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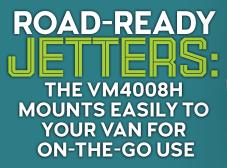
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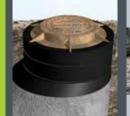
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ON THE COVER // It's not easy to stand out in a service area like Denver, Colorado, with more than 1,800 registered plumbers, but High 5 Plumbing is trying its best to do so and largely succeeding. After starting in 2012 with five full-time employees, the company is now up to a staff of 42 and for 2023 was on pace to reach nearly \$10 million in sales. "We're not your traditional plumbing company," says owner Levi Torres. "If everyone does things one way, we tend to do it another way. I need to make sure people notice us and choose High 5 Plumbing." (Photography by Carl Scofield)



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LOSING FAITH

Statistics show more young people are questioning the value of college, creating an opportunity to showcase the benefits of a trades career

MERICANS ARE LOSING FAITH in the value of college.

That was the headline of an article I read recently in *New York Times Magazine*. There were many different angles to it, but something that stood out to me in particular were the results of various polls cited in the article. In the early 2010s, public opinion polls largely showed a positive feeling about college. In one survey, 74% of young adults said a college education was "very important."

That has since shifted. That same poll now has 41% of young adults saying a college education is "very important." The trend is reflected



in the number of students attending college as well. According to the article, in 2009, 70% of that year's class of high school graduates went straight to college, the highest percentage ever. It stayed at that level for a while. As recently as 2016, 70% of high school graduates were still going straight to college. That number has now dipped to 62%.

A major factor is the burden of the cost of college. The article states that since 1992, the price has almost doubled for four-year private colleges and more than doubled for four-year public institutions, even after accounting for inflation. More students have had to use loans to cover those rising costs. In 2007, total student debt was at \$500 billion. Today it stands at \$1.6 trillion.

I lead with all this to make comment on the workforce issues in the trades, which I've written about in the past. The challenge of finding quality workers and reaching the younger generations is regularly talked about by companies in trades industries, like plumbing and drain cleaning. Often talked about alongside that is the public perception of such jobs as lesser "dirty" work with four-year college being the better career path.

But what these statistics tell me is that four-year college is no longer on a pedestal for people as the ideal pursuit following high school. More people are questioning its value and perhaps considering alternative options. That is basically the origin story for Levi Torres, owner of High 5 Plumbing in the Denver area, one of the companies featured in this month's issue. Torres grew up around the industry, working for his father's plumbing company as a teenager, so he had early exposure. Still, after high school he decided to attend college. Torres lasted one semester.

"I saw how much money I was paying to go to college compared to how much I could make as a plumber and realized that it would be much more beneficial to become a plumber," Torres says.

He returned to working for his father, then another company, and eventually established High 5 Plumbing. Now he's a successful entrepreneur.

There's opportunity here for companies in the trades struggling to produce a reliable pipeline of potential employees. If you can find ways to get into high schools and show students the possibilities of a trades career, they are maybe more open to it than ever before. College and the financial burden it can bring isn't as attractive. Today's students are considering more options.

Enjoy this month's issue. c



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HIGH 5 PLUMBING WORKS HARD TO DISTINGUISH ITSELF IN A CROWDED DENVER SERVICE AREA // By Ken Wysocky

>> John Peloquin and Dominick Calvo of High 5 Plumbing wheel in a new water heater during a service call.

ends with a high five

hether it's technicians giving customers "high-fives" after service calls, hiring a business coach, offering technicians online and virtual reality training, or technician uniforms that look like baseball jerseys, High 5 Plumbing is not your run-of-the-mill plumbing company.

"We're not your traditional plumbing company," says Levi Torres, who established the company in 2012 in Golden, Colorado, a far western suburb of Denver. "If everyone does things one way, we tend to do it another way. The bottom line is that there are more than 1,800 registered plumbers in the Denver area. I need to make sure people notice us and choose High 5 Plumbing."

If the numbers are any indication, plenty of customers are doing just that. By 2016, the company generated around \$1.1 million in gross revenue. By 2022, revenue jumped to around \$7.1 million. And for 2023, the company was on pace to reach nearly \$10 million in sales, Torres says.

Furthermore, the company started out with five full-time employees and now employs 42 people. And the growth is even more impressive when one considers that the company's innovative marketing and branding tactics, a big factor in its success, were developed by Torres and his wife, Cassi, despite neither having any formal marketing training.

"We definitely feel like it's something we're pretty good at," Torres says. "We have a pretty good eye for branding."

That creative spark is reflected in the company's name. that Torres liked.



"I told her, 'That's a good one - give me a high-five," he recalls. "Then we both thought, 'Wait a minute — how about High 5 Plumbing?"

That also led to the company's slogan: "Every call ends with a high-five."

Technicians also ask customers for permission to take selfie photos of them getting high-fives from customers; the company posts the photos on social media platforms.

"We have thousands of photos of our technicians giving customers high-fives," Torres says.

timesHigh 5 Plumbing owner Levi Torres says maintaining a team-centric culture at the company is important to him. "If everyone is sold on your company's mission, they'll tend to do the right things for the business because they believe the business will take care of them in the long run.



GANING INTO TRAINING

irtual-reality training for plumbing technicians sounds about as plausible as clogproof toilets.

But at High 5 Plumbing, it's a reality as apprentices don headsets every week and learn how to make plumbing repairs — even though they're nowhere near a kitchen or a bathroom.

About two years ago, the company invested roughly \$2,000 in a virtual-reality software program called Interplay Learning. Coupled with headsets from Meta, it makes training more like gaming — something fun that technicians actually look forward to, says owner Levi Torres.

The bottom-line benefits: Significantly shortened training time. Plumbers make more money earlier in their careers, which boosts overall company revenue — and employee retention. And better technician engagement during training.

"We can get someone with zero plumbing experience and give them a headset that takes them into a fake bathroom, where they can figure out why a toilet is making an odd noise, for example," Torres explains. "The nice thing is they can get trained without breaking a toilet or flooding someone's bathroom. Furthermore, they can log into the cloud-based app at home and do training there instead of on business hours. It has drastically changed how we train our technicians. It's like a video game to them."

Torres says that the program helps him produce licensed residential plumbers in about 18 months, which is about six months faster than usual.

"If I have, say, three people in the program now, I know I'll have three licensed plumbers producing revenue by the end of a year," he says. "They'll start making good money significantly faster if they're truly committed to the program."

While virtual training doesn't completely replace in-thefield training, it speeds up the learning process because when apprentices ride with technicians, they run into problems they've probably already handled during the virtual training, Torres says.

However, it takes a while for the training to yield financial benefits, Torres warns, noting it took about a year before he saw results.

"You have to realize it's an investment," he says.

The company gives apprentices six to 10 hours of paid virtual training per week, which motivates them to get trained faster. And they only get access to virtual training after they complete a stint as a warehouse apprentice, which involves pulling and delivering repair parts, and then graduate to being a field apprentice.

"After that, the only thing that slows them down from advancing is lack of knowledge," Torres says. "The ultimate goal is to graduate to an installer, because then they can earn performance bonuses. And the more Interplay Learning you do, the better your chance is of advancing faster. Some guys go from being a field apprentice to an installer in as little as 60 days. If you give people the right tools, they'll use them to succeed."



Dakota Nesrufth in his Ford Transit van, organizing tools and gear for the day's jobs. Each High 5 Plumbing team member has their own van that they are responsible for.

GETTING STARTED

Torres has deep roots in plumbing. As a teenager, he worked for his father, Leonard Torres, who owns Torres Plumbing & Heating in Alamosa, Colorado. After attending college for one semester, he decided to work for his father instead.

"I saw how much money I was paying to go to college compared to how much I could make as a plumber and realized that it would be much more beneficial to become a plumber," Torres explains.

"I SAW HOW MUCH MONEY I WAS PAYING TO GO TO COLLEGE COMPARED TO HOW MUCH I COULD MAKE AS A PLUMBER AND REALIZED THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE BENEFICIAL TO BECOME A PLUMBER." LEVI TORRES

At around age 27, Torres went to work for another plumbing company. And after a couple years there, he left to establish High 5 Plumbing after he wasn't allowed to take a day off.

"They wouldn't let me take a day off because I didn't have any personal days left, so I quit," he says. "After that, it seemed like starting my own

business was the next natural step in my career."

The company initially focused on plumbing for new construction and remodeling projects, working primarily for general contractors. But in late 2015, Torres decided to head in a different direction because the company had accumulated more than \$300,000 in past-due invoices for work already completed.

"We spent the last three months or so of 2015 essentially being bill collectors," he says. "Then in 2016, we switched to doing only service and repair plumbing. We essentially started a new company."

Torres says he "fired" all of the general contractors the company worked with except for five businesses that paid on time. Those five companies helped High 5 maintain some cash flow until the company was more firmly established in its new market.

"It was nerve-wracking because we gave up a lot of revenue," Torres says. "But it didn't take us long to see great results. I wasn't that worried because I was very confident in my abilities."

MAN WITH A PLAN

Along with the new business focus, Torres decided to invest in some business coaching from the Blue Collar Success Group, a training and business development organization.

"I wanted to restructure the 'new' business the right way, from the very beginning," he says. "That way, we'd have systems and processes in place so we wouldn't be overwhelmed by rapid growth. A lot of times when companies grow, headaches come along with it. But when you have processes and procedures in place, you can avoid those headaches."

The BCSG provided guidance for things such as office and field operations, inventory management and employee training. For example, it provided an operations manual that spells out exactly what technicians need to do in order to be successful.

"The result is there are no gray areas — no one wonders what they need to do to succeed," Torres says. "It's the same for our staff that takes phone calls and dispatchers. Pretty much everyone has an operations manual for their position."



High 5 Plumbing runs mostly Ford Transit service vans outfitted by Mastercraft Truck Equipment (a company owned by the Reading Truck Group) with Adrian Steel trade shelving systems.

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ONLINE TRAINING

Through the BCSG, Torres also learned about Trainual, an online tutorial program. Technicians can watch repair videos, take quizzes and find answers to plumbing questions. It also contains tutorials for office staff.

"It's basically an online depository that offers a way to rapidly train employees," he says. "If technicians run into problems, they can search Trainual and find answers. As a result, our managers aren't putting out brush fires all day because techs can lean on the software for answers. This gives our managers more time to pay attention to more important things, like profitability and employee retention."

Blue Collar worked with Torres to develop the customized training manuals. Employees can either learn by watching, listening or reading.

Comminick Calvo solders copper fittings to the flexible intake and outflow waterlines for a new water heater installation at a residential property.



"It's a really cool system," Torres says. "Not everyone learns the same way, so we've found that if we can hit all three ways that people learn, then we can ensure everyone gets trained."

The company pays about \$4,500 a year for the program, which is a subscription service with fees based on the number of employees who use the system. But Torres says it's worth the expense because employees get trained much quicker.

"It gets them doing things the High 5 way much faster, so it's money well spent," he says. "If an experienced plumber comes in, it takes only about five days before they're out in the field generating revenue. Before we had Trainual for techs, it was a 10- to 14-day training period."

FOR THE TEAM

To create a team-centric culture, Torres posts copies of the company's mission statement and "vital values" all over the company's office so everyone is on the same page.

"If everyone is sold on your company's mission, they'll tend to do the right things for the business because they believe the business will take care of them in the long run," Torres says. "If you invest time and energy into your people to train them and make them better employees, you'll always get a better outcome. If they keep getting better, they'll stick with you." "A LOT OF TIMES WHEN COMPANIES GROW, HEADACHES COME ALONG WITH IT. BUT WHEN YOU HAVE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE, YOU CAN AVOID THOSE HEADACHES." LEVI TORRES

Good equipment also helps support employee-retention efforts. The company runs mostly Ford Transit service vans outfitted by Mastercraft Truck Equipment (a company owned by the Reading Truck Group) with Adrian Steel trade shelving systems.

Trucks carry SeeSnake Mini, MicroReel and standard pipeline inspection cameras from RIDGID; Spartan Tool 100 and 300 cable drum drain machines; Spartan 717 cart-mounted jetters; and Spartan Cadet portable "suitcase" jetters.

UNIFORM APPROACH TO BRANDING

The uniforms that High 5 technicians wear help brand the company and differentiate it from competitors. Each technician gets to design a baseball jersey in three colors: gray for "home" jerseys, black for "away" jerseys and white with pinstripes for an "alternate" jersey.





Some of the High 5 Plumbing team at company headquarters in Golden, Colorado. The company started with five full-time employees in 2012 and now is up to 42.

"IF YOU INVEST TIME AND ENERGY INTO YOUR PEOPLE TO TRAIN THEM AND MAKE THEM BETTER EMPLOYEES, YOU'LL ALWAYS GET A BETTER OUTCOME. IF THEY KEEP GETTING BETTER, THEY'LL STICK WITH YOU." LEVI TORRES

The company name is embroidered on the front of the jersey and the company logo appears on the back.

"It allows them to show their personalities a little bit, plus they don't have to wear the same thing every day," Torres says. "They've been an absolute hit. And whenever we bring in new technicians and they see the jerseys, they absolutely love it, too."

To extend the theme, technicians' business cards look like baseball cards; each technician gets to design their own card.

"One of our guys held a plunger like a baseball bat for his photo," Torres says. "Those baseball cards are the talk of the town."

Technicians used to wear typical uniforms: gray button-down shirts with a technician's name embroidered on the left chest, the company logo on the right chest, and an American flag on the shoulder.

But in 2019, Torres and his wife were watching a Colorado Rockies baseball game and noted how when players lined up on the field during the singing of the national anthem, they looked so professional — like a team.

"So I bought her a couple of Rockies jerseys," Torres says. "And they looked so good that we thought we might as well use them for our company uniforms."

The popularity of the jerseys led the company to create High 5 clothing for technicians, from T-shirts to hoodies. The only words on the clothing are "High 5" — no reference to plumbing.

When customers started asking where they could buy High 5

merchandise, the company created a small line of merchandise that it sells on a website separate from the company website. All proceeds go to various nonprofit organizations affiliated with the company's High 5 Cares charitable-giving program.

"We've sold more than 2,300 articles of clothing in 22 states and Canada," Torres says. "It's just a cool, uplifting brand."

BRIGHT PROSPECTS

Looking ahead, Torres envisions more growth for the company, both financially and geographically.

"Within the next 18 months, we plan to open another facility in Colorado and open new facilities in multiple states within the next five years," he says.

While the plan may sound ambitious, Torres believes it's totally doable.

"I don't want to sound cocky, but we have a great track record of setting goals and then hitting them," he says. "We're big on vision. Even if we don't hit our goals within the desired timeline, it's just a matter of time before we'll actually achieve them." **c**

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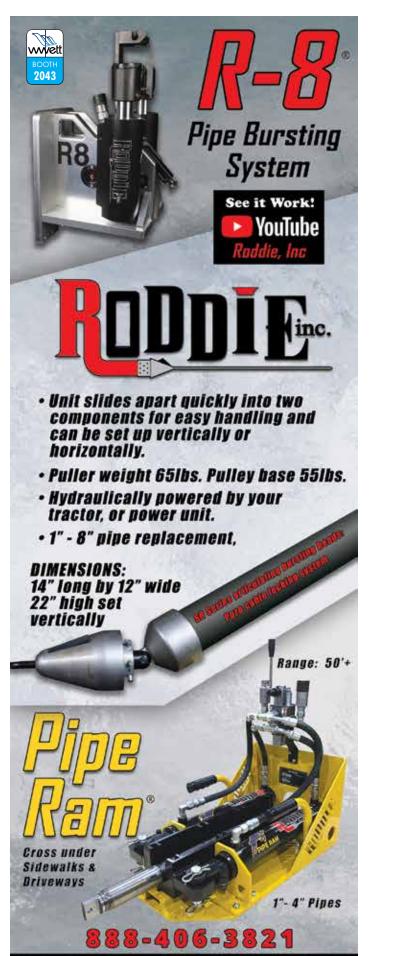
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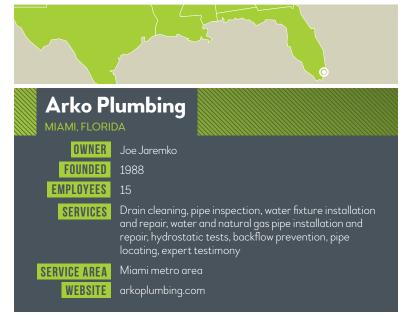
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JOE JAREMKO HAS HAD A VARIED TRADES CAREER, EXPERIENCING BOTH UPS AND DOWNS.

"Always making money, though," says Jaremko, 62, owner of Arko Plumbing in Miami.

He started plumbing reluctantly, became a journeyman plumber, opened a shop of his own and finally became a courtrecognized "expert" in the field. Now he's sort of starting over once again but is determined to be on top of his game even better than before.

"A year ago, I sat down and made a decision," Jaremko says. "Should I retire or keep working? I decided I couldn't part with the company. I get too much satisfaction out of the work. I don't have to work. I want to work and I'm in a position now that I feel like a parent to my employees."

The businessman has opened another chapter in his plumbing career.

HITTING HESET

JOE JAREMKO'S THREE-DECADE CAREER IN THE TRADES HAS TAKEN HIM IN MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, AND HE REMAINS AS COMMITTED AS EVER AS HE PREPARES HIS COMPANY FOR ANOTHER SERVICE SHIFT // By Giles Lambertson

LEARNING THE TRADE

The Florida native grew up around the trades. Jaremko's father was a general contractor and Jaremko loved to visit job sites, often where four-plex residences were being constructed. Other extended family members were brick masons and electricians. Jaremko liked working with his hands, too, and believed auto mechanics was his calling.

One day his father questioned his son's mechanics focus, drove him down to a structured plumbing apprenticeship program and enrolled him. Jaremko liked it well enough to excel in the program — his father must have known his son pretty well — and he now looks back with satisfaction at the experience of learning from master plumbers. He was a union apprentice and an eager one.

"Every time I learned something I'd look forward to using the skill and learning something else," Jaremko says.

The work was mostly in high-rise buildings, but Jaremko

ultimately gravitated to residential subdivision work, helping build custom and tract homes in the Miami area. Then he moved to service work as a plumber for General Plumbing.

"I used to think I was a plumber until I went to work for a service company," Jaremko says.

In 1988, after three years of "learning a lot" on service calls, Jaremko was ready to take the plunge and open his own business. The move rather surprised him.

"I didn't realize I had an entrepreneurial bug in me, but

"I GET TOO MUCH SATISFACTION OUT OF THE WORK. I DON'T HAVE TO WORK. I WANT TO WORK AND I'M IN A POSITION NOW THAT I FEEL LIKE A PARENT TO MY EMPLOYEES." JOE JAREMKO

Photography by Chris Tilley



there was just something that would not let me be satisfied working for other people," he says.

His exit from the service company was not particularly sweet. His employer tried to discourage him from leaving.

"You think it will be easy working for yourself?' he told me. "You'll find out it isn't. You won't last six months.' Well, here it is 36 years later and I'm doing fine. It was his pushback that challenged me."

A bit of serendipity came into play at that moment, too. As Jaremko was weighing whether to start a business or not, a celebrity death helped resolve the situation. A high-profile Miami personality, Don Aronow, who built the Cigarette Racing boats and raced them in venues around the world, was murdered.

"After Aronow died, my partner and I went to snake out the drainlines at Aronow's house," Jaremko says. "We found a huge diamond ring in the drain."

≪ Arko Plumbing is proactive about theft prevention measures. Tools that might be taken in a theft are locked in RIDGID containers bolted to the floor of service vehicles.

The team at Arko Plumbing includes, from left, Alejandro Naranjo, head plumber; Juan Carlos Alonzo, plumber helper; Medardo Huerta, plumber; Guillermo Lazo, plumber; Joe Jaremko, owner; Ryan Hayes, manager; and Mark Garcia, plumber helper.



They turned it over to Aronow's widow, who said it wasn't hers.

"I guess this was Don's gift to you,' she said and gave back the stone. The diamond was appraised at about \$25,000," Jaremko recalls.

It was timely seed money for a new company. The company was dubbed Arko Plumbing. Jaremko wanted the company to be one of the first ones listed in the Yellow Pages and his mother

came up with the name. Arko was a one-ortwo-person operation at first, with his wife answering the phone. For a couple of years, Jaremko survived, mostly on word-of-mouth referrals.

Business was up and down, mostly up, according to Jaremko, but progress was interrupted by the unexpected passing of his wife.

"Life happens," Jaremko says, looking back. He pressed on.

DIFFERENT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

During the past three decades, Arko Plumbing has continued to experience success, but it has been a fluctuating success story. As a young business, the company was "stuck" for a while operating with four service trucks, Jaremko says, then grew to as many as 20 trucks. Then it scaled back to three or four trucks again, where it remains today.

One growth factor during the period of expansion was the abundance of cast iron drainpipes in the area, which "are failing at an alarming rate," according to Jaremko. Vintage waterlines mostly are copper or galvanized steel and largely are still intact. "The drainpipe deterioration might be partly from soil conditions, but mostly the problem is they were engineered to last a hundred years in the ground but only are lasting 30 or 40," he says.

At one point, Arko Plumbing advertised "cast iron colonoscopies," that is, inspection and replacement of cast iron infrastructure.

"We did hundreds of cast iron replacements," Jaremko says. "The insurance companies would pay for it and the jobs just kept coming in. The average ticket was about \$4,500."

Eventually, Jaremko became immersed in a tangential facet of the industry. One of the insurance company people working with him on "I DIDN'T REALIZE I HAD AN ENTREPRENEURIAL BUG IN ME, BUT THERE WAS JUST SOMETHING THAT WOULD NOT LET ME BE SATISFIED WORKING FOR OTHER PEOPLE."

JOE JAREMKO

PIPELINE INSPECTION SYSTEMS





Ryan Hayes, sitting, manager of Arko Plumbing, displays the BrickHouse Security System installed on all work vehicles for owner Joe Jaremko in their office in Miami. The software can tell Jaremko where trucks are at all times.

"I'M A PEOPLE PERSON AND SALESMAN AND I LOVE HELPING PEOPLE SOLVE PROBLEMS. IT'S NOT JUST MONEY. I'VE WRITTEN OFF JOBS, DONE THEM FOR NOTHING. IT'S ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE." JOE JAREMKO

the cast iron infrastructure situation referred Jaremko to Morgan & Morgan, one of the largest injury law firms in the country. It is an aggressive outfit, declaring on its website that "we have the resources to take on the biggest bullies in America." Jaremko was hired by Morgan & Morgan to give testimony in plumbing cases.

"They asked me to come work for them as a trial expert. They offered me the kind of pay I couldn't ignore," he says.

To put a number on it, Arko Plumbing — through Jaremko's testimony has for the past four years averaged \$3 million in testimony billing.

Unfortunately, the bloom has come off that rose. After the Florida Legislature nullified some of the financial opportunities for law firms in injury cases, Morgan & Morgan pulled back. As recently as April 2023, 80% of Arko Plumbing's revenue stream was from expert testimony. That has fallen to 50%, so Jaremko says he is going "back to my roots" by building out his drain cleaning business. Fifteen years ago, Jaremko remarried and, perhaps coincidentally, the business found new stability. His office manager has been with Arko for all of those 15 years as have three of his crew members. "They all have stayed with me through thick and thin," he says.

His service crews work in and around Miami, with most out-oftown work being camera inspections and hydrostatic testing of residential systems. All of Arko Plumbing's customers today are homeowners and other residential property owners.

BIG GOALS

Arko Plumbing operates with four new Nissan service vans loaded with Milwaukee battery-powered tools, RIDGID cameras and drain cleaning equipment, and Picote milling machines. The company subs out any excavation work needed to replace a line, so there isn't a mini-excavator in the fleet of equipment.

THEFT DETERBENT

ne of the costs of doing business in Miami is crime, says Joe Jaremko, owner of Arko Plumbing. He has firsthand experience with it.

"There is nothing like seeing your vehicle being stolen on a video cam," Jaremko says. "I watched on a housing camera. The guy was in the truck faster than if he'd had a key!"

Jaremko searched for the truck and came close to finding it before the police did. "I got the truck back in perfect condition, but all the equipment was gone."

The equipment carried by service plumbers in work vans includes fairly highend items — battery-powered tools, inspection cameras and other modern tools of the trade. So a work van wrapped brightly with logos and other branding art can be a beacon to a thief wanting to make some quick money.

To frustrate such theft, Jaremko doesn't have anything on the sides of his Nissan 2500 vans that identify them as work vans. Plain Jane. They don't have ladder racks on them either. This not only makes it harder for thieves to target his equipment, it also lets Jaremko's crew members park their work trucks at their homes without running into Dade County officials who object to work trucks being parked in residential neighborhoods.

He has also outfitted his vans with three hidden GPS units, one of them hardwired.

"I know where the trucks are at any time," Jaremko says.

Tools that might be taken in a theft are locked in a gang box that's bolted to the floor.

Eleven years ago, Jaremko was the victim of theft that occurred right outside his home. He had a brand-new 2012 pickup truck at the time and, one week after the purchase, a neighbor knocked on his door and told him he'd been robbed.

Jaremko walked outside and found his truck still sitting there. Unfortunately, it sat on blocks. The rims and tires of the vehicle had been removed. He didn't recover them, of course. In response to that incident, Jaremko installed a camera on his property that scans the front of his house and immediate neighborhood.

"That's Miami," he says.



☆ Joe Jaremko explains the steps he has taken to combat theft while operating a business in a larger city like Miami. For example, all vehicles are unmarked, with no logos or other branding art, so as not to be a beacon to a thief wanting to make quick money.

Nowadays, Jaremko doesn't get to dirty his hands often repairing or installing a pipe or fixture. Instead, he shows up to a job site in his pickup to chat with a customer. "I still could do just about any plumbing task I need to working from my pickup. I just choose not to. It doesn't pay for me to do that."

Did he have a favorite task when he was handling tools every day? "It was helping the people," Jaremko says. "I got the most satisfaction from helping someone. I'm a people person and salesman and I love helping people solve problems. It's not just money. I've written off jobs, done them for nothing. It's about helping people."

The future of Arko Plumbing is bright, partly because the

market in Miami is strong, partly because Jaremko still has goals he wants his company to meet. He has it all laid out, from daily and monthly plans all the way to a 10-year vision of the operation.

"I'm still hungry," Jaremko says. "I was just writing my mission statement and vision statement. I want to create a multi-million-dollar business and create opportunities for my employees. I have seen how to do that." **c**

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BETTER BUSINESS



Diane O'Connell

HEALTHY CULTURE

Consider these five lessons — through the lens of the Titanic disaster — about maintaining employees' well-being // By Diane O'Connell

HE SINKING OF THE TITANIC stands as a tragic and haunting reminder of human fallibility. Surprisingly, the parallels between the Titanic disaster and today's workplace well-being cultures are striking.

The Titanic, once deemed "unsinkable," faced unforeseen challenges, inadequate preparation, and communication breakdowns — all factors that bear an uncanny resemblance to issues plaguing today's workplaces.

Let's explore the correlation between history's most infamous shipwreck and the ever-evolving landscape of workplace wellness.

LACK OF VISION (MENTAL HEALTH)

The Titanic had binoculars hidden away in a locked cabinet. Yet, these crucial tools remained untouched throughout the voyage. The reason? A lack of confidence and the fear of consequences, because the ship was brand new, prevented the crew from breaking the glass cabinet to access them. Not feeling empowered to make the decision left them with severely limited vision, so they didn't see the iceberg until it was too late.

Just as the Titanic's fate could have been different with better vision, business leaders today should heed this lesson and equip their talent with the necessary tools and insights to ensure forward vision and the confidence to take action. It's not enough to thrive in the present. Leaders must prepare for the future, recognizing that employees' mental well-being directly impacts productivity, which

THE TITANIC WAS DESIGNED WITH LIMITED LIFEBOATS, A SHORT-SIGHTED AND ARROGANT APPROACH THAT PRIORITIZED PROFITS OVER PASSENGER SAFETY. SIMILARLY, INADEQUATE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT ALLOCATED TO WORKPLACE WELL-BEING PROGRAMS CAN HINDER THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. directly impacts profits. This proactive approach guarantees that wellbeing programs and benefits remain effective and adaptable, capable of meeting the ever-evolving demands of the modern workplace.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN (SETTING EXPECTATIONS)

Just as poor communication protocols and delayed response played significant roles in the Titanic disaster, within an organization, they can have a ripple effect that deteriorates the workplace culture.

In the absence of clear communication channels, information isn't adequately disseminated and feedback mechanisms fail, so employees' access to vital support and resources becomes compromised. This can lead to a decline in overall productivity.

Much like the Titanic crew needed clear communication protocols to navigate expectations and obstacles, modern organizations must foster an environment of open and honest communication, where expectations are well-defined and readily accessible so employees can be fully engaged. In doing so, leaders not only enhance employee satisfaction, mental health and productivity but also safeguard their profits from potential disasters on the horizon.

NEGLECTING WARNING SIGNS (LEADERSHIP)

The Titanic crew received several warnings about icebergs in its path, which were not adequately heeded because they prioritized sending messages for the first-class passengers. Similarly, poor workplace cultures may neglect warning signs of employee distress, such as high attrition, increased absenteeism or declining productivity because it is focusing attention on the wrong areas. When leadership fails to recognize and address these signals, the repercussions can be profound, impacting employee satisfaction and overall well-being which can lead to disengagement.

By actively recognizing and addressing signs of employee distress, you not only enhance well-being but also safeguard the overall health and success of the organization. In this era where leadership and employee well-being are intrinsically linked, astute and empathetic leadership can make all the difference.

INADEQUATE PLANNING (CRISIS/RISK MANAGEMENT)

The Titanic's sinking was partly attributed to insufficient planning and failure to account for potential risks, such as iceberg collisions. Inadequate workplace well-being programs often stem from a lack of strategic planning and risk assessment. Neglecting to anticipate and address employee well-being issues can set the stage for increased stress, burnout, disengagement, and physical and mental illnesses which increase the risk of attrition, injuries, employee-

driven lawsuits, costly mistakes and eventually customer dissatisfaction.

The Titanic serves as a sobering reminder that crisis and risk management are essential. Organizations can proactively identify and mitigate risks by safeguarding not only the health and happiness of their workforce but also their own stability and success in an ever-changing and challenging business environment. In this era where well-being and risk management are intertwined, foresight and preparedness can make all the difference.

INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT (PROFITS)

The Titanic was designed with limited lifeboats, a short-sighted and arrogant approach that prioritized profits over passenger safety. Similarly, inadequate resources and support allocated to workplace well-being programs can hinder their effectiveness. When organizations cut corners with insufficient funding, lack of dedicated staff or inadequate training, they risk limiting the program's ability to address the pressing needs of their employees.

In today's workplace landscape, organizations must recognize that investing in comprehensive programs not only benefits their employees but also contributes to their long-term prosperity. Organizations must understand that neglecting employee well-being can lead to negative outcomes, impacting both their people and their bottom line. A holistic and comprehensive commitment to employee welfare is a wise and forward-thinking strategy that ensures lasting success and sustainability.

Don't make the titanic error of neglecting workplace well-being as a "nice to have" initiative. Instead, chart a course toward a healthier, more prosperous and resilient future by prioritizing the well-being of your organization's greatest asset — its employees. **c**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane O'Connell is an author, speaker, coach, workplace culture reinvention strategist, and attorney and mediator. After being diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, O'Connell left the practice of law to focus on helping businesses create measurable success, reduce risk and improve profitability with a workplace culture of well-being that works. For more information, visit sortingitout.co.



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MONEY MACHINES

POWER SURGE

Vacuum-boosting device helps Texas contractor tackle deep, vertical cleaning jobs // By Ken Wysocky

UMAS PUMPING SERVICE employees used to struggle vacuuming out deep lift stations, vaults at wastewater treatment plants and other jobs that required long, vertical hose runs.

But that changed dramatically after the company invested in a Power Booster from Pressure Lift Corp., a vacuum-assisted pumping nozzle that significantly amps up vacuum power, says Jason Purcell, shop foreman at the company owned by his parents, Ray and Stephanie Purcell.

The company pumps out septic tanks and cleans sewers and related municipal infrastructure. It's based in Dumas, a small town about 40 miles north of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle.

The Power Booster lived up to its billing the first time the company deployed it about a decade ago to clean a 35-foot-deep vault at a wastewater treatment plant. The vault was packed with sludge and the company's vacuum truck was struggling to remove it despite being equipped with two 500 cfm vacuum pumps, Purcell says.



Sason Purcell, shop foreman for Dumas Pumping Service, displays the Power Booster nozzle from Pressure Lift Corp. that he says has greatly expanded the types of jobs the company is able to take on.

DUMAS PUMPING SERVICEDUMAS, TEXASOWNERSRay and Stephanie PurcellMACHINEPower Booster from Pressure Lift Corp.FUNCTIONBoosts vacuum power to perform long-distance
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"When you get that far down, you lose head pressure and the vacuum can't pull up the sludge," he says.

But things changed after attaching the Power Booster to the end of the vacuum hose and using an air hose to connect the device to the truck's trailer service air valve. About 30 minutes later, the truck had pumped out thousands of gallons of sludge.

GOING DEEP

The Power Booster also helps employees more easily clean sludge from 35-foot-deep lift stations, Purcell says.

"Our trucks used to quit pulling on jobs like that," he says. "The sludge in those lift stations is about the consistency of toothpaste — it's pretty thick. But with the Power Booster, we can remove about 1,500 gallons of sludge in about 30 to 45 minutes. It's pretty impressive. It makes our jobs a lot easier, for sure."

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MONEY MACHINES

Purcell admits he was somewhat skeptical when the company purchased the first Power Booster.

"It made sense to me that it would work," he recalls. "But I wasn't sure if the trucks would be able to keep up with the air [pressure] required to operate it. But it hasn't been an issue at all."

Purcell says the company's two vacuum trucks are equipped with trailer service air. But since the trucks don't tow trailers, the trailer service air valve is available to provide air pressure for the Power Booster.

USER-FRIENDLY DEVICE

Contractors can run the Power Booster with air pressure from a truck's air-brake system. They can also use a trailer-mounted air compressor (160 to 180 cfm) or even water pressure, using a pressure washer or a water jetter. The device is equipped with a male camlock fitting on each end and attaches to hoses in seconds.

"It's very easy to use," Purcell says. "You just hook it up to the end of the vacuum hose, plug in the air line that feeds it and you're



WITH THE POWER BOOSTER, WE CAN REMOVE ABOUT 1,500 GALLONS OF SLUDGE IN ABOUT 30 TO 45 MINUTES. IT'S PRETTY IMPRESSIVE. IT MAKES OUR JOBS A LOT EASIER, FOR SURE." JASON PURCELL

good to go in a matter of minutes."

When properly hooked up (either at the end of a vacuum hose or in-line), the device can pump a variety of materials — wastewater and drilling mud to heavy sludges and oils, for example — from depths or distances up to 300 feet, according to manufacturer Pressure Lift.

The specially designed nozzle uses the principles of vacuum pumps and air pressure to seamlessly convey fluids. Made in the United States, the unit can also be used in reverse to agitate thick liquids prior to pumping.

Dumas Pumping Service owns 3-inch-diameter Power Boosters. They also come in 2-, 4-, 6- and 8-inch-diameter models. The 3-inch model is about a foot long, weighs about 12 pounds and is made out of lightweight aluminum for easier handling. It contains no moving parts, which adds to its durability.

VALUABLE TOOL

Over the years, Dumas Pumping Service has found other ways to utilize the Power Booster, including cleaning out clarifiers at wastewater treatment plants.

"It's almost like trying to pump mud," Purcell says. "It took us about two days to pump out about 50,000 gallons of sludge and grease — a little bit of everything. Without the Power Boosters, there's no way we could pull stuff that thick."

The company even has used the device to clean out 50- to 60-foot-deep grain elevator "legs," filled with water-soaked corn kernels, to allow the owners to perform routine maintenance.

"It's a really nasty mess, but we've sucked out a bunch of those, too," Purcell says. "That's about the deepest we've ever gone while using the Power Boosters."

The bottom line: The company owns two Power Boosters, which sell for about \$2,500. And the units have boosted revenue and profitability by enabling the business to do jobs it otherwise couldn't tackle.

"Without the Power Boosters, we wouldn't be able to help out some of our customers," Purcell says. "We'd have to pack up and go on down the road. They're definitely worth every penny." **c**

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CENTER

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

EASY POWER

Advanced lightweight aluminum skids and nozzles provide superior cleaning with significantly less power, psi and water requirements // By Del Williams

OR MUNICIPALITIES and contractors who clean endless miles of sewer lines, the goal is always to clean more with less effort and fewer resources.

Making that goal attainable is innovation in lightweight skid nozzle stabilizing attachments, enabling cleaning crews to move through lines more easily than ever without getting caught on obstructions such as protruding taps, offsets and deflections.

Today's advancements in skid design can substantially improve the balance and maneuverability of nozzles and hoses to speed up sewer cleaning. When used in conjunction with high-performance nozzles, the combination provides faster cleaning that uses less power, pressure and water. The approach not only eases operator workloads but also reduces the cost of vacuum truck fuel, water use and mechanical wear and tear.

LESS FLOW, SAME POWER

To maintain stability with high-volume jetting, operators typically use nozzle skid attachments to keep the nozzle and hose centered within the sewer pipe. Today, some designs go far beyond this basic function and can significantly improve safety and performance.

"More advanced skids with holes are designed to balance the nozzle inside the pipe and prevent the nozzle from becoming airborne and coming out of the manhole," says Dan Story, operations manager at KEG Technologies, a manufacturer of sewer products including Tier 1 to Tier 3 nozzles, chain cutters, floor cleaners and camera nozzle systems. "Providing additional holes allows the user to secure the nozzle on the skid while inside the pipe."

The challenge is that traditional skids are often constructed of steel, which adds weight and reduces maneuverability within the sewer line.

In response to these challenges, Story says he sought to ease cleaning sewer lines. Through testing and experimentation, he discovered a specific technology that could have major implications for municipalities and contractors tasked with cleaning more lines with fewer resources. "I DISCOVERED THAT IF I USED A HIGH-PERFORMANCE ALUMINUM NOZZLE WITH AN ALUMINUM SKID, I COULD GAIN APPROXIMATELY 30% MORE POWER THAN TYPICALLY AVAILABLE THROUGH CONVENTIONAL OPTIONS. ... I COULD LOWER THE NOZZLE FLOW AND PRESSURE AND STILL HAVE ALL THE CLEANING POWER I HAD BEFORE." DAN STORY

"I discovered that if I used a high-performance aluminum nozzle with an aluminum skid, I could gain approximately 30% more power than typically available through conventional options," he says. "That meant I could lower the nozzle flow and pressure and still have all the cleaning power I had before."

ADDITIONAL DESIGN TWEAKS

Story has further refined the skid design after doing additional research, development and testing. The new skid design uses a lightweight aluminum pipe core with protruding plastic fins to provide nozzle stability without the weight of heavier steel skids. The skid design resembles the shape of a football to reduce the risk of snagging on sewer pipe obstructions.

"The design lowers the weight and drag of the skid and nozzle in the pipe. The lighter the weight, the easier it is to propel up the line," Story says. "The football shape and the slick plastic fins also reduce friction, allowing the skid to pass over common sewer pipe obstructions, such as protruding taps, offsets and deflections. If it hits a deflection in a pipe, for instance, it will climb on top of the next step and keep on going."

The approach enables superior sewer line cleaning with significantly less power, psi and water, which translates into important advantages in the field.

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TECH PERSPECTIVE

>> Using a highperformance aluminum nozzle with an aluminum skid can provide approximately 30% more power than typically available through conventional options.

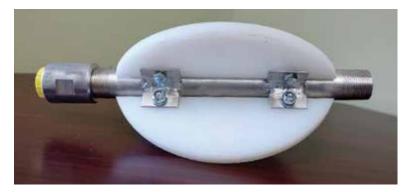
STAYING CENTERED

Cleaning sewer lines at lower pressure reduces the load on vacuum trucks. Toward this end, using a lightweight aluminum skid improves nozzle maneuverability to keep the jetted water stream centered within the pipe and focused where it needs to clean.

When used with a high-performance aluminum nozzle, the combination can produce at least 30% more cleaning power than traditional options because it keeps the jetted water stream centered within the pipe and focused where it needs to clean. This reduces pressure and water use while still achieving efficient cleaning. Just as important, it allows the operator to lower the vacuum truck's rpm, allowing for better conservation of the vehicle's fuel use as well as decreased mechanical wear and tear.

"Operators can essentially run the vacuum truck at idle if they are using an aluminum skid and nozzle. They do not have to crank up the truck's rpm," Story says. "Instead, they can effectively clean sewers with as little as 1,000 psi at 35 gallons a minute. It's a game-changer for cities."





Newer skid designs use a lightweight aluminum pipe core with protruding plastic fins to provide nozzle stability without the weight of heavier steel skids.

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TECH PERSPECTIVE

Another benefit of sewer cleaning at lower psi is reducing the risk of blown toilets, which can leave sewer material on the floor and toilet seat, upsetting homeowners. A blown toilet typically occurs when an operator rushes up the sewer line with minimal cleaning on the first



pass. This results in excessive debris on the return trip through the same stretch of sewer line. Airflow from the nozzle then compresses between the nozzle and the debris, creating significant positive pressure. When the debris passes by a home's service line, the pressurized air blasts up and out of the service line, causing a blown toilet.

"When sewer cleaning, lowering the pressure involved reduces the risk of a blown toilet, and can be particularly effective when cleaning shallow manholes, which are more prone to the issue," Story says.

According to Story, he was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of this technique when a West Coast city invited him to do a demonstration for them.

"Previously, the city was challenged with a blown toilet problem at a home that occurred virtually every time they cleaned a certain line," Story says. "They asked, 'How can we fix this?' We went in at 1,000 psi with an aluminum nozzle and skid and cleaned the entire sewer line without blowing the person's toilet."

Alternatively, the approach can provide more cleaning power on tough jobs such as accumulated grease at restaurants.

"The sewer line on a street with a fast food restaurant was full of grease," Story recalls. "A municipal supervisor doubted the cleaning effectiveness of using an aluminum skid and nozzle. He couldn't believe his eyes when the technique quickly liquified the grease."

A RANGE OF OPTIONS

To accommodate the range of sewer pipes in the field, KEG Technologies offers aluminum skids in 6-, 8-, 10- and 12-inch sizes for use with aluminum Tier 3 nozzles. There are several tiers of nozzles, rated for water efficiency — Tier 1 (about 30% efficient), Tier 2 (50-60% efficient) and Tier 3 (75-98% efficient).

What sets the most efficient Tier 3 nozzles apart from others in the category is fluid mechanics engineering on a par with the aerodynamics of race cars or fighter jets. In the case of KEG's aluminum Tier 3 nozzles, such as the Royal, Cleaning Torpedo and Aluminum Traction, the high-performance fluid mechanics design leaves little room for power losses and excessive turbulence, says Story.

"By more effectively containing, controlling and directing highpressure water with less turbulence, an aluminum Tier 3 nozzle can deliver more cleaning power at lower psi," Story says. "This eliminates the need for operators to compensate for the lack of power from Tier 1 or 2 nozzles by increasing the pressure to higher psi on the way back through the line. Ultimately, less psi — with a better, faster result facilitates safer, more efficient sewer cleaning that complements the use of an aluminum skid." **c**

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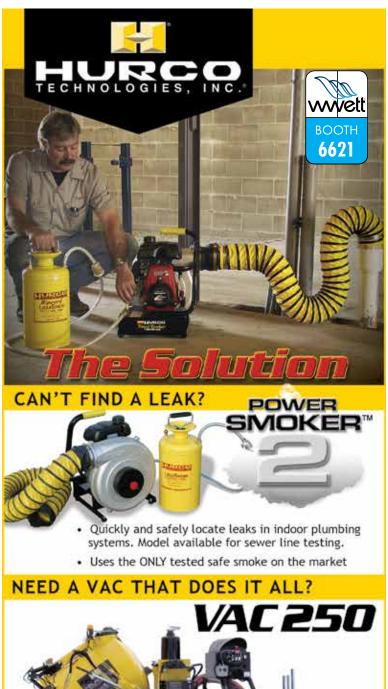
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COLD AND CONFINED

Dangers to watch out for and how to stay safe when cleaning confined spaces in freezing conditions /// By Rick Pedley

ORKING IN PITS to clean or reline pipes and other confined spaces during the colder months can bring new sets of challenges for many workers.

They must stay warm while mitigating the hazards of only one point of entry. Getting trapped inside a tunnel or crawl space becomes even more dangerous when it's cold due to the risk of hypothermia. Working in lower temperatures can also reduce productivity and response times to emerging threats. Workers can never be too careful when occupying these areas.

Avoid these dangers to stay safe in freezing confined spaces.

HYPOTHERMIA, FROSTBITE AND COLD STRESS

Exposure to the cold can lead to a range of health complications, some of which can be fatal.



 $\stackrel{\textstyle <}{\textstyle \sim}$ Wearing the proper personal protective equipment is the best defense against the cold.

WEARING THE PROPER PPE IS THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE COLD. ... IT STARTS WITH A LIGHTWEIGHT, MOISTURE-WICKING, BREATHABLE UNDERLAYER.

Hypothermia sets in when the body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. When it gets cold, the blood thins out along the extremities to keep the core warm. Those affected may shiver or stomp the ground to generate heat until the shivering eventually stops. They may feel warm or need to remove some of their clothes as the condition gets worse.

Frostbite occurs when the skin freezes, damaging the underlying tissue. The body may start to itch or tingle before turning blue.

Cold stress can lead to hypothermia in extreme situations and can also make workers less efficient. The body needs more energy to generate heat in the cold, which burns more calories. Workers may feel sluggish or lightheaded, their pulse will slow, and their muscles will lose strength and become rigid. Performing physical labor in a cold environment will only make the problem worse.

The longer workers are exposed to extreme conditions, the higher the risk. The worker should be able to exit the confined space when the cold becomes too much to bear. If the staff is underground, their colleagues can use a fall protection retrieval system, including tripods and winches, to quickly bring them to the surface.

Some individuals may suffer from pre-existing health conditions that make them more susceptible to the cold, including heart issues that limit circulation. These symptoms can occur in temperatures as warm as 40 degrees Fahrenheit. It all depends on a person's personal comfort level and tolerance for the cold.

Workers should limit their time in the cold environment by taking regular breaks. Everyone occupying these areas should be aware of the risks and speak up when they notice the warning signs.





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SAFETY FIRST

Wearing the proper personal protective equipment is the best defense against the cold. Workers should dress in warm, insulating layers that can be added or removed based on their body temperature. It starts with a lightweight, moisture-wicking, breathable underlayer. There should be enough space between each layer to let the air pass through. Keeping these layers clean is important, as dust and dirt can block air movement through the clothing, making it harder for the sweat to dry. This gear should be comfortable and properly fitted. Tight-fitting garments can restrict movement on the job, and loosefitting garments can risk getting caught in equipment. Workers should wash their clothes regularly based on the manufacturer's guidelines, and replace items that are damaged or no longer fit correctly.

It's best to use thermal, insulated gloves with reinforced palms that make it easy to grip objects and surfaces. Workers must be able to use their fingers fully without too much fabric getting in the way. Hypothermia causes the hands to go numb, making it easy for workers to ignore potential injuries. You should stop working when you can no longer feel your hands and use cut-resistant thermal gloves when working around sharp objects. Insulated boots with up to 500 grams of Thinsulate can keep feet warm and moisture-wicking socks keep feet dry.

Wet clothing can quickly freeze while increasing the risk of hypothermia. If someone gets their clothes wet, they should leave the space for a warmer environment and hang their clothes out to dry.

Every business should have a plan in place for responding to coldstress emergencies. They can keep blankets, warm sweetened drinks and heat packs or hand warmers on hand to quickly increase a person's body temperature.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

The temperature inside a confined space will likely fluctuate as workers come in and out. Warm air can spread condensation and cause frozen liquids to melt, increasing the risk of slips, trips and falls. Workers should be sensitive to the changing temperature in terms of how it might affect their surroundings. Everyone should look out for wet areas on the floor as they move around a space. Managers should install signs in hazardous areas or those most likely to thaw to remind workers to go slow. Boots should have a slip resistance rating to increase traction.

GAS AND CHEMICAL LEAKS

Confined spaces can be a hazard regardless of how cold they are due to a lack of ventilation. If the space isn't designed for prolonged human occupation, the crew will need to test the air for toxic gases before entering.



 $\stackrel{\bigstar}{\rightarrow}$ The longer workers are exposed to extreme conditions, the higher the risk, so it's important that they be able to exit a confined space when the cold becomes too much to bear.

Certain equipment, including forklifts, expel dangerous fumes into the air, which linger in the space without proper airflow. Industrial chemicals typically contain toxic fumes that cause workers to feel dizzy or short of breath in enclosed spaces.

Workers can install a fixed gas monitor or wear portable gas detectors to test the air while they occupy the space. If the air is unfit to breathe, workers can wear respirators that supply oxygen to avoid damaging their lungs. Once a hazard has been detected, the alarm should vibrate and be visual and audible to get workers' attention.

If a person is cleaning a confined space, they should use ventilation, wear proper respiratory protection, and when possible, switch to nontoxic cleaning supplies to reduce the risk of injury.

A FINAL WORD

Occupying any type of confined space can be hazardous. Low temperatures only increase the risk by slowing down the body's reaction to potential threats. Crews can stay safe on the job by wearing the proper PPE, limiting their time in the cold and regularly checking spaces for toxic gases. **c**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick Pedley, PK Safety's president and CEO, joined the family business in 1979. PK Safety, a supplier of occupational safety and personal protective equipment, has been operating since 1947. Visit pksafety.com.





PRODUCT FOCUS

MANHOLE INSPECTION AND REHABILITATION

By Craig Mandli

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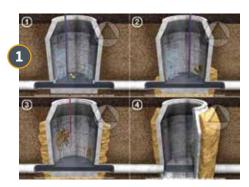
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9 // CHERNE DISC SEALS

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>>> SEALANTS

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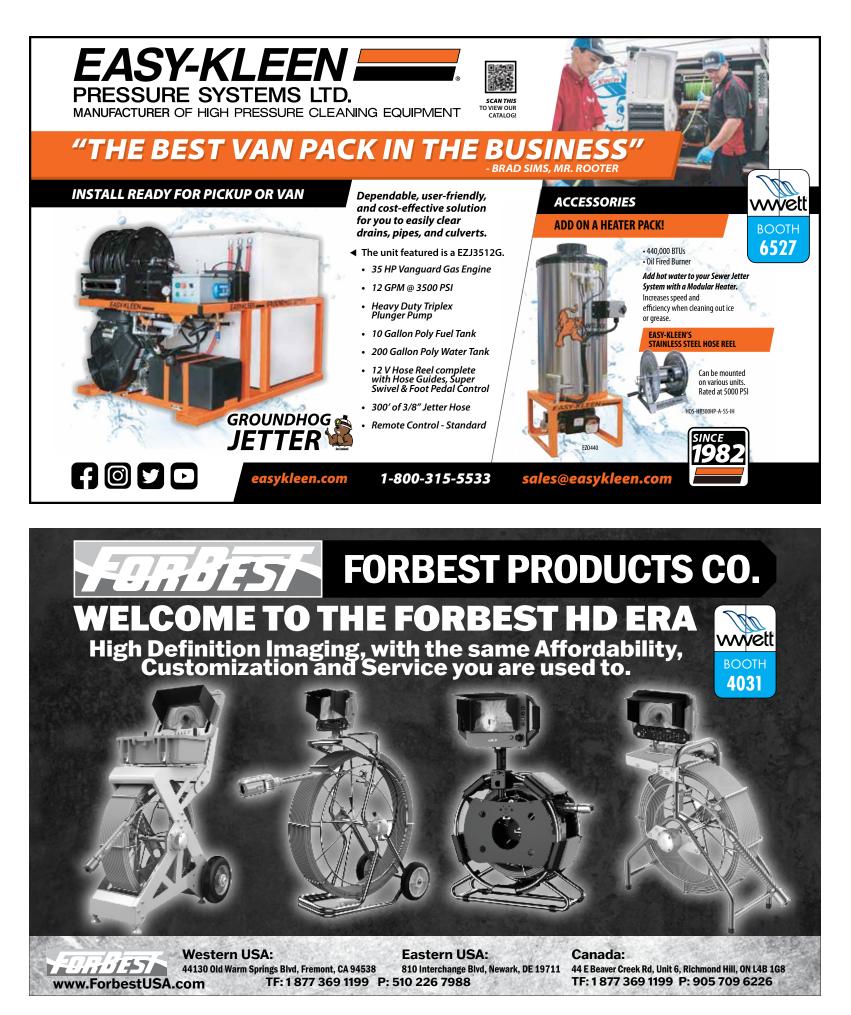
15 // THE STRONG COMPANY STRONG-SEAL SYSTEM

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CASE STUDIES

MANHOLE INSPECTION AND REHABILITATION

// By Craig Mandli

CONCRETE MANHOLE BROUGHT BACK UP TO CODE USING LINING SYSTEM



PROBLEM / Due to deterioration caused by inflow and infiltration, a Kansas City, Missouri, concrete manhole needed rehabilitation.

SOLUTION / A week prior to application, Mongan Painting prepared and repaired the substrate. The concrete was abrasive brush blasted, then pressure cleaned, in accordance with SSPC-SP13/NACE No. 6, "Surface Preparation of Concrete." Additionally, patch work was completed, and low-pressure water seepage was plugged using **Epoxytec's** hydraulic cement, **Hydrxx-3**, which has a cure time of about three to five minutes. A week later, this clean, sound, and profiled concrete was ready for Epoxytec's technical service crew to quickly mobilize, alongside Mongan Painting, to line the structure using **Series 456 CPP Sprayliner** at 200–250 mils. Upon completion, per city requirements, a spark test was completed. The passing results ensured the application was pinhole-free.

RESULT / This concrete manhole was rehabilitated to like-new condition, with the seamless spray-on application as advertised. The crew was in and out within a day and able to move on to the next needy manhole rehabilitation situation. **877-463-7699; www.epoxytec.com**

LINING PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY REHABILITATES DETERIORATED MANHOLES



PROBLEM / In 2020, a project was identified through a Florida-based electric authority's engineering department for seven severely deteriorated manholes in the area. The initial capital improvements-funded project called for these manholes to be conventionally excavated and replaced with new structures. Unfortunately, this work would disrupt the local community for at least six months with heavy construction, bypass pumping and rerouting of residents around the construction site.

SOLUTION / Rather than the conventional dig-and-replace method, Florida-based contractor Engineered Spray Solutions concluded that the project was suitable for structural lining using **Sprayroq's SprayWall** at various thicknesses.

RESULT / The clients accepted the proposal noting the tremendous cost savings and minimal disruption to the community. The project was completed on time, on budget and without a single neighborhood complaint. **205-957-0020; www.sprayroq.com c**

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT uv curing system gives operator complete control

By Craig Mandli

Being rushed on a point repair job can lead to mistakes. UV patch curing, however, eliminates the rush to install. Unlike other pipe repair systems where the operator must install the patch quickly before the resin begins to cure, the LightRay LR3 LED UV System provides the time and flexibility to install, then cures in as little as 10 minutes when the light is activated.

The system is a collaboration between Spartan Tool and Waterline Renewal Technologies. The state-ofthe-art technology can significantly reduce costs and risks when compared

to traditional thermo-setting or ambient-cured CIPP liners, creating new opportunities for drain cleaning contractors, according to Mike Sekach, national sales director for Spartan Tool.

"LightRay LR3's process is straightforward, and it offers a quick curing time," he says. "Once the pipe is prepped, the liner is set in place, and the packer is inflated, curing is initiated by activating the light. The simple, stress-free process and quick return on investment make it a no-brainer for our customers."

LR3's curing process doesn't start until the UV light is activated. This gives the operator time to place and readjust the liner in the pipe as needed. While other pipe repair systems use resin that needs to



be measured and mixed precisely, LR3's non-VOC resin is pre-impregnated into the high-performance fiberglass liner and shipped ready to install, so there's no mixing or measuring of resin.

"It provides an opportunity for drain cleaning business owners to expand their business and offer their customers a cost-effective, lower-risk, easy-to-install, permanent solution for damaged pipes," says Sekach. "With LR3, when a drain cleaner uncovers a damaged pipe, they can offer their customer a same-day repair."

The LightRay LR3 System has

multiple applications, according to Sekach. It can be used in interior and exterior lines in residential, commercial, or industrial settings. It can also be used as both a pull-in-place and push-in-place spot repair system, setting it apart from other pipe repair systems.

"We believe the LightRay LR3 System is a great fit for the drain cleaning industry because it is a fast, effective, same-day solution for damaged pipes," he says. "With the LR3 System, when a drain cleaner responds to a call, they can clear the stoppage and also provide the customer with an on-the-spot repair for a fraction of the cost of other pipe repair methods." **800-435-3866; www.spartantool.com**



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INDUSTRY NEWS

PPI releases new technical document, announces new online course

The Plastics Pipe Institute released a new technical document that reports on the association's findings about the compatibility of plastic piping materials with chlorine dioxide when used in hotand cold-water plumbing distribution systems. Prepared by PPI's Building & Construction Division, *PPI TN-67 Chlorine Dioxide and Plastic Hot- And Cold-Water Plumbing Distribution Pipes* focuses on the application of chlorine dioxide within buildings and its potential effects on plastic hot- and cold-water plumbing distribution pipe materials.

Also, PPI's newest online course, PEX Tubing for Water Service Line Applications, is now available on its PPI eLearn channel. It provides a self-directed learning opportunity for professionals in the plumbing and underground infrastructure industries and CEU credit will be awarded to those completing the ASPE-accredited course. The class is based on requirements of the updated industry standard AWWA C904-22 Crosslinked Polyethylene Pressure Tube, 1/2 Inch Through 3 Inch for Water Service, the ANSI-approved standard for PEX tubing intended to deliver potable water into homes and buildings.

Aries Industries adds Colorado dealership

Aries Industries has strengthened its western U.S. market reach with the addition of a Colorado dealership with three locations. Faris Machinery specializes in new and used heavy equipment for municipalities and construction operations. The company provides sales, rentals, service and training from dealerships in Commerce City, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction. **c**

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