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Cleaner®



Redneck Success

Charlie Hall combines a down-home approach with sophisticated management for Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado™ Page 38

READER PIPELINES

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MONEY MANAGER

Tax-saving ways to plan for retirement

TECH PERSPECTIVE

The latest in small push cameras

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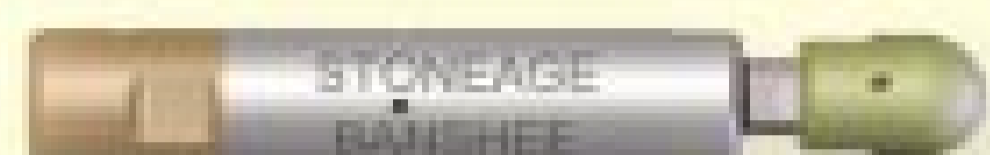


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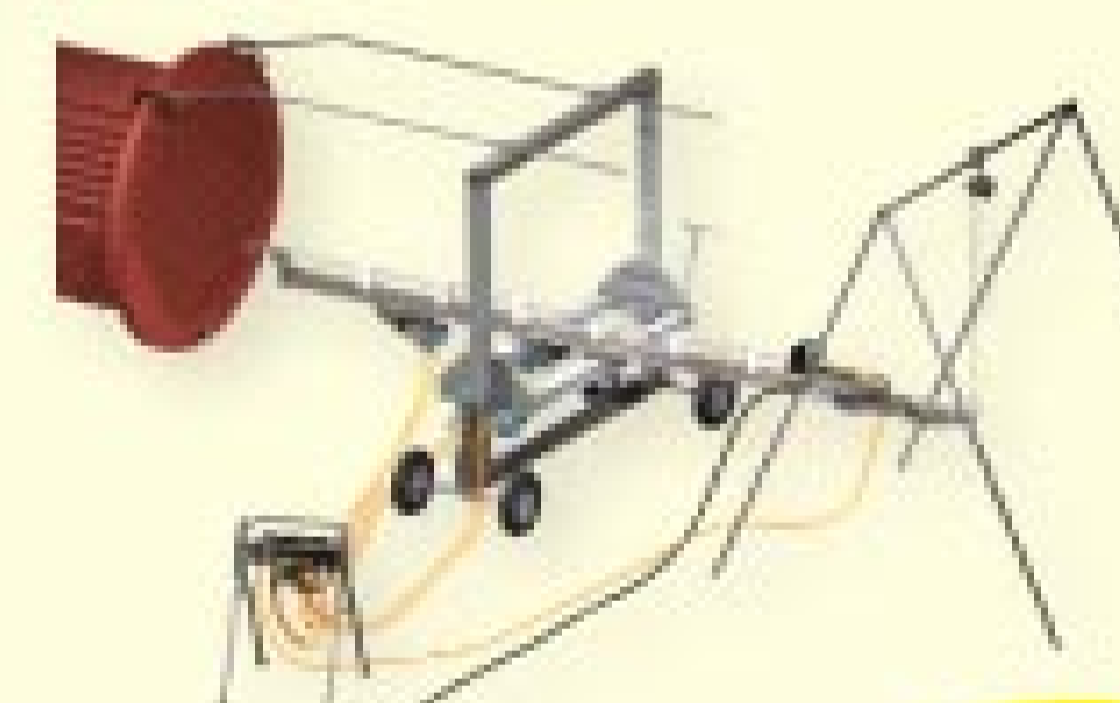
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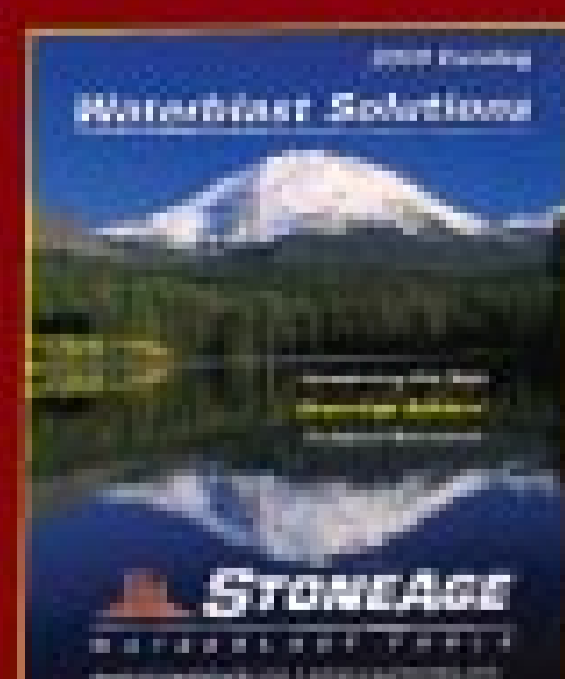


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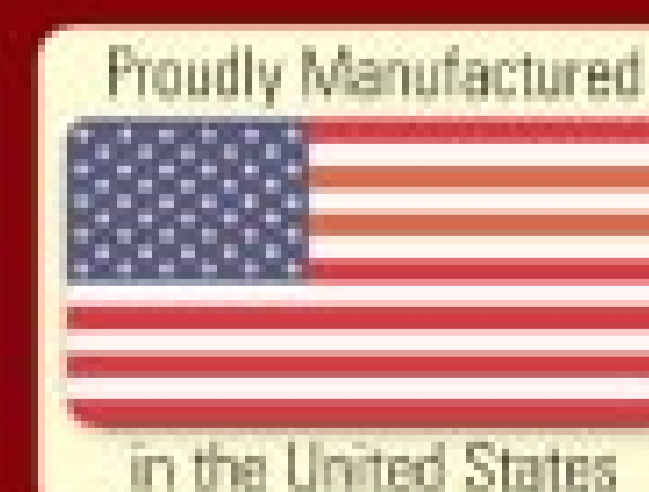
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By Ken Wysocky

On the cover: Charlie Hall calls his sewer and drain-cleaning operation a "redneck enterprise," but it's actually a well-run business. In seven years, Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado has gone from three service vans to seven, five employees to 19, and one camera system to nine. Here, Christian Perez operates the company's Ring-O-Matic hydroexcavator. (Photography by Jon Asp)

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- Profile: Electric Eel Sewer & Drain Specialists, Calgary, Alberta
- Better Business: Contracts for selling online
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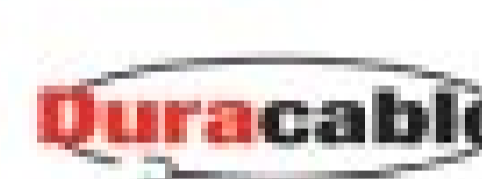
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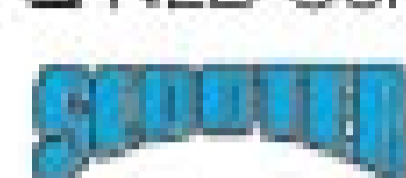


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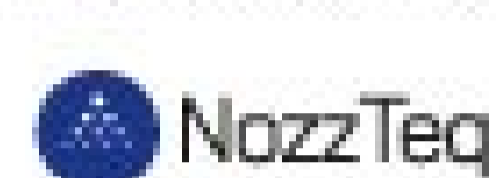
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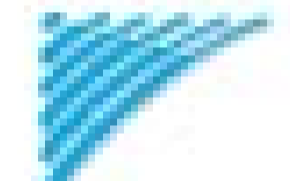
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Some Truths Don't Change

No matter how the online world transforms advertising, certain fundamentals still apply – and they probably always will

We all see it: The Internet is changing the way companies advertise. No longer are choices limited to TV, radio, print publications, and billboards. The online world has opened new possibilities almost too numerous to list.

Yet certain fundamentals of advertising remain immutable. Here are a few bits of wisdom gleaned from a previous career in advertising, and just from life in general.

1. You've got to back it up. Your product (or service) had better be as

good as your ads claim. Advertising pioneer Jerry Della Femina said, "There is a great deal of advertising that is much better than the product. When that happens, all that the good advertising will do is put you out of business faster."

I experienced this rule when, as a college kid, I bought a can of chili based on a TV ad that said, "It's not exactly tame!" I took it to my apartment, cut the lid off the can, heated it up and found...the absolute worst kind of tasteless, pasty stuff. Ever since then, I have looked with

suspicion on any product with that company's brand name. So avoid raising expectations, only to have the customer's experience trash them.

2. Spend smart. And that doesn't only mean being frugal. As American Advertising Federation hall-of-famer Morris Hite put it, "There is more money wasted in advertising by underspending than by overspending. Years ago, someone said that underspending in advertising is like buying a ticket halfway to Europe. You've spent your money, but you

"Advertising says to people, 'Here's what we've got. Here's what it will do for you. Here's how to get it.'" Under-emphasize any of those and your advertising will fail. Above all, make the "how to get it" clear, simple, memorable, and easy.

6. Don't let the ad get in the way of what you offer. Burnett again: "We want consumers to say, 'That's a hell of a product,' instead of, 'That's a hell of an ad.'" How many times have you seen a spot on TV that's so clever you remember it for days – but



Ted J. Rulseh

"I figured that if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest."

Muhammad Ali

never get there." In other words, your campaign simply crashed, and *all* the money you spent was wasted.

3. Repetition (frequency) counts. Boxing great Muhammad Ali understood that: "I figured that if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest." And he did convince a great many people. Of course, remember that he backed his words up in the ring. And remember, too, that frequency alone is not enough. Said ad legend William Bernbach, "In communications, familiarity breeds apathy."

4. People buy benefits. One advertising instructor admonished students: "Sell a good night's sleep – not the mattress." Or as the same rule is more often stated, "Sell the sizzle – not the steak." What are you really selling? Surely not a pipe liner or a cable machine or pictures on a pipe's insides. No, you're selling things like a healthy and functional home, peace of mind, absence of hassles, and disruption.

5. Remember the basics. As ad agency founder Leo Burnett observed,

you can't remember what it was advertising? There's an ad that did no good, no matter how many awards it won for creativity. Make sure that when people remember your ads, they also remember the name of your business.

7. Remember the KISS principle. Keep It Simple, Stupid. In the words of Timo Everi, an ad man from Finland, "The number of ideas to implement in advertising design should be odd – and three's too many." In other words, one ad, one idea. Sure, you'd like your radio spot to tell everything about your business. But listeners will more likely remember if you stick to one thing. Then to tell more of your story, maybe you can run more than one ad.

Finally, don't ask your advertising to do too much. A business is too complex for magic-bullet solutions. In the words of Los Angeles ad man Lee Clow, "I've never found a client's business problem that could be solved solely through advertising." ■

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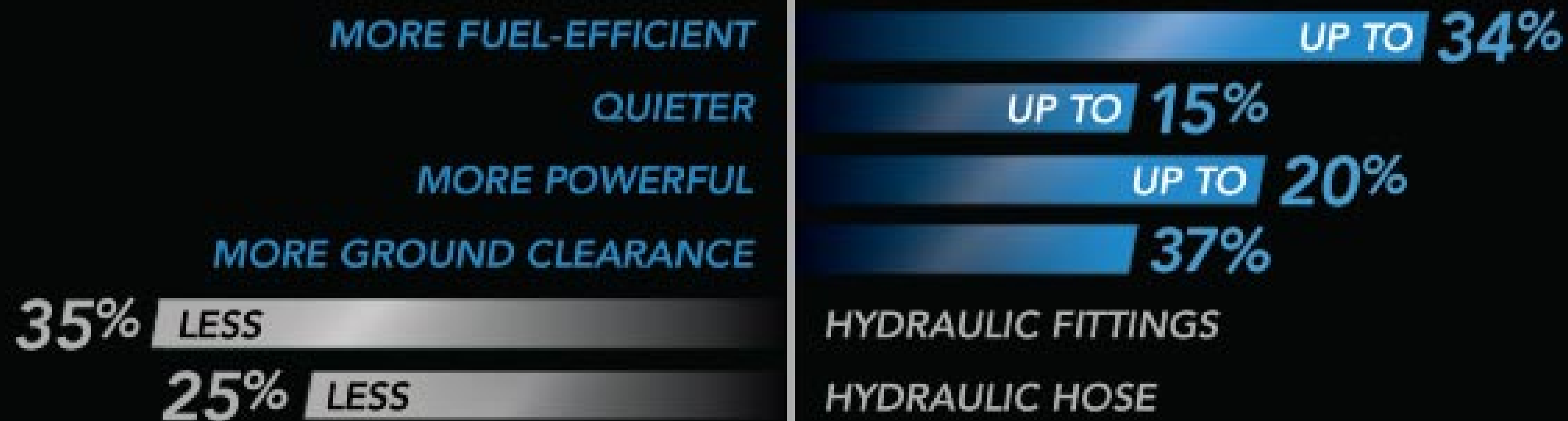
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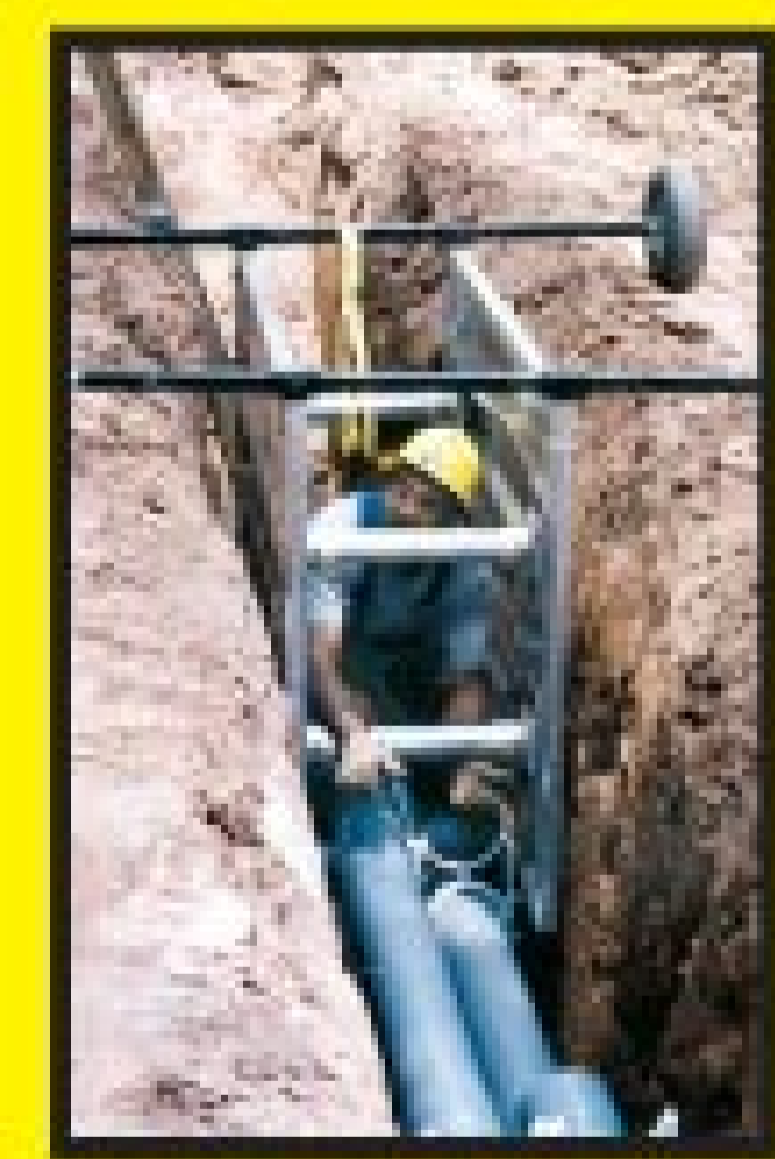
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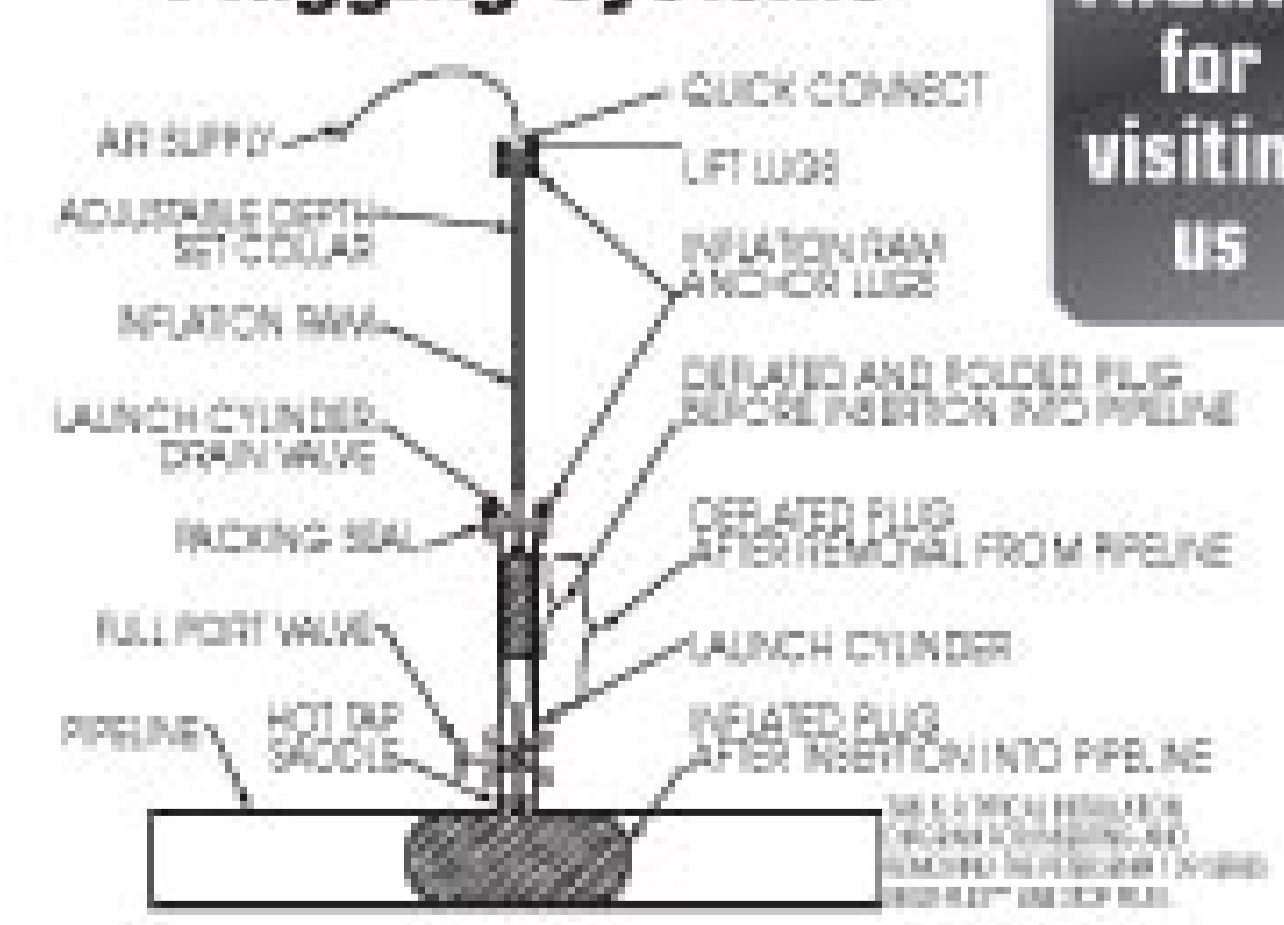


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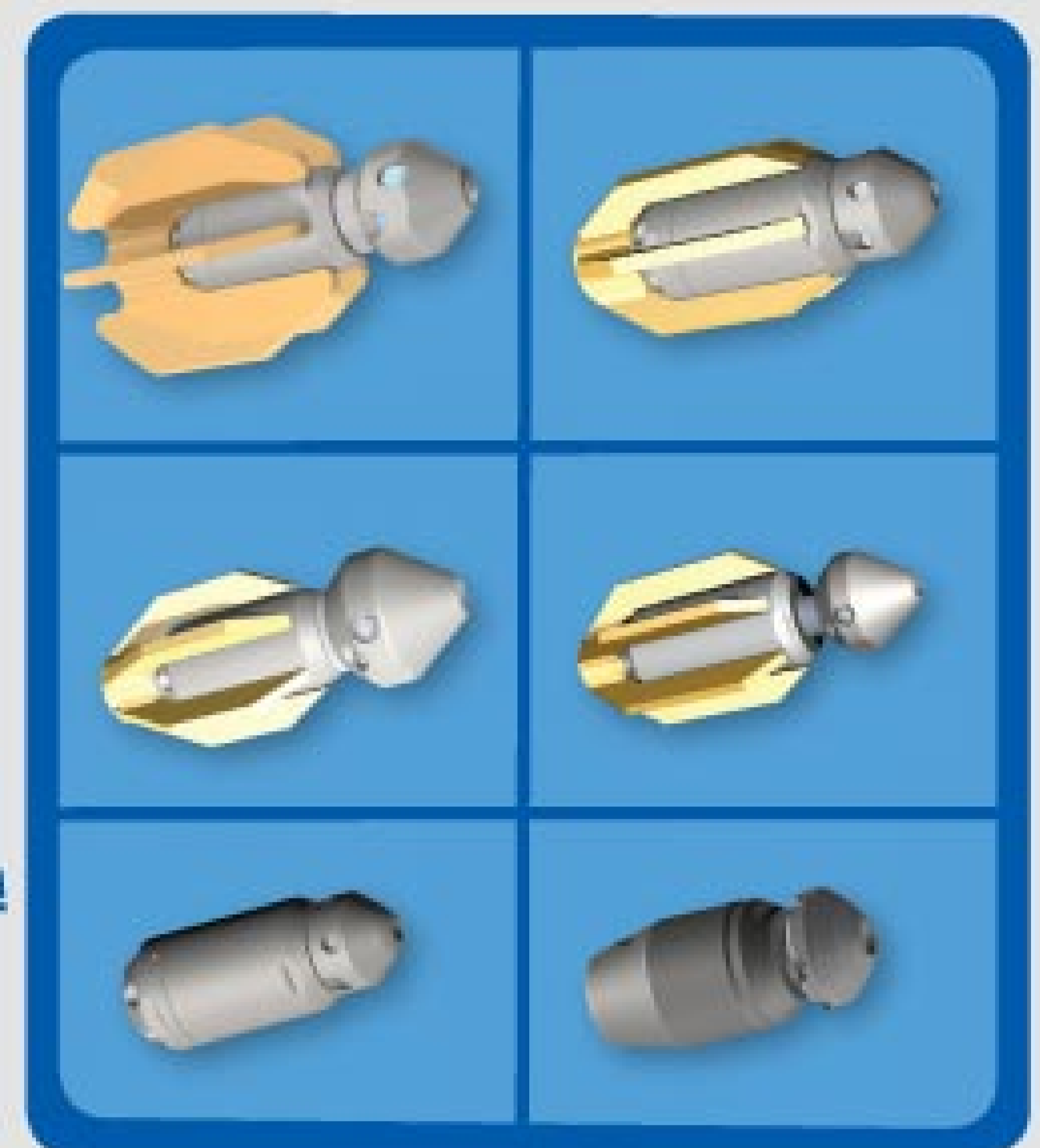
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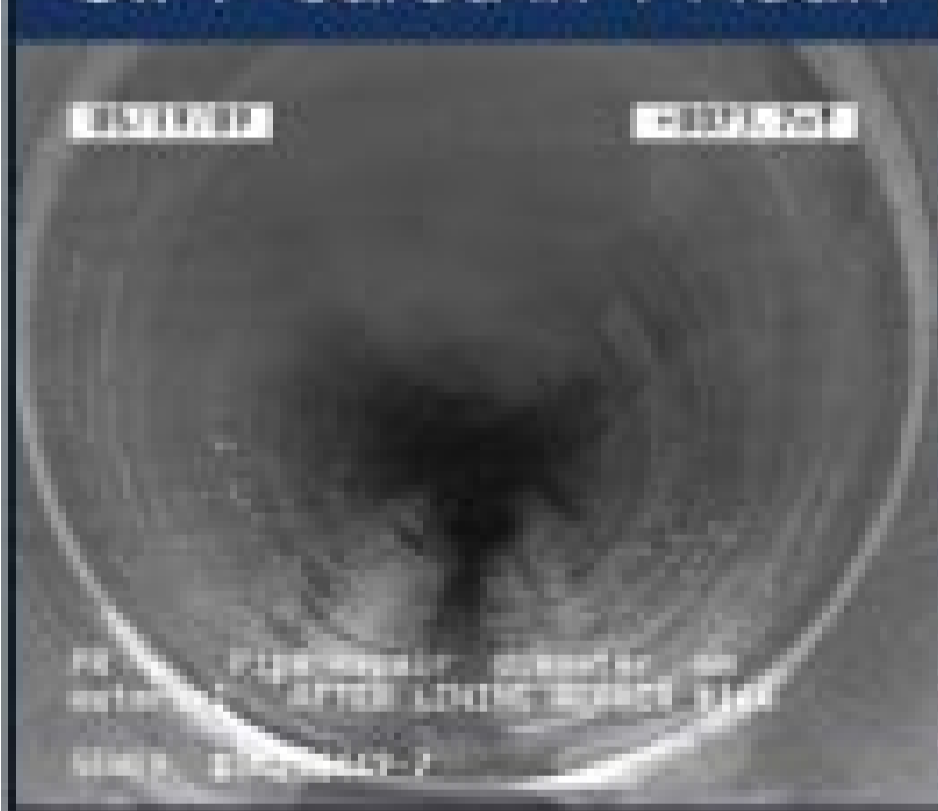
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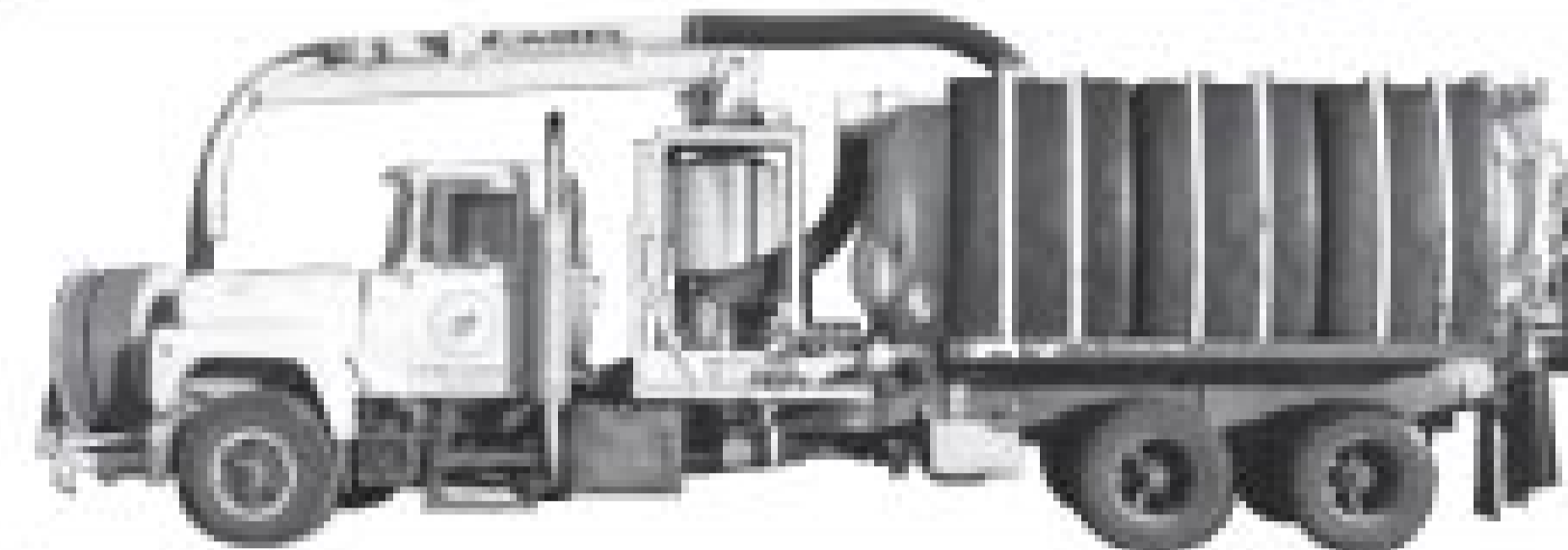
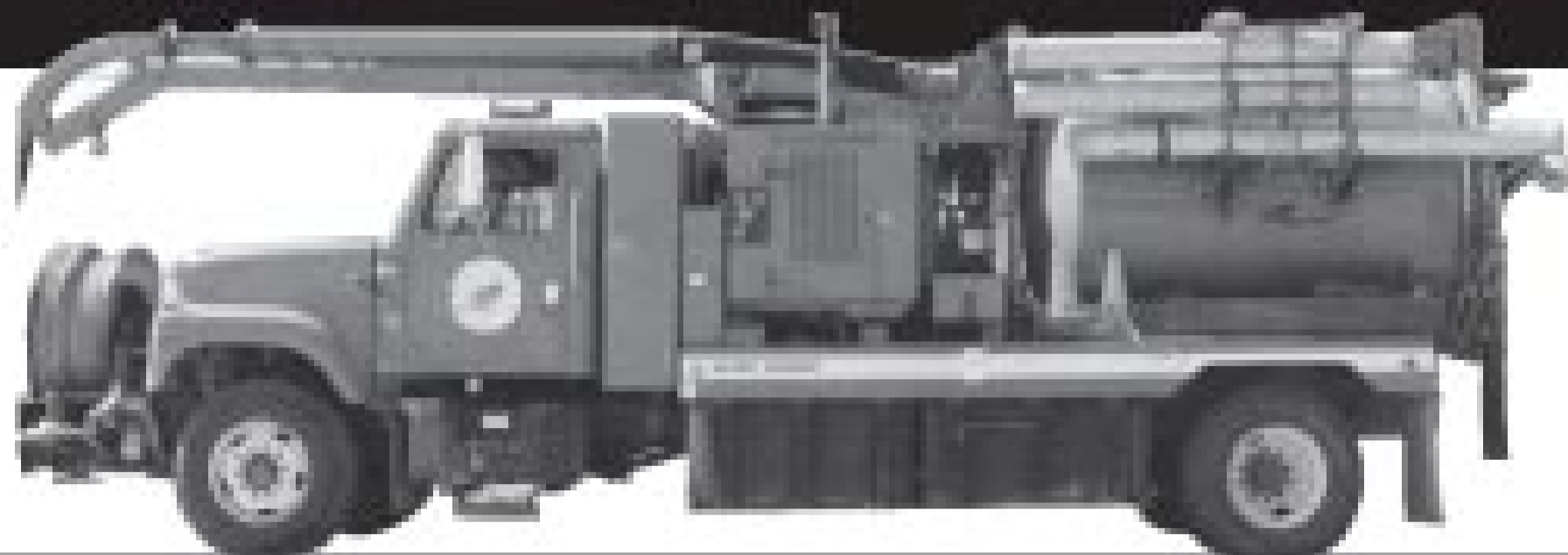
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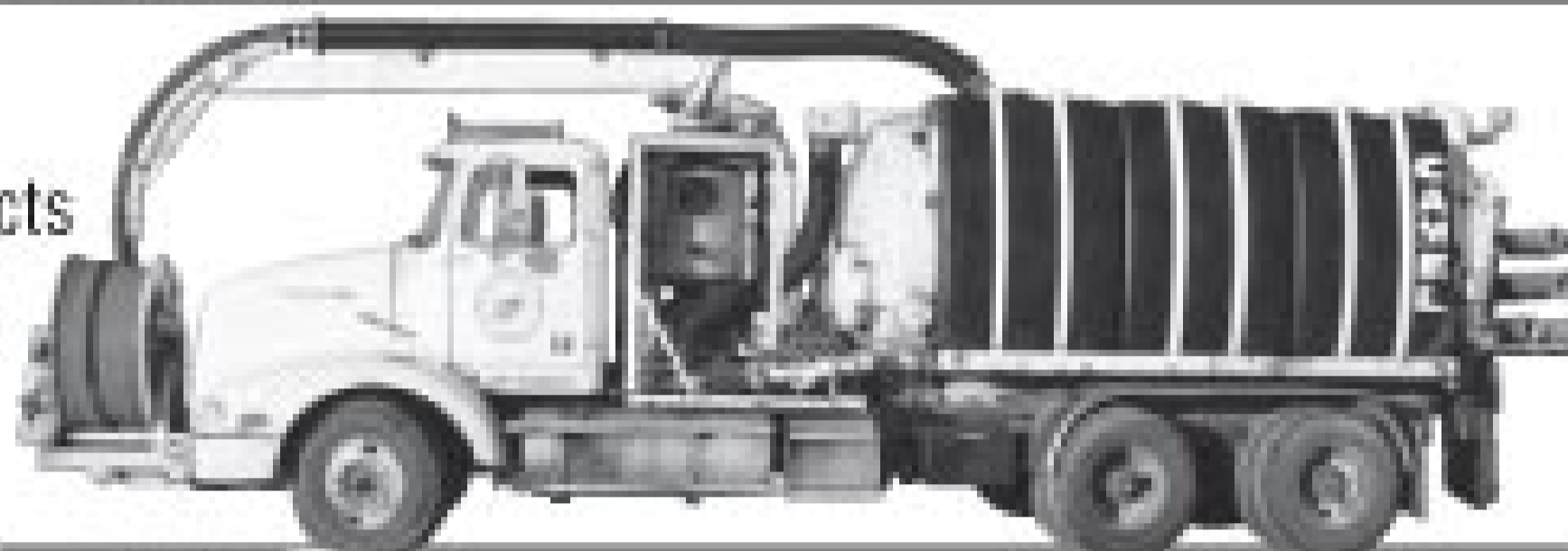
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65@2000 psi Myers pump.

**1992 Western Star Combo
Truck:** 280 hp, 1995 Super Products
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Myers pump.



**1991 Camel Combination Cleaner
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**1993 Ford LNT 8000 Vector
Combination:** 80 gpm @ 2000 psi,
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Rate That Lift

An online calculator helps you evaluate the safety of lifts your people perform on the job

By Ted J. Rulseh

We all know it: Manual lifting strains the back, shoulders, and legs. And improper lifting causes injuries that can be serious and lasting.

Safety
FIRST

But how can you tell if a lift is safe or unsafe? Is it OK for a technician to hoist a drain machine out of

and back into a truck at job sites? Or should you really outfit the truck with a ramp or some type of hoist?

With the online calculator, you can quickly enter data that approximates lifting conditions to which your people are exposed. The result will tell you whether the lift appears to be safe, or whether you should study the lifting procedure and consider making changes.

Well, you don't have to guess. There's a way to determine, mathematically, whether a given lift is likely to cause harm. It's called the

NIOSH Lifting Equation. You can find information about it in various places on the Internet, and one Web

site, http://www.emcins.com/loss_control/quick_links/employee_safety_health/ergonomicsNIOSH.aspx, actually has an online calculator that uses the equation as its basis.

Why it matters

Safe lifting is important because injuries caused by manual lifting are a leading health and safety concern nationwide.

The National Safety Council says overexertion injuries to the back, shoulders, and knees account for more than three in 10 injuries on the job. NIOSH (the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) created the lifting equation to help employers determine the reasonable certainty of the safety of lifting tasks and to set reasonable limits for how much employees should lift. The equation is one of various tools that can be used in a complete injury prevention program.

NIOSH created its first guidelines for manual lifting in 1981 and released the first version of the lifting equation in 1991. It has been updated since then. In essence, the equation is used to calculate a Recommended Weight Limit for a given task, based on a variety of factors:

- How far out from the body the object is at the beginning and end of the lift.

- How high the object is from the ground at the beginning and end of the lift.
- The vertical distance the object is lifted.
- How far the body has to twist at the beginning of the lift and at the end.
- How many such lifts are performed per minute, over how long a time.
- The amount of force required to grip the object.
- The weight of the object.

Checking it out

With the online calculator, you can quickly enter data that approximates lifting conditions to which your people are exposed. The result will tell you whether the lift appears to be safe, or whether you should study the lifting procedure and consider making changes.

Of course, just casually using this calculator is not an appropriate way to gauge the safety of lifts your people perform. For that, you may need to rely on an expert. But the equation and the calculator may help you "red flag" lifting procedures that may be putting your people at more risk than you imagine.

If your people do a fair amount of lifting, then it might be worth your spending some time observing lifting tasks in the field, and taking a few minutes to use the calculator. You can learn more about the NIOSH Lifting Equation at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/94-110/>.



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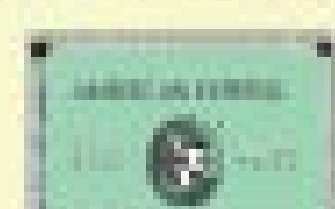
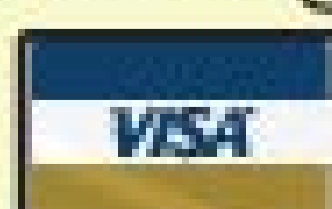
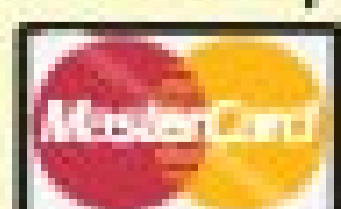
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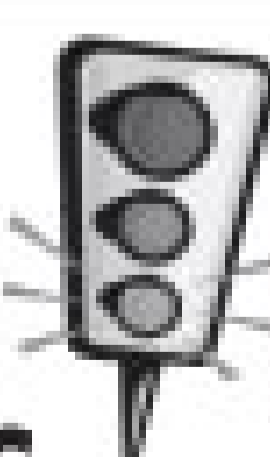
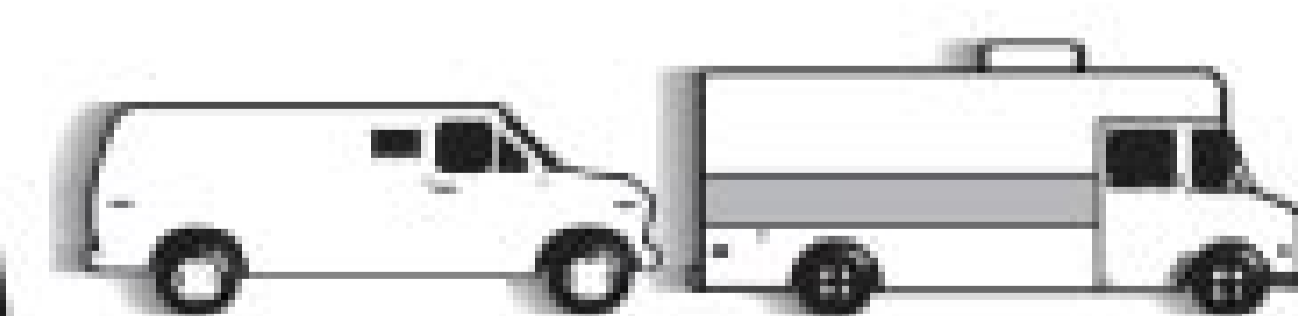


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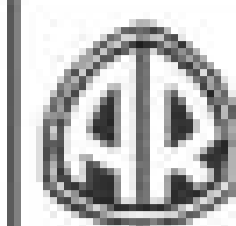
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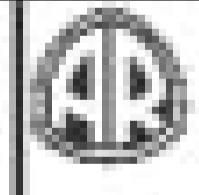
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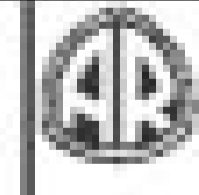
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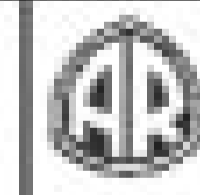
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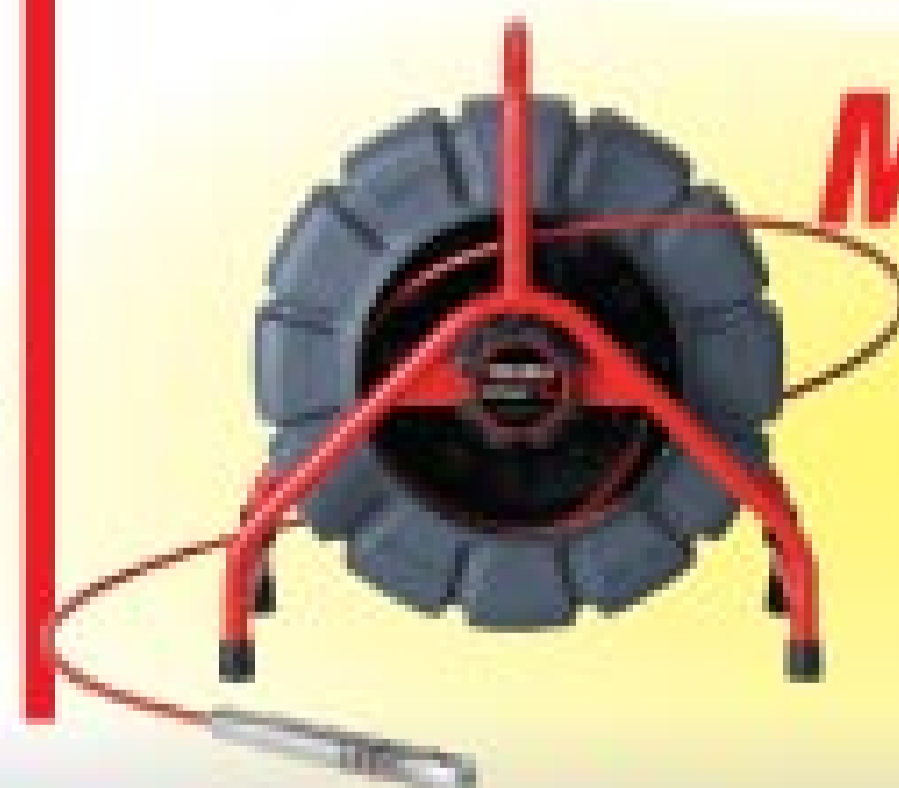
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Industry Rising

2010 Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo sees growth in attendance along with an abundance of new tools and technologies for cleaning contractors

By Ted J. Rulseh



The 30th Annual Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo struck an optimistic note for the environmental service industry. Attendance reached 8,784 persons representing 3,921 companies, up 3.7 percent over 2009. Exhibitors almost universally reported interested buyers and strong sales.

A cruise around the exhibit floor also showed continuing innovation in products and technologies that help contractors save labor, serve customers better, and boost profits. Here is a look at some of the innovations on display.



RamVac HX Series 8-inch hydroexcavator from Sewer Equipment Company of America.



BLASTMAX pumping unit from KMT Aqua-Dyne.



EagleCam color mini-camera inspection system from UEMSI.



Duct Hunter traceable rodder from Jameson LLC.



Saflex-2000 semi-automated tube lancing system from NLB Corp.



SeeSnake LT1000 laptop interface from RIDGID.

Hydroexcavating truck

The **RamVac HX12** hydroexcavator from **Sewer Equipment Company of America** can dig safely and also bulk-load material. It has a 5,500-cfm/27-inch-Hg positive displacement blower that can be activated from the control panel. A temperature-controlled environmental chamber keeps the water system from freezing. Dual cyclone and final filters ensure that the blower is protected even when excavating dry materials. Call 800/323-1604 or visit www.ram-vac.com.

Trailered blaster

The **BLASTMAX** pumping unit from **KMT Aqua-Dyne** is a versatile pumping unit for industrial cleaning, surface preparation, and petrochemical applications. A Valve-In-Line fluid end design provides high volumetric efficiency for high productivity and low operating cost. Units operate at pressures from 5,000 to 40,000 psi and at flows from 0.93 to 125 gpm. Base unit packages at 30,000 to 40,000 psi include skid, diesel or electric motor, bare shaft pump, power transmission, filtration system, water tank, charge pump, and fuel tank (for diesel units). Call 800/826-9274 or visit www.aqua-dyne.com.

Compact camera

The **EagleCam** color mini-camera inspection system from **UEMSI** includes a lightweight briefcase-style power control unit with a 10.4-inch color LCD monitor and 200 feet of video push cable. It works on AC or DC power. The CM-1 camera head has 15 white LEDs. The standard package includes a 4- to 6-inch brush skid, cable reel made of lightweight, heavy-duty steel tubing, video input and output RCA connections, and a video amplifier to allow operation with up to 500 feet of cable. Call 800/666-0766 or visit www.uemsi.com.

Duct tracer

The **Duct Hunter** traceable rodder from **Jameson LLC** traces underground conduit or pipe with a rod containing a copper trace wire to enable mapping without digging or trenching. The system can trace at depths to 10 feet. A wheeled frame allows easy field transport. The rod's ferrule attaches to a sonde, roller guide or pulling eye. Call 800/346-1956 or visit www.jamesonllc.com.

Wheeled tube lancer

The **Saflex-2000** semi-automated tube lancing system from **NLB Corp.** has a new hose-drive system that can drive hoses at pressures up to 40,000 psi. The cart-mounted system lets the operator position the lances against the tube bundle, then index them forward with the controls on the hand lance. The flow of high-pressure water can be started and stopped with the appropriate NLB foot box (not included). The system can run one or two lances. Fully adjustable flex lance stroke length allows the machine to be configured for various length bundles. Call 248/624-5555 or visit www.nlbcorp.com.

Laptop camera interface

The **SeeSnake LT1000** laptop interface from **RIDGID** (available summer 2010) provides a flexible way to digitally record, monitor and manage drain-inspection footage when paired with a SeeSnake reel and PC laptop with SeeSnake HQ software installed. The interface is designed to give users the efficiency of a laptop for managing drain footage in the field. Users can complete tasks without transferring data between field devices and a PC, saving time spent converting files. The software enables easy reporting functionality and allows footage to be sent to end users through methods such as a thumb drive or SD card, DVD, e-mailed PDF reports, or by upload to the RIDGIDConnect subscription-based online business tool. Call 800/769-7743 or visit www.ridgid.com.



Spinner manhole and lift station cleaning tool from Mosmatic Corp.



Magnum PVR lateral push camera system from Hathorn Corporation.



300-gallon Platform Series waterjetter from US Jetting.



VIS 330/340 push camera inspection system from Wohler USA.



PJ3000 portable waterjetter from Drincables Direct.



HT100 hydraulically driven waterblast tool from Waterblasting Technologies.

Lift-station cleaner

Spinner manhole and lift station cleaning tools from **Mosmatic Corp.** deliver water at up to 5,000 psi when attached to a waterjetter. The devices are made of stainless steel with debris shields to prevent arm damage and a safety cage to prevent impact with surfaces. Units are available with 1/4- or 3/8-inch water ports. Various sizes are available to fit different manhole or basin diameters. Call 262/857-9880 or visit www.mosmatic.com.

Push camera

The **Magnum PVR** lateral push camera system from **Hathorn Corporation** records directly to an SD card that can then be played back in any computer. The unit comes standard with a 16-page text writer and color camera head. Its portability and removable monitor case make it easy to transport and to carry up and down stairs. Call 905/886-2835 or visit www.hathorncorp.com.

High-pressure jetter

The **300-gallon Platform Series** of waterjetters from **US Jetting** now includes a model delivering 5,000 psi/18 gpm. Trailer-mounted units come with a central control panel attached to the hose reel, Jump Jet pulsation system, hydraulic-powered seven-position swivel hose reel with 500 feet of high-pressure jetting hose, 300-gallon rotationally molded water tank, lockable toolboxes on each side, and a choice of diesel engines. The unit rides on a 7,000-pound-torque flex axle with 16-inch tires and an electric or hydraulic braking system. Call 800/538-8464 or visit www.usjetting.com.

Pan-and-tilt push camera

The **VIS 330/340** push camera inspection system from **Wohler USA** has a camera head with 360-degree pan and 180-degree tilt that allows the lens to

inspect even small defects. The head measures 1.5 inches diameter and 2 1/3 inches long. The waterproof camera head is fully encapsulated and comes with an exchangeable dome. The control panel has an SD card recorder wide-screen color monitor keypad with extra-large keys, digital distance measurement, video output, and USB adapter. Call 978/750-9876 or visit www.wohlerusa.com.

Portable jetter

The **PJ3000** portable waterjetter from **Drincables Direct** is powered by a 13-hp Honda gasoline engine and delivers 3,000 psi/4 gpm to clean 1 1/4- to 6-inch pipes. Its direct-drive triplex pump has stainless steel valves and ceramic plungers. The package includes 75 feet of hose with nozzle, plus toolbox, gloves, face shield, four-nozzle kit with storage box, and tip cleaner. Call 800/421-4580 or visit www.drincables.com.

Waterblasting gun

HT100 hydraulically driven waterblast tools from **Waterblasting Technologies** are lightweight devices that are versatile on the job and easy to service. The tools keep operators at a safe distance and allow ambidextrous operations. Multiple head and nozzle configurations are available, and the tools have a triple operator safety trigger mechanism. The 14-pound tools have a cleaning capacity of 50 to 400 square feet per hour. Call 772/223-7393 or visit www.waterblastingtechnologies.com.

Tank inspector

Tank inspection pole cameras from **Remote Vision System** are designed to make confined-space inspections safe and inexpensive without manned entry. The systems include video cameras on telescoping poles that



Tank inspection pole camera from Remote Vision System.



Elite-SC pipeline inspection system from Ratech Electronics.



Reach trailer-mounted vacuum system from Guzzler Manufacturing.

extend to 18 feet. The systems are lightweight and portable and come complete with camera, cable, television monitor, carrying case, onboard batteries, and power cord. Call 612/221-6690 or visit www.remotevisionsystem.com.

SD-based survey recording

The **Elite-SC** pipeline inspection system from **Ratech Electronics** is built around a fully digital SD card recorder. The control unit folds into a compact and lightweight briefcase-style case weighing 10 pounds. It includes an 8-inch high-resolution LCD screen and keyboard. The SD card recorder is accessible from the front of the unit. Video is recorded in MPEG-4-SP ASF format, and 240 minutes can be recorded into a 1-GB SD card. Operating functions are top-mounted on the control panel. Call 800/461-9200 or visit www.ratech-electronics.com.

Versatile vacuum unit

The **Reach** trailer-mounted vacuum system from **Guzzler Manufacturing** has a debris tank that lifts and pivots for easy dumping. The unit carries a positive displacement blower with output from 2,300 to 5,600 cfm and capable of 27-inches-Hg vacuum. The three-stage filtration system provides cyclonic separation, a baghouse with Teflon-coated quick-change filter bags with continuous reverse pulse air cleaning, and a high-efficiency blower safety filter. A lockable steel shroud covers all major components. Power comes from a 170-hp, 225-hp or 325-hp John Deere turbocharged diesel engine. Call 815/672-3171 or visit www.guzzler.com. ■



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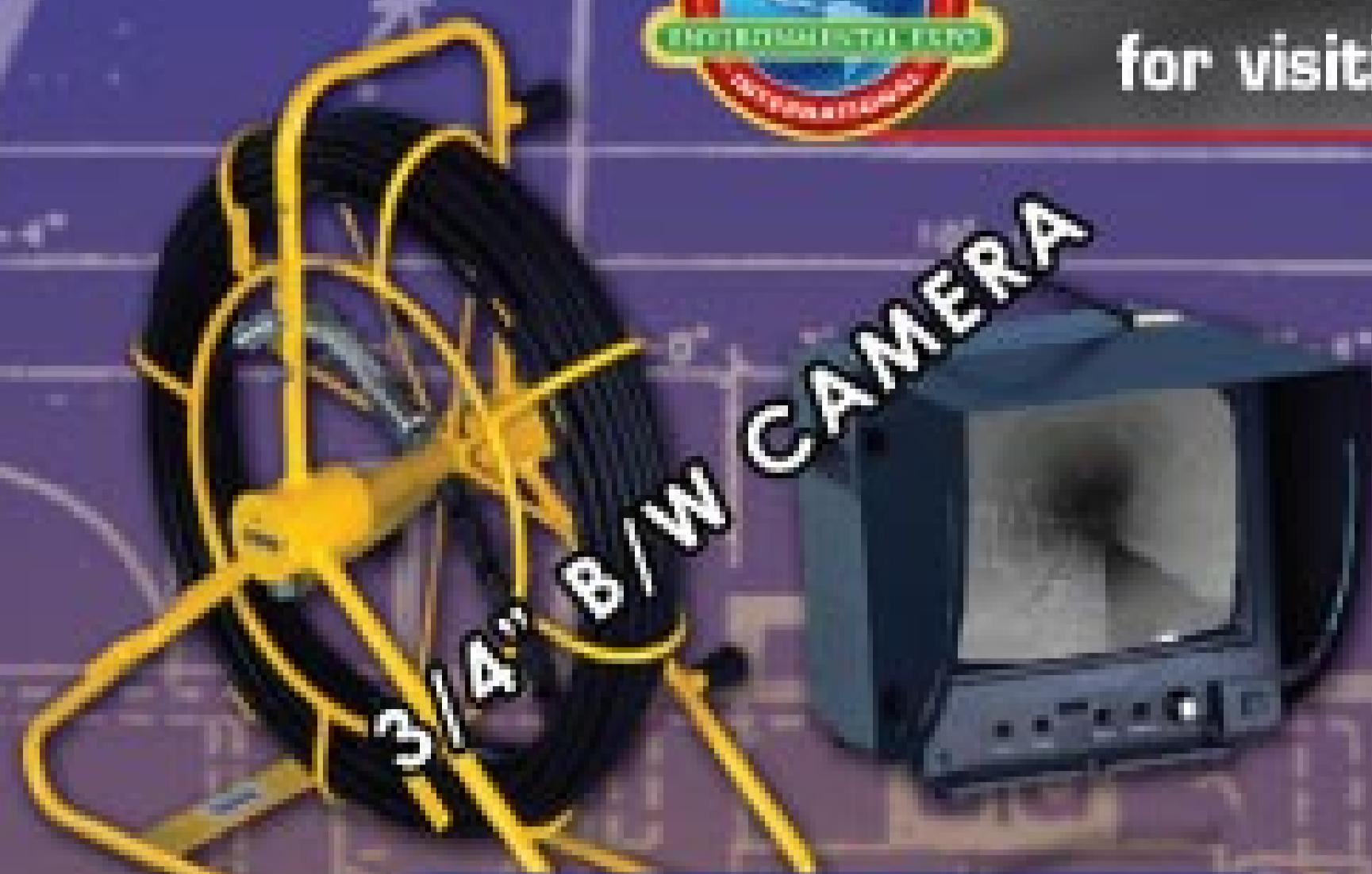


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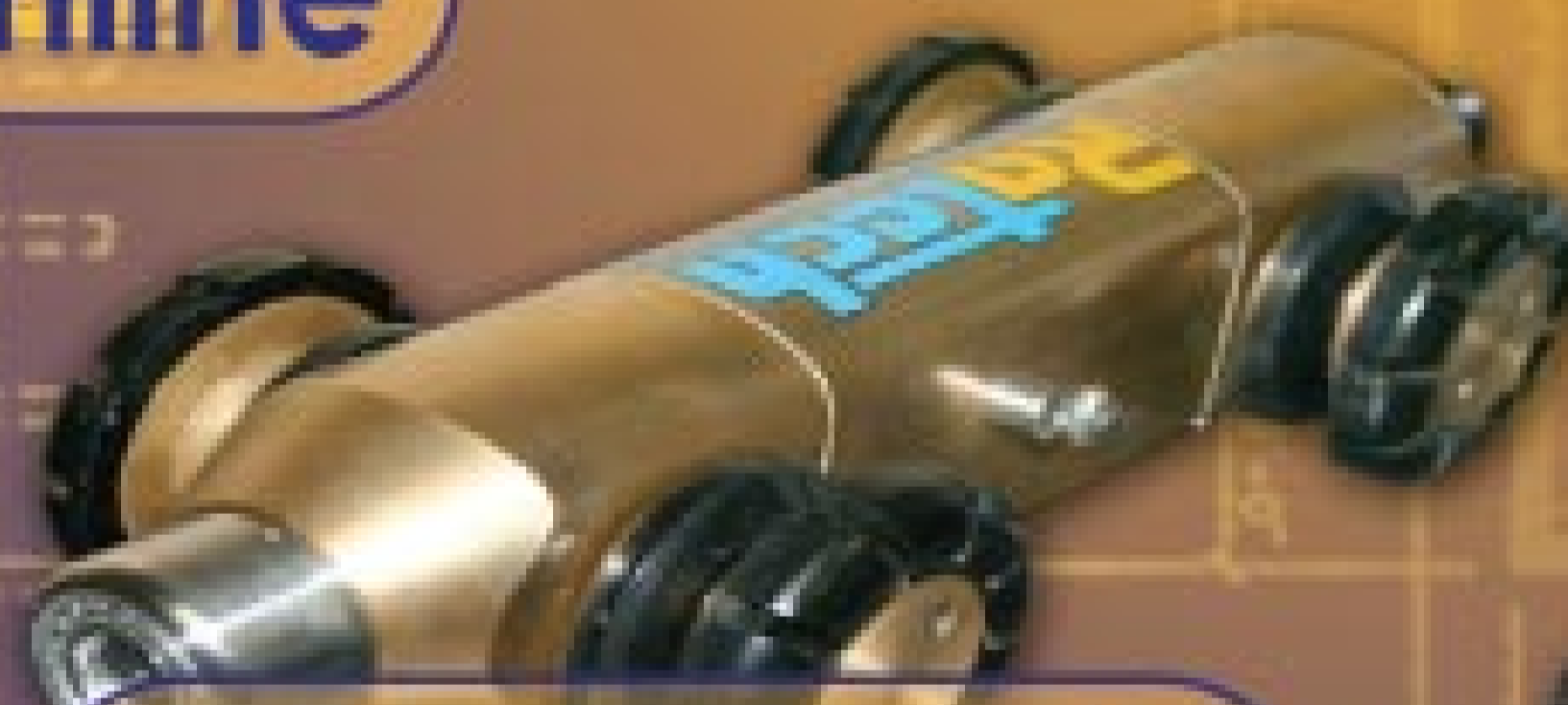


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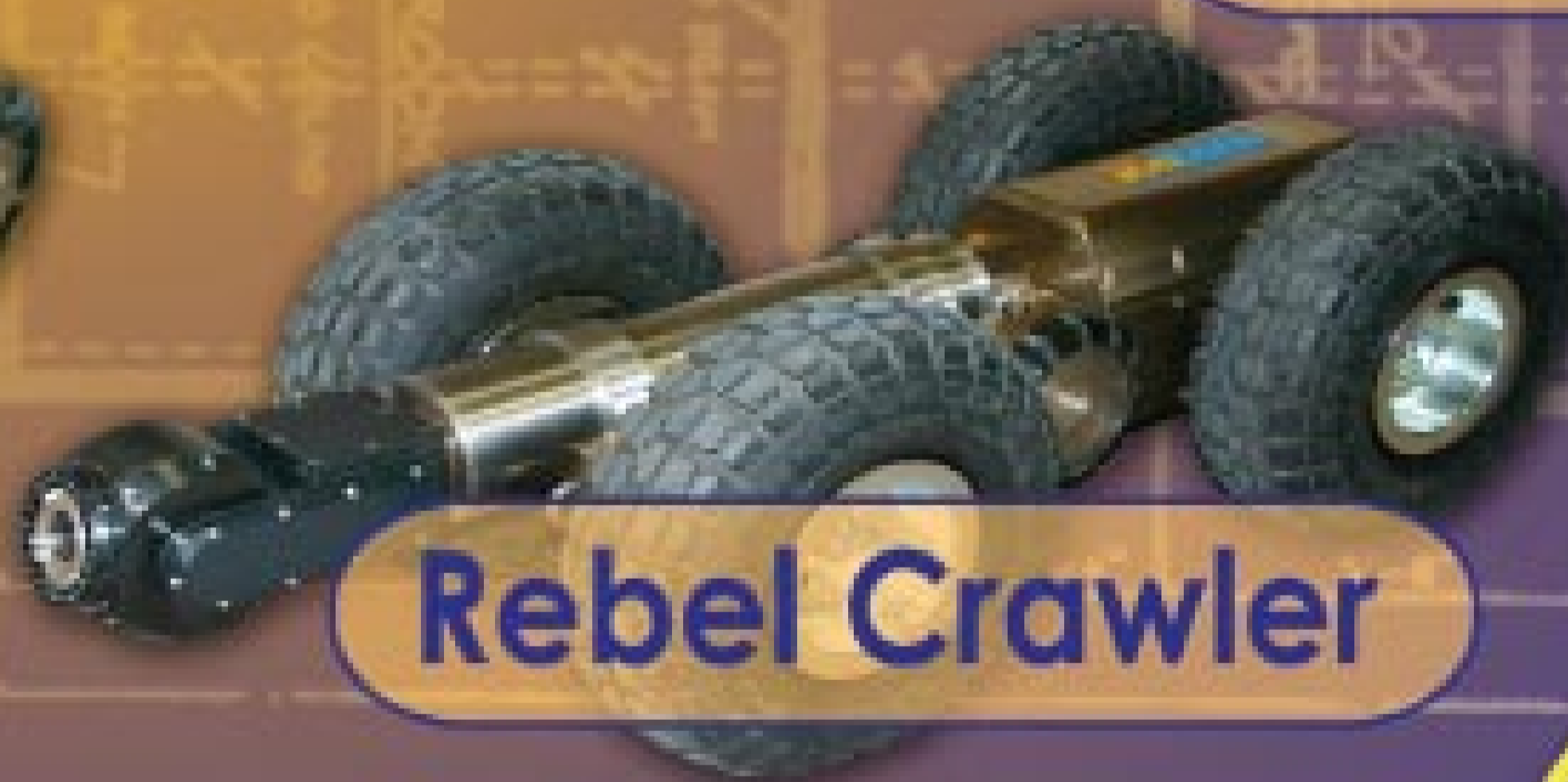
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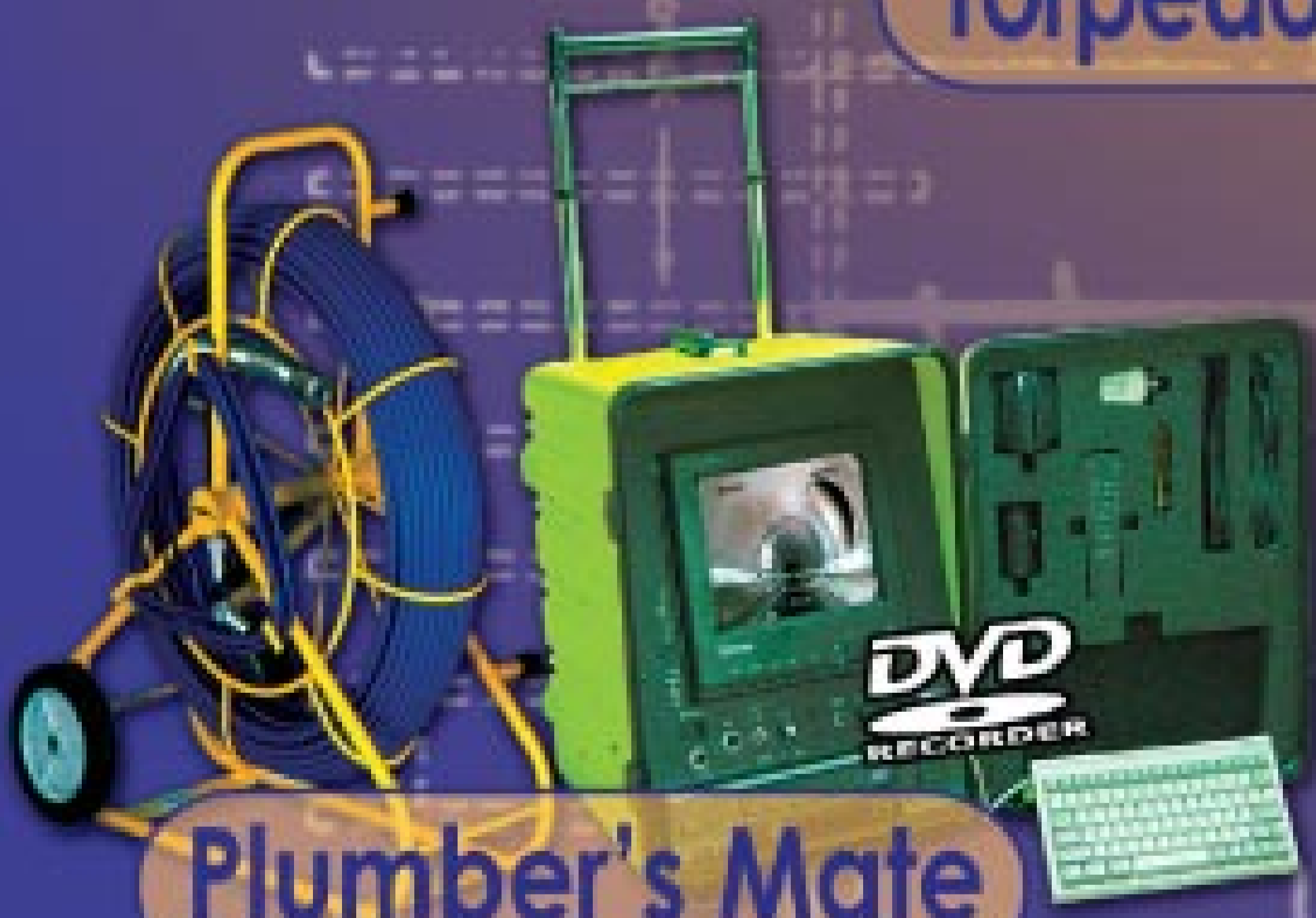
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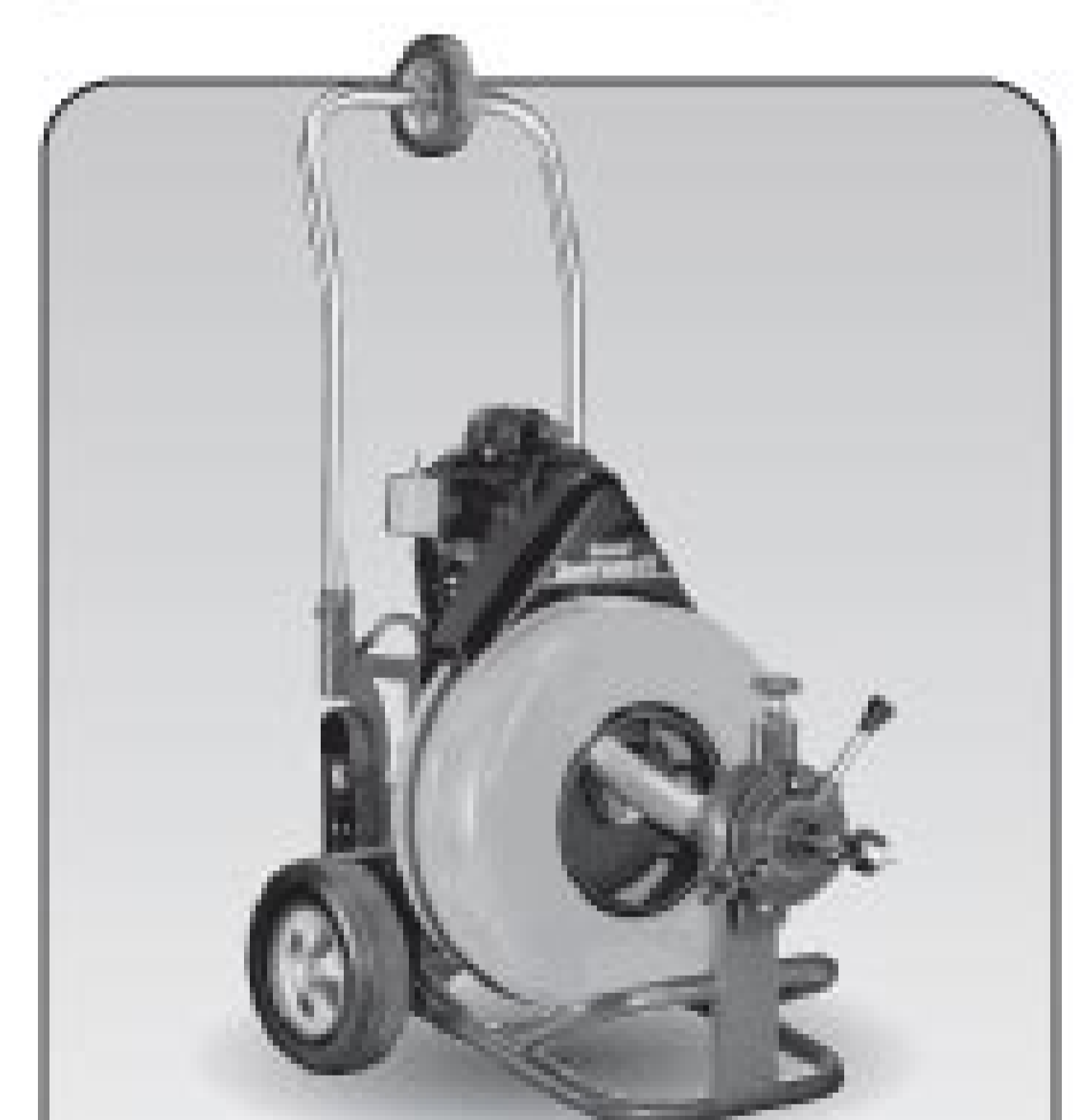
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Drain Visions technicians (from left) Mike Beausil and J.R. Moore and owner Frank Canora interact during a job in Blackwood, N.J. The company's specialties include pipeline inspection. (Photography by Kevin Cook)



Members of the Drain Visions team with a company truck: From left, owner Frank Canora, and team members J.R. Moore, Mike Beausil, and Joe Capone.

PROFILE

DRAIN VISIONS LLC, BLACKWOOD, N.J.

OWNER: Frank Canora
 FOUNDED: 1999
 EMPLOYEES: 4
 SERVICE AREA: 150-mile radius
 SPECIALTIES: Drain line locating, inspection, and jetting
 AFFILIATIONS: New Jersey Water Environmental Federation



Doubling Down

Drain Visions LLC pursues fast growth with high energy, an adaptable business plan, and quality service as a subcontractor to local plumbers

By Scottie Dayton

Video inspection cameras are beautiful things to Frank Canora. His belief in pipe inspections led him to open Drain Visions LLC in Blackwood, N.J., in 1999.

At first, Canora rented a friend's equipment, working as a subcontractor while building his own commercial customer base. With bulldog tenacity, Canora built a reputation as the go-to man for plumbing and mechanical contractors to call when all else failed. Today, they still provide 65 percent of his work.

On the way, with frequent modifications to his business plan, Canora doubled the company's revenue each year for seven years. Then he made his biggest adjustment, stepping out of the service van, hiring people, and focusing on job estimates and sales.

Drain Visions is growing at a steady 10 percent now, but Canora knows it can do better. He plans an aggressive, face-to-face marketing campaign and envisions branching into underground leak detection and hiring two more employees within five years.

Laying groundwork

Much of Drain Visions' work is identifying and cleaning drain line stoppages or marking the location and depth of blockages for excavation. Its service area encompasses the southern halves of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and customers include engineering firms, plumbing and mechanical contractors, and environmental service companies. Commercial accounts contribute 70 to 80 percent of revenue.

It took time for Canora to gain the plumbers' trust. "They're very cautious in who they allow around their work, because they're afraid of losing customers," he says. "My solution was not to do plumbing, and to present my company as a resource for contractors to accommodate customers' needs."

The strategy worked so well that even contractors who clean and inspect some drain lines on their own call Drain Visions when they are overloaded or their equipment is down. "I never took any customers from anybody, and I never burned any bridges," says Canora. "That philosophy paid off, because 90 percent of the time, I'm the subcontractor these guys call for help." They also refer Drain Visions to their customers.

The business got a boost when the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) mandated time-of-sale inspections of industrial sites. Where chemicals are used, engineers must know if drains are broken, soil is contaminated, or pipes discharge into watersheds. They turn to Drain Visions for answers.



Drain Visions technicians J.R. Moore and Mike Beausil retrieve an inspection camera after a job in Blackwood, N.J.

"I never took any customers from anybody and I never burned any bridges. That philosophy paid off, because 90 percent of the time, I'm the subcontractor these guys call for help."

Frank Canora

Systems. With that equipment, he did subcontract work for Bommer and two other plumbing companies.

For almost seven years, Canora's only help was Bob Kull, a part-timer who worked two weeks per month. His presence freed Canora to focus on sales.

Unusual jobs

The two often found themselves in interesting situations where other contractors wanted no part of a problem. One job involved a homeowner with a malfunctioning toilet: Flushing it sucked the water out of the sink basin and bathtub traps, allowing sewer gas into the bathroom. Various plumbers tried everything in the book without success.

"We were one of the only companies that would go to the house," says Canora. Finding nothing wrong with the lateral or inside lines, the men turned

"We use the sonde in the camera head for 90 percent of our locating work, but sometimes dye tests are necessary," says Canora. "We do whatever it takes to make the DEP happy." Inspections are stored on DVD and are accompanied by written reports that include the depth of pipes and the best excavation points.

Company toolbox

The company's two technicians, J.R. Moore and Mike Beausil, use mini and full-size SeeSnake Plus cameras and locators from RIDGID, or a custom-built inspection trailer from CUES Inc., equipped with an OZIL pan-and-tilt camera on a tracked transporter for mainline inspections and a K2 portable video inspection system. The men create detailed reports on CUES Granite XP asset inspection and decision support software.

Canora wishes he had that equipment when he opened Drain Visions. "My business plan was to specialize in video pipe inspections, locating, and jetting, but I needed a customer base before any bank would give me a loan," he says. He turned to his former employer, Wayne Bommer of W.R. Bommer Plumbing in Laurel Springs, N.J., renting his mini and standard Scooter Video Inspection

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

Frank Canora, confident that he could start his own drain line inspection and locating business, threw himself into running Drain Visions in Blackwood, N.J. For seven years, he worked nonstop with only a part-time helper, who came two weeks per month.

"I let the business run me," says Canora. "The relentless cycle left me exhausted, and that opened the door to depression. In 2006, I reached the point where I had to make a life-changing decision or lose everything I had worked for. I wasn't me anymore. I had lost myself."

Part of the solution was moving the office out of his house, enabling him to leave the work behind at the end of the day. Now he warns other business owners about the

hazards of doing paperwork every night instead of strengthening their marriages and watching their children grow.

"Sure, we have to work hard and face reality, but we must balance that effort with time to enjoy life, because it passes quickly," says Canora. "Sometimes business will take that time from you in a heartbeat."

Canora found part of the balance he seeks in working out at a gym and training in the martial arts twice a week for an hour before starting his day. "I don't move very well, but the training has really improved my focus and concentration," he says.

"Just doing a couple little things for myself has paid big dividends. I'm making up for some of the time I've lost."

to the roof, but not before they got a 40-foot ladder to reach it. Kull climbed up and lowered the push camera down the vent stack. Canora followed its progress on the monitor until he saw a large plastic drink bottle lodged cross-ways in the pipe.

"I yelled the discovery to Bob, and he said to send up some rope," says Canora. "He made a lasso and pulled out the bottle. It had been cutting off the vent every time the toilet flushed." The bottle apparently fell in during roof repairs.

Locating often involves retrieval of objects with cable equipment or metal pushrods with spiral or C-hook retrievers on the end. Technicians often cut or bend the hooks to help snag or push the object. "Contractors drop levels, screwdrivers, tape measures, and other hand tools down the drain," says Canora. "We even find lengths of replacement pipe, and once a can of plastic pipe primer."

Municipal income

Winter brings its own special locating jobs, as snowplow drivers knock brass cleanout caps down catch basins. "Once in the drain, they act like flappers and clog it," says Canora. "Depending on where we find the caps in the line, we pull them back to a manhole or jet them to the downstream manhole for retrieval. They're a real nuisance."

Drain Visions also subcontracts at health care facilities, and one of those provided the company's longest job. A hospital had constant backups and sewer flies in the cafeteria and some kitchen areas.

The plumbing contractor assumed the culprit was a drain handling 80 percent of the hospital's sewage. It ran underground 400 feet to a lift station, then the waste was pumped up to a manhole. The plumber's preventive maintenance had little effect, so the hospital engineering and operations supervisor called Drain Visions.

"I wound up not wanting to go to work or liking what I was doing, and the company stagnated. This was bad, because I love nothing better than to operate the camera all day."

Frank Canora

"It was a very hard line to inspect and clean because our only access was the pump station," says Canora. "Besides that, a lot of flow comes out of hospitals, and the pipe was half full of water." Packed grease and sewage prevented a thorough inspection.

The supervisor insisted that Canora set up a bypass to the manhole in case the pump station failed. Canora also needed permission from the township to discharge into the manhole. "Bob Kull and I worked from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. when the flow was lowest," says Canora. "We battled one week to clean the line and eliminate the sewer flies multiplying down there. However, we like those jobs because of the challenge."

Assorted challenges often caused Canora to modify his business plan. He initially marketed to real estate agents and homebuyers, but the state has no time-of-sale law. "Everyone viewed onsite system inspections as just another hurdle impeding settlement," he says. "So I put, 'Buying A Home? Request An Inspection' on my trucks. It's beginning to pay off, as we've seen an increase in those calls."

Life's detours

When he couldn't stay busy doing video pipe inspections and locating, Canora branched into emergency, 24/7 drain cleaning and hired an answering service for after-hours calls. "I always looked at what I could offer using the equipment I had," he says.

Seeing the need for even more expansion, he decided to rejuvenate onsite systems by pressure-washing cesspools and drainfield distribution lines using an O'Brien Manufacturing, a Div. of Hi-Vac Corporation, trailer-mounted 3518-SC hydrojetter.

The next natural transition was locating buried septic tanks. "These are the ones that haven't been pumped in 40 years and are hiding under garages, decks, driveways, and toolsheds," he says. Drain Visions also locates buried curb traps,



J.R. Moore conducts and observes a mainline inspection with a K2 portable inspection system from CUES Inc.

cleanouts, and manholes at apartment complexes and strip malls.

By working during the day and doing paperwork at night, Canora kept the company growing fast, but the relentless cycle took its toll, especially after Kull died. "I wound up not wanting to go to work or liking what I was doing, and the company stagnated," he says. "This was bad, because I love nothing better than to operate the camera all day."

More contact

Canora decided to devote 60 to 70 percent of his time to meeting customers and prospects face to face. He hired Joe Capone as operations manager, Robin Holbrook as his part-time assistant, and Moore and Beausil as technicians.

"It's better for me now than it has ever been," says Canora. "When I'm selling, Joe sends text messages saying where J.R. and Mike are and what jobs they're doing. That way, I can help them when necessary. It's working out very well, we're all happy, and the company is moving forward again."

Besides personal visits, Canora reaches commercial contractors by advertising in USA Blue Book, exhibiting at plumbing and mechanical expositions, attending contractor networking events, and hosting an occasional meeting of the local association of the New Jersey State League of Master Plumbers. He also started marketing to municipalities and their engineering firms.

Canora was 35 when he opened Drain Visions, but he wouldn't attempt it now at 45. "It takes too many years to build the business foundation," he says. "I built the company on honesty, reliability and, most of all, team players who don't give up. They always try to find the most economical solution, not the easiest and the fastest."

In the next five years, Canora hopes to hire two more employees and expand into underground leak locating and onsite system inspections, while maintaining the team-player ethic. "I think it's very important that everybody wants to come to work, enjoys what they do, and goes home safe," he says. "For myself, I'm not an office person. I don't want to grow so big that I can't jump in the truck whenever my guys need help." ■

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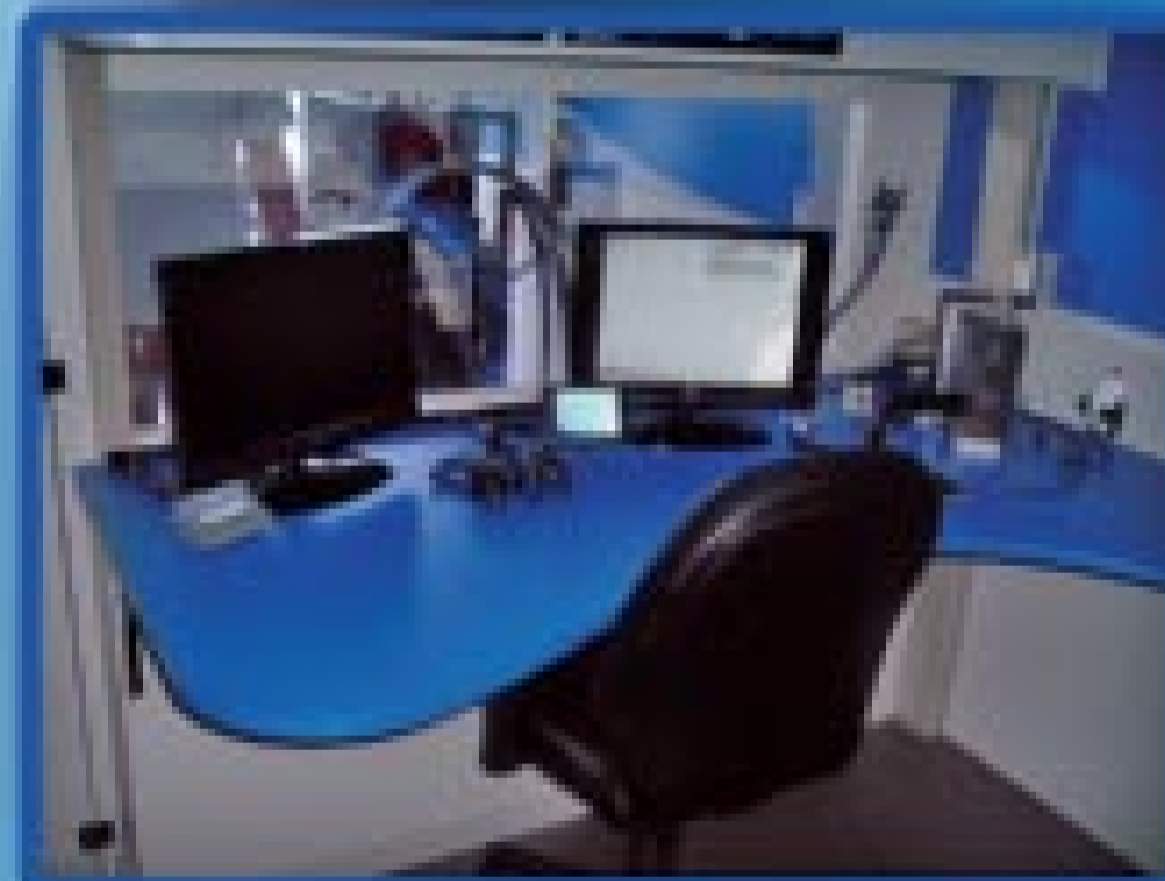
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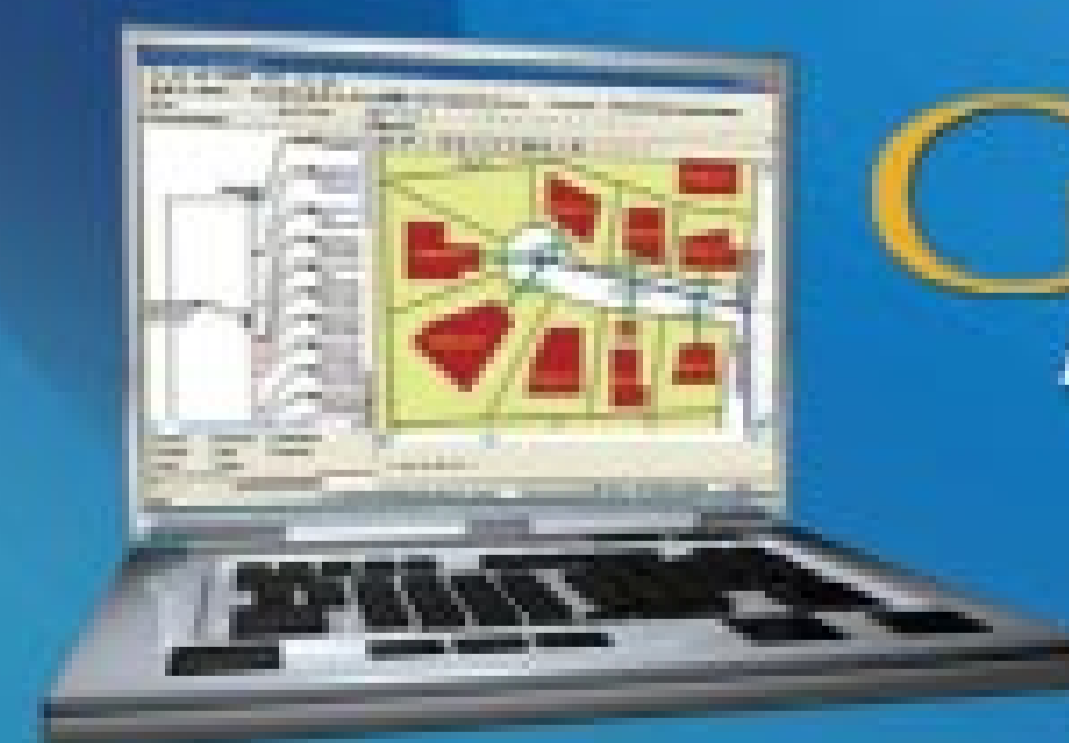


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Redneck Success

Charlie Hall combines a down-home approach with big-company management skills to achieve fast growth in a diversified Mr. Rooter franchise in Colorado

By Marian Bond

Charlie Hall may call his sewer and drain-cleaning operation a “redneck enterprise,” but there is no smirking about the way he has grown his business.

In seven years, Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado has gone from three service vans to seven, five employees to 19, and one camera system to nine. From first-year revenue of \$700,000, he has grown to a projected \$2 million for 2010. On the way, he has added a variety of services for his primarily residential customers, including line locating and trenchless repair.

Hall, who spent 25 years with Coca-Cola in marketing and sales, bought an existing Mr. Rooter franchise in Colorado Springs in 2003. “My son Nick, who was a technician with the franchise, informed me that the owner was going to sell,” Hall says. “Initially Nick was going to be a partner, but he moved on to other things.” Hall’s wife Delene, has worked in the business, but is now taking some time away.

Before making the purchase, Hall did a lot of “tumbling the numbers” with Mr. Rooter Corp. and decided there was a lot of room for growth and for expansion of the services. “Not actually knowing the industry, I realized I had to specialize in several facets to help generate income,” he says.

“We needed to get our arms around jetting, and we had to get into excavation, which the former owner had not done. We also needed to get into pipe lining and pipe bursting. We needed to grab some tools to do these needed processes.”

PROFILE

MR. ROOTER OF SOUTHERN COLORADO (SERVING COLORADO SPRINGS AND PUEBLO)

OWNER:	Charlie Hall
YEARS IN BUSINESS:	7
SPECIALTIES:	Drain cleaning, line locating, inspection, pipe bursting, pipe lining
ANNUAL REVENUE:	\$1.7 million (2009)
EMPLOYEES:	19
WEB SITE:	http://southerncolorado.mrrooter.com



Troy Bunn and Peter Gomalka use a Ring-O-Matic hydroexcavating system to access a broken pipe that caused water to leak into a homeowner's basement. (Photography by Jon Asp)



Learning the ropes

Hall's new services required an important first step: locating the sewer line. "We had an old locator and didn't know how to use it," he says. "I bought a brand-new piece of equipment from Prototek Corp. and of course no one could run it properly. We were learning as we went along. It would have been comical, if it wasn't so important.

"Over one holiday period, I called Prototek for some help. It turned out one of their guys was in Colorado Springs on vacation, and this guy, Kent Tarpley, came out to our shop and spent time from his vacation teaching us how to use that locator. It made all the difference in the world, and I bought another one on the spot.

"It took 'hands on' to get us started. That equipment is bullet proof. It doesn't need calibration. You can locate your lines. It is redneck-friendly. We are rednecks. A bunch of hillbillies."

The three Prototek locators the company now owns are multiple-frequency units. "We are getting 100 calls a week, and in many instances we need to find the sewer lines," Hall says. "Line locating is an essential part of what we do."

"When we start an excavation, we need all utility lines located. Colorado Springs Utilities will locate all the other lines, but we locate the sewer lines. If we miss the line, we could conceivably dig up a driveway, a curb, a gutter, that does not need to be dug up."

Charlie Hall

In marking sewer line locations, Hall has his own system. "Digging without knowing where you are going is like running a business without a plan," he says. "You can overcome this first with good, solid equipment. We always map the entire line from the house to the main.

"We move the pushrod in the camera and trace it with the locator, and put spots of green paint on the ground using a water-based paint. Or another technique is to use a little green flag on a wire. We'll put the mark every couple feet. It works. We have to be sure that the camera sends off the signal and



A Ring-O-Matic system provides hydroexcavation capability to Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado.

that it is picked up with the locator. Get the camera head to the problem area and pick up that signal."

Technicians use a locator five or six times every day, and Hall is considering adding a second excavation team, a Bobcat mini-excavator, and a fourth locator.

Getting it right

When locating a sewer line, several things come into play. "When we start an excavation, we need all utility lines located," Hall says. "Colorado Springs Utilities will locate all the other lines, but we locate the sewer lines. If we miss the line, we could conceivably dig up a driveway, a curb, a gutter, that does not need to be dug up. Sprinkler systems – this can be expensive if you miss. You need to have confidence in your equipment. A mistake could cost \$10,000."

Whenever he adds services, Hall chooses equipment with care. For high-pressure line cleaning, he chose two trailer jettors from US Jetting LLC each with pumps delivering 18 gpm/4,000 psi. He chose pipe bursting with Hammerhead, an Earth Tool Company, and CIPP lining equipment from Perma-Liner Industries Inc. The company lines one or two pipes per day and does a couple of pipe bursting jobs per week.

"We just had a job where we did a sewer reline on a house built in 1889," Hall says. "They originally had an outhouse and then various versions of plumbing. Clay was put in probably in the 1930s. This is a beautiful old house. Just think: They had new lining blown into their old line, and they started out with no indoor plumbing."

Another tool in the arsenal is a trailer-mounted hydroexcavator from Ring-O-Matic Manufacturing Inc. with a 500-gallon debris tank and a vacuum



Dan Burleson demonstrates line locating, another service of Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado.

BUSINESS IN THE ROCKIES

Charlie Hall has found plenty of opportunity, along with challenges, in growing Mr. Rooter of Southern Colorado. In Colorado Springs (population 550,000) and 40 miles south in Pueblo (100,000) he is digging in to enhance the company image and offer an array of services in a unique region.

"People may not realize that our sewer lines are 9 feet deep," he says. "We have full basements. If you are going to dig, you have to worry about where to put that soil. You have to be spot on as to where you dig. When you dig that deep and 5 feet wide, you have a huge amount of dirt. You can't make mistakes. It is unforgiving. Pretty close is not good enough."

With a substantial inventory of equipment and a range of services, Hall has beefed up sales by providing his tools and crew as subcontractors to other plumbers in the area, as well as to mechanical contractors. The subcontract work includes inspection, jetting, pipe bursting, hydroexcavation, and line locating. "This represents maybe 5 percent of our business, but it is still an important segment," Hall says.

From his 25 years of experience with Coca-Cola, Hall came to the industry with expertise in marketing, sales, record keeping, interactive coaching, and people management. He regards his opportunity to buy a Mr. Rooter franchise as "luck of the draw." He is growing the company despite the recession.

In his first year in the business, "we didn't light the world on fire with just \$700,000 in sales," he says. "We were underperforming. But the potential was there."

system that generates 23-inches Hg. Hall says the unit will “suck up baseball-sized rocks from 9 feet down all day long.”

For pipe inspection, he uses nine pushrod systems from Scooter Video Inspection Systems. The service vans are Fords or Chevrolets with bright graphics. Hall promotes the entire service line aggressively.

“Bundling services for a price is crucial and is cost-effective in all the teams and tools I offer.”

Charlie Hall

New structure

Three years ago, Hall restructured his staff, aiming to get better control of time and the care of equipment. Now, instead of one technician handling all aspects of a job, the duties are sectioned off. One specific crew handles all excavation, another all jetting, another liners and pipe bursting. Hall finds that specialization helps crews take more ownership of the equipment.

“If a technician goes out and cables a line and determines the need of a jetting machine, that crew will go in,” Hall says. “Same with an excavation. Same with locating. Certain people are responsible for certain functions.”



Members of the Mr. Rooter team: Front, from left, Willie Pilcher, Shane O'Meara, Julio Hernandez, Christian Perez, Dee Hall, owner Charlie Hall, Linda Matthew, Sue Reid, Kim Miller, and Dan Burleson; back, Joe Smith, Mark Keesling, Bill Jones, Mike Sjoström, Peter Gomalka, Troy Bunn, R.J. Johnson.



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"I can get more work done with less by having specialized people. Then if something is not working, I know who to visit with. I find this keeps the equipment in much better shape."

General manager Dan Burelson, manager of excavation Troy Bunn, and service manager R.J. Johnson carry locators. "These three guys are pretty dog-gone good with all they do," Hall says.

Hall is proud of his equipment, which during winter is housed in a 3,000-square-foot facility. The staff takes excellent care of the equipment. For example, when the mini-excavator comes back from a job, it is power-washed, and the bucket and blade are spray painted, so that when it goes out again, it looks brand new.

"I can get more work done with less by having specialized people. Then if something is not working, I know who to visit with. I find this keeps the equipment in much better shape."

Charlie Hall

The right people

If equipment is important to Hall, people are more so. Hall believes in catching people doing things right, instead of finding fault. "Although our process is actually ongoing, we sit down formally once a year with each individual," he says. "At least twice a month, a manager will ride along on a job with somebody." The process is geared to pointing out the positives. Supervisors look for good things and offer praise, but don't dwell on negatives unless they are serious. "This is positive reinforcement," Hall says.

Bundling of services is a win for the company. The team has produced a DVD

showing the various processes. While a technician talks about a technology with a customer, he can pop the DVD into a computer, and the customer can watch a demonstration.

Some big-ticket items, such as jetting, locating, lining or pipe bursting, are bundled into a three-for-one price. "Bundling services for a price is crucial and is cost-effective in all the teams and tools I offer," Hall says. "We are not selling pop here. We are running a sewer-inspection company. On all sewer jobs we video inspect the mainline. That is part of our service.

"Then we review with the customer. Let them look at the video. They see it while we are doing it, right there with the technician. No hijinks. No bait and switch. They see it. We didn't cause the roots and we don't muscle in or sell anything to anybody they don't need."

Hall believes that where there is a problem, he might as well be the one to fix it. He owes a lot to Coca-Cola, but he is certainly breaking new ground in quite a different industry.



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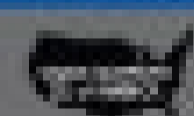
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Small Wonders

Compact camera systems provide affordable entry to the inspection business and enable accurate diagnosis of trouble in small lines

By Ted J. Rulseh

There are good reasons to go small in a pipeline-inspection system. One is to get into the inspection market and test the waters without making too big an investment. Another is simply to get access to small spaces – drains, traps, conduits, ductwork – that otherwise aren't accessible.

Camera manufacturers offer an almost limitless variety of compact systems based on pushrod technology. The ones described here are the smallest or among the smallest in each supplier's line. Take a quick look, then go to the Web sites or make some phone calls to find out which of these systems is best for your business.

1. One inch

The 1-inch stationary head video kit from Amazing Machinery works in pipes from 1 1/4 to 6 inches. The 1-inch color camera head has a stainless steel housing that is waterproof up to 100 feet under water. The system has a hinged 5.5-inch high-resolution monitor with 6-foot cable and RCA video output. The monitor has 960 x 234 pixel resolution. 800/504-7435; www.amazingmachinery.com.

2. Choice of camera heads

The portable SEEKER camera from Aries Industries Inc. is designed to meet users' applications. By providing choice of straight-view or pan-and-tilt cameras, it lets users inspect pipes ranging from 2-inch laterals to 60-inch mainline sewers.

The straight-view camera has 12 warm white LEDs that provide

10,000-hour life, bright illumination, and optimum light temperature for true color. The Mini Pan-and-Tilt camera provides continuous pan-and-tilt rotation and has 12 warm white 10,000-hour LEDs. Built-in wipers clear the lens and light with every panning rotation. Camera control is by way of a wireless key fob controller. 262/896-7205; www.ariesindustries.com.

3. Versatile tools

ProScout II and III mini cameras from CUES Inc. can be inserted through cleanouts as small as 2 inches. Propulsion choices include pushing, pulling, transporters and crawlers. They pass through short 90-degree turns or single tee connections in 4-inch pipe with the end connector and cable in place. Interchangeable color or black-and-white camera heads provide the best picture for any application.

The ProScout III (1.5 inches diameter, 3.5 inches long) has a centering ball skid with 4- to 6-inch pipe that mounts directly to the camera housing. It also includes a light head containing 12 LEDs to illuminate interiors of 2- to 10-inch pipes.

The ProScout II (2.25 inches diameter, 3.8 inches long) has a stainless spring steel skid set for 3- to 6-inch pipes. It includes a front light ring with four incandescent lamps to illuminate 3- to 10-inch pipes. 800/327-7791; www.cuesinc.com.

4. Tiny camera head

The Micro-Cam Model AS340-C system from Cyclops Electronics is designed to inspect small pipes and look into other hard-to-access

places. The camera head, 3/4 inch in diameter, is waterproof and has built-in white LED lights.

The 410,000-pixel CCD produces super-high-resolution video. The system is capable of 120-V AC or 12-V DC power. It has a 5.6-inch LCD monitor with video connectors for a VCR or DVR, plus 50 feet of push cable. An internal SD chip holds up to one hour of video. It is lightweight and easy to transport. 830/249-9756; www.cyclopestv.com.

5. Modular components

Easy CAM systems from Easy Cam LLC include models with 150 or 200 feet of pushrod with built-in 512-Hz transmitter. The video cable connects to a wide variety of video equipment, giving users options for viewing and recording inspections. The cameras use a standard 12-V power supply. A stainless steel spring connects the camera head to the pushrod, providing flexibility to maneuver around bends.

The pushrod is designed for strength and flexibility and has a low-friction jacket that reduces drag even in rough pipes. A rotary contact ensures a steady flow of signals to maintain a high-quality picture. A camera lens cover takes the blunt of impacts in the pipe and is replaceable. Laminated glass lenses maintain waterproof qualities even if the lens becomes cracked or broken. 432/349-4300; www.easycamllc.com.

6. Compact cable reel

The EelCam Micro-Cam pipeline inspection system from Electric Eel Manufacturing Co. Inc., has a 3/4-inch-diameter CCD black-and-white camera rated at 0.03 lux

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.

with solid-state, high-power LED lighting. It includes a compact 20-inch cable reel with slip-ring assembly and with feet that allow the reel to be laid on its side. The reel holds 100 feet of 5/16-inch video cable that allows for maneuvering in small lines. It adapts to any existing EelCam inspection system. A color camera head is available. 800/833-1212; www.electriceel.com.

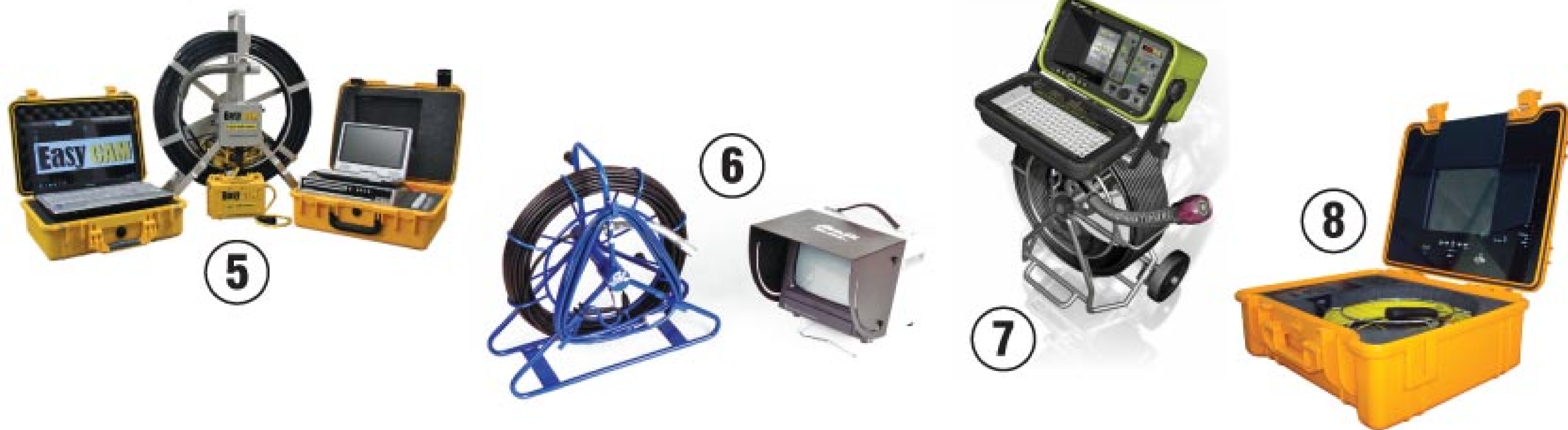
7. Digital push cam

The VeriSight digital push camera system from Envirosight LLC has an onboard 60-GB hard drive that stores 45 hours of MPEG4 video. An intuitive file system lets users archive clips for easy retrieval while USB and SD ports enable upload of inspection data directly to a PC. The unit has a selectable sonde frequency and a 16-page text generator with full QWERTY keyboard.

The system has a welded stainless steel frame, Kevlar-reinforced pushrod, spring shock absorbers, sealed slip ring, and waterproof ABS housing for durability. The controller lets users complete inspections quickly and document them thoroughly. It has an 8-inch recessed color TFT display, onscreen text-generator with 16-page memory, analog/digital connectivity (via RCA in/out jacks and a USB port), NiMH rechargeable battery plus main power and 12-V DC input, microphone for narration, graphical file navigation, and footage counter (feet and meters). 973/252-6700; www.envirosight.com.

8. Pipe wall inspection

The FB-PIC3188DN video/pipe wall inspection system from Forbest Products Co. includes a 7-inch TFT



LCD display monitor with DVR, a CCD waterproof color camera with eight bright LEDs, and 65 feet of push cable (98- and 130-foot cables optional). A 12-V lithium-ion rechargeable storage battery is included. 650/757-4786; www.forbestusa.net.

9. Integral system

The Gen-Eye POD from General Pipe Cleaners combines camera, reel, and monitor in a single package. The 5.6-inch color LCD screen is mounted on a tough, flexible gooseneck that swivels to provide the best viewing angle. A video-out connection lets users record to an external device.

The full-size POD unit includes a self-leveling camera and 200 feet of Gel-Rod cable for troubleshooting 3- to 10-inch lines. The MINI-POD system carries 125 or 175 feet of pushrod and a color mini camera for inspecting 2- to 4-inch lines. The steel frame can be operated vertically or horizontally. Other features include a picture inverter, AC and DC power cords, LED dimmer control, 3-inch trap skid, and 512-Hz transmitter. 800/245-6200; www.drainbrain.com.

10. Measured in millimeters

The Color Mini Camera from Image Inspection Services Ltd. has 350 lines of resolution and 0.5-lux sensitivity. It has white LED solid-state lighting consisting of 12 LEDs in a high-output bullet nose. The unit comes with a recessed shatterproof lens and measures 0.6 inches in diameter. 800/667-6670; www.image-inspect.com.

11. Quality and clarity

Micro Push camera systems from Insight/Vision for inspecting 1- to 6-inch lines include the ClearVIEW MICRO camera head, designed for high picture quality and clarity and Xpress Command Modules with USB port, memory card, and DVD recording capability. The cameras include bright LED lighting. 800/488-8177; www.insightvisioncameras.com.

12. Low-light capability

The Mini Crystal Cam push camera from Inuktun USA is a high-resolution color video system for inspecting small pipes. At 7/8-inch diameter, the camera head easily passes through 1.25-inch pipe. The fiberglass pushrod allows the camera to negotiate bends and to be pushed

long distances. The stainless steel housing and internal potted electronics provide durability and chemical resistance. Users can set the focus before deploying the camera and to examine details close up or at a distance. 985/662-0755; www.inuktunusa.com.

13. Broad applications

The flexprobe P330+ pushrod inspection system from Pearpoint Inc. combines full-featured P330+ flexprobe controller with high-performance, durable cameras, and a wide range of rods and accessories to handle numerous video inspection applications.

The controller displays video footage in digital-quality full-color VGA on an ultra-bright 8-inch industrial TFT screen. Digital technology makes it easy to access controller features. The intuitive user interface and keypad are operable even when wearing gloves. The system offers digital pan and zoom, one-touch recording to compact Flash cards up to 8 GB, and quick transfer of video and still pictures via USB and Bluetooth wireless technology. Inspection reports can be produced on site with an integrated

report writer. 800/688-8094; www.radiodetection.com.

14. Cased in steel

The Mini Stand Alone Complete (MSA COM) camera from MyTana Manufacturing Co. Inc. is designed to inspect 1.5- to 3-inch lines. It has a self-contained monitor and control box and can operate with household electricity or with an onboard rechargeable 12-V battery.

The 1 1/8-inch steel camera housing includes nine LEDs and a built-in 512-Hz transmitter. The unit comes in an all-steel frame that measures 17 inches square by 12 inches deep. 800/328-8170; www.mytana.com.

15. Straight view

The IBAK Hydrus straight-view camera from RapidView is a pluggable unit for inspecting lines 2 inches and up. It can be used with cable reels such as the HSP Coiler with wheels and transport handle and up to 200 feet of Magic Push Rod cable, and with control panels such as the BOP, with a TFT LCD bright monitor, wireless remote control, and text-display generator. 800/656-4225; www.rapidview.com.



16. Compact and affordable

The Ultra Micro camera system from Ratech Electronics Ltd., includes a black-and-white camera head, 3/4 inch in diameter and 1.5 inches long. Intended as a low-cost entry system, it is designed to maintain the quality of the company's high-end units in a compact, affordable package.

The camera can access pipes as small as 1 inch and will negotiate multiple bends in larger pipes and services. High-intensity LED lights enable high-quality images. A 1-inch color camera is available. The monitor control unit has all functions rear-mounted except the camera light head control, which is front-mounted for easy access and operation.

Rear-mounted jacks include camera input, video in/out jacks for recording or playback, and fuses for camera, lights and AC line. The black-and-white 1,000-line resolution monitor includes a sun shield that doubles as a screen protector when not in use. Standard cable length is 100 feet. 800/461-9200; www.ratech-electronics.com.

17. Auto-upright

The Alpha SAT45H pushrod

camera system from Rausch Electronics USA LLC has a removable camera with a permanent auto-upright picture for inspecting 2- to 10-inch pipes. An integrated sonde is available. The push-reel holds up to 200 feet of push cable and has an internal electronic footage counter. The LCD viewing monitor has external connectors for VCR and DVD-R recorders. A titler with keyboard is optional. 717/709-1005; www.rauschtv-usa.com.

18. Reaching tight spots

The SeeSnake microDrain inspection system from RIDGID lets users quickly inspect previously inaccessible places. A 0.86-inch-diameter camera head can pass through many toilet traps and 1 1/4-inch lines. The system includes 30 feet of push cable.

The lightweight and compact package is designed for ease of transport. The cable reel is compatible with a variety of SeeSnake monitors or the microEXPLORER digital inspection camera. 800/474-3443; www.RIDGIDUpgrade.com.

19. Cordless system

The ROCAM cordless color drain-inspection camera from

Rothenberger USA has a 1 1/4-inch-diameter camera head with a scratch-resistant sapphire lens for inspecting 2- to 6-inch lines. The system carries 118 feet of push cable and includes a 2-inch guide skid. Other features include digital footage readout, video in/out, LED illumination, onboard battery charger with charge-status indicator, and a tubular frame that acts as a handle. 800/545-7698; www.rothenberger-usa.com.

20. Tapered head

The 1306 Mini Camera from RS Technical Services Inc. is a high-resolution color inspection camera (2.25-inch diameter). It is tapered to negotiate past offsets and clear multiple 90-degree bends in pipes 4 inches or larger and pass 3-inch sweeps and 90-degree bends in 3-inch lines.

The unit has 0.19-lux high-performance camera electronics, digital video processing, and a high-frequency (DWM) power supply. Integrated high-efficiency lighting with 16 high-intensity LEDs can illuminate lines up to 16 inches. The camera can be mated with mini systems carrying 150 to 400 feet of pushrod on a standard reel.

It is compatible with the compa-

ny's 1300 Series controller and RST Mainline Control. 800/767-1974; www.rstechserv.com.

Around bends

The Mini Mongoose inspection system from Scooter Video Inspection System is designed for hard-to-reach locations. The 1.16-inch-diameter camera negotiates Ls and P-traps in 2-inch pipes as well as 1 1/2-inch sanitary Ls and straights. The push cable is 100 feet long and polypropylene-jacketed for long life. It is flexible enough to go through a P-trap. A coiler drum stores the cable and camera, which is high-resolution with 18 high-intensity LEDs mounted in a diffuser light head. The camera housing is seamless urethane. A black-and-white 9-inch monitor is standard – it is VCR-ready and includes the VCR interface cable. 800/772-6165; www.tvinspection.com.

Ultra-tough cable

The Pro-Built Series 100-foot sewer camera from South Coast Sewer Equipment Inc. includes a built-in 512-Hz transmitter for locates up to 20 feet deep. It includes 100 feet of premium heat-treated video cable with fiber rod center core,



polypropylene filler strands, and gel-sealed polyethylene heat-treated commercial-grade jacket. The package comes on a welded-tube 24-inch steel reel. The camera has a super-bright white LED light ring. The 9-inch color LCD monitor has DVD recording capability and an LED intensity adjustment control. 800/688-0081; www.southcoastequipment.com.

21. Adaptable system

The PROvision 2.0 camera system from Spartan Tool LLC has a compact design and modular components that let users tailor the package to their needs. The base unit includes a flexible, reel-mounted pushrod (100 feet) and an LCD screen with DVR, and a choice of black-and-white, color, or color self-leveling camera heads. A secondary reel can be added for longer runs, and a locating beacon or receiver helps pinpoint trouble spots as deep as 25 feet. 800/435-3866; www.spartantool.com.

Compact color

The Speedy Cam Micro Color camera system from Speedway Drain Cleaning Products includes a 1-inch-diameter mini camera, 100 feet of gel-

rod, an open mini reel, and a command module with 9-inch color monitor, sun shield, and tilt stand. It operates on 110-V AC power. 800/835-2200; www.speedway-tools.com.

22. Lots of options

The Tru-View mini camera system from Triple R Specialty includes a color camera with sapphire lens and built-in transmitter, stainless steel camera and transmitter housing, 100 feet of pushrod able to navigate 2-inch traps, video output jacks, battery and charger, (or 120-V operation), powder-coated steel frame, and 5.6-inch color flat-screen monitor with picture inverter. Options include a black-and-white camera, locator receiver, 9-inch monitor and VCR, and mini monitor and VCR. 800/356-9661; www.triplerspecialty.com.

23. Ductwork and conduits

The EagleCam color mini camera system from UEMSI is designed as an affordable device for looking inside ductwork, conduit, or 2-inch and larger pipes. It includes a durable, lightweight, briefcase-style power control unit with a 10.4-inch color LCD monitor, 200 feet of push-

cable, and a CM-1 camera head. The system works on either AC or DC power.

The push cable is constructed with a fiberglass rod for stiffness and has water-blocking gel to prevent water infiltration if it were to become damaged. The cable reel is made of steel tubing, powder-coated for long life, and has wheels. The camera head includes a 100-degree wide-angle lens with fixed focus and 15 high-intensity LEDs. A built-in video amplifier allows operation with long cable runs. 800/666-0766; www.uemsi.com.

24. Choice of modules

The vCam inspection system from Vivax Corp. allows a choice of vCamView module for viewing only and vCamDigital monitor for viewing and recording. Reel options provide 100, 200 or 400 feet of push cable. Pushrod comes in 10 mm for small-diameter pipes or 12 mm for larger pipes or longer distances. Standard and self-leveling cameras are available for each cable size.

The control module includes a compact injection-molded housing that can be mounted on the reel. It has an 8-inch TFT LCD display recessed for viewing in harsh sun-

light, MPEG4 recording to a 120-GB internal hard drive, full-function waterproof silicon rubber keyboard and enlarged titler storage capacity, USB interface, and video in/out. It can be powered by mains, internal rechargeable batteries, or 12-V DC external power. 866/332-1688; www.vivax.biz. ■

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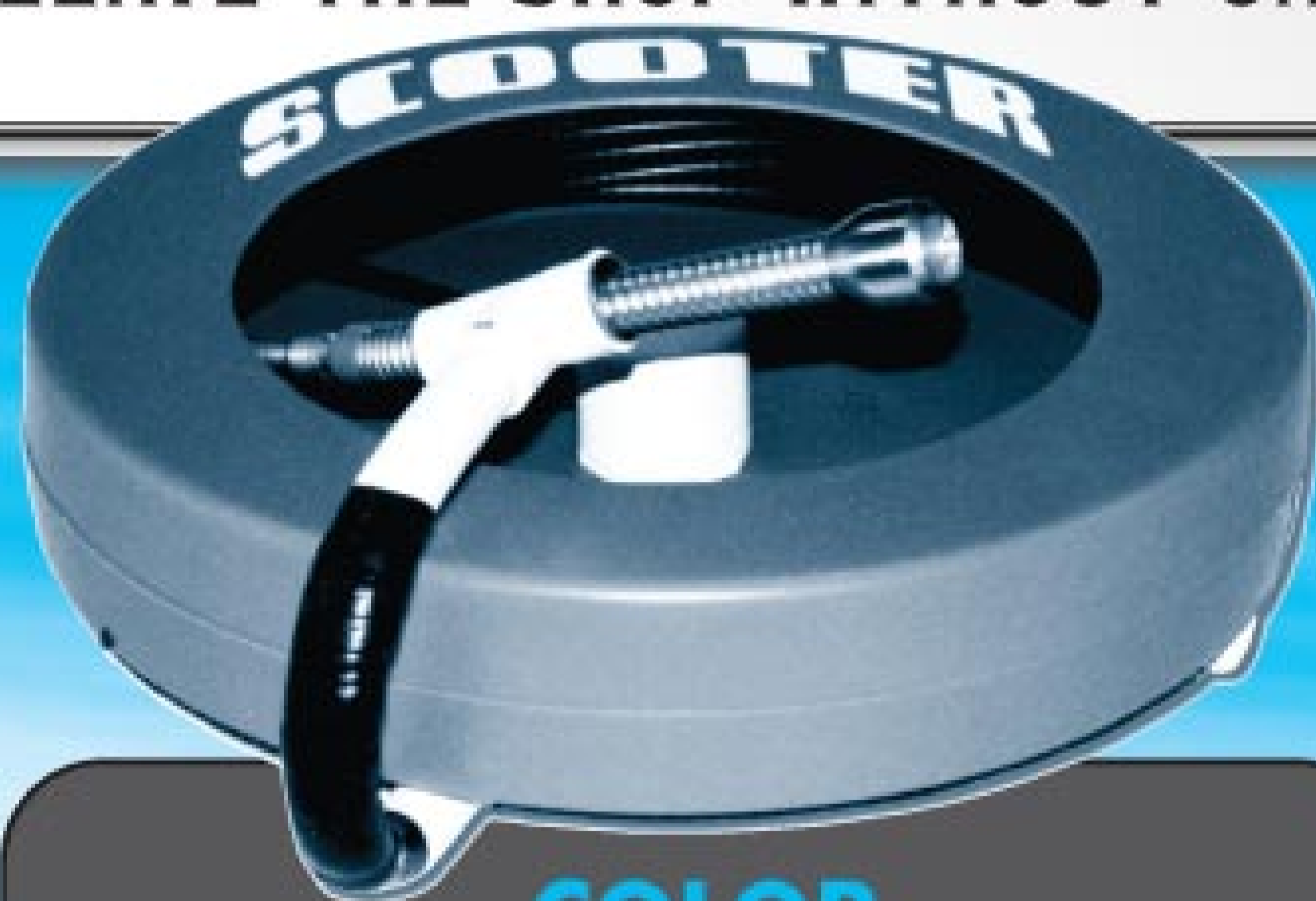
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A Matter of Debris

A hydroexcavator helps a contractor's crew clear a sludgy deposit up to 4 feet deep from a 72-inch retention culvert

By Scottie Dayton

Floor drains and downspouts backing up at a company's training center near St. Louis, Mo., caught the attention of a general contractor shooting grades for an extension of the building's parking lot. The contractor called Mike Laughlin of Mid America Drain Service in Valley Park, Mo. Laughlin popped the lid on the parking lot manhole farthest from the building and saw water, which he and Kevin Bessler pumped out using a hydroexcavator from Vac-Con Inc.

"Nobody had any idea what piping was down there," says Laughlin. It took two hours flushing at 80 gpm/3,000 psi to clean the completely blocked line entering the manhole. The pipe was an overflow.

What Laughlin and Bessler found at its other end was a 320-foot-long, 72-inch underground retention culvert belonging to the company. It discharged into the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District's main trunk line, but grit and organic material 3 to 4 feet deep impeded the flow.

Work on the parking lot extension stopped while Laughlin's crew struggled to get into the culvert to remove the sludgy, mostly solid material. They spent hours hunched over



Left: Grit and organic material 3 to 4 feet deep impede flow in the 320-foot, 72-inch retention culvert. Cleaning tools are a 6-inch vacuum hose and handheld lance with standard nozzle attached to the 1/2-inch jetter hose. Right: Mission accomplished. The culvert is free of material. (Photos courtesy of Mid America Drain Service, Valley Park, Mo.)



TOUGH JOB

PROJECT:

Clean an underground retention culvert

CUSTOMER:

General contractor

CONTRACTOR:

Mid America Drain Service, Valley Park, Mo.

EQUIPMENT:

Custom-built hydroexcavator, Vac-Con Inc.

RESULTS:

Culvert cleaned ahead of schedule

Mystery guest

The 13-foot-deep culvert was installed in the 1990s, then forgotten. It collected mud and grit washed off the parking lot and training center roof, keeping the material from reaching the wastewater treatment plant. "The parking lot design called for

hydroexcavator boom its full 20 feet before adding another 20 feet of 6-inch corrugated pipe to reach the upstream manhole. The truck, sold by Craig Suhre of E.J. Equipment in Centralia, Ill., and manufactured to custom specifications by Vac-Con, has a 12-cubic-yard debris tank and 1,100-gallon water system rated at 80 gpm/3,000 psi with variable flow. The Dresser Roots positive displacement blower delivers 6,000 cfm/18-inches Hg.

The culvert was accessible through three 30-inch manholes about 100 feet apart. "Cody Gamble, who did most of the vacuuming, is a big guy," says Laughlin. "After putting on his confined-space entry gear, he barely fit down the manhole."

Although air quality wasn't a big concern in the storm drain, Laughlin still required the men to wear gas meters. "I'm not taking any chances

with their lives," he says. Another company provided the OSHA-certified spotter.

Changing places

After Gamble reached the floor of the manhole, Bessler lowered the 6-inch vacuum hose and handheld lance with standard nozzle attached to the 1/2-inch jetter hose, then operated the truck. Every 90 minutes to two hours, the men switched positions.

"The Vac-Con enabled my guys to finish the job ahead of schedule and save the general contractor thousands of dollars on the bid."

Mike Laughlin

in darkness, lit only by the lights on their hard hats, using the hydroexcavator to remove the material. Despite muscle strain and fatigue, they completed the job ahead of schedule, saving the general contractor more than \$7,000.

more storm drains, and they couldn't be installed until we cleaned the debris in the culvert," says Laughlin. He bid the job based on an estimate of 250 tons of material.

Laughlin's men parked their vehicles on a road, then extended the

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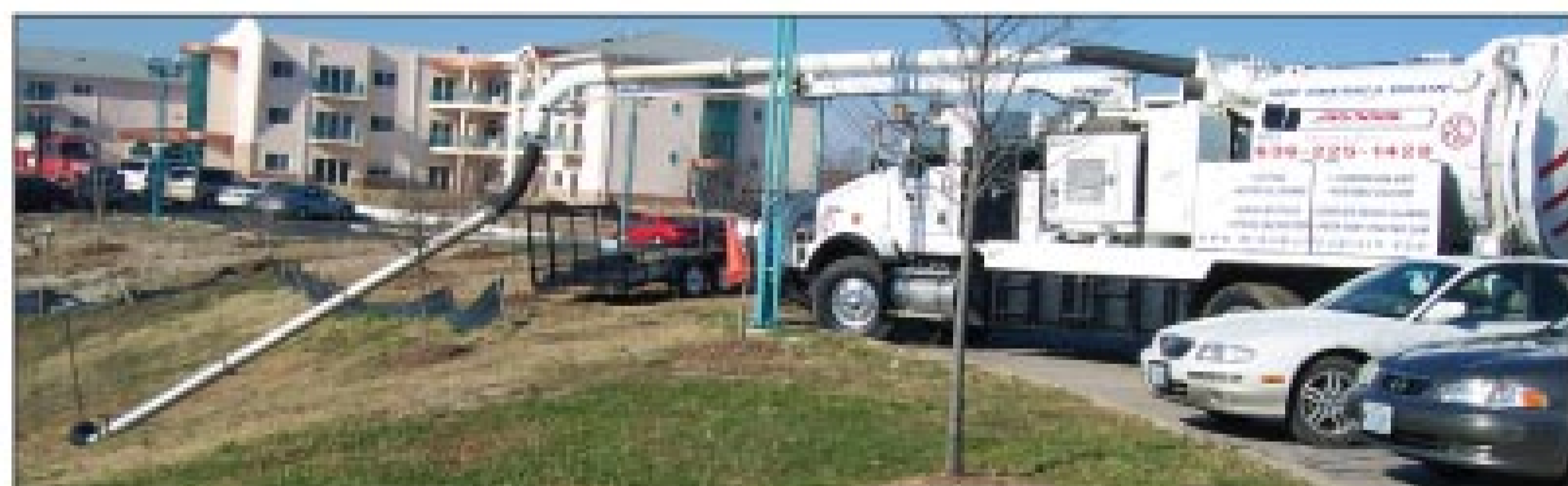
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The hydroexcavator's boom is extended its full 20 feet. The crew from Mid America then added 20 feet of 6-inch corrugated pipe to reach the upstream manhole.

"We anticipated jetting the debris to loosen it, but the power distribution unit on the truck did such a great job sucking up the tough material that we made better headway working dry," says Laughlin. "We hardly used any water."

Each load was decanted and taken to the wastewater treatment plant in downtown St. Louis, a 90-minute round trip. In a 10-hour day, the men averaged two to three loads and cleaned 60 feet. "That was great progress for as full as the pipe was and the time needed to dispose of the loads," says Laughlin. Although the men rested until the truck returned, the exertion from working stooped over for six days was hard on them.

"The Vac-Con enabled my guys to finish the job ahead of schedule and save the general contractor thousands of dollars on the bid," says Laughlin. "The customer was so pleased that they referred us to a branch plant to flush a 70-foot-long line." ■

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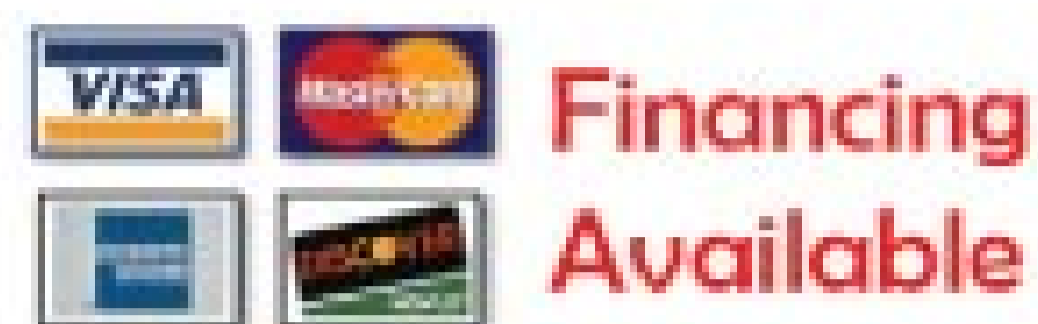
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Hometown Heroes

A drain-cleaning franchiser reports on a year's worth of rescues of valuable items and priceless pets recovered from difficult places

By Ted J. Rulseh

One of the perks of being a drain-cleaning contractor is that every now and then, maybe only once in a lifetime, you get to be a hero.

Whitney Wyatt-Kovar, public relations specialist at Mr. Rooter Corp., pulled together a list of dramatic rescues from 2009. Some of these led to stories in the local franchises' hometown newspapers.

"From jewelry to animals, Mr. Rooter plumbers recovered quite a few precious items last year," says Wyatt-Kovar. "While some of the recoveries took hours, others took mere minutes. But both had the same outcome – overjoyed and relieved customers."

Expensive ring. Mike Roberts, general manager of the Mr. Rooter of Phoenix franchise, recovered a \$70,000 wedding ring that a woman in a Phoenix restaurant accidentally flushed down the toilet in January.

The rescue was an eight-hour process that included removing the toilet, searching the line with a video inspection camera, and digging up the floor to retrieve the ring. "It was like dredging the ocean for a treasure chest," Roberts said. "The sewer line was so deteriorated that flakes of the pipe and debris were littered through the length of the line."

Daughter's diamond. It was déjà vu for Roberts in April when a second customer called about a ring down the toilet – this time at her home in Phoenix. This \$6,000 sapphire and diamond ring was a gift to the customer from her father. Roberts dropped a video inspection camera



Camille Jorgensen shows the ring rescued by Mike Roberts, general manager of the Mr. Rooter of Phoenix franchise. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Rooter Corporation).

owner, Camille Jorgensen, 24, was in tears when she saw it. Her father had bought the 4.5-carat sapphire ring with a setting of 1-carat diamonds on the sides while in Thailand.

Lucky ducklings. George Jessup, a commercial service technician at Mr. Rooter Plumbing of Pittsburgh was driving down a road in Shaler Township when he saw a duck sitting on a storm

"The ring was a very special gift from daddy to daughter. She had such a look of excitement when I revealed it to her for the first time, and I knew it was a very special ring. When she came and told me what had happened, there was no limit to what we would do to recover it."

Bob Jorgensen

down the ventilation pipe. Just five minutes into the search, he located the ring in a pipe below a closet off the hallway.

The ring owner's father, Bob Jorgensen, dug up the floor himself. Roberts returned the next day to break open the pipe and recover the ring. Its

"The ring was a very special gift from daddy to daughter," Bob Jorgensen said. "She had such a look of excitement when I revealed it to her for the first time, and I knew it was a very special ring. When she came and told me what had happened, there was no limit to what we would do to recover it."

drain. Something didn't seem right, so he pulled over. When he looked down the drain, he saw ducklings, and he knew he had to rescue them.

After trying to lift the heavy drain grating, Jessup called the fire department and police. Within 30 minutes, they got seven ducklings out.

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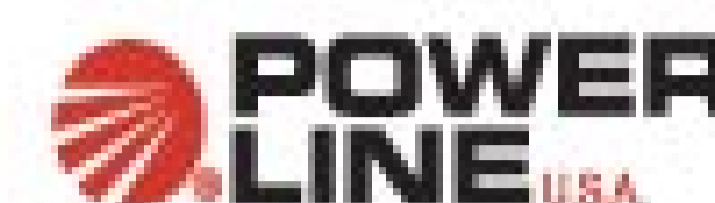


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"They were the cutest things you ever saw," Jessup said. "I'm so glad we were able to save them." The fire department flushed the pipe and Jessup sent his inspection camera into the pipe to make sure no ducklings were still trapped. Seeing none, he went back to work.

Trouble for a toddler. In May, Dan Kraby, a Mr. Rooter technician at the franchise in Salem, Mass., needed three hours to recover a woman's wedding and engagement rings at a house in Newburyport, Mass. Her toddler son had flushed them down the toilet when she wasn't looking. "She will have a great story to tell her son when he grows up," Kovar says.

Bad Karma. In March, Robert Plantic, a technician at the Mr. Rooter Plumbing franchise in Toronto, Ont., learned that a customer's cat, named Karma, was missing. Using a video inspection camera, he found the cat in two hours. Karma had worked her way under the floorboards that renovators were putting down to cover

holes in the customer's house.

Easy recover. Mr. Rooter of Central Texas plumber Jim Hauk didn't need a video inspection camera to find a diamond that went down the kitchen sink drain in a customer's house in Waco, Texas, in June. He spotted the diamond after disconnecting the drain line close to the garbage disposal.

Their little secret. In January, technician Gerald Johns of the Mr. Rooter of New Orleans shop recovered a 1-carat diamond engagement ring that had slipped off the customer's finger in her home. She didn't notice that it had fallen into the toilet until she had already pushed the handle to flush. "The woman didn't tell her fiancé, and her secret is safe with Mr. Rooter," Wyatt-Kovar says.

Says Mary Kennedy Thompson, president of Mr. Rooter Corp., "Our service professionals turned into heroes when they saved the day for our customers. They went above and beyond to safely recover these treasures." ■



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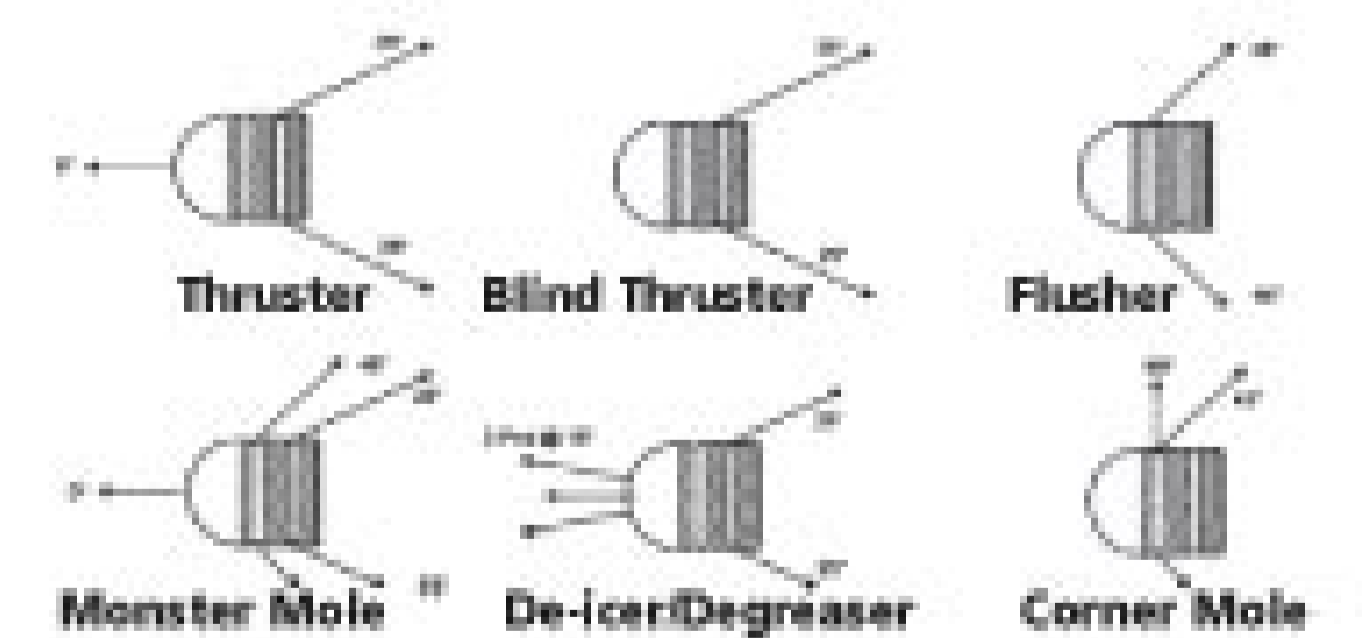
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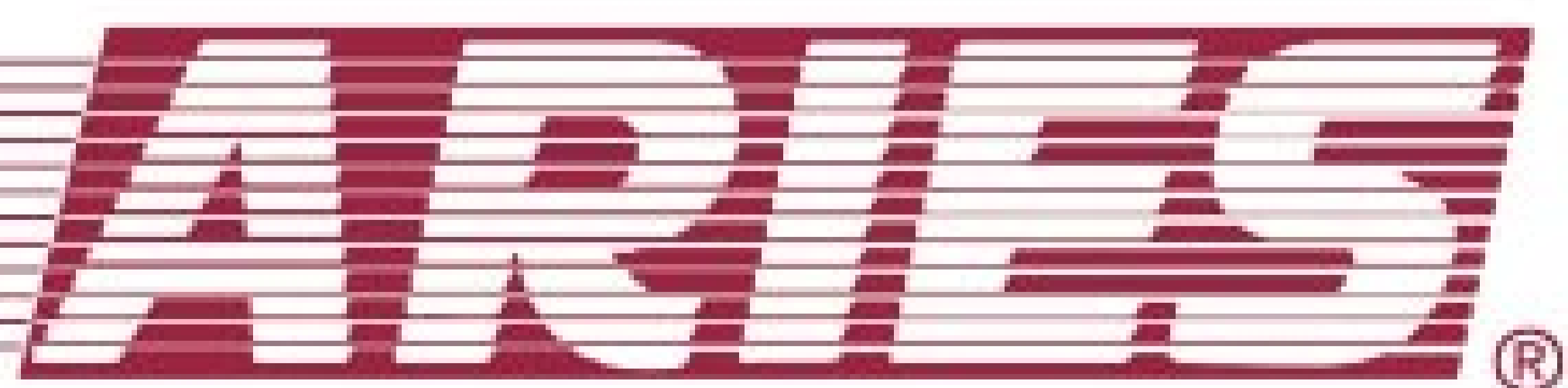


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Setting It Aside

A variety of tax-deferred investment plans can help small business owners, and their employees, prepare themselves for retirement years

By Erik Gunn

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.



It might seem impossible right now, but sooner or later, you will retire. And so will your employees. The question is, will you, or they, be ready?

People make assumptions about retirement that can short-change them when it's time to slow down. Some think they can rely on Social Security. Others think they'll be able to live on the equity from the family home after they sell it and move into a condo.

Or they assume they can retire on proceeds from the sale of their business.

Such assumptions leave a lot to chance. A retirement plan can help you take control of your own destiny, says Michael Bein, a consultant for Harris Investor Services Inc. in Chicago, Ill.

A choice of plans

Bein, who works with all types of businesses in the upper Midwest to set up retirement plans, observes that people are living a lot longer

kind of time machine: You take money you make now and, instead of paying income taxes on it now, transport it to the future. "These plans allow a business owner potentially to move money from the corporate ledger to the personal ledger in a tax-efficient way," Bein says.

Today there are three basic approaches most small businesses can take: A Simplified Employee Pension plan (SEP), a Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees (SIMPLE), or a 401(k) plan. Each has its benefits and drawbacks, depending on your personal and business situation, so before you plunge into one or the other, you should speak directly with a professional financial advisor.

SEP plans

The SEP plan is funded strictly by employers. It's a common plan for people who are self-employed, but it's also available if you have other people working for you. Note one thing: Employees don't con-

what's the point of having the plan? But if things get tight, you can hold off without any kind of penalty.

The money typically goes into an individual retirement account (IRA), and the investments are directed by the employee. That's important, because you as the employer don't want to have the legal fiduciary responsibility for the assets of the pension.

"Typically, the SEP IRA is a nice plan for smaller companies with 10 employees or fewer, or if there are three or four partners in the business," Bein says.

SIMPLE plans

The SIMPLE plan is among the most popular, Bein says. The big difference from an SEP plan is that the SIMPLE is initially funded by employees.

"The SIMPLE IRA is really a terrific plan for a company that has fewer than 100 employees and is looking to add a retirement plan as a startup," says Bein. In 2009,

One big benefit for employers is that, unlike the SEP, employees fund it themselves (except for the employer match). And an advantage over 401(k) plans is that they're a lot cheaper to start up. "The cost to open up a SIMPLE IRA plan is anywhere from \$10 to \$15 per employee, whereas a 401(k) is easily \$1,200 a year, plus \$20 to \$25 per employee. And there are many additional regulations on a 401(k) that are not on a SIMPLE IRA plan."

401(k) plans

Despite their greater complexity and certain drawbacks, 401(k) plans have their place. "Going from a SIMPLE IRA to a 401(k) really depends on how well a business owner is doing and how much money they want to put away," Bein explains.

The 401(k) plan allows much larger contributions. In 2009, account holders can put in \$16,500 of their income; persons 50 or older can bank another \$5,500; and a profit-sharing program can be

"You want to make sure you're working with somebody who's well-versed in different types of plans. I run across businesses all the time that are in the wrong plan, blatantly in the wrong plan. It is important to find somebody who's got some experience in working with these types of plans."

Michael Bein

today. "When you retire, you have to plan to live through the age of 100, which means you've got to have a substantial cash balance built up to support yourself," he says.

Then there are taxes. In the typical individual- or family-owned small business, profits all pass through to the owner and get declared on the personal income tax return. But a retirement plan is a

tribute to an SEP – only employers do. So if you decide to offer an SEP plan, you will make the financial contributions. Since it's part of your employee-compensation package, remember to include it when you calculate their total compensation and your labor costs.

Contributions aren't mandatory. Of course, most years you'll want to make a contribution, or else

employees can contribute up to \$11,500 of their income. Those 50 and over are allowed catch-up contributions of \$2,500 more, plus the company match.

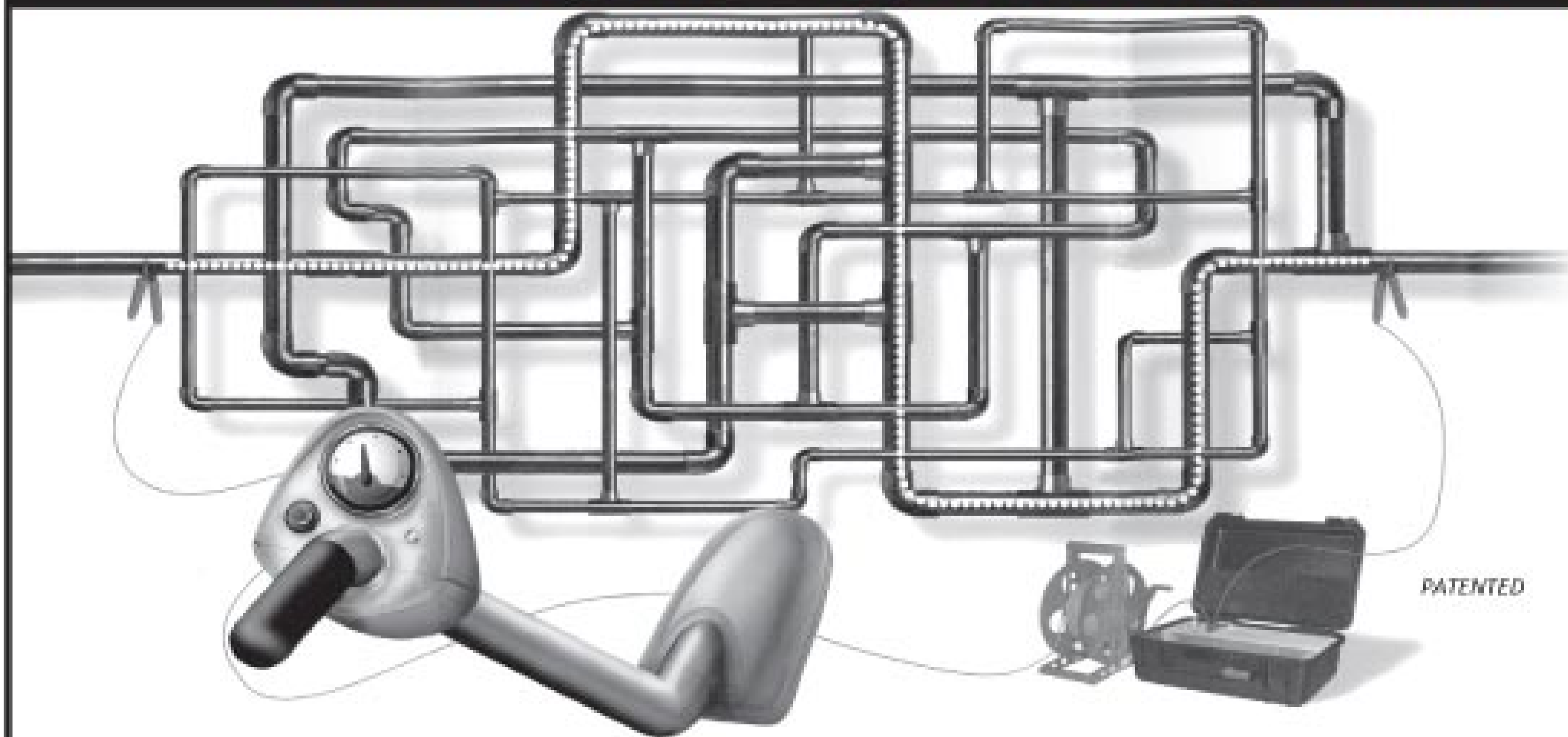
Employees can put 1 to 3 percent of their pre-tax pay into the SIMPLE. In any year that an employee puts in money, the employers must match 1, 2 or 3 percent of the employee's salary.

attached that allows the company potentially to put an additional 25 percent of the employees' income into the plan. "Between those three components in a 401(k) you can put away a total of \$49,000, and if you're 50 or above, \$54,500," Bein says.

Unlike the SIMPLE, owners do not have to match the employee's contribution to the 401(k). There's a

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catch, however: the Internal Revenue Service limits how much the highest-paid employees, typically the owner and top management, can put into their own account based on how much the rank-and-file contribute.

"So all of a sudden you've got this great 401(k) plan in place, and you've got people who are not participating, which in this economic environment is definitely the case," says Bein. "Then the owners are unable to put very much money into it."

A "Safe Harbor 401(k)" offers an out. If the employer gives every employee 3 percent of their salary up front to put in their own accounts, the highly paid people can max out their own contributions. But, as Bein observes, "A lot of businesses are not in the cash-flow situation where they can afford every year to put away 3 percent of every person's salary."

Professional help

If you're going to set up a retirement plan (and you really should), don't do it on your own. Look for objective, professional help from an attorney or accountant, and don't settle for the first name you find in the

Yellow Pages or on the Internet.

"You want to make sure you're working with somebody who's well-versed in different types of plans," says Bein. "Ask them, 'How many retirement plans do you work with right now?' I run across businesses all the time that are in the wrong plan—blatantly in the wrong plan. It is important to find somebody who's got some experience in working with these types of plans."

When it comes to retirement, take time now to stop leaving your future, or your employees' futures, to chance. A well-thought-out retirement plan can help put you more in control of your own retirement years.



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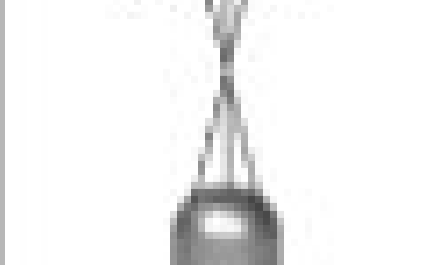
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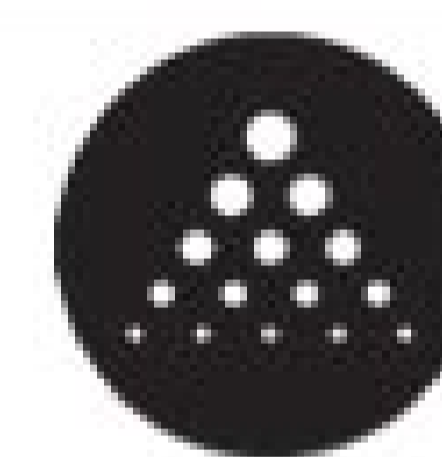
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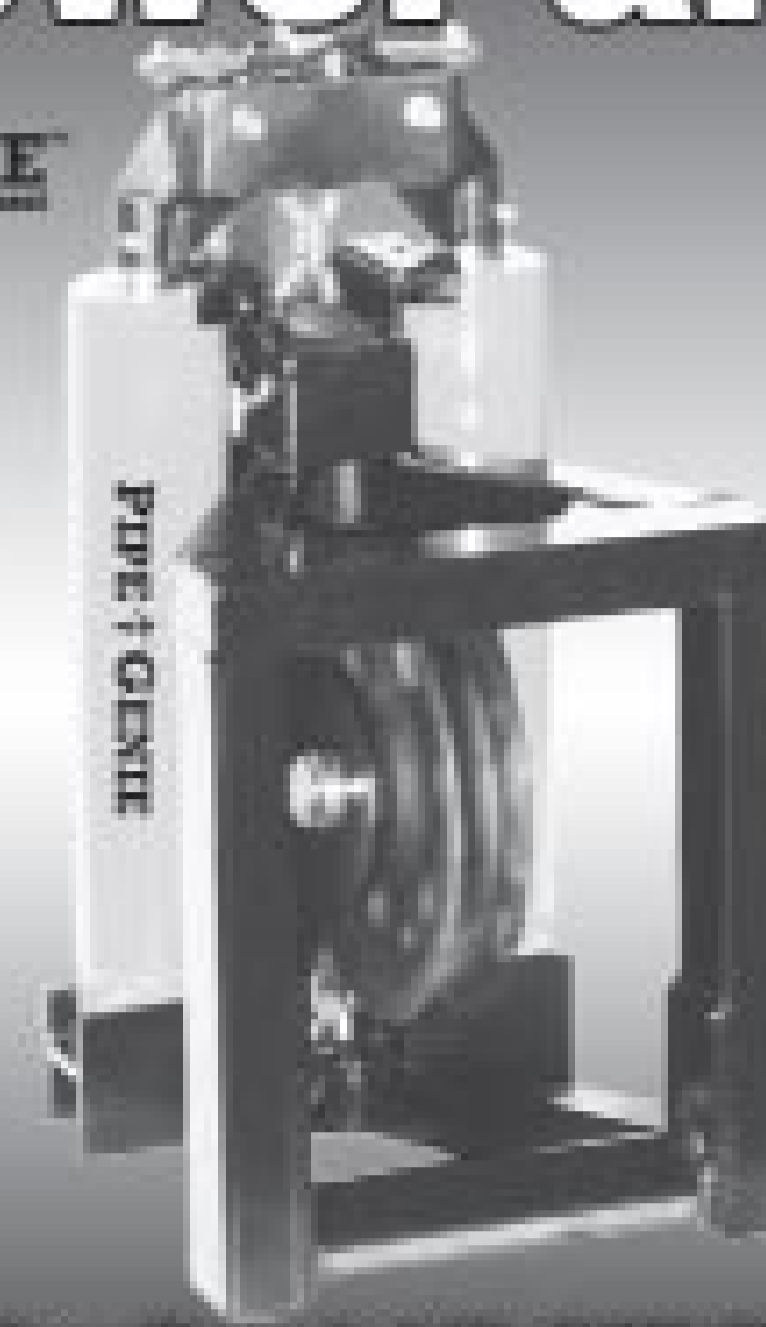
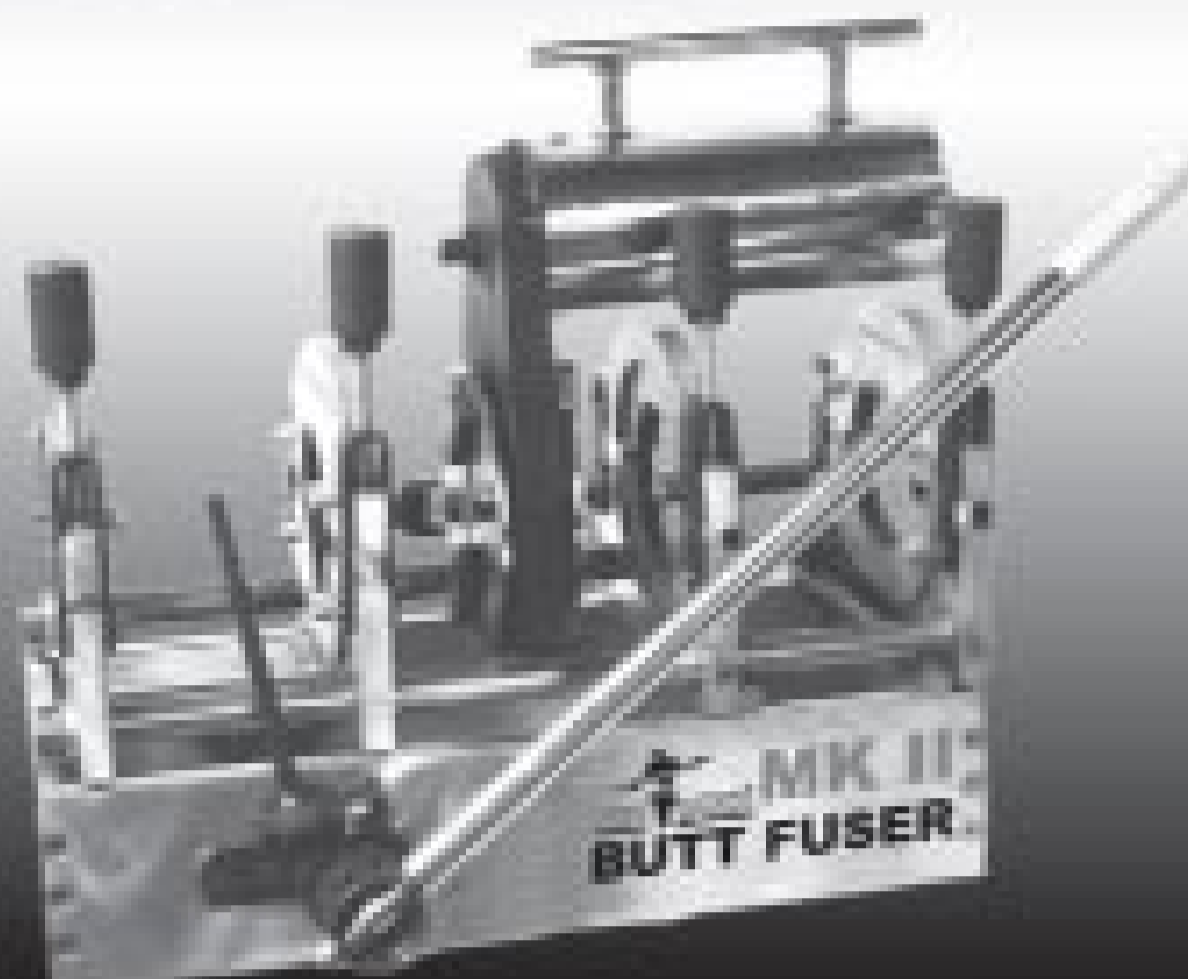
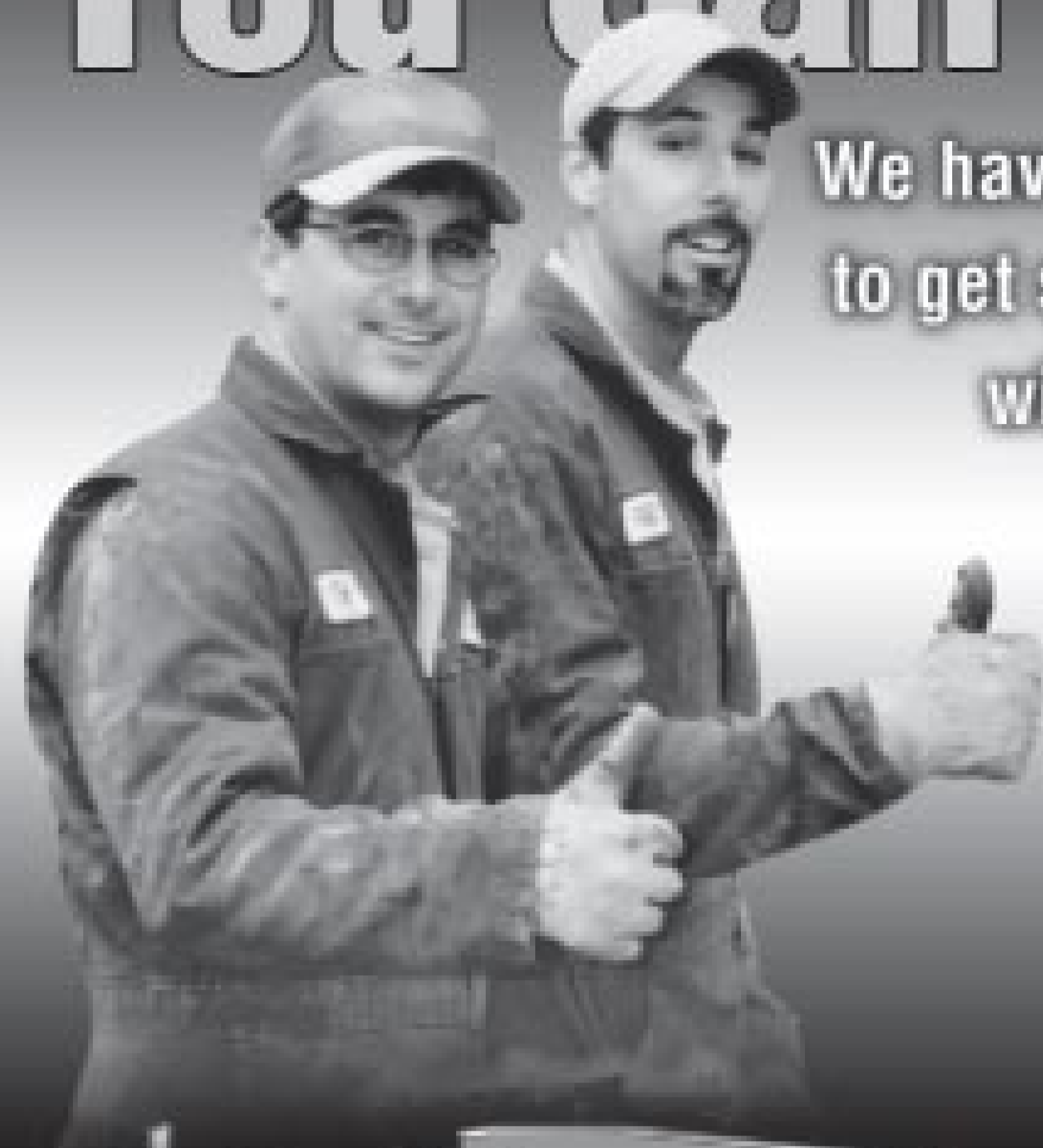
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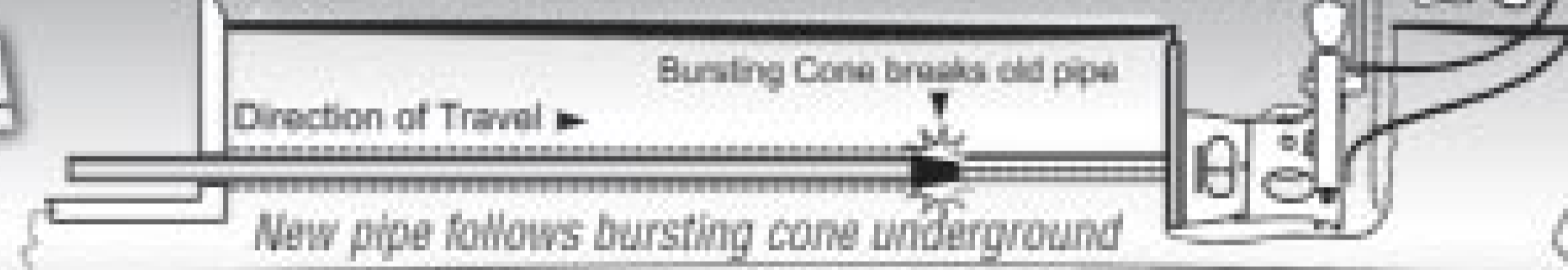
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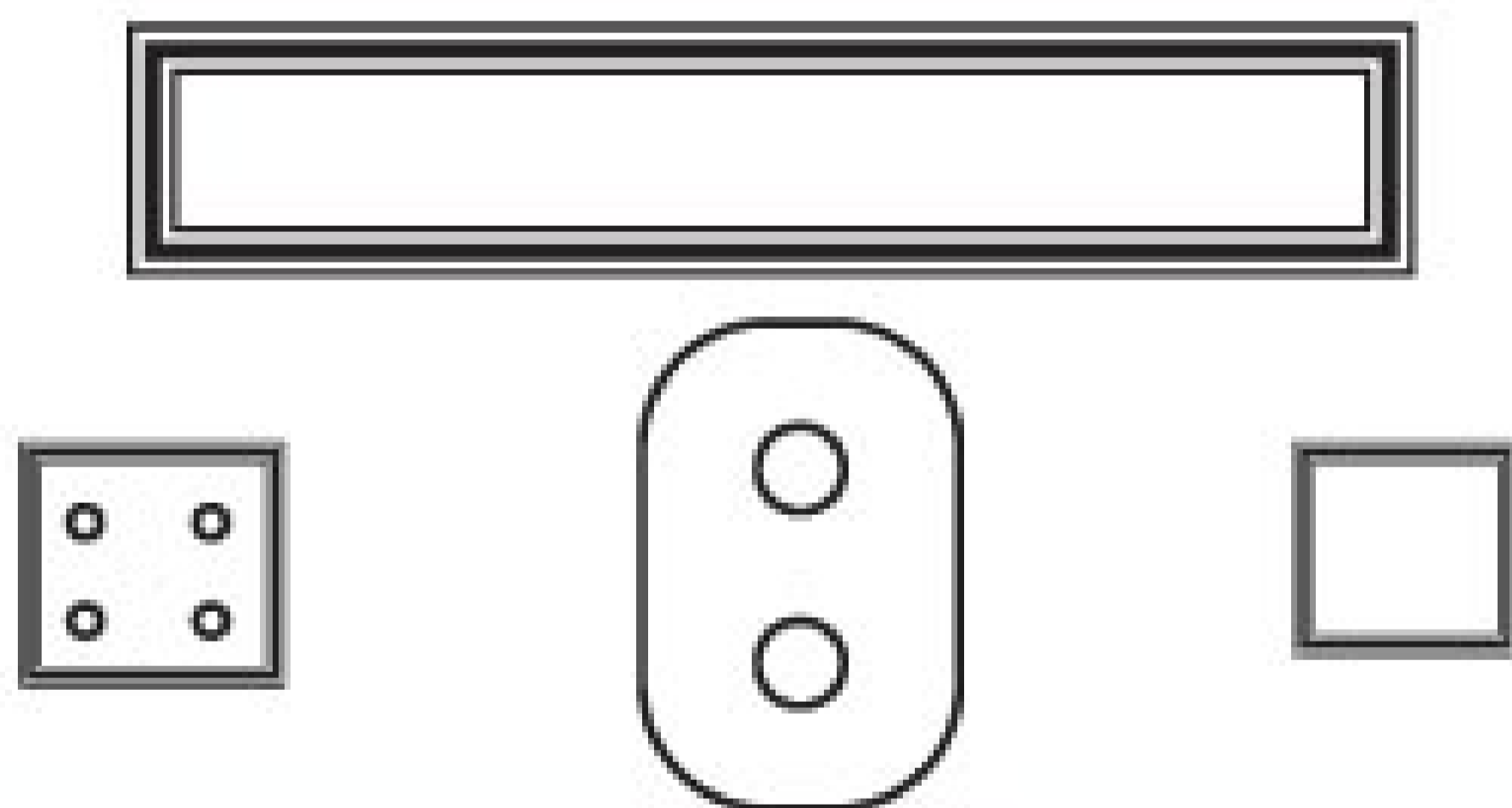


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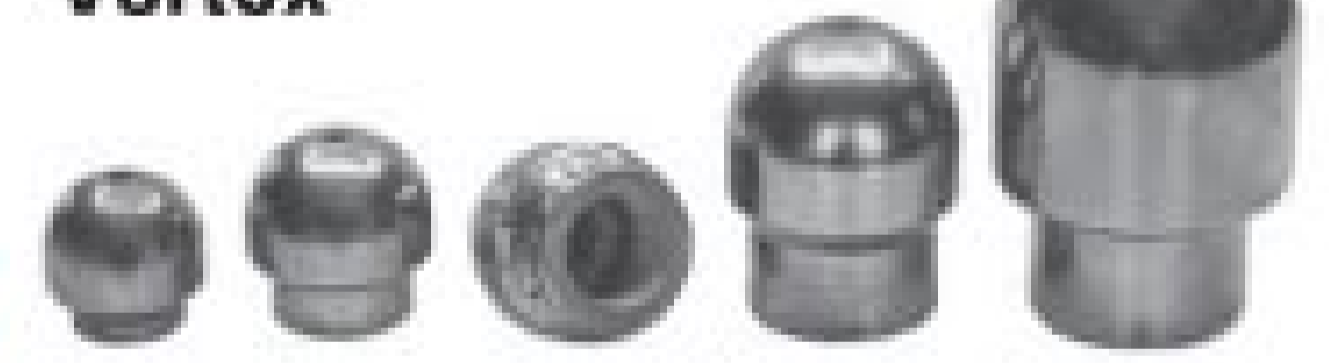
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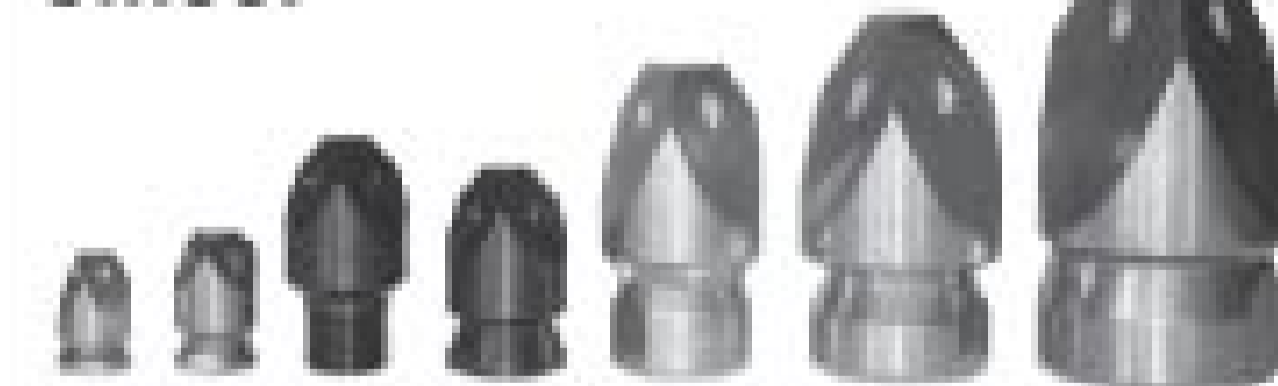
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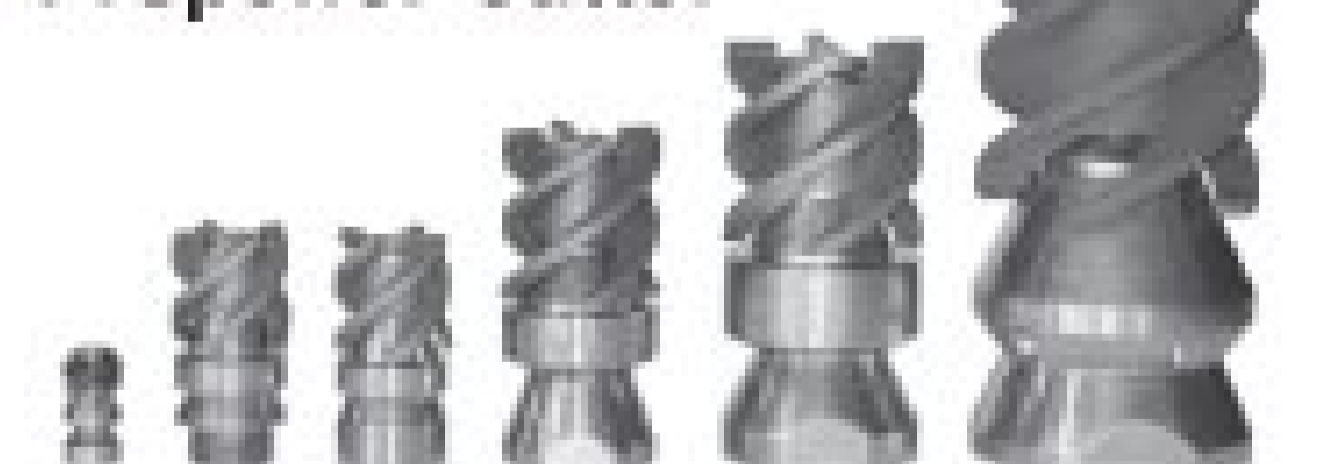
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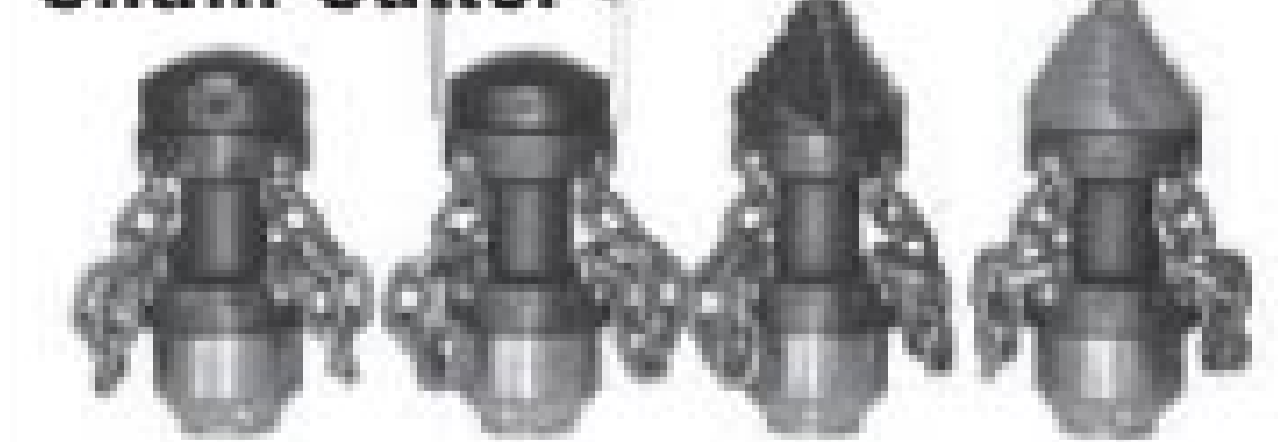
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Rewards Beyond Money

Why motivation strategies based solely on money fail, and how your business can get people energized with a proven three-step approach to compensation

By John Schaefer

It's been said: "Money isn't everything – but whatever's in second place is a heck of a long way behind!"

It's tough to disagree, which is probably why compensation tends to be the measure of success and progress in most people's eyes. But if it's true, then why are productivity, loyalty, and morale still such huge and costly problems in workplaces today? Why can't companies just offer employees enough money to make them go the extra mile, and everyone wins?

There are three problems with the "it's all about the money" approach:

The big problem with moving so quickly to money as the measuring and motivating tool is that it's cold and calculating and must be refreshed regularly. This is expensive and time-consuming, even when it works.

1. Maslow's view. Way back in the 1940s, when Abraham Maslow developed his famous Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid, he described the fallacy of relying on money to motivate and reward. As everyone remembers,

you don't move up through the five levels of needs until your current level is satisfied.

Money resides in Level 1: Physiological needs (basic survival, a roof over your head, food, and clothing). Most employees in our society live mainly in Level 4: Self-esteem (a desire to be loved and respected). That is, they have already achieved Level 1, Level 2 (safety, benefits, 401K, security) and Level 3 (social needs, friends, family, supportive colleagues).

Just look at advertising and this becomes quite clear. It's all about how you look, how you feel, diet, exercise, clothing, makeup, plastic surgery,

cars, lifestyle. There is nothing wrong with this, but it defines a huge amount of time that makes up most of employees' lives.

Money, while everybody wants more, and while it is important, is no

longer motivating, because it dwells in a completed level of the pyramid. It's a want, not a need.

2. Money as the measure. Financial measurement has driven corporate thinking since the Industrial Revolution and is now the common denominator for the world economy. How else can you score the game of business?

The problem is that this fixation skips a very important aspect of human achievement, performance, and employee engagement. If you do a blanket survey, every employee wants money. That is universal and is nothing new. But, if you ask them why they do what they do and what personally excites them about their work, it's never about money. It's about the emotional aspects of their work, life and personal interactions.

Companies must understand and relate to the emotional needs of their people first (Maslow Level 4 thinking), before trying to motivate and incentivize with money. Only when people feel genuinely loved, appreciated and respected as human beings will they strive to make you (and themselves) more money in the long run.

Money is a quick-and-dirty fix, so it is seen as impersonal, manipulative, and self-serving. Organizations that rely on money alone find it to be a very expensive and short-lived recognition tool.

3. Brain biology. All financial thinking is left brain – the logical, calculating side. A decision involving money will always consider value, fairness, and time. On the other hand, love and respect are emotional and are processed by the right brain. They are considered from a warm, holistic, feeling viewpoint, not logically motivated.

The big problem with moving so quickly to money as the measuring

John Schaefer is a consultant with more than 20 years of experience helping companies realize and react to what he calls the Employer/Employee Disconnect. He is the author of The Vocational Shrink: An Analysis of the Ten Levels of Workplace Disillusionment, and the Manager Training Program, "Why Should Supervisors Care?" For more information, visit www.VocationalShrink.com.

and motivating tool is that it's cold and calculating and must be refreshed regularly. This is expensive and time-consuming, even when it works.

The approach recommended by many today is to engage employees personally, emotionally and honestly first, then allow their rising self-esteem and feelings of value to drive their desire for more money. This approach, while requiring time and pushes leaders beyond their comfort zones, ultimately lasts longer, gets far better results, and costs significantly less money.

As a matter of fact, when done properly, it actually makes the company much more money than it costs – a true win-win solution. Money will always be the ultimate measure of business and personal success, but smart companies get there in three steps:

Step 1: Show the love. Let employees know you care about them as human beings, not just as workers; and be genuine about it, so they believe you really mean it.

Step 2: Treat them with respect. Keep everyone informed and make their work relevant. Show that they are important to the company and that you value their input.

Step 3: Share the wealth. Now that you've got their attention and they feel good about the place, offer well-organized, realistic, fair, and meaningful opportunities to share in the revenue that their improved performance brings to the organization.

Today's technology allows you to orchestrate all your current employee programs into a single, cost-effective strategy. Finally, measure and evaluate the results so you can prove that your effort is paying off – and it will. ■

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Mr. Rooter Corp. ranks 139 on Entrepreneur magazine's Annual Franchise 500 list. The list is based on financial strength and stability, growth rate, and size of the system. In 2009, Mr. Rooter Plumbing added 37 franchise locations in North America.

Vacall Forms Partnership, Names Dealer

Vacall Industries has partnered with Myers to offer an 85-gpm dry-run pump on AllJetVac sewer cleaners/hydroexcavators. The company also named Finkbiner Equipment, Burr Ridge, Ill., as a dealer for its AllJetVac machines. ■

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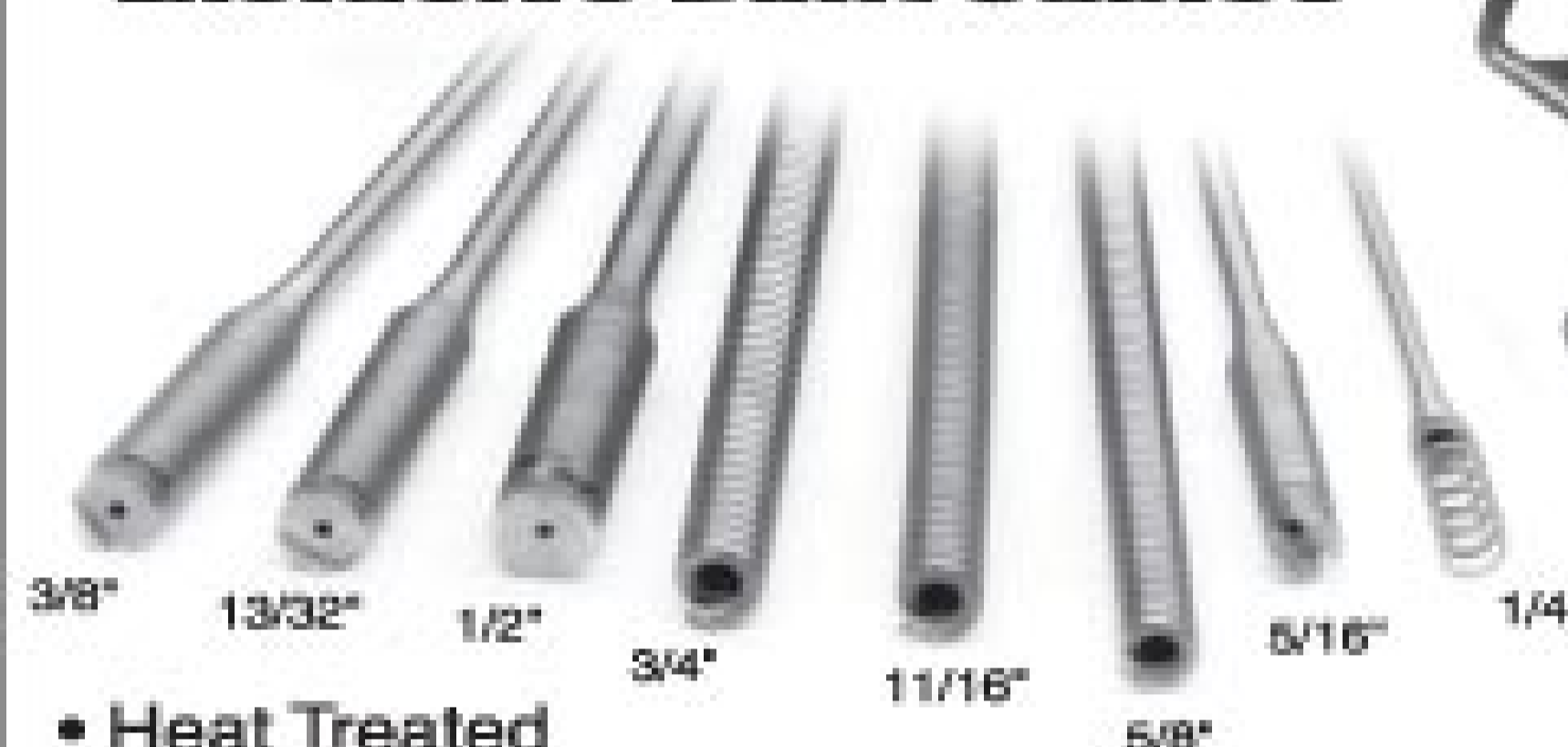
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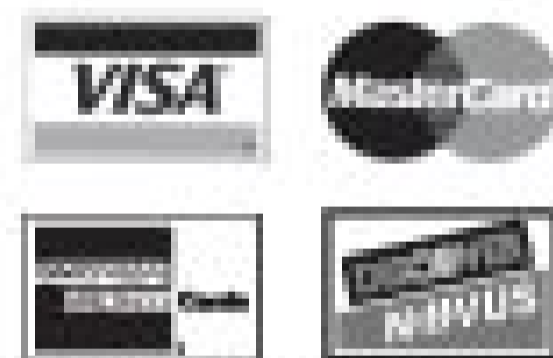
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Multiplier Effect

A fleet of identical trucks helps Grayton Plumbing achieve brand recognition and cultivate the image of being a much larger company

By Ken Wysocky

Grayton Plumbing in Washington, D.C. doesn't own a fleet of 20 trucks – it just seems that way. That visual sleight-of-hand is a testament to the power of effective branding, says owner Frankey Grayton, whose picture appears on the back of his company's six service vehicles.

"The trucks are, for the most part, identical," says Grayton. The Dodge Sprinter 3500 chassis carries Hackney box bodies. Vinyl wraps show a large yellow smiley face with a bright-red monkey wrench, plus the company's phone number, Web address and slogan, all on a watery, aqua-blue background.

They're everywhere

"Six identical trucks moving throughout the city give the impression that we have more trucks than we actually own," says Grayton. "People tell me they saw a truck on the south side and another on the west side, but they don't realize that in most cases, they saw the same truck."



Prospective customers can hardly miss this colorful service van owned by Grayton Plumbing in Washington, D.C.

MONEY Machines

Before the vinyl wraps, the business had no name recognition. So Grayton contacted SignZoo in Sarasota, Fla. "I wanted to clearly distinguish us from anything else in the market, and we got that," Grayton says. "Now I'm known throughout the city as the guy with his picture on the back of his trucks.

"When we get service calls, we ask everyone how they heard about our company. The vinyl wraps doubled the calls generated by our

trucks. We went from not being recognized at all to very high recognition, all because of the trucks."

Grayton talks with other plumbers and drain cleaners about the value of highly visible trucks. Their excitement about the concept

MONEY MACHINES

OWNER:	Grayton Plumbing, Washington, D.C.
FUNCTION:	Plumbing and drain-cleaning service and repair
VEHICLE TYPE:	Dodge Sprinter 3500 chassis with Hackney box bodies
PRIMARY EQUIPMENT:	RIDGID K-1500, K-60 and K-50 drain machines
COST:	\$55,000
WEB SITE:	www.graytonplumbing.com

usually disappears when they hear the price tag. "Sometimes, small

"Sometimes, small businesses don't have big-business mentality. Just because you're small doesn't mean you have to think small. Whether you run a fleet of two or 20 vehicles, they need to be identical. It's all part of branding."

Frankey Grayton

businesses don't have big-business mentality," he says. "Just because you're small doesn't mean you have to think small. Whether you run a fleet of two or 20 vehicles, they need to be identical. It's all part of branding."

Time savers

The trucks do more than just market the company: They save technicians significant time because

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they carry everything required for a job. "We don't spend a lot of time running back and forth for materials," Grayton says. "Once a supplier asked me what was wrong with our business because he rarely saw my guys anymore.

"If we can knock out an average call without leaving the property, that adds value for homeowners because we're not wasting their time, either. Our customer surveys show they really like that."

Each truck carries a RIDGID K-1500 sectional drain machine for larger jobs and a K-50 for bathtubs and sinks. Half the trucks also carry

RIDGID K-60s, designed for 1-1/2- to 4-inch drain lines. The trucks also have identical coded storage bins that make spare-part inventory tracking as easy as the vehicles are visible. All 20, er, six of them. ■

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Keeping the Best

Contractors use a wide variety of strategies beyond competitive compensation to lure and retain the best employees possible

By Ken Wysocky

Competitive wages help companies attract and retain employees. But in the commercial and residential pipe-cleaning industry, where tough, dirty work can make good workers hard to locate, contractors often must offer more than just decent pay to attract good people and keep them on board.

The methods they use to minimize turnover vary. Some companies find that health insurance and retirement plans do the trick. For others, an emphasis on workplace safety pays dividends. Bonus programs also boost employee loyalty. Here's what three contractors had to say about what works for them:

"In terms of attracting employees, the industrial-cleaning industry is not the easiest business to be in," observes Brooks Bradford, CEO of AIMM Technologies Inc. in Texas



Brooks Bradford

CEO
AIMM Technologies Inc.,
Texas City, Texas
Employees: 221
Years in business: 13

City, Texas, which provides hydrokinetic cleaning, mostly for the chemical industry.

"But with our processes, we make it much easier and safer for employees to work. We're so much faster than typical hydroblasting – 50 to 60 percent faster. And the process is automated to the extent that there's very little manual work involved, so to a large extent, it eliminates fatigue.

"We're very proud of how safe our employees are. We stress safety every day. As a result, we've never had a lost-time accident in the history of the company. We have classroom training at least once a week, where we'll bring employees in and sit them down and go over some new concepts, or review areas where another company we know about had an accident, and try to determine why it happened and how we can avoid it.

"In the long run, our employees know that we value their health and their lives. They're not just a number or a percentage to us. We're truly interested because we want the total person involved in our operations.

"Along with standard benefits, we offer employees profit-sharing. We find the main thing employees are interested in, aside from health and safety, is their paycheck. We have a very liberal profit-sharing plan and as a result we have some very

long-term employees. Employees get a profit-sharing check every quarter if we make a profit. It can be substantial.

"Employee communication is also important. Our weekly classroom meetings are not restricted just to safety. We also may talk about profit-sharing, for instance. We also listen



Dave Teeter

Owner
Action Drain Services Inc.,
Craig, Colo.
Employees: 8
Years in business: 12

to employees – try to find out about their problems, and what we can do to make ourselves a better company."

"There are a lot of jobs in our area in the oil and natural gas fields, so it's tough to find employees, especially good employees," explains Dave Teeter, owner of Action Drain Services Inc. in Craig, Colo. "The pool of workers is very small, so the quality isn't up to par, in most cases. Good employees get snapped up quickly.

"So we have to be very competitive in terms of wages and benefits. We pay 75 percent of employees' health insurance and offer them a Savings

"Employee communication is important. Our weekly classroom meetings are not restricted just to safety. We also may talk about profit-sharing, for instance. We also listen to employees – try to find out about their problems, and what we can do to make ourselves a better company."

Brooks Bradford, CEO
AIMM Technologies Inc.

Incentive Match Plan for Employees (SIMPLE) IRA for retirement, in which we match their contributions up to 3 percent of their income. We also offer two weeks of paid vacation when they start, and it goes up from there.

"My wife and I believe that small businesses should offer benefits and compensation packages just like large businesses, like coal mines and power plants, do. There's no reason why small businesses

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



can't do the same. I'm a small business owner, and I believe if it was my family in the reverse situation, I'd want health care coverage and vacation time to spend with family and friends, and I'd want to make enough money to go on vacation.

"Sure, it hurts our bottom line a little bit. And we still have turnover. It seems there's always someone who moves on because they want more money, or they think the grass is greener on the other side. But good benefits help us retain the quality people.

"We have had bonus programs in the past, but we find they work well for a little while, then fall on their face from one quarter to the next. I don't know why. Maybe the payouts need to be more frequent – monthly may work better than quarterly. We're still trying to figure out how to reward guys for extra work, besides just paying them.

"For overtime calls, we charge a flat rate over and above the usual call fee, and our guys get 80 percent of that. We've had to raise the call price on weekends because of demand, so that 80 percent went way up. They still hate working overtime, but I've had guys who've made an extra \$1,500 a weekend, over and above their wages."

Mike Greenwood, vice president of Greenwood's Sewer Service in Des Moines, Iowa, says his company attracts and retains employees through competitive wages and a bonus program.

"We provide a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan and give



Mike Greenwood

Vice President
Greenwood's Sewer Service,
Des Moines, Iowa
Employees: 9
Years in business: 15

our employees two weeks of paid vacation, as well as paid time off on holidays, if they aren't on call.

"We also run a monthly bonus program that's based on the number of calls our guys make per month after hours and on weekends. They get a percentage of the total cost of the job they do after hours. That percentage goes in a 'bank,' and employees receive the bonus at end of the month.

"It costs us extra money, but it keeps employees happy, and gives them an incentive to go out after hours, which keeps customers happy. It also helps keep our employees out of competitors' hands." ■

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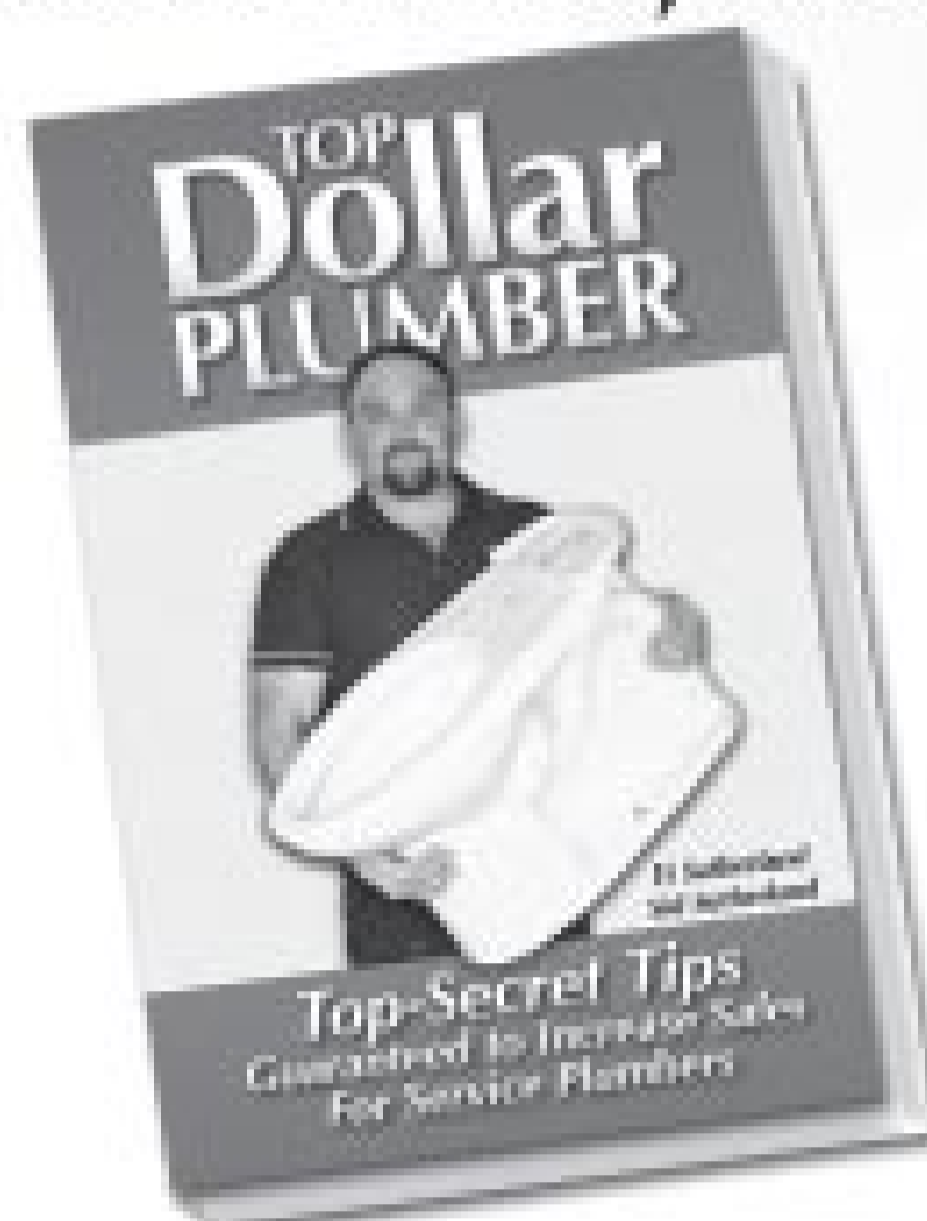
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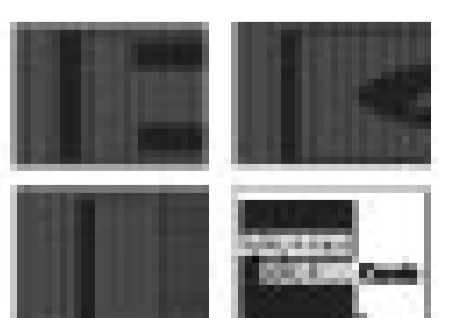
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Service and Repair Company for sale, turnkey operation, six trucks, established 1985. Located in Hilton Head Island, SC. Call 843-683-6001 anytime. (C7)

Philadelphia/Allentown Pennsylvania Area Sewer Business For Sale. Specializing in collection systems, video inspection, jetting, municipal work. Includes CUES TV & grout truck, Sewer Equipment Corporation jetter truck, Vactor 2100, RIDGID camera, confined space equipment and more! Good revenue history. Great opportunity to expand or start your own business. Current owner wants to retire. **Offered at \$330,000.** E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

Looking to sell your industrial cleaning, hydroexcavation or waterblasting business? We have buyers. Must have gross revenue in excess of \$1,000,000 annually. Nationwide interest. E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

Northern California/Reno, Nevada Area Portable Restroom Service Business For Sale. Owner is motivated and inventory alone is worth the asking price. Includes 100+ restrooms, sinks, ADA units, holding tanks, 2 service trucks and a delivery trailer. Annual revenue in excess of \$100K each of the past 4 years. List of existing customers and contracts included. Owner is willing to train if needed. Asking \$75,000 - **REDUCED TO \$55,000.** E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (C6)

BUSINESSES

BUSINESSES WANTED: Septic pumping, grease trap, drain cleaning and other ancillary businesses wanted. We are buying well run businesses in New England, Mid-Atlantic and Florida. All opportunities will be given proper consideration. Confidentiality ensured. Will move quickly for the right opportunity. Serious inquiries only. Please contact Richard Bedard @ Blue Water, 617-326-3344 or rbedard@bwseptic.com. (CPBM)

Massachusetts Sewer & Drain Franchise For Sale. Confidential listing, Non Disclosure Agreement required. Turn-key business, good revenue — **asking \$165,000.** E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ROTO-ROOTER franchise for sale in TN. This area consists of Putnam and Cumberland counties. It includes the cities of Cookeville and Crossville. Contact Philip Harbin 423-593-2169. (C6)

REDUCED! MUST SELL DUE TO OWNER'S HEALTH. Drain cleaning, jetting, plumbing business for sale in Myrtle Beach, SC. 3 trucks, jetter, all equipment. Strong customer base. Will consider holding plumbing license. Willing to train. 843-997-5570. (CBM)

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Well-Established and Profitable Texas Septic, Sewer & Installation Business For Sale. Grossing in excess of \$1,000,000 annually, customer list of nearly 2,000 accounts and 430 contracted customers. Includes nice late model equipment, most are 2007, 2008 model years. Real estate with rental income can be purchased separately if interested. Asking \$799,000. E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

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Looking to sell your business? We can effectively market your business to more than 100,000 potential buyers in the liquid waste, portable sanitation, and sewer & drain industries, as well as your local markets, the Internet and other venues. No upfront fees — you don't pay unless your business sells. To learn more about brokering your business through B2 Business Brokers powered by Cleaner, call 800-257-7222. (CBM)

WWW.ROOTERMAN.COM. Franchises available with low flat fee. New concept. Visit web site or call 1-800-700-8062 x26. (CPBM)

Looking to sell your portable restroom business? We have buyers looking in the following areas: Florida, California, Virginia, Iowa, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania and more! Must have gross revenue in excess of \$250,000 in most cases. E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

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1984 Aquatech model JV1000 trailer mounted vacuum. 16 hp B&S gas engine, Moro PD pump. 515-864-1036. (C4)

2008 Mongoose Model 184, Dealer Demo Unit, excellent condition, Hatz diesel Silent Pak engine, 4000 PSI, 18 GPM wireless remote, low hours. \$32,500 OBO. Trade-ins welcome. 800-575-2538. (C5)

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2006 GMC TC6500 cab and chassis with Pipe Hunter trunk mounted jetting unit, 3000 psi @ 50 gpm with a 1,000 US gal. water tank, rear mounted hose reel with JET EYE camera system. **PRICED TO SELL!** (Stock #13234V) www.VacuumSalesInc.com, (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (C4)

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1986 Aquatech SJR1500, GMC cabover with front reel, 26,100 miles, 2600 hrs. 60 GPM @ 2000, rebuilt pump. \$9,500 OBO. www.ahequipment.com (C7)

1982 Ford F350, gas, manual transmission, F. E. Myers Jetter, Ford 4 cylinder aux engine, 35 gpm @ 1800 psi pump, fixed hose reel with 300' hose. 515-864-1036. (C4)

PipeHunter 30 gpm, 3,000 psi, 1997 GMC 3500 HD, AC, new tires, new paint, clean, 600' 3/4" hose, 625 gal. \$15,995. 518-747-2044. municipalsales.net/equipment.html. (CBM)

RETIRING: 1987 Ford F-800 Jetter Truck, low miles, 1500 gallon, 36 gpm @ 3000 psi, new tires, arrow board, extras. Best reasonable offer. Jim 951-545-9604. (C5)

1994 Ford LN8000, Ford FD1460, automatic, Sreco truck mounted jetter model HV200TM/H/A/P, front mounted PTO, 1500 gal. poly tank, 60 gpm @ 3000 psi Myers pump, 600' of 1" 2500 psi hose. 515-864-1036. (C4)

JET VACS

2008 Sterling LT7501 with a VacAll AJV1015, 10-yd. debris body, 1500 gal. water, combination vacuum/jetting unit, preowned rental unit. **PRICED TO SELL!** (Stock #13366) www.VacuumSalesInc.com, (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (C4)

1991 Camel 200, 6-speed, 65 gpm, 2000 psi, Roots 624 blower, tandem axle, ready for work, 169,000 miles, excellent condition. \$35,900. Call 920-655-7302 or 920-866-9109. (CBM)

2003 Vactor 2110, **PD blower**, 80 gpm, 2500 psi pump, pump-off system, articulating hose reel, extendible boom. Was city owned. In excellent condition. Located in Dallas. 972-938-1905. www.empireequip.com. (CPBM)

1999 International, 275 hp diesel, MD3060 auto, tandem, Vac-Con model V312LHAE combination machine, 12-cu-yd. body, 3-stage fan, Cummins 150 hp aux. motor, 80 gpm pump, articulating hose reel, 8" telescopic boom, factory reconditioned with new dark blue paint. 515-864-1036. (C4)

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Cues TV/Cutter Trailer: 2007 Evolution package, with or without camera, cutter or compressor. Call or go to our web site for photos and specs. www.mccannunderground.com. Financing available. Kelly 608-279-2299. (CBM)

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Olympic hi-rise fiberglass portable toilets used on one job site, \$250 ea. 100 Satellite Tufway construction portable toilets, \$200. Call 573-450-8378 for more information. (C5)

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Pipeline Rehab Field Superintendent for CCTV and cleaning large diameter pipe crew. REQUIREMENTS: CDL B w/tanker endorsement and clean driving record. Must have good verifiable supervisory experience, pipeline rehab preferred. Must have comprehensive speaking, writing & computer skills. Bilingual a plus. Call Peggy for appt. at 727-524-8609. (C4)

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Growing South TX company is seeking experienced (5 yr.) CCTV/JET/VAC technician to train as Foreman/Crew Supervisor. Responsibilities to include ability to work with City supervisors and on-site Engineers; to work with and oversee pipeline cleaning and confined space entry; to handle TV inspections & analysis of sewer lines and oversee and provide equipment maintenance. Send resume to HR Dept., P.O. Box 270298, Corpus Christi, TX 78427. (C4)

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1992 International 4900 7-speed, 2500 gallon tank with hydraulic lift and full open rear door. Masport liquid cooled pump. \$25,000. WI 920-585-9924. (CPBM)

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TV INSPECTION

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1995 Chevy Van with **8100 original miles,** RST video system, Omni Eye II color camera, transporter, RST data display plus system with VCR and 19" monitor. Was municipal owned and in like new condition. 714-639-8352. **www.empireequip.com.** (CPBM)

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New Cyclops TV System mounted in 2001 1/2-ton Ford van. P7T camera, transporter, 1,000' cable, power cable reel, on-screen footage & data, DVD, factory warranty. \$52,800. Call Bill @ 830-249-9756. (C4)

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VACUUM LOADERS

1999 International with a Guzzler Ace 27" HG wet/dry industrial vacuum tank loader. **PRICED TO SELL!** (Stock #7390) **www.VacuumSalesInc.com, (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648).** (C4)

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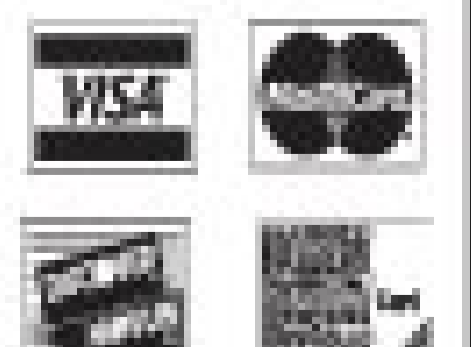
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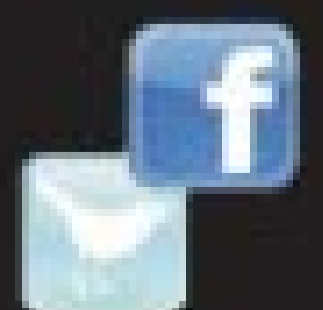


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