, Rivera sees a bright outlook for cleaning contractors. "I see guys out there who are really making a difference and pushing us all forward," he says. "The technology is really pushing the envelope. I think it's growing the industry as a whole. Times may be slow now, but I think we're going to bounce back and overall, we're still moving this field forward every year." ■

"Customer time is as important as the time spent in the pipes. Usually, in an emergency, people are frustrated, they're annoyed, their personal effects are being damaged. You need to guide them through that situation, and lots of times that just means being a good listener."

Brian Rivera



From left, Roberto Orozco and Brian Rivera measure liner materials for the start of a job.

camera systems from Radiodetection; three Model 300 sewer rooters for 3- to 6-inch lines from Spartan Tool LLC; three Model 100 sewer rooters for 1.5- to 2-inch lines from Spartan; and a sectional cable machine from Electric Eel Manufacturing Inc. Service vehicles include a 2002 GMC box truck with body by Hackney, a 2002 Chevrolet Express van, a 1998 Dodge Ram van, and a 1998 Ford F250 pickup truck.

Success is contagious

Rivera backs up technology with information. He attends the Pumper & Cleaner Expo, in part for networking.

"You meet some really great people there and bounce ideas off each other," he says. "You might not get another chance to talk with someone who runs a multi million-dollar company and benefit from everything he's learned."

"I talk to successful business people and I ask them what they're doing that works," Rivera explains. "It's great not to have to go through problems someone else has already solved. We're all trying to make a living, and there's no reason we can't all work together to help each other. I try to be a sponge, soaking up whatever successful people have to tell me."

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Since the North American Association of Pipeline Inspectors (NAAPI) ceased operations in September, NASSCO's Pipeline Assessment and Certification Program (PACP) has been positioned as the new standard for North America.

Upon closing its doors, NAAPI referred its members to NASSCO for operator training and certification. Under PACP, operators do not need to be recertified. A QA/QC program within PACP allows contractors and municipalities to monitor the accuracy of each technician and require further training if indicated.

In June, Canada's Center for Expertise and Research on Infrastructures in Urban Areas established PACP as its industry standard.

Aries Presents Grout Boot Camp VI

Aries Industries Inc. will present Grout Boot Camp VI, Jan. 13-15, at the Aries Industries Service Center, 1441 S.W. 10th Ave., Unit 202, Pompano Beach, Fla. Featuring training for sewer grouting inspectors and operators of test and sealing systems, the seminar will be led by Dick Schantz, with special training by Avanti, deNeff and Logiball. Technical overview will include understanding sewer lines and infiltration, test and seal system components, component maintenance and repair, lateral and main line packer operation, mixing and optimizing acrylamide grout, urethane grout application, and ASTM and NASSCO test and seal standards. For more information, contact Tina Marrese at 800/234-7205, ext. 1415.

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Trailers from Spartan Tool LLC have passed the National Association of Trailer Manufacturers' voluntary safety-compliance inspection program. Based on NATM's "Guidelines for Recommended Minimum Manufacturing Practices for Light and Medium Duty Trailers," requirements include a compilation of federal safety standards and regulations, as well as industry best practices governing trailer construction.

RIDGID Releases Product Catalog

The latest 234-page product catalog from RIDGID features a variety of new products and expanded product information. Helpful tool tips are located throughout. To obtain a copy, call 800/769-7743 or visit www.ridgid.com.

Magazine Recognizes Mr. Rooter in Top 200

Mr. Rooter Corp. ranks No. 160 in *Franchise Times* magazine's Top 200. Mr. Rooter, with its 348 franchises, had \$311 million in worldwide sales, moving up five positions from last year.

Mr. Manhole Opens Distribution and Training Center

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Amazing Machinery Expands Equipment Line

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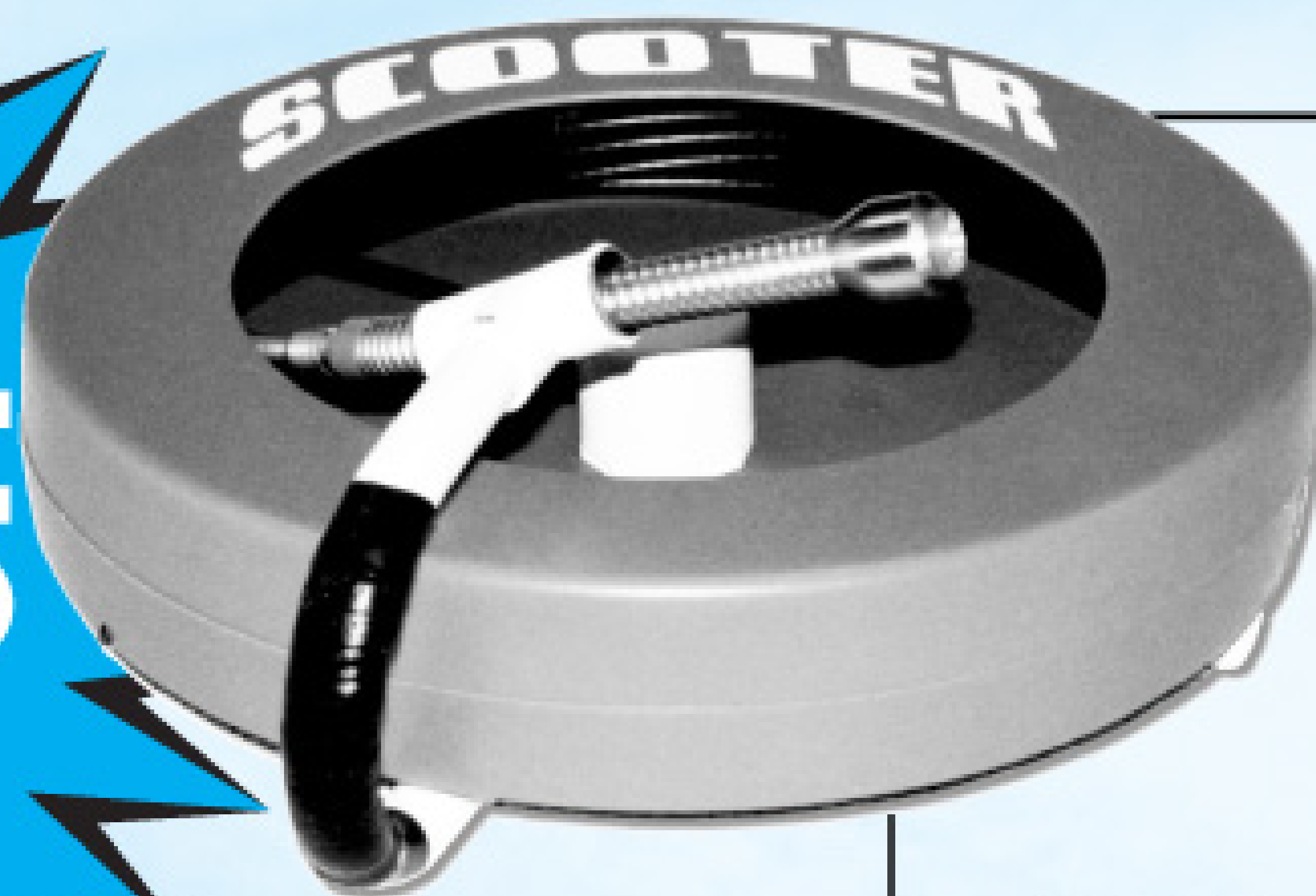
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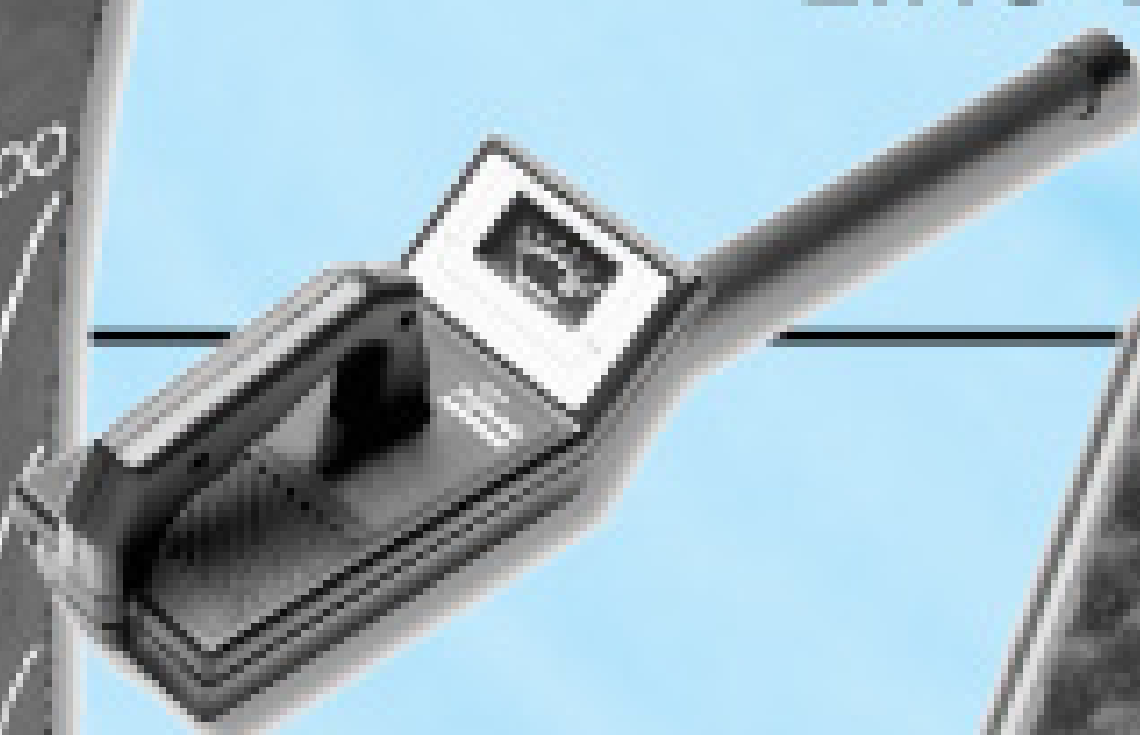
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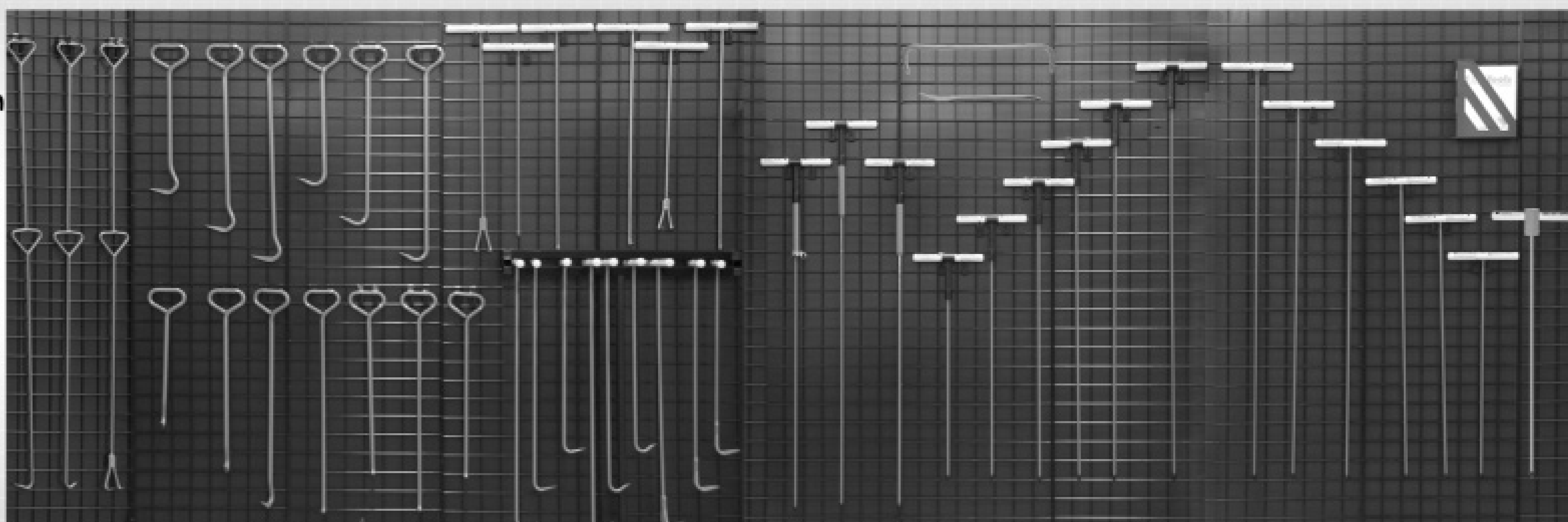
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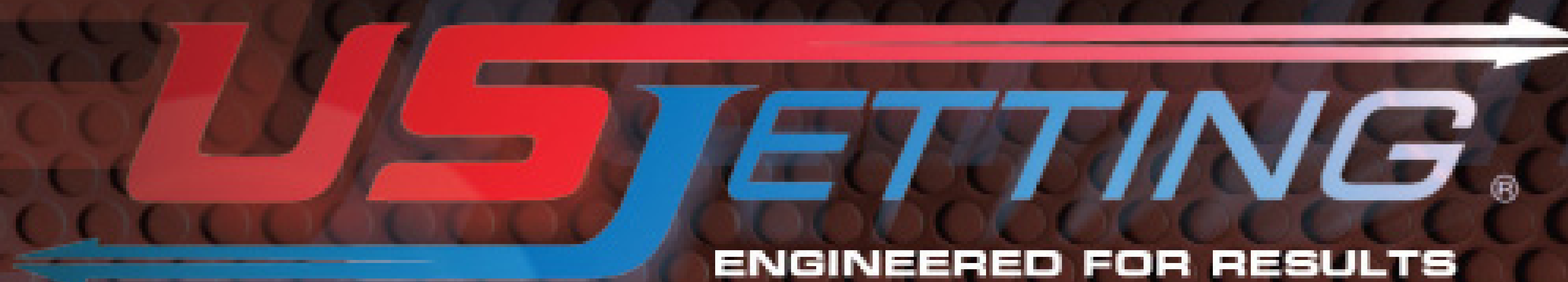
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He's Coming to Town

Long-time Illinois contractor Danny Bland of Bland's Sewer & Water spreads Christmas cheer each December as that fellow from the North Pole

By Judy Kneiszel

Thanksgiving through Christmas is the busy season for Danny Bland of Bland's Sewer and Water in Alton, Ill. But he's not busy maintaining pipes – he's busy maintaining hearts, including his own, by playing Santa Claus.

"This will be my 15th year," Bland says. "I've been playing Santa since my beard turned white. I wanted to do something for the kids, and I enjoy this so much. No amount of money in the world can pay for how I feel when I get that feeling in my heart."

Bland, who wears a 6-inch white beard, refuses any pay – he says commercial jobs "take away from Santa Claus." But he keeps busy eight to nine hours a day in December from 6 a.m. appearances at daycare centers to community Santa breakfasts, appearances at elementary schools and Christmas parties for the elderly at nursing homes.

It all started when the Exchange Club of Alton, a service club Bland

belongs to, needed someone to play Santa at its annual Christmas party for children. "My buddy did it one year, but he didn't have very good beard, so that's how I got started," he says. "Kids always pull on my beard and say, 'You are the real Santa.'"

The belly like a bowl full of jelly is also real, Bland says, but he has to wear a white wig under his red hat because he's a little short on real hair.

Changing times

Bland's business, like his Santa activities, started small and grew through the years. "I've been in business 43 years," he says. "I started it when I was 19 years old." Alton (population 30,000) is across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, but Bland's 50-mile service territory is entirely in Illinois.

"St. Louis is close, but all different rules," Bland says. "I never wanted to be the biggest, I just wanted to be the best." He started the business after a back injury ended his college football career. He started



Danny Bland and his wife Bonnie bring Santa and Mrs. Claus to life for kids and adults alike.



Long-time sewer and water contractor Danny Bland was afraid of Santa Claus when he was a child, but the role suits him well today.

"I've been playing Santa since my beard turned white. I wanted to do something for the kids and I enjoy this so much. No amount of money in the world can pay for how I feel when I get that feeling in my heart."

Danny Bland

with a trencher, then bought a backhoe and eventually got into liquid waste pumping.

After four decades of pumping septic tanks, he sold his vacuum truck, and today he concentrates on service work, hooking houses and some small commercial buildings to

sewer lines and doing line repairs and replacements. The company works on about 10 houses a week.

"Once all the houses get hooked up to water and sewer, there's not a lot of tanks left to pump," Bland says. "On the rare occasion we need someone to pump a tank, it's usually

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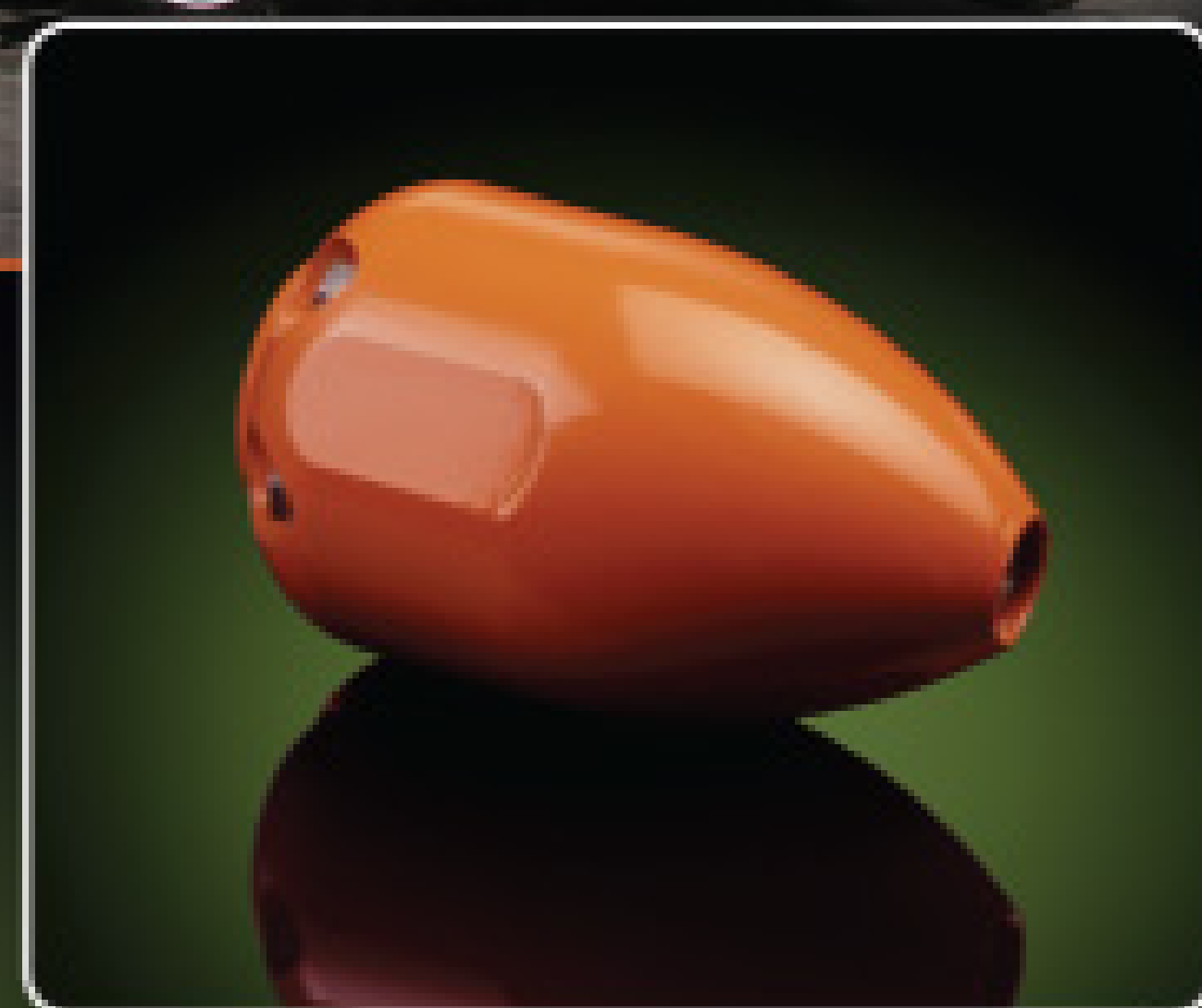
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to fill it up with dirt because it's not going to be used anymore. We have a contractor we use."

Santa support team

Bland's stepson, Bill Ayres, is taking over the business. His grandson, apprentice plumber Struther Griffith, and nephews Bill and Jason Bland also work for the company and all pitch in so he can play Santa. Bland's wife, Bonnie, sometimes accompanies him as Mrs. Claus.

"I like going to the nursing homes the most," Bland says. "Those people still believe in Santa Claus when they are 80 years old or more. It's like they go back to their childhoods when they see me. They get to be kids again."

Since Alton is a close-knit community, he has known many of the nursing home residents his entire life and can tell stories about them. That makes for good fun if they don't recognize him in his Santa costume. "They are really amazed at some of the things Santa knows about them," he says.

Bland will hand out presents at a nursing home Christmas party and then visit the residents who are

unable to leave their rooms to attend. "I insist on going to see the unresponsive ones, too," he says. "I talk like Santa to them and they'll remember their childhoods, and almost every time I get a big smile. The staff can't believe it."

Probably the most emotional visit Bland has had was at the home of an 8-year-old girl diagnosed with terminal cancer. "When I left, I said, 'See you next year,' and she turned to me and said, 'Santa, I'm not going to be here next year,'" Bland says. "If that doesn't tear at your heart, nothing will."

Overcoming Santa-phobia

One might assume a guy who grew up to play Santa with so much conviction has fond childhood memories of the man in the red suit. Not so. "I hated him when I was a child," Bland says. "I had three older sisters and five older brothers, and they pulled tricks on me that made me scared of Santa."

Those memories are the key to getting children over their fears today. "I understand their fears, so I can get any child on my lap because I don't try to scare them," he says.

"If a child is crying, I don't force it. I let them sit on the floor and watch. When they see the other kids aren't getting hurt and are getting treats, they come around."

Bland's activities to help children are not limited to the holidays. He owns a 320-acre farm 60 miles north of Alton where he raises elk and deer. Several times throughout the year, he welcomes groups of disadvantaged children to the farm through the Alton Boys and Girls Club and the Exchange Club of Alton.

The kids get a chance to fish and hike. Sharing the country scenery and the animals with kids who might not otherwise get out of the city is just another way that Bland maintains his heart during his after-hours time. ■

After Hours is an occasional feature that describes how business owners reconcile work life with family, leisure time, charitable pursuits, and personal interests and passions. Cleaner welcomes story ideas. If you take part in something interesting outside work, or if you know someone in the cleaning business who does, please send a note to editor@cleaner.com.



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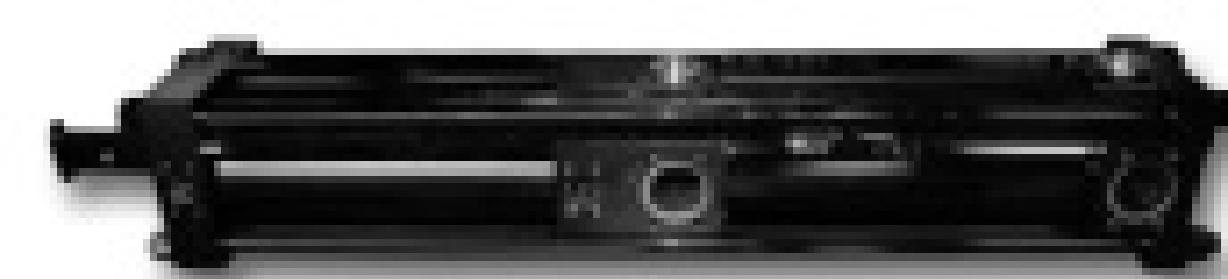
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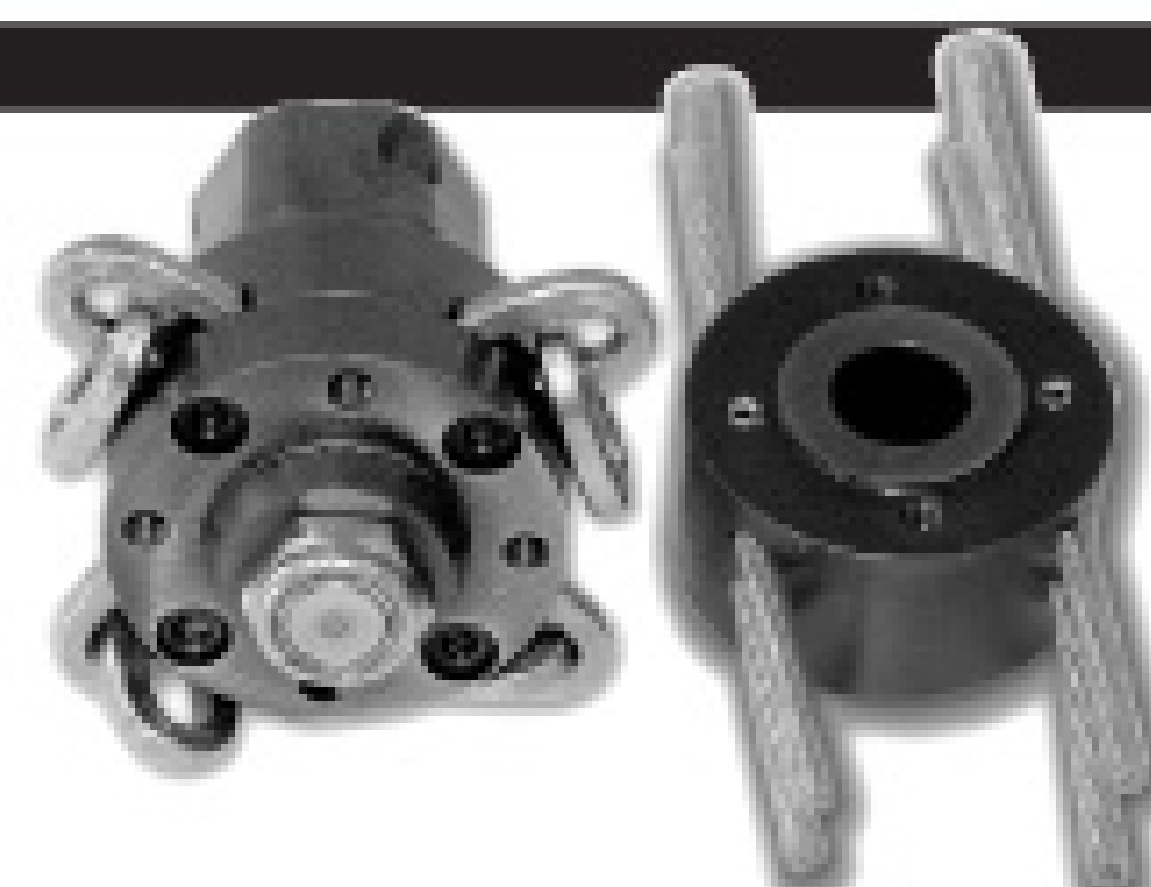
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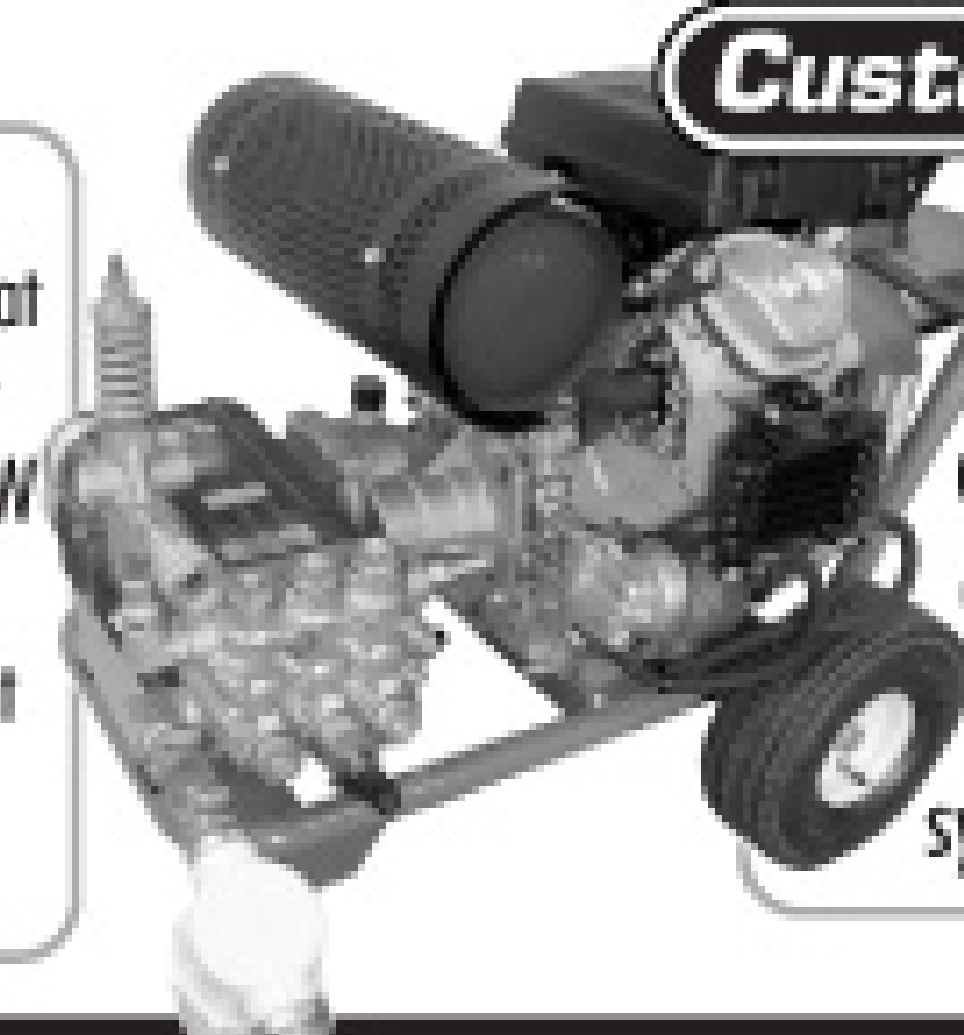


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Waterjetter Designed for Powerful, Quiet Performance

By Ken Wysocky

Hearing-protection gear can be a nuisance for waterjetter operators, assuming they wear any at all. Earplugs and earmuffs also can put operators at risk because they can't hear traffic noise or warnings from co-workers.

The Warrior high-pressure waterjetter from Spartan Tool LLC tackles those issues with an enclosed, soundproofed unit. "Our customers tell us that hearing protection is increasingly important," says Tom Pranka, president. "Until now, operators of large jetters were required to wear hearing protection because all large jetters exceeded OSHA-mandated decibel levels.

"Rather than educate the industry about the need to wear hearing protection, which operators have historically resisted, we developed a quieter jetter that eliminates the need for hearing protection," he says. Spartan engineers reduced noise by embedding the cover with sound-absorbing material and using two mufflers instead of one.

"The jetter produces below 70 decibels, and the OSHA standard is 76 or 80 decibels," Pranka notes. In addition, the cover is lockable, which prevents vandalism.

Aimed at contractors who clean sewer laterals and small commercial lines from 3 to 24 inches, the jetter also has a low-emission engine designed to meet tougher emission standards now in place in California. It will meet all federal emission requirements through 2012.

Another benefit is a sleeker design that Pranka says adds value for customers.

"A jetter represents a large expenditure for our customers," Pranka says. "In addition, customers are increasingly spending thousands of dollars on customized logo wraps to more effectively brand their companies. So we wanted a highly stylized look – something that's really eye-catching as it goes down the road.

"A stylish-looking machine can help a contractor justify the high price associated with using a large jetter. It conveys to customers that they're getting value for their dollar, as opposed to a guy who pulls up with a homemade trailer and a pressure washer."

The Warrior jetter weighs 3,450 pounds empty and 5,940 pounds full, and delivers 4,000 psi at 18 gpm. Standard hoses are a 500-foot, 1/2-inch high-pressure cleaning hose; a 100-foot, 5/8-inch rubber supply hose; a 75-foot, 1/4-inch trap-cleaning hose; and a 15-foot, color-coded leader hose. The unit is available in skid or trailer mount.

800/435-3866; www.spartantool.com.

Expo booth 1170



Coxreels Increases T-Series Capacity

Coxreels has increased the capacity of its heavy-duty Truck Mount Series to 75 feet of 3/4-inch I.D. hose and 50 feet of 1-inch hose. The new reels accompany the original heavy-duty T-Series and feature a dual-bearing axle-support system. All T-Series reels are spring-motor operated and come standard with Super-Hub and full-frame triple-axle support. Stainless steel rollers are standard on 3/4- and 1-inch hose-handling reels. 800/269-7335; www.coxreels.com.

Expo booth 3057



RIDGID Introduces Combo Roll Groover

The 975 combo roll groover from RIDGID is designed to provide both in-place and machine grooving capabilities on 1 1/4- to 6-inch schedule 10 and 40 steel pipe, as well as schedule 10 and 40 stainless steel, aluminum and PVC pipe. Weighing 26 pounds, the groover mounts to the RIDGID 300 power drive. 800/769-7743;

www.ridgid.com. Expo booth 7115



TT Technologies Introduces Pipe Rammer Package

The pipe rammer and bentonite system from TT Technologies is designed for oil and gas pipeline installation projects. The pipeliner package features an 18-inch diameter Grundoram Goliath pneumatic ramming system and a Grundomudd 500 bentonite mixing/delivery system. During the ramming process, the rammer is attached to the rear of the casing and drives the pipe through the ground. The rammer is designed to install steel pipes and casings from 24 to 56 inches in diameter. It also can be used for the slick-bore process.

630/851-8200; www.tttechnologies.com. Expo booth 8197

General Rolls Out Gen-Ear LE Leak Locator

The Gen-Ear LE leak locator from General Pipe Cleaners fits in the palm of the hand and provides noise-free amplification with built-in preset audio filters that block out surrounding ambient noise. The system is designed to pinpoint water leaks in residential and commercial water lines, whether they are under concrete, in walls, swimming pools or hot tubs. 800/245-6200; www.generalpipecleaners.com. Expo booth 3147



MSA Introduces Altair 5 Gas Detector

Designed to detect five types of gases, the Altair 5 Multigas Detector from MSA features MotionAlert and InstantAlert warning systems. MotionAlert activates a "man down" alarm if no motion is detected for 30 seconds, while InstantAlert enables users to manually activate an audible alarm warning of a potentially dangerous situation. Other features include optional, high-resolution color display screen, more than 17 preprogrammed languages, Galaxy System compatibility, standard vibrating alarm and data logging. The gas detector also is MSA Link Software-ready. 800/672-2222; www.msanet.com.



Hannay Designs Grounds Maintenance Reel

The GHAT1200 reel from Hannay is specifically engineered for portable use in grounds maintenance. The reel provides continuous hose flow with a swivel joint inlet, fluid hub and outlet riser and features a permanent direct-crank rewind. The reel is designed to operate at up to 1,000 psi and temperatures from -80F to 185F. The standard inlet is a 90C ball-bearing swivel joint with 1-inch female NPT threads and male GHT standard outlet. 877/467-3357; www.hannay.com. Expo booth 3161

MyTana Introduces DCB 10 Digital Video System

The DCB 10 digital monitor/video recording system from MyTana Manufacturing Company Inc. features a 12.1-inch touch screen, full text writing ability, and various media output, as well as 11 onscreen touch-and-drag icons for locating and identifying problem areas. The pipeline inspection system can be operated using either battery power or AC current. Controls can be accessed onscreen using the stylus. Common obstruction icons are preloaded and can be dragged onto the inspection image. 800/328-8170; www.mytana.com. Expo booth 8089 ■



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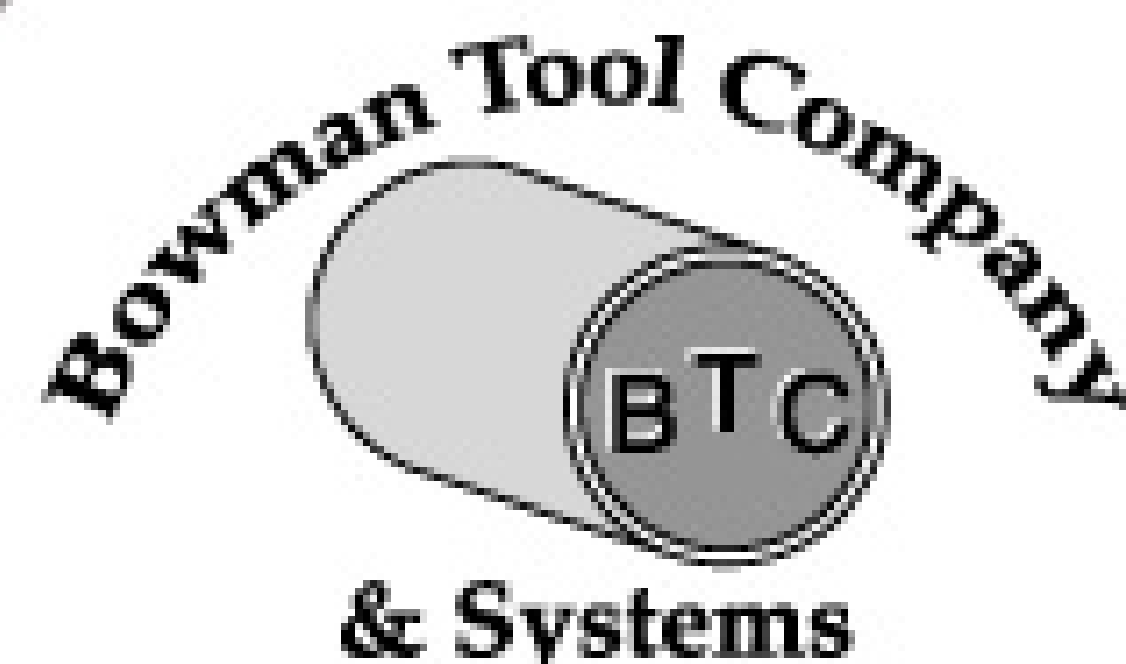
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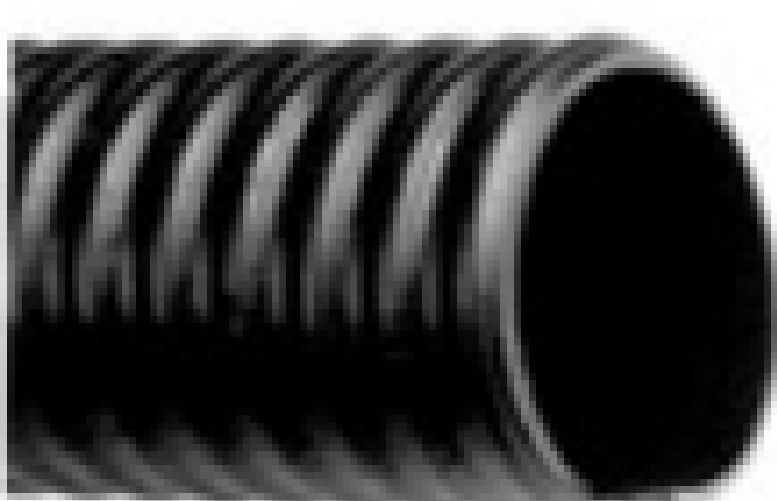
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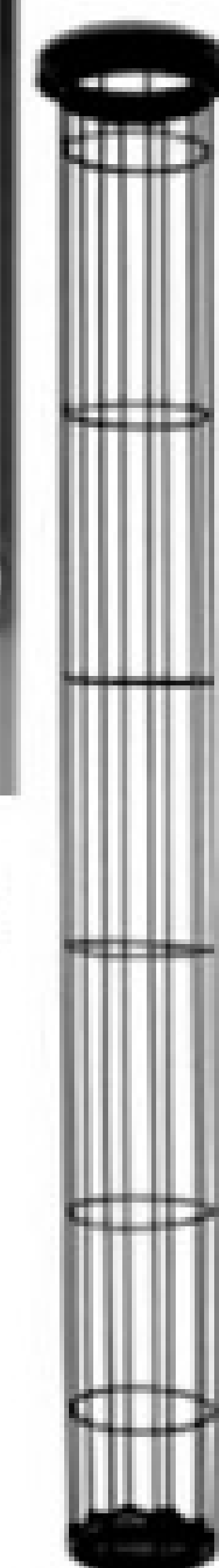
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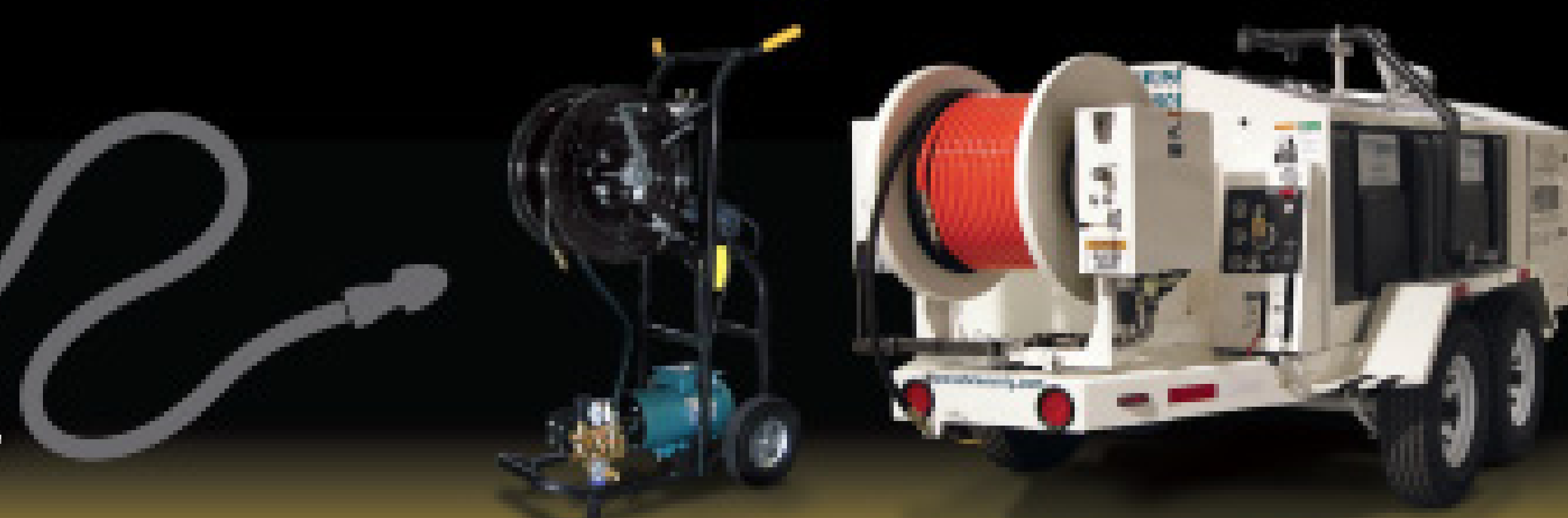
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It's No Mystery

A sleek camera van with complete inspection equipment and software helps a Florida contractor zero in on maximum productivity and profit

By Ken Wysocky

There are three words every parent dreads: Some assembly required. Pipeline inspection technicians at Sleuth Plumbing Technologies used to feel the same way until the company invested in a 2006 Dodge Sprinter camera van.

"Before we bought the van, it took about an hour to set up and take down a portable camera system," says Justin Mizell, vice president of the company in Sarasota, Fla. "Technicians spent a couple hours a day just setting up and breaking down equipment. With a full-fledged camera van, it now takes about 15 minutes to set up and 15 minutes to break down, so our productivity improved by 50 percent. That definitely adds up."

"We also can do longer runs much more efficiently. Before, we might have been able to do about 1,500 feet a day, whereas now we can do about 2,500 feet. I'd say it has made us about 15 to 20 percent more profitable because we can do so many more jobs over the course of a year."

Efficiency and comfort

The van carries Power Vision pipeline inspection systems from Power Equipment Mfg. Inc. One camera is rigged to inspect 6- to 12-inch pipes and the other for 12- to 40-inch pipes. Each supplies 1,000 feet of video cable rated at 2,500-pound break strength. Sleuth uses SubCam software from SubCam Inc. to document inspections. The software converts all information into video files that are compatible with most other software for viewing purposes.

MONEY Machines

The van also makes work more convenient for technicians. "It's so much easier because we just back up right to the manhole," Mizell says.



Sleuth Plumbing Technologies' 2006 Dodge Sprinter makes inspection convenient and comfortable for technicians, saving time and increasing profits.



One camera is rigged to inspect 6- to 12-inch pipes and the other for 12- to 40-inch pipes. Each supplies 1,000 feet of video cable rated at 2,500-pound break strength.

MONEY MACHINES

OWNER:	Sleuth Plumbing Technologies, Sarasota, Fla.
FUNCTION:	Sewer video inspections, utility location and leak detection
VEHICLE TYPE:	2006 Dodge Sprinter
PRIMARY EQUIPMENT:	Power Vision cameras from Power Equipment Mfg. Inc.
COST:	About \$85,000 fully equipped
WEB SITE:	www.sleuthpt.com

"We sent our two camera operators, Dewey Mixon and Chris Harmon, to a week-long training school to learn how to use the SubCam software," Mizell says. "They absolutely love the equipment."

The van also has air conditioning, power windows and locks and a CD player.

"We try to make our employees as comfortable as possible," Mizell notes. "It makes our guys real happy to work inside an air-conditioned van."

Serious marketing

With its distinctive styling, the high-top Sprinter van by itself is an eye-catcher. But it's virtually impossible to miss with the Sleuth logo emblazoned on the side, along with the company motto: Don't Speculate ... investigate!

"Branding our company is what we're all about," Mizell says. "We trademarked the slogan because we take marketing very seriously. The lettering on the trucks isn't cheap by any means, but it's critical to what we do."



The camera van carries Power Vision pipeline inspection systems from Power Equipment Mfg. Inc. Technicians use SubCam software from SubCam Inc. to document inspections.

"We try to make our employees as comfortable as possible. It makes our guys real happy to work inside an air-conditioned van."

Justin Mizell

Sleuth tracks all phone calls to determine where job leads originate, and Mizell says the numbers indicate how well the company branding works. "I bet we get at least one call a day from someone who saw one of our trucks," he notes.

The van gets 22 miles per gallon, which is significant with fuel prices topping \$4 per gallon. One thing's for sure: A technician doesn't have to be a detective to determine that this vehicle increases profitability and productivity. ■

MORE INFO:

Power Equipment Manufacturing Inc.
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<http://powervision.cc/home.htm>

SubCam Inc.
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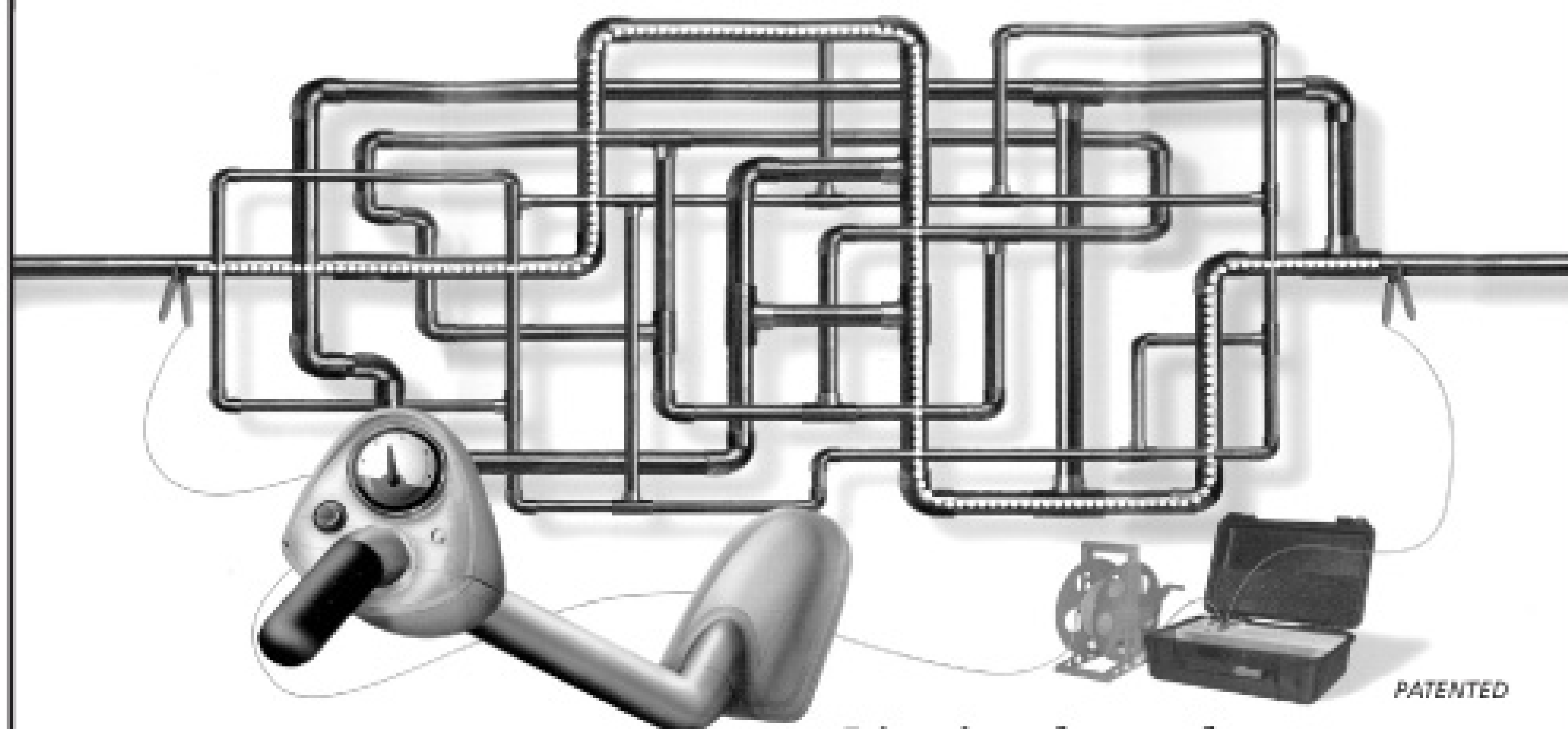
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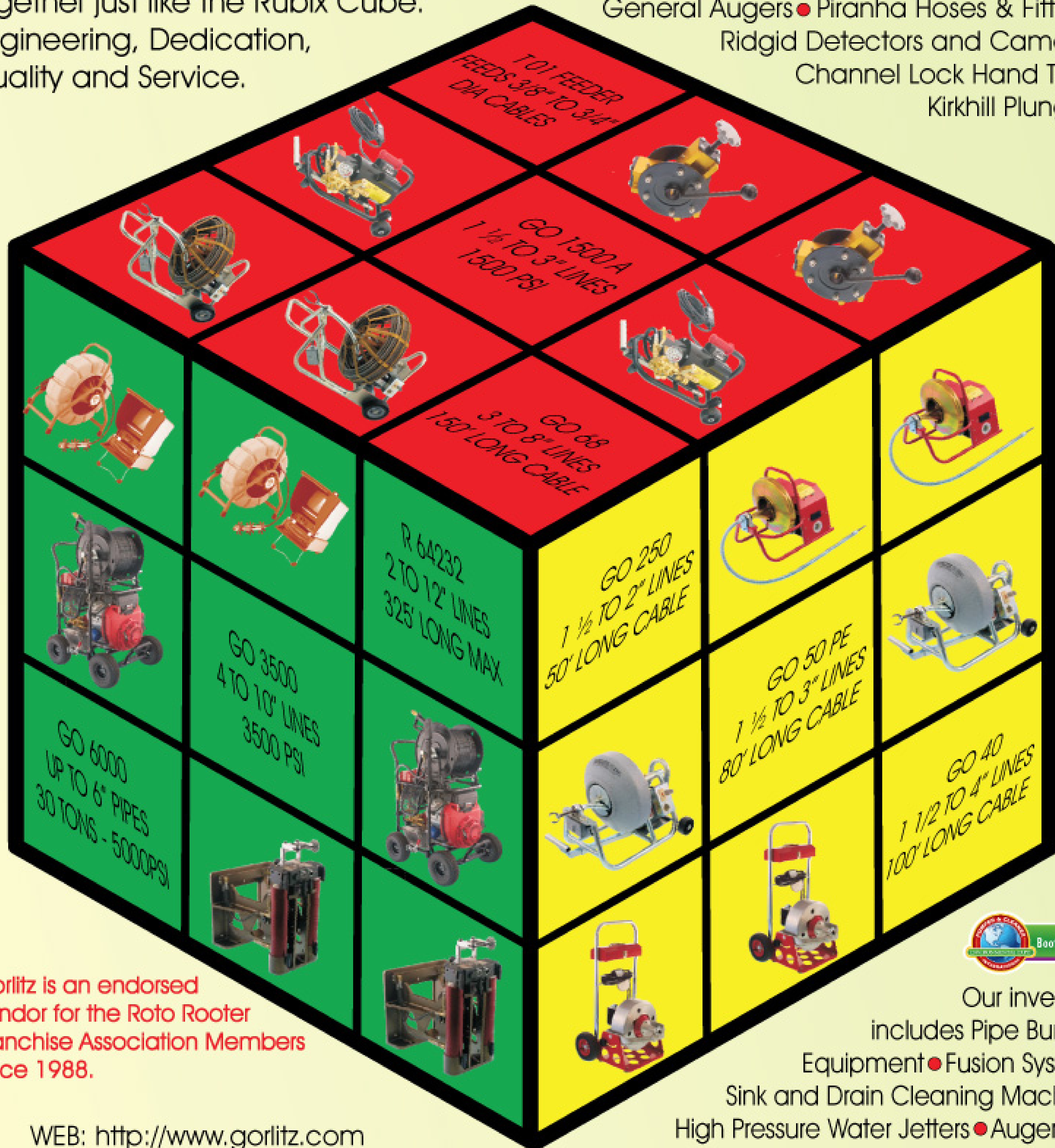
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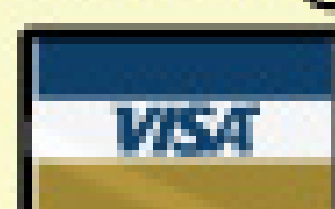
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Tech Perspective

Routing Roots

Almost every root-cutting job is different. Savvy contractors keep a variety of cutting tools on hand and know when to use them.

By Peter Kenter

Every contractor runs into pipes plugged by invasive roots. It's a problem that defies a one-size-fits-all approach, says David Bradford, product manager at Shamrock Pipe Tools Inc. of Baton Rouge, La.

"Anybody who says they're a true expert in root removal is probably exaggerating, because each situation is unique," says Bradford, whose company makes and distributes pipe-cleaning tools and products. "It's amazing to see the diversity of root material that can infiltrate a standard 8-inch line in locations across the country."

Regardless of the type of root, however, Bradford says the first

But choice of blade attachment is important. Bradford says some optimistic contractors use the maximum size blade in hopes of clearing the full diameter of the pipe.

"If you've got an 8-inch pipe and an 8-inch blade, you'd better hope you've got a pipe that's true to diameter all the way along," he says. "It's better to select a blade that's slightly smaller to get through the offsets and deflections you might find. When a guy pops open a manhole and sees that roots are present, you know that the pipe is broken somewhere along the line."

Bradford recommends small-pipe hydraulic blade root cutters for 3- to 10-inch pipes and waterjet root cutters for 6- to 18-inch lines.

"You don't know what's in that pipe, so if you progress too quickly at first, you may not be able to pull back out. Do manageable chunks of 20, 30 or 40 feet at a time. It's a lot easier to move back and forth than to retrieve a tool that's stuck 100 feet down."

David Bradford

order of business is to re-establish water flow as soon as possible. While root solvents may help to dissolve roots, and while chemical treatments discourage root growth as part of a longer-term maintenance strategy, the immediate task at hand often calls for mechanical cutting.

Saws and cutters

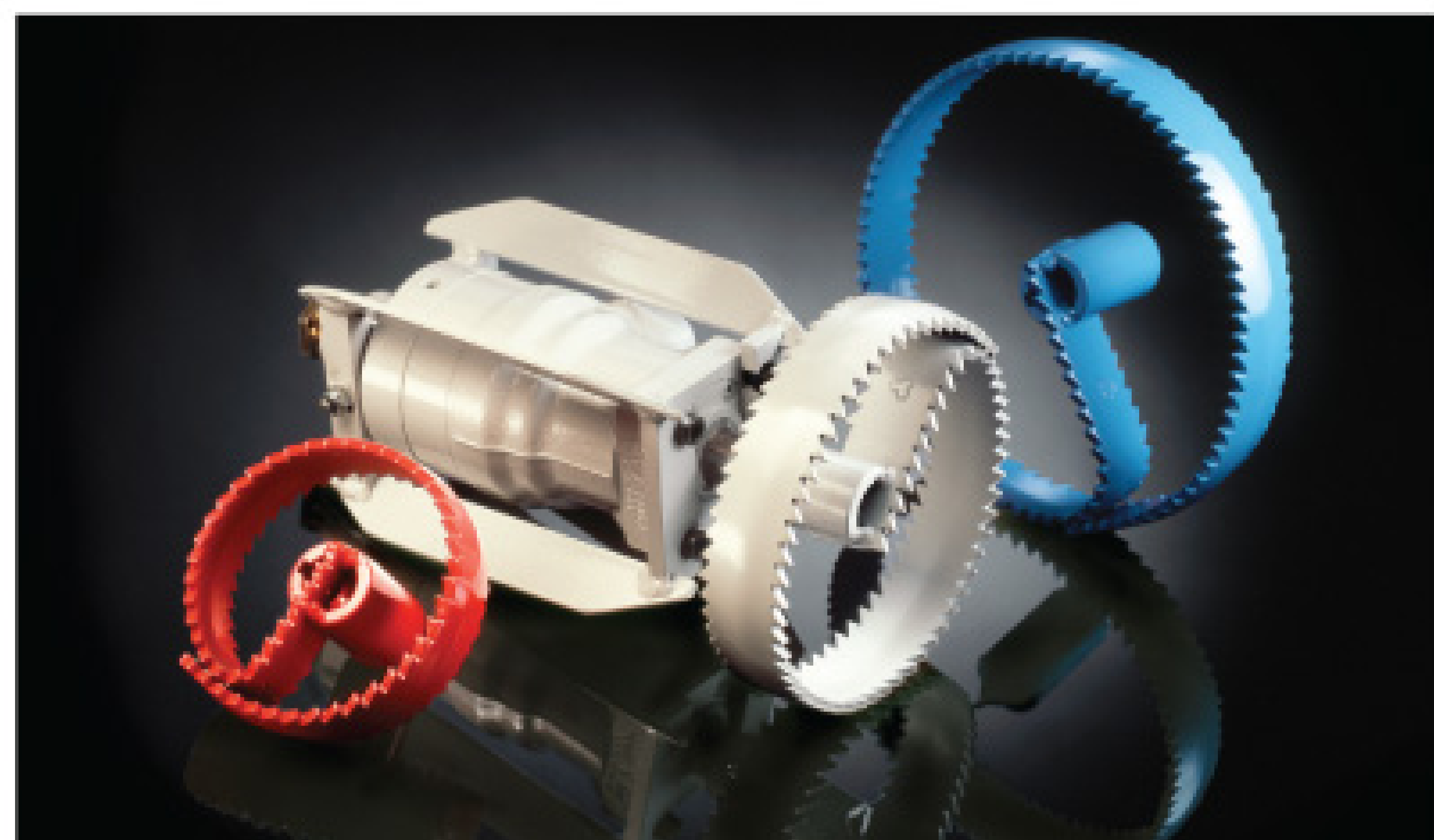
Bradford prefers saws and cutters as a first line of offense. A waterjet root cutter that drives a circular saw blade by hydraulic power is the most common tool used to combat roots.

Re-establishing flow

In most cases, the quickest way to re-establish flow is to clear out the tenderest roots and remove the debris that has collected on them. In other cases, the first task is to clear enough roots to pass an inspection camera through the pipe.

"Engineers can be strange beasts," he says. "It's hard to convince some of them that a broken 100-year-old pipe running through a yard full of 100-year-old oak trees is really infiltrated with roots. They want to see pictures first."

Tech Perspective looks at technology-related issues and provides information and advice that cleaning professionals can apply to equipment selection and to their daily work in the field. Industry members are welcome to offer ideas for this column. Please direct them to editor Ted J. Rulseh, editor@cleaner.com.



Root-cutting blades and accessories for sawing, slicing and ripping obstacles of all sizes in various pipe diameters.



A variety of waterjet nozzles, designed for root-intrusion cutting and various degrees of grease, debris and residue removal.



Heavy-duty penetrating waterjet sewer-cleaning nozzle for removing debris and grease buildup.

Bradford says simple tempered metal blades of alloy steel or carbon steel provide enough cutting power to get through the toughest root problems. Contractors can choose from flat blades that would lie perfectly flat if unwound, and concave blades that feature a slight indentation along the side. "I prefer a concave blade, because it offers a smaller surface wear against the side of the pipe wall," he says.

Once the center of the pipe is clear of obstruction, a chain cutter – essentially a forward-facing set of blades with a length of chain swinging around its circumference – is a useful tool to clean off the pipe walls. "Let the blade cutter do the work of dealing with the initial blockage, and let the chain cutter scrape the pipes out," Bradford says. "I like these a lot for cutting fine root hairs around the circumference of the pipe."

A cable roter, which uses metal cables to scrape the full diameter of the pipe in combination with a front cutter, can also be used to remove grease, scale, debris and roots from smaller-diameter cast iron and storm sewer pipes.

Slow and steady

While the temptation may be to force the cutter through the root blockage at top speed, Bradford recommends patience. "Get to the blockage at as low an angle as possible, with a slow and steady approach, and you'll have the power to penetrate the root mass," he says. "Use a lower rpm and let the tool do the cutting, without forcing it. Don't be a cowboy."

"You don't know what's in that pipe, so if you progress too quickly at first, you may not be able to pull back out," he notes. "Do manageable chunks of 20, 30 or 40 feet at a time. It's a lot easier to move back and forth than to retrieve a tool that's stuck 100 feet down."

Waterjet nozzles alone can be used to flush out some grime and clear away roots in a pinch, but Bradford doesn't recommend them as root cutters. "I can see where people use nozzles to remove some of the debris – anything from dirt, grease, oil and soap to cheap toilet paper – hanging onto the roots," he says. "But I'm not convinced a nozzle can be used as an effective cutting tool."

"Some proponents of nozzle cutters look at me like I'm from the prehistoric age, but if you're in a 15-inch line and using a nozzle, it loses impact almost immediately after the water enters the pipe."

"You could hit the root, clean the area a bit and perhaps pulverize the fiber, but the water pressure would just drive the root debris deeper into the pipe," Bradford says. "When you try to retract the nozzle it will probably be buried in debris. Better to use the nozzle to clean away the grit that might cause premature wear on the blades and damage high-torque motors that can jam up with sand."

While contractors might be forced to deal with a wide variety of problems related to root incursions, a disciplined approach and thoughtful selection of cutting tools can handle the toughest roots. Says Bradford: "It's a combination of a little creativity and choosing the right tool for the job." ■

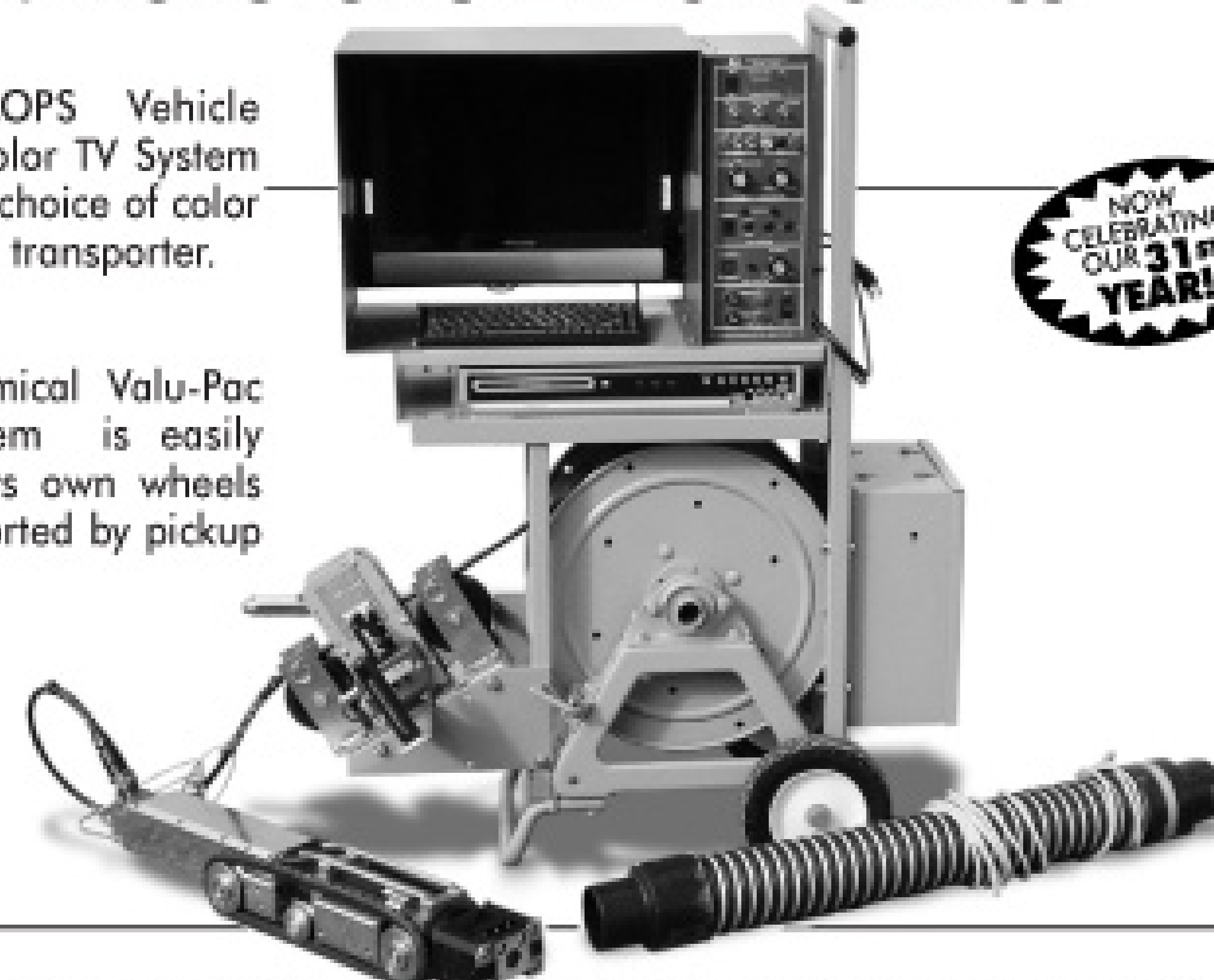
TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

Can waterjet cutting nozzles clear roots as effectively as rotating steel blades do? The source for the accompanying article is not convinced. *Cleaner* welcomes waterjet and nozzle manufacturers, and contractors who use cutting nozzles, to share their opinions and experiences. Weigh in on this issue by sending your comments to editor@cleaner.com. We'll include a follow-up story in a future issue.

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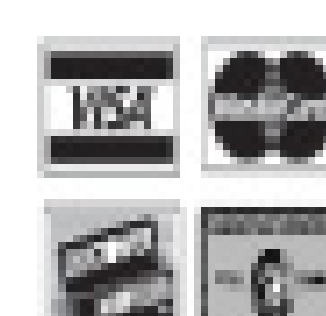
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Top of Their Game

Pipe bursting helps a contractor meet a major challenge in upsizing the sanitary sewers at the Cotton Bowl stadium

By **Scottie Dayton**

The city of Dallas was renovating its 76-year-old Cotton Bowl. The \$50 million facelift included expanding capacity to 92,107, replacing the seats, adding media and VIP facilities, replacing the scoreboard, and upgrading concession areas, lighting, utility and sound systems. Plans also specified enlarging and adding restrooms and upsizing the sanitary sewers to handle the increased flow.

As Wright Construction Co. Inc. in Grapevine, Texas, began open-cutting the trenches for the new pipes, workers found numerous utility and telecommunication lines running over the old service. Project manager John Kolb called John Newell of DigTec in Dallas to review the inspection video and evaluate the situation. Newell declared the 8-inch concrete and SDR lines with CIPP liners good candidates for pipe bursting.

Dense soils, numerous delays, obstructions and unexpected obstacles stretched the three-week project to three months. Newell, however, overcame the challenges using a pipe-pulling system and a proprietary tool, enabling the 100-year-old Red River Shootout between the University of Texas and University of Oklahoma football teams to kick off again in the Cotton Bowl.



Wright Construction excavated a 10-foot-square, 15-foot-deep pulling pit on the right side of the stadium stairway for the pipe-bursting operation. (Photos courtesy of DigTec)

Stairway to grief

Wright Construction did all the excavating and set the shoring boxes. The 10-foot-square by 15-foot-deep pulling pits were 10 feet on either side of the stadium stairway. The pits and 3- by 20-foot entry trenches for the fused pipe were in hard clay. Gravel bedding and backfill covered areas of the host pipe. "When dropped into a hole, gravel compacts 85 to 90 percent and is as hard as concrete to expand," says Newell.

Newell asked Gerry Robinson of Pipe Genie Manufacturing Inc. in Vancouver, B.C., what size bursting machine to use to upsize the 8-inch lined pipe to 12-inch HDPE pipe in such conditions. Robinson recommended an 80-ton machine, but

Newell had a 40-ton and 60-ton Pipe Genie system and wanted to use them in tandem.

The chains normally run through the two hollow bursting cones and attach to the pulling head bolted to the HDPE pipe. Robinson, however, custom built a head that connected the chains from the two machines to a 3-inch bar. The cones slid over the bar and attached to the pulling head, allowing the rams to work in unison.

To prepare the pits, Newell's six men laid two layers of 3/4-inch plywood over the gravel at the bottom to establish a level floor. They stacked railroad ties in front of the bursting machines to form resistance bulkheads. Newell lowered the ties

TOUGH JOB

PROJECT:

Upsize sanitary sewers at the Cotton Bowl in time for the Oklahoma-Texas college football game

CUSTOMER:

City of Dallas

CONTRACTOR:

DigTec, Dallas

EQUIPMENT:

Pipe-bursting system, Pipe Genie Manufacturing Inc., Vancouver, B.C.

RESULTS:

Sewers upsized successfully and game played

and placed the rams side by side with his Terex backhoe. A chain winch raised and lowered other equipment and removed the 100-foot lengths of 3/4-inch chain as



A crew attaches the pulling head to the pipe. The 3-inch bar extending from the pipe is part of the custom head created by Pipe Genie for the job.



The first 200 feet of pipe were fused together at the entrance pit ramp. Rollers under the pipe reduced drag and scarring during the pull.

they were pulled into the pit. Each length weighed 618 pounds.

Before Wright Construction could excavate the entry trench on the right side of the stairway, a large crane parked over the location. "A contractor drilling piles needed it to lift rebar into the holes," says Newell. "That crane put us on hold for weeks."

Shark attack

Because the liners in the host pipes could come lose and bunch up in front of the breaking cones, Newell first split the lines using the Pipe Genie Shark Fin. As the front of the fin splits the pipe, water sprays out a jetting head at the back, loosening the surrounding bedding and blowing some gravel and sand into the split pipe, creating voids that help with displacement.

"Pulling a 12-inch pipe into an 8-inch pipe bursts and expands it to 15 inches," says Newell. "Wet dirt and sand compact easier than dry material. In heavy clay and gravel, we jet at 10 or 15 gpm and 3,000 or 4,000 psi."

Splitting the pipe on the right side took two 10-hour days due to unexpected obstacles. One was in front of the transformer supplying power for most of the Cotton Bowl. An encased duct bank ran directly over the top of the host pipe. Using the backhoe and trailer-mounted SPV800 SpoilVac with 800-gallon tank from Vacmasters, Arvada, Colo., Newell's crew excavated a 6-foot-square by 10-foot-deep hole, exposed the duct bank, and chipped away enough concrete for the HDPE pipe to pass.

Rollers under the pipe reduced drag and scarring during the pull. After pulling in 150 feet, the men had enough room to fuse the remaining length to the first half.

The first pipe pulled into the right-hand pit ran 275 feet beneath the angular section of Cotton Bowl Circle as it passed the stadium. "Besides pulling around a radius, the line had repairs bedded in gravel," says Newell. "The pull was so hard that we broke railroad ties and equipment in two places." Work stopped until Wright Construction

"Besides pulling around a radius, the line had repairs bedded in gravel. The pull was so hard that we broke railroad ties and equipment in two places."

John Newell

The Shark Fin stopped next at a repaired section of pipe encased in concrete. Newell waited for Wright Construction to open-cut and break it out. "Such an obstruction will stop a pull," he says. "Time is of the essence then, as the expanded soil collapses slowly around the HDPE pipe, making it difficult to start moving again. Splitting the host pipe first eliminates such surprises."

We're off

Lacking sufficient space, the crew fused two 200-foot lengths of 12-inch DR17 HDPE pipe using a McElroy 412 fusion machine.

open-cut those areas.

Meanwhile, Newell doubled the rows of railroad ties used for bulkheads. Once the pipe entered the pit, crews turned the rams 90 degrees and pulled a 100-foot section straight in from a manhole. When completed, poured-in-place manholes connected the lines in both pulling pits.

Running rams nonstop for eight to 10 hours heats and thins the hydraulic fluid, causing it to lose viscosity. To prevent that from happening and keep the machines pulling at their maximum, Newell alternated between a portable

hydraulic power pack and a Bobcat skid-steer's hydraulic power supply.

The first pipe pulled into the left-hand pit traveled straight from the second entry trench 275 feet away. Crews then turned the equipment 90 degrees and pulled a 100-foot section straight in from a manhole. Once completed, both replacement lines were connected to a new 12-inch pipe auger rammed under Midway Plaza.

Players' tunnel

The stadium has only one players' tunnel, and Newell needed a 10-foot-square by 25-foot-deep pulling pit at its outside entrance to upsize 350 feet of 8-inch pipe to 10-inch pipe. However, tons of material for the stadium renovation passed through the tunnel. "We weren't allowed in there because it would slow progress," says Newell, who again spent weeks juggling his work schedule while waiting for the all clear.

When the call came, the sand in the area sloughed off so fast that Wright Construction excavated the pulling pit by setting the shore box, digging from inside it, and pushing the box down as the hole deepened. The 15-foot-deep entry trench in the asphalt pavement was dug inside stacked 8- by 20-foot shoring.

Newell's crew set up one ram and split the pipe the first day with the Shark Fin, jetting at 5 gpm/1,000 psi so as not to make too big a void. That afternoon, they set the second ram, hooked up both chains, and pulled the pipe into the entry trench.

"We starting pulling at seven the next morning and finished at six that evening," says Newell. "The relief of my business returning to normal was palpable." The annual Red River Shootout was played at the Cotton Bowl during the State Fair of Texas. ■

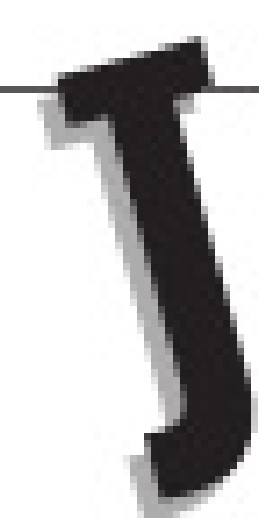
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1998 Vac-Con Model V350THA, 3-stage fan, 50 gpm, 3000 psi pump, 5-yd. debris tank, new white paint. Was city owned. 714-639-8352. www.empireequip.com. (CPBM)

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Sewer Cam Reel and Camera Repair: 48-hr. turn-around time. General Wire, Ratech, Electric Eel, Gator Cams. Quality service on all brands. For more info. give Jack a call. Dynamic Cable Repairs, Lodi, NJ 07644. 973-478-0893. (CBM)

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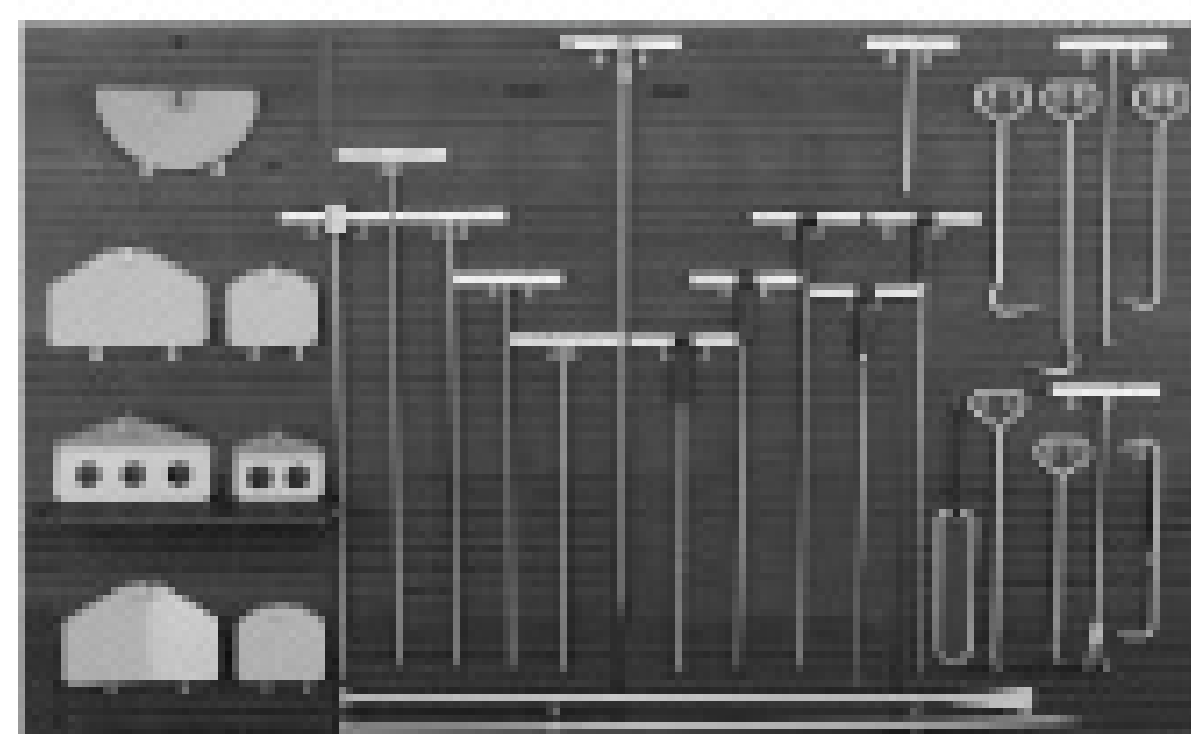
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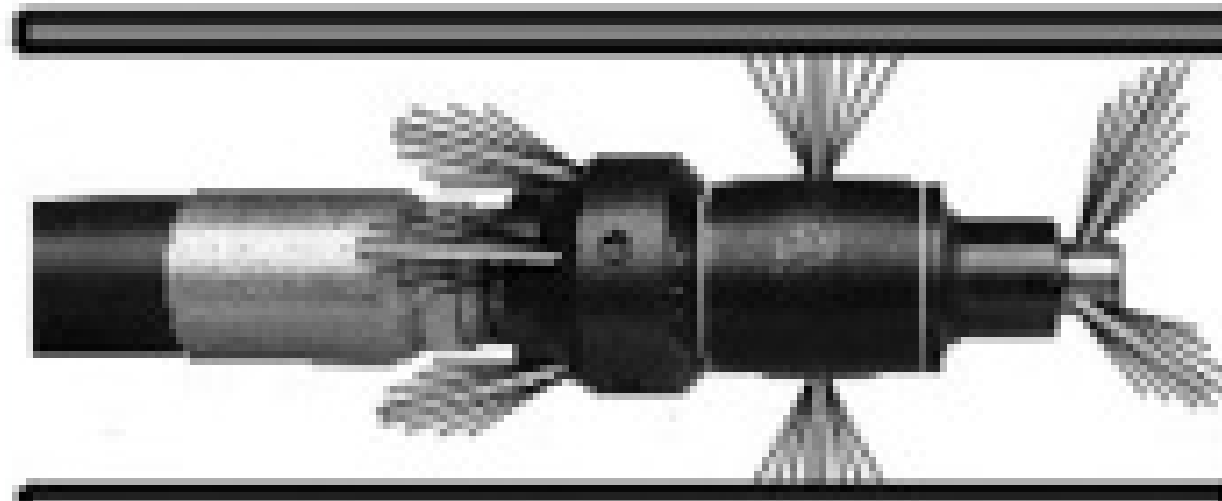
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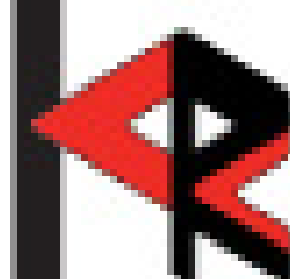
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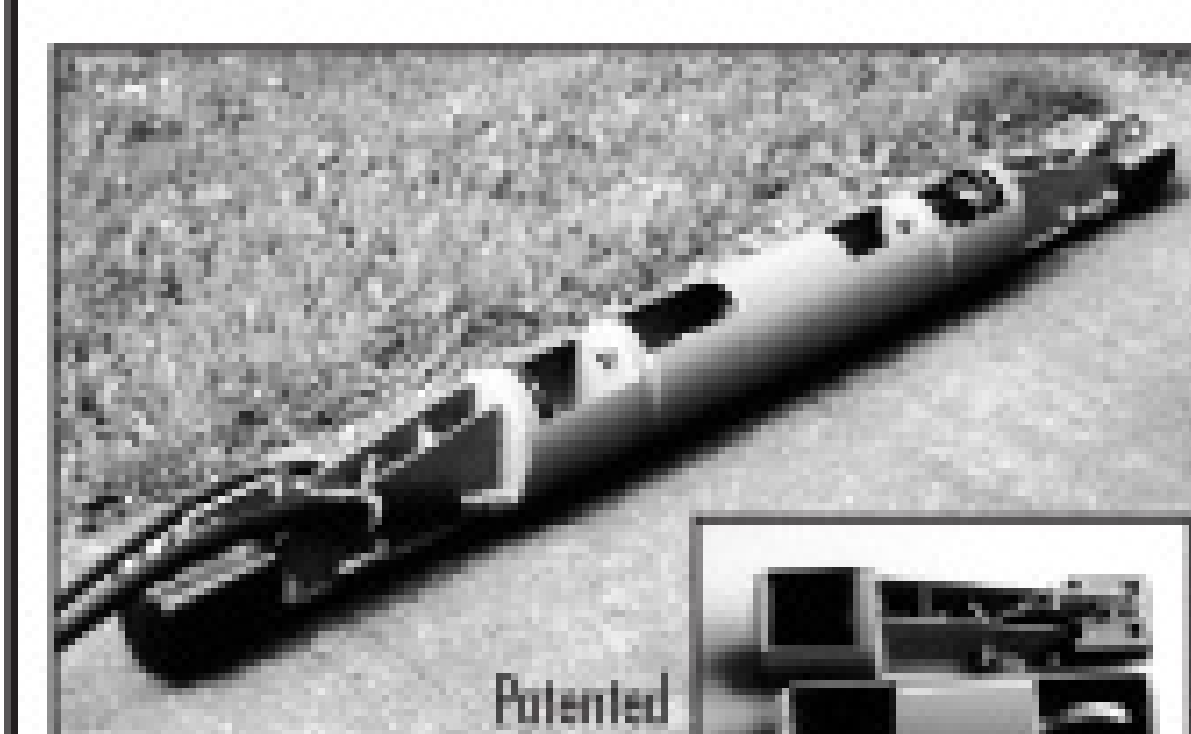


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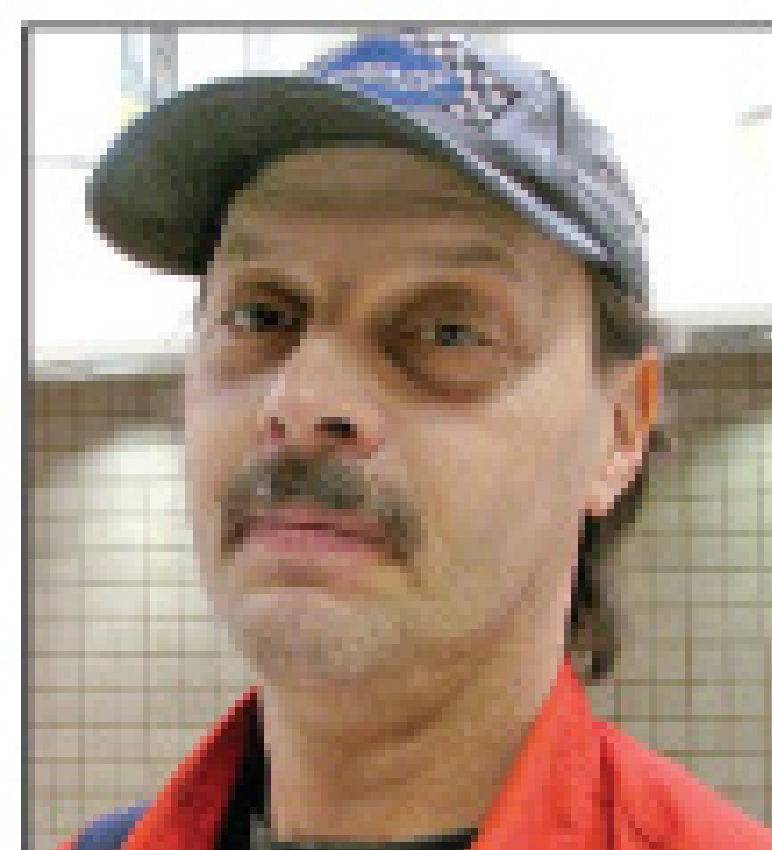
Contractors use efficiency-boosting practices and increase rates to help offset the effects of fast-rising gasoline and diesel fuel prices

By Mary Shafer

If there's one line in the ledger that's screaming with pain these days, it's the one for fuel expenses. Any business that depends on a fleet of vehicles is struggling with fuel costs, especially those depending on diesel.

One thing is pretty clear: There's no single, sweeping strategy that will take the hurt off the bottom line. Instead, there are a number of smaller tactics that address individual facets of an operation.

For some businesses, it's using a fuel card that allows a discount and may offer perks like cash back or frequent flyer miles. For others, it's moving dispatch and tracking functions to software that optimizes routes. Still others are casting more than sidelong glances at hybrid vehicles. These three contractors share steps they're taking to keep their fleets rolling affordably.



Bob Foster

Field Manager
Aqua Source Group Inc.
Honeoye, N.Y.
Employees: 12
Years in Business: 22

Bob Foster, field manager responsible for a 17-vehicle fleet for Aqua Source Group Inc. working in and around Rochester, N.Y., is keenly attentive to small things he can do to reduce fuel consumption. His company was already managing dispatch to run denser routes. "If someone is in one area, their route is planned so they stay in that area and aren't running around all over the place," he says.

"We also buy our gas in bulk so we get a per-gallon discount, and we store it in tanks at our yard. That helps. We also remind drivers not to gun the engines, and other gas-wasting stuff. But you know, they're going to do it sometimes."

Bob Foster
Aqua Source Group Inc.
Honeoye, N.Y.

Aqua Source continually reminds drivers to keep their mileage down and to avoid unnecessary trips. "We also buy our gas in bulk so we get a per-gallon discount, and we store it in tanks at our

yard," says Foster. "That helps. We also remind drivers not to gun the engines, and other gas-wasting stuff. But you know, they're going to do it sometimes."

Fernando Chavarria has been running his own business, Chavarria's Plumbing, for more than a quarter-century. He led its evolution from a franchise cleaning firm to a full-service entrepreneurial venture on the Mexican border. He now runs a fleet of 23 trucks, so fuel takes a huge bite out of his operating budget.



Fernando Chavarria

Owner
Chavarria's Plumbing Inc.
Laredo, Texas
Employees: 42
Years in Business: 28

"We coordinate all our activities the day before, synchronizing all the work that has to be done that day so we can create the most efficient route," says Chavarria. "We use a GPS tracking system tied into proprietary software we had programmed just for our needs." Along with a dispatching feature, the program handles job numbering, customer contact management and invoicing.

Because most of his fleet is fairly new, precluding the purchase of many smaller trucks, Chavarria is being creative with vehicle usage. "We try to save fuel by using the smallest truck possible for the job, but we're also trying a different approach," he says. "We're looking at putting larger tanks on smaller trucks to accommodate more volume per run." Some roads and access bridges won't accommodate anything larger than what he's now using, so dispatchers consider that when planning routes.

The company also allocates larger trucks to the longer routes, again saving on individual trips. One of Chavarria's largest challenges is addressing the multiple 150-mile trips to haul waste to public treatment plants for processing.

"We don't have a disposal site nearby, so I'm investing in a dewatering separator," he reports. "This will drastically reduce load volume. We can store dewatered sludge on site until there's enough for a load to transport to the treatment facility." He expects to see fuel costs drop drastically once the dewatering system goes online.

Comments may be directed to Mary Shafer in care of Cleaner. You may also e-mail pipelines@cleaner.com.



Tom Vecchiolli, office manager with Paramount Plumbing, a full-service firm on the outskirts of Philadelphia, says the firm has done two things to address fuel costs.

The first step is internal.

"We've always charged a service fee to cover the cost of getting a service person out to the caller's location. The fee is graduated, based on zones in 5-mile increments from the office, so it reflects actual costs. Fuel prices just forced us to tack on a bit extra."

Tom Vecchiolli
Paramount Plumbing, Downingtown, Pa.

"Our office administrator now works from home one day a week, telecommuting instead of driving," he says. "We're tapping into our PC over the Internet via a remote desktop application called GoToMyPC.com." A call-forwarding feature takes care of routing calls to the home office, and Vecchiolli reports that it is working out well.

Tom Vecchiolli

Office Manager
Paramount Plumbing, Downingtown, Pa.
Employees: 3
Years in Business: 9

Externally, Paramount is trying to recover some of its fuel costs by raising its standard service fee by about 10 percent. "We've always charged a service fee to cover the cost of getting a service person out to the caller's location," Vecchiolli says. "The fee is graduated, based on zones in 5-mile increments from the office, so it reflects actual costs. Fuel prices just forced us to tack on a bit extra."

The company instituted the increase in mid-May. "Some people are objecting more to that fee now, maybe 7 to 10 percent of all our callers," reports Vecchiolli. "Some people have always had a problem with it, but a lot of people understand why we need to do it. They know because they're dealing with those costs, too." ■

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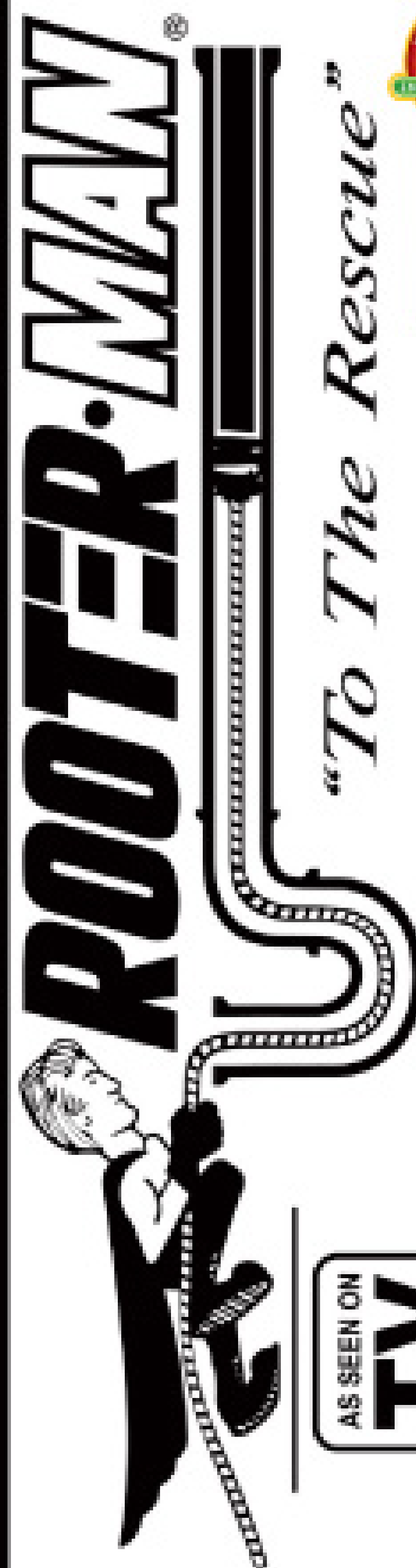
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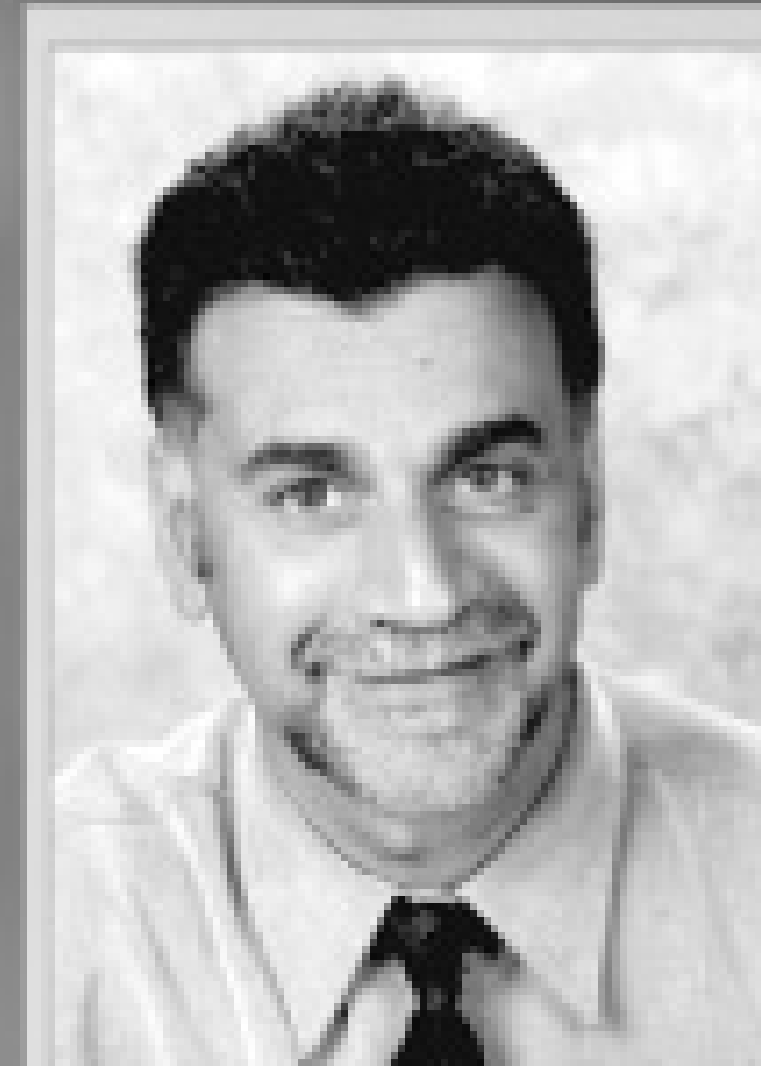


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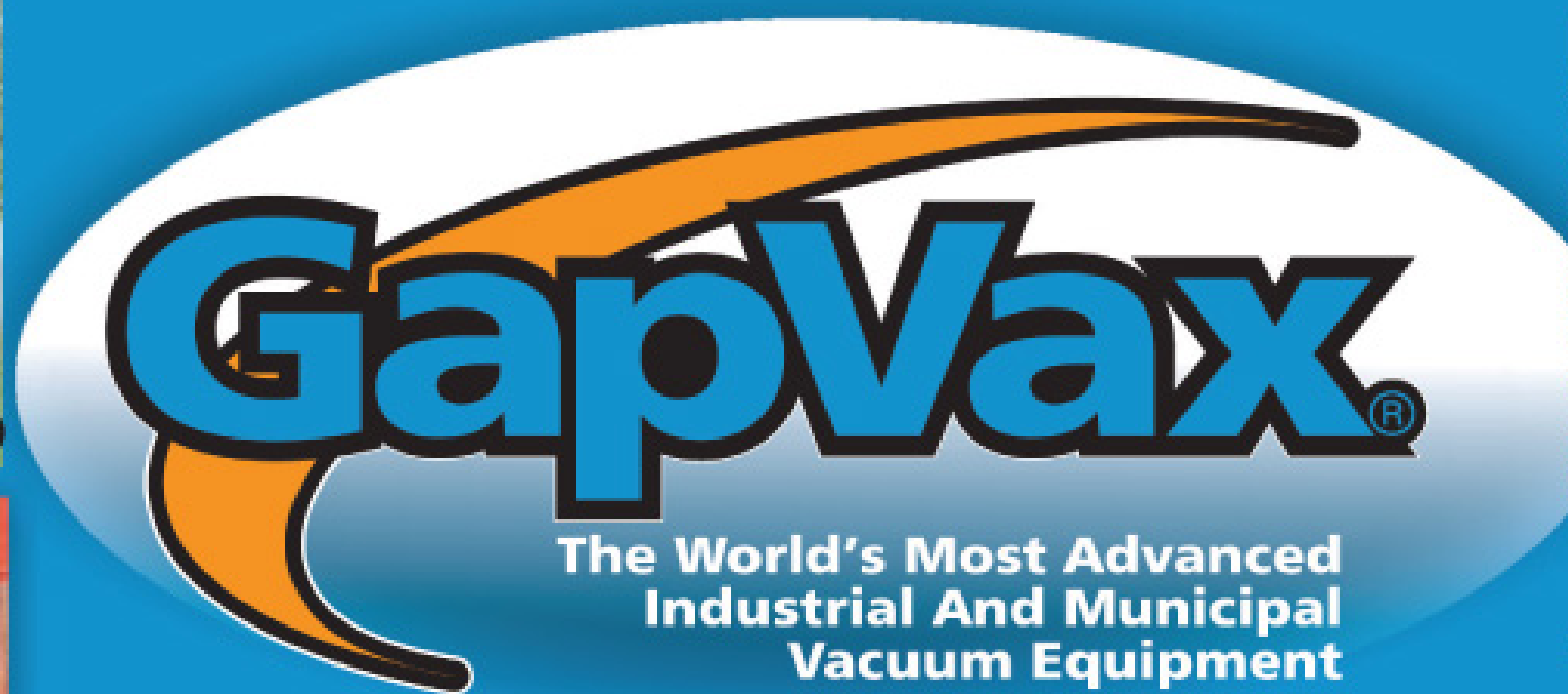
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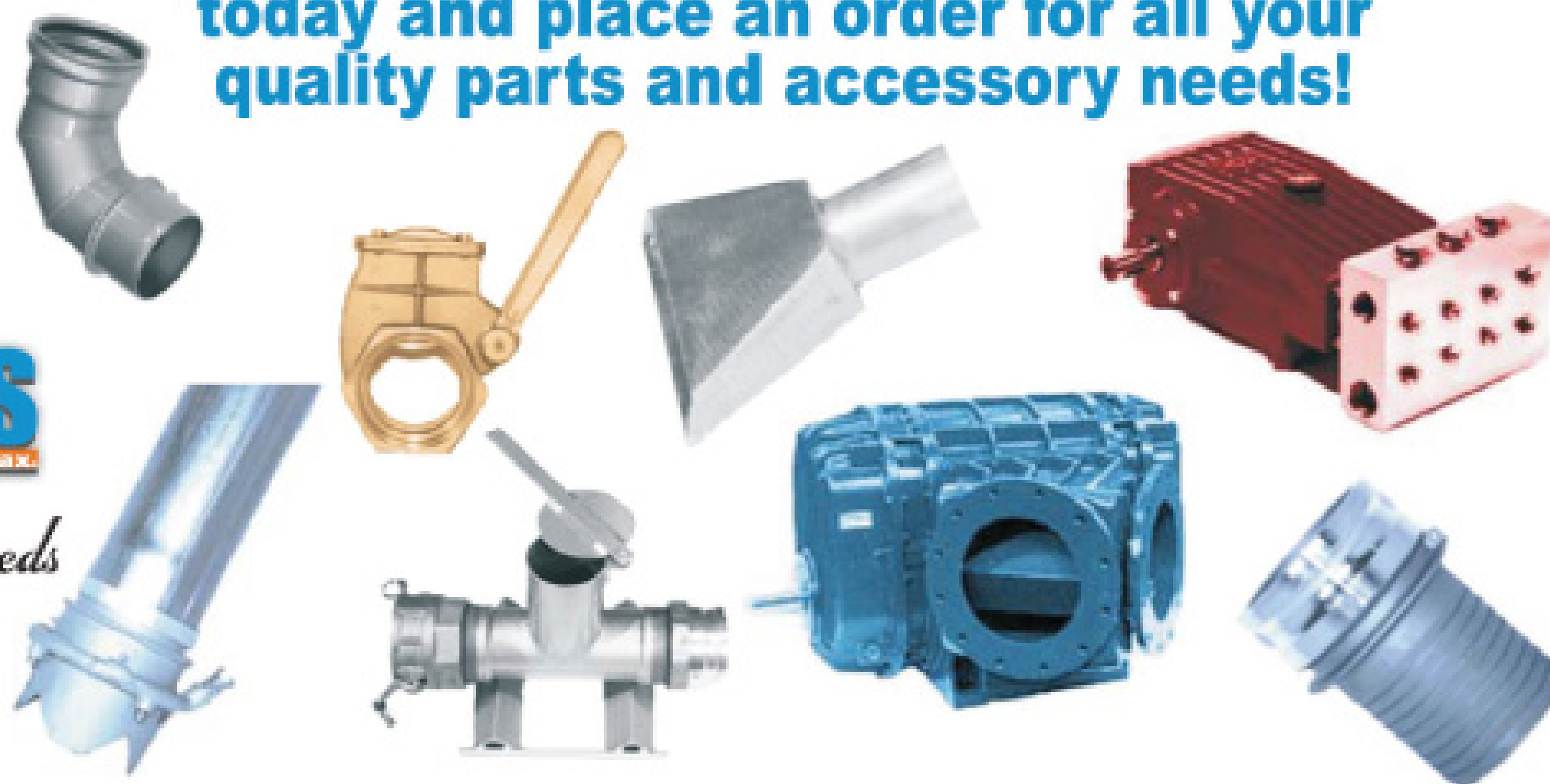
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