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DECEMBER 2011
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THE WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution



PHCP/PVF Person of the Year

John Pope, CEO of F.W. Webb Company, has spent 55 years building a dynamic wholesaling business while enriching the lives of all those around him. Pope has consistently grown what he affectionately refers to as 'Frank's company' through innovation and diversification — and the confidence he's built among his extremely loyal team with a philosophy of 'Let the players play.' Story begins on page 32.

Ferguson buys major Calif. waterworks distributor

NEWPORT NEWS, VA. — Ferguson Enterprises Inc. announces the acquisition of Groeniger & Company in an asset transaction completed November 7. At the present time, the company will continue to operate under its existing name and be led by Groeniger's current executive vice president, Dick Alexander.

(Turn to 'Flagship'... page 53.)

Contractors Pipe & Supply buys assets of A&S Supply

FARMINGTON HILLS, MICH. — Contractors Pipe & Supply Corp. has purchased the assets of plumbing and heating distributor A&S Supply, which is based in Flint, Mich., and has been doing business in Flint and the surrounding area for 62 years. Until the recession took its toll, they were a dominant player in the marketplace.

(Turn to Flint-based... page 53.)

'Technology is linchpin'

Epicor hosts panel on future of wholesaling



YARDLEY, PA. — An audience representing 60+ wholesale distribution companies was treated to an unprecedented gathering of industry thought leaders as they recently discussed enterprise resource planning

(ERP) and the technology-enabled distributor of the future. The expert panel at the annual Distribution Executive Forum hosted by Epicor Software Corporation, a global leader in business software solutions for manufacturing, distribution, retail and services organizations, included:

- Kevin Roach, executive vice president and general manager, ERP Americas for Epicor

- Guy Blissett, researcher at IBM and fellow of the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence

- Tom Gale, president, Gale Media/Industrial Market Information, and publisher of *Modern Distribution Management*

- Dr. Barry Lawrence, director of Texas A&M's Industrial Distribution Program

- Mike Marks, managing partner of Indian River Consulting Group

(Turn to Forum... page 53.)



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ThermaSol heats up DPHA conference with new 'Letting Off Steam' booth

SAN JOSE, CALIF. — ThermaSol® generated a lot of attention at the Decorative Plumbing and Hardware Association conference October 14–16. In collaboration with Napoleon at Home Interior Design and artist Susan Marie Bacchi, ThermaSol unveiled its much anticipated “Letting



Winner of the Golden Sol was Michael Ardente of Water Spot, shown here with ThermaSol's Mike Straw.

Off Steam” booth to great fanfare.

“We wanted to break the mold with our booth and create something unlike anything that’s been seen at DPHA,” said Mike Straw, regional sales manager for ThermaSol. “It’s one thing to display and debut our latest products but quite another to give our industry an opportunity to enjoy the ThermaSol spa experience firsthand. We wanted to give everyone a taste of ‘A Day at the Spa’ in true ThermaSol fashion, and we succeeded.”

The collaboration between ThermaSol, Bacchi and Napoleon at Home Interior Design served as a three-dimensional example of how ThermaSol’s innovative steam technology complements and enhances contemporary spa environments. A serene oasis amidst the hectic pace of the trade show, the “Letting Off Steam” booth created an elegant spa-like space with neutral colors, tranquil lighting and an underwater sealife theme, complete

with custom artwork by Bacchi. Nearly every guest who took respite at the booth raved about the spa-like setting, taking full advantage of the opportunity to kick up their feet and relax.

“We wanted attendees to feel as if they had been transported to their favorite day spa, where they could sit back and enjoy a refreshing beverage amidst the soothing lights, colors and music of ThermaSol’s Serenity light & music system,” said Bacchi. “We used the system in a creative way, by focusing the lights and colors on the painted canvases to immerse attendees in our underwater haven.”

ThermaSol’s booth also engaged guests by unveiling the interactive Bluetooth Zone®. This demonstration tool allowed any attendee to walk into the booth and wirelessly sync up their portable music players with the Seren-



ity light & music system, which helped create an even more serene ambiance. ThermaSol representatives were on hand to present the company’s new Modern Collection, which consists of sleek steam shower controls, steamheads and designs that match most popular modern and minimalist plumbing fixtures and decorative trim sets.

Michael Ardente of Water Spot was announced as the grand prize winner of ThermaSol’s Missing Sol Contest, originally launched on the company’s Facebook page in early October. Ardente found the Golden Sol hiding at the show underneath a water fountain. As the lucky winner, he took home an iPad®2.

Visit www.thermasol.com

Rheem honors General Plumbing Supply

EDISON, N.J. — General Plumbing Supply, a plumbing wholesaler with 13 locations in New Jersey, recently earned special recognition from Rheem as a “Partner in Growth.” The award honors GPS for more than 100 years of business excellence and its seven years of distributing Rheem residential and commercial water heating products to the New Jersey market, as well as parts of Pennsylvania and New York.

“Rheem has had a great working relationship with General Plumbing Supply for the last seven years,” said Dennis Ryan, eastern region sales manager for Rheem. “Between 2009 and 2010, General Plumbing Supply’s sales of Rheem water heaters were up 21.6% despite the difficult economy. What’s more, the outlook for 2011 is tracking to be another 10% to 15% increase for Rheem tank-type water heaters and a 20% increase for the company’s tankless water heaters.”

Founded in Bayonne, N.J., in 1910, GPS experienced initial growth in the 1980s when it expanded to two locations and relocated its headquarters to Edison. The current structure is the result of acquisitions and organic growth over the last decade. With the most recent addition of a trade location in Lakewood in June, GPS now has 13 total locations, including 12

office-warehouse facilities, five of which have showrooms, and one stand-alone showroom.

“We’re experiencing tremendous growth right now because we’re moving into new markets,” said Justin Freedman, marketing director for GPS. “In the last five years, we’ve created a stronger presence in northern New Jersey with the opening of our Ridgefield branch a few years ago and our more recent openings in Tenafly and Bergenfield.”

Part of the strategy that GPS has used when opening new locations is to leverage the strength of the Rheem brand. GPS actively promotes Rheem in the company’s marketing efforts, such as direct mailings and giveaways, or dinners that reward customers as part of Rheem-sponsored customer loyalty programs.

“When we move into a new location, we understand the importance of promoting the Rheem brand and leveraging its success,” said Freedman. “For example, because we believe the Rheem name is so strong, we marketed ourselves using the Rheem brand, logo and products in print advertising when we entered Tenafly in October 2010.”

Advancements in water heater technology have also been a driving factor behind the increase in Rheem

sales, according to Freedman. GPS has actively assisted its customers in moving to higher-efficiency residential products, such as power direct vent and induced draft tank-type water heaters, and tankless water heaters, including the new Rheem Prestige™ Series Condensing Tankless Water Heaters, which operate at 94% efficiency.

“Rheem has a much more competitive offering of tankless water heaters, both in terms of the units themselves and their pricing, espe-

Although Freedman attributes a majority of GPS’ growth of Rheem sales to residential water heating products, he also added that the company’s commercial products have helped reach customers’ needs. In particular, the new SPIDERfire® series of gas commercial water heaters from Rheem have been popular with GPS’ customers. Operating at 95% thermal efficiency, the SPIDERfire water heater can deliver 460 gallons of hot water in one hour.

“Our recent success with GPS is a



From left, Bruce Tucker, Justin Freedman and Joe Novak of General Plumbing Supply display the ‘Partner in Growth’ award from Rheem.

cially with the introduction of the Prestige units,” stated Freedman. “Residential customers are definitely trending toward tankless, whether these units are specified by the builder or an added value that plumbing and heating contractors are able to up-sell to their end users.”

definitive case where the Rheem brand has helped generate more sales for a wholesaler,” said Rheem’s Ryan. “At the same time, the wholesaler’s longstanding history in a local market has helped Rheem expand its footprint in the New Jersey area.”

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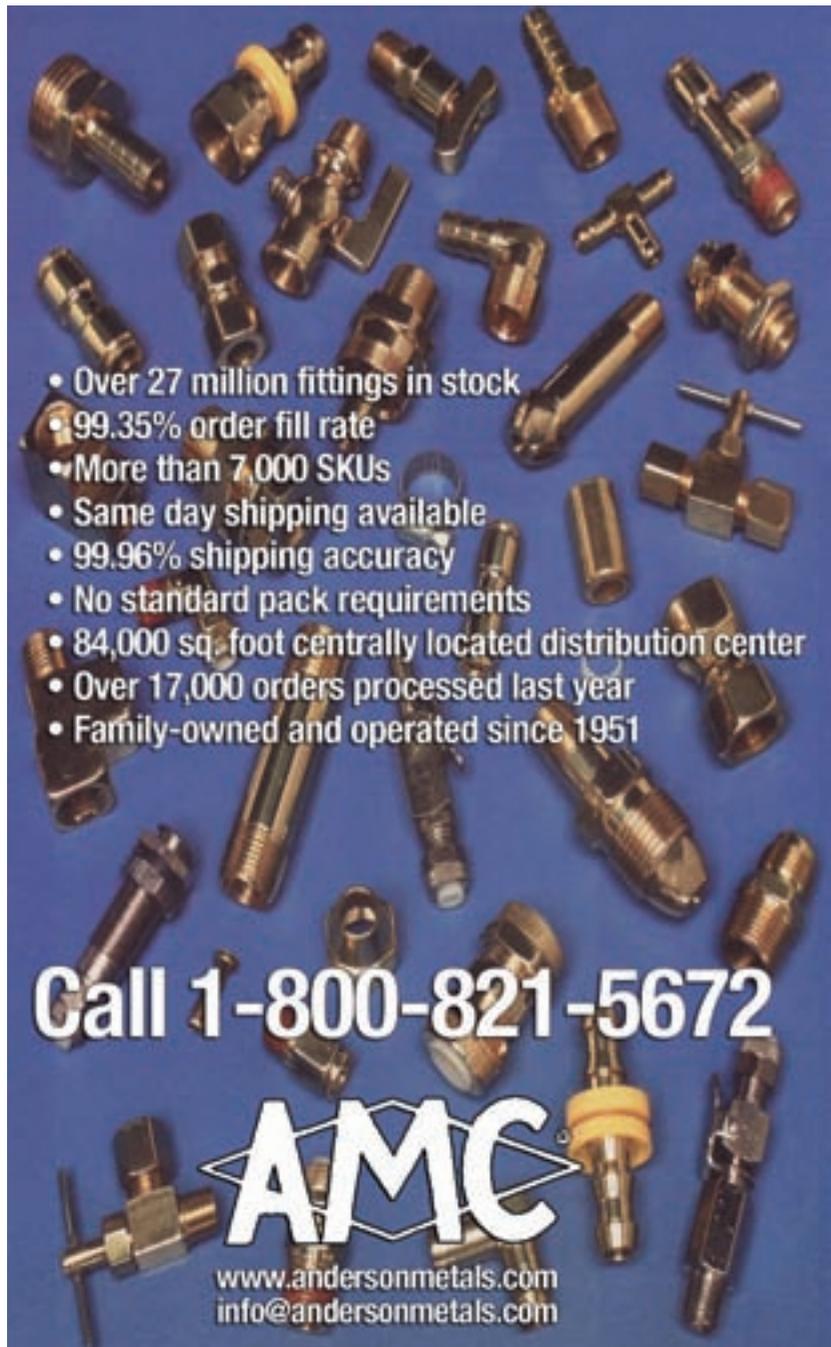
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The Front Page



For our inaugural PHCP/PVF Person of the Year, *THE WHOLESALER* honors legendary F.W. Webb CEO John Pope. Pope describes his role as that of a caretaker of the 145-year-old business— and fondly refers to F.W. Webb as “Frank’s company” [in reference to founder Frank W. Webb]. Editorial director Mary Jo Martin recently spent a day with John Pope, his son Jeff, who serves as president, and VPs Ernie Coutermarsh and John Provencal.

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Next Month

We kick off 2012 with our annual Industry Forecast!



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Drama is fine for the theater, not so fine for your business and life

I was talking to my son a couple months ago. He is single and not in a relationship. He was saying that he really wanted to reduce the drama in his life. I asked what that meant and he said that work, friends and girls were creating a lot of stress for him. He said that the girls in his life were especially stressful and involved a lot of active work to maintain happy, peaceful relationships. He said further that some just seemed to be in a continuing state of crisis that required that he be doing something to bring peace to the relationship on a regular basis. I asked where he was finding these girls and, while I won't be specific, he does not seem to be looking for girls at church socials — if there still are church socials for young men in his area.

With vast consulting experience, I suggested that his recruiting process might be flawed and that I thought there actually were girls who didn't require excessive attention for a good relationship. I suggested that he should focus on lower-drama relationships going forward. He said he would consider whether it was worth it.

As I was thinking about wholesaling in 2012, I think this would be a good year to actively reduce the drama in our lives. I doubt that we can eradicate all of the drama, but I think there is a lot of low-ROI (return on investment) drama that can prob-

ably be eliminated that would make our lives more pleasant and productive. The first step is to consider some of the drama areas and then to select the drama that we want to eliminate.

Some thoughts

1. Drama customers. While it is always tough to fire customers, in the current market it is even tougher to justify. With that said, there are some customer drama-queens that you ought to at least consider firing. They consume an inordinate level of resources. They often generate low to negative profit when you consider the drag that they create on your company. They can be terribly demoralizing.

a. Chronic complainers. Some customers must have had or have an unhappy life where they feel the need to gripe about everything from the weather, to the traffic, to the world as a whole and, so you don't feel left out, about your company.

When I worked for a Fortune 50 company, I had a customer who was unhappy about everything we did with him. It just seemed that he was mad at us all the time. One time, he called me to loudly remind me how horrible we were. I told him that we were working very hard for his account, that we appreciated his business and we were frustrated and disappointed that all our hard work resulted in making him so unhappy.

After a minute, he said that he really wasn't unhappy with us, it was just his style to complain aggressively whenever there was a problem. It was the turning point in our relationship as he realized that his style created so much drama in the relationship. So before you end any relationship, always try to reform the offender. If you finally decide to end the relationship, you will have a clean conscience knowing that you have done all that you can. Efforts to change drama-customers doesn't always work because some of them enjoy complaining and are probably happier when they can make your life a little more miserable.

b. Complainers who have valid complaints. It is important to sepa-

rate the chronic complainers from those who like you and can help to identify the important problems for your company to address. Some of your team will put these customers in the same bucket as the chronic complainers since they both create added work and drama. Management must differentiate between the two types and deal with each class in vastly different ways.

2. Drama Employees. As with all labor issues, consult your labor attorney so you remain in compliance with local, state and federal laws. Sadly, the morass of laws that companies must comply with seem to be getting more complex and sometimes less based on common sense. While many drama employees were probably removed as a part of the belt-tightening that most companies implemented, sometimes new ones appear over time. So take stock of your team looking for these:

a. Chronic complainers. Some probably learned it from your customers while others are just "naturals." Either way, they can create a lot of management stress and consume a disproportionate amount of time that could be spent leading the productive people on the team. They demoralize and annoy your happy workers and their productivity is impacted as they



BY RICH SCHMITT
Management specialist

devote hours nitpicking about all facets of the company. As with customers it is important to distinguish between the ones who are just not happy versus those who care and can provide management with important insights into the company and its processes.

b. Chronic poor performers. Beyond the obvious productivity issues created by poor performers, there is the drama they create for management and the morale-drama they create among the good members of your team.

I had a customer who was unhappy about everything we did with him. It just seemed that he was mad at us all the time... [but] he said that he really wasn't unhappy with us, it was just his style to complain aggressively whenever there was a problem. It was the turning point in our relationship...

c. Non-team players. This group is often the toughest drama-creator since they are sometimes the most talented and most ego-centric employees. It is a day-to-day recalculation comparing the good that they do with the damage they inflict. In my career, outside sales and IT people have been the most difficult. I think that the skills and personality that makes these people great also seems to make them more difficult to work with.

3. Drama vendors. Ideally manufacturers are there to help but sometimes that is not the case.

a. Inconsistent objectives. Many manufacturers are publicly traded companies. Sometimes their quarterly performance focus can cause them to cycle from Jekyll to Hyde over the course of a quarter. Every time they change direction, make new requests or demands, it creates drama in your company. While sometimes these changes are for the good, they create extra work as your company adapts and adjusts to the supplier's new policies and edicts.

b. Poor performance. This can occur many ways:

i. Shipping errors. Every messed up order becomes a succession of missed commitments, reorders, credits and extra work for your team.

(Turn to Do you... page 67.)

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Murray Supply hosts 5th annual field marketing summit

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA — Wholesale plumbing distributor Murray Supply Company held their annual Field Marketing Summit on October 7-8. A number of MSC sales personnel and 18 Valued Vendor Partners participated in the event.

Murray Supply Company is a member of Affiliated Distributors, which is a nationally recognized buying and marketing group that serves the independent distributors of plumbing, PVF, HVAC, electrical and industrial suppliers. Affiliated Distributors strongly encourages their members to participate in Field Marketing Summits to strengthen relationships between suppliers and distributors.

On October 7, the vendors, reps and Murray Supply branch managers and corporate staff began the evening with a tour of Old Salem in downtown Winston-Salem, N.C. After the tour, the participants enjoyed dinner at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center.

The next day, Murray Supply



Jim Sutton from Ward Manufacturing discusses products with associates from Murray Supply Company.

Company held a day-long strategic planning session with 18 Valued Vendor Partners at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center. All of the inside and outside sales associates, branch managers, purchasing agents, showroom consultants and corporate personnel from Murray Supply participated in the event. The suppliers had booth sessions, where they meet with all of the MSC sales

associates to discuss sales, marketing and training goals for the upcoming year.

The 18 Valued Vendor Partners that participated in the event included: American Standard, Anvil, A.O. Smith, Apollo Valve, Aquarius Bathware, Bradley, Cambridge-Lee, Charlotte Pipe, Elkay, Halsey Taylor, Lenox, Jay R Smith, Matco-Norca, Moen, Nibco, Oatey, Sloan and Ward.

KSD goes green with solar power

WOODBIDGE, N.J. — KSD has completed a 1-megawatt system, in conjunction with STC Solar Inc., comprised of more than 3,600 solar panels. The system sits on top of



KSD's Woodbridge, N.J., distribution center. Approximately one-third of the power generated will be used at KSD's facility; the remaining two-thirds of the power will be sent to the power grid to provide green, sustainable power to the citizens of New Jersey.

Visit www.ksdusa.com or www.stc-solar.com

F.W. Webb opens state-of-the-art warehouse and showroom in Boston

BEDFORD, MASS. — F.W. Webb Company has opened a new 50,000-square-foot wholesale supply store and retail bath showroom in Boston. Frank Webb's Bath Center is the company's first retail showroom in the city of Boston and offers a new resource for designers, architects, contractors and Bostonians.

With roots that go back to 1866, F.W. Webb's new Boston location represents the moving of a landmark. The F.W. Webb headquarters was on Columbus Avenue until 1968, when the company built its new headquarters in Burlington, Mass. F.W. Webb renewed its presence in Boston in the 1970s with the acquisition of Atlantic Pipe and Supply at the current location in the city at 237 Albany Street.

Now, with the new facility on Dorchester Avenue, F.W. Webb is tripling the size of its Boston footprint while shrinking its carbon footprint, once again changing the downtown landscape with a forward-thinking, one-of-a-kind structure. The green design of the building includes an array of solar panels on the roof and a geothermal unit for its heating and cooling needs.

"We take a lot of pride in our contribution to the city of Boston. Over the

past century and a half, if there was a building being built in Boston, it was likely that F.W. Webb was involved," said president Jeff Pope. "Today we are pleased to offer our own cutting-edge facility to the city, providing a very small carbon footprint with the latest in green building design."

The new F.W. Webb location was built with an open-concept design that allows wholesale trade customers to browse merchandise. "Our customers are now able to view and select merchandise rather than waiting for a salesclerk to track down items in the warehouse," said Tom Blades, general manager of the Boston location. "In addition to our core industrial PVF and plumbing and heating supplies, the new store will also carry HVAC controls and refrigeration and fire protection products, providing our customers with more of what they need for any job."

The modern showroom will feature a broad range of bathroom and kitchen displays and premium product lines, including Toto, Hansgrohe and American Standard. A wall of fully functioning shower heads and faucets offers customers the opportunity to experience and evaluate water



F.W. Webb president Jeff Pope (inset) remarked, "We take a lot of pride in our contribution to the city of Boston... Today we are pleased to offer our own cutting-edge facility to the city, providing a very small carbon footprint with the latest in green building design."

flow before making a purchase. From tubs to towel bars, the Frank Webb's Bath Center specialists will help homeowners take the guesswork out

of their construction or remodeling projects and even connect them with a recommended contractor.

Visit www.fwwebb.com

Speakman Company unveils new bath fixture collections

NEW CASTLE, DEL. — Speakman Company exhibited their new coordinated bath plumbing fixtures at the International Hotel, Motel & Restaurant Show in New York on November 13-15. Speakman has been the showerhead choice for many hotel brands.

Each collection includes coordi-

nated showerhead, shower valve and tub spout, which pair nicely with matching faucets and accessories (towel bar, robe hook, toilet paper holder, etc.) These coordinated looks have been designed to enhance any hotel guest bathroom decor.

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Modern Supply wins WIT marketing award

KNOXVILLE, TENN. — Modern Supply Company has been selected as the overall winner for WIT & Company's WHAM (WIT Honors Achievements in Marketing) marketing award for 2010 innovative marketing initiatives. WIT is a national member-owned organization of approximately one hundred independent plumbing, heating and cooling wholesale distributors. Modern Supply submitted entries in six categories, including advertising and brand awareness for the creation of their fictional spokesperson Modern's Millie.

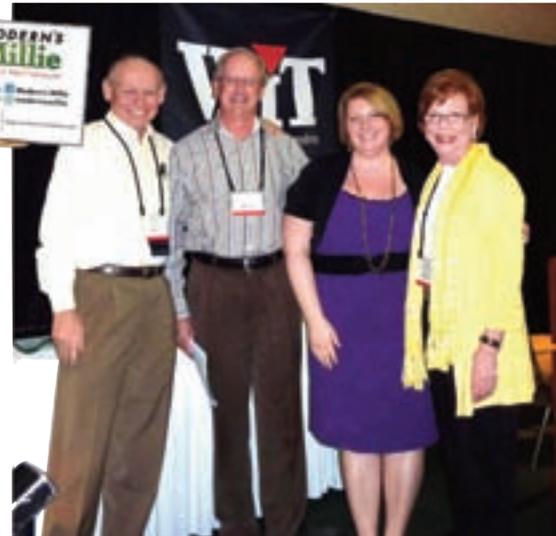
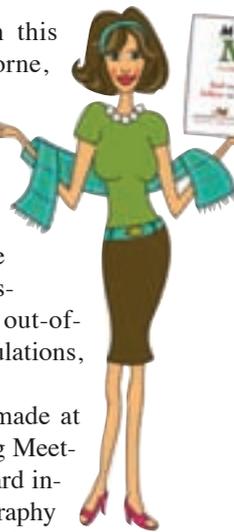
"We're very excited to receive the WHAM marketing award and to be recognized among our peers," states Pace Robinson, Modern Supply CEO. "Modern Supply has implemented marketing programs that are unique to our industry. Our fictional spokesperson, Modern's Millie, was created to soften our wholesale image and better relate to today's consumer market. We continue to expand our marketing efforts and incorporate Millie in most all aspects."

"For all their hard work reinventing their company's brand in 2010 and beyond, Modern Supply

definitely deserved to win this award," Sabrina Hawthorne, WIT marketing coordinator, comments. "Their branding strategy is unique and creative, for this industry and overall. When they introduced Millie to their market, they successfully implemented several out-of-the-box endeavors. Congratulations, Modern Supply!"

The announcement was made at WIT's 2011 Fall Networking Meeting in Indianapolis. The award included a professional photography and video shoot of Modern Supply's Knoxville showroom and staff and was revealed at the meeting.

Visit www.kitchenandbathblab.com or www.modernsupplyshowroom.com, as well as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.



Modern Supply received the overall WHAM award from WIT at its Fall Networking Meeting. Shown here are WIT president Morris Cregger, Modern CEO Pace Robinson, Sabrina Hawthorne from WIT and Modern president/COO Dottie Ramsey.

Rep. Westmoreland visits Rinnai America

PEACHTREE CITY, GA. — On, October 20, Rep. Lynn Westmoreland, R-Ga., toured Rinnai America Corporation's

and businesses," said Phil Weeks, Rinnai's COO for North America. "Strong energy policy also translates



North American headquarters and lab facilities, and spoke with employees and honored guests.

During his visit, Rep. Westmoreland, a former building executive, met with Rinnai executives to discuss initiatives and policies to spur economic growth, promote job creation and accelerate hiring in Georgia's Third Congressional District and throughout the U.S. Rep. Westmoreland made remarks to a crowd that included Mayor Don Haddix of Peachtree City and Chamber of Commerce president Virginia Gibbs, as well as more than 70 Rinnai employees.

"Rep. Westmoreland's visit highlighted topics critical to the success of our business, including support for legislation that will help promote energy efficiency in our country's homes

into a stronger bottom line for Rinnai, its distributors and installers, fostering valuable economic development opportunities during this critical time in our nation's history. We applaud the congressman for committing to fight for jobs in Fayette County and the building industry."

"I am proud to have the Rinnai corporate headquarters based here in Peachtree City in Georgia's Third Congressional District," said Rep. Westmoreland. "It's companies like Rinnai that are working to keep America competitive on the global stage. Their advances in energy technology not only help American families save money on their heating bills but also create American jobs."

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Sanibest plumbing system turns branch-rehab project into in-store working model

BALTIMORE, MD. — When plumbing wholesaler Schumacher & Seiler Inc. relocated its Baltimore branch last summer, district manager Bill Pritchett expected the hefty price tag that goes along with any major move. When they began to convert the space to their liking, however, he and the management team quickly realized that the existing restroom site wasn't going to work. That meant unanticipated expenses.

"The old bathroom didn't fit the plan, so we moved it," Pritchett said. "But the new location of the bathroom — with no below-floor drainage — meant we would have had to break up the concrete floor and run pipe about 20 feet to the sewer line. That would have cost a lot more than we wanted to spend."

If it had been any other business, the manager might have been stumped and, therefore, stuck with an unwanted bathroom in an inconvenient location, but Pritchett knew exactly how to solve this challenge. He turned to his own warehouse inventories and installed one of his most popular commercial products.

By using a Sanibest up-flush macerating system from SFA Saniflo Inc., Pritchett was able to create a suitable bathroom and put it exactly where he wanted. The grinder system serves the sink, a urinal and a toilet. A nearby water cooler also drains into the pump. It's the only restroom in the branch, so both customers and employees use it.

The most powerful of Saniflo's products, the Sanibest grinds waste with a steel cutting blade and uses a pump to send the effluent through ¾- or 1-inch pipe to the sewer or septic system. Despite its exceptional pumping ability, the toilet

themselves and get an idea of how it works."

Residential customers will likely end up with the Saniplus, which uses a fast-rotating macerating blade to process waste and water through ¾-inch pipe. Ideal for homes, the Saniplus can pump effluent 12 vertical feet as well as 150 hor-



Schumacher & Seiler Inc.'s relocated Baltimore branch is a showcase for the Sanibest up-flush macerating system, with a system installed for customers' appraisal. Below right, district manager Bill Pritchett says "A working model has been a great way to help our customers see what they can do in a challenging situation to save time and money."



flushes the standard 1.6 gpf.

Although Pritchett's system needs to pump waste and water just 20 feet, the Sanibest can pump effluent up to 150 horizontal feet and 18 vertical feet. The grinder system can handle heavy toilet use and flushing of sanitary products, so it's ideal for warehouses, rental properties, commercial facilities and other locations where use can't be controlled.

What began as a cost-saving installation quickly turned into a working model, Pritchett explained, noting that even skeptical plumbing installers have been converted. "It's been a great selling tool, especially with homeowners. We tell people in our other stores to go to Eastpoint so they can see it

horizontal feet, so it can easily be installed in attics, bathrooms or anywhere else that plumbing is needed. There really was no question as to what product to install in the new branch, Pritchett noted. "I've been selling Saniflo for years, and we've never had any issues."

Pritchett encourages others to install a Saniflo product in the showroom or warehouse, but not just for convenience or cost savings. "A working model has been a great way to help our customers see what they can do in a challenging situation to save time and money," he added. "You can pretty much put a bathroom anywhere you want with this product."

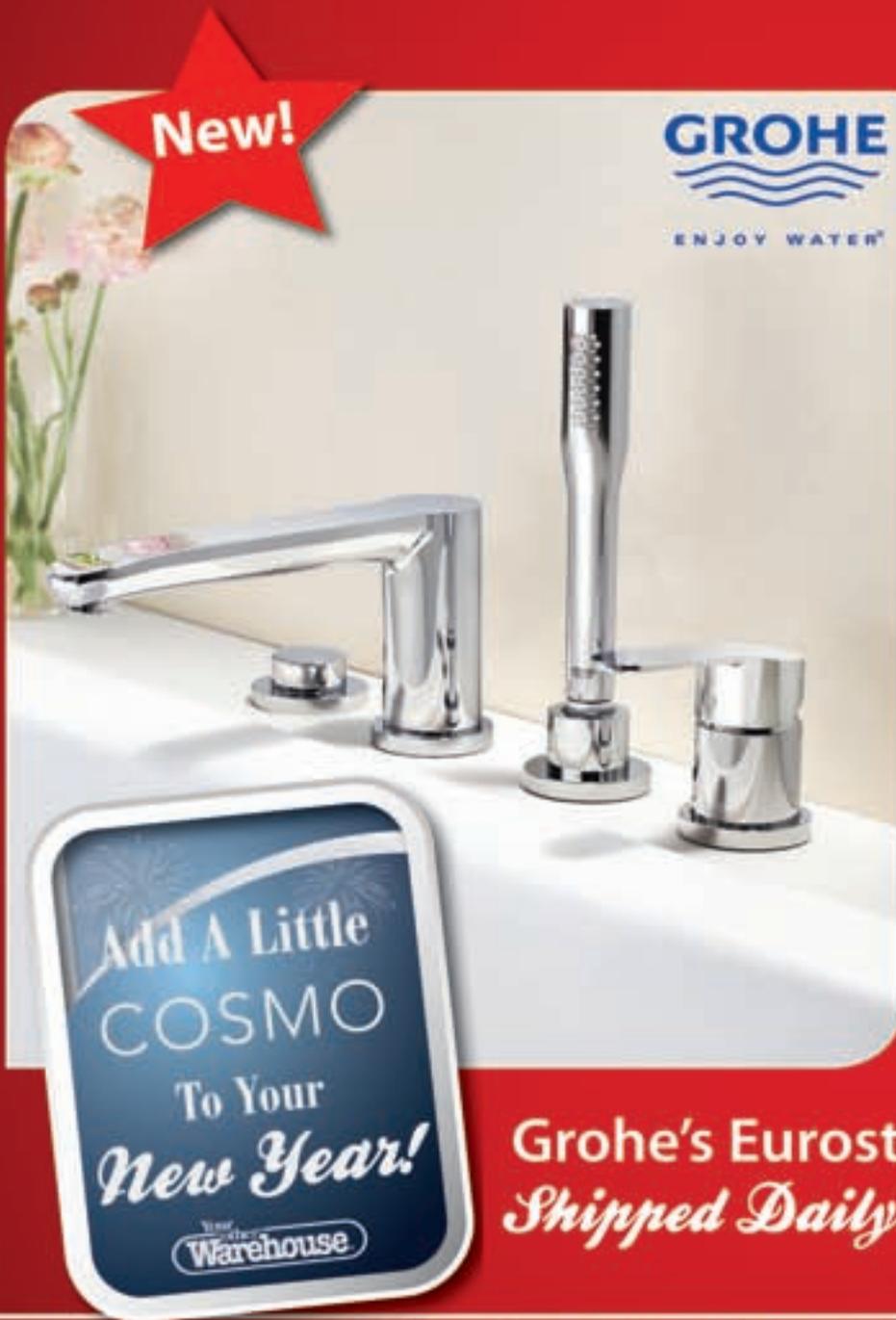
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M. Cooper Supply

'It just keeps getting better!'



BY JOHN E. MARTIN
PVF industry veteran

Welcome readers! Every time I miss a month of processing "Martin's Corner" or skip a month for various reasons, I feel a bit like I simply missed out on a great opportunity to share with the industry and all the readers of *The Wholesaler* another success story about the independent wholesaler in this country of ours that needs to be told.

I can only imagine that when George Merrill Cooper founded M. Cooper Supply Co. way back in 1938, and what was then way out on the southwest side of Chicago, that he had some thought of having a wholesale company to support a niche market he had found out there or needed to support some contractor or end user for any number of reasons. I'm quite sure he had no written plan to make it last 60-plus years; he just wanted to make a buck and stay in business. No Sir, it never entered his mind most likely. As business must have improved for Mr. Cooper in those first 20 years, the U.S. went through a couple of wars (WWII being one of them), during that time also. Culture changes and other major economic changes that happened

- Founded in Chicago in the late 1930s
- Contractors look to M. Cooper for stability
- Continually finding ways to lower costs
- Business culture that honors customers
- Heavily involved in trade associations and buying groups
- Good community member involved in children's charity
- Say 'YES'; never find reason to say "no"

across the country changed the face of our country and they started changes in how business was to be done in our system for ever more.

Now, do the math, 60 years later on September 1, 1998, a young fellow by the name of Dennis Goode came along and purchased M. Cooper Supply. Needing a business vehicle (an umbrella company if you will) by which to make the acquisition happen, Mr. Goode founded a holding company by the name of Goode Industries, and he along with his sons Greg and Dan made the buy, and took control of the company at that point. The new ownership had up front ideas of diversification in services and goods they could offer to make a difference in multi-markets within a defined geographic area.

Starting their efforts with a local company like M. Cooper under their direction that already had a product line base for plumbing products, an inventory, and an active customer base in place seemed to be a good place to start — and so begins the story, that just keeps getting better!

Fast forward to 2004. Since acquiring M. Cooper, and obviously working the plan they created, Goode Industries opened a subsidiary company called M. Cooper Cabinet LLC. Starting from scratch, this fledgling small cabinet supplier (with big ideas) to new homes and downtown high-rise projects experienced substantial growth over the next five years. As we all know in those years, markets such as this were booming and in need of good, steady suppliers of product and finished goods. Dennis Goode and his sons' plan was obviously working for them and playing to the market needs. (As stated by Dennis Goode, "Over the past 30 years, there has been 60 or more independent wholesale businesses of various sizes and shapes go out of business due to not having good working plans for survival in the Chicagoland market. That is why I

started with my sons at my side to learn through me and the markets I chose to serve, and then have them carry on. I still expect that to happen.") That statement would be one apparent solid reason why during this boom starting in 2004 for M. Cooper, they were experiencing great success, as owners and contractors were looking for someone solid and steady to depend on in all phases of their plumbing, cabinets, etc. business.

Fast forward again to 2010, In September of that year, M. Cooper Supply acquired a company by the name of K&L Supply of Hanover Park, which

Ill. Please, meet Mr. Dennis Goode, founder and CEO of Goode Industries, and owner of M. Cooper Supply Co. Good morning Dennis. I thank you so much for allowing myself, Martin's Corner, and *The Wholesaler* industry magazine to have this much of your time to share the story of your company(s) and the growth ride you have been on almost since the start back in 1998.

Goode: Thanks to you John, and it is a pleasure to have you here with us. Having your company (Anvil International) as a valued vendor and partner in our industry efforts is really a pleasure, but having you here also on behalf of the industry to tell our story in print for all the readers of *The Wholesaler* is really an excit-



Front row, l-r: Greg Goode, VP-Sales & Marketing; Dennis Goode, Founder and CEO of Goode Industries and owner of M. Cooper; and Gary Hull, President. Back row, l-r: Jim Mischka, Inside Sales Manager; Dave Poteete, VP-Finance; Janet Pace, VP-Purchasing; and Rick Stahmer, Operations Manager.

is now known as M. Cooper North. Adding this piece of the plan finally enhanced their ability to better service the entire Chicagoland market.

Well, enough of all the information that I have read about or was told or learned from the street about M. Cooper. This company is continuing to move in a very positive way and of course in the right direction under the style of management that has been proven. Let's hear directly from the folks that started it all.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be in the corporate office of M. Cooper Supply in Mokena,

ing deal for us.

Martin: Well Dennis, it is a pleasure to do it. I know you have heard it said from many manufacturers in this business over the years, but it is true that the making of our industry lands squarely on the backs of all the visionary people out there in the past to the current that see a need, and focus on that need for the good of an industry or a segment of that industry. Our success at Anvil was squarely built on the backs of and with the support of independent wholesalers and end-users. It's part of the record, very clear. There (Turn to M. Cooper... page 18.)

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M. Cooper Supply grows by giving back

(Continued from page 16.)
are a lot of good things that go on with all the large and very large chain wholesalers nationally and regionally no doubt. In today's world, producers of commodity products like Anvil makes here in the USA needs good business from all of you to help us run factories, keep hard working people on the pay role, keep production up, and to help you help us continue to compete with importing companies from around the world.

Keeping our plant loaded cost to a real honest competitive number, is the only way we see to make all the above happen for you and for us. We are competitive for the wholesaler because our foundries and plants strive continually to find ways to lower our transaction cost to each of you. We do that by working and knowing the markets, and the players in every market. M. Cooper is a player that we

know in the market you serve — congratulations on that.

Now let's get started with a few questions about the chain of events that have brought you, you companies and all the people that work for M. Cooper to this point today. In my introduction above I told a lot of the start up story starting with Mr. George M. Cooper forming the company in Orland Park in 1938. Sixty years later you purchased it, allowing you and your sons to take control. That started the ball to rolling it seems, but before we get into all the details, tell the readers a little bit about Dennis Goode?

Dennis Goode: Well, to get to that answer, let me start with noting the fact that I was born in the Chicagoland area. In 1976, I went to work in the wholesale plumbing industry as a warehouse person for Builder's Plumbing and Heating Supply in Ad-

dison, Ill. After numerous promotions I was named corporate purchasing manager. Purchasing, I found became a real passion for me. (Note from the writer: Mr. Goode did not tell me this, but just as an aside, I know that he was named Corporate Purchasing Agent of the Year in our industry in 1986!) In 1990, I went to work for L.W. Paul Supply Company, which is where I received 8 years of experience in administration and finance. In 1998, using the vast knowledge I had gained, decided to form Goode Industries Inc., to purchase M. Cooper Supply.

Martin: Thanks Dennis. How about moving on into telling us a bit about your key management TEAM and how they are structured please.

Dennis Goode: You bet I will, John. That is a piece of the company that I really enjoy — building a great core of people to respect and grow the company who respect my busi-

ness philosophy to grow the company.

First of all, I must introduce my son *Greg Goode* to the readers. He is VP of sales and marketing. Greg is being groomed to be the future owner of M. Cooper Supply. He has been in the industry about 18 years. In addi-

“Our company policy is to say ‘Yes,’ rather than to think of a reason to say ‘No,’ and that makes all the difference.”

tion to working full time here running all the sales and marketing aspects of the company, he is also attending Purdue University in the evening pursuing his MBA.

Next we have *Janet Pace* who is (Turn to Serving... page 22.)

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**Merry Christmas.
Happy Hanukkah.**



God Bless America.



Serving Chicagoland since 1938: M. Cooper Supply

(Continued from page 18.)

VP of purchasing for us. Janet came from Louisiana and has been in the business over 35 years working with good companies like LCR-M and Your Other Warehouse, both Hajoca Companies. She also was with Y.O.W. when it was sold to Home Depot. Later she went to work for Builders Plumbing and Heating here in Chicago. Janet came to M. Cooper in 2007 and is doing a great job for us. Having her in charge of our substantial inventory dollars is a real comfort for me. We here at M. Cooper are very proud of Janet's involvement in the industry. As an ex-

ample she was just elected and installed as President of the Chicago Chapter of The Executive Women International. I was very pleased to be asked to give the keynote speech to the chapter at her installation. All these women executives from some 35 plus Chicago area corporate companies are very active in their own business operations like Janet is, but also in joint business issues and problems that harm us all.....working on issues to benefit us all.

and wholesale distribution and has been with M. Cooper since 2005. Currently he is chairman of The Plumbing Division of the American Supply Association and on the Board of Directors of the Midwest Distributors Association.

We are lucky to have *Rick Stahmer* with us also. He was recently hired as operations manager for the company. He is a graduate of Indiana U., with a BS in Finance. He has 25 years of experience in the wholesale business as well, with a lot of that time in IT. His strength and focus is in streamlining processes and maximizing operational cost savings while improving customer service.

Finally, we are pleased to have *Jim Mischka* on board with us as our inside sales manager. He has his Associates degree South Suburban College and has 19 years in the plumbing wholesale business. Jim joined the M. Cooper family in 2006 as the Operations manager and then took over as Inside Sales Manager.

Martin: *Let's move to inventory to service your market segments? Do you let each geographic branch location stand on it's own for inventory buys, or does corporate (Janet) have the direction and the flexibility to make sure local inventories are up to speed based on segment needs?*

Dennis Goode: Fair question, and one that needs a clear cut response. To answer your question in an all-encompassing way, I'll start by saying that currently, M. Cooper Supply operates out of two distribution centers offering a full line of commercial and residential fixtures and faucets, including American Standard, Porcher, Villeroy & Boch, St. Thomas Creations, Jado, Moen, Delta, Brizo, Danze, Jacuzzi, MAAX/Aker, MTI and National Bathing products, Rheem Water Heaters, Charlotte Pipe & Foundry Product, Anvil International products, as well as other pipe, valves and fittings needed in our different market segments served.

Our cabinet division, M Cooper Cabinet Company also warehoused in Mokena, offers kitchen and bath cabinets from Crystal, Fieldstone, Ultracraft, Kitchencraft, Homecrest,

Smart and Bertch vanities, as well as laminate, solid surfaces, quartz and granite countertops. The M. Cooper Kitchen & Bath showroom allows our customers to choose from all of above mentioned names.

We service the entire Chicagoland area, going as far north as Wisconsin, as far west as Rockford and as far south as Kankakee. We also deliver into NW Indiana. We have a total of eight plumbing and cabinet outside salespeople with combined segment duties, and 12 inside salespeople in total.

Martin: *Knowing that inventory management is a darned if I do and darned if I don't balancing act, how have you controlled your inventory over the last of couple of years?*

Greg Goode: Hey, Good morning John! Good to see ya, and my thanks also for giving our company this exposure in *The Wholesaler*. We all appreciate it. On the inventory question, I'll just say that while Janet has qualified help, at the end of the day she is very good at watching it all, and knowing what us going on with the allocated dollars we have in that warehouse. She spends it like it was all hers, and that is a good thing!

Martin: *Thanks Greg. While I have you and Dennis is taking a break, let me throw this two part question at you:*

- *How are the annual sales at M. Cooper divided (%) among the market segments to you are dedicated?*

- *Do you have a market niche that you consider a specialty for you?*

Greg Goode: Hey, I'm glad Dad is on a break also, as I love to answer these questions. First of all reference question 1: The current snap shot (due to the market conditions today that are available), about 93% of our business is plumbing with 65% of that being commercial and 35% of it residential. The balance of 7% is cabinets that consist of 100% residential both single and multi-family.

In reference to question 2, we feel we have created a business culture that honors our customers. We treat them fairly, and react to their needs in a timely manner. Our success is based on our commitment to providing value added services and top quality products to our entire customer base.

John, we have a Mission Statement here at M. Cooper that reads like this:

"The employees of M. Cooper Supply, a Midwest plumbing and cabinet distributor, are committed to the success of our customers by providing excellent customer service while maintaining the highest ethical business practices."

Martin: *Thanks Greg. You have a*

lot of pride my friend, and well you should. Your company mission statement needs repeating often. I hope you have it on our business cards, invoices, etc. Great stuff!

Are there any special or major projects in your area where you have been involved that are a particular source of pride?

Greg Goode: Absolutely, John! Several of the jobs listed below are important to M. Cooper because they involve public institutions for medical and education facilities as an example, which are the backbone of our economy. Please note the following list:

- Northern Illinois University
- University of Chicago Medical Center
- Silver Cross Hospital
- Palos Community Hospital
- The Aqua Hotel –Chicago
- Kinsey East & West Towers – Chicago
- Ritz Carlton –Chicag.o

Martin: *Wow! This is an impressive list of projects in the Chicagoland area. You and the TEAM must be pleased.*

Have you had to change the focus of your business or do anything differently over the past 24 months or so due to the economic slump? Could you describe the situation in your market area now, and when you may see it improving?

Dennis Goode: Thanks Guys. I had to get that phone call. I'm back, so I'll pick up from here. That is another really good question, John, for the times we live in. You know I have told Greg and all our employees that I lean on and respect and need their opinions that, "You must always be

"We continually look for ways to grow our market share either through competitive intelligence or acquisition."

prepared for the opportunity!" During the current economic recession, we've used the opportunity to focus on two things.

First, we dissected our business to determine on what each does well and then, try to enhance it. At that time, we also will make adjustments or corrections to our inefficiencies. Secondly, we continually look for ways to grow our market share either through competitive intelligence or acquisition. Our acquisition of K&L Supply last year, recently renamed M. Cooper North, now completes our strategic placement of the two distribution centers and has positioned (Turn to M. Cooper... page 24.)

"...We feel we have created a business culture that honors our customers. We treat them fairly, and react to their needs in a timely manner. Our success is based on our commitment to providing value added services and top quality products to our entire customer base."

ample she was just elected and installed as President of the Chicago Chapter of The Executive Women International. I was very pleased to be asked to give the keynote speech to the chapter at her installation. All these women executives from some 35 plus Chicago area corporate companies are very active in their own business operations like Janet is, but also in joint business issues and problems that harm us all.....working on issues to benefit us all.

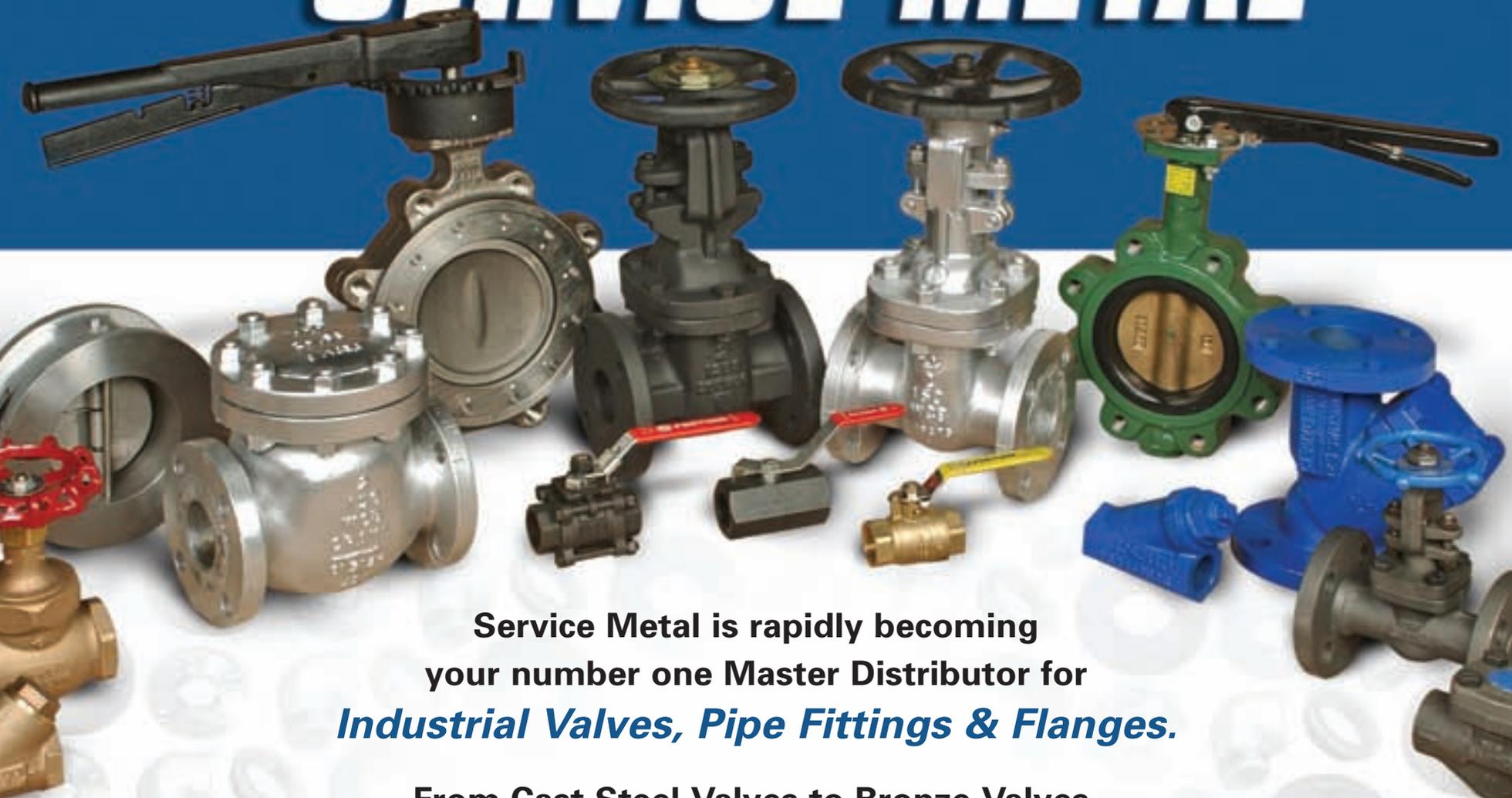
Next, we have a gentleman by the name of *Gary Hull* that I brought in as President quite recently. Gary is a graduate of Roosevelt University with a BSBA. He also entered the business here in Chicago after graduation and spent his entire career cultivating his true passion and that is sales and marketing! In 1982 he helped develop Mid-Continent Marketing, which became a leading manufacturer rep in the state of Illinois.

In 2008, he sold the company to his junior partners. For the next couple years he was consultant to several companies which included M. Cooper, and now he was named as president of M. Cooper Company in early 2011. Gary is a great addition to our company and our TEAM.

We also are pleased to have *David Poteete* with us as VP of finance. He has an Associate's Degree at south Suburban College (1989), and a Managerial/Business Accounting Degree from Purdue Calumet. In various roles since 1990, David has experience with both plumbing contractor

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M. Cooper helping those who can't help themselves

(Continued from page 22.)

tioned us to increase our market share as things turn around.

Martin: Dennis, this is certainly a plan that is text book, and it appears that you have found a way to make it work exactly as you have called it...

of no one that puts effort into a good solid group like Embassy that doesn't get good solid returns like you are, and always have positive things to speak about the group. There are indeed lots of good groups out there today, but you seem to have found a



Warehouse space that M. Cooper allocates to being a partner to a company called 'My Joyful Heart!' These packages are destined for the poor, helpless, hungry, and abused children and families in the Chicagoland area. For more information, log on to www.myjoyfulheart.org.

...Congrats man!

Just a couple more! I must ask you about marketing and buying groups. Being a strong market driven independent in this industry must be a very good feeling with a lot of pride attached. Having said that, I know that M. Cooper is also a proud member of The Embassy Marketing/Buying Group, which is member owned and is completely made up of strong local and regional independent players. Can you share with the readers of "Martin's Corner" the reasons you became a member/owner in Embassy, and has it been what you thought it would be?

Dennis Goode: We strongly feel that a company's involvement in trade associations and buying groups are imperative to the success of a company. Our joining of Embassy Buying Group has been invaluable and has benefited us in many ways. Along with the enhanced incentive opportunities, we have also found the group a good source of networking and benchmarking. In addition to the buying group we are actively involved with the American Supply Association. ASA is nationwide well-known trade industry association. I serve as Chairman of the ASA Governmental Affairs committee. I represent the interests of the Wholesale Plumbing Industry in Washington, DC. Dave Poteete is also the Chairman for the Plumbing Division of ASA and is on the board of the Young Executives (YE) of ASA. Greg Goode is also an active member of the YE.

Martin: You know, Dennis, I know

good home with Wally Gumm and the Embassy member/owner system, and I'd say you made a good choice for the company. Thanks for your honesty!

Okay, moving on, how have your customers' expectations changed over the years, and how has M. Cooper Supply adapted to those changing needs/wants?

Dennis Goode: There have been two major changes in the market over the last two years. First, the customers have pulled back on their inventory levels. This along with the Vendors decreasing their field inventories has forced the wholesaler to increase theirs at a time where everyone is looking for a way control spending. Adjustments were carefully made to our inventory levels to preserve turns and maintain premium service level. Secondly, in today's financial climate with banks tightening credit has forced our customers to rely on us more than ever on us to help finance their projects. Thus, creating a very stressful climate, where we try to diplomatically ask for money in a certain time frame without losing them as a customer.

Martin: My friends, what is My Joyful Heart? Is it a part of some Community Service type organization? Why is a section of your warehouse dedicated to this non-industry looking enterprise aimed at what looked like a distribution shipping point for a side business. Is it leased to some one?

Greg Goode: Okay this one is mine. First of all, John, I assure you that part of our distribution center is

NOT leased to anyone. M. Cooper is community minded in more ways that anyone would most likely think. If I said you could narrow down the community minded wording to be "Children of The Community Minded," it would be even more fitting. We have made it a paramount rule around here for years that what we do as a company for this help and support of the children of our community is first and foremost an effort from the heart and soul of M. Cooper (the company) and its people, and in NO WAY is done or talked about to get industry recognition or praise. We just don't operate that way. With the opportunity to have this article published about our company, I think it is time to make a few statements about our activity with an organization called "My Joyful Heart!"

In March 2009, inspired by the story of My Joyful Heart, we decided to make a commitment to this effort for children care by offering the use of 5,000-square-foot of warehouse space in our Mokena Distribution Center. Since the move to our location My Joyful Heart is now able to assist 500 children throughout 14 schools. These under-privileged children ages three months to 17 years old receive a gift package six times a year. Gift packages consist of clothing, shoes, books and hygiene related product which most of us take for granted. We are

"We strongly feel that a company's involvement in trade associations and buying groups are imperative to the success of a company. Our joining of Embassy Buying Group has been invaluable and has benefited us in many ways...In addition to the buying group we are actively involved with the American Supply Association."

blessed to be able to help such a wonderful organization. We also sponsor several other community activities with the hope to spread the word of our family business and increase our customer loyalty.

Martin: To you, Greg and to all the readers of "Martin's Corner," If I have any soft spots in my old heart, the largest is the one that is focused on child abuse and senseless harm to children. I must tell you that my heart melted upon walking thru the packaging area of this "My Joyful Heart" operation and seeing clothes, and dolls, and toys, and shirts, and shoes, and pajamas, and bibles, and books, etc, etc, etc. ear-marked in shipping containers for different age boys and girls — WOW! I can't tell you how wonderful it felt and what a great surprise for me to see such an effort in a warehouse dedicated to plumbing

and industrial products.

Let me tell ya, God is making simply wonderful and loving things happen here by people that love kids and want to serve the community. This is not M. Cooper doing this, this is M. Cooper acting as a partner to them and finding a small part of their warehouse space and allowing them a very safe and quality controlled place to perform this great community service for God, and mankind. Readers, I was really touched and if you want to know more or read more on this wonderful effort, just go their website which is (www.myjoyfulheart.org) and see for yourself. Be sure to take a box of Kleenex with ya; It will bless your day.

Okay, just a couple more I promise, then we can go for lunch! Can you describe the leadership philosophy at M. Cooper for the readers, such as accessibility to customers and employees, and hands-on activity by the owners and key management?

Dennis Goode: Back again! Our company philosophy is to say "YES" rather than to think of a reason to say "no," and that makes all the difference! We empower our people to take care of a delicate situation at any cost. Most of the time, the marginal cost is outweighed by a benefit and at the same time it creates a more loyal customer.

Martin: I buy in to that, Dennis, I really do. Okay, here is the next to last question! With so many sources

of competition in the marketplace, how does M. Cooper differentiate itself?

Dennis Goode: The Chicagoland market is a changing landscape. I think I mentioned early on in this interview how many wholesalers have gone out of business during the past 30 or so years. It is something like some 63 different businesses in total due to bad management or lack of any management. I really believe that. Several of them happened within the last two years that we have personal knowledge of. As current as September 2011, we witnessed yet another local independent be acquired by a publicly traded company. Being a privately held company allows us to maintain our company philosophy that gets lost with the "mega suppliers" and create a culture that set (Turn to M. Cooper... page 26.)

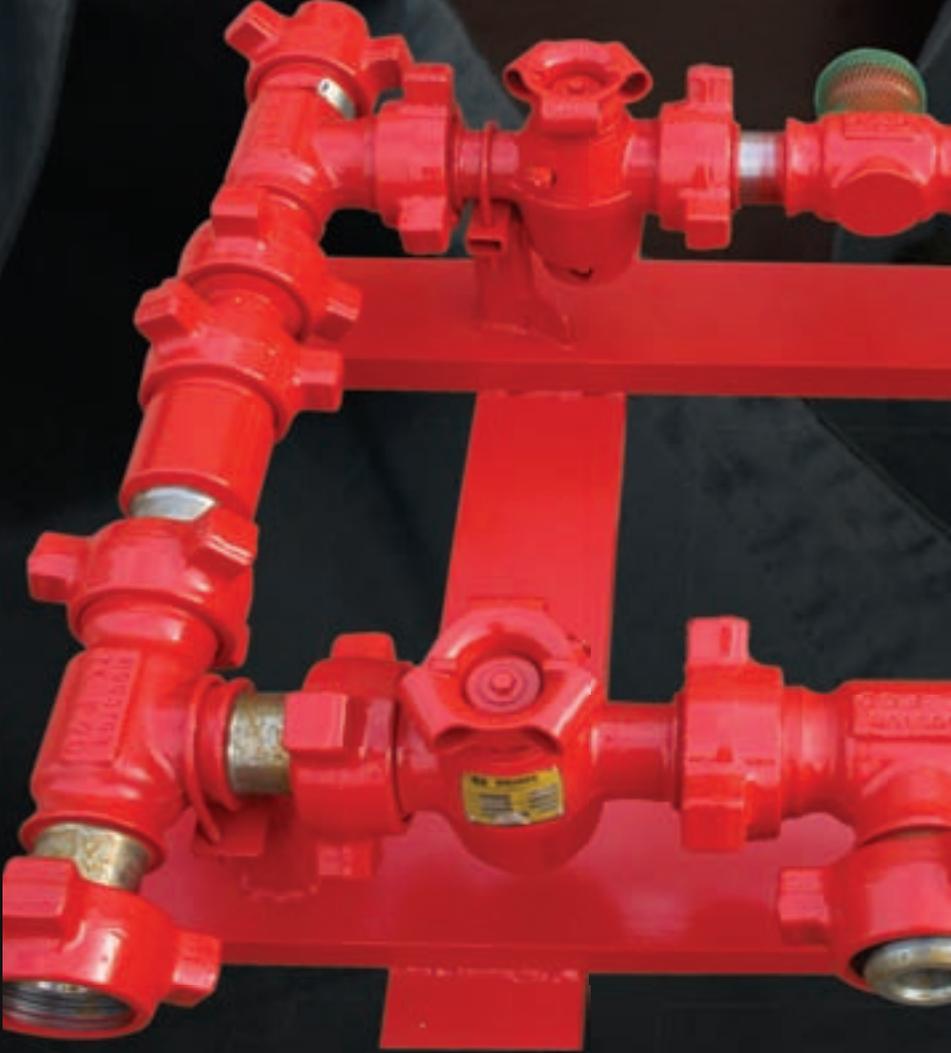


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M. Cooper Supply builds on tradition of service, value

(Continued from page 24.)

us apart from the competition. That makes us more dynamic.

Martin: *Forgive me, Dennis, but I'm gonna relate all that to really being in the people business category! It really makes sense if you just pay attention and take care of a customer with proper attention and a great product. Great answer above. I really appreciate it.*

My last question I would like to direct towards Greg. With you being the future of this company and based on being and continuing to be an independent, where do you feel M. Cooper will be or should be over the next five years?

Greg Goode: The combined 110,000 square feet of warehouse space will allow us to continually im-

prove our warehouse efficiencies and capabilities which ultimately lower our operating cost. Along with having an excellent history of controlling operating expenses and maximizing inventory turns has created a business portfolio that will take us to higher levels of sales and service in the future. Thus, we will achieve our business goals and also be recognized as an independent market leader.

Martin: *Fellows, what a great time I have had getting the time and space to do this article with you. Dennis, I sure appreciate you taking the time to set with me for this time to do this interview. Greg, good luck to you my friend, and Janet, you're just the best, and so thanks for working with me to set all this up. You guys have a great company in M. Cooper,*

so much success to you in the future. It has been a pure pleasure.

That's it readers! Here's wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a very

"We have made it a paramount rule around here for years that what we do as a company for this help and support of the children of our community is first and foremost an effort from the heart and soul of M. Cooper [the company] and its people, and in NO WAY is done or talked about to get industry recognition or praise."

happy Holiday Season, right into the New Year, okay? By the way, be sure to remember that great wine goes wonderful with good or great turkey or ham for Christmas dinner, so be sure to follow up this read on M. Cooper with my "Wine Tip of the

Month" in this December issue as well. Enjoy the holidays! Remember it is winter now. It gets cold out there in a lot of places, so don't forget the coat and gloves, and if trying out a

few good wines with friends, please drink safe and responsible!

God Bless, and feel free to contact me at anytime about anything! Have a great Holiday Season, and See ya in 2012. ■

— John

Wine tip of the month

Want your Holiday Gatherings to be the best on the block (maybe the neighborhood) this year? Read on!

Happy Holidays everyone! No matter how you celebrate this wonderful season of love, friendship, a family gathering, travel, great food, gift giving, celebrating the thoughts of a new year, etc., etc., etc. .no matter what, when, or where, having the opportunity to do what ever you do is a great time to enjoy a great bottle of wine! It can be one of your old standby "bottles", or should you want to stand out from the crowd as a forward thinker in great wines and the proper use of it during the Holiday Season, then you should continue to read on for sure. It is true that with all the retailers around the country normally willing to make less margin this year (have you heard that in your business this past couple years), you can really find some pretty good bargains out there if you know a bit about what you are looking for.

It is said that the month of December is the number one month on the calendar when people think of hospitality and merriment! That's a good thing. December is a time when you can enjoy alcohol related drinks with an easy conscience. Since wine is always my choice of drink, I always look forward to this time of year, the "World Wide Holiday Season!" Let's focus on wine or wine related drinks for this year's celebrations and see what we can come up with, okay?

As with the wine parties we have around my house a couple times a year, at Christmas and all thru the Season when we have guest, I try to typically have something that will please every one, even the most critical person that may partake of the "fruit of the vine," huh? Think about this. If you

have a variety of drinks available, you'll really have something for casual drinkers, drinks for toasting the "Season" or other special events like birthdays, or even new births! How about drinks simply for the pure pleasure of being able to be free and to be with friends! Now that is the "drink of choice" for me — .being free to worship the faith of your choice, and to have a list of people that you call friends and really mean it. That is the best, so to me that is when you really try to gain their attention with the knowledge that you have gained about good wines to great wines, know what I mean?

I suggest that during the Christmas Season, you always start a party or a dinner get together with friends, with a nice crisp glass of a simple and good champagne. The label does not have to be extravagant at all. Two companies I have knowledge that make really good champagne are Lidl or Aldi. You'll like or love them both for sure. Remember, serve the Champagne as cold as you can get it, always. It is a great way to get conversation started, and I promise you, it will quickly turn to wine! Remember this — and I have stated this before in other articles — most people will have their own opinion on the kind of wine they want or like, and their reason for it. When it is time to get off the Champagne and into various wine, if you have a couple bottles of a good everyday Cab like say Pepper Bridge from Walla Walla, Washington, and a reasonable Merlot like say Elyse from Napa, and a Red Zin like say St. Francis from Napa, and a couple bottles of Adastra Pinot Noir from Napa, you'll be in good shape with reds to offer. You should also have a couple bottles of white wine like Chardonnay from Adastra also, and a Sav. Blanc from Mason. Both are easy

priced and taste just right. All these will please most everyone, and the higher end products that you may have or are thinking about having will not get consumed with little knowledge of a difference, if any at all. Save those for a smaller diner party of say you two best couple friends that may share the same taste buds as you when it comes to great wines.

If you are thinking of an after meal or after dinner drink of some kind, there is just about nothing finer than a good glass of Port. Believe it or not, this is a wine that is slipping out of fashion. It is very rich in flavor, and it is a deep fortified wine also. That is why it is typically served in very small glasses. Have one and you will confirm that it is quite nice, and a small glass is very satisfying. Many producers (brand labels) offer one called a "Tawny Port" — very good, tasty, and affordable.

Offer a nice cup of coffee after that, and you will have a bunch of happy campers telling you what a great time they have had. After all, isn't that what the Holiday Season is all about? Thank God for all the good things that come from him, and acknowledge that with Him and only Him, you can keep fighting for better days.

So my friends, thanks for your loyalty this year and from "Martin's Corner" to you all I wish you the very best in a Happy Holiday Season, and a happy content life in the New Year, with lots of business. Until next time, remember this: It is my belief that wine is not a bad thing, but what it causes some people to do by not knowing when to stop, is a bad thing, so for the sake of better times for all, please limit your in-take and drink responsible. Take care, and get in touch with me on any subject anytime you have the need. Your friendship is key for me and for this magazine. See you in January 2012! ■ — John

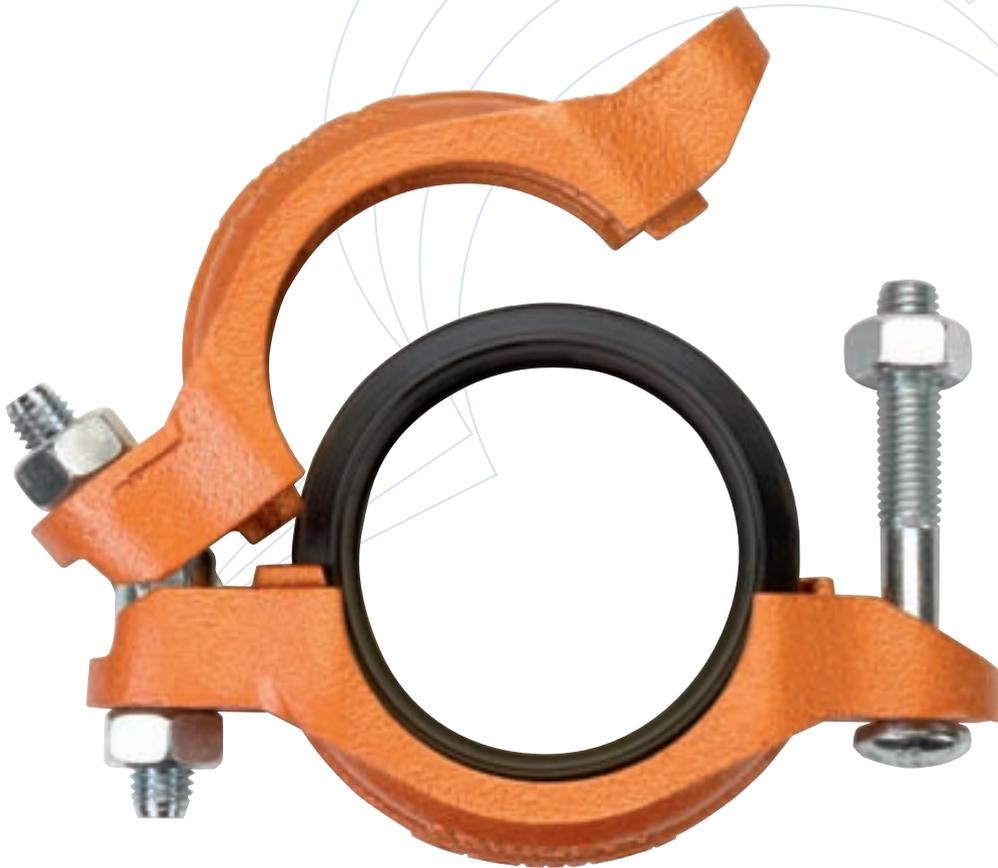
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INDUSTRY NEWS

Weldbend's Del Buono still going strong in his 90s

BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS

One of the most colorful, committed and longest-serving PVF sector activists is Weldbend's Quality Assurance Manager, Amerigo Del Buono. He celebrated his 90th birthday with his Weldbend associates in attendance on Oct. 25.

A U.S. Army enlisted man and officer during World War II, Del — as all of his many industry friends refer to him — saw active duty, mostly in General Douglas MacArthur's re-conquest of the Philippines in 1944-45. He volunteered for military service right after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, as a 20-year-old Wayne University student. Much of his long-lasting and avid patriotism came from his father, Giuseppe, who emigrated from Italy with his family in 1919, after serving in the Italian Army for much of World War I, during Italy's ongoing battles with Austria-Hungary.

With the onrush of Fascism looming over Italy's post-war turmoil, the Del Buono family decided to transfer their allegiance to the U.S., where Del's father found immediate employment with the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, Mich. As the family's first-born in America, Del was named "Amerigo," which focused on the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci, from whose name both the United States of America, and both North and South American continents were derived. After distinguished military service from which he received an honorable discharge in 1946 as a captain, he returned to Detroit's Wayne University, where he had only finished his freshman year before the war.

Taking advantage of the GI Bill of Rights, he not only completed his undergraduate studies at Wayne, but went on to receive a Masters Degree in Engineering.

Shortly after being awarded his educational diplomas, Del started his long and ongoing trek in the pipe-valve-fitting sector, joining the venerable Taylor Forge Corporation as a professional engineer. He subsequently worked for Southwest Fabricating before joining ITT Grinnell's

manufacturing operations as manager at their Princeton, Ky., location, producing large diameter fittings and flanges. That location was particularly adroit at nuclear-oriented flow control devices, having previously received the coveted government-awarded N-Stamp.

When the Three Mile Island near-nuclear meltdown in 1979 extinguished America's enthusiasm for new nuclear power installations, the Kentucky-based plant was closed in the early 1980s, due to a lack of sufficient demand.

It was not long after, while Del Buono was presiding over the dismantling of the Grinnell operational plant facility that the intrepid engineer was visited by both James Coulas Sr., the founder of Weldbend, and his son Jim, the firm's current President. As Del describes it, "There was an immediate camaraderie that has lasted for the ensuing 25 years." After due discussion as to how they could join forces, a mutual decision was reached for Del Buono to come on board as Weldbend's Quality Assurance Manager, in a consulting capacity.

The Coulases were very much aware at that point that the carbon steel broad size range of fittings and flanges was in the process of switching to the lowest cost available import sources. That would likely endanger the industry's quality standards in an increasing number of applications, with potentially cataclysmic consequences.

With Del Buono's experience in helping build a strong quality assurance-based team in Weldbend's ultra-modern manufacturing operations, this partnership has enhanced Weldbend's reputation as one of the industry's top practitioners of maintaining the highest capability in enhancing the safety and security in whatever end-use applications its products are found.

Del Buono has spent an increasing amount of his time in the field with the Weldbend sales organization, counseling distributors and their customers in maintaining constant vigilance to make sure that the dangers of product failure are kept to an absolute minimum.

With Del's energy, vigor, and up-to-date knowledge, it's a good bet that his continuous contributions to Weldbend and the industry at large will continue to manifest themselves for many more years to come. ■

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32 • **PHCP/PVF**
Person of the Year

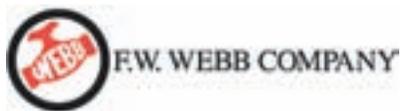
The caretaker

John Pope reflects on illustrious career building F.W. Webb

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

“Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.”
 — John Wooden

When I joined this great industry in 1994, one of the most important lessons I learned was that it is not defined by the products within it — but rather by the legacy of individuals who have tirelessly given of themselves to enrich their companies, their trading partners and the industry as a whole.



“This business is all about relationships... You’re only as good as the last order you got, so you want to make sure that you’ve got the best people taking care of your customers, and that they care.”



John Pope (at head of table) has built a dedicated team at F.W. Webb, including (from left) Ernie Coutermarsh, John Provencal and Jeff Pope. His ability to listen and ‘let the players play’ has inspired great loyalty throughout the organization.

It’s been such a privilege for me to meet and learn about many of these individuals over the years. These legends — many of whom are part of what Tom Brokaw has termed “The Greatest Generation” — really are a special breed. They laid the course for their own businesses and paved the way for all those who followed.

The Wholesaler wanted a way to honor these outstanding individuals, and so we present our inaugural PHCP/PVF Person of the Year to F.W. Webb CEO John Pope. It was my absolute delight to visit the company’s headquarters in Bedford, Mass., this fall to interview Mr. Pope, his son Jeff, who serves as F.W. Webb president, and key executives Ernie Coutermarsh and John Provencal.

Mr. Pope epitomizes the John Wooden quote I used above. He is an exceptionally smart man who just five years after joining the business had to learn on his feet following the sudden death of his father. In his 55-year career, Pope has shown incredible foresight in building a dynamic, highly successful wholesaling business that covers much of the Northeast. At the same time, it is his character that is what others largely



F.W. Webb is headquartered in this beautiful building in Bedford, Mass. The highly diversified company has about 1,400 employees across its 75 locations in the Northeast and sells into 11 market segments.

use to define him.

A former Naval officer, Pope certainly exemplifies the pledge they make to be “An Officer and a Gentleman.” Throughout his years at the helm of F.W. Webb, Pope has built an extremely loyal workforce and customer and vendor base. He has also given countless hours of volunteer leadership to industry associations, as well as supporting numerous charities and organizations in the Northeast.

Following are excerpts from our conversation.

MJM: Did you grow up working in the business?

John Pope: I had worked at the Salem location during the summers while I was in school, and then after I got out of the Navy, I worked at the Roxbury store. The Navy taught me a lot and was a great experience. I was on active duty for two years and then in the reserves. As a 23-year-old, I was in charge of 90 men. It was a challenge, but I had a great chief. We made a deal. I said, “You take care of these guys and I’ll take care of you.”

I liked the way my father lived and enjoyed working in the business for him when I was in school, so when I got out of the Navy, I figured ‘Why not?’ Something interesting is that former Boston Celtic great Bill Rus-

sell worked for a Ford dealership next door as salesman. Back in those days, professional athletes didn’t make anywhere near the money they do now, and many took off season jobs



F.W. Webb CEO John Pope

to make ends meet.

MJM: I love the quote from your father, Roger Pope: “Management’s responsibility to employees is to give them the opportunity to make money and to show them how to have fun doing it.” He sounds like such a genuine man. What memories would you share with me about your dad?

John Pope: Dad graduated from (Turn to At F.W.... page 34.)

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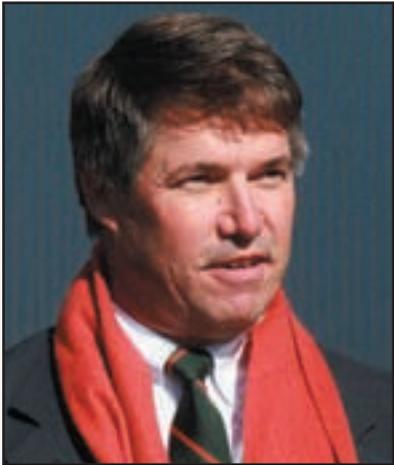
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34. PHCP/PVF Person of the Year

At F.W. Webb, John Pope trusts his people to build the company

(Continued from page 32.)

college. He was the son of a master plumber, and became a master plumber himself. He was really a bright guy who could spell about any



Jeff Pope, F.W. Webb president

word you ever wanted him to. He was somewhat stern, but he was a risk taker. To buy a company in Roxbury in 1933 was a huge risk.

He was a wonderful man to know. Every Tuesday night, I'd go up and have dinner at the big house and he'd sit and talk about the company. He was pulling information out of me and not giving much. He was trying

to find out what I knew.

Dad was right. I don't know how you can have more fun than making things happen. You've got to keep trying new things to find out what will work. You should have fun at what you do. When the company was a lot smaller, we had a lot of bonding opportunities. We'd all go count inventory together at our locations. And we used to have managers' weekends each year, going to a resort and just having fun together. As we've grown so much, and we have a lot more people, these things are harder to do.

MJM: What was it like for you at such a young age to take over the reins after his sudden death?

John Pope: It was hard. Several of my father's compatriots looked at me as a 29-year-old who didn't know anything, and thought they didn't need to answer to me. I had a lot to learn.

I did learn that you've got to lose before you win. If you don't, you probably don't know how to win or why. The company wasn't growing. We had the same basic sales numbers for about five years. You can't make money doing that.

So I started turning to others for ad-



•THE WHOLESALER® — DECEMBER 2011

Just part of F.W. Webb's impressive fleet of trucks, although, says John Pope, 'What creates the Webb company are the people.'

vice, we made some acquisitions and away we went. I learned how to listen and, much like the philosophy in the Navy, how to "Let the players play." Sometimes, you've got to get the hell out of the way. You've got to have trust in your people because if you don't, you can't grow.

MJM: It sounds as though you also learned a lot from your father's best friend Jack Douglas of Douglas Pottery in Cincinnati.

John Pope: Prior to my father's sudden death, I had only been with the company a few years, working as an inventory clerk and outside salesman. I didn't have a clue how to run the business. I'd sit there at night alone in the building trying to decide what to do. I wanted to do things the same as my father, but I had a lot to learn.

I was fortunate to be able to lean on "Uncle Jack," as I called him. He was very bright and I learned a great deal from him. One of the most important things he taught me was that if someone asks you a question, say "Why do you ask?" Try to find out why people are asking a question; it will help teach you what they are looking for.

MJM: Give us an overview of F.W. Webb today?

John Pope: We've got about 75 locations currently, including 25 major ones and 27 showrooms, and more than 1,400 employees. Our territory runs from Maine down to Connecticut and from the coast as far south as Newburgh, N.Y.

We made a conscious effort to keep buying inventory. I think we've captured a bigger market share because we do have inventory available. But we still have many good competitors and as long as one of their trucks is going down the street, it's an order we don't have. I always ask "Why?" We don't have all the business; we never will. But we can try like hell.

This business is all about relationships. Selling can be hard sometimes;

sometimes you're your own worst enemy. You're only as good as the last order you got, so you want to make sure that you've got the best people taking care of your customers, and that they care.

Our employees stay with us a long time; most have been here at least 15 years and have maxed out on their vacation time. We also have



In 2006 F.W. Webb became an official sponsor of the Boston Red Sox and got its logo on the Green Monster at Fenway Park.

some multi-generation family members here.

We have a profit sharing plan for employees that helped build that loyalty. We take 25% of all we make before tax and give it back to the employees. It allows them to share in the money we make, and it's a great incentive for them.

MJM: You have worked very hard to diversify F.W. Webb. What are some of the key areas of business you're in?

John Pope: We are in 11 markets all together. That has enabled our company to continue to grow and expand, because when some markets are down, others are up.

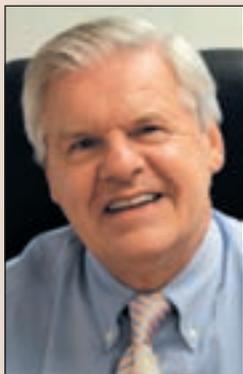
There are four primary legs to our stool — plumbing, hydronic heating, industrial PVF and HVAC. Then we have smaller parts like refrigeration, pumps, bio-pharm, fire protection, LP gas, and water systems.

I don't think that you can survive today with only plumbing and hydronic heating. But, you've got to (Turn to Third-generation..page 36.)

Reflections from Ernie Coutermarsh

Senior vice president-industrial business development Ernie Coutermarsh has been with F.W. Webb for more than 40 years — and has a goal of reaching 50 years with the company. He holds great affection and respect for John Pope, and graciously shared some of his reflections with me.

"I came out of Marine Corps, which taught me teamwork, history and tradition. When I first met with John one of the things that struck me was that F.W. Webb embodied those same characteristics. When you get to know John, you can see the pride, which is the fuel that has helped the company evolve. He challenged all of us to grow and shared his vision of the future. He created an expectation that stretched you and made you think of yourself in a different way; not as an employee, but more like an owner. It makes you want to please him, and it also helps you develop a healthy self-respect. He took a lot of ordinary folks and put us in the right spots. He encouraged us to take chances, with the attitude of 'You've got to buy a ticket to



go on the ride.'

"We don't fear anybody, but we have a healthy respect for the other competitors out there of all sizes. We know that at the core it is our customers making decisions every day, and there are plenty of other choices for our customers today. We have been conditioned to provide an extraordinary level of service.

"John has a great gift of really listening to people. He used to carry a little leather notebook and when he'd pull it out, it meant he was taking notes. He would want to know the good and the bad, why we made certain decisions and if the ball is moving forward or how we plan on fixing a problem.

"He surrounded us with all the tools we needed and a humble attitude. He has always been personally involved and worked hard. He talks about the nuts and bolts of distribution, customers, service and what it really means, trends and how they will affect us. He also taught us about being loyal and respectful to our vendors, and growing the business together." ■



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36. PHCP/PVF Person of the Year

Third-generation family business F.W. Webb looks to 4th generation

(Continued from page 34.)

build your niche businesses to be big enough so they're meaningful.

We made some key acquisitions like Shepard Corporation, Kennebec Supply, and Victor, to get us into the LP business; ECS, which gave us entry into the HVACR business; and INSCO that got us into valve controls.

When it comes to acquisitions, the most important thing is the sharing of information. When you cast your bread on the water, it doesn't always have to come back soggy.

Being diversified has really helped us when the economy struggles. We've consistently looked at what other ponds we could be a big fish in. It's always going to be what else makes sense for us to get into and how are we going to grow our busi-

ness. There are still opportunities in this territory to grow.

MJM: *You have an impressive Central Distribution facility. How has it helped your business?*

John Pope: If we hadn't done it, I think we'd be out of business because it has cut out so much inventory redundancy.

The CD came about because I was driving down to Quincy one day and saw a big building with a sign for Jordan Marsh on the side. I knew they didn't have a store there and I started investigating. I learned about the concept of centralized distribution and thought it could work well in our business. We built it around 1970.

It has also been instrumental in growing our CD Sales master distribution business. After we built our

A long, distinguished history

F.W. Webb's roots go back to 1866 when two men – Stultz and Mansur – formed a small brass shop in Boston. In 1888 they sold their shop to Henry McShane of Baltimore, owner of The McShane Company, which was famous for its church bells and its large brass foundry. McShane named his brother-in-law Frank W. Webb as the general manager of the Boston distribution facility. In 1900, Webb purchased the Boston facility and changed the name of the company to The F.W. Webb Manufacturing Company. The company manufactured brass fittings, faucets and accessories, and also offered china and enameled iron plumbing fixtures — much of which were made by Trenton pottery under the F.W. Webb label.

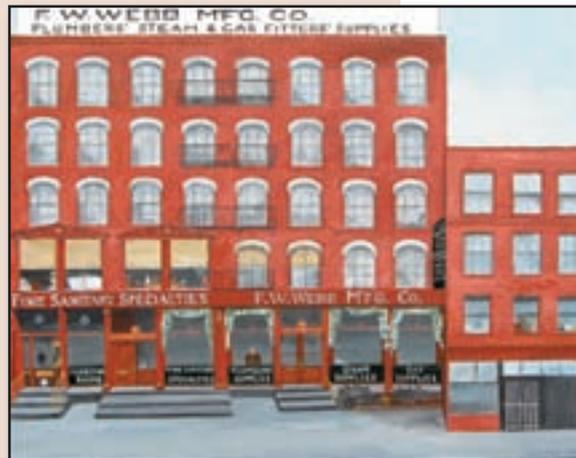
Webb died in 1912, and its growth was limited in the ensuing years. The Pope family and others purchased the company in 1933, when sales were less than \$350,000.

By 1945, Roger Pope began to expand F.W. Webb with new locations in Fitchburg, Greenfield, Hyannis, Pittsfield and Salem, Mass., as well as their first location across state lines in Nashua, N.H. John Pope joined the company in 1956. When Roger Pope passed away in 1962, the company had seven locations and sales in excess of \$5 million.

In the 1970s, F.W. Webb made a series of key acquisitions, including Atlantic Pipe in Boston; Crane Supply with locations in Portland, Maine and Springfield, Mass.; Shepard Supply with locations in Barre, Rutland and St. Johnsbury, Vt. During the time, the company also opened start-up locations in Williston, Vt., Lebanon and Dover, N.H., and Bangor, Maine. In 1978 F.W.

Webb built a 60,000-square-foot Central Distribution facility in Merrimack, N.H.

Jeff Pope joined the company in 1980 and by the end of that decade, F.W. Webb opened locations in Albany, Plattsburgh and Queensbury, N.Y. In the 1990s, the company opened



Painted by Jenny Pope, this canvas depicts F.W. Webb Manufacturing Co. in Boston when Frank W. Webb (pictured in center window) purchased it in 1900.

branches in Syracuse, N.Y. and Hartford, Conn., along with making acquisitions of Energy Control Systems in Woburn, Mass., International Supply in Lincoln, R.I., Kentrol Inc. and Sevo Inc.; the W.L. Blake Co. in Portland, Maine; and Victor Mfg.

In more recent years, F.W. Webb created the Webb BioPharm division to service pharmaceutical and bio-tech markets throughout New England and New York, and acquired Utilities Supply, a major player in the plastic PVF business. The company's annual sales now exceed \$700 million. ■



•THE WHOLESALER® — DECEMBER 2011

A history buff, John Pope has quite a collection of company memorabilia on display throughout the F.W. Webb headquarters. Here, with just a sample of the displays in Pope's office are (from left) John Pope, Ernie Coutermarsh, Jeff Pope and John Provencal.

CD, we wondered what else we could do with it, and we started thinking about how to sell to our competitors because they've got an order we don't and we wanted a way to get a piece of it. We ship product all over the world. We are very reliable and make it easy for wholesalers who need to get a product quickly.

MJM: *A lot of companies give lip service to the term "customer service" but you seem to really live it. How have you managed to instill that throughout your company?*

Jeff Pope: Managing is like writing in the snow while it's still snowing. You've got to keep going over and over and over it. Does everybody understand? Maybe not at first. Will they? Eventually. Why? We have Profit Sharing that has been a great incentive to service the customer. But, it's always a work in progress.

We have a slogan that says "Every Customer Counts." And we mean both our external and internal customers. We transfer a lot of products between branches. We have to continue to impress upon our people how important it is to get the material — correct and on time — from one store to another. It has to be perfect. Working as a team when you have over 1,400 people and 70-plus locations is one of our biggest challenges.

MJM: *Jeff, what are some of the key things you've learned from the way your father has managed this business?*

Jeff Pope: First thing is listening to our people — especially those who

are out there with our customers or with our products, like the truck drivers and the warehouse and counter personnel. Try to make them feel comfortable enough to talk to you openly and not criticize them just because they might tell you something you don't want to hear.

You also have to prepare them to

"Sometimes you've got to get the hell out of the way. You've got to have trust in your people because if you don't, you can't grow."

make tough decisions. You have to have faith in your people and let them do their jobs. Everyone will make mistakes but that's how we all learn. We want them to have the confidence to try. Hunkering down has never been our style.

We're defying the odds right now as a third-generation family owned company. I want to make sure it gets to the next generation. My dad has always taught me that our role is as the caretakers of this business.

MJM: *Jeff, talk about what it's been like growing up in this business and now serving as president of F.W. Webb?*

Jeff Pope: There's a lot of pressure in being my dad's son, but I was exposed to the business from a young age and was fortunate to have someone like [former president] Jack Hester to report to and he taught me so much. I've also got a great team that surrounds me.

I've been just about everything — working at the counter, warehouse, inside sales, outside sales, store manager and general manager. Being a store manager was very valuable experience. (Turn to John Pope... page 38.)

5 FOR 5



For the fifth straight year, Bradford White is the tank water heater brand most purchased by professional contractors. And again, we are the most recommended brand.

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*Ranking is based on the 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 CLEARReports by Clear Seas Research. Please visit www.clearseasresearch.com for additional information. © 2011, Bradford White Corporation. All rights reserved.

See contact information on page 70

38. PHCP/PUF Person of the Year

John Pope views self as caretaker of F.W. Webb's 145-year traditions

(Continued from page 36.)

perience for me. It was a small branch and you had to do everything; plus you got to meet customers up close, and had to take care of everything and anything that came at you.

Since 2002, I've been the president and I really enjoy it. I like setting a course of what I want to see happen and then determining what we need to do to make sure that it happens. It's going to be fun building the team of our future. I occasionally think about what the next F.W. Webb is going to look like.

MJM: Mr. Pope, I've been told that you never refer to F.W. Webb as "my company" but rather "Frank's company." Why is that?

John Pope: What creates the Webb company are the people. You cannot make a cult figure out of one person. Sometimes people try to make you into something you don't want to be. If you refer to something as a third party, you can do a lot of things. I inherited my job; I didn't climb over a lot of people's backs to get here. You've got to get the ego out of the way.

MJM: Based on your long experience, are there any words of wisdom you could share with today's younger generation?

John Pope: You have to look at things the way you think other people are looking at them. If you listen hard enough and let the players play, good things will happen. People can tell you all the important information you need to know if you provide an open environment of communication. The good ones will leave if you don't listen to them and let them grow; then you'll be stuck with the average or worse employees. You've got to make business fun and challenging to inspire the best people.

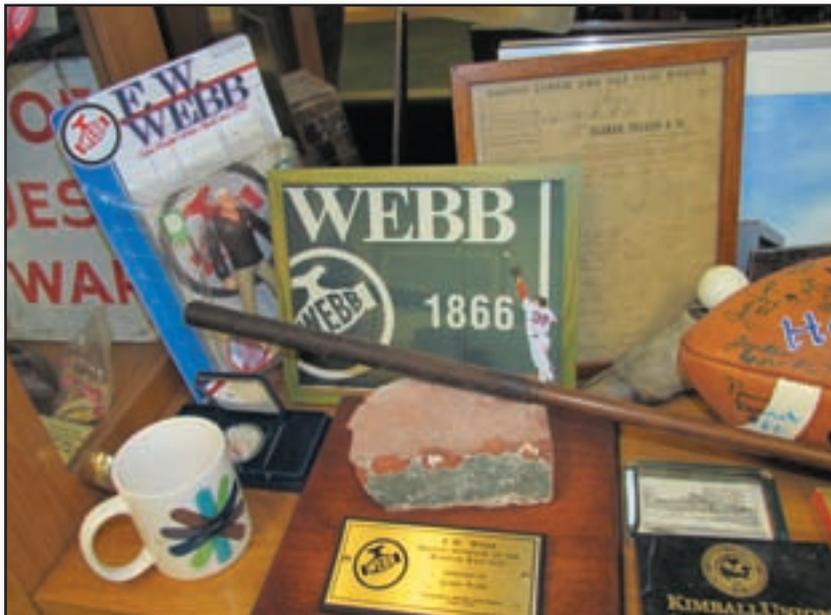
One of my favorite sayings is from Guiseppe Mazzini, who was an Italian revolutionary: "Sleep not in the tents of your fathers. The world is advancing. Advance with it."

People that adapt are successful. You must adapt to your environment or you will perish. And it's important to remember, you only get to drive the bus for a while and then it's someone else's turn. ■

How times change

To give you a perspective on Mr. Pope's length of service, here are some interesting facts from 1956 — the year he joined F.W. Webb:

- A new car cost around \$2,050
- Norma Jean Mortenson changed her name to Marilyn Monroe
- A gallon of gas was 22 cents
- A loaf of bread cost 18 cents
- Dwight Eisenhower was President and Richard Nixon was Vice President
- Cost of a first class postage stamp was 3 cents
- Minimum wage in the United States was \$1.00 per hour
- "Around the World in 80 Days" won Best Motion Picture at the Academy Awards
- Elvis Presley released "Hound Dog" and "Heartbreak Hotel"
- Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line" became a hit ■



Sports have been a big part of Webb's marketing efforts, from sponsoring the Boston Red Sox to NASCAR racing events.



Editorial director Mary Jo Martin was delighted to spend a day at the F.W. Webb headquarters in Bedford, Mass., to conduct interviews for this article. Here, she prepares to shoot a short video with F.W. Webb president Jeff Pope. Visit the 'On the Road' section of www.thewholesaler.com to view the videos Mary Jo recorded with key members of the F.W. Webb team.

"People that adapt are successful. You must adapt to your environment or you will perish. And it's important to remember, you only get to drive the bus for a while, and then it's someone else's turn."

Thoughts from John Provencal

Senior vice president-sales John Provencal is another of F.W. Webb's long-time employees, with 31 years of service. He, too, wanted to share his thoughts on the legacy that John Pope has built at F.W. Webb.

"He never wanted to be in the spotlight, but his position put him there. He's stayed consistent in his style and management through the years. He believes that the success of the company was his people, and even refers to employees as stakeholders. You run into a lot of people in business who refer to employees as 'my people' or 'my team.' But with John, it's always been 'we' or 'Frank's company.' He's a pretty remarkable



guy. You don't find many people like him.

"He's always reinvested in the company and the people, and created an entrepreneurial spirit within the company. Longevity here is infectious. You go to our branches and it's almost like there is a whole bunch of owners. It is great to hear them talk about the company as a team. The attitude comes down from the top, because when John doesn't use his position, it sets an example for all of us. He's taught us humility and a sense of fair play. We all have different titles and positions but at end of the day we all work for our family here and that family works for us.

"While John represents the past, he's kept himself current by working hard with the new technology tools to make sure he's still in touch and relevant. He has a vision and a passion for the future with the business that will help him and the company grow. One of the things that has remained constant is that he's never forgotten the customer. Everything we do revolves around the customer. John has an incredible ability to communicate with all of our customers. No matter what the situation, he relates and understands.

"I think his legacy will always be that he generated a tremendous amount of loyalty, respect, appreciation and commitment by the people who worked in the organization. They idolize him because of the way he treats them and cares about them. He's brought the best out of some very good people and made them better." ■

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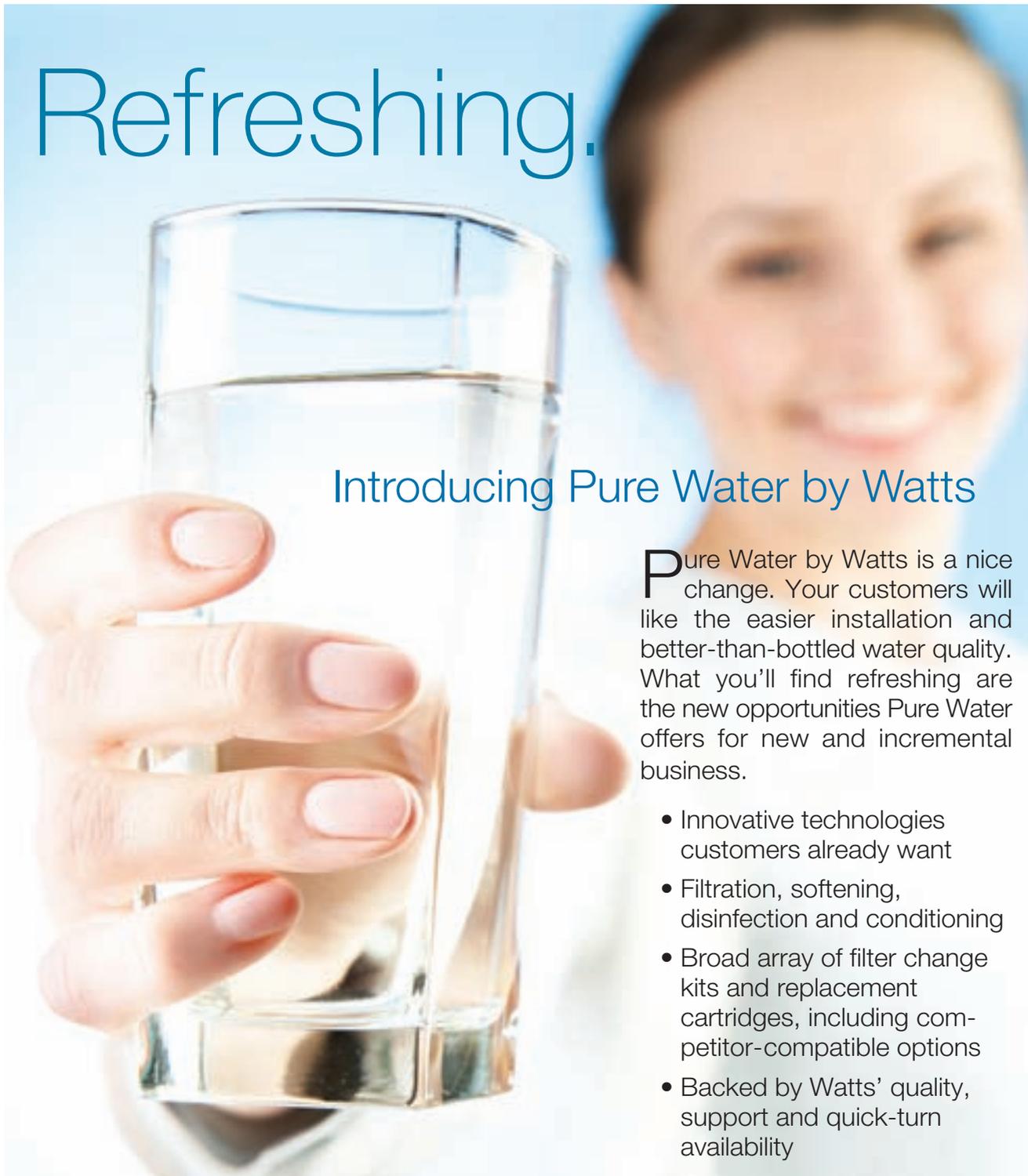
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VAI enhances S2K Analytics with financial BI capabilities

RONKONKOMA, N.Y. — Vormittag Associates Inc. has released its enhanced S2K Analytics solution, a comprehensive, web-based business intelligence tool designed to drive



smarter, faster business decisions. This upgraded tool features 10 new financial management dashboards that provide an in-depth view of financial data from all levels of the organization.

Designed to meet the needs of VAI's customers, regardless of size or industry, S2K Analytics integrates with S2K Enterprise and features automated reporting and dashboard capabilities that give customers big-picture visibility into their rev-

enue and profitability. The new dashboards provide at-a-glance insight into a company's financial performance, allowing for customization and consolidation of data that can be used to make educated decisions. With the enhanced S2K Analytics, VAI customers can do the following:

- View balance sheets and P&L statements
- Analyze profitability of their business
- Monitor procurement and expense management
- Create ad hoc self-serve inquiries
- Build reports and dashboards, as well as share information with others
- Integrate S2K Analytics with Excel
- Collaborate on and contribute to new reporting needs

- Access information through a web browser, including a mobile device
- Compare past financial performance.

“VAI is excited to offer an even more comprehensive BI tool to our customers,” said Joe Scioscia, VAI vice president of sales. “We are committed to continual innovation of our products in order to provide our cus-

tomers with best-in-class software that streamlines business processes and creates cost efficiencies. The upgraded S2K Analytics will undoubtedly enhance our customers' ability to use the information gathered through our ERP software to make even more effective, real-time business decisions.”

Visit www.vai.net.

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WORCHESTER, MASS. — Webstone is pleased to announce its acceptance as a vendor in the OMNI buying group effective November 1.

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Controlling the showroom selling process: Increase sales, profits and save time

To refresh your memory, the profound three keys to wholesaler showroom success are:

1. Qualifying clients
2. Determining who sent the client to your showroom
3. Determining who is buying the product.

“The Greeting” is the two-minute bonding process. Then come qualifying/questioning, building rapport and listening. Remember that the qualifying/questioning process is for people who are doing a full bath or more and not for someone picking out a towel bar. Building rapport in the early stage of the process is the key to success when you are giving up valuable hours of your time to spend with the client. It is much harder to walk away from someone in a relationship.

This month’s column is about “controlling the process,” which is the fourth key to success in today’s showrooms. This is based on some of the most financially successful and acclaimed bath, plumbing and decorative hardware showrooms in the U.S. and Canada. I grant you, though, that not every single potential client fits into the process.

The process of speeding up the selection

The client walks in with a set of architectural plans for a remodel. You allow them to walk around to get acclimated to your showroom’s product and, when the time is right, you go through the greeting (bonding) and the first three steps of the process.

The client then proceeds to tell you that they are here today to pick out all of the bath/plumbing finished products for their new home. Regardless of how slow the showroom is at this time, you should proceed to tell the client that you do this by appointment only because it takes time to put everything together the right way.

Most very successful showrooms will have a three- to four-day time lapse between the original meeting and the planned appointment. This allows you to do the following things that will ultimately save time and produce greater results:

- Call the person who referred the client and cover the unanswered questions, such as budgets, the stage of construction and who is buying the product.
- Ask for a set of plans before you meet. Make a complete take-off of all the products drawn in the baths, kitchens and other areas that you supply on what successful showrooms call a “pre-printed take-off product

— long form.”

Example: Master bath. Plans for lavatories — quantity, description and style — should be left open for the meeting. Plan the bath accessories, such as towel bars, just as you would if using the bath yourself. Make notes on any products you sell that are not in the plans, such as air massage/whirlpool tubs, steam shower, towel warmers, shower doors, towel bars, etc. For detailed information on using a “long form” to sell more product and bigger packages, log on to www.thewholesaler.com. Go to Archives and click on 2007. Go to the May 2007 showroom column and print out a PDF of the article. The information is all there.

Some very successful showrooms explain to consumers of large remodels that they would be glad to work with them by quoting the retail price only and having the builder’s wholesale price on file. Consumers are told that when a builder calls for bidding their home, you will give them the retail price and the wholesale package price. The builder will be told about any unusual plumbing specialties that were selected, such as a steam unit or an air massage tub, as well as about products that may be in the non-plumbing budget, such as towel bars or shower doors. The key is that the written quote does not leave the showroom with the consumer or that the builder bidding does not get a breakdown copy. Tell the consumer about this “win-win” situation before you begin.

When a builder gets the job and calls for the wholesale quote, ask which plumbers will be bidding the job.

Remember, you did not charge a fee for your services, the consumer got value, and you are entitled to get the order. In complete openness, there are many, many other tools and tips and secrets in the above paragraph that would go into several articles on this subject. A good example is a Win-Win Philosophy, which is, “I will give you what you want if you give me what I want.”

Here are some time-saving showrooms tips and secrets to speed up the selection process:

- 10-80-10 Showroom Rule. You know the 80/20 rule: 20% of your clients make 80% of your volume, or 20% of your inventory moves 80% of the time. The 10-80-10 showroom rule says, “Concentrate on your 80% target market client.” 10% on either side of the 80% are clients that may be D-I-Yers and should be sent to a home center; others want retail services and

wholesale prices; some clients are never satisfied and can be trouble.

- Qualifying clients. Good qualifying skills are the key. Unless you are closing 75% of the sales you must take a good look at how deep you are using the qualifying process. Numerous showroom people have told me about the one that was a “sure order” but turned sour after the clients got hours of service and expertise. Remember: The American Dream for most people is “retail services and wholesale prices.” Even in these tough times, this works.

- Chart traffic hours. Take two weeks of showroom hours and keep track of the exact time people come to your showroom. Then, for each time, add up the number of quality customers and divide that number by two weeks of working days. You will be able to determine what time to do quotes and when to expect heavy traffic. (Yes, I know there is always the exception to the rule, when 10 people walk in at 4:00 p.m.)

- Schedule appointments. Schedule product selection meetings with your client at your slowest traffic times. Remember, you must stay in control of your time.

- Produce a showroom flyer. How does your showroom work? Every showroom should have a marketing sheet available to explain the details; i.e., days, hours, years in business, guidelines for planning appointments, etc. This sheet should be available at the entrance. I was visiting a high-end client’s luxury showroom where we put in a greeting/waiting room with a couch and fireplace. The area had much information (awards, certifications, trainings) on the company to raise the client’s expectations before the selection meeting. The receptionist greeted the couple, offered them a soft drink and turned on a four-minute professional video explaining the showroom’s professional services.

- Educate professional trades on how your showroom works and on your selection process.

- Establish a consumer-friendly website: This is a must.

- Have silent sales aids available. Shorten the selection process by having a small library of books and magazines that will help clients identify what they want without taking your valuable time. Several successful showrooms have pre-made literature packages for bath/kitchen remodeling and for complete homes. These packages are exceptionally helpful for



BY PETER SCHOR
Showroom specialist

clients who are overwhelmed by the choices or who may not have their partner present. Many of these packages have a \$25 cost, which is put on the client’s credit card but not charged until the literature is returned. This assures you that the client will return the literature and must talk to you again. The credit card charge is put through if the package is not returned in 30 days.

- Have a planning table. I see too many showrooms without a place for four people to sit down with a set of architectural plans after they have walked the showroom to make preliminary selections. A good planning table should be located in the center of the hub of the showroom

- Display at least one complete matching faucet and accessories series. We are talking about a widespread, centerset, single hole faucet; a roman tub set; a wall mount tub set; a shower set; towel bars and all the other accessories, including cabinet and door hardware. When a client picks out a lavatory set and finish for a specific bath, you could offer to provide all of the components required by the plans, including accessories such as those in the matching series on display.

Remember: The keys to increasing your sales dramatically are to sell bigger packages, to take control of the process of selling the package and to identify the products consumers really want before they are told differently.

Send me an e-mail about your biggest challenges and the obstacles in your showroom, and I will address them in my monthly column. I will also send you a free copy of my book *Pillars of Success*. ■

Peter Schor, president of Dynamic Results Inc., is a bath/plumbing industry speaker, educator, author, columnist and consultant in the many segments of our industry. For the past 20 years, he conducted seminars and speaks at numerous conventions. Schor has great expertise in the field of showrooms and hotel bathrooms and has won many industry awards. He also consults manufacturers in taking their products to market in the areas of sales, marketing and public relations. Schor can be reached at 1302 Longhorn Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648, phone 916/408-5346, fax 916/408-5899, email pschor@dynamicresultsonline.com or visit www.dynamicresultsonline.com.



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See contact information on page 70

A.O. Smith expands tour

ASHLAND CITY, TENN. — For the past nine months, the A. O. Smith High Efficiency Revolution Tour has traveled the country visiting plumbing distributors. At each stop, contractors, plumbers, specifying engineers, builders and consumers have been invited to tour the MMV for a unique look at A. O. Smith's high efficiency line of products.

In October, the High Efficiency Mobile Marketing Vehicle (MMV) took a break from its nationwide tour to expand the product offering on display inside the mobile showroom.

Two new units were added to the MMV — a conventional vent gas model with the new electronic gas valve and A. O. Smith's newest product, a power vent unit that will be available in 2012.

The tour will continue to feature its original line-up of A. O. Smith's

innovative high efficiency water heaters, including the NEXT hybrid® gas, the Voltex® hybrid electric heat pump, the Effex® high



efficiency gas, tankless and the Vertex™ condensing gas models. These, along with the new standard units, will be on display throughout the tour in an interactive learning environment.

The 2011 tour will run through December 9 and will resume in January 2012 in the Southeast. The tour schedule can be found at www.hot-water.com/MMV.

Arkansas Supply continues traditions

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK. — Arkansas Supply has been in business for 56 years, and they are looking forward to another 56 years.

Robert Wright, who has been with the company for 55 years, will become the CEO. He will be spending more time overseeing the long-term growth and making sure that the company continues to expand. Wright has one of the longest industry careers in the state of Arkansas. The expertise, experience and knowledge he has of

plumbing are beyond his years; he grew up helping his dad in his plumbing business.

Robert's stepson Terry Buffalo will be company president. He is formerly from England, Arkansas, and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas.

Steven Brickey will remain as general manager and Tim Desbrow as assistant general manager. Arkansas Supply salesmen Chuck Martin and Jody Woody are very excited about the new ideas and technology that



Robert Wright



Terry Buffalo

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See contact information on page 70

will be available to them.

Arkansas Supply will continue to be a family owned business with outstanding service and inventory to supply customers' needs.

Visit www.arkansasupplyinc.com

American Standard bath kit earns PTPA seal of approval

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — The innovative FunBath tub conversion kit from American Standard Brands has been awarded the Parent Tested, Parent Approved (PTPA) Winner's Seal of Approval. PTPA Media has North America's largest volunteer parent testing community, with over 40,000 parents. Consumers looking for high-quality products and services can rest assured when they see the PTPA Winner's Seal; it is evidence of product excellence as evaluated by unbiased parent consumers.

Fitting over most existing standard 60-inch bathtubs, the FunBath kit makes bath time safer, more comfortable and uses less water. Easy installation allows parents to bathe their children in comfort — no need to stoop or kneel while bathing little ones in a traditional bathtub.

The FunBath kit was among many entries from across North America competing to earn the PTPA seal. Because independent parent volunteers evaluate these products in their own homes, PTPA winners are chosen based on merit and consumer experience, not on commercial considerations.

Visit www.americanstandard.com.

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Becoming an S corporation may be a good move for your business

Are you a closely held business that operates as a C corporation? If your answer is yes, then this article is must reading. If you are already an S corporation, chances are you will learn one or more tax tricks that enrich you or your family, instead of the IRS.

To start, burn this into your mind. There are only three good reasons to be a C corporation:

- Your taxable profits are, and are likely to remain, under about \$125,000, and you need the after-tax dollars in the corporation to maintain growth or pay down debt.
- You use the C corporation as a vehicle to get the benefit of deducting your health insurance and/or long-term care premiums.
- You have carry-forward losses or other tax credits that would be lost if you make an S election.

Okay, you C corporation guys and gals, listen up. Following is a list of the pros and cons of staying a C corporation or electing S corporation status (Hint: Nine out of 10 corporations enjoy tax advantages by being an S corporation.)

Why you may not want to be an S corporation (the Cons)

1. You would probably pay more income tax in the current year as an S corporation. C corporations only pay 15% in income tax on the first \$50,000 of net profit and 25% on the next \$25,000. But remember, when you want to get those after-tax dollars out of your C corporation someday, you will be double taxed. Also, see Pros 1. And consider that the top individual rate and the C corporation rate are currently the same, 35%.

2. Health insurance premiums for shareholder/employees and their families are not fully deductible.

3. Long-term care premiums for shareholder/employees and their families are not fully deductible.

4. Any assets owned as of the date of the S election are subject to the "Built-in-Gain Tax" (a whopping 35%) if sold within five years after the election. (This tax is easy to avoid.)

- Only 3 good reasons to be C corporation
- Many pros for S corps
- Earnings not subject to double taxation
- Take advantage of family tax laws

5. Use of a fiscal year is either not available or is impractical. Usually forces a December 31 year-end. This is rarely a consideration.

6. The accumulated C corporation earnings would be permanently frozen at the date of the S election. Not a real problem, as those earnings are generally frozen anyway.

7. Life insurance proceeds cannot be distributed from an S corporation until all S corporation and prior C corporation earnings have been paid out. (A corporation — C or S — should not own life insurance in the first place.)

Why you want to be an S corporation (the Pros)

1. Earnings, after making the S election, are not subject to double taxation and do not increase accumulated C corporation earnings. For example, suppose your new S corporation makes a total of \$1.2 million (\$300,000, \$400,000 and \$500,000) in profits during the first three years. You pay tax on the profits each year as earned. Those profits are like a piggy bank. You can take any amount at any time, tax-free, as a dividend. Just don't exceed the accumulated S corporation profits. Over time, this is reason enough for most C corporations to switch to S.

2. Opens up significant tax-saving estate planning opportunities. For example, opens the door for using an intentionally defective trust, which allows you to sell your business tax-free to your children or key employees. The typical client saves over \$1 million in taxes including income tax, capital gains tax and estate tax.

3. Reasonable compensation (a corporate plague) becomes a non-issue with the IRS.

Unreasonable surplus "problems" (often a big and expensive C corporation deal) disappear

4. An opportunity to divide family income among family members: Saves huge amounts of income tax and estate tax. Trick is to give non-voting stock to kids and grandkids, while the founder keeps control by retaining the voting stock.

5. Dividends (automatic double taxation for a C corporation) are no longer required. Sure, only 15% for C corporation dividends is a low tax rate but a rather high toll to pay when compared to zero for an S corporation.

6. You enjoy low capital gains tax rates (only 15%) as an S, instead of high ordinary income tax rates (35%)

on sale of capital assets by a C corporation.

7. The tax basis of your stock is increased dollar-for-dollar for undrawn profits. For example, if profits of the S corporation over a period of a year were \$900,000, and if you only took \$400,000 as tax-free dividends, the basis of your stock would increase by \$500,000. If you sold your stock, that \$500,000 would be tax-free. If you are thinking of selling down the road, an S corporation is a must.

The best of both worlds

Often, a family business gets the best tax results by having one or more S corporations and a separate C corporation, typically a management company. The new C corporation and old operating S corporations are structured to take advantage of the tax law for the family business owner to enjoy the tax advantages available to both a C corporation and an S corporation. Neat!

Finally, it should be noted that whether or not to be an S corporation is one of the most important tax decisions a business owner ever makes. If



BY IRVING BLACKMAN
Tax and estate specialist

you are still a C corporation and have a taxable income of about \$250,000 or more per year, I invite you to call me (Irv) at 847/674-5295 to review how to apply the information in this article to your exact facts and circumstances.

If you are already an S corporation, make sure you are taking advantage of the many tax breaks available to you. Need help? Call me. ■

Irv Blackman, CPA and lawyer, is a retired founding partner of Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, LLP (CPAs) and Chairman Emeritus of the New Century Bank (both in Chicago). Want to consult? Need a second opinion? Contact Irv by phone at 847/674-5295, e-mail blackman@estatetaxsecrets.com or visit his website at www.taxsecretsofthewealthy.com.

SunGard links to Billtrust's CompleteBilling service

NEW YORK — SunGard's AvantGard Receivables (GETPAID) is now linked to the Billtrust CompleteBilling platform to offer joint customers a more streamlined approach to the order-to-cash cycle. This offering delivers businesses a solution from invoice creation and delivery to automated credit, collections and dispute resolution to electronic invoice presentation and payment (EIPP), including auto-cash processing.

Corporations are commonly challenged by the high costs, inefficiencies and inaccuracies associated with the billing process. These difficulties can be overcome by leveraging an integrated order-to-cash platform, yet many companies are unable to achieve a straight-through process due to disparate systems. The connection between SunGard's AvantGard GETPAID and Billtrust helps mitigate this challenge by providing linkage between their billing service (Billtrust CompleteBilling) directly into their core collections system (GETPAID).

With the dramatic growth of elec-

tronic billing, the linkage with Billtrust's EIPP portal to SunGard's AvantGard GETPAID helps accounts receivable managers obtain real-time access to important invoice transaction information, including payments made and transactions disputed.

Jim Mangano, senior vice president of receivables solutions, SunGard's AvantGard business unit, said, "SunGard's ability to connect to Billtrust is part of a larger strategy to offer connectivity across the trade receivables ecosystem, consisting of credit data providers, agencies, banks and customers. Providing a link from AvantGard GETPAID to a complete billing solution such as Billtrust helps eliminate the time and costs associated with collections staff performing administrative tasks, such as answering account inquiries or having to go outside of the core credit and collections system to retrieve copies of an original invoice."

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LOS ANGELES ■ LAS VEGAS ■ ATLANTA

Former Shell Oil CEO warns of upcoming U.S. energy grid breakdown

In a dramatic warning of upcoming nationwide breakdowns of America's energy capability, John Hofmeister, chairman of Citizens for Affordable Energy and former Shell Oil CEO, stunned a packed Houston audience of PVF Roundtable members at the city's Hess Club in mid-October.

This group, comprised of manufacturers, distributors, end users and product specifiers of international energy-oriented products meets quarter-annually to focus on the state of the industry and its ongoing ramifications.

Hofmeister, whose Washington, D.C.-based action organization strives to enlist millions of Americans to support a new centralized energy agency to circumvent a 40-year deadlock of the politicization of this crucial bedrock of America's electric power and transportation network, described the current status of the nation's Internet as approaching a rolling breakdown in the next five years. He attributed this primarily to the refusal of U.S. government action to confront an aging energy production and facilitating capability so critical in the functioning of America's still world-leading economy.

Describing the mid-20th century development of this nation's previous electrification and gas energy infrastructure as rapidly deteriorating, Hofmeister blamed presidents and members of Congress for refusing to confront this inevitable disaster in the making.

The former Shell Oil CEO went further in blaming the multiple trillion dollar renewable energy programs of ethanol, solar, wind power and geothermal, which he says could, at best, provide 2% to 3% of the U.S.'s needs to support a population growth exceeding the current 312 million plus.

Hofmeister's solution is to enroll millions of Americans in support of a professional, centralized agency di-

- Seek to create central energy agency
- U.S. natural gas now world leading volume
- Oil prices to rise amid Middle East turmoil
- U.S. chemical exports hitting record levels
- Canada-U.S. pipeline in new jeopardy

forced from political interference, akin to the independence of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board. As an exemplar of the success of such a focused strategy, he cited China's aggregation of world oil supplies and upgrading of a 21st century power and transportation infrastructure. The intrepid Chinese are accomplishing this through contracts for an ownership of worldwide energy sourcing.

He concluded his stirring presentation by blaming the "destructive" paralysis imposed on an unrestrained Environmental Protection Agency by imposing its "fanatical" will on all aspects of America's attempts to urgently bring its increasingly deteriorating energy network up-to-date. It's Hofmeister's hope that a growing citizen-led outcry will reverse this trend.

Natural gas production vaults U.S. to potential global leadership

Only a few short years ago, the U.S. was experiencing a drastic natural gas shortage and was not able to supply the expanding electric power generating utilities, who were attempting to switch as quickly as possible from the cheaper but effluent-producing coal.

This accelerating shortage had driven up the price of units per one million Btu to \$15 in 2005, with no indication that this shortage would be assuaged. Much of natural gas deposits were imbedded in large swaths of land owned and controlled by the federal government. Even areas available for leasing were deep down in dolomite rock areas, with only high-cost drilling extraction in those areas available, with even the high mid-teen pricing making such a recovery expedient unprofitable.

Only the Northeast U.S. quadrant found satisfactory accessibility available from Canada, enough to get it through the cold winter. But then the fracturing (fracking) technology, which had been around since the mid-twentieth century, had evolved to the point where it could be used to crack open the dolomite-covered deposits. This breakthrough, combined with the lower extraction costs and the ability to also liberate oil simultaneously, gave new life to opening the practically unlimited deposits, including the Rocky Mountains, and not yet available on federal lands.

In the past five years, the growth of fracking has been revolutionary. It's estimated that the natural gas poten-

tial throughout the U.S. is plentiful enough to satisfy the nation's growing need for natural gas for power generation and even the potential usage for future transportation expansion for the next 100 years.

Already, the New York-Pennsylvania Marcellus Range and the North Dakota/Montana Bakken Belt are furiously pumping up natural gas. This is only the beginning, as other discoveries have been announced almost monthly. Plans for liquid natural gas importation and the docks needed to import it from Algeria, Qatar and even Russia have been discarded.

Even the animosity of the EPA bringing up new "straw men" in ongoing opposition, has been staid in light of White House pressure during the election year heat-up. An optimistic projection of future natural gas production even estimates major American worldwide exports, which would provide the U.S. with eagerly sought-after trade deficit reduction.

Oil prices headed for long-term climb

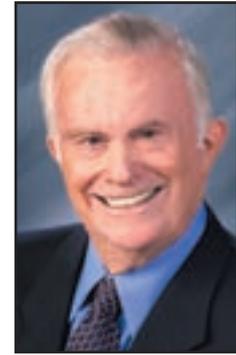
Just recently it looked like gasoline prices and other oil derivatives were headed for yearly lows, as the

Hofmeister blamed presidents and members of Congress for refusing to confront this inevitable disaster in the making... Hofmeister's solution is to enroll millions of Americans in support of a professional, centralized agency divorced from political interference, akin to the independence of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board.

approach of winter seemed to justify the dropping costs of Cushing, Okla., inventories, primarily comprised of West Texas Intermediate "light" crude. However, this seemed to be contradicted, as this focused supply, primarily stored for U.S. consumption, experienced further unexpected drops.

While professional observers attributed this turn of events to technical factors, such as a switch to heating oil for the oncoming winter, the global impact of geopolitical events on world oil availability is being lost. A one-day increase of 5% in late October can better be explained by major North African and Mideast geopolitical changes.

The historic parallel to the current Arabic-centered convolutions recalls



BY MORRIS BECHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

the Saudi 1973 -74 oil boycott against the Western nations, especially the U.S., in the wake of the Arab-Israeli October war.

Premature optimists believe that the toppling of Egypt's Mubarak, Libya's Ghadafi, and Tunisia's Ben Ali, together with heavy bets against the survival of Syria's Bashar Al-Assad, would lighten up oil availability, freed of the harsh control of monolithic dictators.

But, just as events 40 years ago proved, when Iran's Shah opportunistically allied himself with Hussein's Iraq and the Saudis to vault the per barrel price from \$2 to \$10, a confluence of dangerous events is emerging as a force of returning to the \$100, and eventually higher, price per barrel of light, sweet crude.

The coincidental election of Shariah-law supporting governing

bodies in Tunisia, likely followed by similar events in Libya and Egypt, will allow Iran to dictate world prices. The unwitting facilitator in this case will have been President Obama, as no American troops will be left to keep Iraq from falling under Tehran's heavy hand. Iran has always been the ultimate hawk in ultimate oil pricing, which it desperately needs to ameliorate its deteriorating economic condition.

Long-term investors, unlike professional energy observers, put heavy weight on forthcoming geopolitical reverberations and allocate their funds accordingly. In the annals of historical developments, such prudent long-term analyses have more often than not proven correct, result- (Turn to U.S. chemical ... page 50.)

Happy Holidays from WOI

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the plant,
Not a creature was stirring, not even an ant.

All of the sudden out of the night,
a cry was heard - something's not right!

As we all ran to the sight we could see a leak!
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As we stood in fright in the middle of the night
We all wondered - who could make this right!

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U.S. chemical industry on a global roll, but Canada-U.S. oil pipeline faces political heat

(Continued from page 48.)

ing in money well spent by risk-prone investors.

U.S. global chemical exports continue to set records

Although little attention has usually been focused on the U.S. chemical industry, it dipped less than other major sectors during the ongoing global recession. In fact, America's chemistry-oriented capability has been a driving force behind the entrepreneurial activities that have driven

Regarding export activities, direct chemical-based products have grown astronomically in the past 20 years. With less than \$45 billion annually in 1990, it reached a record \$180 billion in 2010, with only a slight downward bounce in 2009... little has been dramatized regarding this important sector's headway.

new product development, a major factor in the U.S.'s surprising technological growth. This includes such diverse innovations as solar cells, therapeutic drugs, water purification systems, etc.

One out of every five patents issued is based on chemistry-related technology, according to the American Chemistry Council, while almost 10% of America's rebounding export sector is chemical-based.

An ancillary factor is the U.S. chemical industry's future growth access to the burgeoning national shale gas boom. This will lead to more competitive costs and making future contributions to energy efficiency, according to the American Chemical Council.

Regarding export activities, direct chemical-based products have grown astronomically in the past 20 years. With less than \$45 billion annually in 1990, it reached a record \$180 billion in 2010, with only a slight downward bounce in 2009.

While the overall stagnation of the U.S. economy and its minuscule growth, together with intractable unemployment, has grabbed the headlines, little has been dramatized regarding this important sector's headway.

Indisputably, the U.S. chemical industry and such industrial giants as Dow, DuPont and BASF have become key to America's continued dynamics as a world leader. It is one of the few components in the overall dismal picture painted by those looking at America's future opportunities with discouragement. However, the availability of technically-trained participants has become an increasing

problem. Many of those graduated from U.S. universities are of foreign origin and have increasingly chosen to return to their home nations, which have been active in building a budding chemical potential.

Canada's Harper warns of 'no delay' in Canada-U.S. oil pipeline

In a relatively unpublicized interview with *Business Week* magazine, Canada's Prime Minister Steve Harper delivered an ultimatum to the United States regarding U.S. ap-

proval of the Keystone XL pipeline, destined to move four million barrels of oil a day by 2025 into U.S. refineries.

What has become a major sticking point in U.S./Canadian relations is the hesitancy of the Obama administration to culminate this agreement by the end of the year. The drawback in initiating this massive project is the fierce opposition by the EPA and its head, Lisa Jackson.

The EPA, which has never lost the opportunity to curb the previously dwindling output of domestic fossil fuels (oil and gas) production threatens White House demonstrations. They've even run a threatening full-page ad in the *New York Times* under the label "Tar Scandal Watch". With nuclear power development, except on-site expansion, all but dead, knowledgeable observers have put a termination point on new nuclear site development. With the Japanese earthquake/tsunami catastrophe on everyone's mind, the nuclear option has never been more unacceptable.

Deep-sea drilling in the Gulf of Mexico has also come to a standstill, as last year's drilling rig explosion has frightened the administration from approving a Gulf drilling revival as yet. What, however, is not highly publicized, is the nationwide dry land production, which has reached the highest level in the past decade. With the EPA on a warpath against oil and natural gas production (especially the revolutionary fracking method), the Obama administration finds itself stuck with an impotent renewable energy alternative that has been rejected by energy experts as barely marginal in

replacing fossil fuels.

Canada's Harper has made it crystal clear that a rejection of the Canada/U.S. oil pipeline will turn the bulk of Canada's oil potential toward China and other Southeast Asian booming economies.

With 30,000 construction jobs and a major closing of the energy gap at stake, it's a near certainty that placing the decision in Hillary Clinton's State Department is a prelude to White House year-end passage of oil pipeline approval.

"Keystone Copout" questions Administration's job creation seriousness

The shocking recent news that the Administration has abandoned the trans-Canada Keystone XL pipeline, is a crushing blow to the almost immediate employment of 30,000 to 50,000 construction workers, and an additional million barrel a day infusion into America's energy needs, as well as cheaper gasoline prices in 2012 and beyond. It's obvious that job creation in a sector that suffers the highest unemployment rate (construction) offers no leverage.

The \$7-billion project, which has been hanging fire since 2008, had received the U.S. State Department's tentative go-ahead, since its investigation disclosed "no significant impact" on the environment. However, after having given the final decision to the State Department for go or no-go, Obama tipped his hand early in November by calling on the U.S. Inspector to review the tentatively approved process, and that he personally would render the final de-

cision. This process assures that no decision will be reached before next November's general election.

It's obvious that the environmentalists, with 8,000 activists surrounding the White House earlier in the week, carried more clout than Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO boss, whose union adherents pressed for the pipeline green light.

The lame excuse that the pipeline would cross the Nebraska Ogalala Sioux Reservation and a giant aquifer carries no merit, since 25,000 miles of pipeline already crisscross that area.

The most serious consequence emanating from the President's literal dismissal of a pipeline that would greatly expand U.S. refining activity is that it comes after the Canadian Prime Minister Steve Harper's stern warning that any pipeline startup delay later than December 31 would result in the sale of additional tar sand production to those willing to receive such shipments with no strings attached.

This means that the Canadian Government, starting immediately, since the delay announcement quashed any further discussion, would let Trans-Canada simply load the oil on railroad cars for trans-shipment from British Columbia to other countries, primarily China. The Chinese have already helped finance rail lines and an expanded Vancouver port for just such an expedient. In effect, the President will have speeded up China's evolution into the world's leading and oil-independent economy, sooner than later. ■

Morris R. Beschloss, a 55-year veteran of the pipe, valve and fitting industry, is PVF and economic analyst emeritus for THE WHOLESALER.

Crown Boiler University launches new class

PHILADELPHIA, PA. — Crown Boiler Co. has added the Bimini Buddy Basics course to their online learning center, Crown Boiler University. The course will join the Bimini Boiler Annual Inspection and Service course and bolster the training options offered in the Bimini Boiler Training section of Crown Boiler University.

This introductory course covers the fundamentals of the Bimini Buddy hydraulic separator, which is designed to simplify the installation process of the Bimini boiler. In the Bimini Buddy Basics course, students will learn what hydraulic separation is, the benefits of the Bimini Buddy and what differentiates each Bimini Buddy model. It is free to enroll in the Bimini Buddy Basics course through

Crown Boiler University, and enables contractors to earn CEU's towards their NATE and NORA recertification at their own pace.

Crown Boiler University is a free online learning center designed to promote and encourage education. Through the University, contractors will have access to training 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Crown Boiler University is offered by Crown Boiler Co., a leader in the hydronic heating industry. Begun as Crown Industries in 1949, Crown Boiler now supplies an established network of independent and regional wholesalers, as well as some of the largest national HVAC wholesale chains.

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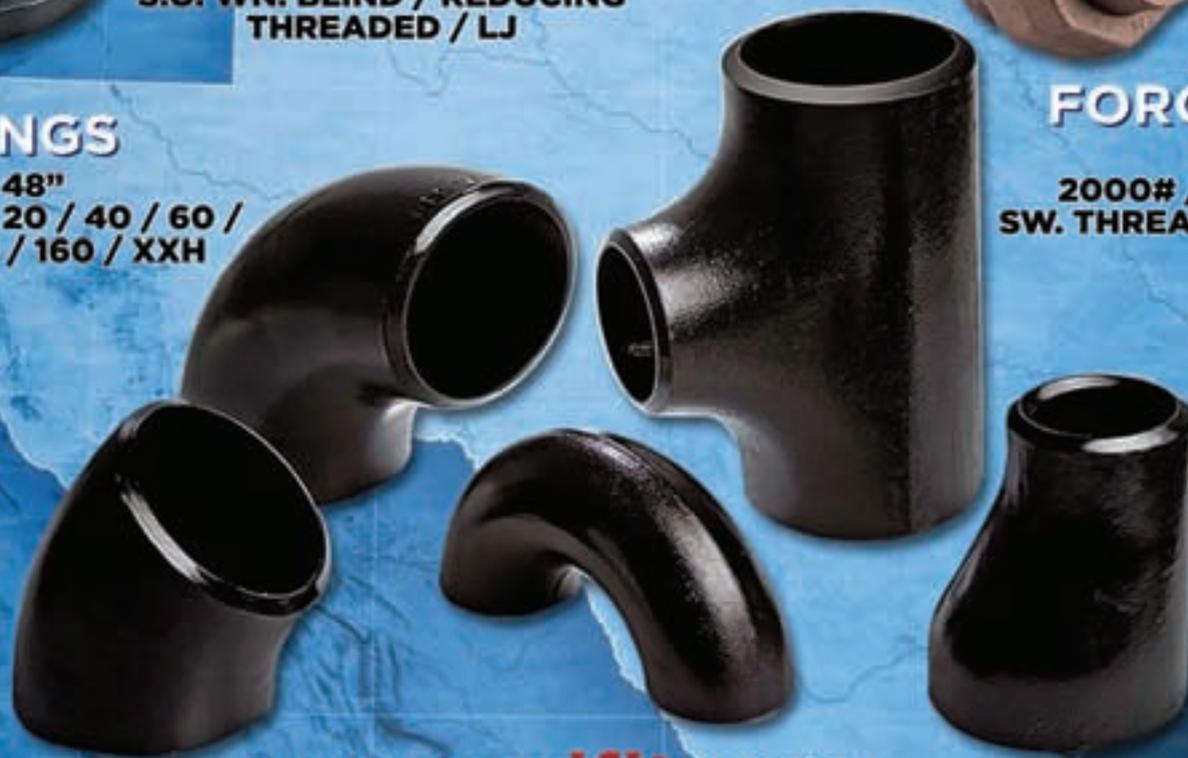


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Forum: Tech-savvy distributors to define future market dynamics

(Continued from Epicor, front cover.)

• Jon Schreiberfeder, president of Effective Inventory Management Inc.

The theme of this year's Executive Forum, held in Napa, Calif., was "Distribution 2.0," an exploration of the form and format of the next-generation wholesale distributor, focusing on technology, industry trends, business models, and organizational culture.



"Technology is the linchpin of Distribution 2.0," said Kevin Roach. "Distributors need to have a defined strategy around this key aspect of their business. Technology can and will make a real difference in how you compete in the market."

During the panel discussion, the experts observed that most distributors are currently using only 20% to 30% of the technical functionality in the ERP systems they have bought and paid for; and today's consultative selling model requires more than just product knowledge, but a more technically competent and adept sales force, as well.

In looking at the future of wholesale distributing, the panelists also suggested that instead of serving merely as an inventory storage house,

companies should focus on becoming the "intellectual controller" of the supply chain, introducing reliability into the processes between supplier and customer as a true value-add. The experts encouraged distributors to "analyze the value dynamic among you, your vendors and your customers, to create meaningful differentiation." Other topics covered by the group included strategies for directing field sales; the use of customer stratification, predictive analytics and central warehousing; and the role of buying groups and master distributors.

A post-event survey of attendees indicated they received tremendous value from this year's Executive Forum, giving it an average rating of 9.16 out of 10. "It is great to get rejuvenated with some of the most knowledgeable speakers in regards to distribution and profitability, and to hear the direction that Epicor is taking to continue to improve my business," commented Greg Domino, president, Anderson Pump & Process, of Brookfield, Wis. Plans are currently under way for the next Distribution Executive Forum in fall 2012.

Visit distribution.epicor.com

'Flagship' California waterworks distributor acquired by Ferguson

(Continued from Ferguson, front page.)

Groeniger was founded in 1949 by W.C. "Bill" Groeniger and is now a leading waterworks distributor in northern and central California. The company has eight sales branches, one administrative office and one pipe yard. Groeniger distributes pipe and other equipment for waterworks, fire protection, sewer, reclaimed water, irrigation and storm drainage projects. They are recognized as one of California's leading pipeline materials suppliers for residential, commercial and public works sectors.

"It is clear that Groeniger and Ferguson share the same culture of taking care of the customer, respecting our vendors and taking care of our employees," commented Alexander. "We will continue to believe 'Family Is Our Tradition, Our People Are Our Strength and Service Is Our Reputation.' This union will provide our customers with a combination of resources and talent that will benefit them now and for many years to come."

Ferguson CEO Frank Roach added, "Groeniger is a flagship waterworks distributor in California. We are happy to welcome them to the Ferguson family and look forward to the synergies that arise as two industry leaders come together."

Ferguson has been in the waterworks business since the mid-1980s, supplying utility contractors, municipalities, water and sewer treatment plants, land developers and others with a variety of waterworks products. Ferguson's commitment to technical training, personnel development and relationship building gives the company a strategic advantage in the highly

specialized utility industry.

Ferguson is the largest wholesale distributor of residential and commercial plumbing supplies and pipe, valves and fittings in the U.S. The company is also a major distributor of HVAC/R equipment, waterworks and industrial products and services. Founded in 1953 and headquartered in Newport News, Va., Ferguson has sales of \$8.8 billion and approximately 17,500 associates in 1,300 service centers located throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean. Ferguson is part of Wolseley plc.

Visit www.ferguson.com

Flint-based P&H distributor bought by Detroit wholesaler

(Continued from Contractors, front page.)

Contractors Pipe & Supply is a 47-year-old family company that operates in the Detroit metropolitan area. The companies share an unparalleled commitment to serving the contractor. Both have a reputation for providing outstanding customer service and are staffed with knowledgeable employees. They have a similar business culture and many common product lines.

According to vice president Steve Weiss, "We want A&S Supply to keep the same personality that has evolved from their 62-year heritage in the Flint market. They will benefit from our purchasing power, the depth of our inventory and the strength of our administrative staff. This will allow them to focus their efforts on what they do best, which are sales and service."

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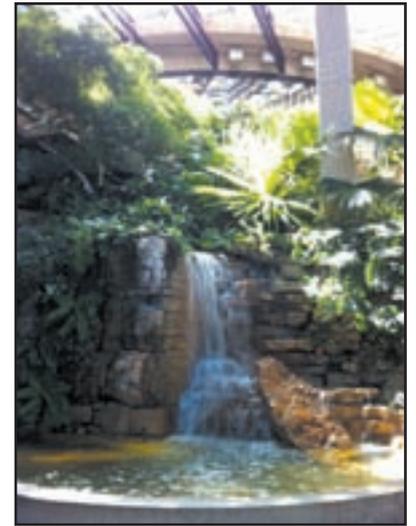
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See contact information on page 70

DDI Conference

In mid-September, loyal users of DDI Software Systems gathered in Kansas City to learn about the latest offerings available from DDI. The meeting provided a great mix of keynote presentations, breakout groups, networking opportunities and social events. Editorial director Mary Jo Martin was an invited guest, and shares an overview of the event in her Viewpoint on page 70.



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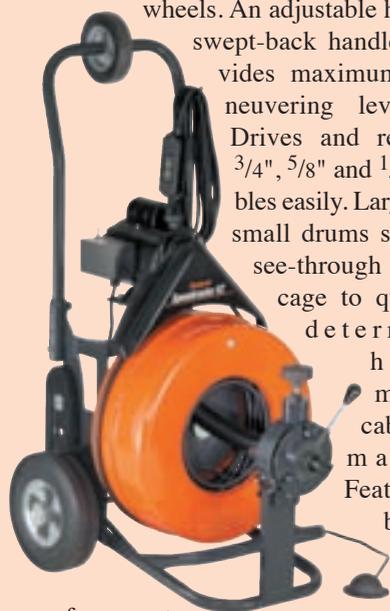
Energy-saving faucet

The AVA single-lever basin faucet with COOLFIX technology offers an ingeniously simple way to save energy. With this award-winning technology, the “six o’clock” middle position of the faucet is designed “full cold”; no hot water is delivered in this setting, saving energy each time the faucet is activated. The only way to draw warm water — and use energy — is to rotate the lever clockwise and away from the middle position. The faucet also incorporates the Neoperl® Caché® aerator, which reduces water flow to 1.5 gpm, a 40% savings over conventional 2.5-gpm faucets. **KWC.**

www.kwc.us.com

Drain cleaner

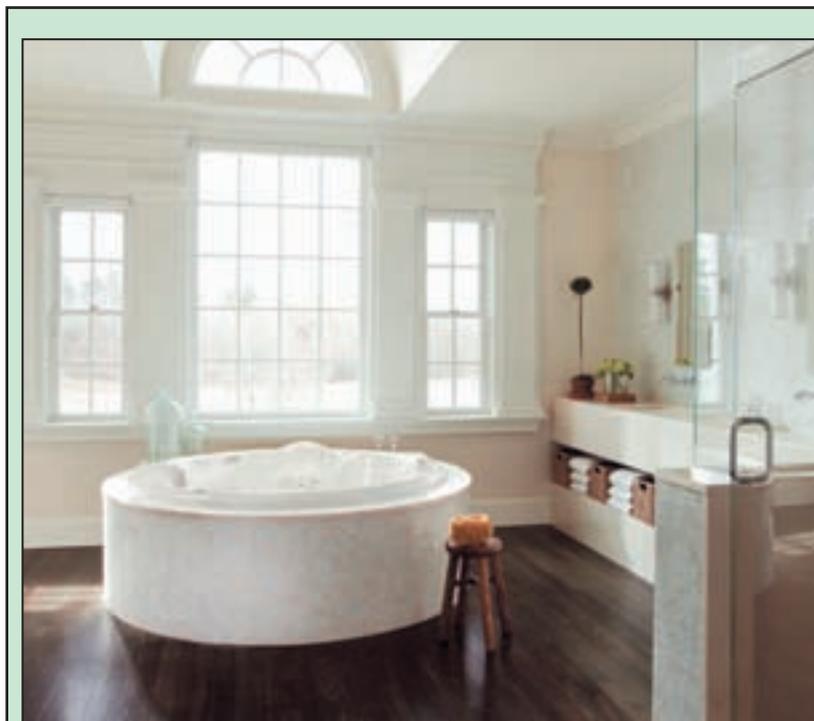
Speedroter 92™ offers easy handling; one person can easily load it onto a truck. Flexitube™ spring distributor tube allows the cable to feed and retract more smoothly. The machine’s frame slides smoothly from the loading wheel to the handle to the stair climbers and, finally, to the wheels. An adjustable height,



swept-back handle provides maximum maneuvering leverage. Drives and retracts 3/4", 5/8" and 1/2" cables easily. Large and small drums sport a see-through inner cage to quickly determine how much cable remains. Features a braced

frame at key stress points, heavy-duty 1/2-hp motor and Flexicore® cable. **General Pipe Cleaners, a div. of General Wire Spring.**

www.drainbrain.com



Hydrotherapy tubs now with more performance

In addition to style updates, a refreshed line of hydrotherapy tubs includes the following performance updates: Dual-port spinning jets target the back muscle group and feature two side-by-side oval ports that produce a consistent, even massage with fewer interruptions in movement. Additional jets are fully adjustable, allowing the user to change the force and direction of water flow at each jet. Tighter jet compression ensures optimal air-water mixture and a more consistent, aerated water massage. Engineering changes and quality construction minimize water retention in the plumbing system, optimizing performance and reducing potential service points. **Aquatic.**

www.aquaticbath.com



HEU urinal

The high efficiency DECORUM™ FloWise® urinal features water-saving technology that uses only 0.5 gpf — 50% less water than a standard urinal — and meets the EPA’s WaterSense® program requirements for high performance and water efficiency. Can be used with manual or Selectronic® hands-free flush valves. ADA-compliant model can be specified as a urinal/valve system or as an individual chinaware unit. Ever-Clean® permanent finish inhibits the growth of stain and odor-causing bacteria, mold and mildew on the surface. **American Standard.**

www.americanstandard.com

Ice maker kit

Speedfit® Ice Maker Kit consists of a low-lead angle stop adapter valve, 25 ft of plastic tubing and a 1/4"



plastic compression fitting. The valve meets the NSF 14, 51 and 61 standards, making it suitable for use with potable liquids. For water supply hookup, the valve connects between the supply valve and riser to the main water supply. For refrigerator hookup, the tubing must be cut to the appropriate length, leaving an additional 6 ft of tubing behind the refrigerator. The tubing is then marked 5/8" from each end and inserted into the plastic connector. **John Guest USA.**

www.johnguest.com



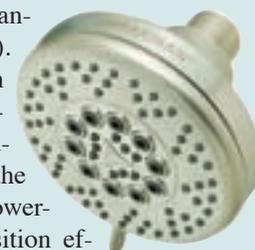
Solar pump block

The Solar X-Pump Block combines a variable speed solar differential temperature control, bronze collector and storage tank circulators, and a stainless steel flat plate heat exchanger. Variable speed controls match solar collector output, increasing system performance by 20%. With just four pipe connections, the installation is complete. Can be set up to maintain a temperature differential between the solar collector(s) and up to two storage tanks, can support a booster pump as part of a drain-back system and comes with a heat dump option and freeze protection. Large LCD screen displays the amount of thermal energy harvested by the collector when optional flow meter is installed. **TACO.**

www.taco-hvac.com

Fully rotating showerheads

Anystream® Refresh showerheads feature Anystream 360°™ spray technology, which allows a 360° rotation to the spray adjusting mechanism (handle or faceplate). The user can make small incremental adjustments to the spray of the showerhead and transition effortlessly through an infinite number of sprays. The Refresh family includes three fixed, three hand-held shower and nine unique combination showers. Each style offers a unique spray configuration of massage, needle and full-body flood sprays. **Speakman Company.**



www.speakmancompany.com

Faucet series

SILGRANIT II Truffle faucets are made from the highest quality materials available and come in a variety of styles and beautiful finishes. Solid



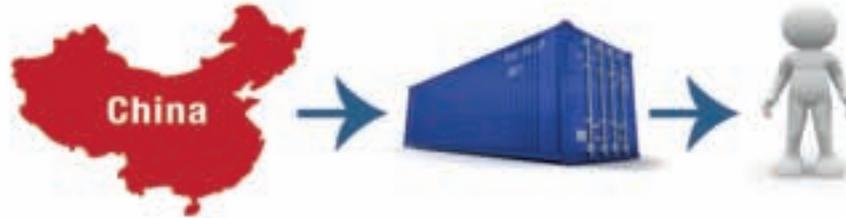
brass body construction anchors the finely-tuned inner workings, from long-lasting ceramic disc cartridges to the flexible and convenient pull-out spray hoses. SILGRANIT II Truffle faucets range in price from \$375 to \$925. **BLANCO.**

www.blancoamerica.com

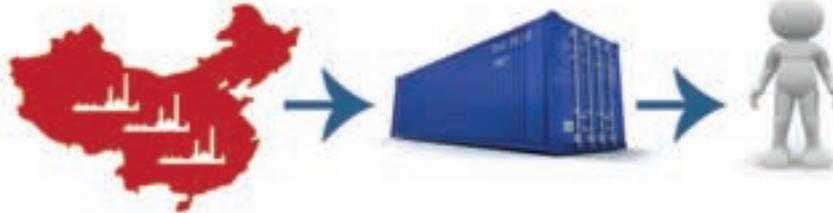
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J.O. Galloup Co. celebrates 125 years in PVF distribution business

BATTLE CREEK, MICH. — J.O. Galloup Company, a Michigan corporation, celebrated its 125-year anniversary of business on November 6. A November 6, 1886 article in the *Battle Creek Journal* read: Olie (J.O.) Galloup has opened a plumbing, steam and gas fitting business at 8 E. Main Street. Mr. Galloup is a practical and experienced workman and favorably known.”

Mr. Galloup was followed as president by his son, Andrew, grandson, Robert and great grandson, Bruce Shurtz (1983–2002). Ward Shurtz (husband of Barbara Galloup Shurtz, sister of Robert) served as vice president and chairman of the board for many years. John Galloup (brother of Robert) is the longest serving board member. Douglas Riggs (2002–09) was the first president outside of the Galloup family. Richard Waters followed Douglas and currently serves as president.

The company is an industrial distributor of pipe, valves and pipe fittings, process instrumentation, steam specialties and process equipment. Company headquarters remain in Battle Creek, with 11 other locations throughout Michigan and two locations in Ohio.

The family owned Galloup for four generations. In January 2006 the management team purchased the company. Owners are Craig Geers, Douglas Riggs, Gary Longman, Nick Carter, Richard Waters and 10 other managers.

The company has experienced significant growth in recent years through acquisitions and organic strategies. Acquisitions include: Smith Instrument, Grand Rapids (1995); Smith Instrument, Detroit (1997); Merlo Steam Equipment (2006); D & S Welding (2007) and Steam Economies Company (2008).

In late 2003 Galloup absorbed a significant part of what was the Bertsch Company, another four-generation pipe, valve and pipefitting industrial distributor founded in 1875. This move added several locations throughout Michigan and broadened the product offering. Most important were the people that joined Galloup. Their experience and professionalism were a

perfect fit to the company culture.

Galloup serves a broad scope of markets: food and beverage, power, commercial, institutional, automotive and steel. The company employs more than 200 people throughout Michigan and Ohio, and has added staff in the past year to support business opportunities and to insure that winning strategies are passed on for the future.

Solar thermal systems installed in N.C. YMCAs

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Linuo Ritter USA and Vanir Energy engineered and installed evacuated tube solar thermal systems at six YMCA facilities in the vicinity of Winston-Salem. Vanir financed and built these systems through a power purchase agreement. The Ys received new state-of-the-art solar thermal systems with a fixed energy cost for the next 20 years.

These systems were engineered using the design principles of Ritter XL Solar Germany, utilizing CPC evacuated tube collectors and the

“Aqua Principle,” which uses water as the heat transfer medium instead of glycol. The solar energy will be dispersed at five different temperature levels for showers, laundries, space heating, dehumidification and pool water heating.

The combined annual output from the 12,600-sq ft of CPC 45 collectors is 38,638 therms, which will offset 2.6 million lbs of CO₂. System monitoring and data collection is available in real time via the Internet.

Visit www.vanir.com

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Homeowners love the quiet, dependable, and energy saving operation of the Mascot II. This wall-hung, compact powerhouse has ample output for both home heating and a continuous supply of domestic hot water.

Contractors appreciate the Mascot II for its service-friendly design and fully packaged system components that allow faster install times compared to other units on the market.

Included components can save contractors hundreds of dollars in material and labor costs and help to reduce installation errors.

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More information at www.laars.com/MascotII

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See contact information on page 70

Murray Supply Company hosts counter day

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Murray Supply Company hosted a counter day on September 14, with the assistance of Rep South representatives, including Chuck Pearson and Mark Reynolds, who were on hand to showcase a variety of products from A.O. Smith, American Standard and

Elkay. The Murray Supply Company Winston-Salem staff spent a great deal of time preparing for the event and made sure all of the customers enjoyed a satisfying lunch.

The counter day included a raffle. The many winners included Jimmy Jolly of Benner & Fields, Dusty

Lyons of Warco Enterprises, Bud Jolly of Benner & Fields, Jeff Tate of Wake Forest University, John Shoemaker of Benner & Fields, Joe Tanyi of Winston Salem State University



Banner Plumbing receives coveted DPHA award

BUFFALO GROVE, ILL. — Banner Plumbing Kitchen & Bath Showroom was recognized as Showroom of the Year at the recent 2011 Decorative Plumbing and Hardware Association conference in San Jose, Calif. The award is presented annually to an outstanding showroom for their business practices, customer service, human resource practices and industry support.

After being nominated by an industry peer, the showroom is evaluated for training programs, marketing programs, customer service, involvement and support in the industry, merchandising and innovative presentation of decorative plumbing and hardware products within the showroom. This is the first time that Ban-

and Mike Baker of Winston Salem State University.

Murray Supply would like to thank everyone who attended and played a part in making the day such a great success.

Visit www.murraysupply.com

ner has received this award.

Banner's state-of-the-art showroom in Buffalo Grove boasts beautifully appointed vignettes, displaying everything that's important in the industry. Michelle Henderson, showroom manager, works tirelessly to update displays and ensure that a full range of lines are on the floor, all price points, all types of décor, a mix of manufacturers and that there is an emphasis on green. Many of the displays are interactive; customers are even encouraged to make an appointment after hours to try out the tubs and showers. Banner is, and always has been, committed to excellent customer service.

Visit www.bannerplumbing.com

InSinkEerator announces contest winners

RACINE, WIS. — InSinkEerator recently announced the grand prize winner of the company's "Are You Smarter?" promotion. From May through August, InSinkEerator hosted a series of four online training programs. Each month, the first 100 designers to complete the module were entered for the chance to win prizes. Those who completed all four modules gained automatic entry to win the grand prize, a vacation getaway at the all-inclusive Occidental Grand Papagayo resort in Costa Rica.

Meghan Aberle of Baths & Beyond, Western Steel & Plumbing in Bismarck, N.D., was selected as the grand prize winner. InSinkEerator representatives stopped by Aberle's office to share the news and present her with a congratulatory gift.

The First Prize Winner was Lamya Aljabi, Aljabi Architecture & Interior Design; La Mesa, Calif., who received Dell Inspiron Slim Series desktop computer system and computer desk.

Second Place Winners were:

- Kim Harris-Grant, Columbus Win-nelson Showroom; Columbus, Ohio
- Christine Tingen, Ferguson Enterprises; Apex, N.C.
- Louise Dunworth, White Supply Co. Inc.; Coldwater, Mich.

They had their choice of a 16GB Apple® iPad 2; a Dyson® Ball vacuum; or a Fujifilm® digital camera bundle.

Visit www.InSinkEerator.com

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— Rich Stothers, Service Manager & Plumber, South Florida Gas

Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) has compiled a remarkable safety record over the last two decades. On the other hand, rigid iron pipe is much more likely to be involved in a fire or explosion.¹

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**Safety is everyone's responsibility.
Follow our lead to CounterStrike.**

¹ Natural Gas and LP-Gas Home Structure Fires, Jennifer Flynn, NFPA, January 2010;
Deaths Due to Unintentional Injury from Explosions, John Hall, Jr., NFPA, March 2008



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The Jolly Green Giant or The Little Green Pea?

There's something on the horizon that's becoming more exciting every day. It began last year with a *60 Minutes* segment about a new fuel cell technology called the "Bloom Box," from a company called Bloom Energy. Bloom Energy claimed to have developed a fuel cell that produced low-cost electricity and generated little pollution, using inexpensive materials. Having received more than \$400 million in cash from venture capitalists, they had already installed working test units at some of the largest and most respected companies in the world, such as Walmart, Google and eBay.

And so it was with great anticipation that CEO K.R. Sridhar held up a fuel cell and announced the secret ingredient that would allow the Bloom Box fuel cell to become affordable to every homeowner — ordinary beach sand, abundant and available worldwide. The Internet was abuzz during the weeks immediately following the broadcast, with everyone clamoring for more information regarding this revolutionary energy-saving technology.

The technology

Fuel cells generate electricity from an electrochemical reaction in which oxygen (air) and a fuel (e.g. hydrogen) combine to form water. There are several types of fuel cells, all of them based around one central design. The electricity produced is used to power all sorts of devices, including power for buildings and homes. Each fuel cell consists of a so-called fuel stack that is constructed of a number of individual cells. Within each individual cell are two electrodes, the cathode and the anode, one positive and one negative. The reactions that produce electricity take place at the electrodes. Each fuel cell is also comprised of an electrolyte, which carries electrically-charged particles from one electrode to another, along with a catalyst, which accelerates the reactions at the electrodes.

Why is this so great and so green?

This type of fuel cell can run on natural gas or propane, not by burning the gas but by an electrochemical process that provides numerous benefits:

- Low greenhouse gas emissions — clean consumption
- A domestic energy supply (natural gas, propane, bio gas, hydrogen)
- A reliable energy source (more reliable than solar or wind)
- An existing infrastructure (nat-

ural gas and bio gas)

- A distributed energy model (Electricity loses efficiency during transmission)
 - Upwards of 60% efficient when consuming gas
 - Upwards of 80% efficient when consuming gas and using waste heat.
- ©FuelCellToday 2011. July 1, 2011. www.fuelcelltoday.com.



Just imagine a world where each building or home produces low cost, clean electricity and heat by means of a highly-efficient fuel cell appliance that utilizes an abundant, reliable and clean domestic energy source. Now you know why there was such a flurry of excitement when Bloom Energy was featured on *60 Minutes*.

The problem

What's the drawback of this great new technology, and why don't we already have it in every building? First, this isn't a new energy technology. The first fuel cell was developed in 1839, with initial commercial use by NASA in the 1960s for the Apollo space missions. The U.S. Navy uses fuel cells in submarines and currently, in Iceland, they've begun converting their fishing fleet from diesel engines to hydrogen fuel cells.

So, why aren't we using them in our homes and buildings today? Fuel cells have traditionally been comprised of a number of very rare and costly materials and have been prone to inefficiency and deterioration over time. Our traditional energy sources were also abundant and relatively inexpensive, keeping new technologies on the back burner.

It's too early to tell whether Bloom Energy and other similar companies have solved these problems, but the manufacturing and installation of fuel cells is now on the rise. The U.S. government has allocated nearly \$65 million for continued fuel cell technology research and product development. Bloom Energy recently announced that they are producing 200 additional systems and will sell the energy produced under 10-year energy contracts. This will allow more companies to begin using the technology today,

while testing the reliability and reducing overall production costs.

On the horizon

There are companies currently in the testing stage for small SOFC (solid oxide fuel cells) whose systems will power the average home and provide enough waste heat to heat both the home and hot water. These companies have begun using ceramic materials to lower the cost of production and are continuously improving the durability and efficiency of the fuel cell. Production capability is being ramped up in hopes of introducing a product for the masses within five years. This provides an unprecedented opportunity for our industry as we tie in our products and systems, increasing the usage and efficiency of these systems. Radiant floor heating systems, hot water plumbing systems, absorption chillers and tankless water heaters can all become part of the onsite fuel cell energy plant.

Sales, distribution, installation and service partners will be needed to support this new home fuel cell appliance. The companies that get involved by applying this technology in their own buildings will be in the position to capitalize on an entirely new emerging industry.

Additional add-on technologies will be developed that increase the efficiency of the system and will incorporate renewable energy, providing numerous opportunities for manufacturers, distribution and installers.

Let's get growing

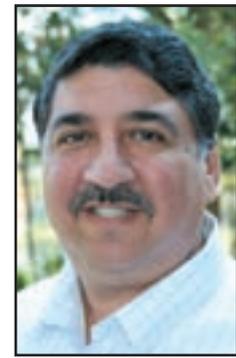
There are those in the green world that believe we are simply tying ourselves to another natural resource with a limited supply and that we'd be better served to find options that are truly sustainable, such as solar, wind or geothermal energy.

Blue Monster closet bolts offered to contractors

MENTOR, OHIO — PHC contractors and wholesalers in the U.S. qualify for a free sample of new Blue Monster® Advantage™ closet bolts, which simplify installation of toilets, save time and ensure that the job is done right.

For the first time since the invention of the closet bolt, due to the unique, broached tip design, installers can tell the direction of the bolt's foot while setting the toilet. Additional features include raised knobs on the underside of the foot that prevent movement after setting the toilet.

Blue Monster Advantage closet bolts are machined to facilitate a clean "break-off" at the desired level, eliminating the need to saw the bolt at the proper length. This action takes seconds, prevents marking the china



BY CLIFF D'ANGELO
Special to THE WHOLESALER

But, in reality, there are myriad solutions in making a more sustainable planet for future generations and fuel cell technology just might be one of the foremost technologies in getting

Sales, distribution, installation and service partners will be needed to support this new home fuel cell appliance.

us closer. It may well debut as The Jolly Green Giant, the next best thing. Or perhaps, it will find slow, steady growth and be cultivated as The Little Green Pea. ■

Cliff D'Angelo is a LEED AP and a 20-year veteran of the plumbing products manufacturing and wholesale industries in sales and sales management, with both the Kohler Companies and Ferguson Enterprises. He is currently principal owner of GREENCLIF, LLC, providing both LEED and sales consulting services. Additionally, he is on the forefront of introducing an innovative new solar thermal dehumidification technology to the market. Visit greencliff@netbusiness.com.

with a saw and provides a secure fit for the universal bolt cap. It also allows for easy removal of the nut if disassembly is required.

PHC contractors and wholesalers can request their free sample kit of Blue Monster closet bolts at www.CleanFit.com/bm_closet_bolt_request.php.



HARDI distributors honored for environmental leadership

MAUI, HAWAII — During HARDI's annual meeting in Maui, Thermostat Recycling Corporation's executive director Mark Tibbetts recognized three HVAC/R distributors for their efforts to promote TRC's program



and help reduce mercury pollution.

"It comes with great pleasure to recognize the contributions this impressive group made to the TRC program and the examples they set," Tibbetts said. "During the summer months, this year's winners helped divert over 57 pounds of mercury from solid waste through their collection efforts."

The Mercury Thermostat Recycling Awards program recognizes the contribution of HARDI wholesale distributors who demonstrate a commitment to the environment by promoting thermostat recycling and helping keep mer-

cury out of the waste stream. The winners are as follows:

Mercury Thermostat Promoter Awards

- Baker Distributing Company, Jacksonville, Fla., is collecting mercury thermostats at over 220 locations nationwide. Baker implemented a campaign that targeted both employees and customers, reaching external audiences via a number of channels including its monthly newsletter and statements, TRC promotional materials in all Baker locations and a TRC banner ad on its homepage. Baker also educated its employees about the program through its quarterly sustainability and monthly employee newsletters.

- Johnson Supply, Houston, is collecting mercury thermostats at its 23 locations throughout Texas and Louisiana. Each Johnson Supply location has the recycling container in a visible location. All its employees

are very familiar with the program, and they work to educate Johnson Supply customers on the importance and impact of the TRC program. Among other promotional activities, Johnson Supply added a tag line to each invoice stating its thermostat recycling efforts and, in August 2011, promoted the program through a \$1 credit on their Johnson Supply Tool Card for each thermostat returned.

Mercury Thermostat Recycling Heavyweight Award and Pound-for-Pound Award

- USAirconditioning Distributors is collecting mercury thermostats at its 43 locations in the western U.S. and Florida. The company has actively promoted the recycling of mercury thermostats, and its customers have embraced the program. During the summer months their locations shipped TRC more than 2,100 waste mercury thermostats, keeping 29 pounds of mercury out of solid waste. Over half of the thermostats came from its City of Industry location, yielding 17 pounds of mercury.

Visit www.HARDInet.org

Victoria + Albert bath featured in fine art prints

MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C. — The next creative project professional photographer Chris Crumley has embarked upon are a series of fine art prints involving the Victoria + Albert slipper tub and a mermaid underwater. Crumley is the go-to-guy for creatively conceived underwater images. He has a successful career in commercial and advertising photography and in recent years has made a name for himself in a very unique niche of underwater Mermaid photography.

According to the photographer, "The Victoria + Albert classic Victorian slipper tub had the right look and was also light enough for two people to lift and move around the studio (in

the 130-lb range) thanks to the amazing Englishcast® material."

The Victoria + Albert tub will be shot in Crumley's 'wet studio,' a special 22,000-gallon pool he built for underwater photo illustration work. The clawfoot tub will be submerged and photographed with mermaid model Kristi Sherk in a custom-made tail by Eric Ducharme.

"We were delighted that our tub was chosen for this creative project, as it clearly brings the artistic expression of bathing to a whole new level," stated Javier Kor-

neluk, VP of North America sales for Victoria + Albert. "Chris is an extremely talented photographer, and we are glad he found the tub of his choice for this fantasy-themed project."

Visit www.vandabaths.com



Harrington Industrial Plastics opens new branch

CHINO, CALIF. — Harrington Industrial Plastics opened its newest location in Malta, N.Y., on August 1. Harrington has grown from a regional distributor-

ship to one of the largest distributors of industrial plastic piping systems in the U.S. in the last 52 years.

Harrington began with the purpose

of servicing customers that handle corrosive liquids and has expanded its offerings to include products for customers with high-purity needs and

MSS publishes revised standard for surface evaluation

VIENNA, VA. — The Manufacturers Standardization Society announced that revised Standard Practice SP-55-2011, *Quality Standard for Steel Castings for Valves, Flanges, Fittings, and Other Piping Components—Visual Method for Evaluation of Surface Irregularities*, has been published and approved by the American National Standards Institute as an American National Standard.

This Standard Practice, utilized for the visual evaluation of surface irregularities in steel castings for valves, flanges, fittings and other piping components, was originally published in 1961 and is today referenced in many standards' publications and employed throughout the industry. On Aug. 26, ANSI granted final approval of the revised MSS SP-55-2011 as an ANS. This Standard Practice is being published in its traditional book format (with improved spiral binding) and in a newly created digital version (PDF).

The new ANSI-approved American National Standard edition, ANSI/MSS SP-55-2011, is now available and is used extensively in the chemical, petro-chemical, nuclear, boiler and pressure vessel and other corrosive and high temperature industry environments.

This standard does the following:

- Establishes visual surface irregularity acceptance standards for steel parts
- Supplements requirements in identified ASTM Standards
- Provides a series of referenced photographs typical of the various surface irregularities
- Identifies what is of generally acceptable and generally rejectable quality.

Visit www.mss-hq.org

products to help protect the environment. Companies that manufacture semiconductor, pharmaceuticals and bio-pharmaceuticals find the company an indispensable resource for their demanding processes.

The new 14,000-square-foot facility offers a fully stocked warehouse, clean room area and training center. As with all of Harrington's facilities, this new location will bring a technically oriented sales staff to the Albany area, along with the knowledge and strength of 41 locations nationwide.

The new facility is located at 3 Knabner Road in Malta, N.Y., just a couple of miles from the Albany International Airport.

Visit www.harringtonplastics.com



Rheem opens new PROSTOCK stores in Miss.

MERIDIAN AND GULFPORT, MISS. — Last month, Rheem distributor Southern Pipe & Supply Co. Inc., opened two new PROSTOCK locations in Mississippi. Founded in 1938 and headquartered in Meridian, Miss., Southern Pipe & Supply is one of the largest privately held, independent wholesalers of plumbing, heating, air conditioning, industrial,

mechanical, water and sewer supplies in the Southeast.

Rheem worked with Southern Pipe & Supply to convert two of its stores in Gulfport and Meridian to PROSTOCK locations. These are Southern Pipe & Supply's first PROSTOCK locations. Southern Pipe & Supply owns more than 90 stores throughout Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana,

Mississippi and Tennessee.

"Southern Pipe & Supply has an amazing reputation as a long-standing partner for HVAC, plumbing and industrial suppliers in the Southeast," said Don Harter, general manager of Rheem Sales Company. "These new PROSTOCK stores will help them showcase a highly professional, bright and organized retail presence that can

meet the needs of local contractors."

PROSTOCK stores provide replacement parts directly from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM), Rheem, as well as aftermarket parts and supplies for profession-



als that install, maintain and service HVAC and plumbing equipment. Rheem is one of the few manufacturers in the country offering a retail presence to meet the needs of HVAC and plumbing contractors.

"The PROSTOCK model is a new concept for Southern Pipe & Supply and we're confident that it will help us better serve the needs of contractors in Meridian and Gulfport," said Buddy Wallace, director of HVAC, Southern Pipe & Supply. "Our PROSTOCK retail locations are incredibly visual and organized in a way that our contractor customers can quickly and easily find all the replacement and aftermarket parts that they may need."

In late October, PROSTOCK and Southern Pipe & Supply hosted grand opening events for local contractors in Meridian and Gulfport. The events included ribbon-cutting ceremonies and also featured lunches and giveaways, including PROTECH branded hex sets to the first 50 customers. Plus, Southern Pipe & Supply conducted drawings at each opening event, where one lucky contractor in Meridian and another in Gulfport won \$1,500 credits toward the Rheem heating or cooling unit of their choice.

A number of company representatives from Southern Pipe & Supply — including Marty Davidson, chairman; Mark Roebuck, vice president-sales; Buddy Wallace, director of HVAC; Mike French, central regional manager; Britt Glenn, territory manager; Todd Cotton, branch manager; Dennis Manley, branch manager; Scott Spears, territory manager, HVAC sales; Tommy Cason, corporate sales manager; and Van Slayton, counter sales merchandising manager — were able to participate in the grand opening events. Beth Childress, manager of store development for PROSTOCK; Lee Wilkerson, district sales manager for Rheem; and Mike Himel, Southeast district parts manager from Rheem Sales Company in Randleman, N.C., traveled to Mississippi to attend the events.

The Meridian store is located at 2223 Highway 39 North. The Gulfport store is located at 2202 34th Street. Both stores are open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

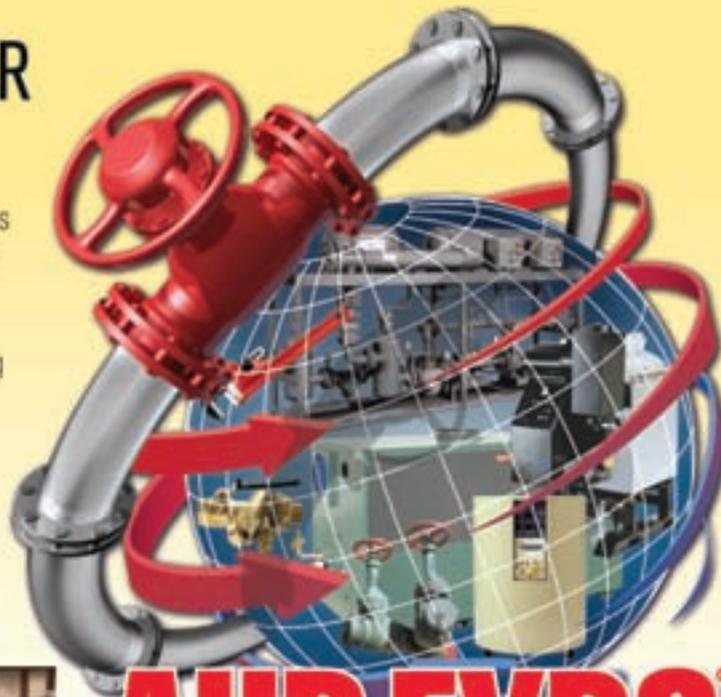
Visit www.southernpipe.com

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Johnstone Supply sees growth in stores

PORTLAND, ORE. — Johnstone Supply Inc. is bucking overall industry trends and ongoing uncertainty in the economy by continuing to see robust growth and expansion in its national network of locally owned and operated stores. In the last 12 months, current Johnstone owners have newly opened or acquired an additional 17 stores, significantly boosting the company's presence in markets nationwide. Johnstone also continues to attract independent store owners to the cooperative, recently welcoming a significant new member in the West Texas region whose group comprises five stores.

The cooperative's most active growth has been in existing owners purchasing or opening additional store locations in their regions, buttressed by strong member investments to improve or expand store facilities. "The confidence and growth we're seeing for Johnstone members around the country is really

unprecedented for the industry in this current economy," noted Mark Askew, Johnstone membership direc-



tor. "How strongly we're expanding compared to the industry as a whole is really amazing, and we see this growth continuing."

Askew is convinced that the inherent strengths of Johnstone's business model are propelling the surprising growth of the cooperative's membership. "Knowing regional contractor needs and a small-business focus on servicing them is our one-two punch in these local markets," said Askew. In Texas, Johnstone's newest group of stores to join the co-op serves as a case study in how it also continues to entice successful independent owners.

Eddie Rhodes's group of five stores in the West Texas region had built their business success on the

service side and was familiar with the advantages of a cooperative when they began considering Johnstone membership. "We felt Johnstone was unique in the way it operated," states Rhodes, "and we were frustrated having to compete with the big guys all the time." While evaluating where his group of stores would be in five, 10, 20 years, Rhodes felt they needed a level playing field in terms of pricing and access to inventory and decided that they "had to become a part of something bigger."

In addition to giving Rhodes the ability to better compete in terms of volume purchases, access to product lines and rapid delivery, Johnstone's training and information assets were also a deciding factor. "We get directly involved on problem issues to help customers in the field and get them on down the road," says Rhodes, "We've always focused on training, and the Johnstone University concept is a great calling card. We want to be able to elevate their (contractor) expertise, and we know that JS University is going to be a great asset to us in the future."

Visit www.JohnstoneSupply.com

Xylem completes spinoff from ITT

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — Xylem Inc. has completed its spinoff from ITT Corporation and has begun operations as a \$3.2-billion stand-alone global water technology company. Xylem's market-leading product brands, applications expertise and technological



strength enable the transport, treatment, testing and efficient use of water in public utility, residential and commercial building services, industrial and agricultural settings.

The company serves customers in more than 150 countries to address critical water issues, such as growing water scarcity, aging infrastructure and more stringent environmental regulations. Xylem began regular trading on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol XYL and will be listed on the Standard & Poor's 500 Index.

"I'm extremely proud to announce the launch of a unique company, the product of more than 100 years of experience in the water business and the collective work and expertise of our nearly 12,000 employees and our strategic partners around the world," said Gretchen McClain, president and CEO of Xylem. "While our name has

changed with the spinoff, our customers will find in Xylem the same commitment to providing local service to meet their specific needs while leveraging our global network of technological strength and applications expertise."

Xylem serves a \$30-billion segment of the global water equipment and services market through a distribution network consisting of a direct sales force and independent channel partners. The company's products and services address the full cycle of water and are key in the collection, distribution and use of water. Well-known and respected product brands such as Bell & Gossett, Flojet, Flygt, Godwin, Goulds Water Technologies, WTW and YSI, among others, will continue their place in the water industry as part of the Xylem portfolio.

Xylem's senior management team has significant water industry expertise and a demonstrated record of growth

JMF Company launches new website

BETTENDORF, IOWA — JMF Company's corporate website has undergone an exciting redesign. The updated site will have expanded features and resources that will surely be helpful to visitors and will give viewers a clear understanding of what the JMF Proposition is all about.

The most recent updates include a more lively and interactive interface,

and strategic execution. They include:

- Gretchen McClain, president and CEO
- Mike Speetzen, CFO
- Mike Kuchenbro, president — Water Solutions
- Chris McIntire, president — Analytics
- Ken Napolitano, president — Residential & Commercial Water
- Bob Wolpert, president — Flow Control and China & India
- Angela Buonocore, chief communications officer
- Frank Jimenez, general counsel and corporate secretary
- Robyn Mingle, chief human resources officer
- Colin Sabol, chief strategy and growth officer.

Xylem's corporate citizenship and social investment program, Xylem Watermark, aims to provide and protect safe water resources in communities around the world.

For more information, visit www.xyleminc.com

an industry news section and an expanded VIP Program page.

Visit jmfcompany.com



NSF International launches NSF Passport Program

ANN ARBOR, MICH. — NSF International, a global organization that certifies products and writes standards for food, water and consumer goods, has launched a new program to help manufacturers gain global market access for water treatment, distribution and plumbing products.

The NSF Passport Program: Your Access to Global Market Approvals™ helps companies achieve product certifications required in major and



emerging global markets such as the UK, Australia, Brazil, China, Italy, France, Japan and many others.

The program manages the complex approval process, helping companies navigate the various regulatory, testing and certification requirements in each country to gain entry into new international markets. NSF Passport™ provides companies with a single point of contact and combines testing and auditing services, saving both time and reducing cost by managing multiple country approval projects from the initial application to final approval.

"This service is completely unique to the water industry," said Pierre Sbabo, vice president of NSF International Water Programs. "Manufacturers of water treatment, distribution and plumbing products must meet multiple rigid and complex regulatory requirements to sell and compete in major markets. These requirements can vary between countries and certification types. It has taken NSF years to develop a program that facilitates product certification for customers in more than 25 major and emerging global markets. NSF had to meet certification requirements specific to each country and certification body, which included completing multiple laboratory audits and earning numerous accreditations. Because NSF International has global offices, we were able to overcome the added challenges of language and time zone barriers.

"The NSF Passport Program helps manufacturers access all top and key emerging markets for water products. Importantly, customers are able to work with a local NSF International project manager, in their local language and time zone, through NSF's global network of offices," Sbabo added.

Visit www.nsf.org/info/passport

Mirolin Industries to expand to Western Canada

TORONTO, ONT. — Mirolin Industries Corp. will be expanding its operations to include a manufacturing facility in western Canada. The new 150,000-square-foot state-of-the-art manufacturing facility and distribution center will be located in Airdrie, Alberta, a growing economic region of Canada ideally situated geographically to service all of Western Canada.

Dominic Primucci, president of Mirolin Industries, is extremely confident about the company's continued growth and strategic direction. "The expansion is a significant commitment to the Western Canadian market and reinforces our dedication to Canadian economic growth. Mirolin is the first truly national player in acrylic tub and shower manufacturing. We offer a complete product assortment nationally and are now strategically positioned to be the leading national acrylic tub and shower brand in Canada."

Production at the new facility will commence in the first quarter of 2012, and the expansion will enhance effectiveness and efficiency of service to customers Canada-wide. The growth will further solidify and secure strong national partnerships with new and existing customers across Canada.

Mirolin is well poised to service the new home construction, home improvement and renovation markets coast-to-coast.

Visit www.mirolin.com

HARDI voices opposition to DOE direct final rule

COLUMBUS, OHIO — HARDI filed comments in opposition to a Department of Energy direct final rule that would regionalize air conditioners and furnaces and increase efficiency standards for those products in certain regions. The rule came as the result of a negotiation between equipment manufacturers and energy efficiency advocates that excluded the input of HVAC distributors and contractors. HARDI asks the DOE to withdraw the direct final rule and precede with the traditional rulemaking (NOPR) process which would allow for more analysis and stakeholder input.

Indicated in previous comments to DOE, HARDI asserts that support will only be offered to the proposed rule if planned increases in efficiency standards are economically justifiable. With these new comments, HARDI maintains that stance, stating that the proposed rule is economically unjustified with the nation's poor economic climate, an unprecedented drop in new home construction, a substantial decline in unitary sales of both air conditioners and furnaces since the last increase in national standards in 2006 and a reduction in consumer purchasing power.

"HARDI believes that the proposed rule will harm small businesses, jobs and our industry as a whole at an already difficult time in

terms of unitary equipment sales," said HARDI EVP & COO Talbot Gee. "If the DOE proceeds with this ill-conceived and unjustified direct final rule, they will be actively turning a blind eye to economic and practical realities."

While the "consensus agreement" between the manufacturers and efficiency advocates that provides the



basis for this DOE rule may provide some level of certainty for what models manufacturers may produce for the next ten years, it adds significant uncertainty to how the rest of the industry will inventory, support and sell these units. HARDI's concerns about the unknown costs associated with compliance and enforcement of the proposed rule make it impossible for the DOE to fully assess its economic impact without first finalizing an enforcement plan.

HARDI fears that the cost and responsibility will not fall on the manufacturers who negotiated the agreement but on the many small businesses in the HVAC distribution and contract installation industry. HARDI has asked the DOE to withdraw the direct final rule and move the rule to a NOPR with a combined, or concurrent, enforcement rulemaking.

Visit www.hardinet.org

ASA introduces online training program

CHICAGO — The ASA Education Foundation has completed development of the 3D Commercial Schematic® online training program, which is designed to be a continuous work in progress.

The central chiller plant provides comfort cooling and dehumidification of a typical hospital facility. This was the first area to be developed for training. In coming months, more systems, including a boiler room, will be added and will showcase, teach and train employees in wholesale distribution about the various pipe, valves, fittings and

components contained within a commercial application.



AMERICAN SUPPLY ASSOCIATION

The Central Chiller Plant training includes six interactive lessons, which allow users to see how a typical hospital chiller plant operates.

Each lesson includes instructional text with audio, flash animation (to depict water movement, etc.) learning games, engaging activities and a self-grading quiz. A glossary of common commercial and industrial PVF terms is included so users can easily look up any unfamiliar terms.

For information and to order, visit www.asa.net or call 312/464-0090

Aquatic strengthens bathing system materials

ANAHEIM, CALIF. — Bathware manufacturer Aquatic's Everyday fiberglass-reinforced product (FRP) showers and tub showers have been

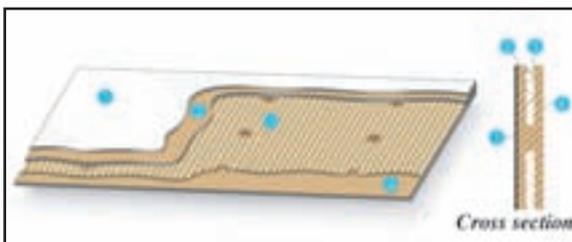
reengineered and now are 40% thicker than before. These fixtures include fully reinforced, encapsulated wall systems. The result is bathware that is built for even more years of use and able to withstand the rigors of shipping, handling, installation and reverse impact.

Aquatic's newly-engineered FRP



showers and tub-showers derive their superior strength from a four-stage layering process during manufacturing:

- The surface layer is a premium-



grade, ultra-glossy gelcoat that is smooth and highly durable.

- At first lamination, a mixture of fiberglass and resin begin building the unit's strength. Resin acts as the binding agent for thousands of small strands of fiberglass that are woven together to provide structure and rigidity. Aquatic's formula is higher in glass content than many competitors, yielding a stronger product.

- A corrugated reinforcement is wrapped around each of the shower walls. The resin saturates and bonds

the material, filling its peaks and valleys and permeating through a pattern of perforations placed every 4 inches on the corrugation.

- A second coat of the fiberglass/resin mixture is layered on top of the reinforcement, sandwiching the core

Caroma showerhead receives WaterSense approval

SURREY, B.C. — Caroma's first-ever shower product, Caroma Flow, has received WaterSense® approval and its label, giving Caroma an unprecedented number of WaterSense-labeled products.

The Caroma Flow was designed with the same water-conscious mission and technological know-how as the company's 51 WaterSense toilets. The high-efficiency showerhead has a nominal flow rate of 1.5gpm/5.7L at 80 psi and includes a precision engineered



nozzle that pressurizes water to produce a uniform and soft, yet powerful, spray of water; maximizing comfort while saving up to 10 gallons more water than the standard 2.5-gpm showerhead for a 10-minute shower. Incorporating a unique easy-slide spray adjustment, ranging from a wide coverage bathing spray to a concentrated rinse flow, the Caroma Flow is easy to

install in both retrofit and new construction projects.

Visit www.caromausa.com

HD Supply Earns Top 200 technology innovation award for 3rd year in a row

ATLANTA — HD Supply recently announced that for the third consecutive

year it was awarded a top 200 ranking on the 2011 *InformationWeek* 500, an annual listing of the nation's most innovative users of business technology. HD Supply was recognized for its comprehensive IT Operations Management Suite.

For 23 years, *InformationWeek* has identified and honored the nation's most innovative users of information technology with its annual 500 listing and also tracks the technology, strategies, investments and administrative practices of America's best-known companies.

"HD Supply is truly honored to be recognized among the top 200 business technology innovators by *Info-*

Homegrown IT operations management platform saves the company more than \$1.4M

mationWeek for a third consecutive year," said Michele Markham, HD Supply senior vice president and chief information officer. "Developing this comprehensive management suite has produced a series of big wins for our company, including significant cost avoidance and elimination, the exiting of 21 datacenters, the creation of a Global Help Desk for IT support and the establishment of a stable, scalable and centralized infrastructure to serve our customers. This management suite automates how we gather and deliver real-time data to take proactive and corrective action faster while reducing issue resolution time."

The HD Supply information tech-

nology team avoided more than \$1.2M in license purchases and

eliminated more than \$200k in annual maintenance cost by developing this comprehensive management suite in-house. The management suite includes:

- The Configuration Management Database (CMDB) for capturing more than 9,000 infrastructure and application components and their interdependencies

- More than 23,000 monitors tracking servers, databases, network circuits, application services and transaction response times;

- Digital dashboards that present real-time data to HD Supply's IT



team for faster decision making;

- The company's Help Desk ticket management system that provides automated routing to the right support team for more than 13,000 calls, incidents and change requests each month.

About HD Supply

HD Supply is a leading wholesale distribution company, providing a broad range of products and services to professional customers in the infrastructure & energy, maintenance, re-

pair & improvement and specialty construction markets. With a diverse portfolio of industry-leading businesses, HD Supply is one of the largest diversified wholesale distributors in North America, with approximately 680 locations.

Visit www.hdsupply.com

Viewpoint

Continued from page 70

Advanced Report Writer is another of DDI's new launches, and is designed to generate graphically appealing customized reports that can be shared throughout an organization. Easy to set up and save for future/continued use, these reports can be viewed, printed or e-mailed.

The highlight of the social events was a fabulous reception and dinner at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, where we were greeted by stunning artwork and displays. We were able to wander through a number of exhibits during the reception with a bruschetta bar and champagne cantaloupe soup shooters. The delicious dinner featured marinated flank steak with salsa verde and grilled chicken with sun-dried tomato cream, risotto primavera, summer potato gratin and sweet corn succotach. It was followed by decadent desserts including chocolate budino, key lime tarts and bread pudding with bourbon caramel sauce. Everyone went home with a party favor — brightly colored glass magnets designed by a local artist.

Sincere thanks to Adam Waller, Barbara Jagoe, Rayna Naclerio and the DDI team for your gracious hospitality! Please visit the "On the Road" section of www.thewholesaler.com to view some videos I shot at the conference. And be sure to check out the photo montage on page 54. ■

Mary Jo Martin is editorial director of *THE WHOLESALER*. She can be reached at 972-315-9803 or editor@thewholesaler.com. You can also follow her adventures at www.facebook.com/maryjomartintx or on Twitter at @maryjomartin. Also please remember to "Like" *THE WHOLESALER* on Facebook to get the latest news, updates and event coverage!

Do you live with drama? Don't allow it to rule you!

(Continued from Schmitt, page 8.)

ii. Invoicing errors. Every invoicing problem also results in extra work to correct the problems and get the accounting adjusted.

iii. Excessive shipments to fill orders. When a supplier sends a big order in 10 separate deliveries, it creates churning that spawns drama. (10 receipts of inventory, 10 invoices, 10 put-aways)

iv. Unreliable. When you can't count on your suppliers to do their job, it adds drama and extra work for your team.

c. Poor product quality. This is getting shot in both feet.

- Your customers are upset so your sales team must focus on fixing the problems versus selling.

- Your inventory team may become the quality control group for the supplier and expeditors to get the working product into the customer's hands.

- You may need to find a second, reliable source of supply.

- Plus you have the cost and drama of processing returns, warranty claims, credits, etc.

When you find yourself justifying a high-drama vendor because they give you a little better price, review the list and ask yourself if it is worth all the drama that you must endure.

4. Drama Markets. Sometimes fully serving a region involves operating in some good and some bad markets. While you might like to

cherry-pick a couple of the sweet ones, your success in the region may require that you endure some rotten-apple locations. Some of the clues are:

- High employee turnover
- Employee conflict with other employees and customers
- High inventory shrinkage
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Armed robberies.

I think staying in poor markets is always an explicit decision that is not taken lightly. There should always be ongoing activities to improve the branch's performance.

5. Drama Product Lines.

a. Non-strategic lines. Ideally your stocking list is a premeditated, carefully crafted list of products designed to fully serve your targeted types of customers. At least that was the plan in the beginning. Then as they say, the plan got altered to address the events of the day, week or years...in other words, "stuff happens." The result is often a non-strategic offering that includes lines that just don't make sense now. (Some probably never made sense.) Many wholesalers kid themselves thinking that these lines are benign. They are not! They divert inventory dollars, sales focus, buyer time, management direction from the lines that are the keys to your success and thus ought to be your priority.

b. Overlapping lines. While there may be a need to source some prod-

ucts from multiple suppliers, there is a real cost and a drama cost in the process.

- Many plumbing wholesalers have too many faucet lines. They hope their broad offering of special order products will somehow attract additional business but for many that is just the dream and certainly not the reality.

- Just reducing the sales calls from manufacturers will reduce your drama, even if you enjoy talking to their people.

Certainly this is only a list of thought starters so I challenge you to take a couple minutes to review where your stress and drama is coming from and to remove a few from your life. While I don't think a drama-free life is possible in the world today, I think an effort to reduce the drama can make us all more productive and less stressed as we head into 2012. ■

Have a happy and prosperous new year! —Rich

Rich Schmitt is president of Schmitt Consulting Group Inc., a management consulting firm focused on distribution and manufacturing clients for:

- Pricing
- Consulting Seminars
- Profit improvement

www.go-scg.com

Rich is also the co-owner of Schmitt ProfiTools Inc.(SPI), providing:

- Web Storefronts and Handheld tools
- Print catalog software, content creation and services
- Pricing management and pricing analysis

www.go-spi.com

Allied Group hosts Charlotte open house

FORT MILL, S.C. — The Allied Group's Charlotte-area branch hosted an open house on October 7. The new state-of-the-art facility opened earlier this year as a joint location for both carbon and stainless inventory and boasts three acres of outside storage and over 133,000 square feet of inventory space.

Customers from surrounding areas and all over the country were welcomed by Allied Group employees to enjoy music, prizes, tours of the new facility and local fare by a Charlotte

caterer. Money was raised to support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Eastern regional sales manager Buddy Berry addressed the group, saying, "Thank you for participating in this important milestone for the Allied Group. We are proud of our new home and we wouldn't be here without your support. Seamless is a word frequently used in our industry, and 'seamless' is what we strive to deliver in customer service and product. One group, one goal, one team."

Visit www.allied-grp.com.



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TERRITORY MANAGER

A leading manufacturer of plumbing products is currently looking for a territory manager in NC and SC.

This newly created position requires a self starting, motivated individual to call on plumbing wholesalers, and develop business through the trade.

Good communication skills and the ability to manage your time and territory are necessary. Some overnight travel required. Salary commensurate with experience.

For consideration, please submit your resume to lisa.woodward@oreilly-depalma.com.

All inquiries are held in strict confidence.

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VIEGA LLC is looking for District Sales Managers in WI, CO,

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hr@viega.com for consideration.

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Midwest manufacturer has a need for an experienced Director of Marketing who can develop and execute an effective product marketing campaign for a variety of commercial/institutional plumbing products used in the construction industry. This full time position requires documentable experience in the creation and execution of a comprehensive marketing strategy for commercial plumbing products. Successful candidate must also have demonstrable hands-on skills in the areas of product photography, artwork creation, descriptive text generation and sales literature development. This position requires strong attention to detail and superior communication skills. A comprehensive benefits program is available. Please respond via e-mail to:

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Bonomi North America, one of the fastest growing valve manufacturers has an opening for their commercial products group. Candidate will be responsible for developing specifications, marketing and training on new and existing valve products for the commercial plumbing and HVAC sectors. Experience with design engineers and working with manufacturer's representatives and wholesalers is a positive.

Please send or e-mail resume to nickw@bonominorthamerica.com.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL MANAGER
Bonomi North America is looking for an individual to fill the newly created position of North East Regional Manager. Ideally the candidate should have prior experience in our industry in calling on or working with Plumbing wholesalers, PVF houses, and OEM's. Responsibilities will include working with manufacturer's representatives, in marketing a broad line of ball valves, butterfly valves, check valves, and actuation controls.

Please send or e-mail resume to nickw@bonominorthamerica.com.



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Ruben Klein (rk@united-pipe.com), CFO/Director of Human Resources.
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Administrative Assistant Sadie Bechtold

Editorial Director Mary Jo Martin
Production Manager Cate C. Brown

Managing Editor James Schaible
Prepress Coordinator Mark Bruno
PVF, Industry and Economic Analyst Emeritus Morris R. Beschloss

Editorial Offices: 2165 Shermer Road., Suite A, Northbrook, IL 60062
 Phone: 847/564-1127, Fax: 847/564-1264, e-mail: editor@thewholesaler.com
Direct subscription inquiries to: Cynthia Lewis, Creative Data Services;
 519 E. Briarcliff Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440; clewis@cds1976.com;
 Phone: 630-739-0900 ext 203, Fax: 630-739-7648

Sales Offices

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Insightful keynote, exciting launches at DDI Conference



BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

The “Show Me” state was an ideal venue for DDI System to hold their 2011 Inform User Conference, as team members unveiled some exciting new launches that DDI believes will strengthen their offerings — and their customers’ businesses. I was delighted to be a guest of DDI at the conference and learn more about what they have in store. The event drew 100+ users and 13 DDI staff members to the Westin Crown Center in Kansas City for three days of business and social activities.

The keynote speaker was Ken Brown of Evergreen Consulting, who gave an incredibly insightful presentation on strategic pricing. Attendees came away very impressed by his knowledge. Following are some of the highlights:

- “Six months ago I didn’t know much about DDI. But as I’ve learned more, DDI has been quite a surprise. I’ve been delighted to learn they have the flexibility and capability to support the type of pricing requirements that companies need to move forward and grow their businesses. Think about your businesses and how pricing optimization applies to your companies.”

- “Strategic pricing is the last unplowed field. Salespeople have objectives — largely because of the way we pay them — that aren’t always in the best interest of our companies. Do your salespeople really understand the power of that extra 1% to 2% margin for your company?”

- “Rafi Mohammed, author of the *1% Windfall*, talks about the net gain that changing 1% of pricing can have on your company. Stop marking up costs, set prices that capture value, create a value statement, reinforce to employees that it is okay to earn high profits, realize that a discount today doesn’t guarantee a premium tomorrow.”

- “We often make excuses for not rocking the boat, like ‘the market sets prices,’ ‘salespeople already know where we need to be,’ ‘we need the volume,’ ‘we have a weak service and value proposition,’ and ‘we position ourselves for the last look.’ Accountability for pricing decisions is lacking. What companies need is a pricing coordinator who can be responsible to set margins.”

- “In a perfect world, you’d expect to see pricing organized so that margin percentage is higher for smaller customers. There should be an orderly pattern. But unfortunately, it’s often a chaotic pattern where we give the same attractive pricing to smaller/not as good customers as our larger/better customers. Pricing analytics make order out of a highly complex, chaotic environment. You also need a pricing library. Having the information is wonderful, but if you can’t access it readily, you’re going to revert back to old ways.”

- “There are three steps to strategic pricing: preparation, analysis and implementation. Take a look at your most recent 12 months of pricing history. Group customers into 5 to 10 primary segments, and then rank those segments by size (extra large, large, medium, small and very small). Set product price sensitivity by product and product group and by customer and customer segment; then determine margins or discounts.”

- “Every item is assigned a core sensitivity. Core means very sensitive products; non-core are less sensitive. Look at customer segments and then product classes and the whole sensitivity issue. The sweet spot is where they all are intertwined.”

A number of in-depth training sessions were offered to help users further their software knowledge and gain strategic ideas that they could take home to their businesses. These sessions included topics such as:

- Inventory and Purchasing Tools
- Price Rollups and Contracts
- Setting Up and Management the Price Matrix Workflow
- Financial Reporting
- Increasing Efficiencies
- Better Marketing
- Cloud Computing.

The agenda was also jampacked with sessions dedicated to new software launches that DDI is rolling out — and customers were extremely enthusiastic about the potential these new products have to offer. One of the most talked-about was Inform SBE — DDI’s new Small Business Edition software for distributors with less than 10 users. Among its features are:

- Comprehensive Inventory and Warehouse Management
- Automated Purchasing and Pricing
- Complete Sales Tools
- Advanced Accounting and Financial Reporting
- Custom Reporting Options.

Another launch is the Business to Consumer enhancement of Inform e-Commerce. This solution is fully integrated with DDI’s ERP software and eliminates the need for duplicate tasks when it comes to order entry, inventory and purchasing. Pricing, images and descriptions are all accessible from a single screen and available to all users — making it extremely easy to use. It is designed to capitalize on anonymous browsing and ultimately help distributions gain more sales through new shoppers that are drawn to their websites. It also streamlines the process for users in several ways:

- Instantly creates new accounts
- Assures users of secure credit card processing
- Fully integrates complex sales tax structures
- Automatically adds on shipping costs.

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