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Cleaner®



Where the Air Gets Thin

Freedom Enterprises tackles challenging projects in the high Rocky Mountains

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READER PIPELINES

Successful jetting strategies

TECH PERSPECTIVE

A fresh look at online advertising

BETTER BUSINESS

The hazards of holding on too long

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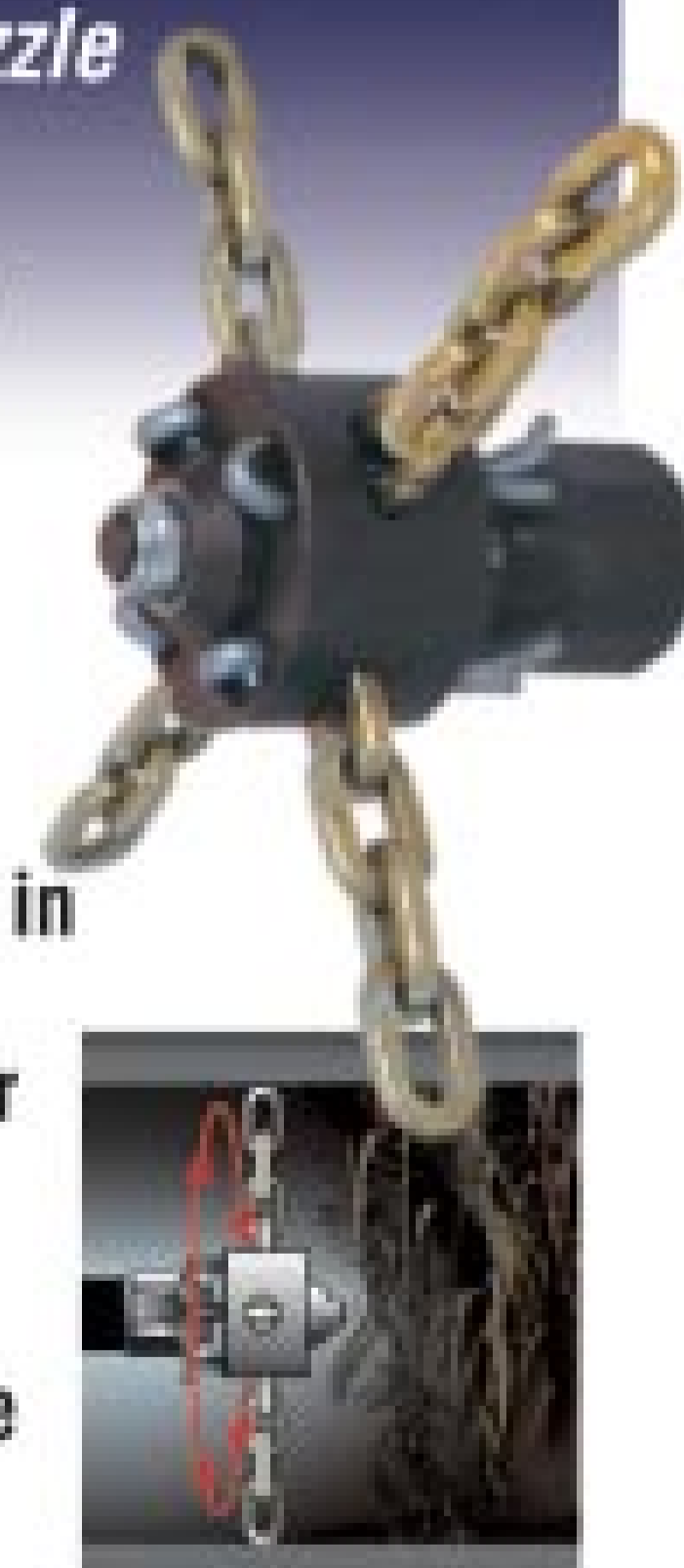
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- 3/8" nozzle is available in 4, 5.5 and 8 gpm models to clear 2", 4", 6", and 8" lines.



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ARTICLES

32 WHERE THE AIR GETS THIN By Marian Bond

On the cover: Bob Rasnick and Melinda Gorman started in business offering basic residential services. The couple saw opportunities in water jetting, video inspection, waterblasting and other services. Today, their company, Freedom Enterprises, operates high in the Rocky Mountains near Steamboat Springs, Colo., and uses sophisticated technology to solve problems. Here, Rasnick discusses a culvert cleaning job with technicians Zane Younglund and Titus Larsson. (Photography by Larry Pierce)

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- Profile: American Inspection Technologies, Trenton, N.J.
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- Reader Pipelines: Getting and keeping top inspection operators

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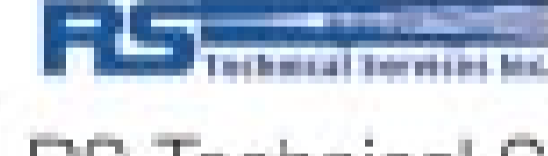



DRAIN MAINTENANCE

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Work on Your Strengths

It's not your weaknesses that need strengthening. It's your unique ability that you should constantly hone to get the most from your business and life



Ted J. Rulseh

Conventional wisdom (some of it anyway) says we all have strengths and weaknesses, and we should always be working to shore up our weak areas.

That may hold true to a certain extent. There are certain skills a person must have as the price of admission to a job or profession. For example, I wouldn't get far in my line of work if not competent in writing, spelling, grammar, interviewing. A drain cleaning technician isn't likely to make it without mechanical aptitude, good driving habits, people skills, business savvy.

So it makes sense to get stronger in all those areas that are essential to

everything, very few people can become good at everything. And in fact we don't need to be, because most of us work on teams.

What we should be doing is working on our strengths. Because a team of people, all operating at peak efficiency with different specialties, can be an amazing force.

Nurturing a specialty

If you're old enough to remember, think of the old Boston Celtics dynasty. There in the middle stood Bill Russell, a mediocre offensive player at best. But did coach Red Auerbach exhort him to work on his shooting?

No, Russell had plenty of team-

mates who could score. So he often tapped it to a teammate to start a fast break. Similarly, no one pushed 6-foot-tall point guard Bob Cousy to focus on rebounding. His genius was passing. So even the best of those Celtics players had big weaknesses – but look at what they did together.

The concept of focusing on strengths is perhaps the most powerful when applied to the owner or leader of a business. Strong management of a business is the sum of many skills: Sales, finance, staff development, marketing, purchasing and more. Who can claim to be good at all of those? The smart owner doesn't try. He or she concentrates on one or a few strong areas and hires people

that you work far into the night, until you yawn, and look up at the clock, and say, "Doggone it, I'm too tired, I have to quit now." At such times, chances are you were working in your unique ability.

The folks at Lifebushido (www.lifebushido.com) put it this way: "The more time you spend on your unique ability, the more you will achieve. Your unique talent is something you are passionate about doing. You want to do it as much as possible. Your unique ability is energizing for you and those around you. You keep getting better at it..."

"Your unique ability comes naturally and is easy, fun, energizing and motivating. If you focus your energy

The mere fact you run a business doesn't mean you have to give up the things you most love doing to become a full-time overseer. On the contrary, most likely the best thing you can do for your business – and yourself, and your family – is to keep working as much as possible within your unique ability, and let others handle the rest.

our work. But at a certain point, working on weaknesses – as noble as that sounds – becomes almost a fool's errand. Just as no one is good at

mates who could score. So he focused on his strength: Defense. It was said that when Russell blocked a shot, he didn't swat it into the stands,

who are experts in the others.

It doesn't matter, for example, if you own a business but despise marketing work and are not earthly good at it. You can hire a marketing manager and spend more of your time on other tasks that you enjoy and at which you excel.

Your unique ability

There's a concept in business that says a person is happiest, most productive and most prosperous when focused on his or her unique ability. This is the area where you perform better than almost anyone else, and where you greatly enjoy working.

Maybe at some time you've had occasion to say about your work, "What, I get paid for this? Or maybe you've been so engrossed in a project

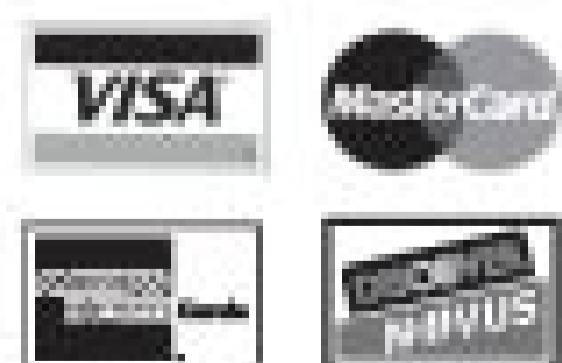
on what you love to do and what you do best, anything is possible."

The mere fact you run a business doesn't mean you have to give up the things you most love doing to become a full-time overseer. On the contrary, most likely the best thing you can do for your business – and yourself, and your family – is to keep working as much as possible within your unique ability, and let others handle the rest.

And then if you're wise or fortunate enough to have the people in charge of sales, marketing, training, customer service, dispatching, purchasing and other functions, all working in their unique abilities – well, then your business is a force to be reckoned with. Kind of like those 1960s Boston Celtics. ■

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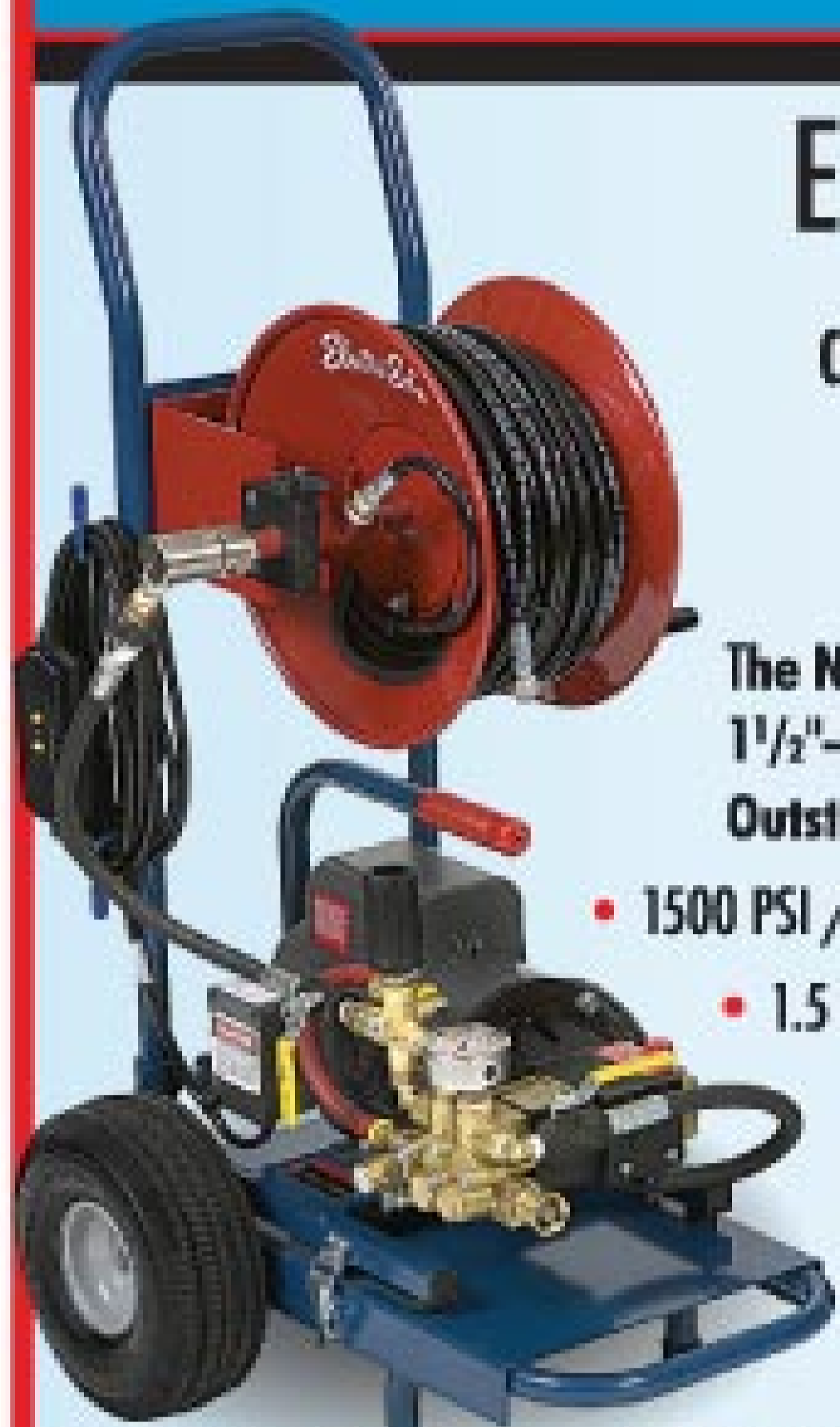
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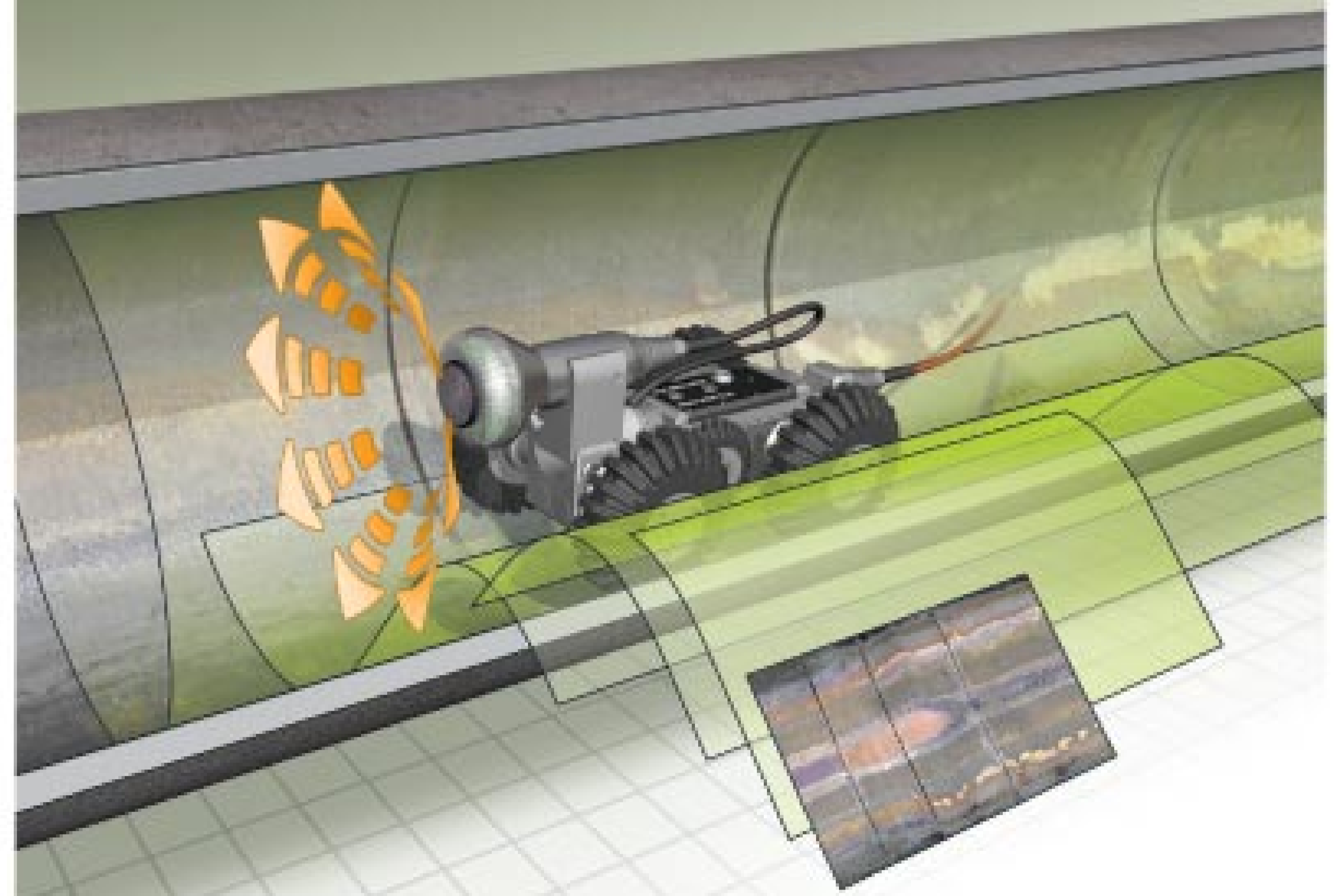
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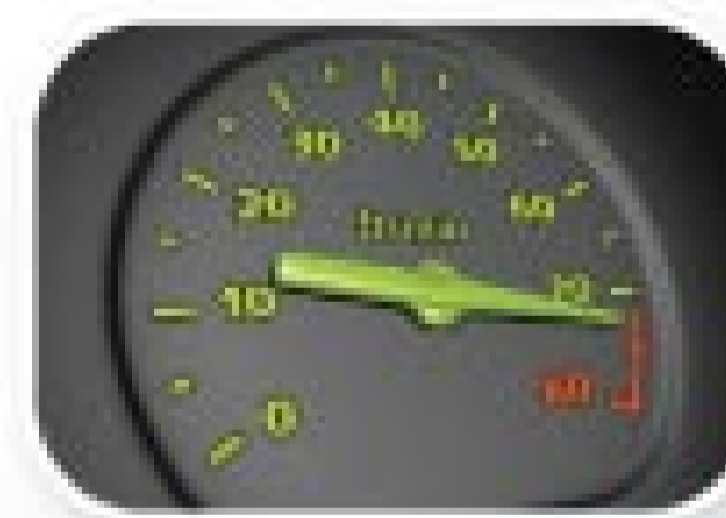
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Do They Buckle Up?

Seat belt usage is now the nearly universal law. But do your company's drivers always wear them?

By Ted J. Rulseh

When I was 16 and just starting to drive, my father, an observant man, saw that the seat belt on the driver's side of our 1964 Rambler station wagon looked as if it

Safety
FIRST

had been sat on. This was before seat belts were automatically wound up on reels.

Anyway, that triggered a lecture

on the importance of wearing the seat belt, and a threat (not idle in the least) that if he ever caught me going without it I would lose my driving privileges. He did me a great favor. From then on I vowed that I would always buckle the belt on, and if I ever forgot, put it on the instant I discovered I had been driving without it.

How about the people who drive your service vehicles? Seat

belts are more comfortable now. Alarm bells ring if you fail to buckle up. The law says they must be worn at all times. Yet sometimes people still neglect them.

Life and limb

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) says that requiring the use of seat belts while driving on the job is a critical step that employers

Experts say that seat belts should be fastened before traveling any distance or speed. Seventy-five percent of crash deaths and injuries occur within 25 miles of home – important to remember for contractors working in a compact service area.

The Virginia DOT also notes that drivers are 25 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured if they are thrown clear of the vehicle

Experts say that seat belts should be fastened before traveling any distance or speed. Seventy-five percent of crash deaths and injuries occur within 25 miles of home – important to remember for contractors working in a compact service area.

should take to prevent injuries and fatalities from vehicle crashes.

NIOSH says a mandatory belt use policy is the single most important road safety policy an employer can put in place. The organization says seat belts save thousands of lives every year and could save thousands more if victims had been wearing them. NIOSH estimates that belt use also prevents hundreds of thousands of moderate to severe injuries.

If that's not convincing enough, consider these facts and figures provided by the State of Virginia, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among people age 44 and younger and the number one cause of head and spinal cord injury.
- About 35,000 people die in motor vehicle crashes each year, and about half of them could be saved if they wore their safety belts.
- For every 1 percent increase in safety belt use, 172 lives and close to \$100 million in annual injury and death costs could be saved.

in a crash than if they remain inside the vehicle.

In a 30 mph collision, an unrestrained 160-pound person can strike another passenger, crash through a windshield or slam into the vehicle's interior with 4,800 pounds of force.

Leading cause of death

NIOSH notes that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths in the United States. Motor vehicle safety on the job is an important public health issue, not just an occupational safety issue.

Employers are in a strategic position to promote road safety on the job, in turn advancing motor vehicle safety in general. Have you taken a recent look at your team members' seat-belt-wearing habits? A little vigilance could help you save the life of a valuable team member. ■



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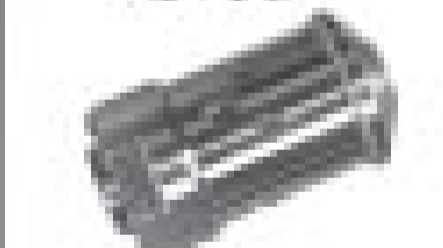
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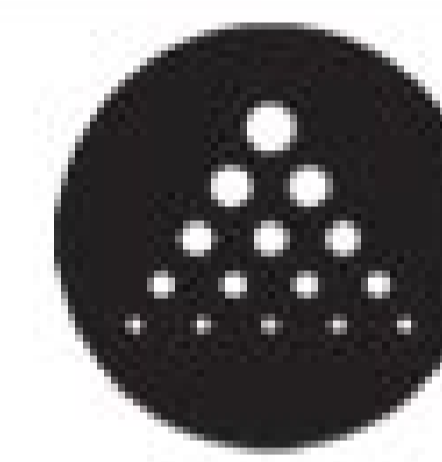
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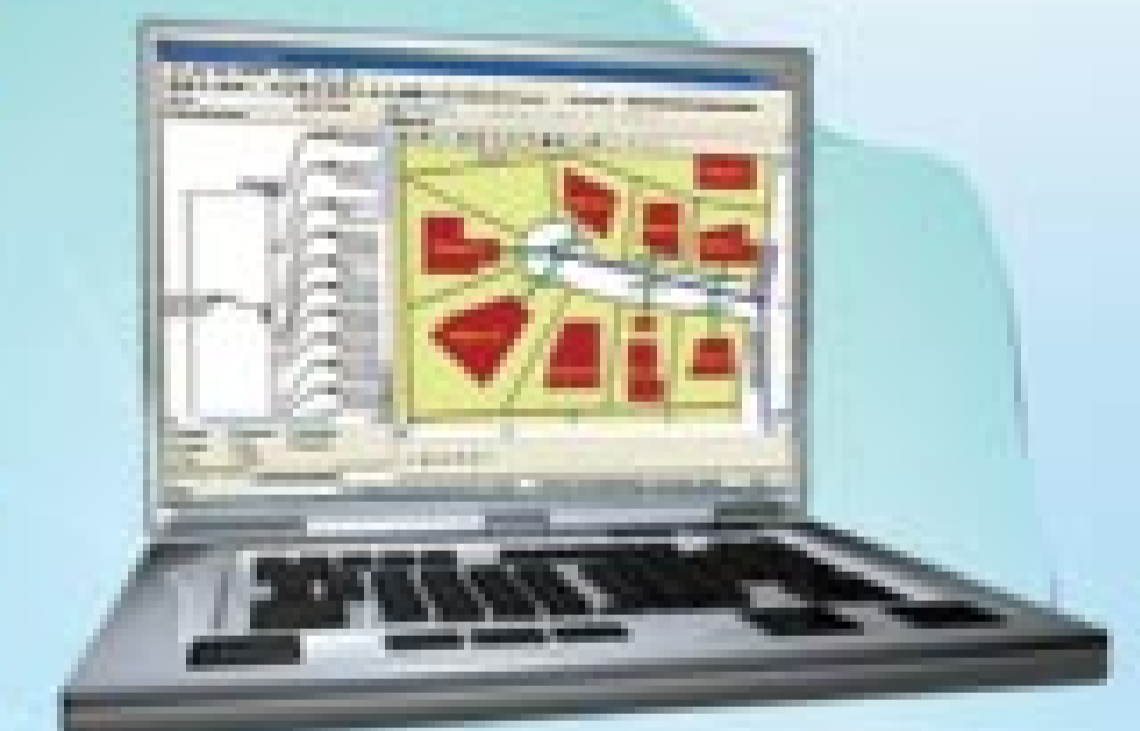
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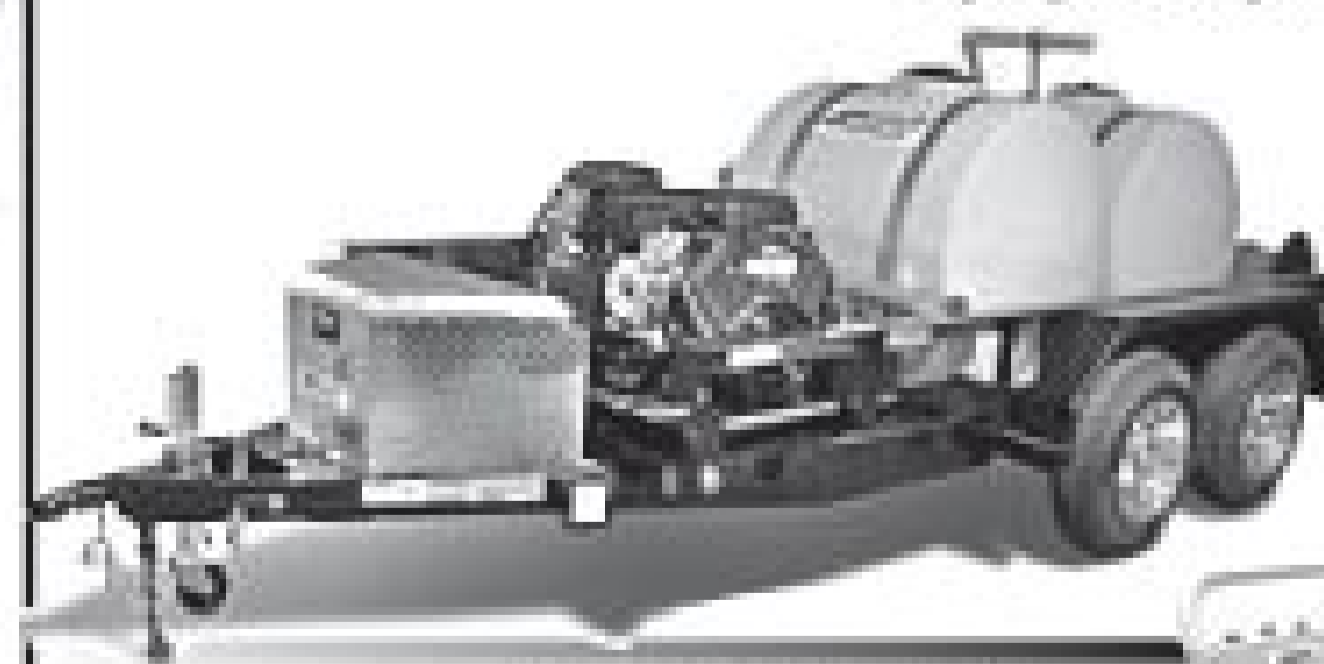
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PHCC MEMBER



Technicians Frank Romig (left) and Jason Vanlandingham prepare a pipe liner for installation in Skeen Plumbing's 24-foot liner trailer on a work site in Jackson, Miss. (Photography by Ron Blaylock)

PROFILE

SKEEN PLUMBING & GAS INC., RIDGELAND, MISS.

OWNER: Ricky Skeen

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 27

EMPLOYEES: 20

SPECIALTIES: Waterjet cleaning, TV inspection, pipe bursting, CIPP lining

FLEET: 14 service vans

WEB SITE: www.skeenplumbinggas.com



Vanlandingham (left) and technician Justin Thames prepare a new pipe liner.

Upping the Pressure

The addition of high-powered waterjetting systems helps Skeen Plumbing establish an elite reputation around Jackson, Miss.

By Marian Bond

Operating Skeen Plumbing & Gas Inc. for 27 years in Ridgeland, Miss., Ricky Skeen has seen many shifts in the industry, and changes in his own business, too.

There were times when he had 30 service vans, and when he scaled down to three. Today, with 12 service vans, 20 employees, and two distinct divisions in the company, Skeen likes his situation.

Skeen added TV inspection in 1995, and the addition of waterjetting in 2000 helped him further please his customers, about 60 percent of them residential. His first jetter was a cart-mounted model that he used to pick up some school and restaurant accounts. Then the jetter was stolen and, reluctant to invest in another larger jetter, Skeen worked with cable machines until 2007. At that point he began adding the jetting equipment for which the company is now known.

Jetting, along with line locating, pipe bursting, and CIPP lining, have helped make Skeen Plumbing the "go to" source in the greater Jackson area. The company motto is: "Don't scream, call Skeen."

When one of Skeen's Chevrolet 4500 service vans pulls up to a job site, pulling a 38-foot enclosed CIPP lining trailer, it is a 68-foot-long rolling billboard. The unit generally goes out to the bigger projects at multi-story apartment buildings, commercial properties or restaurants. "We get a lot of attention when we pull up with that one," says Skeen.

"I really enjoy the jetting process. I guess it's because I like equipment."

Ricky Skeen

Hooked on toys

Skeen Plumbing operates out of a 7,500 square-foot facility. The plumbing division has nine service vans and related equipment, and the drain cleaning, inspection and repair division has five service vans. The divisions mostly run separately. Long-time employee Richard Parker supervises the plumbing side, and Jason Vanlandingham oversees drain cleaning.

"I'm all over the place," says Skeen. "I would rather be in the truck working, but that doesn't always pan out."

Skeen saw the potential for jetting at the 2004 Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International, where he recalls feeling like "the kid in the

Jason Vanlandingham secures the air line in preparation for installing the new pipe liner. The waterjetter from US Jetting in the background delivers 4,000 psi/18 gpm.



candy shop.” He bought a trailer jetter from US Jetting, and within 12 months he had two more – another trailer unit and a truck-based system in a Chevrolet 4500 four-door fully enclosed van.

The trailer jetters deliver 4,000 psi/18 gpm and carry 300-gallon water tanks. The truck-mounted unit delivers the same flow and pressure but carries a 600-gallon tank, as well as a removable 400-gallon tank. It has a curbside power-pullout reel.

With that equipment on board, Skeen set about training his team to use it productively and safely. US Jetting conducted a two-day training class at its headquarters and visited for on site training. New jetting technicians are thoroughly trained, attending classes and riding along with experienced technicians before running the equipment themselves.

Doing it better

“I really enjoy the jetting process,” says Skeen. “I guess it’s because I like equipment.” He also appreciates the chance to offer a better service and expand his customer base, revenue and profit.

“The customer can call us, and the woman who takes the call will determine if it’s a call for the plumbing division or the drain side,” says Skeen. “If it’s a drain call, one of our trucks will go out and diagnose the problem. Jet it out, camera it. After jetting, we can see cracks, misalignments and other problems in the pipe. I like that we can describe the problem. We let the customer look at the screen in the van, send an e-mail to whoever might want to

review the tape, or burn a DVD, all from the vehicle.”

The technician typically offers the customer up to three options and then suggests the one that will do the most good: Line the pipe, make a spot repair, pipe burst or dig it up.

“You have to see what you are looking at,” says Skeen. “If you just run a cable, you are punching a hole. You don’t have clean sides of the pipe and you don’t know what you have. Jetting it out cleans it out. Then the picture takes all the guesswork out of it.”

The company typically cleans 2- and 4-inch residential lines and up to 10-inch lines for commercial, industrial and municipal customers. Technicians see concrete, terra cotta and Orangeburg pipes, as well as some PVC lines that are broken or cracked and need spot repair or more aggressive measures. The soils in the area are subject to settling, and that has caused some building foundations to shift.

Training and duty

The paradigm at Skeen is to specialize. Plumbing technicians have vehicles fully outfitted with the tools they need, and it’s the same on the drain side. If a plumber finds a situation beyond his expertise, a drain technician is called in.

Inspection vehicles are outfitted to Skeen’s high standards, with air conditioning, a stove and microwave oven for the technician and assistant, 32-inch monitors, computers, printers and seating for customers who want to view the images.

Cameras on the inspection vans are from RIDGID and Pearpoint. The

GETTING NOTICED

Ricky Skeen had always wanted to be a technology leader around Jackson, Miss., and waterjetting helped make that happen. Because Skeen Plumbing & Gas has added high-pressure jetting services, other plumbing companies sometimes call for help with tough problems.

“They will sometimes call us to say they can’t get a drain unstopped – that they are pulling mud back on the cable, that they don’t have the right tools,” Skeen says. “And we will go in and get it cleaned out and inspected. We can take out all the guesswork. Does this happen all the time? Do they always call us? Of course not. But when they do, we can fix the problem without tearing up the house.

“We wanted to be a step ahead. We didn’t want to be the company that would just go out there and punch holes and never know what else was going on in the pipeline. We want people, when there is a problem, to say, ‘Call Skeen. They have the equipment and knowledge.’ That’s what this is all about for us.”

plumbing vans carry Gen-Eye cameras from General Pipe Cleaners as well as push cameras from Spartan Tool. Locating equipment is from Radiodetection.

Trenchless technologies include the UnderTaker pipe bursting system from Spartan, the Nu Flow Technologies lining system for mainlines, and lateral lining technologies from Flow-Liner Systems Ltd. and Global Pipeline Systems.

Technicians are responsible for their service vehicles and equipment. Skeen does a visual inspection once a week and inventories the equipment monthly. Plumbing service vans carry up to \$60,000 in equipment and supplies and drain cleaning vans as much as \$120,000. Technicians are accountable for anything broken or lost unless they have a reasonable explanation.

Right-sizing

At the end of the day, the two supervisors take their vans home, and so does the one plumbing technician on duty for off hours. All other vans are returned to the shop overnight.

Skeen employees enjoy excellent benefits, including health insurance with dental and eye coverage. They also have many opportunities to earn bonuses and win contests. "They make good money as well," Skeen says.

"After jetting, we can see cracks, misalignments and other problems in the pipe. I like that we can describe the problem. We let the customer look at the screen in the van, send an e-mail to whoever might want to review the tape, or burn a DVD, all from the vehicle."

Ricky Skeen

Contest rewards include four-day vacations at the beach, maid service and large-screen TV sets.

When it comes to equipment, Skeen advises contractors considering jetting not to scrimp on the purchase price. "On a machine that can run from \$40,000 to \$70,000, don't look to save \$1,000. Always be sure to buy quality equipment," he says. "You get what you pay for. And do the proper



From left, Richard Parker, owner Ricky Skeen, Keith Grant, and Cassi Callaway review upcoming projects at a meeting in the Skeen headquarters.

training. You can get hurt with this equipment if you don't train and learn safety measures. Take the appropriate classes."

Skeen takes the jetters to many small cities and villages in his territory, sometimes traveling as far as 150 miles to develop more business and keep the equipment busy.

"We're not anywhere near where I would like to be with that business," Skeen says. "I'm pushing that right now, putting together information to go out to different entities. A lot of small communities have lift stations and pumping stations. There is always maintenance on those pumps. We're always working to get the phone to ring. That never stops, or it never should."

Ultimately, Skeen wants to provide full value for his customers. "It's never good enough unless you have done everything, used every tool, offered a workable solution, and solved the problem," he says. "And never, ever short-change your customer." ■

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Top Photo: 4500 Chevy truck and 38-foot trailer at the headquarters of Skeen Plumbing and Gas in Ridgeland, Miss. Bottom left, the video inspection station inside the trailer. Bottom right, Tommy Metz pulls supplies from the interior of the trailer.

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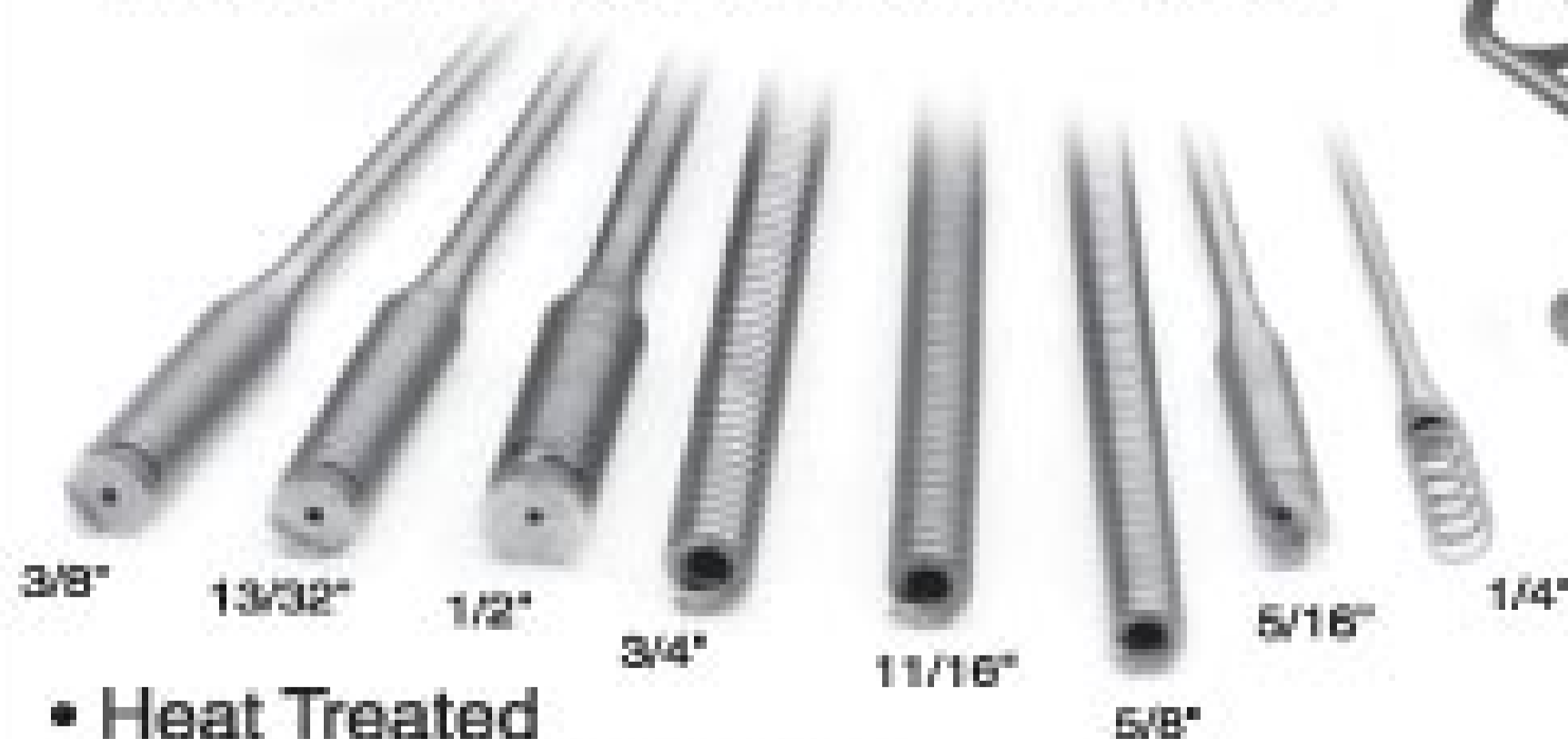
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Where the Air Gets Thin

Working in the Rocky Mountains opens the doors for a contractor who built a startup plumbing operation into a diverse and profitable enterprise

By Marian Bond



As the son of a plumber who had worked for his father as a youngster, Bob Rasnick decided in 1993 to open Freedom Sewer and Drain in Oak Creek, Colo. With his wife, Melinda Gorman, as a partner, he started with a small cable machine, offering basic residential services.

Within a year, after attending the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International, the couple saw other opportunities, specifically waterjetting and video inspection. Over the years, they also added waterblasting, pipe thawing, and line locating, and changed the name of the company to Freedom Enterprises Inc. In 2002, they moved to a 26-acre site in Bond, Colo., high in the Rocky Mountains near Steamboat Springs.

Now, instead of taking care of faulty toilets, Rasnick and Gorman have municipal, commercial and industrial customers throughout Colorado and neighboring states, and crews travel up to 400 miles to apply their special expertise.

Rasnick is proud to have a growing business that can use sophisticated technology to solve problems and help protect the environment.

Working at altitude

Waterjetting accounts for about 45 percent of the business and waterblasting another 10 percent. The balance consists of video inspection, locating and other services.

Customers are heavily municipal (40 percent) and mining (55 percent). Working in the mines means working underground and under pressure to perform. A pipe blockage may shut down a mine's production, and customers want service restored on the double.

Freedom Enterprises technicians Zane Younglund (left) and Titus Larsson assemble vacuum tubes for a Vactor combination truck on a sewer cleaning job. The firm faces many challenging projects working high in the Rocky Mountains. (Photography by Larry Pierce)



Left photo, Bob Rasnick moves an easement jetter made by Jack Doheny Supplies to an off-road work site. Right photo, Titus Larsson feeds vacuum tube into blocked culvert.

Working under those conditions, and often in sub-zero temperatures, is the company's forte. Often the secret is to find the right nozzle and the right flow and pressure for unique jobs. Sometimes it's a matter of adjusting on the fly, trying new approaches, and relying on suppliers who offer solutions and options.

To accommodate their work environment, Rasnick and Gorman customize equipment and add specialized components. Rasnick says the company's own technicians "can build just about anything." He just asks them for a list of items they need and lets them take it from there.

With its highly developed fleet, Freedom often rides to the rescue of clients at 10,000 feet elevation and higher, arriving with hot waterjetting equipment and the right nozzles and hoses. The company takes jobs from

"While most waterblasting people use the equipment for jobs like washing walls and floors, we go into industrial pipe and have to go long distances with high pressure."

Bob Rasnick

which competitors have been known to turn tail and run. Customers are quick to spread the word about the results they get.

Getting it right

Rasnick manages the field operations while Gorman oversees the office. From the start, they learned a valuable lesson about equipment. "It was a major lesson when we purchased a used combination truck for what to us was a lot of money, around \$40,000," Rasnick says. "It turned out to be just a lot of headaches, and we realized it's a mistake to try to save money on your fleet."

One purchase that did work out well was a 4,000 psi/14 gpm trailer jetter from US Jetting. Rasnick says Freedom has made millions of dollars in revenue from that one machine. Even that unit received considerable customization.

PROFILE

FREEDOM ENTERPRISES INC., BOND, COLO.

OWNERS: Melinda Gorman, president;
Bob Rasnick, vice president

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 18

EMPLOYEES: 7

SERVICES: Waterjetting, video inspection, waterblasting

MARKETS: Municipal, commercial, industrial

SERVICE AREA: Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico

WEB SITE: www.freedomseweranddrain.com



Rasnick bought a 14-foot International box truck, insulated it, and rebuilt the jetter within the truck so the water would stay warm, and driving the jetter off the truck engine. The water in the jetter would heat up to 120 degrees in the truck and still be at 90 degrees when a crew needed hot water in winter to open a hole to get to a line, or to thaw frozen pipe. "We really got good at it, and it really took off from there," Rasnick says.

When the truck wore out in 2006, they bought a 14-foot Sterling Acterra box truck and installed the original jetter inside, this time using a hydrostatic powered pump, which has worked well.

A more recent purchase is a re-manufactured 2001 Vactor combination machine on a Sterling chassis with 2,000 psi/100 gpm water system and Dresser Roots positive displacement blower, which performs at the higher elevations where the air gets thin. The truck has a 12-cubic-yard debris tank and is used to vacuum wet and dry material.

Varied fleet

Freedom also has a 1995 Vac-Con truck on a Sterling chassis with a three-stage fan, 12-cubic-yard debris tank (wet only) and 2,000 psi/65 gpm pump.

Another key tool is a 4,000 psi/14 gpm truck-mounted jetter from US Jetting that can clean lines up to 14 inches with heavy mineral buildup and thaw frozen lines. The unit carries 1,200 feet of 1/2-inch hose and a 600-gallon tank for heated water.

On the inspection side, the fleet includes two video vans from RS Technical Services Inc. with an assortment of cameras. A tractor-mounted camera from RS



Left photo, Titus Larsson sets up for video inspection with a camera from RS Technical Services in remote area at 10,000 feet elevation. Right photo, Freedom Enterprises owners Bob Rasnick, vice president and Melinda Gorman, president.

Technical operates in 6- to 24-inch lines. There is also a steerable tractor camera from RS Technical and push cameras from RIDGID and Pearpoint.

Rasnick credits nozzle supplier StoneAge Inc. for help in solving customers' problems. "I realize how smart these guys are," he says. "We have always loved their nozzles. We tell them what we need to do, and they tell us what nozzle we need and what size inserts to put in. They have helped us become experts."

For waterblasting, Freedom has a system from Jetstream of Houston (40,000 psi/6 to 58 gpm) and gets high-pressure hoses from SPIR STAR. He and his crews have learned to use that equipment to clean pipes with carefully selected nozzles.

Tackling challenges

Here again, suppliers help out. "While most waterblasting people use the equipment for jobs like washing walls and floors, we go into industrial pipe and have to go long distances with high pressure," Rasnick says. "We did an acid line, and we had to call SPIR STAR. We ended up with a 500-foot section of stainless steel-braided hose – braided on the outside. Before that we couldn't get through that line. We totally amazed the customer, and saved the company thousands of dollars.

"I am amazed at how smart our suppliers are, and how helpful and how willing they are to share their expertise and professionalism. It's so important to learn to work and learn from your suppliers."

"My advice to any woman in the industry is to go out on a project. Pull the levers. Be the other man. It does give you an idea of what's going on and helps explain a lot when the workers come back and talk about things. You will understand it all more."

Melinda Gorman

When working in underground mines, crews often clean long lines to keep the mine functioning. Here, they deploy a US Jetting skid-mounted jetter (4,000 psi/18 gpm) with a 350-gallon water tank. The unit came with a steel platform, but Freedom's welders added a steel protective cage.

Typically, Freedom works on a contract basis with customers, offering maintenance and emergency services. For jobs that require travel, two technicians make the trip. For any confined-space entry there are three workers on site.

Rasnick and Gorman have complete confidence in their crew. When Rasnick recently missed several months of work with health issues, everyone pulled together and kept the firm on sound footing.

First line of defense

Putting safety first and foremost, Gorman and Rasnick make sure each employee is fully protected with all appropriate gear, and aware of safety requirements for working with high-pressure equipment.

"There is one thing we would fire someone over," says Gorman, who is president of Freedom Enterprises. "That is if they see a safety concern, and they do not come to us." The safety record is outstanding.

"Bob does a toolbox safety meeting before they do any confined-space

AT IT YEAR-ROUND

Freedom Enterprises has developed a clientele through innovation and performance. Vice president of operations Bob Rasnick says that as crews worked in sub-zero temperatures, thawing pipe and clearing lines, customers took notice and told others. As a result, the business grew.

Soon, better and bigger equipment became a priority. The company's move to a 26-acre property in 2002, and the construction of a 5,400-square-foot heated garage with shop and office, helped the firm meet growing customer demands year-round. "It's just a lot easier in the summer months," says Rasnick.

Challenging jobs are common. On one job for a municipality, a sewer had become blocked by grout. A contractor installing a "soil nail" anchor for a building footing drilled into the barrel section of a manhole. When they injected grout to hold the "soil nail" and stabilize the foundation, the grout filled the sewer.

"We rented a milling tool from NozzTeq Inc. to remove the grout," Rasnick says. "It worked well until we encountered an offset joint, which stopped the tool."

The company bought a Torpedo Nozzle from KEG Technologies Inc., connected it to a hose from a Vactor combination truck, placed the nozzle about 15 feet in front of the offset joint, and turned on the jetter. "The impact from the nozzle hitting the grout moved the whole slab 50 feet to an upstream manhole," says Rasnick. The crew then cut and removed the 1,300-pound slab a piece at a time.

Rasnick always appreciates a challenge and a mission accomplished in a unique location. "I just can't believe some of the beautiful sights I see on these jobs," he says. "I can't believe people pay me to be here and to do this work."



Titus Larsson conducts video inspection with an OmniEYE III tractor-mounted camera from RS Technical Services.

work," Gorman says. "He does all the training on the equipment and holds monthly safety meetings. We have the team members take refresher safety courses offered at some of the mines and power plants. Bob is in charge of safety in the field."

Before she and Rasnick started the business, Gorman was, in her words, primarily a housewife who didn't even worry about balancing a checkbook. "When we first started, I would make up invoices using paper and a ruler," she says. "At first we didn't have a computer, but then I went to a QuickBooks program, and now I take responsibility for the office and work closely with my sister Joanne Crabb, who is one of our employees."

Gorman also acts as a check on Rasnick, who has an entrepreneurial side and is always coming up with innovations on equipment. Gorman asks: Is this expenditure really necessary, and a good idea? Why do we really need that item?

"There have also been times when I had to go out in the field on a job," she says. "My advice to any woman in the industry is to go out on a project. Pull the levers. Be the other man. It does give you an idea of what's going on and helps explain a lot when the workers come back and talk about things. You will understand it all more." ■

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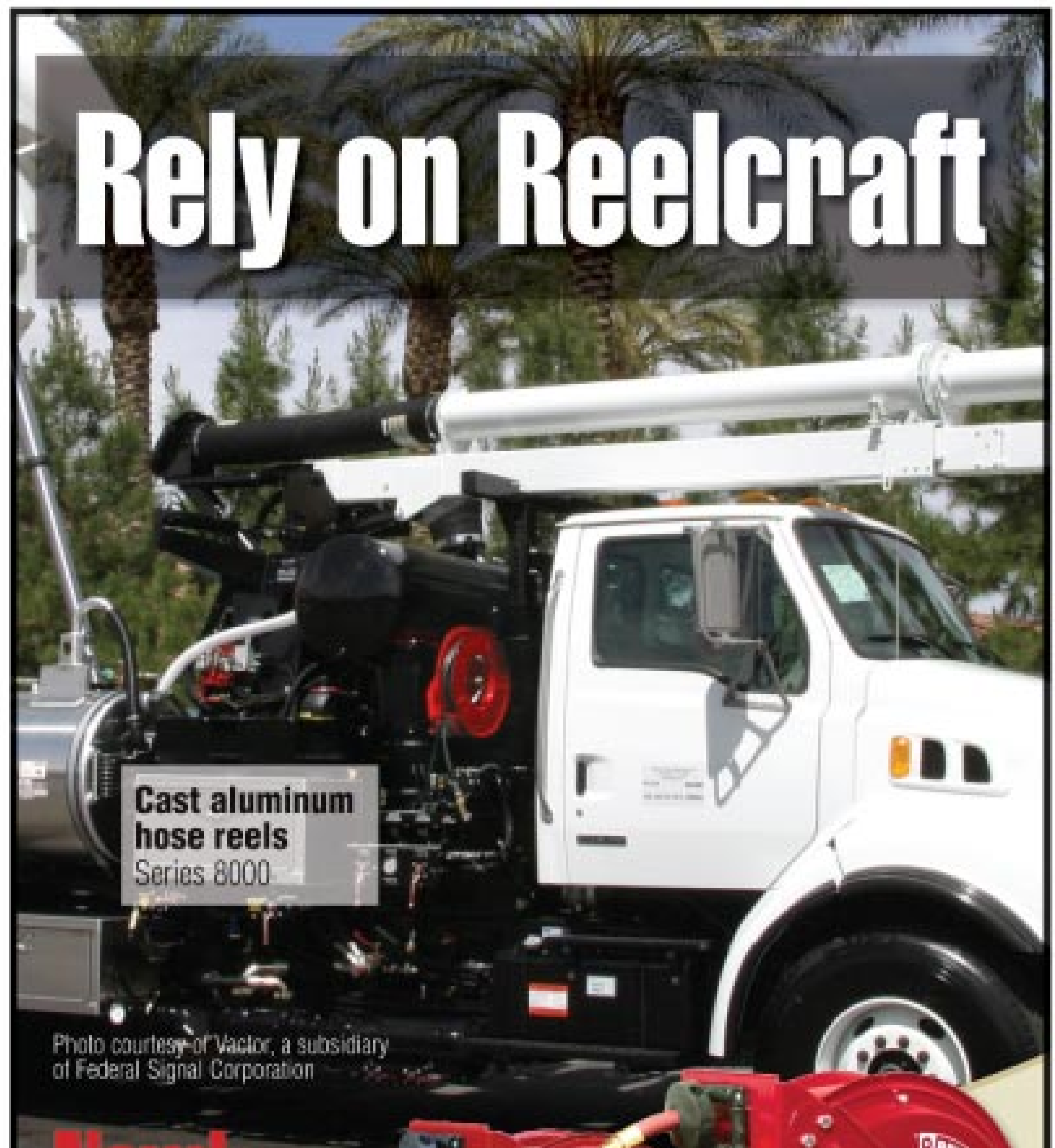


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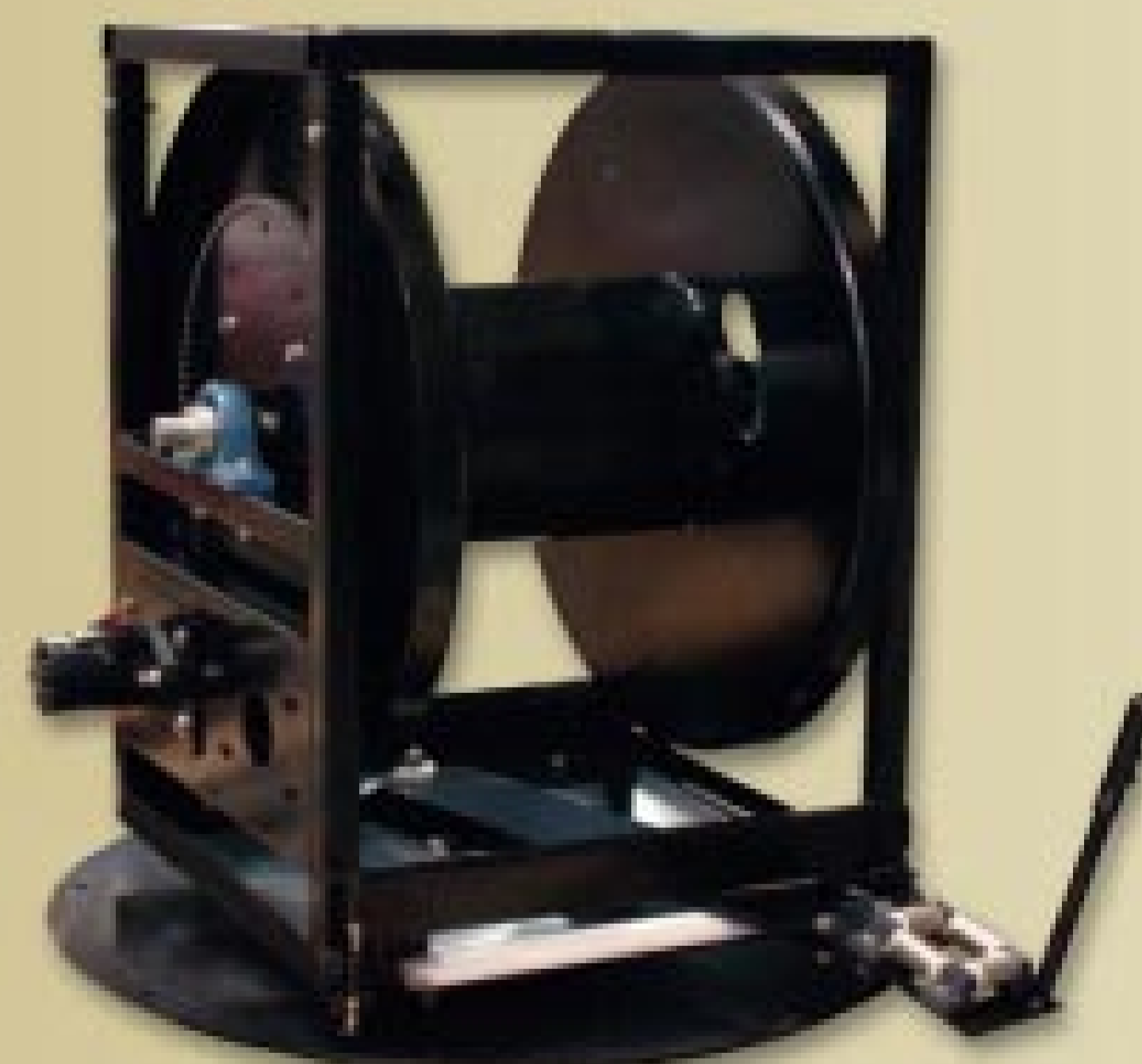
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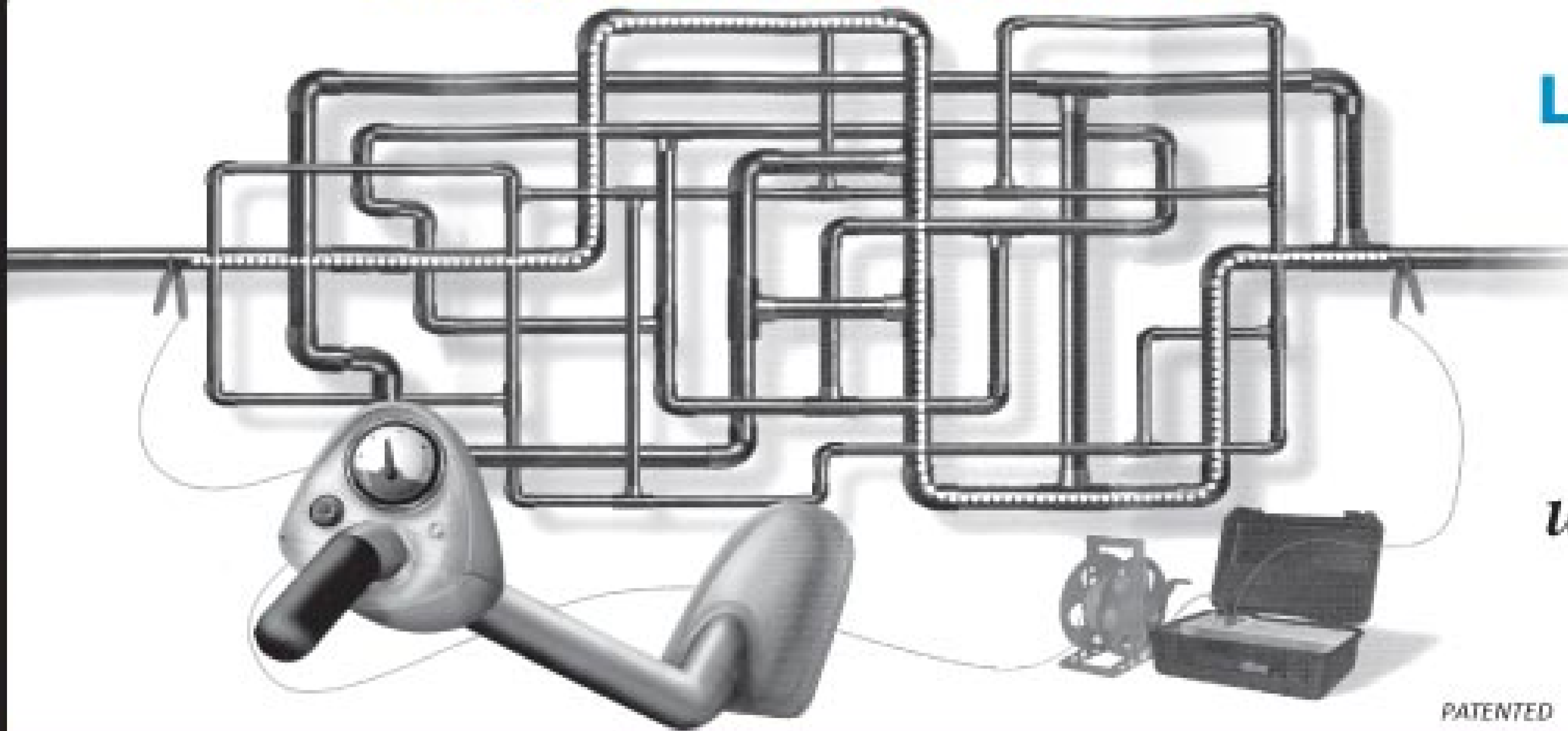


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Tracking Impact

Internet advertising is a great component of a marketing program. Technology that helps gauge its effectiveness makes it even better.

By Pete Litterski

Considering the global reach of the worldwide Web, small business owners who launch online ad campaigns need to know whether their message is actually reaching the potential customer just around the corner.

Recognizing such concerns, a number of new companies focus on giving clients detailed, up-to-the-minute feedback, helping businesses to track the effectiveness of their online promotional campaigns.

Although a well-designed, effectively constructed Web site is a vital part of any online marketing

program, the best site won't work if customers don't find it in the first place. Knowing how many people visit a Web site and how they got there is one of the key benefits cited by Court Cunningham, co-author of *Local Online Advertising for Dummies* and the CEO of Yodle Inc., an online advertising services company.

local businesses. "The Internet is the great equalizer for small businesses if they have access to the right services," Hanks says. "There are millions of small businesses that haven't had the option of using these kinds of cutting edge services."

Although Yodle offers Web site design as an option, its primary services begin with the placement of ads and sponsored links through search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing, and at local online directories

Big and small

Cunningham says large companies often have technical staff who

"You don't have just one site to be concerned with anymore. You may have a presence on 10 sites or more. People may go online and find you on Yelp, Twitter or Facebook."

Nathan Hanks

track Web traffic and use the information they collect to optimize the advertising strategy. They can collect data on what search engines or online directories prospective customers are using to find their Web site. They can also track phone calls and e-mails to see how many people take the step from being prospects to becoming customers.

"Some companies are big enough that they're going to hire someone who has that experience," Cunningham says. "But if you're a smaller business, you're not going to be able to afford that person." He believes that companies like his fill a niche: They offer smaller, local businesses access to the same kind of feedback larger companies can get from IT departments.

Nathan Hanks, chief distribution officer and a co-founder of ReachLocal.com, another online advertising firm, agrees. That's why his company focuses on serving

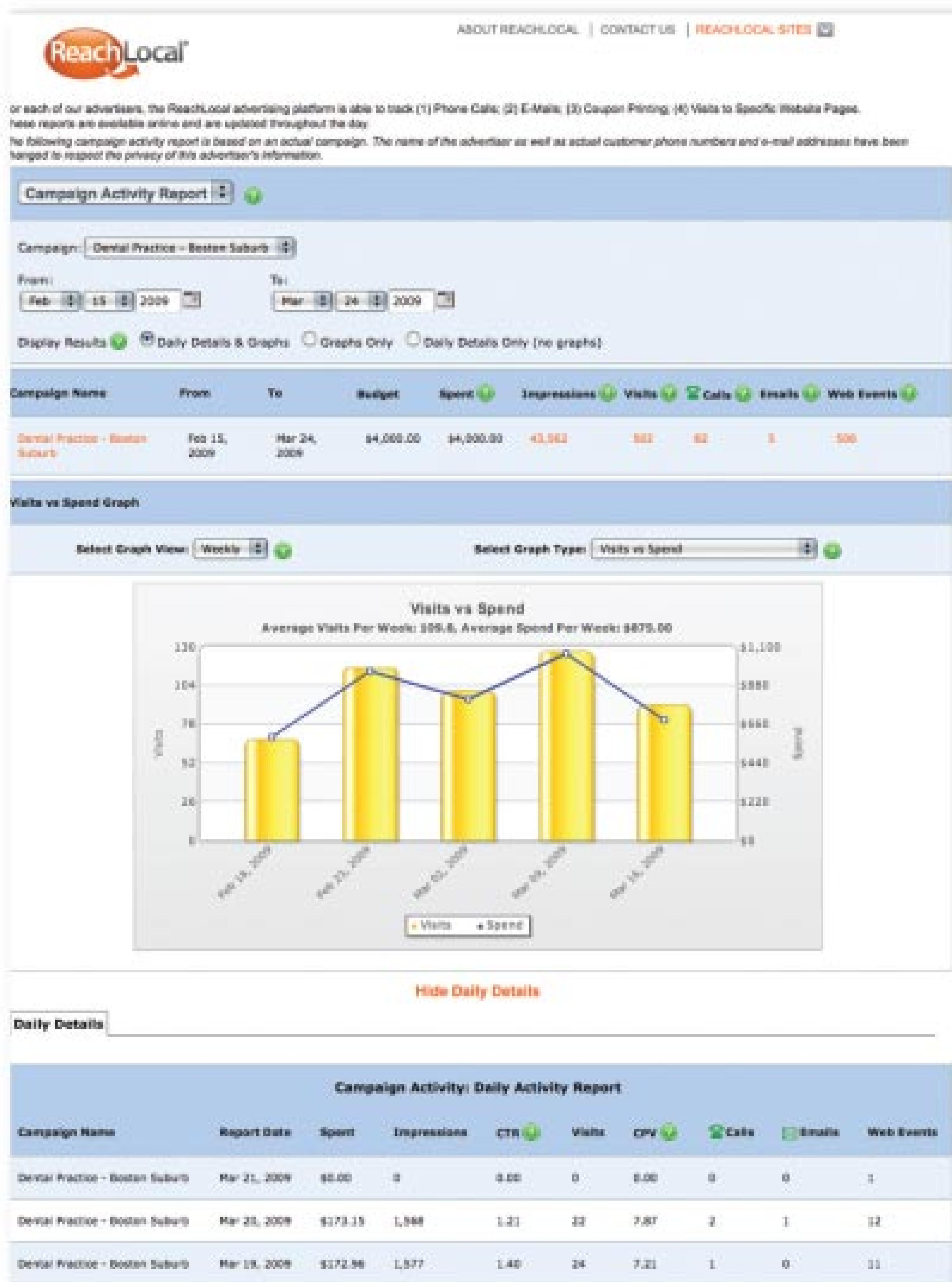
such as CitySearch, Yellow Pages and LocalDirect.

That is just the first step. Once the ads and links are placed, the real-time tracking of customer response begins. Business owners can go to a dedicated site where they can see up-to-the-minute reporting on their Web page visits and the customer responses.

A dedicated phone number is used in all online advertising placed through Yodle so that calls can be routed through the company and relayed to the client. That allows software to determine customer response and to record each call so that the owner has a record of what customers were seeking and how employees responded to their requests.

Valuable data

The phone records allow business owners to determine whether their advertising is effective and what



Online advertising service companies provide small businesses with a wide variety of current online reports. This report graphs customer visits and average spending by week. (Graphics courtesy of ReachLocal.com)

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.

services or products are most important to potential customers. The tracking information on Web site visits can reveal where the advertising is working and how potential customers sought the information.

ReachLocal.com gives its clients access to a wide variety of up-to-the-minute online reports that do everything from listing Web site visits to mapping where calls come from. But Hanks says the company's services go much deeper. The firm tracks all places where clients' brands appear online, from their own Web sites and listings to reviews, comments and ratings on third-party sites.

"You don't have just one site to be concerned with anymore," he says. "You may have a presence on 10 sites or more. People may go online and find you on Yelp, Twitter or Facebook."

The company's newest services track pages where clients are mentioned and measure the impression those sites give. Hanks says it's important for a business owner to know when potential customers have clicked a Like, Share, or Rating button.

In the past, a business might measure the effect of its marketing by counting phone calls or coupons. Now, Hanks says, "How many links point to you and the quality of those links is what's important."

Wave of the future

Cunningham says effective use of the Internet is important because that is where more customers are turning to find goods or services. "Eighty-two percent are looking for businesses online," he says. "For half of them – 40 percent – that is their primary source."

Despite that, he says, a third of small businesses don't even have a Web site. "Our sense based on some of the work we've done is that only 20 percent or so are advertising online. About 50 percent of that is on Facebook."

The content, design and ease of navigation at a business Web site are important when designing an online marketing plan, but none of that matters if potential customers are not arriving at that site. A key challenge of online advertising is to help prospective customers sift through millions of Web sites and find the business home page.

After that, it is up to the site to do its job by informing customers about the business's services, qualifications and advantages. Cunningham says many business owners can find local advertising agencies or Web designers to provide those services, but expertise in maximizing a Web site's visibility is harder to find.

'Complicated world'

Between search engines, city sites, newspapers, television stations, local guides and directories, and other Web sites, there are many places a business owner can pay to advertise online. Add to that free services like Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites, and the possibilities multiply.

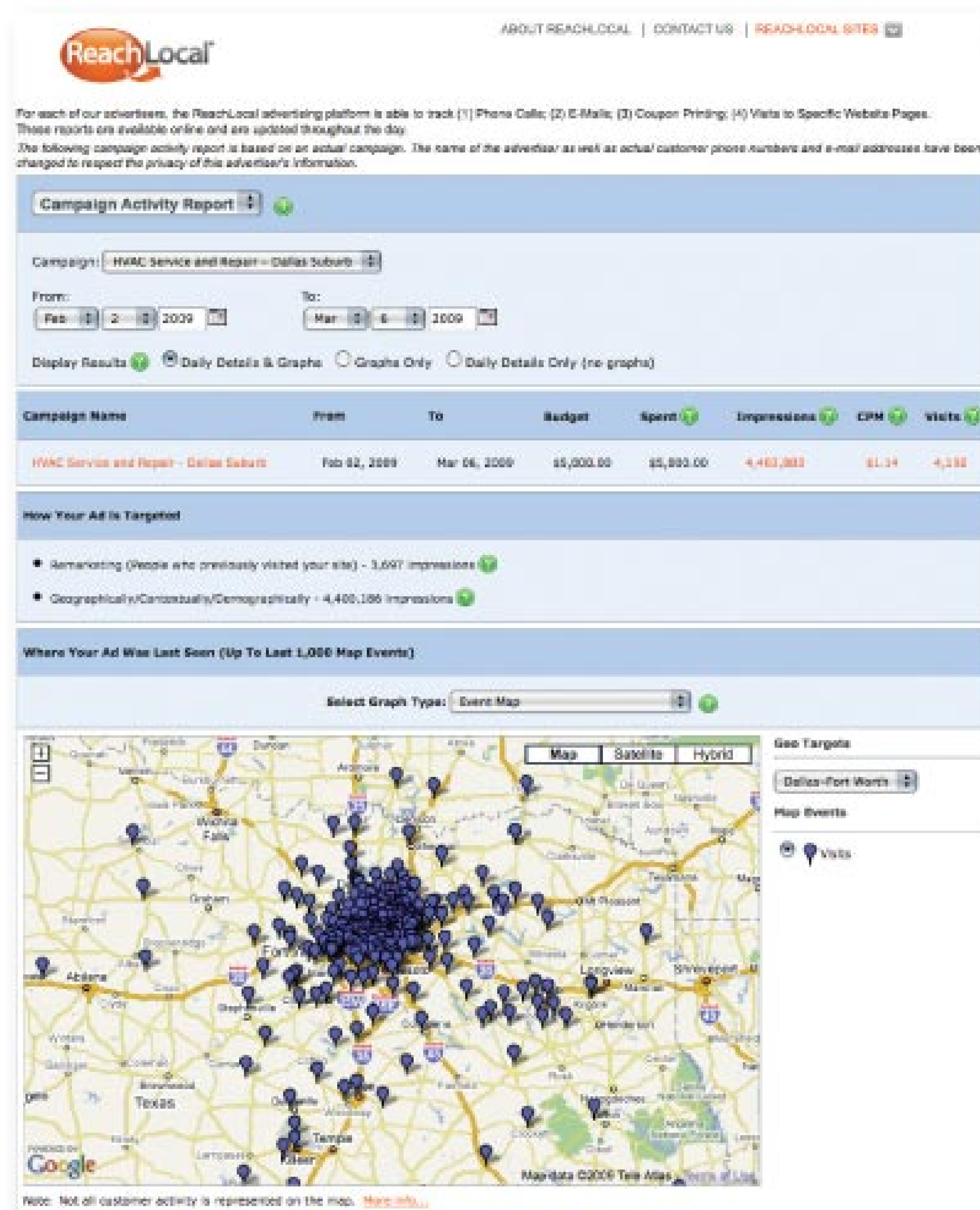
"If you're a small business owner, you don't have the time to figure all of that out," Cunningham says. "It's a complicated world out there for people who are not familiar with it."

Hanks says that's why ReachLocal has individual representatives – internet marketing consultants – who work in person with clients in larger markets. Small business owners are used to working with sales representatives from traditional advertising media, and ReachLocal finds that in Internet advertising, personal service is as important as ever.

The services vary, but one priority Yodle and ReachLocal share is to get the client's Web site to appear near the top of the page when a customer launches a search. Cunningham says it is important to find the right combination of paid and free advertising, banners and boxes on local media Web sites, and sponsored ads on search engines.

Although it might seem tempting to simply set up a free social networking page, Cunningham says that is not enough. "It's a media-mix issue," he says. "If you go back to the older forms of advertising, you could post flyers on utility poles at almost no cost, but you wouldn't rely upon that alone."

Data from Yodle's customer base of 7,000 small businesses and professional offices shows that 40 percent of customer response comes from people who found clients' sites with a Google search, while 5 percent comes from people looking on



Another benefit of online advertising tracking service is reporting that graphically shows where calls and other inquiries come from.

Facebook. Knowing that mix for an individual business is important when developing an online advertising strategy.

Both executives say the most important step is making sure that when the customer down the street looks for a service, your business shows up at the top of the screen,

no matter what search engine, social networking site or online listing service that customer uses. ■



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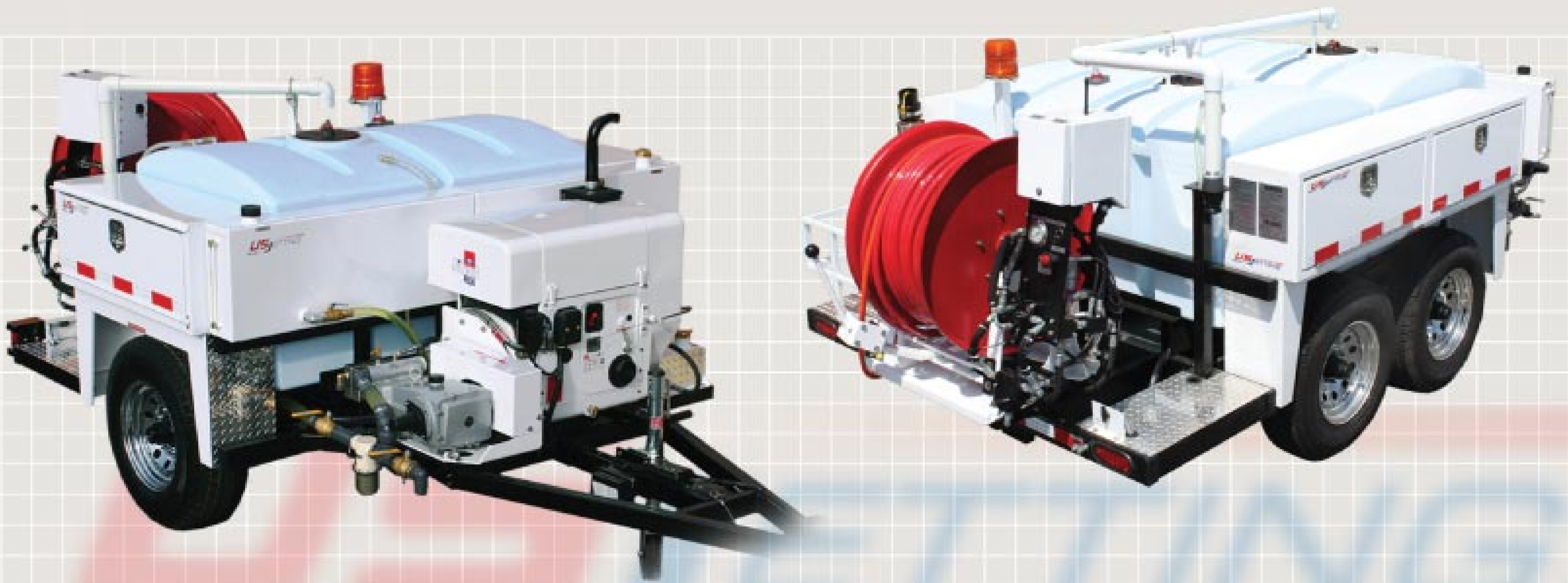
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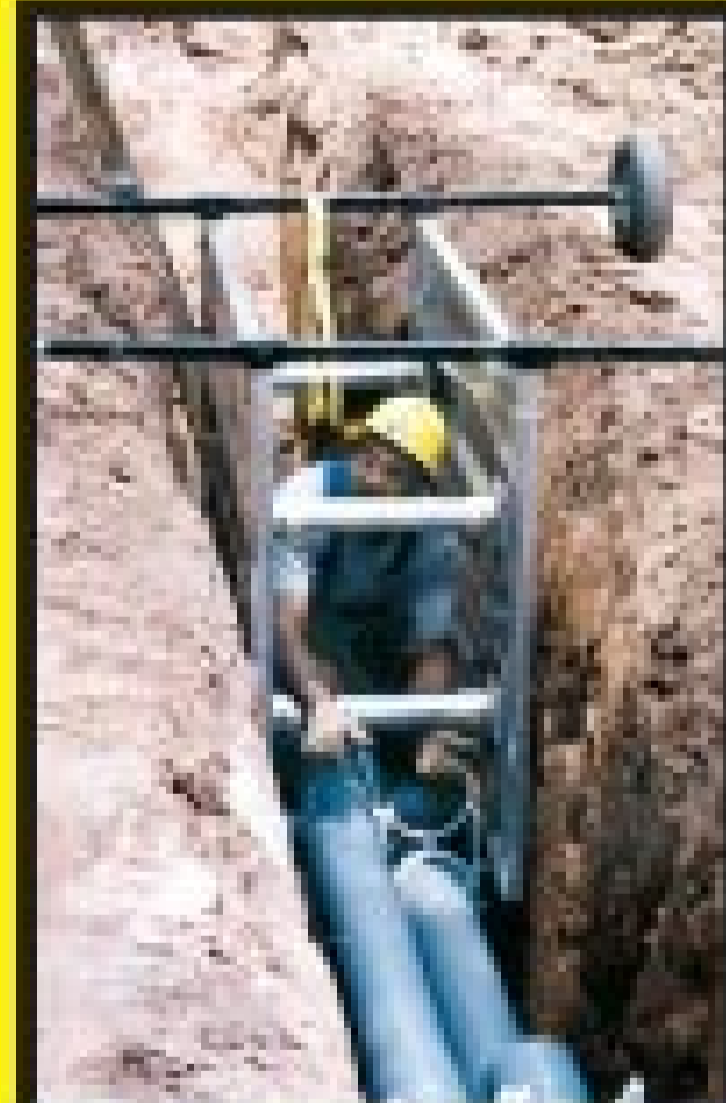
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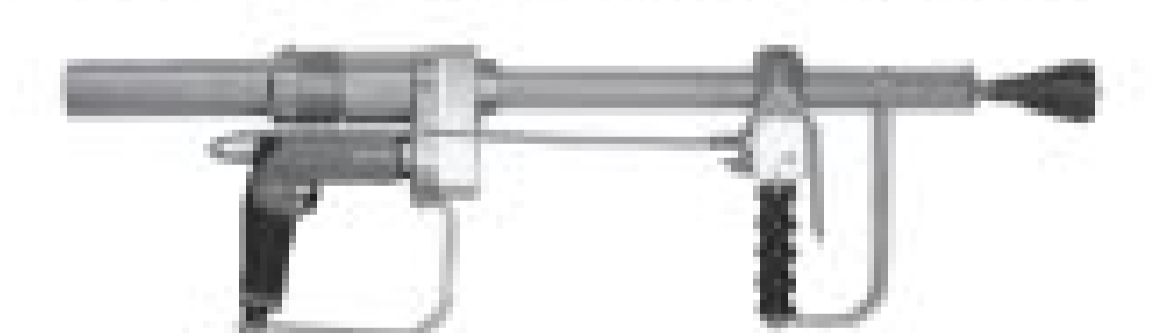
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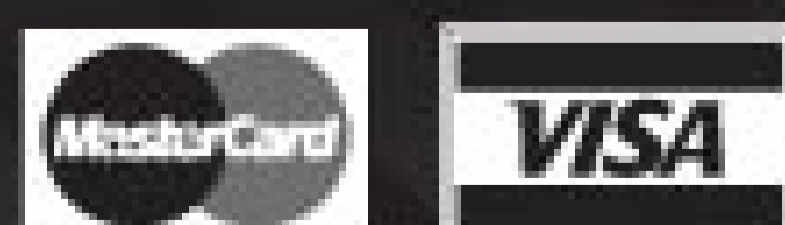


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New on the IRS Front

2010 brings a number of changes in tax laws that might affect a small business like yours. Now may be a good time to visit your tax advisor.

By Fred S. Steingold

There's lots of news on the federal tax front. Uncle Sam has made a number of changes recently, and more are on the horizon. This may be a good time to chat with your tax advisor. You'd like to take full advantage of benefits available to your small business. And, of course, you'd like to avoid penalties. Here are some tax law developments you should know about.

Husband-Wife businesses

An amazing percentage of service contracting businesses are owned and operated by a husband and wife. If you and your spouse have such a business, and if it's not run as a

Security and Medicare benefits.

Generally, the IRS classifies an unincorporated husband-and-wife business as a partnership. This means you have to keep partnership records and file a partnership tax return each year with the IRS. Couples often avoid the paperwork hassle by treating the business as if owned by one spouse only. The business then files a Schedule C in the name of that spouse. The problem is that only that spouse receives credit for Social Security and Medicare coverage purposes.

There's now a way for both you and your spouse to avoid being classified as a partnership, and for each of you to get credit toward Social

the only members of the venture, file a joint tax return, both materially participate in the business, and both elect not to be treated as a partnership.

You'll each prepare a separate Schedule C showing your shares of business profits or losses. And, if you're subject to self-employment taxes, you'll each prepare a separate Schedule SE. You'll send these to the IRS with your annual Form 1040.

Payroll tax holiday

Congress has provided an incentive for your business to hire new employees this year. It applies to people you hire who were unemployed during the 60 days before you

weeks. The details are a bit complicated, so check with a tax professional to see how this credit might apply to your business.

Health insurance credit

As a small employer, beginning in 2010, you can claim a tax credit for part of the contributions you make to your employees' health insurance premiums. To qualify for this credit, your business must have no more than 25 employees, and the average annual wages you pay them can't exceed \$50,000.

The tax credit can be as much as 35 percent of your health insurance contributions, depending on the number of employees on your payroll, and how much you pay them. Again, this is complicated stuff, so you'll want to consult your tax advisor.

A heads-up: This health insurance credit is just the tip of the iceberg created by the 2010 health care legislation. In the coming years, additional health care incentives and penalties affecting businesses will be phased in. The costs to your business – as well as the paperwork – are likely to multiply to unprecedented levels.

For example, in early 2012 when you prepare a Form W-2 to report an employee's 2011 earnings, you'll need to disclose how much it costs your business to provide group health insurance to the employee. This additional information won't affect the employee's tax liability, but it can be an administrative nuisance for your business.

It's always wise to stay abreast of changes in tax laws, and it's better not to wait until "tax time" next year to review your tax position with a trusted advisor. ■

Fred S. Steingold practices law in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

He is the author of Legal Guide for Starting and Running a Small Business and The Employer's Legal Handbook, published by Nolo. Legal strategies may vary depending on the state in which you live and the specifics of your situation. See your lawyer for legal advice.



You can become a qualified joint venture if you and your spouse are the only members of the venture, file a joint tax return, both materially participate in the business, and both elect not to be treated as a partnership.

corporation or LLC, there are some tax issues to consider. How you proceed can affect the tax forms you prepare and how you and your spouse later qualify for Social

Security and Medicare benefits. You can elect to be a "qualified joint venture."

You can become a qualified joint venture if you and your spouse are

hired them. If you've hired such people after Feb. 13, 2010, you don't have to pay the employer's share of Social Security taxes through the end of that year. You still have to pay the employer's share of Medicare taxes.

You can't get this tax break for someone you hire to replace another worker unless the other worker quit or was fired for cause. And you can't get this tax break if you hire a relative or a dependent.

Retained worker credit

Another tax break for employers is the retained worker credit. Your business can get a tax credit of \$1,000, or 6.2 percent of a retained worker's wages (whichever is less), for each worker who qualified for the payroll tax holiday – if you retain the worker for at least 52 consecutive

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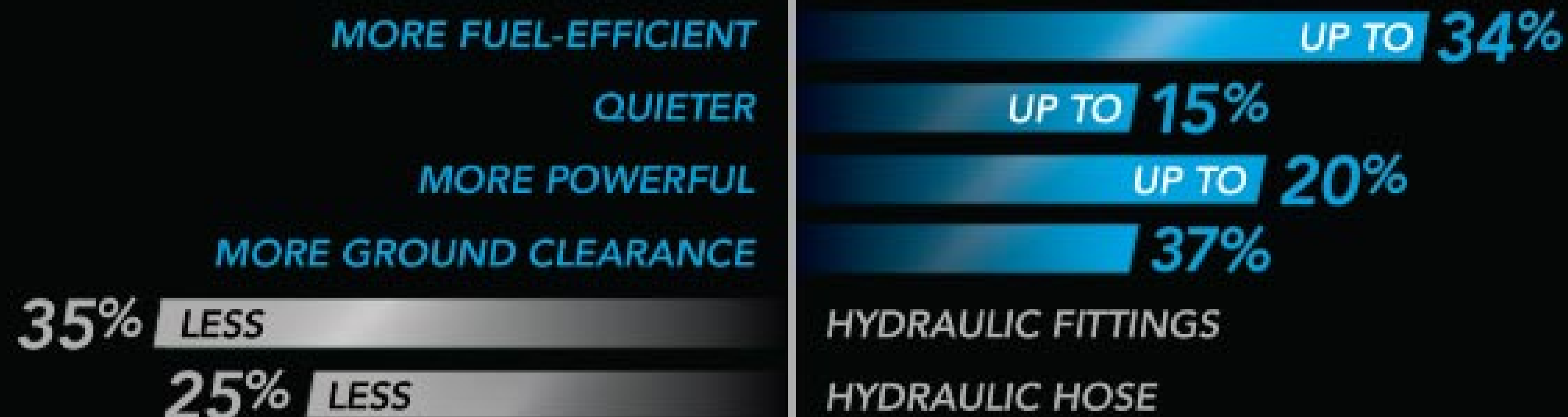
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The Cardinal Sin

One of the worst mistakes a business owner can make is hanging on to the wrong person in the wrong job for too long.

By Lee Froschheiser

Good business leaders often say they've learned more from their failures than their successes. They have the confidence to know they can't be right all the time and that mistakes come with the territory.

For example, they might fail to communicate effectively or delegate properly. Perhaps they need to improve at accountability or developing their people skills. But what's the biggest sin or failure of all – the one that causes harm to the company's performance and gives leadership the most grief?

Believe it or not, it's a people problem: Keeping an employee on

with a particular employee: The manager gets too close to that person.

This makes it more challenging to deal with performance problems because the manager has valued loyalty over performance. An example occurs when managers hire friends or relatives. That invisible line between the manager and employee becomes blurred, and the manager becomes confused. Then it's really tough to deal with the poor performer in an objective, constructive manner.

Next, consider that nobody likes to be wrong. When a manager hires someone who is a bad fit for a position, letting that person go

with an ongoing methodology to evaluate performance eliminates conflict by creating an objective process for communicating to employees about their strengths and shortcomings.

Many managers don't have a good performance management system in place, so when they have to deal with the poor performer, conflict results. Without an established evaluation process, employees are often surprised if they're suddenly reprimanded or let go. That's obviously a conflict-ridden situation.

Most important, company leaders hold on to the wrong person for too long simply because they lack good performance management

Loyalty is an important attribute. However, at times a manager crosses the line and over-identifies with a particular employee. An example occurs when managers hire friends or relatives.

board who clearly is not suited to his or her job. Ironically, it's often the company owner or manager who is the last to understand the impact of not taking action on a poor performer.

The employees who work alongside the person quickly recognize the dire consequences of the situation. It breeds negative morale and hurts productivity. It can also erode employees' confidence in those in charge.

On the flip side, when team leaders know there's a performance problem, many do nothing about it or take way too long to tackle the problem. Why?

Misplaced loyalty

Let's start with loyalty. Loyalty is an important attribute – companies and managers encourage and value it. However, at times a manager crosses the line and over-identifies

becomes a public admission that he or she made a mistake. The fear of admitting the mistake often stalls the termination process or prevents it altogether. The manager keeps hoping the person will get better – but hope is not a strategy for success. The employee may never improve. The situation just festers, and everyone suffers.

Another reason managers often don't act is that they have no back-up plan. They think, "At least I have a warm body in the job." They accept mediocrity rather than take a risk that would create the opportunity to improve the situation.

Avoiding conflict

Dealing with the poor performer also comes with the perception that it must result in conflict. Most people don't like conflict and will avoid situations that might lead to it. But a performance management system

skills themselves. A good leader can use an established performance system as a tool and can also create a culture in which open, honest conversations about performance can take place.

Strong leaders are candid. They have no problem addressing poor performance, and they embrace the opportunity to make such conversations productive for the company and the employee alike. They set clear expectations for their employees, measure their progress, coach them when necessary, and conduct formal training.

Furthermore, effective leaders sense when it's time to draw a line. For instance, when a little voice in their head keeps saying, "I hope he or she gets better," they take that as a cue that it's time to ask critical questions about the person's performance and take immediate, appropriate action.

Lee Froschheiser, president and CEO of Management Actions Programs (MAP), works with business leaders and companies nationwide. He is co-author of the book, Vital Factors, The Secret to Transforming Your Business – And Your Life. For more information, visit www.mapconsulting.com.

Heading off trouble

The good news is leaders can easily reduce the potential for mistakes by addressing the problem head-on. How? Position employees for success by:

- Establishing a proven system for accountability.
- Properly delegating job responsibilities.
- Providing employees with clearly defined goals.
- Making sure their skills align with the job and specific duties.
- Putting effective coaching and training in place.

If you have found yourself with a chronic poor performer on board, it is essential to ask why, and then develop a plan and take action. Here are some affirmative steps to take to position your employees for success and hold them accountable:

Set clear goals and establish Vital Factors – the key indicators of business health for each person on the team. Communicate what performance measures you will use and what your expectations are in terms of performance. Be specific, and focus on results.

Get help from a professional accountability coach who can help you understand what good accountability looks like and how to model accountability effectively.

Identify your weaknesses as an accountability leader and determine areas where you personally need to develop.

Establish a system for accountability and use your established Vital Factors to evaluate performance and take corrective action.

Understand how you deal with conflict. What should you do differently to modify any resistance to conflict and improve upon your conflict management style? ■

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WJTA-IMCA Expo planned for Aug. 17-19

The Waterjet Technology Association and Industrial & Municipal Cleaning Association will host the inaugural WJTA-IMCA Expo Aug. 17-19 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas.

The event will include an expanded exhibit hall and boot camp sessions for individuals and companies. Displays will include equipment, products and services related to precision waterjet cutting, industrial cleaning, waterblasting, hydrodemolition, surface preparation, and industrial vacuuming.

There will be 51 exhibitors, and 12 companies will give live demonstrations of their equipment. For more information, contact the WJTA at 314/241-1449 or visit www.wjta.org.



Ted DeBoda

Ted DeBoda Named NASSCO Executive Director

The National Association of Sewer Service Companies (NASSCO) board of directors has selected Ted DeBoda, P.E., to succeed Irvin Gemora as executive director. Last October, Gemora announced his decision to retire effective in February 2011.

DeBoda is manager of the Baltimore office of the URS Corporation, a leading provider of engineering, construction and technical services for public agencies and private-sector companies around the world. Previously, DeBoda served as a senior project manager for URS in the Delaware office, and served 15 years with the Departments of Public Works and Special Services in New Castle County, Del., working in the Engineering and Operations Divisions.

"Accepting the position at NASSCO is a natural progression for me," says DeBoda. "Becoming executive director is the only career opportunity I can think of for which I would ever leave URS. The position at NASSCO is the next step in my contribution to helping the industry grow as a whole."

"I've been in this business my entire life, and I have a passion for the industry and the professionals involved in it. This is the next step for me to personally promote trenchless technologies on a national level, reconnect with people I've known through the years, meet new industry experts, and work to help us all come together to move our industry forward."

DeBoda is also vice president of the Chesapeake Water Environment Association and a past chair and founding member of the Collection System Committee. He also brings 20 years of leadership experience as an officer in the Army National Guard. "I fully intend to stay involved in leadership positions in WEF and CWEA to help to stay on top of the latest technological and legislative changes in the industry, while getting information out to the people who need it," says DeBoda.

Gemora comments, "We are very excited about Ted's appointment. We know that in order to uphold NASSCO's mission, we must reach out to other organizations, industries, governments, and look at all avenues to promote trenchless technologies. I believe that Ted is just the guy to do that. He also has a great combination of contractor, engineer and municipal experience, so I am confident that he will relate very well to NASSCO members."

Gemora's nine years as NASSCO executive director left a legacy of accomplishments that started during a period of significant technological advances and ended with a challenging economic period. One of the most significant accomplishments during his tenure was in making the Pipeline Assessment Certification Program (PACP) a national standard.

DeBoda will officially take the helm in August 2010. Gemora will help bridge the transition by continuing his involvement until February 2011. For more information on NASSCO, visit www.nassco.org.

Louisiana FS Solutions Center Adds Guzzler Parts

Federal Signal Environmental Solutions Group's FS Solutions center in Gonzales, La., now stocks parts for Federal Signal's Guzzler brand of industrial vacuum loaders, as well as vacuum accessories. The new inventory is in addition to the Jetstream brand of waterblasters and other makes and models of waterblasters already in stock.

Draincables Direct Opens California Location

Draincables Direct has opened a distribution facility in Visalia, Calif. Draincables Direct now has two West Coast locations.

PipeFlo Becomes Installer for LMK Enterprises

PipeFlo Contracting Corp., operating in Southern Ontario, Canada, has become a licensed installer for LMK Enterprises. PipeFlo will offer both LMK's Lateral Lining System and its Vac-a-Tea Trenchless Cleanout Installation System.

Elastec/American Marine Assists with Gulf Oil Spill

Elastec/American Marine is assisting with the oil spill cleanup in the Gulf of Mexico. The company has shipped 9,14 miles of containment boom to assist in the response efforts. The inflatable, water-cooled, fire-resistant Hydro-Fire Boom System was developed to contain surface oil and burn it offshore.



From left, Kerry Petranek, CEO StoneAge; John Wolgamott, president StoneAge; Ed Morlan, executive director Region 9 Economic Development District, Durango, Colo.; and Mike Burns, president Alpine Bank, Durango, Colo.

StoneAge Named 2010 Colorado Company to Watch

StoneAge Inc., Durango, Colo., was named 2010 winner of the Colorado Companies to Watch award, presented by M3 Insurance and developed by the Edward Lowe Foundation. StoneAge was chosen from among 250 nominees and 110 finalists. To be eligible, nominees must be a second-stage company, typically past the startup phase, and face growth challenges rather than survival issues. Companies must be privately held, employ six to 99 full-time workers, have between \$750,000 and \$50 million in annual revenue or working capital and demonstrate the intent and capacity to grow. Founded in 1979, StoneAge had 49.5 employees in 2009 and has averaged 18 percent in annual sales growth.

Pat's Pump Named Distributor for Myers/Aplex

Pat's Pump & Blower has been named Southeast Master Distributor for the Myers/Aplex line of high-pressure pumps used for the sewer jetting industry. ■



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Making It Personal

Sparkling-clean vehicles put a public face on a California drain cleaner and speak volumes to customers about high-quality, professional service

By Ken Wysocky

Remember those Andre Agassi commercials for Canon cameras with the tagline, "Image is everything?"

Mark Bonney agrees, and that's why the 22 service trucks owned by Bonney Plumbing, Heating, Air and Rooter Service look as neat and clean as their drivers. "It's all about image," says Bonney, vice president of operations for the company, which operates from Sacramento, Calif.

"From image, you get perceived value, and that can take any customer's price objections right off the table. We encourage customers to come out and look inside our trucks to see how clean and well-organized they are."

Well stocked

Most of the service vehicles are Chevrolet 3500 and 4500 cab-over trucks with P2000 service bodies from Hackney USA. "We really like



Bonney Plumbing owners Mark and Candace Bonney make it personal by displaying their picture on the company's service trucks.

MONEY Machines

the fact that the Hackney bodies come with the shelves and racks

inside and are basically infinitely adjustable," Bonney says. Each truck has 68 bins, 34 on each side. The bins are labeled L1 through L34 on the left and R1 through R34 on the right. An index tells which parts go where.

"All the trucks are set up identically, so if a technician goes on vacation, someone filling in can jump in the truck and still work efficiently and effectively," Bonney says.

Each truck carries \$15,000 worth of parts inventory so that technicians have everything they need to do a job. "They can work

out of the trucks for a couple days before they need to resupply," Bonney says.

Each truck carries GO 68 (larger) and GO 380 (smaller) cable machines from Gorlitz Sewer & Drain Inc., a J-1450-C mini-jetter (2,000 psi/12 gpm) from General Pipe Cleaners, and a Vivax push camera system from Vivax-Metrotech Corp.

The company keeps about \$500,000 worth of parts in its warehouse. After using a part, the techni-

cian writes it down on an inventory replenishment sheet. Every night, the technicians send those sheets from home to the warehouse manager on company-issued fax machines. The manager fills the orders, and on Mondays and Wednesdays, each technician picks up the parts to restock.

Always clean

"Having that kind of inventory on hand helps with two things," Bonney says. "We get better pricing



All service trucks are set up identically with numbered bins assigned to specific parts and supply items.

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“From image, you get perceived value, and that can take any customer’s price objections right off the table. We encourage customers to come out and look inside our trucks to see how clean and well-organized they are.”

Mark Bonney

with volume buying, and our guys don’t waste time waiting in line at a supply house.”

The odds of seeing a dirty Bonney truck are about as good as seeing a Bonney technician who isn’t neatly groomed and wearing a clean uniform. One-third of the trucks are inspected each week for cleanliness, organization and proper inventory, and technicians can’t leave the lot until their trucks pass muster.

The trucks have plenty of marketing muscle. About 45 percent of the service calls come straight from people who see the trucks in neighborhoods and on freeways. “We let our technicians take their trucks home,” says Bonney. “They’re dispatched from home every morning, and that further increases the trucks’ exposure.”

Bonney has another strong vested interest in keeping the trucks spotless: a vinyl wrap shows him and Candace larger than life on the sides. He started using the wraps in 2003 to

add a personal, approachable touch.

“We can’t go anywhere without people saying, ‘Hey, you’re the Bonneys,’” he says. “It’s almost like celebrity status, except unlike movie stars, we have to pay for it.” But it’s worth every penny. ■

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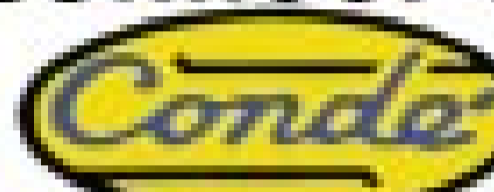
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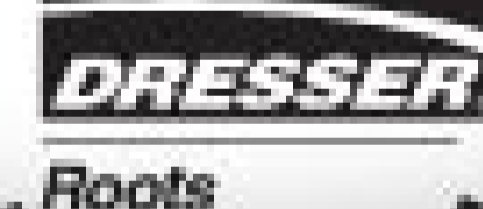
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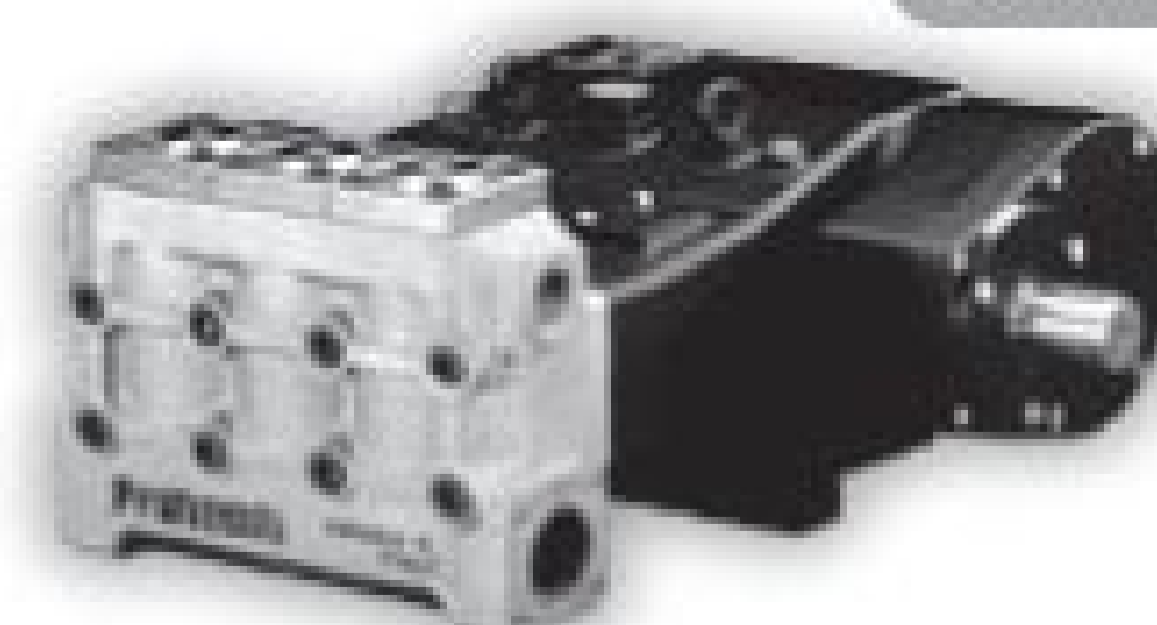
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Boot Camp Sessions - Preliminary Schedule

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

- DOT Regulations for Trucks/Trailers
- Safety in Waterjetting
- High Pressure Waterblasting
- Reducing Hydroblasting Risk and Incidents Through Partnership and Technology
- Hose Fittings, Pressure Testing
- Is "Cold-Cutting" Really Non-Explosive?

Thursday, August 19, 2010

- Waterjet 101 - The Capabilities and Benefits of Precision Waterjet Cutting
- Video Inspection of Pipelines
- Hydro-Excavation
- Nozzle Selection for Sewer Cleaning
- Static Electricity - Effects and Solutions
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For more information and to register online, visit www.wjta.org or contact: WJTA-IMCA, 906 Olive Street, Ste. 1200, St. Louis, MO 63101-1448, email: wjta-imca@wjta.org, phone: (314)241-1445, fax: (314)241-1449.



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Winning with Water

Contractors rely on quality equipment, well-trained people and performance on the job to drive success in waterjetting

By Ken Wysocky

A waterjetter can serve as a tidy profit center and open up new markets and revenue streams. But just buying a jetter doesn't guarantee success. To succeed, contractors rely on a variety of strategies: investing in reliable equipment, hiring good operators, providing comprehensive training and keeping up with advancing technology. Here's what a few contractors say about making their jetting operations successful.

"We've been providing waterjetting service for seven years," says Tim Pike, owner of Pike's Plumbing & Gas in Birmingham, Ala. "Good equipment is the key to our success. No matter how much advertising you have, or how skilled you are, you can't do the job without proper, dependable equipment.

"We use a jetter made by US Jetting (4,000 psi/18 gpm) to clean storm drains, pool drains, larger yard drains and things like that. We weren't doing that kind of work before, and it greatly increased our productivity. And once you fix the



Tim Pike

Owner
Pike's Plumbing & Gas,
Birmingham, Ala.
Employees: 13
Years in business: 21

drainage problem, it opens the door to get a foot in for other plumbing work.

"For example, in downtown Birmingham, we were asked to jet a main sewer line because another plumber didn't have the equipment to do it.

"Using a camera with the jetter has been a big plus, because you can actually show the customer why they're having a problem. You can actually sell them a repair because there's proof that a legitimate problem exists."

Tim Pike
Pike's Plumbing & Gas

When we finished, they asked us to do all their work, since we had the right equipment. This happened about two years ago and provided about \$200,000 worth of business for us.

"Minimizing downtime is very important. If you have downtime, you're pulling equipment from somewhere else to take care of a problem. That's why I buy newer equipment, so I'm not using worn-out, breakdown-prone equipment."

Arland Hilyer
ATC Services

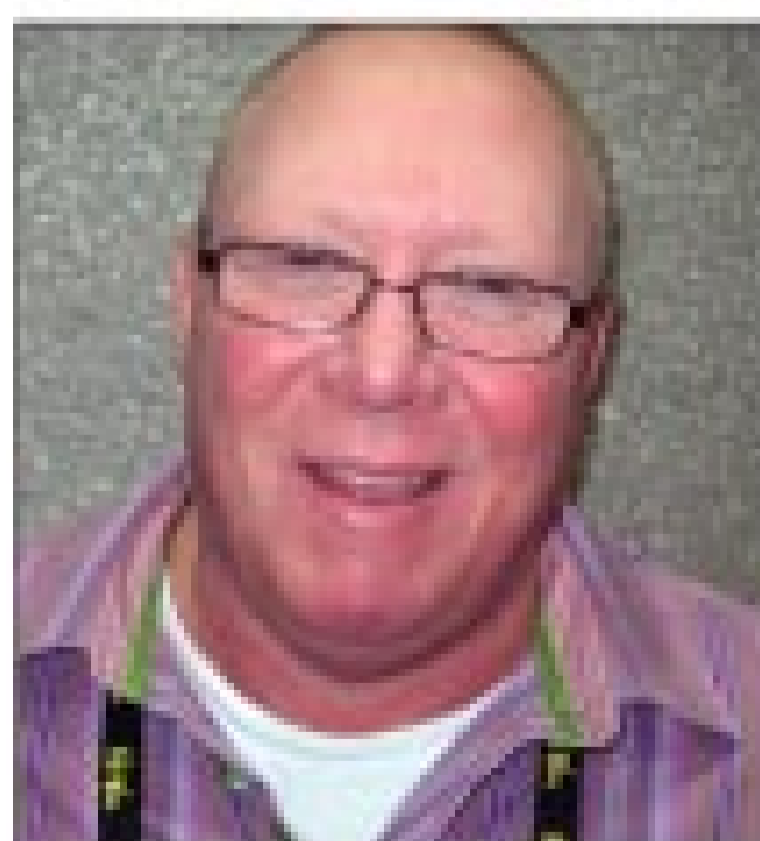
"We had small mini-jettors and cable machines before now to do residential and small commercial lines, but it was a battle because we didn't have the capability to go out and do larger lines. We didn't have something that someone else didn't have. We went with a bigger jetter because at the time, very few other people had them. I had other plumbers calling me to help them out, so it opened the door to other business. It really differentiates me from competitors.

"Using a camera with the jetter has been a big plus, too, because you can actually show the customer why they're having a problem. You can actually sell them a repair because there's proof that a legitimate problem exists. They know you're not just trying to sell them something.

"We use the phone book for marketing, but word-of-mouth is our biggest marketing tool. We thought about using brochures, but word got out so fast that we didn't have to. Word-of-mouth is the best advertising because you don't have to pay for it."

"We're successful because we have good men and good equipment," says Arland Hilyer, owner and manager of ATC Services in Millbrook, Ala.

"When we hire guys, we



Arland Hilyer

Owner and Manager
ATC Services,
Millbrook, Ala.
Employees: 14
Years in business: 10

use a screening process and a thorough background check. Most of the guys I hire I've had relationships with before they come to work for me. You bump into guys here and there while they're working for other companies.

"Good equipment is very important – one of

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



the key assets for our business. With top equipment, you can provide better service and better quality of work than other companies that don't spend money on good equipment. I run the kind of equipment we run to avoid breakdowns. We use jettors from US Jetting and high-pressure equipment from Jetstream of Houston.

"Minimizing downtime is very important. If you have downtime, you're pulling equipment from somewhere else to take care of a problem. That's why I buy newer equipment, so I'm not using worn-out, breakdown-prone equipment. If you've got it running, it's making money. If it's broken down, it's not making you any money.

"In addition, it looks better when you pull up on a job with nice-looking equipment. It makes a big difference. If you pull up on a job for a new client and you've got equipment that looks like junk, you're not making a very good impression. You pull up with something nice, and you do a great job, chances are they'll call you back.

"We work with a lot of industrial companies, paper mills and the like, where uptime is critical. When they have shutdowns for eight or 10 hours to do maintenance work – clean tanks or waterblast heat exchang-



Brad Dutruch

Vice President
Compliance EnviroSystems
LLC, Baton Rouge, La.
Employees: 75
Years in business: 16

ers, for instance – you've got a certain amount of time to get in and get it done. And if you don't, it doesn't look good."

"Productivity is the key to our success," notes Brad Dutruch, vice president of Compliance EnviroSystems LLC in Baton Rouge, La. "We do 100 percent municipal sewage system work, cleaning and televising. We spend a lot of time trying to be efficient.

"We invest a lot in training. We make sure our operators understand the difference between pressure versus flow and how to select the right nozzle. We also teach them how to make sure the jets are at the right angle on the nozzle to handle the different kinds of debris in a pipe, as well as different pipe materials.

"Sometimes representatives from companies come in to train them, but we do a lot of it ourselves with senior-level guys. We have some guys



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"Keeping up with technology also ensures our
success. That's why we attend the Pumper &
Cleaner Environmental Expo International. We go
every year – all the new technology is there. We try
to stay on the cutting edge. We spend a lot of time
with vendors because there are a lot of new mouse-
traps out there every year.

"It's amazing how much the technology has
changed in the last 14 years. In jetties alone, there
are many different nozzles you can use. Being able
to use reclaimed water, or being able to filter water
from the sewer system without using hydrant water –
that's a big deal when you're cleaning a 54-inch
interceptor that's half full.

"The reliability of equipment is much better
today, too. Our downtime has significantly
decreased due to the better products out there. We
have to keep making capital investments. We have
to stay on the cutting edge or competition will pass
us up." ■



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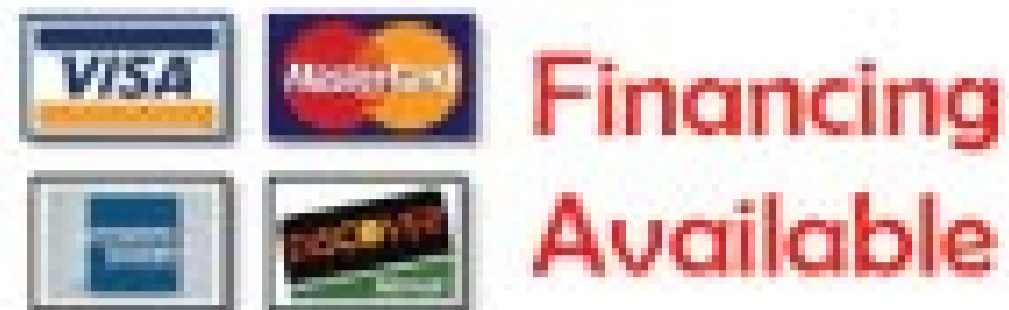
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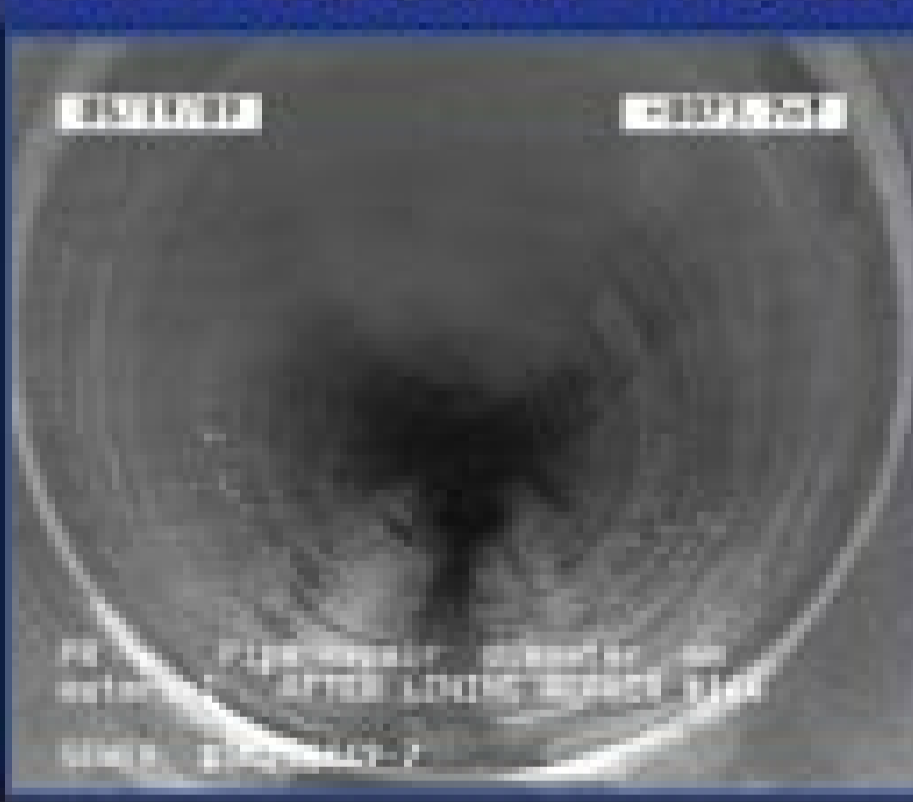
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Attache Monitor from Scooter Features 250 GB Hard Drive

By Ed Wodalski

The Attache family of monitors and recorders from Scooter Video Inspection Systems is the newest generation for use with the company's current inspection systems and prior models.

"They're very compact compared to what they used to be, and lightweight to boot," says Jerry Northcutt, president. "All have a 10-inch color LCD monitor as well as a built-in power supply to power the camera, and high-quality Pelican cases. This new family of monitors is also compatible with most other inspection systems using our custom adapter."

The professional level Attache 3 DVR has a

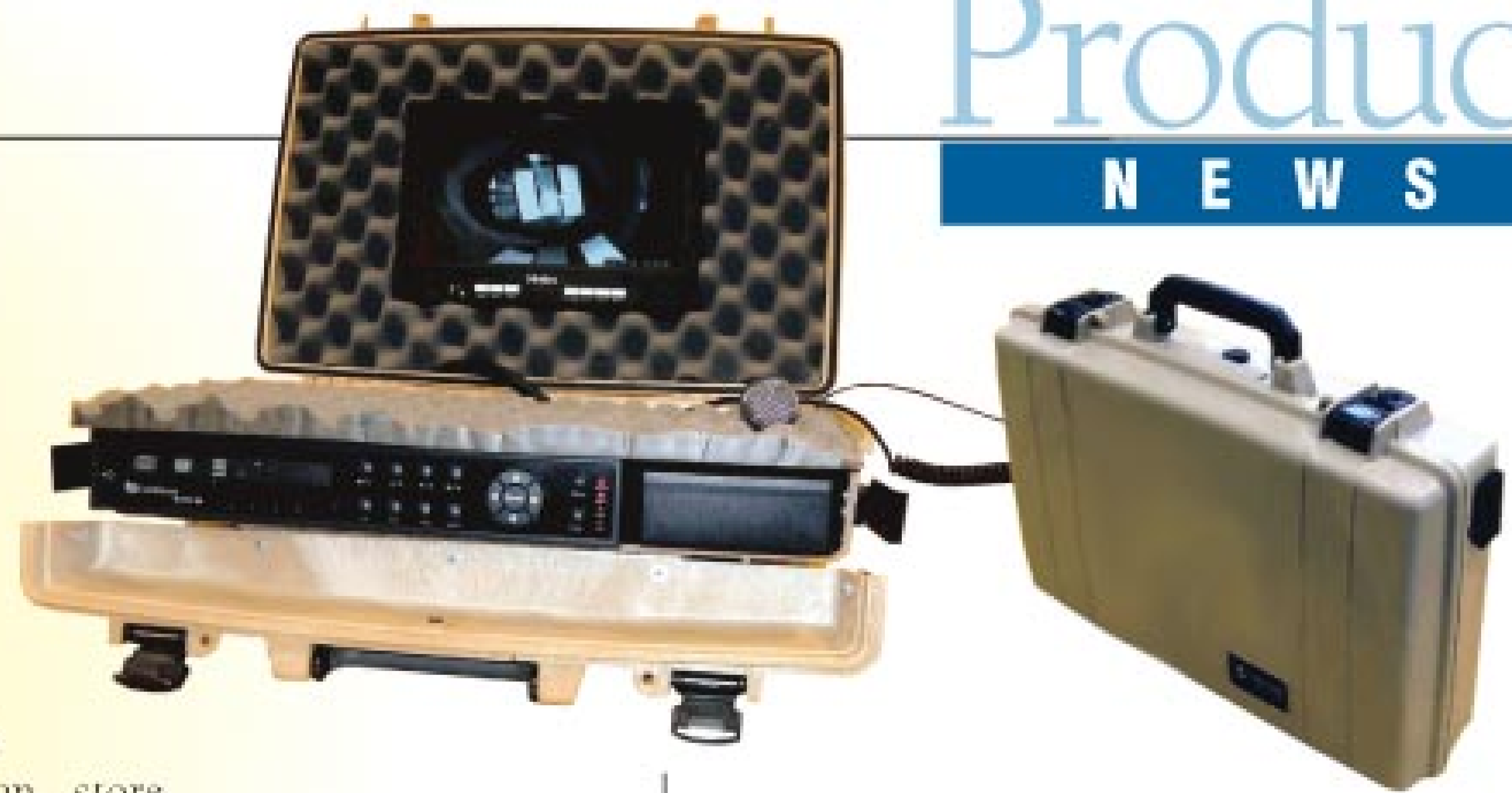
250 GB hard drive that can store months of inspections, making it easy to retrieve video from the archives if the need arises. The monitor also has a DVD burner and a USB port that enables users to copy data to a flash drive with time and date stamp. The unit weighs 12 pounds and comes with microphone and amplifier.

The mid-level Attache 2 has a built-in DVR with 2 GB storage that records (with time and date stamp) to an SD card. "We provide a USB adapter for the SD card to plug directly into your computer so you can burn the video to a DVD or to a USB flash drive, put it into storage or send it over the Internet," Northcutt says. Weighing 6 pounds, the

monitor includes a microphone and amplifier for narration.

The Attache 1 basic model comes without a recorder. The entry-level unit might serve an operator looking to check his work or to show a customer. The monitor weighs 5 pounds.

All three units come with a 20-foot coil cord that runs from the monitor to the pushrod coiler. "It's quite forgiving if someone trips on it," Northcutt says. "It just stretches out instead of pulling wires out of the connector." 800/722-6165; www.tvinspection.com.



RIDGID Introduces Auto-Clean Drain Cleaner

The Auto-Clean drain cleaning machine from RIDGID, model K-30, is designed to clean pipes 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Weighing 11 pounds, the machine features Autofeed technology that advances and retrieves

the 50-foot cable with the push of a lever. Aluminum paddles enable the user to feed cable at 18 feet per minute. Other features include a handle for easy transport and storage, rubber feet for stability and foot bulb activation. 800/769-7743; www.ridgid.com.



SAMI Releases NPT, Medium-Pressure Ball Valves

SAMI Instruments has added NPT and medium-pressure ball valves to its product line. Distributed by SPIR STAR, the valves are designed for liquid and gas flow control and are available in various connection sizes. The valves' quarter-turn feature allows for quick open and close operation, while the blowout-proof stem provides greater safety. 800/890-7827; www.spirstar.com.

General Offers Variable-Speed Hose Reel Jetter

The Typhoon trailer jet from General Pipe Cleaners features a variable-speed control for easier hose handling of the 400-foot capacity hose reel. The jetter delivers 12 gpm at 2,500 psi and has a 200-gallon holding tank. Powered



by a 24 hp Honda engine, the unit has two hose reels mounted at the rear, lockable toolbox with engine controls mounted on the inside. Standard equipment includes electric brakes, safety strobe light, rear fold-down stabilizer jacks, retractable hose guide arm, antifreeze system and high-performance nozzle set. 800/245-6200; www.drainbrain.com/jetset.

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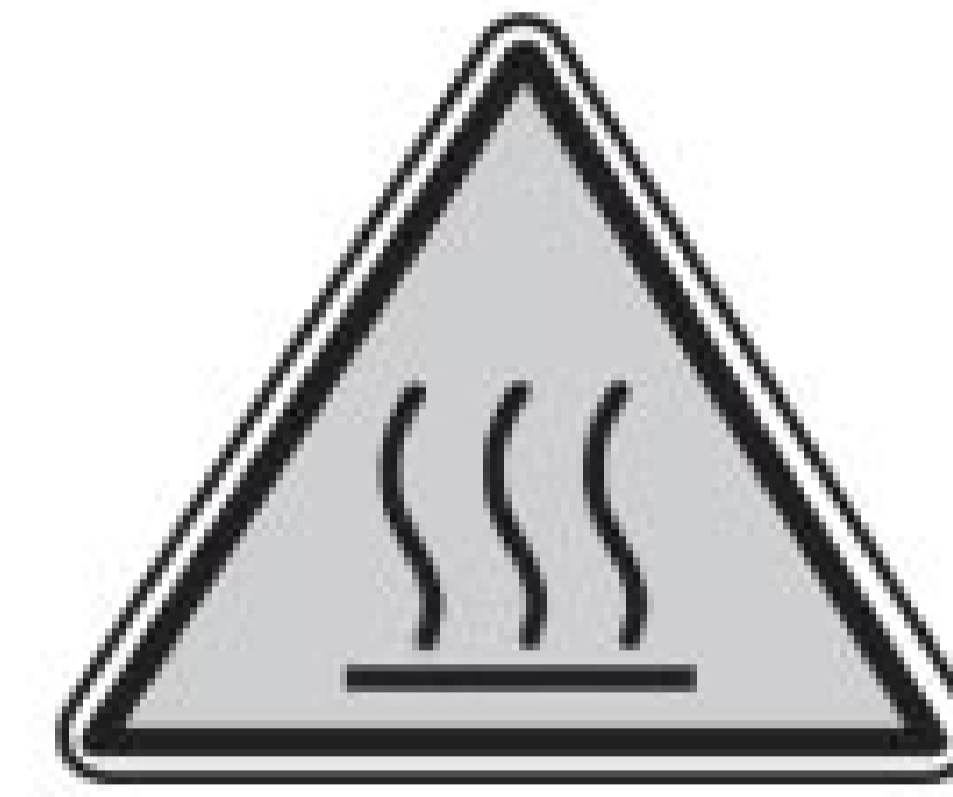
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Code Red

A creative approach to pipe bursting helps a contractor crew quickly repair a failed sewer line under a hospital emergency room entrance

By **Scottie Dayton**

Sewage backing into the emergency room complex of the Villages Regional Hospital brought employees from the maintenance arm of CH2M Hill on the double.

They pumped what they could, then tried to televise the 260-foot, 8-inch SDR-35 PVC gravity sewer. The upper portion of the line ran 150 feet under the circular ambulance driveway to the center manhole in a median strip.

The camera head went two feet from the upstream and center manholes before hitting a collapsed section. The 110-foot lower sewer portion, running south from the center manhole under a parking lot to a manhole in the street, had two partially collapsed but passable sections.

Open cutting to replace the sewer would destroy the driveway and entrance to the emergency room. Instead, the CH2M Hill personnel contacted Jim Theriault of Omni Eye Inc. in Sarasota, Fla., to pipe-burst the line. After Theriault reviewed the inspection video, he called Ward Carter of TRIC Tools to help plan and execute the burst.



Video capture of the collapsed 8-inch SDR-35 PVC gravity sewer 1.7 feet upstream of the center manhole. (Courtesy of CH2M Hill)



The 8-inch bursting head begins its descent into the entrance pit in the median strip. Note the slitting fins on the head and service collar. (Photos courtesy of Omni Eye Inc.)

Because of the pipe's condition and extenuating circumstances, Theriault expected the job to last longer than a week. The collaborative effort restored the sewer to full capacity in five days without disrupting access to the emergency room.

Meltdown

The problem began when a boiler room valve stuck open, releasing scalding water that poured down the floor drains and through the bell-and-spigot sewer pipe, softening and collapsing it.

The CH2M Hill team pumped the sewer until Theriault arrived to insert a tag line using a

1/2-inch jet nozzle. The jetter, launched from the center manhole in the parking area just south of the emergency room entrance, traveled 100 feet before the hose became stuck. Two sewer lines entered that manhole.

CH2M Hill resumed pumping, while some of Theriault's crew set up the bypass system. They intercepted the two lines at the cleanouts and installed two flow-through plugs before the north manhole.

After inserting 4-inch suction lines, they attached each to a Thompson pump (with a redundant unit in reserve) that pumped the sewage to a tanker. A Vactor sewer cleaner emptied one-fourth of the tanker's capacity at a time. The

TOUGH JOB

PROJECT:

Restore a collapsed sewer under the ambulance route to a hospital emergency room

CUSTOMER:

Villages Regional Hospital, The Villages, Fla.

CONTRACTOR:

Omni Eye Inc., Sarasota, Fla.

EQUIPMENT:

X60 pipe bursting system, TRIC Tools Inc., Lafayette, La.

RESULTS:

Sewer rejuvenated without disrupting ambulance access

center manhole had a second inlet to one side, which the men diverted by pumping the flow to the south manhole.



The setup at the center entrance pit included the bursting head, bypass pumps and hoses, and the attendant/entry supervisor observing the man working in the pit.

Meanwhile, other workers excavated an entrance pit next to the center manhole in the 10-foot-wide median between the parking lot and circular driveway. They hammered out the north and south manhole inverts, then excavated to a depth that positioned the 60-ton TRIC X60 hydraulic ram in line with the sewer pipe. The 12-foot-deep south pulling manhole required shoring, but the 5-foot-deep north manhole did not.

At the same time, Carter fused 20-foot-long sections of 8-inch HDPE pipe. The staging area was along a row of bushes in front of the parking lot and next to a drive leading to the ambulance circle. During the pull, the pipe had to bend around the end of bushes, then cross a sidewalk before entering the hole.

"We parked a pickup truck over the curb to pin the pipe against the shrubs and force it around the corner," says Carter. "We couldn't risk the pipe sliding into the street and impeding the ambulances."

North and south

Once workers installed the 6-by-6-inch wood cribbing in the north manhole, they used a confined-space tripod to lower the steel resistance plate with an aluminum pulling wheel. "We had to punch an opening through the collapsed PVC to the entrance pit to pull back the 1-inch swaged cable that attaches to the bursting head," says Carter.

"I did that using a 3/8-inch

duct rodder and Wedge service line replacement tool from Footage Tools Inc. However, the pipe was still so badly buckled that I needed 3/8-inch post-tensioning wire and a TRIC C20 20-ton ram powered by a 12 hp hydraulic pump to bring back the cable."

Once the cable was in the pulling pit, workers replaced the 20-ton ram with the 60-ton unit. "We

"The pipe was still so badly buckled that I needed 3/8-inch post-tensioning wire and a TRIC C20 20-ton ram powered by a 12 hp hydraulic pump to bring back the cable."

Ward Carter

probably could have used the 20-ton ram if the pipe had been in better shape," says Carter. "We didn't use more than 12 tons on the south pull, but we needed 38 to 40 tons for the north pull, where we did 90 percent of the work."

To slip the bursting head into the squashed pipe, Carter put a standard 4-inch head with 3-inch-diameter nose on the cable in front of the 8-inch head with 5.5-inch-diameter nose. When the pull began, the two heads seated together like stackable cups.

The crew also welded four blades at 90-degree increments to the 8-inch head to cut the plastic pipe and spread the fragments into the soil. "Slitting in one plane causes the host pipe to act like a giant



Workers used a scissor jack in an attempt to free the tightly packed telescoping shards of plastic pipe. Backed up water is just beginning to spill out of the black pipe.

roll pin and pinch the new pipe," he says. "Then the host pipe collapses on the new one, causing parasitic drag of 10 to 20 tons."

A 14 gpm/10,000 psi TRIC/Enerpac prototype pump powered the X60 puller with 12 square inches of piston area. "We had so much sand, mud and plastic pipe coming into the hole that we couldn't tell if the bursting head was

pipe with pea gravel.

Meanwhile, Carter burst the south half of the sewer in 20 minutes using just the 8-inch head. "We couldn't trench back far enough without interfering with the ambulance approach, so we had to use the backhoe bucket to guide the HDPE pipe into the host pipe," he says. "Other than that, things went smoothly."

A final inspection confirmed that the rejuvenated sewer was perfectly on grade. Once the remaining manholes were restored and the median strip sodded, no one could tell anything had happened. ■

MORE INFO:

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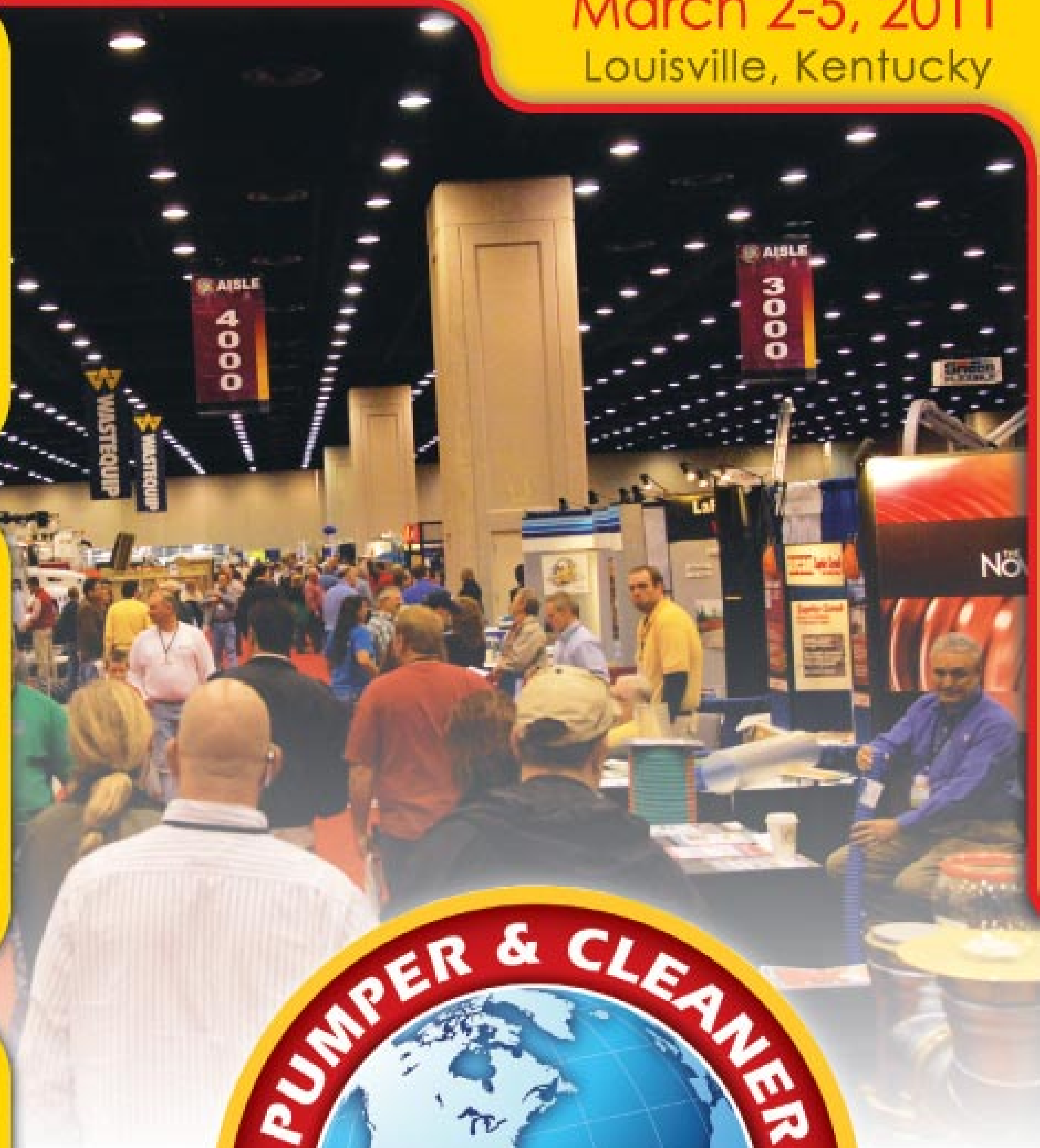
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August



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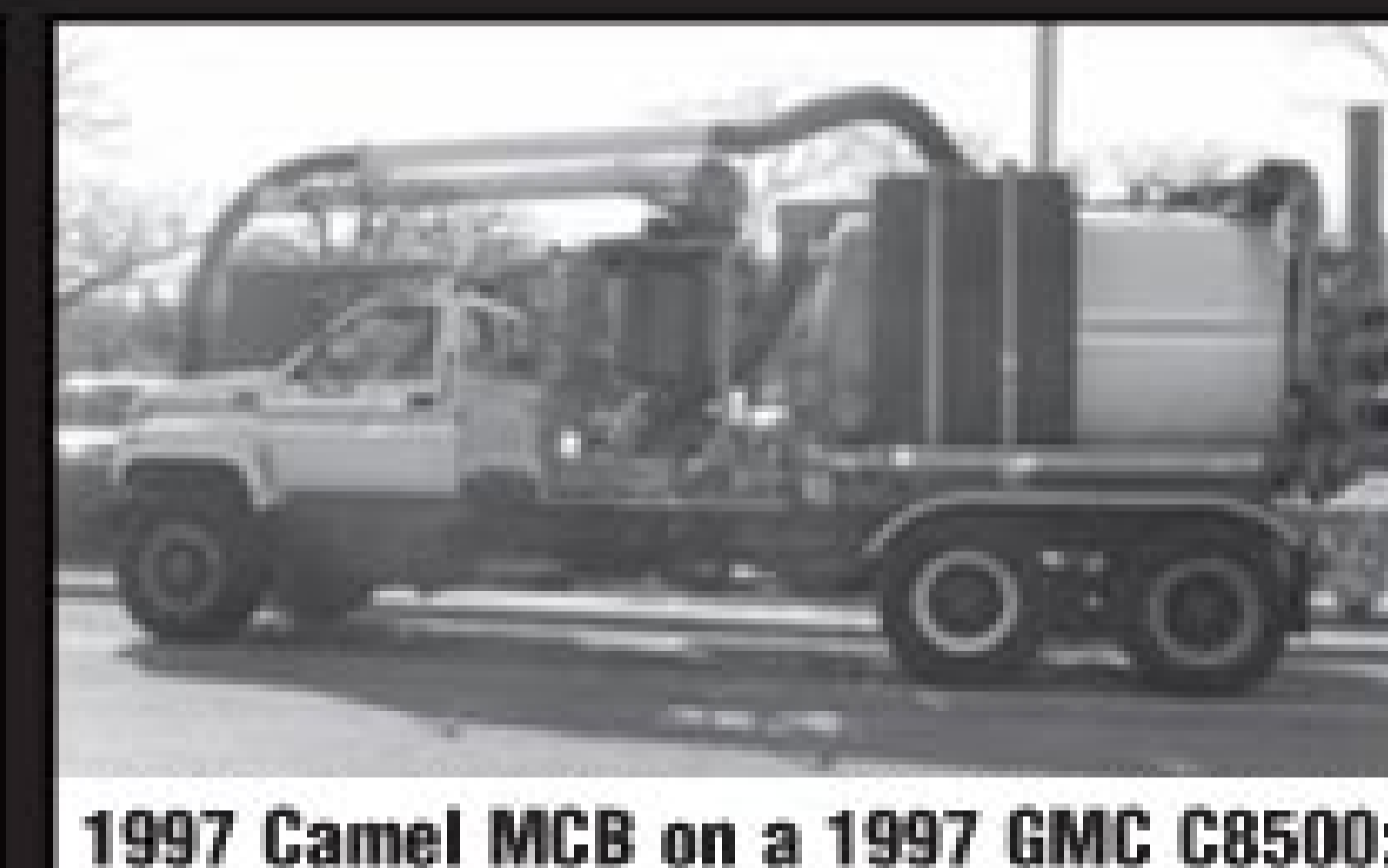
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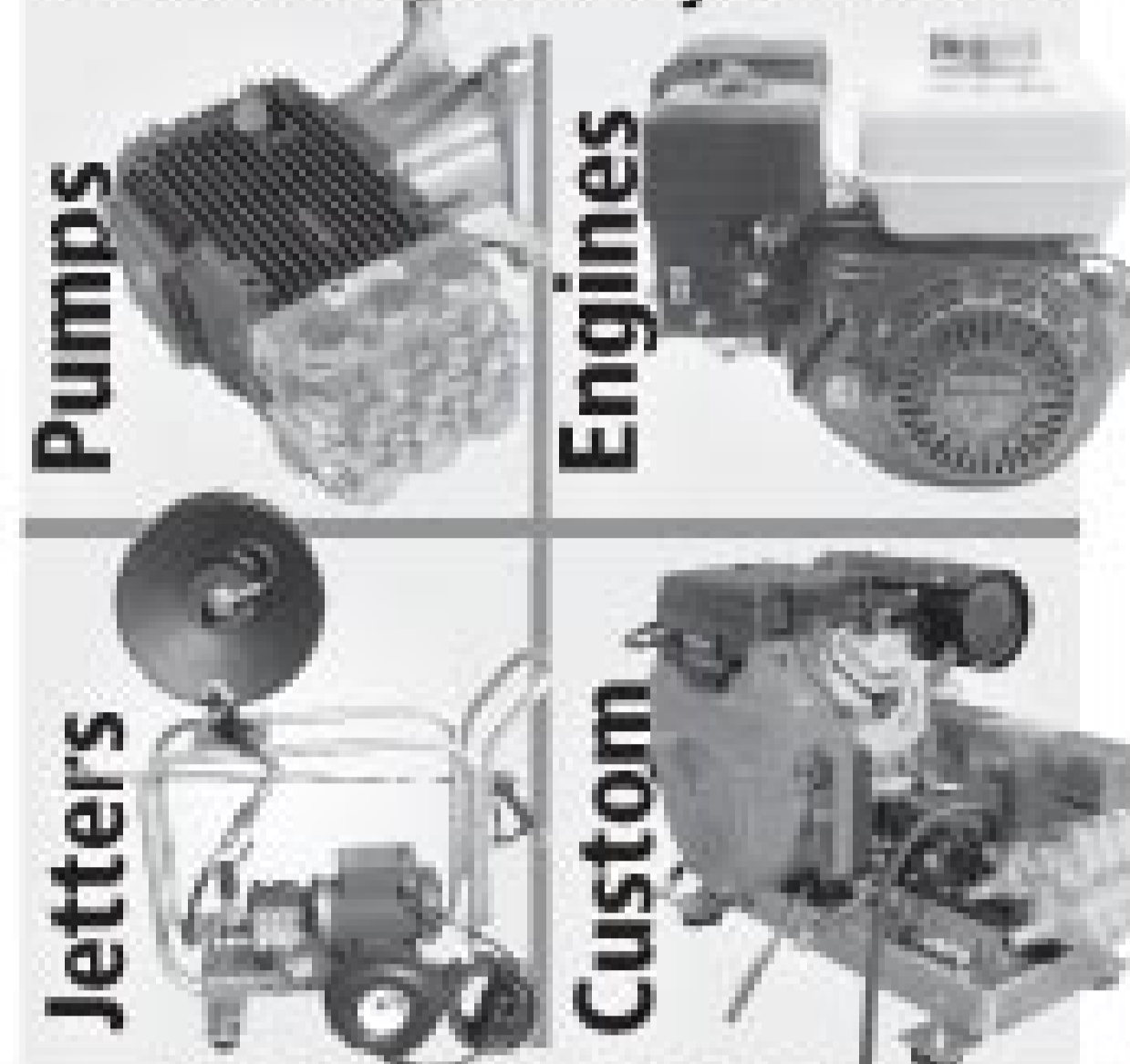
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South Florida Commercial Real Estate, Plumbing, Septic & Sewer Business For Sale. Established in 1969, owner is moving on. Nearly 8,000 customers in database including some contracted. Established name with real estate on turnpike. Real estate appraised in excess of \$2 million, business grosses in excess of \$1 million, close to \$1 million in equipment including Vactor, Guzzler and Safe Jet trucks. Equipment has been featured in Cleaner magazine. Assumable SBA loan for bulk of selling price. \$2,799,000 for the entire package. E-mail jeffb@colepublishing.com, visit www.BTwo.biz, or call 800-257-7222 and ask for Jeff Bruss for more details. **A B2 Business Brokerage Listing.** (CBM)

BUSINESSES

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BUSINESSES

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*****www.servicewithasmile.com*** Sewer Cam Reel and Camera Repair: Authorized for General Wire, Ratech & Ridgid. Quality service on all brands. Need more info? Give Chuck a call. Electronic Repair Co., Birmingham, AL 35206. 205-836-0454; email: part@servicewithasmile.com.** (CBM)

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TV INSPECTION

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CUES van mount system, approx. 1000' cable, Pipe Ranger with large wheels, camera lift, shorty transporter, P/T camera with back-up, \$18,900. Call 801-518-5356. (C9)

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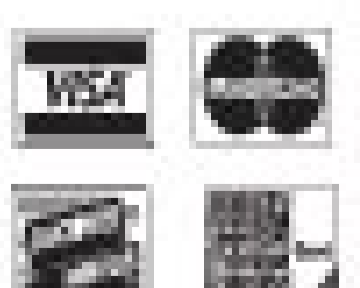
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