

# Cleaner

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com | JULY 2015

2015 Cleaner  
**BUYER'S** GUIDE

## COMPLETE CLEANING OPERATION

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FOR CUSTOMERS **PAGE 22**

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- **SAFETY FIRST:** The hierarchy of waterblasting safety
- **MONEY MANAGER:** Cash flow is king

## Cleaner



### ON THE COVER:

All Service Plus owner Wisler Sanon started his business in 2012 and has succeeded, in part, due to his willingness to provide just about any service his customers need. The Sicklerville, New Jersey-based operation now serves all of New Jersey and Philadelphia. (Photography by Tracie VanAuken)



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Luke Laggis  
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# Small Business is Big Business

Small companies play a significant role in shaping our economy and our communities

By Luke Laggis

It's National Small Business Week as I'm writing this. Small businesses play a significant role in our economy and in this industry. Most of the companies we profile in *Cleaner* are classified as small businesses. Most of you work for them.

More than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and those businesses create about two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. each year.

This month's *Cleaner* profiles are two great examples of the types of small businesses this industry revolves around.

Jet Plumbing, Heating & Drain Services in Reno, Nevada, is a family business. It's been around for more than 45 years. Jim Walker and his sister, Nanci Thomas, own the business. Walker's wife, Robin, manages the office

and his niece is a dispatcher.

The business employs close to 50 people, and Walker works to create a strong family atmosphere. He says developing relationships with his employees and seeing their development over the years is one of the most rewarding aspects of the business.

That tight-knit family atmosphere is one of the hallmarks of the best small businesses. Everyone works together and everyone has a stake in the company's success. It gives everyone a sense of ownership, and that is a powerful thing.

The second profile in this issue features All Service Plus, and it paints another picture of success. Owner Wisler Sanon didn't grow up around the plumbing industry. He didn't even grow up in the United States. He came here from Haiti in 1992.

Sanon had spent 10 years working for other plumbing and drain cleaning companies when he saw the opportunity to go out on his own and fulfill the dream of owning a business and being his own boss. Like so many entrepreneurs, he realized that if he could make money for someone else, he could do the same for himself. He started out with just a service van, a hand-held cable machine and a large drum machine.

Since he formed All Service in 2012, Sanon has acquired a fleet of equipment worth roughly \$230,000, employs five people and has expanded his service area to include all of New Jersey and Philadelphia.

The theme of this year's Small Business Week was "Dream Big, Start Small." Sanon's business certainly personifies that statement. Most businesses start small. Whether they stay small is in large part up to the owners and operators. There are plenty of business owners who want to stay small, who don't want it to grow beyond the point where they can oversee and stay fully involved in every aspect of the operation. For many, that means staying close to the people who make it work and cultivating that family atmosphere. In many ways, that's just as difficult as growing a cleaning business to millions in revenue and a staff of 150.

Regardless of the size of your company, small businesses are really big business. You play a big role in this nation's economy and an even bigger role in the lives of those who work for you.

Perhaps more importantly, at least in the context of this discussion, you form the backbone of this industry.

Enjoy this month's issue. **c**

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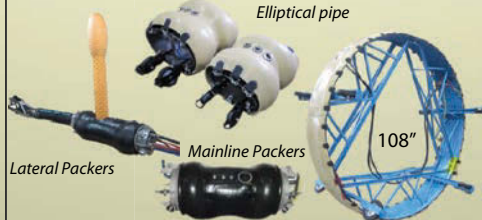
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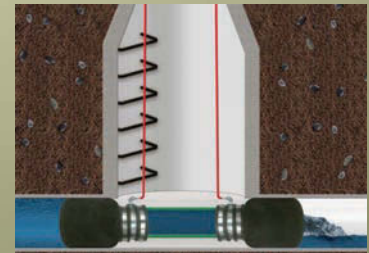
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## SMALL VICTORY

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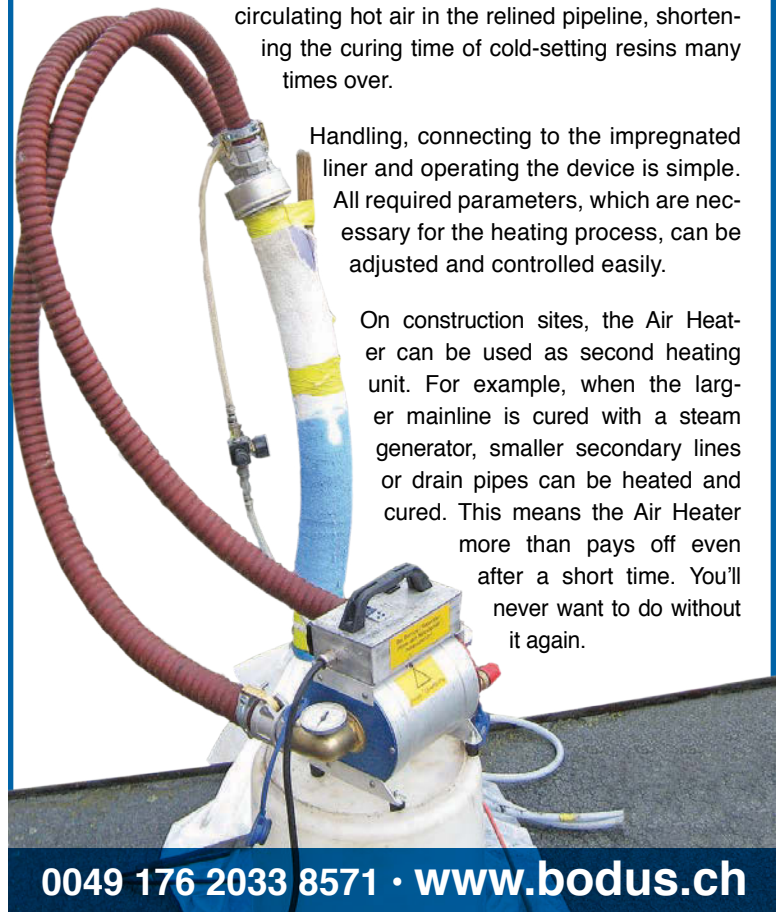
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# COMPLETE CLEANING OPERATION

BY KEN WYSOCKY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
TRACIE VANAUKEN

ALL SERVICE PLUS TAKES ON MORE THAN MOST CLEANERS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR CUSTOMERS

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A MORE APTLY NAMED COMPANY THAN ALL SERVICE PLUS — OR A MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL-MINDED businessman than its owner, Wisler Sanon, who's established a thriving drain cleaning company by following a simple mantra: Be humble and hustle.

In short, the Haitian-born Sanon never met a service he wasn't willing to provide for his customers. In the case of All Service, based in Sicklerville, New Jersey, that means doing everything from cleaning drains to pipe

locating, grease-trap cleaning, carpet washing, fire/water-damage mitigation and general plumbing service.

"I'm very confident and I'm pretty resourceful," Sanon says about his ability to provide so many services. "We're busy every day, thank God. Once a customer called us and said there was a bird caught up in a water heater. I said, 'Yes, we'll take care of it.' And we did. For the right money, we'll come out and take care of just about anything."



<< **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The team at All Service Plus includes (from left) service technician Chris Scott, supervisor and drain specialist Mario Condis, service technician Qwanean Smith, owner Wisler Sanon, service technician Zhaquan Manuel and Jaaquana Manuel.

>> **RIGHT:** All Service owner Wisler Sanon mans the controls of the truck-mounted jetter (US Jetting) while clearing the mainline on the street outside a home in Ewing, New Jersey.

“That’s the main reason why we’ve been so successful in the short time we’ve been in business,” he adds. “We don’t turn anything down.”

Sanon, who came to the United States in 1992, credits his late mother, Irma Sanon, for his strong work ethic and can-do attitude. She ran her own restaurant in Haiti but also took on many other jobs — “just about anything,” he says — to make ends meet. “So I got that from her.” He also

**“Once a customer called us and said there was a bird caught up in a water heater. I said, ‘Yes, we’ll take care of it.’ And we did. For the right money, we’ll come out and take care of just about anything.”**

Wisler Sanon

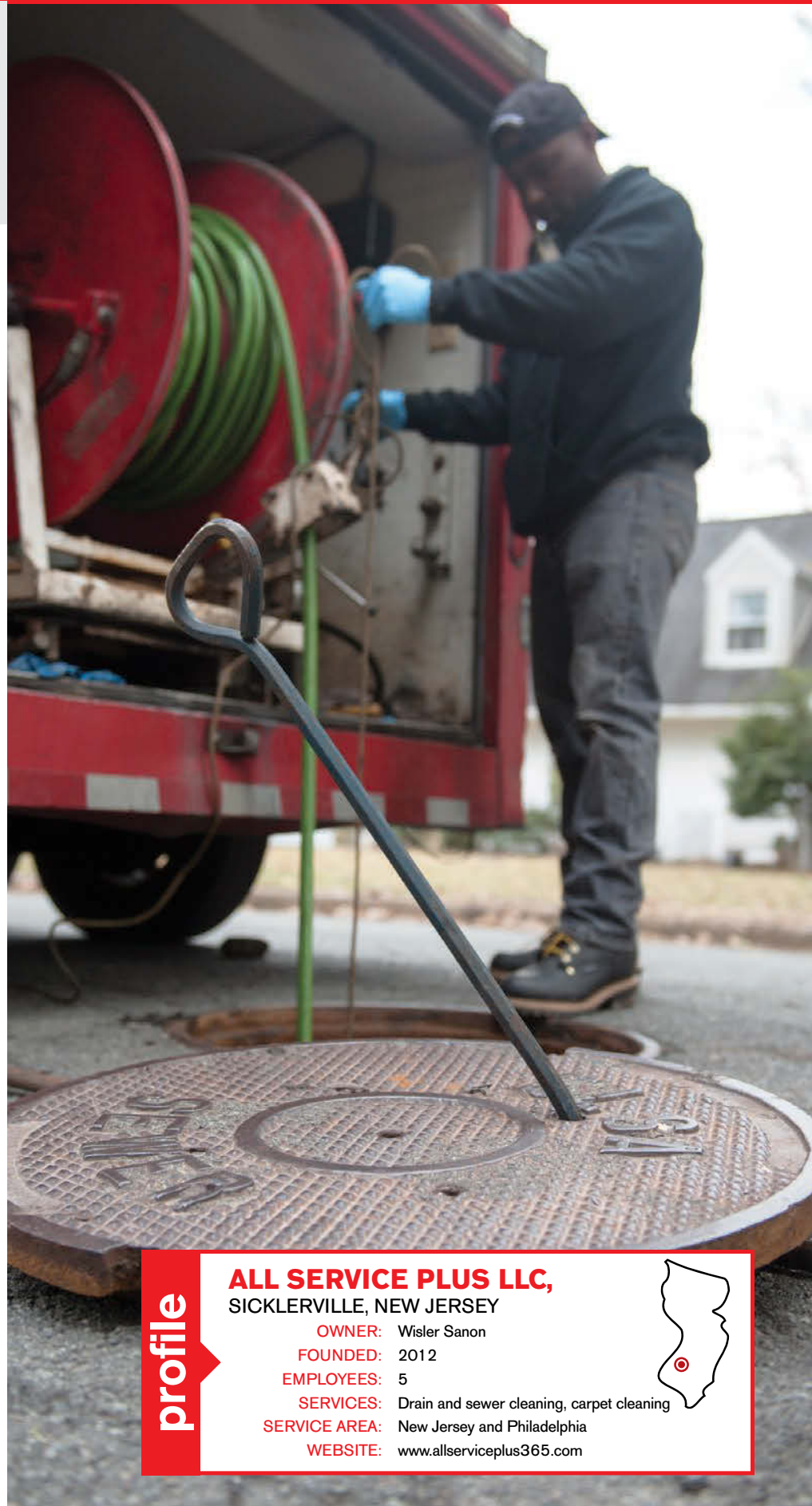
says his wife, Rahsher, as well as his son, Wisler Jr., have contributed greatly to his success. “I couldn’t do it without them,” he notes.

So far, the do-anything formula is working pretty well. Since he struck out on his own and formed All Service in 2012, Sanon now owns a fleet of equipment worth roughly \$230,000, employs five people, expanded his service area to include all of New Jersey and Philadelphia, and increased annual gross revenues by about 35 percent.

### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Sanon spent 10 years working for several plumbing and drain cleaning companies before deciding to run his own business. Like so many entrepreneurs, he came to the realization that if he could make money for someone else, he could do the same for himself. So he obtained the required licenses, bought business insurance and started out with just a service van, a hand-held RIDGID drain cleaning machine and a large drum machine made by Spartan Tool.

Within two months, Sanon, 38, hired his first employee. Within six months, he bought a trailer-mounted O’Brien water jetter (a brand owned by Hi-Vac Corp.); it generates 14 gpm at 3,000 psi and is equipped with a 300-gallon water tank. A year later, he invested in another trailer jetter, this one made by US Jetting (18 gpm at 4,000 psi with a 350-gallon water tank).



profile

### ALL SERVICE PLUS LLC, SICKLERVILLE, NEW JERSEY

- OWNER:** Wisler Sanon
- FOUNDED:** 2012
- EMPLOYEES:** 5
- SERVICES:** Drain and sewer cleaning, carpet cleaning
- SERVICE AREA:** New Jersey and Philadelphia
- WEBSITE:** [www.allserviceplus365.com](http://www.allserviceplus365.com)







Today, All Service also owns two Chevrolet utility box trucks that carry drain cleaning machines made by Spartan and General Pipe Cleaners (a division of General Wire Spring Co.); two service vans (Dodge and Chevrolet) equipped with RIDGID and General Pipe drain cleaning equipment; two pipeline inspection

**<< LEFT:** Mario Condis watches the monitor on a Vivax-Metrotech pipe inspection camera while examining a clogged drain at a home in Ewing, New Jersey.

**BELOW:** Condis examines the blockage in a clogged residential drainline.



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camera systems made by Vivax-Metrotech Corp.; and one 2003 Dodge pickup truck. For pipeline cleaning, Sanon prefers Warthog nozzles from StoneAge.

"We use a rotating nozzle and a pullback head," he explains. "The pullback head is good for cleaning lines from a clean-out at the curb, because it can pull debris backward ... that way we don't have to go into a building to clean the line. If we can work from the outside, it's all good — we don't make a mess in peoples' homes. It's always better to work from the outside."

### HUSTLING FOR CUSTOMERS

To build a business base, Sanon followed a decidedly simple marketing plan: Go to big-box home centers and exchange business cards with plumbers. "There's a big difference between plumbers and drain cleaning," he points out. "A lot of plumbers don't clean drains, but they get a lot of drain cleaning calls. So I got to know plumbers in the neighborhood and exchanged business cards with them. If they need a drain cleaner, they call me. And if I get plumbing calls, I call them. We help each other out."

## DIVERSE ARRAY OF SERVICES ENSURES STEADY WORK

Wisler Sanon likes to be busy. "If you're always busy, you're always making money," says the owner of All Service Plus, a drain cleaning business based in Sicklerville, New Jersey. The business also offers a wide variety of other services — including carpet cleaning.

Cleaning carpets may not sound like the most logical complementary service for a drain cleaner, but it makes perfect sense for Sanon, who used to work for a company that did carpet cleaning and restoration work. Before striking out on his own, he also worked for plumbers and drain cleaners. And in All Service, he's established the perfect vehicle for utilizing all his skills — and then some.

"At my previous jobs, I learned how to do a lot of different things," he says.

Sanon estimates he's invested about \$40,000 in carpet cleaning equipment, including about \$26,000 for a ProChem Blazer XL truck-mount carpet cleaning machine. Made by ProChem Karcher Group, the unit is bolted to the floor of a Dodge service van. For a water source, the machine can be hooked up to a hose bib or to the 150-gallon water tank in the van. "When you get to a job, you just hook up the water supply, pull out the hose and you're in business," he says.

Other equipment includes about 30 commercial floor fans and six commercial-grade dehumidifiers made by Dri-Eaz Products, plus smaller carpet cleaning machines made by Mytee Products and AquaClean (a Nilfisk-Advance brand).

Sanon has offered carpet cleaning service ever since the day he started his drain cleaning business in 2012. One reason: It helped ensure a steady stream of business, a philosophy that also explains the company's forays into many other cleaning-related service offerings.

"I wanted to stay occupied," he notes. "But we're also in the cleaning business, whether it's drains, carpets, ductwork or even car washing. Our main focus is drains, but I'll take every kind of cleaning work I can get."

The carpet cleaning arm of the business is not a huge revenue generator for All Service, Sanon concedes, but it does help him get his foot in the door for his other services. "We try to lock down all our customers' needs," he says. "Most customers prefer to call one person for everything they need. And if they give us a carpet cleaning job one day, the next day they might give us a drain cleaning job. It all adds up."

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**ABOVE:** All Service Plus owner Wisler Sanon (left) and drain specialist Mario Condis use a 1/2-inch hose off the truck-mounted jetter (US Jetting) to clean a drain inside an apartment complex in West Philadelphia. Condis holds a cloth over the drain opening to prevent debris from splashing into the hallway when it clears.

**<< LEFT:** Condis cuts a piece of PVC pipe for a repair on a broken sewer lateral at an apartment complex in West Philadelphia.



“You just have to be humble and hustle — get out there and sell the business,” he adds. “That’s pretty much it. I don’t do a lot of advertising because there’s a lot of competition out there and it costs too much money to get your name out. I just hustle and be humble.”

Not that starting from scratch was easy — far from it. Sanon says he often went months without getting paid by the business. Instead, he concentrated on plowing whatever money he earned back into the business. Because he didn’t have good credit established, he paid cash for new tools, vehicles and equipment.

“Instead of showing off and buying a BMW, I invested in getting the right tools for the job,” he says. “With the right tools, you’re good. Without them, you’re not in business very long.”





“Instead of showing off and buying a BMW, I invested in getting the right tools for the job. With the right tools, you’re good. Without them, you’re not in business very long.”

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Sanon also learned the value of never turning down work. “If you do a job for \$300, next week that same customer might call you for a \$3,000 job,” he says. “So you can’t say no to work, even if it’s far away.”

**MOSTLY COMMERCIAL WORK**

About 90 percent of All Service’s customers are commercial. On the drain cleaning side of the business, Sanon says the company cleans everything from mainlines, sewer laterals and industrial pipelines to grease traps, pump stations and manholes, residential drains and pipelines at hospitals, nursing homes and restaurants.

“Anything that has to do with drain cleaning, we’re on it,” he says.

Some of the company’s more challenging jobs involve unclogging lines in high-rise apartment buildings. It’s one of the reasons why the company’s trailer jettors are equipped with 400 and 500 feet of 1/2-inch hose. To clean such lines in, say, a 20-story building, a technician carries a rope up to a rooftop,



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**ABOVE:** Wisler Sanon uses rope and a plastic tube to guide a 1/2-inch jetting hose where it needs to go inside a sewer lateral at a home in Ewing, New Jersey. Because the blockage was extensive, Sanon decided to treat the blockage from both inside and outside of the home.

**<< LEFT:** Mario Condis digs around a broken sewer pipe at an apartment complex in West Philadelphia. The broken portion of the pipe was 5 feet underground and had to be removed and replaced with PVC.

then drops it to another crew member on the ground, who ties it to the end of the jetter hose. Then the technician on the roof pulls up the hose, drops it down a stack pipe and goes to work.

“We might have to run hose up 200 feet, then drop it down the stack 200 feet,” Sanon explains. “The clog could be caused by just about anything — grease buildup, toilet paper or even a kid’s toy. Any foreign object will clog it. We’ve even seen lines clogged by cellphones.”

**“As a businessman, you’re never comfortable. You always want to do more — be more successful. I’d like to do \$5 million in business. If I have the right crew, it will happen.”**

Wisler Sanon

One of the toughest drain jobs Sanon ever encountered occurred in a 12-story high-rise apartment in Philadelphia occupied by many wealthy residents. When water started backing up through a kitchen sink in one millionaire’s apartment on the fifth or sixth floor, Sanon had to station an employee in the apartment with a wet vac to control the situation.

“It took about one and a half to two hours to get the line clean,” he recalls. “It was pretty nerve-wracking. We could’ve ruined a \$100,000 rug, and I can’t afford to have that happen.”

Finding good employees also poses a challenge for Sanon. “It’s not at all hard to find business, but it is hard to find the right employees — people who do good work and who want to learn the business. If we have to do a lot of recalls, we’re not making money.”

To attract and retain employees, Sanon says he strives to create a good working atmosphere where employees feel respected. “I stress that they’re not working for me — we’re working together,” he says. “I also go online and look at different drain cleaning companies and see how they do things — how they carry themselves. Then I try to do the same things.”

### LOOKING TO GROW

Looking ahead, Sanon says he anticipates further growth. Within the next five years, he envisions running 10 service trucks. He’d also like to purchase a vacuum truck so the company can expand into bigger drain cleaning jobs — and create more business opportunities.

“As a businessman, you’re never comfortable,” he says. “You always want to do more — be more successful. I’d like to do \$5 million in business. If I have the right crew, it will happen.”

And what advice would he give newcomers to the drain cleaning industry? “Hustle,” he says. “Be humble. Respect customers. Do good work. Be trustworthy. And go from there.” **C**

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Truck Vac Services in Ottawa, Illinois, relies on a Guzzler Classic outfitted with a high-rail package to clean up silica sand on and around railroad tracks.



# It Vacuums Like It's On Rails

Specialty vacuum truck puts industrial cleaning contractor on track to serve new markets

By Ken Wysocky

Investing almost \$500,000 in a vacuum truck to serve a handful of customers in a niche market can be a nerve-wracking prospect for contractors. But at Truck Vac Services in Ottawa, Illinois, taking such a leap of faith was a little easier because the truck was a versatile, multitasking Guzzler Classic.

The Guzzler, built by Guzzler Manufacturing (a subsidiary of Federal Signal Corp.), is an interesting crossbreed: a conventional vac truck that, in a matter of minutes, converts into a rail-ready vehicle that can efficiently suck up spills on and around railroad tracks. The truck is central to operations at Truck Vac, a company formed in summer 2014 in response to requests from local silica sand suppliers, says Kevin Kuntz, co-owner and general manager of the company.

“About 90 percent of the time, we use the Guzzler to vacuum up spilled silica sand, either in railroad yards or at sand mining facilities,” Kuntz explains. “The high-rail package gives us more versatility. Many times, we’re cleaning along multiple (railroad) spurs, with train cars on both sides that limit accessibility. Or there’s other obstructions or no road alongside the tracks. That’s what makes this truck so unique — it can get places where other trucks can’t go.”

Truck Vac paid around \$480,000 for the truck, and the high-rail package accounted for about 25 percent of that cost. The truck also features an 18-cubic-yard debris tank; a 5,300 cfm blower made by Hibon (a brand owned by Ingersoll-Rand Co.); a 16-foot-long boom that telescopes to a maximum length of nearly 22 feet and can rotate 320 degrees; a half-opening, hydraulically powered rear door for discharging debris; a tank vibrator; a 400

## money machines

**OWNER:** Truck Vac Services LLC, Ottawa, Illinois

**VEHICLE:** Guzzler Classic vacuum truck, built by Guzzler Manufacturing Inc.

**FUNCTION:** Cleaning up silica sand spills and other materials

**FEATURES:** High-rail package, 5,300 cfm Hibon blower, 18-cubic-yard debris tank, 16-foot-long telescoping and rotating boom, Cummins diesel engine, Eaton Fuller transmission

**COST:** About \$480,000

hp Cummins diesel engine and a nine-speed Eaton Fuller transmission.

“The nice thing about the Guzzler is that it can vacuum dry or liquid materials — or even both at the same time,” Kuntz points out. “Some vac trucks can only do strictly one or the other. This machine has the ability to vacuum up sludge or even very fine powder, like cement — even rocks. It’ll vacuum anything that’ll fit through the 8-inch hose, from coal to ballast rocks off railroad tracks.

“With a 5,300 cfm blower, it really doesn’t matter what you’re vacuuming up,” he adds. “It provides so much suction that whatever you’re working on, it’s going to go.”

One of the tougher jobs the Guzzler has tackled involved removing packed-down sand between railroad tracks. The sand had built up for years, so it was about 8 inches thick and so compressed that it was as hard as rock,



Kuntz recalls. “It took a lot of effort, but we kept on raising and lowering the boom, and it finally sucked it all up,” he says.

Kuntz lauds the truck’s safety features, particularly the eight exterior cameras strategically mounted on the front, rear and sides of the vehicle, which maximize visibility for drivers. The cameras also make possible another unique feature: a rear-mounted exterior operator chair that allows the operator to safely and easily control the rear-mounted boom.

of the operators manually lowers the two rear rail wheels onto the railroad tracks. After the rear rail wheels are set, then the two front rail wheels are activated. When the truck is in full rail mode, its two front tires are completely off the tracks while two of the rear wheels actually touch the railroad tracks and bear a portion of the truck’s weight. In so-called “creep mode,” operators can vacuum up materials while the truck slowly “creeps” along the rails, Kuntz explains.

CONTINUED >>



When the truck is in full rail mode, its two front tires are completely off the tracks while two of the rear wheels touch the tracks and bear a portion of the truck’s weight. The operator sits behind the debris body, which increases visibility and safety.

“Our operators can run the truck while they sit behind the debris body, which increases visibility and safety,” Kuntz says. “The downside is that it exposes the operator to the elements. In bad weather, they wear rain gear or even snowmobile suits — we’ve worked in rain and in temperatures as low as 10 degrees. If the weather is really bad, then we don’t work. But for everything else, you just dress for the weather.”

The truck is also equipped with remote-control operation. That’s an advantage because the operator — one of two people needed to run the truck — doesn’t have to remain on the vehicle. “The driver can assist his partner who’s maybe doing a little shoveling or some other task ... he can get a little more involved in the actual job, rather than just sitting on the truck,” Kuntz says.

“This gives us a little more versatility, and it’s also a great safety feature,” he continues. “That hose is pulling so much vacuum that if something happens — maybe something gets stuck in the hose or it vacuums up something you didn’t want to — the operator can shut power off right away, even though he’s not on the truck.”

The high-rail package is engaged at railroad crossings. When the truck is properly positioned over the rails, one of the operators turns on a master switch that activates the hydraulics. After that, one



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When it's not plying the rails, Truck Vac uses the Guzzler for a variety of applications at local silica sand plants. Those jobs include everything from vacuuming up sand from under scales used while loading railroad cars to cleaning process conveyors and plugged up elevators. "We've also used the truck to clean tanks at a company that makes plastic pellets," Kuntz says. "At that facility, we work in 'tire mode,' but it's nice to have the ability to work on their rail tracks as well, if needed."

Kuntz envisions eventually using the Guzzler for more than mostly silica sand cleaning operations. "We're looking to expand our services," he notes. "I don't like all our eggs in one basket. This truck is capable of working in any industry, such as refineries or concrete plants, for instance. It definitely gives us the versatility to do many different things." c

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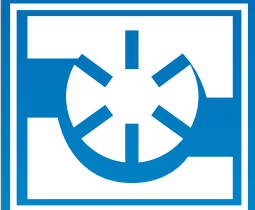
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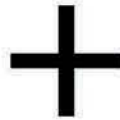
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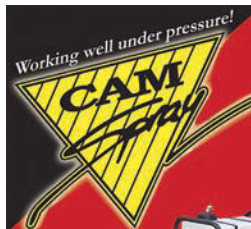
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# Keep the Pressure On

A proactive maintenance routine will help prevent jetting equipment failures

By Kyle Rogers

**Y**ou're out on a job using your jetter when it suddenly breaks down. Perhaps you've fallen behind on the engine maintenance schedule. Maybe the high pressure causes a worn hose to rupture. Or the unit continues to function, but not at the pressure level needed to get the job done.

To ensure your jetter doesn't cost you downtime and remains a reliable piece of equipment over the long term, there are several maintenance practices that contractors should follow regularly.

"The main thing to do on a daily basis is check the oil in the engine and the pump, make sure it's up to marks," says Nick Woodhead, president of US Jetting.

Other items that are important to monitor daily include the hose, water filter and tires if the jetting unit is on a trailer.

"The filter is a key part of the jetting package," Woodhead says. "If you want it working properly, you need to have a clean filter. What people should do is have a checklist so you know you've done it all when you send (the jetter) off."

## GETTING ON A SCHEDULE

Often the way the machine is functioning will be the sign that there's a problem with a component. Woodhead says the 500-hour mark is a good time to carefully inspect the pump and valves if operators want to catch any issues in advance. Otherwise 1,000 hours of use is typically the time when valves and packings need to be replaced.

"They usually will tell you when something's wrong. There will be a hammering. Generally speaking, people will run the equipment until there's a problem," Woodhead says. "It's kind of like a car. There are some things that you do at a certain point anyway, whether there's a problem or not, so you're not breaking down somewhere."

He says jetter operators might have to re-torque pump head bolts occasionally if a pump valve is failing prematurely.

Chester Axley, national products director for Power Line Industries, says simply following the manufacturer's recommended service schedule is the best way to maintain machine components that don't require daily attention.

"You'll have a service on the motor, a service on the pump. If it's a hot-water unit, you're going to have a service on a burner," Axley says. "And the guy servicing it should be running it, like we do here. We have a piece of pipe that we stick the hose down and we turn the machine on and watch it work. Now we're looking for leaks at joints. We're looking at hoses. Are there any bulges? Is the pump leaking any water? This will stave off getting to the job site and pow, you've got a problem."

Nick Woodhead

He says with Power Line's jetting units, for example, the recommended service schedule includes changing engine oil every 50 hours, and changing engine filters and checking spark plugs every 80 hours. The pump oil only has to be changed every 400 hours, but if there's a problem it can be headed off during the 50- or 80-hour service.

"Check the pump to make sure the oil isn't turning milky or looking white," Axley says. "That's telling you water is seeping back behind the head of the pump, which is telling you that water seals are wearing out."

## BACKUP PARTS ON HAND

No matter how strictly jetter users adhere to a regular maintenance





schedule, there are components that will eventually need to be replaced. Axley recommends operators keep some backup parts on hand in case there is a problem with the jetter while out on a job.

“If you have what I call a care package on the shelf or in a truck and you have a problem in the field, you’re going to be able to finish the job,” he says.

That care package should include a high-pressure ball valve, an unloader valve, a safety release valve and, if it’s a hot-water unit, a thermostat and pressure switch.

“Those are probably the most wearable items. They do break and they do fail,” Axley says.

Loss of pressure is a strong indicator that a component needs to be replaced.

“Eventually, the nozzles will wear. If it’s not coming up to pressure, it’s a good sign that’s worn out,” Woodhead says. “The unloader valve, those can go bad. The seat can wear out, dumping water all the time — basically, not getting pressure. If you know what pressure you get with a certain tool and it’s not coming up to pressure, check to make sure it’s not dumping water.”

#### THE LEAD

Woodhead says the jetting component most vulnerable to wear without proper care is the hose. He recommends using a tiger tail, or any sort of guide, to protect the hose from items that may puncture it.

Eric Bragg of Bragg Excavating in Marion, Indiana, says his company uses a pipe or sleeve at the point where the jetter hose is entering to protect it as much as possible. He says they also add a lead to the hose.

“Most of the problems will be on the lead, not the actual hose itself,” Bragg says. “We run a 17-foot lead off the end of our hose. Then you can just take the lead off and replace that instead of having to replace 300 feet of hose.”

#### PROPER TRAINING

The training of equipment operators also factors into jetter maintenance. The way an operator runs the equipment can be the difference between a wearable component like the hose lasting for five minutes or 1,000 hours, says Woodhead.

“Training the operators properly is important because, invariably, if they’re not properly trained you’re going to have problems with the equipment. They do what they see their buddies doing, so you also have to think about who’s training the trainer.”

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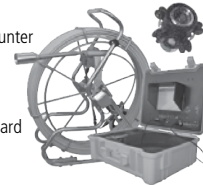
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# A Cure for Jetting Safety Concerns

Robotic waterjetting system from Stutes separates operators from dangerous high-pressure water

By Craig Mandli

Operator safety is paramount in the waterjetting industry. With more companies — especially those in the refinery and petroleum cleaning industry — wishing to remove their operators from possible harm from high-pressure sources and caustic chemicals, automated systems are becoming more common.

The Hydra X Xtream Pad Dragon from Stutes Enterprise Systems, introduced to the water and wastewater industry at the 2015 Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show, is just such a product. The innovative robotic waterjetting system allows the operator to manipulate the variable-speed rotating nozzles as an extension of his own body.

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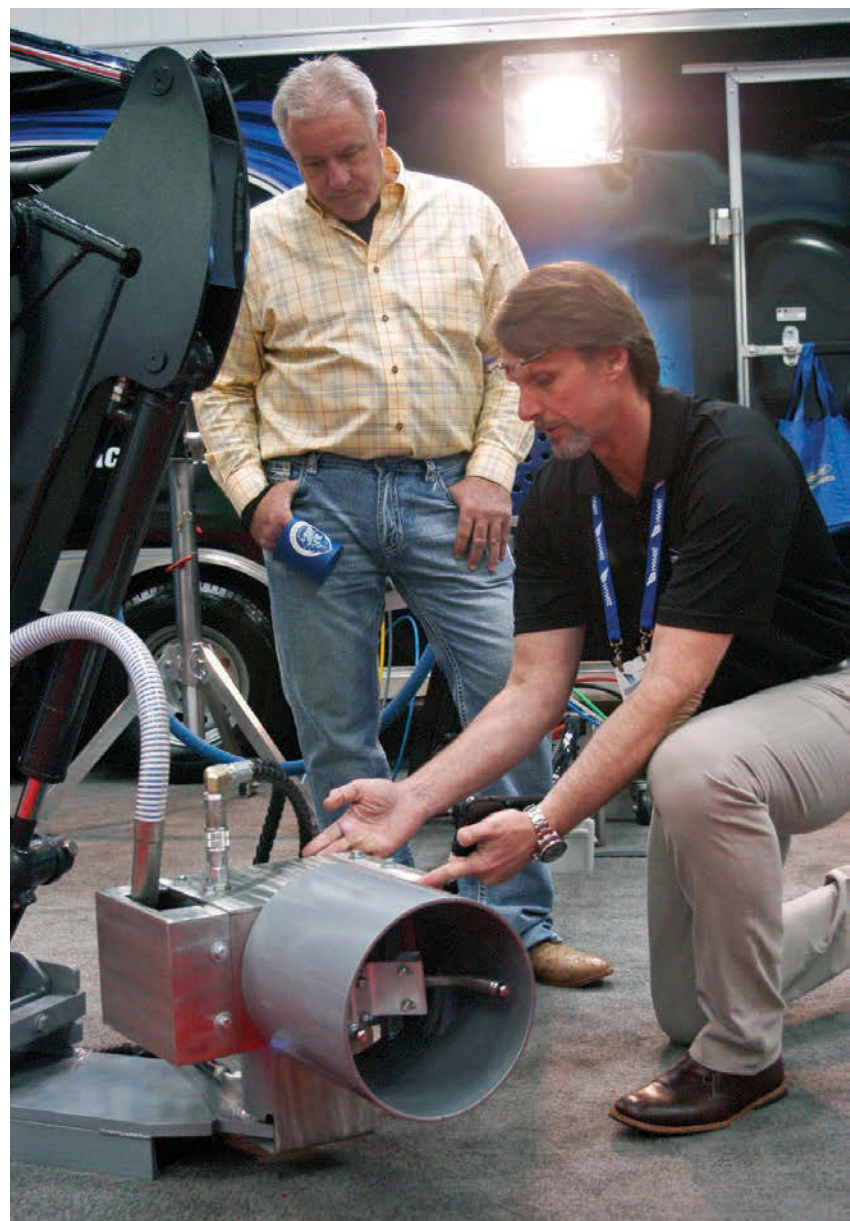
“Operator safety is the biggest factor with the design of this unit. It allows for less wear and tear on the operator, a faster clean, less downtime, and less cost for protective equipment, as the operator can stay in the comfort of the cab.”

Tryan Stutes

other functions from the comfort of its climate-controlled cab. It’s also efficient, as there’s no need to idle-up the engine to power the hydraulic controls.

“Operator safety is the biggest factor with the design of this unit,” says Stutes. “It allows for less wear and tear on the operator, a faster clean, less downtime, and less cost for protective equipment, as the operator can stay in the comfort of the cab.”

Multiple tools are available with the blasting head, with a quick-change system that allows the operator to make adjustments in minutes. While the target market is service workers and companies that work in refinery and utility pipe cleaning and blasting, Stutes says that several municipalities have also purchased units. The unit can also be hooked to a trailer jetter to give it full hydroexcavation capability.



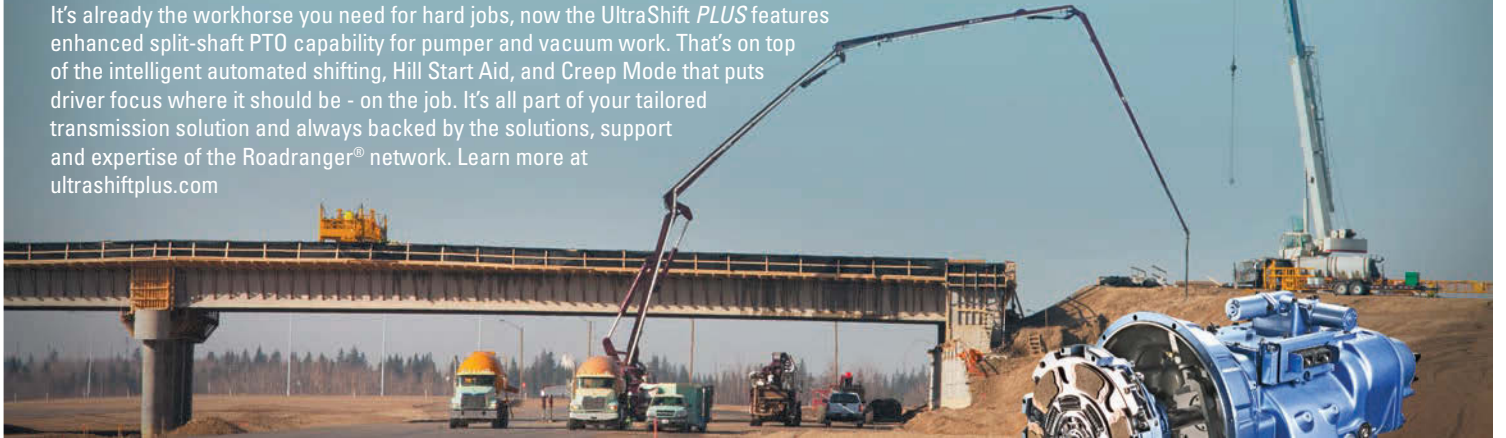
Tryan Stutes, right, the owner and president of Stutes Enterprise Systems, discusses the features of the waterblasting head on his Hydra X Xtream Pad Dragon robotic waterjetting system with an attendee at WWETT 2015. The system offers pressures up to 20,000 psi at 43 gpm, while keeping the operator away from potential harm. (Photo by Craig Mandli)



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"We designed this unit to be a fit across multiple industries," Stutes says. "Now it's a matter of getting the name out there and letting municipalities and contractors know that there is a different, safer option out there for what they're trying to do."

The 2015 show was Stutes' first as an exhibitor, and overall he was enthused by the excitement surrounding his unit — after first explaining what it is, and what it's capable of.

"I think a lot of people in the industry have a vision of what a waterjetting system looks like, and this is something that, looks-wise, is completely different," Stutes says. "There was a lot of education on this product at the WWETT Show, and once people learned about it, they wanted to know more. The feedback I've gotten from those who have units in the field indicates that they don't want to do anything without it."

Stutes says he's excited to see where the market for the unit goes in the coming year. Based on the feedback he received at WWETT, the unit's hydroexcavation functionality could potentially be an even bigger selling point.

"Just being at the WWETT Show for the week, we gained a ton of knowledge on this industry," he says. "I'm confident that this waterblasting unit is a great fit, and I look forward to working with this industry even more." 866/362-9332; [www.aquablasters.com](http://www.aquablasters.com). c

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# Refocusing the FAMILY BUSINESS

AFTER TAKING A HIT DURING THE RECESSION, JET PLUMBING REORGANIZES AND REBUILDS WITH BETTER REVENUE CONTROL AND COST ALLOCATION



**<< OPPOSITE PAGE:** Jet Plumbing has been in business since 1969, but when the recession and accompanying loss of business took their toll in 2008, owner Jim Walker restructured the company and came out even stronger.

**>> RIGHT:** Jet Plumbing drain services technician Larry Stegmaier watches the monitor on his Vivax-Metrotech vCam-5 inspection system.



**J**im Walker's family-owned business had been around nearly 40 years when the recession hit and his staff was reduced from 50 to only 25 in a matter of months. Walker realized he had to halt the bleeding, so in 2008 he took some measured but necessary steps.

Jet Plumbing, Heating & Drain Services serves Reno and the surrounding area, including Lake Tahoe. The family-owned business started out in 1969 primarily doing drain work, but by 1990 plumbing, jetting and CCTV inspection were on the menu. At that time, Walker and his sister, Nanci Thomas, became partners, with Walker being the majority shareholder. They soon expanded into underground sewer and waterline work as well as HVAC services. They added pipe bursting in 1999.

Things were rolling along smoothly until the bottom dropped out of the economy. When business started to suffer, Walker knew he needed to reorganize. He created four distinct departments within the company and put a new focus on accounting practices and accountability so every dollar and every hour could be tracked.

By the end of 2014, the company was back up to 45 employees, with 25 service vehicles on the road and a solid residential and light-commercial customer base.

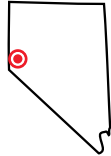
### ROAD TO RECOVERY

The company had always operated as one entity without separate service departments. Plumbing was the driving force with HVAC, drain and underground services sharing near equal percentages of business, but they were lumped together as one for accounting purposes. When searching for the right measures to restore the company, he realized that results of revenue and costs were so blurred that it was impossible to sort out. Everything and everyone worked under the same umbrella, and there was nothing that clarified where the profit was coming from or how to properly account for expenses.

"What I did at that time was set up a profit and loss program and formed

**profile**

**JET PLUMBING, HEATING & DRAIN SERVICES,**  
RENO, NEVADA,  
SERVING NORTHERN NEVADA AND  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



**OWNERS:** Jim Walker and Nanci Thomas  
**ESTABLISHED:** 1969  
**SERVICES:** Plumbing, HVAC, drain, underground (sewer and waterlines)  
**EMPLOYEES:** 45  
**WEBSITE:** [www.jetplumbing.com](http://www.jetplumbing.com)

four separate departments so basically we could see where we were making money and where we needed to concentrate our efforts," Walker says. "It took us probably five months to get this all set up so we could begin to allocate the different expenses. It was kind of an evolutionary process. Once we felt we were good with the numbers, we could take a closer look to see what they were telling us.

"We found that each department has a very unique set of indicators and gross profit," he says. "It makes sense actually."

Each employee is now designated to a specific department. There are some "combo guys," but they still belong to one department and their time is cross-billed when they assist in another. For instance, a plumber might cross



Chauncy Pierson cuts through a section of concrete prior to excavation on a commercial job.



over on occasion to work in the drain department. The drain department gets the revenue, but the plumbing department gets the cost of that plumber's time and the money is allocated from drain back over to plumbing. "This makes sure all is whole," he says. "We then put a supervisor over each department. These were critical steps for us to take during the financial crisis."

Walker gives credit to his wife, Robin, a CPA who manages the office. He says her accounting skills have been critical in the transformation.

## NEW ROLES

Jet Plumbing supervisors are all technicians who have been with the company for many years and offer a wealth of experience. Bill Burgess oversees Underground; Don Smith, Drain; Al Solomon, HVAC; and Jason Deen, Plumbing. Collectively they total 86 years of service with the company.

Other changes in the corporate structure included promoting plumbing supervisor Tommy Stegmaier to service manager, overseeing field operations for all divisions.

"This was critical for me as the owner," Walker says. "Do I want to spend

**"We can provide a camera inspection for an extra fee, but we never want to seem to be selling something they don't need. This is where the dialogue comes in."**

Jim Walker

all my time doing fieldwork or do I want to be an owner looking forward and achieving things you have to do to grow a business?

"Chain of command and accountability are buzzwords, but it is so true. I tell my employees business is business. We just have a different product. So we try as hard as possible to make it a well-run business."

Bill Garlick filled another key role when moved into the position of technical expert/quality control. "Bill is our 'go-to guy' when our techs run into problems," Walker says. "He is awesome at everything."



At the end of 2014, the plumbing department represented 47 percent of Jet's overall revenue. Drain, HVAC and Underground represented roughly equal portions of the remaining 53 percent.

## STAFFING UP

Walker acknowledges that it's difficult to find skilled people. They typically hire on an as-needed basis but do keep resumes on file. If a highly qualified individual applies, he'll try to find a way to bring that person on board.

"Our hiring is based on the applicant's experience, but it also depends on what we need. We have seen people with mechanical aptitude but no experience, but we will spend the time to train those people. If we find someone with some good experience with another roofer company, we will pick that person up.

"With new hires, we put an individual with one of our techs for a couple weeks. This accomplishes two things: We can get feedback from our service tech, and secondly the new hire can learn our way of doing things."

New technicians are taught to engage in a good dialogue with clients to help them make informed decisions. "We don't want anyone to feel pushed into anything.

"We can provide a camera inspection for an extra fee, but we never want to seem to be selling something they don't need," Walker says. "This is where the dialogue comes in. If we run the snake down and hit a bad spot, we know it is a bad spot. We will know the general condition of the line. We would gain more knowledge from the camera, but we

can also tell the customer that we could service the line once a year and it will probably be fine. If we believe there is root infiltration, we might suggest twice-a-year service. On the other hand, if the system backs up it might flood the basement. There is a flip side. That is kind of what we do to help them make a decision.

"We want our customers for a lifetime. We offer honesty and trust. If we don't make them happy, somebody else will."

## WORKING UNDERGROUND

In the underground division, they see older systems made of terra cotta, concrete and Orangeburg with root infestation, cracks and structural failure.

"Terra cotta and concrete pipe are nonelastic. There is no give to them. A lot of them have mechanical joints," Walker says. "We see tree roots in the

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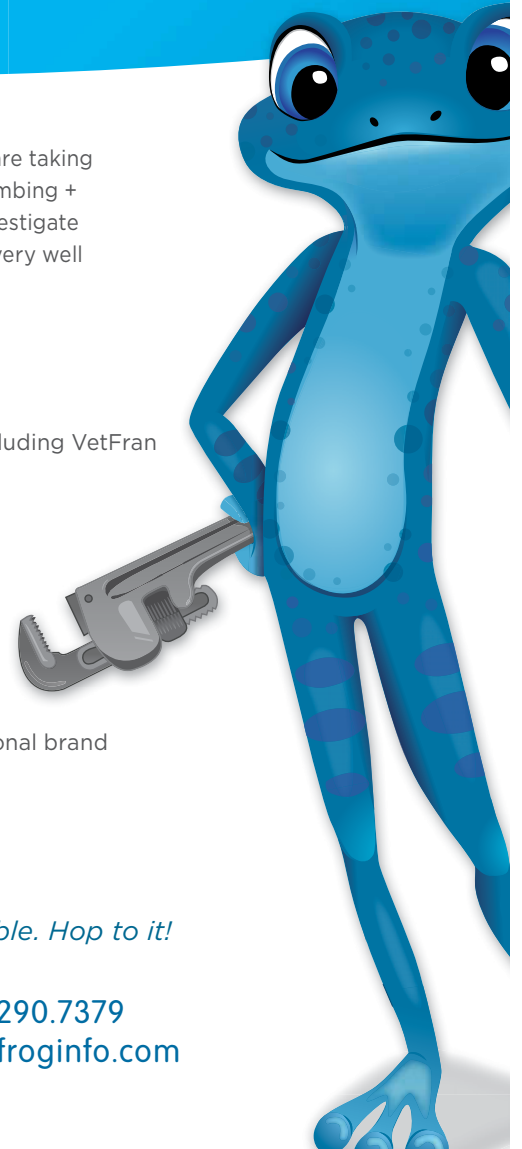
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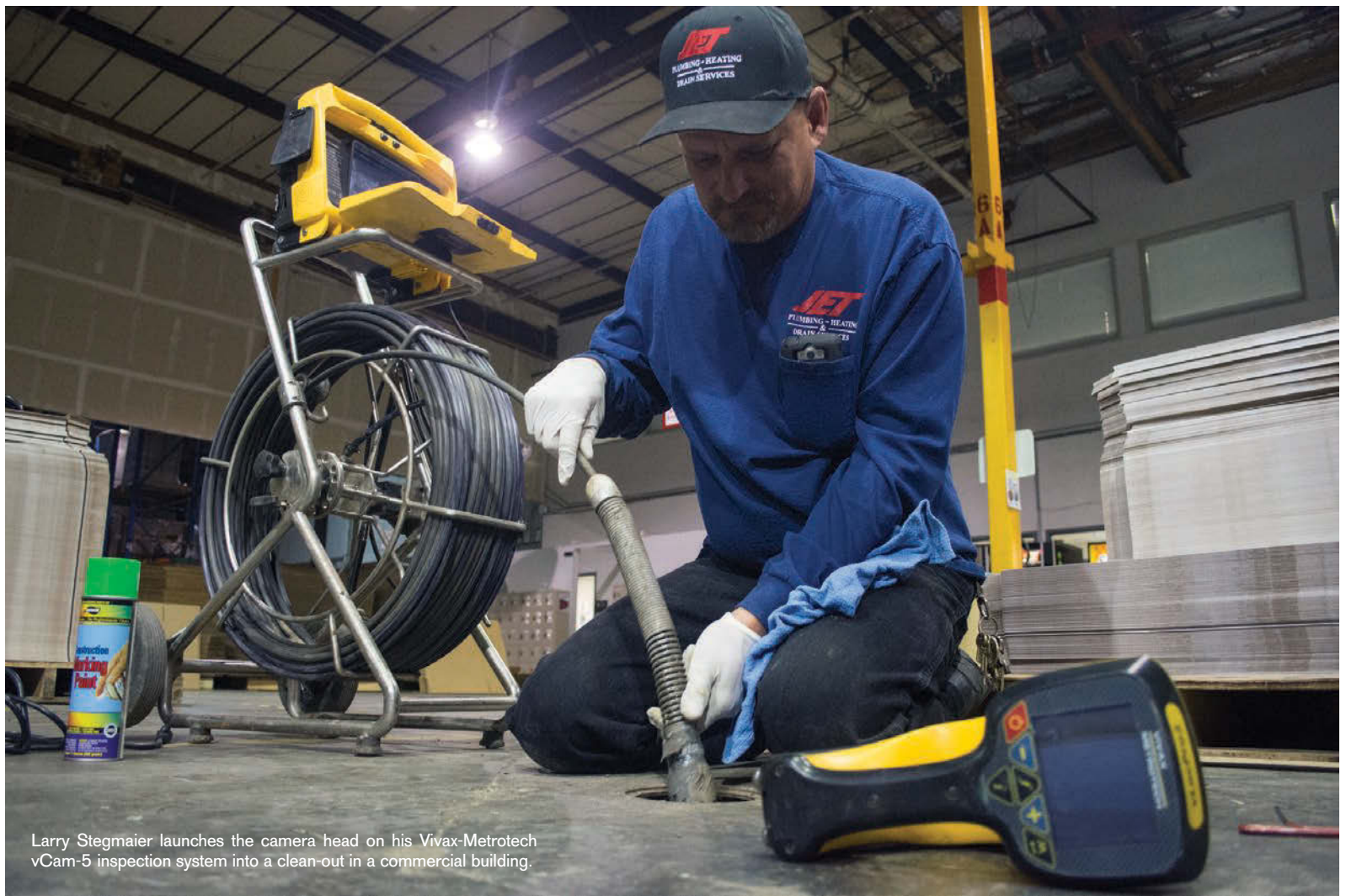
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Jet Plumbing underground foreman Jake Deen excavates a line in a parking lot.







Larry Stegmaier launches the camera head on his Vivax-Metrotech vCam-5 inspection system into a clean-out in a commercial building.

joints. Tree roots in older neighborhoods. Most of our systems are not really deep but we have places where they are 10 to 12 feet underground. Reno is high desert. If you go east out of Reno it's sage brush. If you go west you go into the high Sierras and forest.

**“We want our customers for a lifetime. We offer honesty and trust. If we don't make them happy, somebody else will.”**

Jim Walker

“Pipe bursting now represents 70 percent of our underground line repair work and does well in almost every system. Every situation is different and sometimes we find it makes more sense to just replace a line. It depends on where the utilities are and the depth and length of the line. All those factors come in. If it is a short line and you are digging a big entrance pit and a receiving pit, you might as well just dig a bit more and do a replacement.”

When pipe bursting is the solution, they rely on a Porta Burst system from HammerHead. The Porta Burst system requires small pits and operates at low pressure, which allows

CONTINUED >>

## COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS

When the discussion turns to advertising, Jim Walker is a bit of a skeptic. He wants to be given hard facts — numbers.

“I am an engineer by degree, so advertising just doesn't work right for my brain,” says the owner of Jet Plumbing, Heating & Drain Services, Reno, Nevada. “I want data — two plus two equals four. Advertising is so elusive, such a gray area to me. And the technology today is ever-changing. Even email is almost archaic. It's hard to keep up with.”

Walker says he depends on Marketing Manager Drew Rolley.

“I have been with the company for 24 years and in this position since 2011,” Rolley says. “That is when Jim suggested I ‘take over this beast.’”

“Over the years I have worked in the office in accounting, billing, inventory, those kinds of things.”

He says they reach out to customers in a number of ways. They do television and radio advertising, their trucks are well labeled and their website is mobile and user-friendly.

“Seventy percent of people these days find information on their mobile device,” Rolley says. “People can send us an email requesting services. Plumbing and our other departments are more of a need than a want. Having ways for people to find us is the most important thing. We want to keep things as simple as possible.”



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Larry Stegmaier uses a Vivax-Metrotech vLocCam 2 locator to pinpoint the location of a problem in a commercial building.

service where there are longer lines, in storm drains and where there is dirt in the line. They are also used in some regular maintenance situations.

## WHERE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD

The company service vehicles are Chevrolet and Ford 3/4-ton extended vans. They are kept in service up to around 150,000 miles, but that all depends on the vehicle itself and its history. Walker says it's kind of like threading the needle to make these decisions. Sometimes it will cost more for repairs than to replace, and he goes on long-term statistics in making the subjective calls.

"We have nothing really set in stone, but sometimes you have a vehicle well cared for, still looks good. Everything's OK. You might want to do a new transmission or engine. That costs way less than payments for a new van. On the other side, you might have a van that is dinged up and doesn't really present well. Time to get rid of it at 130,000 miles."

Each service vehicle carries from \$4,000 to \$5,000 in inventory.

Heavier equipment includes a 2002 GMC 10-yard dump truck, a Case Construction 580 Super K backhoe, a Caterpillar 303.5C mini excavator and a Bobcat 830.

They operate out of a 1-acre fenced facility with a two-story, 7,000-square-foot building. Technicians are free to return their vehicles to the yard or bring them home at the end of the day. It all depends on the location of the last job and the situation at hand.


## TEAM BUILDING

Walker's efforts to build a more efficient and cohesive working unit continue to benefit the company. From the first call to dispatch where Walker's niece, Tara Terry, sorts out the issue to the final phase of a job, the pieces of the puzzle fit nicely together.

Wednesday morning safety sessions allow all departments to discuss their experiences, challenges on recent jobs and customer interactions. It provides insight and perspective and helps everyone serve their customers better.

Walker says 95 percent of what they do is routine. "But the 5 percent always offers a learning opportunity, and that includes the hands-on work and interacting with the customer," he says. "Whatever, whenever something like this can be a story from the field. Knowledge we can all collect. We have to keep in mind that we are really just another plumbing company, but we want to offer honesty and integrity that sets us apart wherever possible."

He says there are two distinctly separate but rewarding aspects of running the company. "First is the people — our employees — seeing their development, from a guy sitting across the table and my not knowing that person, to the growth and friendship that develops over the years. You just never know at the beginning. That is rewarding.

"The second thing to me, as an MBA, is running my own company. Running a business and trying to do all the things that business philosophy suggests and then getting them implemented and seeing the results. That is very rewarding." 

**"Pipe bursting now represents 70 percent of our underground line repair work and does well in almost every system. Every situation is different and sometimes we find it makes more sense to just replace a line. It depends on where the utilities are and the depth and length of the line."**

Jim Walker

it to be run by either a dedicated power pack or any other power supply that produces 3,000 psi and 13 gpm.

Determining the best solution often requires a good look inside the pipe, and for that the underground division's two-man inspection crew turns to a pair of Vivax-Metrotech vCam-5 cameras with 100- and 200-foot reels.

The company also has an Aquatech jet truck (2,500 psi/80 gpm) and a trailer jetter (4,000 psi/18 gpm) from US Jetting. The jetters are called into

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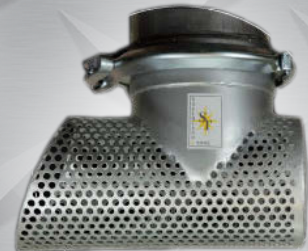
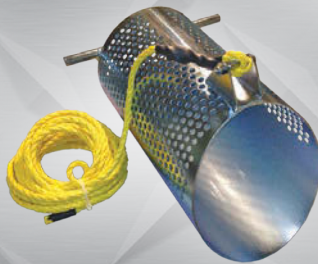
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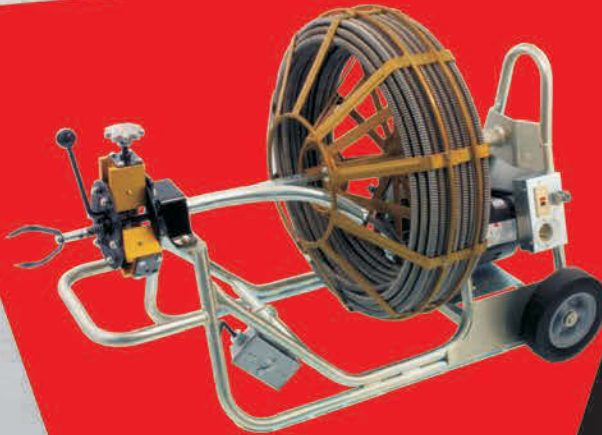
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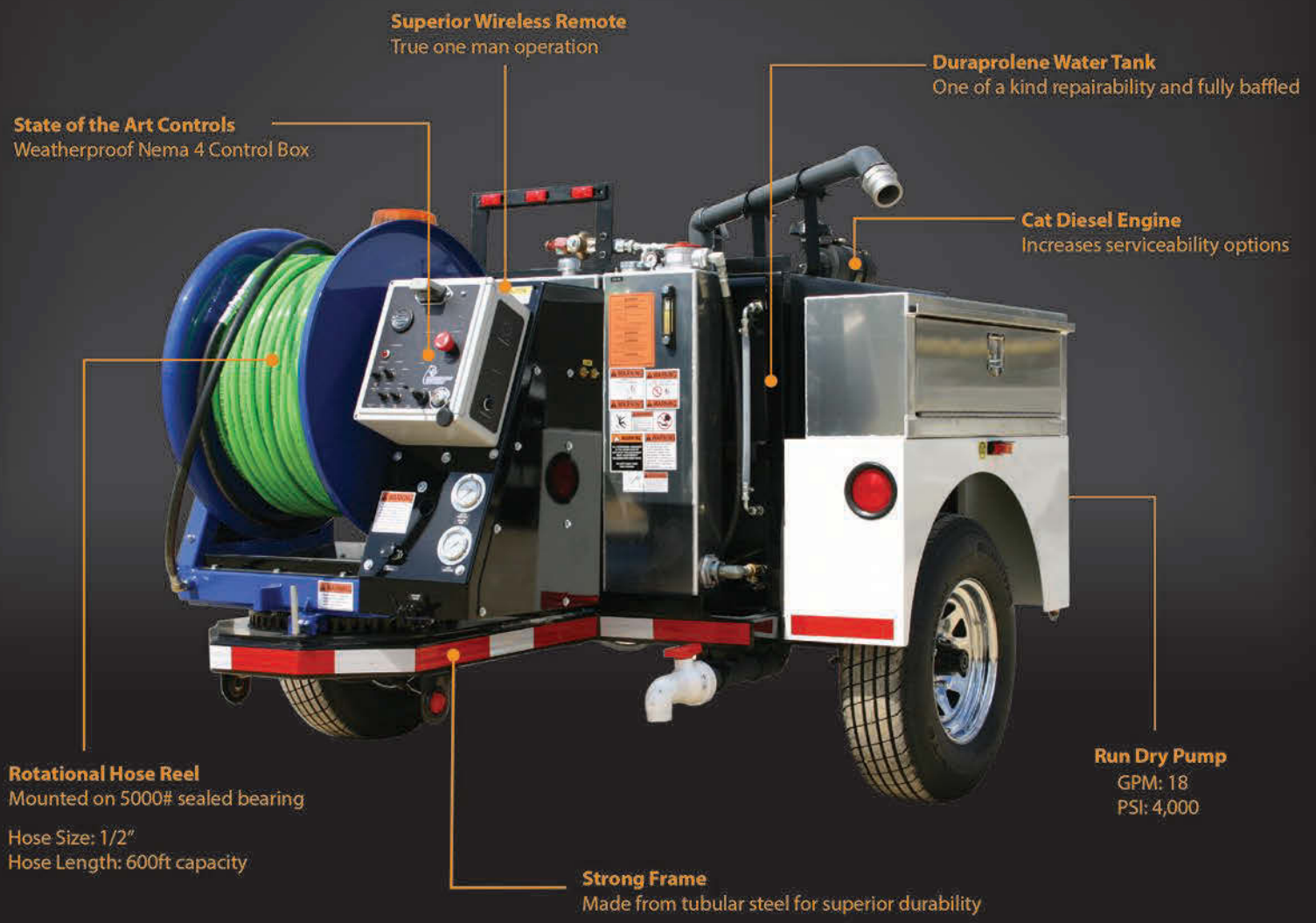


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# The Uncertain Future of Section 179



Erik Gunn is a magazine writer and editor in Racine, Wisconsin.

Generous temporary tax deductions help small businesses offset the cost of new equipment

By Erik Gunn

**W**ill Congress renew higher limits under Section 179 of the U.S. tax code for 2015? It's a question that has dogged small-business owners annually as they contemplate using generous temporary deductions expanded to stimulate the economy during recessionary times.

Section 179 is a great deal, and most drain cleaning contractors know it. The rule lets small-business owners take an immediate federal tax deduction on the full purchase price of certain new equipment the year it is purchased. Before its implementation, business owners were required to take the deduction piecemeal over several years, factoring in its depreciating value in the process.

The section has been around a long time, and no one's talking about terminating it. That's not the issue. What no one knows for sure is whether the value for the deduction will stay as high as it's been in the recent past. And if past patterns offer any clue, we won't know until the year is almost out. That doesn't offer much reassurance to contractors looking into big-ticket items like a new vacuum truck.

## EXPANDING THE BENEFITS

Section 179 has traditionally capped the cost of the equipment eligible for the deduction at \$25,000. Also, for businesses that spent more than \$125,000 on equipment in a year, the cap itself went down. So the measure tended to be targeted at really small businesses.

More than a decade ago, however, Congress passed a temporary provision that boosted the cap. For the last few years, a business could qualify for the immediate deduction on equipment costing up to \$500,000. The temporary change also boosted the ceiling on total annual equipment purchases that a company could make and still qualify for the full deduction to \$2 million.

Those changes were made as part of an economic stimulus program under President George W. Bush after the recession that followed the 9/11 attacks. But they were always written as temporary adjustments. Since then, the temporary adjustments have continued to be renewed from year to year.

That sets up an annual cliffhanger, with Congress deciding at the proverbial 11th hour every year to extend the higher deduction limit and the higher spending ceiling to qualify for the provision. Sure enough, in December 2014 the lawmakers did it once again, approving an extension so the provision is much more generous than it used to be.

When it comes to those annual extensions, "Congress has been quite consistent for the last several years about not passing legislation until after the year ends," says Eva Rosenberg, the proprietor of TaxMama.com, a website that fields visitors' tax questions.

In fact, she points out, for 2014, lawmakers acted a bit sooner than usual, voting to extend the provision back on Dec. 16. (In the past, when the

extension hasn't been granted until after the new year has begun, lawmakers have simply made it retroactive to the year just concluded.)

Even with the earlier activity, by the time Congress finally acted, "there simply wasn't time to order the heavy-duty equipment, have it delivered and set up, and put it into use in 2014," Rosenberg says.

**"Last year, too many businesses put off major purchases because of the uncertainty of recouping their costs as significant tax deductions. Frankly, this kept them from buying much-needed new equipment."**

Eva Rosenberg

## TAX LAW TEA LEAVES

That doesn't mean businesses didn't get the break. But Mathias Weber, tax principal at the California-based accounting firm Haskell & White, says that for those businesses it was a lucky extra. They could not include Section 179 as part of their decision-making process.

So while many businesses — including wastewater contractors — have probably benefited from the more generous rule when tax time rolled around, they were flying blind at the time of the purchase itself.

Last year, businesses that waited until Congress acted before pulling the trigger on buying a piece of equipment "had less than two weeks to make decisions on new purchases," Weber says. Furthermore, he points out, for a business to qualify for the break, the new equipment or technology "must be 'placed in service' in the year you take the deduction."

So what's the forecast for 2015?

Weber takes a cautious approach as he looks ahead: "There are no guarantees that the deduction will be renewed for 2015, or that it will be enacted with enough notice to truly look at software or equipment purchases strategically," he says.

That alone is a good reason to deepen your relationship with the CPA who works with your business. (You do have one, right?)

"The best bet is for business owners and company executives to discuss their business plans with their certified public accountant on an ongoing basis," he continues. Weber likes to be in on the ground floor as a consultant to his clients so he can advise them on the best tax benefit strategies *before* a purchase, "rather than just recording the transaction after the fact."

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## A CONFIDENT FORECAST

Rosenberg is perhaps a bit more willing to go out on a limb. She reports that most tax professionals are confident the higher limits will once again be extended.

But even if Rosenberg's right, Congress probably won't act until very late in the year. So, once again, if you are relying on lawmakers to help you decide whether to buy that new service truck or trailer jetter, you're probably out of luck. You'll need to decide *without* knowing if you'll get the higher deduction.

So it's understandable if you hesitate.

## 'LIVING WITH REALITY'

"It's time to live with reality," Rosenberg says. "Last year, too many businesses put off major purchases because of the uncertainty of recouping their costs as significant tax deductions. Frankly, this kept them from buying much-needed new equipment."

So don't wait for Congress. "Get the vital equipment you need to grow your business and serve your customer base," Rosenberg concludes.

But, she says, it might be possible to hedge your bets so that you can help your tax bottom line whether or not the higher limits stay in force: See if a supplier will agree to a lease-purchase arrangement conditioned on the section.

"It will take some rewriting of boilerplate contracts," Rosenberg acknowledges. But here's how it would work: Work out an agreement that lets you lease the equipment, but also can be converted right away to a conventional purchase loan in the event Congress renews the higher limits for the 2015 tax year.

A conventional lease-to-own contract comes with a nominal buyout price at the end of the leasing period — the part of the purchase cost that is over and above what is built in to your monthly lease payment. With this deal, Rosenberg says your purchase price at the lease conversion would instead cover most of the product's cost — and ensure you get the tax deduction.

Meanwhile, if the tax pros are wrong, the extension does finally expire and the deduction limit falls back to \$25,000, "the buyer can count on deducting the lease payments," Rosenberg says. "It's a little complicated. But if someone needs to spend \$50,000 or \$150,000 for equipment, you need a certain level of assurance that you'll be able to recoup some of that outlay quickly via tax benefits." **C**

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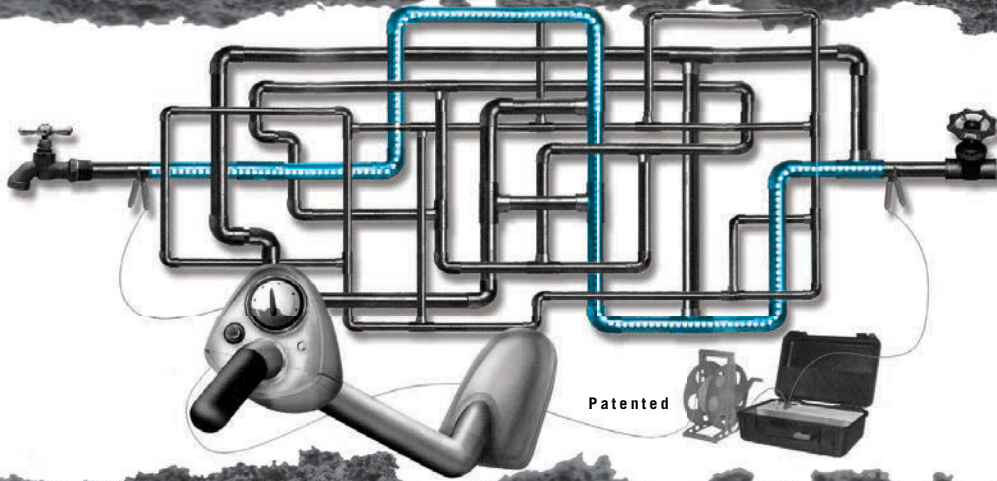


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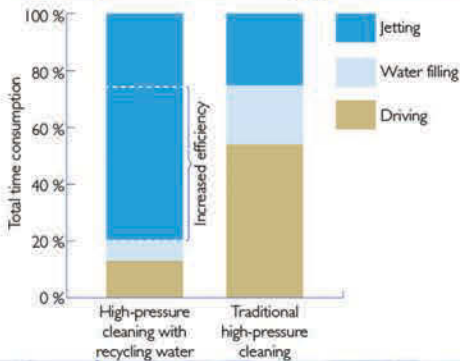


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# Adding Insult to Injury

Workers and families bear the brunt of the cost of workplace injuries

By Doug Day

It's a common refrain, "We're all responsible for safety." But when it comes time to pay the bill for a workplace injury, most of the responsibility falls to the injured worker.

That's according to a new report from OSHA, *Adding Inequality to Injury: The Costs of Failing to Protect Workers on the Job*. "For many, a workplace injury or illness means the end of the American dream and the beginning of a nightmare," says Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for Occupational Safety and Health.

According to the report, injured workers, their families and taxpayer-supported programs pick up most of the tab. "Changes in state-based workers' compensation insurance programs have made it increasingly difficult for injured workers to receive the full benefits (including adequate wage-replacement payments and coverage for medical expenses) to which they are entitled," the report states.

Fewer than 40 percent of eligible workers even apply for workers' compensation. Studies show fewer than 50 percent of those suffering work-related amputations in Massachusetts received any workers' compensation benefits; just one-third in California.

Who bears the cost of worker injuries\*?

Employees and families – 50 percent

Workers' compensation – 21 percent

Private health insurance – 13 percent

Federal government – 11 percent

State and local government – 5 percent

\*Lost wages and medical costs for injuries and illnesses

Those with illnesses get even less, with up to 97 percent receiving no compensation. "Most cases of work-related chronic disease are never diagnosed as work-related," the report says. "Even when a proper diagnosis is made, a worker who is eligible for benefits under Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits or private insurers is more likely to take that route and avoid the barriers to obtaining benefits through the workers' compensation system."

The trend continues for years after an injury. A New Mexico study found those who received workers' compensation earned 15 percent less over the

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next 10 years. Caregivers also often have to reduce their own work hours to care for a disabled family member, the report says. "For working families already struggling to meet basic necessities and set aside some savings, a work injury to a primary wage earner can be especially devastating."

There are also concerns over the growing trend of having more contractors and temporary employees working on project sites. If several firms employ workers at the same site, and employers do not actively collaborate to ensure safe workplaces, all workers at the site may be at a higher risk of injury. OSHA says it often cites employers for endangering employees of other companies working at the same job site.

Misclassifying employees as independent contractors is also an issue for OSHA, since they are not covered by the general duty clause of providing a safe workplace, and companies don't have to pay workers' compensation premiums for them. That not only shifts the cost to the workers, their families and tax-funded programs, but affects other employers, according to the report. "These honest employers are put at a disadvantage, having to compete with scofflaws who ignore safety and health requirements, and shirk paying taxes, benefits and insurance premiums."

More than 3 million workers suffer serious injuries every year. In 2013, the last year for which full data is available, workplace accidents killed 4,405 people, an average of 12 deaths per day.

Preventing those injuries is the most effective solution, according to OSHA's report. "This would spare workers and their families from needless hardship and suffering, as well as the loss of income and benefits associated with these conditions. At the same time, it is vitally important that state-based workers' compensation programs take steps to eliminate roadblocks that prevent workers with compensable injuries or illnesses from receiving the full compensation to which they are entitled." **c**

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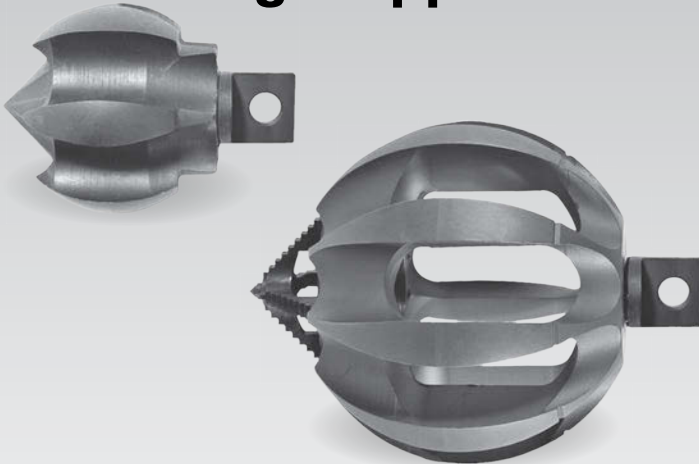
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# Don't Devalue Your Business

Price wars can kill your profit margins and destroy the perceived value of your services

By Judy Kneiszel

**Y**our prices are not randomly set. They're based on the cost of doing business and should include enough profit to make the job worthwhile.

Since your prices are based on something real, it's unrealistic to think you can drastically reduce them and survive. So what do you do when a competitor starts advertising that they'll perform the same service for considerably less money? Do you react hastily and set your prices lower than theirs?

## LOWER VALUE FOR EVERYONE

Price wars between competitors hurt everyone because they destroy the perceived value of what you do. If you think you can compete by cutting prices for a short time until you win the pricing battle, remember that customers will feel cheated when you return to your standard pricing.

For example, you know that \$1 burger on the fast food value menu? Remember when it was \$1.49? I'll bet you'd feel ripped off if the price of that same burger went back up to \$1.49 tomorrow, even though you paid that much for it a few years ago. You now perceive that it's worth only \$1. Customers will apply that same thought process to your business. If you cut your prices by 20 percent, your service will be viewed as being worth 20 percent less, and that will be hard to overcome in the future.

**If you can't make it on razor-thin margins, neither can they. Be there to pick up the pieces (and customers) when they go out of business.**

## DON'T GO TO WAR

This is a subject that comes up frequently, especially in competitive marketplaces. One day a cleaning contractor is working away, happily serving customers, paying the staff, maintaining the equipment, paying the bills and making a little bit of money. The next day, a previously satisfied customer informs you that a new cleaning company just started offering services at half of what you're charging. What do you do?

If you panic and announce you'll beat anybody's price, you risk becoming a nonprofit company and your labor will become volunteer time. Ask yourself how long you'd want to keep that up.

It's a hard piece of advice to follow when you see your customers migrating to the competition, but don't panic and start slashing prices. Give the aggressor time to shoot himself (or herself) in the foot. If you can't make it on razor-thin margins, neither can they. Be there to pick up the pieces (and customers) when they go out of business.

That doesn't mean you should sit back and do nothing. When the competition undercuts your prices, consider taking the following steps:

**Don't overreact.** Maybe the competition enacted a temporary special offer because they are in desperate need of cash. Wait and watch to see if it's going to last.

**Don't aid the enemy.** If suddenly you are getting a barrage of phone calls asking price-only questions, suspect your territory is being "scouted" and stop giving out pricing information on the phone without details regarding a specific job.

**Offer more.** Align your business with a complementary service like excavation or water damage restoration. "One stop shopping" has value to people.

**Be the expert.** Place ads touting your customer service or offer your expertise. Stress that you explain all options and help customers make informed decisions. Explain how your company provides a variety of solutions to fit every circumstance. You are not saying the competition doesn't do these things but adding value to your services for people who appreciate integrity and quality work. The competition is only talking about price, so people who care about price alone are the only ones they are reaching.

**Ramp up customer service and tout it.** Don't cut back on service or equipment to save a few dollars during this crisis. Rather, stress to customers how you provide impeccable service and use only the newest equipment and technology.

**Cut prices judiciously.** If you feel you have to cut prices, do it with discretion and make it easily reversible. An example would be limited time offers, coupons or special pricing for new customers only.

**Build loyalty.** Make switching to the competition undesirable by starting a loyalty program. If customers are in the process of building up points toward getting something free or at a reduced price they are less likely to leave and lose what they've earned.

**Add value.** Find something your business can add to stand out in the marketplace. Be the most unique business in the category.

**Build your brand.** Push your brand name in the market. Brand name businesses stand stronger in a price war. If your name is the first one to pop into someone's mind they'll call you first and then you can sell your service rather than compete with the competition's lowball price.

## GET CREATIVE

There are other creative ways to fight price battles. I heard of one company that fought back against an aggressive price-slashing company by creating a variety of alternate business names and listing them all in the Yellow Pages. Why? When the phone rang five times in a row asking about prices, they could be sure the customer calling cared about price and price alone, and



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they could subsequently decide not to do business with that customer. Or, if the customer called their five different “companies” and got the same price quote five times, they might be convinced that the price quoted was the going rate for that area and not quibble about paying it. It seems like a lot of effort, but it was worth it to this particular company.

Remember, going tit-for-tat in a price war tells your customers that your pricing was unfair to begin with or that you are willing to work for free. Instead find a competitive advantage aside from price and promote it. A steakhouse does not add a dollar menu just because the fast food place across the street does. It touts higher-quality offerings and service. Differentiate yourself and focus your marketing promotions on those advantages. It could make you a stronger, more profitable company in the long run. **c**



# COLE Seeking Presenters for 2016 WWETT Show

**C**OLE Inc. is now accepting proposals for seminars to be presented at the 2016 WWETT Show in Indianapolis, Indiana, Feb. 17-20. Education is a huge part of the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show. The 2015 WWETT Show offered more than 100 educational seminars covering everything from nozzle selection to manhole rehabilitation.

Industry professionals interested in presenting in 2016 should complete and submit a seminar proposal form no later than Aug. 1, 2015. Forms may be completed online at [wwettshow.com/cfp](http://wwettshow.com/cfp).


Accepted submissions will receive four full registration passes to the 2016 WWETT Show. Presentations should be 60 minutes in length and cover topics from a neutral, non-product-specific point of view.

Presentations should focus on one of the following topics:

- Septic collection, treatment, and disposal
- Grease collection, treatment, and disposal
- Municipal collection, treatment, and disposal
- Onsite systems – installation, components, and maintenance
- Sewer & drain – cleaning, inspection, repair, relining, locating, and detection
- Dewatering, biosolids, treatment, and technology
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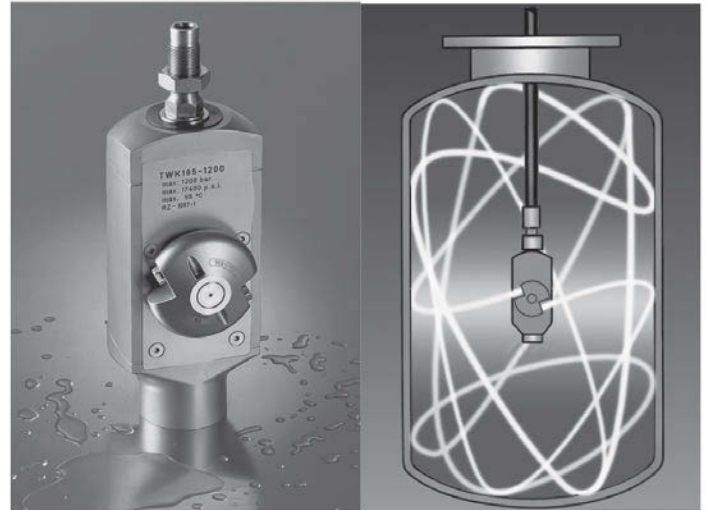
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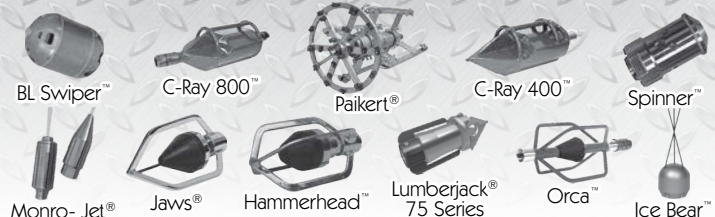
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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

**High-pressure waterjet pump with Tier 4F engine delivers 51.5 gpm**

By Ed Wodalski

The Model 355 trailer-mounted, high-pressure waterjet pump unit from NLB Corp. is powered by a continuous duty 350 hp six-cylinder Tier 4F diesel engine and features a quick-change, in-line fluid end design, slow-running, reciprocating plunger pump.

The pump is rated for a maximum operating pressure of 20,000 psi and can be converted to operate at 8,000, 10,000 or 15,000 psi. Flows range from 26 gpm to 63 gpm.

“At 10,000 psi, this pump will put out 51.5 gpm,” says Jim Van Dam, director of product development and marketing, NLB Corp. “The highest horsepower prior to this was 300 hp that put out 44 gpm. This gives you more flexibility to run multiple operations.”

Applications include tube and pipe cleaning, product removal, surface preparation, tank cleaning, tube bundle cleaning, pavement marking and rubber removal, concrete hydrodemolition, and concrete and pipe cutting.

“The components have been redesigned to accommodate the higher horsepower, but anybody who has worked on an NLB convertible pump will recognize them very quickly,” he says. “The pump’s maintenance and operation is consistent with other NLB systems. It’s not going to be a new experience for operators.”

The latest model in the NLB 225 Series, the pump unit has a 100-gallon aluminum fuel tank, 12-volt electric start, inlet water filter,



oil-filled pressure gauge with snubber, accessory manifold with bypass valve and water pressure actuated throttle control.

The pump is available in an UltraGreen configuration for compliance with the latest Tier 4F emission requirements. Compliance with Tier 4F standards is required by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and written into bid specifications and site permits for DOT and public works projects in various states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

In addition, many large, publicly owned companies are making environmental goals key elements of their business strategies. Dow Chemical and 3M, for example, require that all diesel-powered equipment brought into their facilities be Tier 4F certified.

“Tier 4 Final UltraGreen units are more fuel efficient,” Van Dam says. “We are doing everything we can to get as much horsepower out of as little fuel as possible while not affecting end performance to minimize emissions.”

The heavy-duty tandem-axle trailer is 90 inches wide, 185 inches long and about 81 inches high. It weighs 9,000 pounds and includes 16.5-inch wheels, DOT lighting package, electric brakes and industrial grade enamel finish. 248/624-5555; [www.nlbcorp.com](http://www.nlbcorp.com).



1



2

**1 VANAIR ROTARY SCREW AIR COMPRESSOR**

The Reliant RS85 rotary screw air compressor from Vanair Manufacturing delivers up to 85 cfm at 100 psi and replaces the Viking and Viper Hydraulic lines. The direct-drive unit eliminates belts and pulleys. 800/526-8817; [www.vanair.com](http://www.vanair.com).

**2 CUES PORTABLE MINI-MAINLINE PUSH CAMERA**

The MPlus+ XL portable mini-mainline push camera from CUES features swappable camera heads, pan-and-tilt camera with 360-degree rotation, video observation coding, asset management software interface and digital recording. The 65-pound system includes large, durable wheels for portability and stability. 800/327-7791; [www.cuesinc.com](http://www.cuesinc.com).

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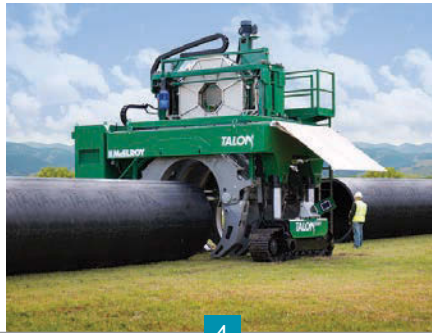
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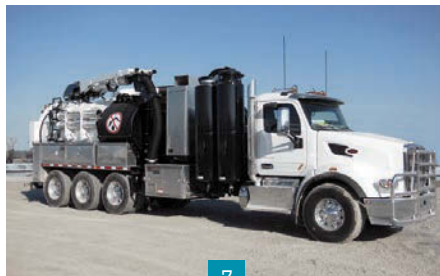
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### 3 VAC-TRON LP-POWER VACUUM LOADER

The LP 533/833 SGT gas vacuum loader from Vac-Tron Equipment is powered by a 37 hp KOHLER gas engine. Similar to the pre-Tier 4 Final SDT diesel model with 1,000 cfm vacuum pump, the LP model features the Series 33 safety rear door that opens to a 90-degree angle with an automatic safety lock. The CVS filtration housing has a 28-inch-diameter cyclone, four-way valve for reverse pressure, silencer for quiet operation and 6-inch debris discharge valve for off-loading liquid materials by gravity or under pressure to another container. The optional strong arm helps support the weight of the vacuum hose. 888/822-8766; [www.vactron.com](http://www.vactron.com).

### 4 MCELROY TALON 2000 FUSION MACHINE

The Talon 2000 fusion machine from McElroy can lift 2,000 mm (about 79 inches) of pipe from the ground and adjust its height and orientation to correctly align and fuse pipes. An electric-powered indexer positions the top-loading heater and facer into the fusion machine. The carriage converts to one fixed jaw and three movable jaws for easy tie-in. Skid-steer and track-mounted features enable it to position itself in tight spaces and move across rugged terrain. Built-in logging records data that syncs with McElroy's DataLogger Vault for storage and analysis. 918/836-8611; [www.mcelroy.com/fusion](http://www.mcelroy.com/fusion).

### 5 TURTLE PLASTICS HOSE BRIDGE EXTENDER

The hose bridge extender from Turtle Plastics provides greater distance between ramps, enabling vehicles with low clearance to easily cross. The standard hose bridge accepts up to 6-inch O.D. hose. The super hose bridge accepts up to 10-inch O.D. hose. 800/756-6635; [www.turtleplastics.com](http://www.turtleplastics.com).

### 6 TRELLEBORG IMMERSSED TUNNEL SEALS

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### 7 VACTOR HYDROEXCAVATOR WITH PETERBILT OPTION

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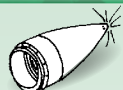
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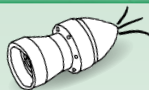
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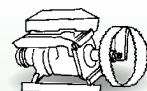
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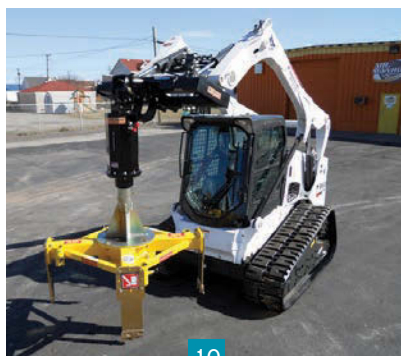
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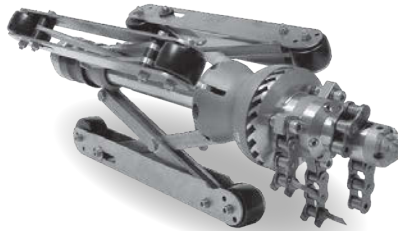
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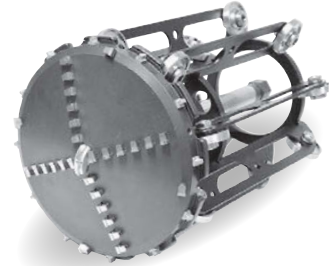
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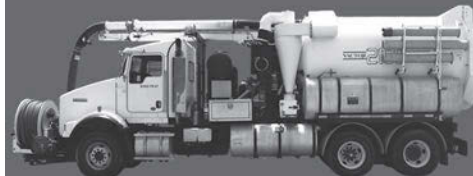
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**Legacy opens new corporate office**

Legacy Building Solutions opened a new corporate office at its headquarters in South Haven, Minnesota. The 70- by 80-foot, two-story structure provides 10,000 square feet of office space for the company's engineering, sales and marketing teams. The office is attached to Legacy's existing fabric manufacturing plant.

**Wastequip adds regional sales managers**

Wastequip named Anthony E. Parker and Ernie Castro regional sales managers for its Technical Products Division. Parker will be responsible for the Midwest region, and Castro will be responsible for growing sales in the Southeast, Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Ferguson Enterprises acquires Equarius**

Ferguson Enterprises acquired Equarius, exclusive Neptune Meter distributor for California. The company will operate as Equarius Waterworks, Meter & Automation Group, a Ferguson enterprise. Management and all employees will remain with the business.

**GapVax Rental Units names operations manager**

GapVax Rental Units named Earnest Rankin operations manager. G.R.U. offers daily, weekly or monthly vacuum truck rentals.



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**Vacuum Truck Rental adds Hydro-Knife hydroexcavator**

Vacuum Truck Rental added the Ledwell Hydro-Knife hydroexcavator to its fleet of rental equipment. The 2,100-gallon hydroexcavator delivers up to 200 degrees of hot water at 3,000 psi. Two 125-foot hoses work independently or in tandem to deliver 10 gpm each. The Hydro-Knife supports multiple excavators with or without onboard water systems.

**LMK Technologies receives innovation award**

LMK Technologies was a 2014 Chicago Innovation Award winner. The yearlong series of events celebrate innovation in the Chicago region, educate organizations and the public about innovation principles, and build relationships. In March, LMK joined fellow award winners in New York City to close the NASDAQ stock market, the premier exchange for technology companies.

**Aries Industries named Business of the Year**

Aries Industries was named a 2015 Top 10 Business of the Year by the Waukesha County Business Alliance and BizTimes Media. The award recognizes companies headquartered in southeastern Wisconsin that have consistent financial growth and demonstrate good business practices through employee relations, customer-focused commitment, community service and business education partnerships.

**AMERISAFE names senior vice president**

AMERISAFE, provider of high-hazard workers' compensation insurance, named David Morton senior vice president of sales and marketing. He will be responsible for future sales and growth within the organization.

**Nu Flow Italia adds licensees**

Nu Flow Italia added two companies to its list of licensees. Termoidaraulica Mansi Enrico of Lugo will offer small-diameter pipe renewal technologies to areas east of Emilia Romagna. Benati Paolo will serve Verona Mantova and Vicenza. **C**

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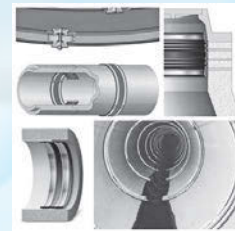
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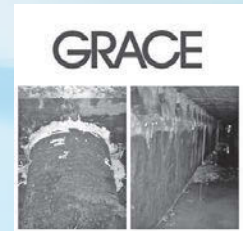
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2009 Sterling Vac-Con: VPD3616LHAEN SVN: 09085083. 3,975 main engine hours. Bean jetting pump. Roots 824 RCS blower, 16-yard debris tank. New aluminum extension tubes. Hydraulic-driven jetter pump. Ken's Truck & Equipment: www.khtrucks.com 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)



**2002 Vactor 2112 PD:** Remanufactured 824 blower at 8,700 hrs. on engine. New 3126 motor and Allison transmission with less than 10,000 miles. Unit has 257,750 miles and 12,541 engine hrs. .. \$65,750

**509-586-2446, WA** C07



**2004 Vac-Con V2211MHA** mounted on an International 7400: 11-cubic-yard body, 80gpm @ 2,200psi. Dual-stage impeller 10" system. 1,000-gallon water tank, retractable/rotating boom, 600' x 1" hose reel. Side-mounted pipe tube racks. Auxiliary engine hours: 2,673.5. International 7400: 300hp IH diesel, Allison MD 3060P transmission. 33,351 miles, 7,039 hours. Stock# 2017.

**Call Joe 312-706-9678** C07



**1999 Freightliner FL112 w/Vactor 2112:** 6x4, 6-cylinder Cummins diesel, 40,780 miles. 12-yard debris body, 60gpm @ 2,000psi. 8" vacuum system w/dual Cyclone. John Deere aux. engine hours: 2,840. Accumulator water system. 8' extendable rotating boom, 600' x 1" rodder hose capacity, telescoping/rotating hose reel. Stock# 2077.

**Call Joe 312-706-9678** C07

2002 International Guzzler: 54,000 miles, 10-speed, 27" Roots blower. Stainless steel tank. Stk# 2300. Ken's Truck & Equipment: www.khtrucks.com 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)

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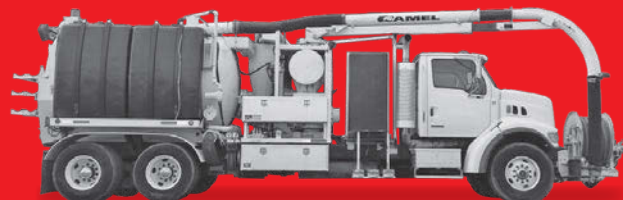
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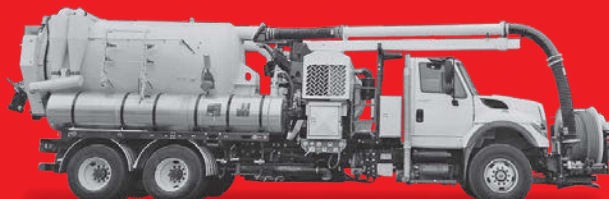
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**2006 CAMEL 200,** 10.8 Cubic Yard Body, Roots Model 824-16" Hg, Dual Fill System w/ Strainer, 1500 Gallon Water Capacity, 8' Telescoping Boom, 80 GPM @ 2000 PSI Water System, 600' Hose Reel Capacity, Hydro Excavation Accessory Kit, Super Pak Control, 2 Aluminum Tool Boxes- 18"x18"x60", Sterling 7500, 6 Cylinder Diesel Caterpillar Engine, Allison RDS Series 3000/3500, Showing 9,801 Hours and 91,250 Miles



**2001 Vactor 2103 mounted on a Chevrolet C7H042,** 3 Cubic Yard Debris Body, 16"PD Roots Blower, Rated at 40 GPM @ 2,500 PSI, 500 Gallon Water Tank Capacity, 4' Extendable Boom, 3/4" x 500' Rodder Hose Capacity, Debris Body Washout, Accumulator, Multi-flow, and Recirculator, 6 Cylinder Caterpillar Diesel Engine, 6,093 Miles and 633 Hours



**2013 Vactor 2112,** 12 Yard Debris Body, Dual Stage Impeller, John Deere Aux Engine with 322 Hours, 1,500 Gallon Water Capacity, Debris Body Washout, 1" x 800' Hose Reel Capacity, 80 GPM/ 2,500 PSI, 8' Telescoping Boom, International 7500, 6 Cylinder Diesel Engine, 10,431 Miles



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## JET VACS



**2001 Freightliner M112** 6x4, VIN# J49135, Cummins ISM 32hp, Allison 4560P automatic, 60,000 GVWR, 20,000 front & 40,000 rear, 60 gallons fuel. Brown interior white cab, safety-yellow body, air-ride drivers, a/c, stereo, 32,796 miles and 8,510 hours. VacCon Model V309SHA Serial# 05012766, 9-yard debris body, 1,300 gallons water, 3-stage fan, auxiliary 4-cylinder diesel engine, 50gpm @ 3,000psi. 600 feet of hose on a 800-foot reel, strobes, arrow board rear. Municipal machine well taken care of, excellent condition. ....\$119,500

**800-672-6010 ext.115, CO** C09



**2002 Vac-Con** International PD 4211 LHAN chassis, 1,300-gallon/14-yard. 81,000 miles. 9,000 hours. PD Roots blower. New radiator, transmission, PTO/splitter. Southern municipal unit. Rust-free, runs and looks great! ....\$115,000

**616-458-3993, MI** C09



**PRICE REDUCED!** 1997 Vactor 2110: 10-yard debris tank, 1,000-gallon water capacity, 2-stage fan, 80gpm water pump. Ford chassis with CAT engine, air-ride seat. Recently installed new instrument panel. ....\$39,500

**Call Brown Equipment**  
**260-747-2312, IN** C07

2007 Mack Guzzler: Damaged, rear unit new in 2011. Ingersoll Rand Air Solutions Hibon model SIAV 8702 blower. Ken's Truck & Equipment: [www.khtrucks.com](http://www.khtrucks.com) 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)

2006 International Vactor 2112\15: 9,300 hours, S\N: 05-07V-9443, Vactor jet pump 80gpm @ 2,000psi. 600' 1" new hose. 800' hose reel capacity. Pump-off system. Ken's Truck & Equipment: [www.khtrucks.com](http://www.khtrucks.com) 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)

1998 Volvo GapVax: Stk# 2301, VIN# 4VHJCB JF8WN857157. Stainless steel tank, N-14 Cummins, 9-speed Fuller transmission, Roots 27" blower. Ken's Truck & Equipment: [www.khtrucks.com](http://www.khtrucks.com) 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)

2002 Sterling LT7501 Vac-Con Model V390LHA combination sewer cleaning truck: Freshly painted white. CAT 3126 - 275hp engine, 3-stage fan, 1,000-gallon water tanks, pump off option available. 10' telescopic boom. FMC water pump - 65gpm @ 3,000psi. Articulating hose reel with 600 feet of new 1" hose. 84,316 miles. Located in Orange, CA. \$79,900. Contact Craig: 714-639-8352. Additional details at [www.empireequip.com](http://www.empireequip.com) (CBM)

1988 Ford 810 Vactor: Good running. Ford diesel, Cummins rear engine, two-stage fans, new tires. Stainless steel water pump, 450' hose. \$25,000 OBO. Call 561-310-4011. (C08)

Vac-Con V390LHA combination unit with Roots 827 blower, 1999 International Model 2554 cab and chassis. (Stock #3918C) **www.VacuumSalesInc.com, (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648).** (CBM)

Vac-Con industrial machine mounted on a pre-owned 2006 Sterling cab and chassis. (Stock #8593C) **www.VacuumSalesInc.com (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648)** (CBM)

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## TV INSPECTION



**2012 Envirosight Supervision** lateral launch inspection system for sale. Dual cable reels, controller, CCU, pan/tilt lateral camera, lateral launch crawler, spare lateral launch cable complete with connectors.

**Contact Paul Hart**  
**561-719-1395** C07



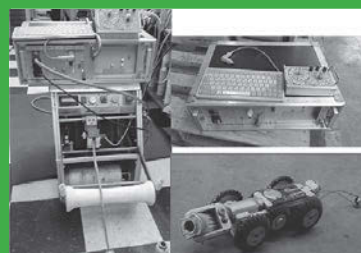
**CUES Inspection Truck:** 1997 Chevy 3500, CUES Pro-Data DVD software, OZil camera - pan and tilt, optical zoom. Ultra shorty transporter. .... \$26,000

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**2002 Ford E450 CUES camera van:** Night Owl Series camera, approximately 1,500 ft. of cable, 56k miles, Stock#02-99. \$37,950. **2000 Workhorse CUES camera van:** Night Owl Series camera, approximately 1,500 ft. of cable, CUES multi-grout chemical pumping system, 500 ft. of Quad-Line chemical/air/water hose, 18k miles, Stock#00-99. \$42,950. For more pictures and info please visit [www.letsrollautoandequipment.net](http://www.letsrollautoandequipment.net) or call **719-494-4927, CO** C08



**Rover System:** RC90 camera w/pan and tilt, auto focus, zoom, LED lights. Rover 125 crawler, portable pendant, TR150 cable reel with 375' of cable. CCU with keyboard, LED auxiliary light, CO2 regulator. Wheels: 6 small, 4 medium, 4 large, 4 medium PBC, and four 1" spacers. Includes tools for replacing wheels. Stock# 2728.

**Call Joe 312-706-9678** C07



**2005 Ford E350 TV Van:** Diesel, Granite XP Software, 42,900 miles. H&A, beacons, arrow board. RST Omni III camera and tractor. Mini camera reel & self-leveling color camera, air compressor. .... \$60,000

**Carroll 916-747-3819, CA** C08

1999 Ford E250 Saturn III pipe inspection van: TR2000 tractor, ST700 micro camera and much more. 52k miles. Local gov't retired. [www.shumatetruckcenter.com](http://www.shumatetruckcenter.com) 813-877-6638 (C07)



**2004 Ford E250 TV Van:** POSM computer, H&A, air compressor, beacons & arrow board. RST Omni III camera & tractor. New tractor motor. Mini camera reel with color camera. .... \$50,000  
**Carroll 916-747-3819, CA** C08

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2003 Ford Aries TV Inspection: Stk# 2168, V10 Triton gas engine. Honda motor powers rear unit. One (1) camera. Ken's Truck & Equipment: [www.khtrucks.com](http://www.khtrucks.com) 972-938-1905 or 214-632-5277 (CBM)

CUES 2006 Ford F550: diesel, 60k miles, 16-ft. box, city-owned. O2Z, Shorty or Pipe Ranger, 1,000-ft. cable (12-pin), Prodata 2000, Cobra CDL/CIMS computer optional. Call Alan Grant at Cobra Technologies 800-443-3761 (C07)

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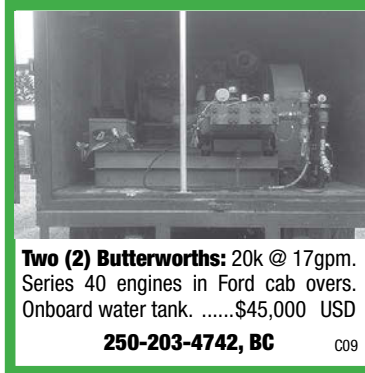


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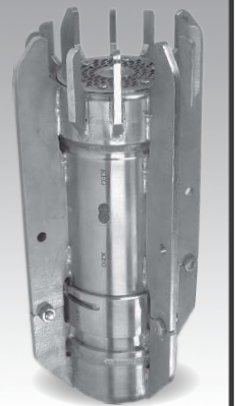
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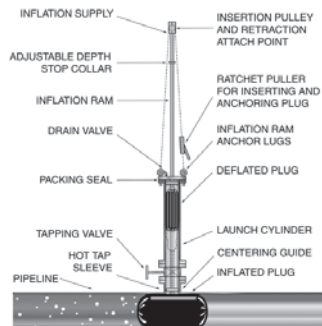
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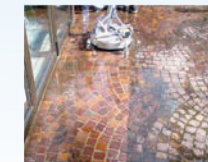
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