

THE WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution

2010 PVF Hall of Fame

Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc., based in Greenville, S.C., is the 2010 inductee into THE WHOLESALER's PVF Hall of Fame. They will be recognized during the May meeting of the PVF Roundtable in Houston. Shown inside Eastern's Branch 1-Greenville Distribution Center are (sitting) Kim Miller and John Snover; (standing, from left) Alyn Judkins, Kip Miller, Richy Milligan and Robby Davis. See page 26.



'Important market'

Noland Co. opens Florida HVAC location

DAYTON, OHIO — In a move to broaden its reach with NuTone Heating and Cooling Products in the Florida market, Noland Company, a distributor of plumbing supplies and HVAC equipment in the Southeast, has opened a new location in Cape Coral, Fla., to serve commercial and residential contractors.

It's the second HVAC company Noland has opened on Florida's west coast. (Turn to Ohio... page 105.)

Noritz creates commercial div.

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, CALIF. — Noritz America Corporation has developed the Noritz Commercial Department, which consists of regional teams of commercial professionals to assist with all retrofitting and new commercial projects, according to Yoshi Asano, Noritz America senior marketing manager.

(Turn to New... page 105.)

Zoeller welcomes Clarus Environmental

LOUISVILLE, KY. — Zoeller Company recently introduced the newest member of the Zoeller Family of Water Solutions — Clarus Environmental.

Clarus Environmental is committed to providing environmentally sustainable solutions. (Turn to Clarus... page 105.)



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Coaire hosts grand opening at new Texas facility

FORT WORTH, TEXAS — Coaire recently opened a 64,000-square-foot facility in Fort Worth. In addition to a warehouse, the location has offices and a 3,000-square-foot classroom for customer training. The facility highlights the Samsung DVM Plus Series Variable Refrigerant Flow System and the QuietSide tankless hot water series.

Coaire general manager Jack Ernest explained the reasons behind the company's decision to expand: "Expansion is always based on need and location. Coaire needed to have central location. We had the West and East Coasts covered, however as we've grown the need to have a Central location also grew. Choosing Texas was the easy part, as Texas is very business friendly. Choosing the city was another issue! We looked at all the major metropolitan areas. After visiting each one, the City of Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce rose to the top and has proven to be great partners."

On February 17, Coaire hosted a Grand Opening ribbon cutting ceremony with the help and support of the

City of Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. On this special occasion, Ernest was joined by Coaire president and CEO Sang Woo Lee, vice president-sales & engineering John Miles, the City of Fort Worth Major Pro Tem Assemblyman Danny Scarth and City of Fort Worth executive VP-economic development David Berzina, in addition to a number of sales reps and customers. Lunch was catered by one of North Texas' prime eateries — Babe's — which served mouth-watering fried chicken with all of the trimmings.

In addition to Ernest, other key personnel in Fort Worth are operations manager Ryan Burleson, product sales and technical support manager Matt Wall and warehouse manager Dusty Crocker.

Both visual and hands-on training is now offered in Fort Worth on a regularly scheduled basis for all products and applications. Classes are open to wholesalers, contractors, architects and engineers. In addition, wholesalers may schedule independent classes for just themselves and their contractors.

First Supply hosts dealer meetings and product show

BROOKLYN CENTER, MINN. AND WISCONSIN DELLS, WIS.— First Supply held its first Armstrong Air Dealer Meeting at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Center on February 25. Thirty-five dealers gathered to learn first hand from First Supply and Armstrong Air teams about technical information as well as sales and marketing programs. These programs are designed to give dealers the tools they need to help enhance their business in 2010.

"I was extremely pleased with the dealer attendance for our first Armstrong Air dealer meeting," said Mitch Anderson, sales manager for the Rochester, New Brighton and Owatonna, Minn., branches. "I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of the dealers who participated

and hope they found the program very informative."

The dealer meeting was the kick off of a series of training throughout the year to keep the dealers ahead of advancing technology, new products and enhanced environmental focus.

In related news, First Supply held its annual HVAC Dealer Meeting and Product Show March 11-12 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. Over 200 people attended the show including dealers, vendors, First Supply employees and International Comfort Products representatives. Ninety dealers from Milwaukee, Wis., to Brainerd, Minn., gathered to learn more about Comfortmaker and Tempstar programs.

The meeting included a successful HVAC tradeshow attended by over 30 vendors and manufacturer representatives showcasing 60 brands.

Informational sessions were held for HVAC dealers providing an opportunity for them learn more about products and programs offered by First Supply. The sessions included technical information,



First Supply's first Armstrong Air Dealer Meeting attracted 35 dealers to learn about technical information as well as sales and marketing programs.



Shown at the top is Coaire's new facility in Fort Worth, Texas. Lower left is a display in the new warehouse highlighting many of the products and brands the company offers. The photo at lower right shows Teresa Pearson, director of member relations with the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce; Sang Woo Lee, president/CEO of Coaire; and Jack Ernest, Coaire general manager, cutting the ribbon during the recent Grand Opening.

As Ernest noted, "Education and information is power and the more empowered we make people the more successful they'll be and the more successful Coaire will be."

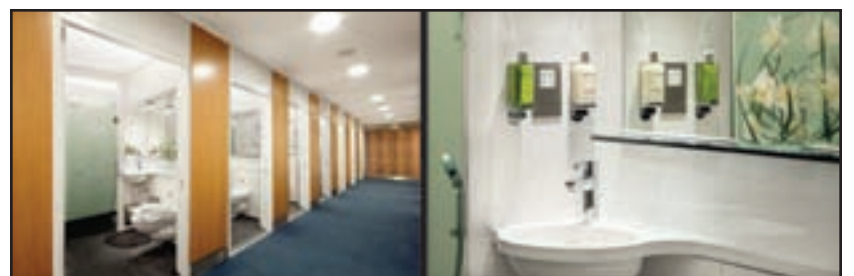
Ernest has 30-plus years in this industry, first with Heatwave and later with Goodman and Evcon unitary equipment manufacturers, before tran-

sitioning to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, a mini-split manufacturer, in 1995. In 1998, Ernest and Sang Woo Lee discussed Lee's vision of developing a new company in California, which led to the formation of QuietSide and now Coaire. Coaire has developed, manufactures and sells a line of state-

(Turn to Ft. Worth... page 10.)

First Supply LLC is a regional wholesale distributor with 26 locations in the upper Midwest. Founded in 1897, First Supply, employing over 500 people, is a family-owned, single source provider of plumbing, heating, cooling, pump/well & septic, municipal, waterworks, builder and industrial supplies.

Heathrow's luxurious Terminal 5 now features Hansgrohe products



British Airways' six stylish lounges offer passengers luxurious facilities and an exclusive spa, all fitted with Hansgrohe water-conserving fixtures.

SCHILTACH, GERMANY — Travelers can enjoy an entirely new airport experience at London Heathrow airport's Terminal 5. The innovative design ideas and construction processes have given Europe's biggest airport a spacious, light-flooded building of lightness and modernity that sets new standards. British Airways' six stylish lounges pamper passengers with a luxurious

well-being area and an exclusive spa even before they take off.

The Terminal 5 is the biggest detached building in the U.K. "Passenger requirements were always the focus in the construction of this modern, all-glass building," said Mike Davies, the architect in charge of the project.

The spacious, modern building —

(Turn to Hansgrohe... page 49.)

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See contact information on page 114



The Wholesaler presents
Mary Jo Martin's
"Between Us"
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Watch her online at
www.thewholesaler.com



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THE WHOLESALER

The Front Page



2010 marks the ninth year for THE WHOLESALER's PVF Hall of Fame, in which we honor outstanding distributors and manufacturers that have distinguished themselves within the industry. This year's inductee is Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc. of Greenville, S.C., which has incorporated president and CEO Kip Miller's values and ethics into its business model as a formula for success.

In the News

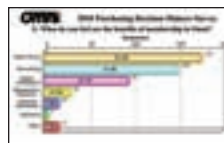


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Small changes to your processes can have a big impact

On a recent flight to an assignment, I boarded in the first group and asked the flight attendant how their passenger load looked for the trip. She said that they had about 80 passengers on a flight that had a capacity of 137. I said that was good news for us passengers but bad news for the airline. She responded that it was actually okay because their breakeven load was at 72. She said that the company should breakeven on the trip depending upon the number of “non-revs.” (A non-rev is non-revenue passenger who is a guest, an employee or a member of the employee’s family who is flying for free or at a greatly reduced fare.) She added that the airline may even do better if their fuel purchases had been done wisely. I sat down a little stunned by her grasp of the situation and by the simplicity of her explanation.

As we flew toward our destination and after she had completed her duties, I told her that I was impressed with her understanding of the company’s operating performance. I asked how she came to that level of understanding. I asked if the airline had provided training or seminars. She said that the company simply made the information available on the company’s internal website. She just liked to log in to see how things are going. She also added that she participated in the company’s profit sharing plan, so her interest was more than casual.

That conversation reminded me that another focus area for wholesalers is to give people information that will help them know whether they are doing a good job. As I have said before, I believe most people come to work every day to do a good job. Companies often fail those people in several ways:

- **They provide bad supervisors who end up beating all the good intentions out of the team through their Neanderthal people and supervisory skills.** We have all seen the cartoon where a supervisor is yelling at an employee, “If I want your opinion, I’ll beat it out of you!!!” I am not a proponent of a soft, laissez-faire approach either.

Until this economic crisis, many wholesalers suffered because their team thought that the company was ‘rolling in dough’ since they were moving a lot of product. This misconception caused people to offer obscene discounts, to work with less intensity, to care less about efficiency and to be less concerned about waste.

Great talent deserves great leaders using good techniques. The first job is to find supervisors who are smart and like working with people.

- **They create stupid policies that cause the team to become demotivated and demoralized.**

1. You are at risk when you hire a great person but then in the orienta-

tion meeting say, “Our company has a two-year training program to learn our warehouse operation.” This may be wrong on several fronts. First, any warehouse operation that takes two years to learn is probably too complicated, thus a problem since you cannot afford to staff your warehouse with “rocket surgeons.”

Second, assuming that you have a normal warehouse operation, if the people you hire take two years to learn your warehouse procedures, you are not hiring sharp-enough people. And third, sharp people don’t take two years to learn a warehouse operation, even if it is overly complicated. Forcing a smart person to endure two years of warehouse training

is a good way to get them motivated — to leave at their first opportunity.

2. When processes are designed using a lowest-common-denominator approach, the tedious procedures can be insulting and demoralizing to good people. Ideally you will hire sharp people and your training programs will allow individuals to progress at their own pace. Of course, tests of skills and proficiency are required to ensure that the progress is real and meets established standards.

3. When processes and policies are implemented with the basic fairness of fraternity hazing it is demoralizing. When the senior employees pick on new or less-senior employees, it causes the good people to look elsewhere and only the lesser people will stay because they have no better alternative.

- **They don’t provide a set of goals or guidelines that properly describe top-level performance.** As I mentioned last month in more detail, it is critical to define processes in writing to ensure consistency and to get everybody operating from those procedures. Everyone should be singing from the same sheet of music.

- **They don’t provide the information to allow employees to self-evaluate their performance and improve.** I have seen instances in my career where the simple act of providing performance data resulted in



BY RICH SCHMITT
Management specialist

better performance by the team. There was no implied threat of punishment. It wasn’t the “Hawthorne Effect” where people’s performance improves when they are observed and measured. It was their desire to do good work. Of course there are people who don’t give a hoot, but most people are not wired that way. Simply establishing fair measures often results in better and more consistent performance.

- **They don’t provide measures to supervisors so they can evaluate, coach, reward or remove people from roles.** Supervisors who don’t have information can use their “gut feeling” to evaluate performance. This can allow personal relationships — both good and bad — to bias evaluations. Or at the other end of the spectrum, supervisors without data may feel uncomfortable evaluating performance, resulting in little coaching in either direction and never feeling comfortable removing a person.

Performance measures

- **Overall company performance** — I have mixed emotions about providing this information since it can result in mixed reactions by your team. Knowing that the company is doing badly can be good since it can also create a sense of urgency. Until this economic crisis, many wholesalers suffered because their team thought that the company was “rolling in dough” since they were moving a lot of product. This “rolling in dough” misconception caused people to offer obscene discounts, to work with less intensity, to care less about efficiency and to be less concerned about waste. Seeing performance numbers can help focus the team on operating efficiently.

On the other hand, knowing that the company is really struggling may also result in good people seeking other jobs. If you provide this information, it is critical to help your team understand and react properly to the results. So I guess I end up with the following advice: Look at your team and determine how the information will be received and used. It is probable (Turn to Evolution... page 110.)

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Trane honors outstanding distributors for '09

TYLER, TEXAS – The Pacesetter Award was presented at Trane's annual awards event to eight of its leading channel partners who have exceeded expectations. The award was given to the company's top-performing sales channels, recognizing both Dealer Sales Offices (DSO) and Independent Wholesale Distributors (IWD). There are three groups within the DSO and IWD channels that receive these awards based on their market share and size. Additionally, an overall Pacesetter Top Performer Award was presented to one DSO and one IWD.

Weighted metrics around performance are used to determine the winners in each group. The total scores for each group are then used to determine the Top Performer Award.

The following won awards:

Group One Winners

- DSO — Kentucky/Tennessee DSO (four-time winner)
- IWD — Hunton Distribution, Houston (three-time winner) and

O'Connor Company, Kansas City, Kan. (four-time winner)

Group Two Winners

- DSO — Heartland DSO, St. Louis (three-time winner) and Richmond DSO, Richmond, Va. (three-time winner)
- IWD — Butcher Distributors, Baton Rouge, La. (three-time winner)

Group Three Winners

- DSO — Indiana/Michigan DSO,

Indianapolis (first-time winner)

- IWD — Ferguson Heating and Cooling, Cleveland (first-time winner)

Overall Pacesetter DSO

- Kentucky/Tennessee DSO

Overall Pacesetter IWD

- Butcher Distributors.

"Each of our award winners share a common theme as they've all done an outstanding job this past year in communicating the value and benefits of

Trane to dealers and in turn, their customers," said Kevin Carlile, vice president-Trane Sales, Residential Solutions. "In addition to increasing their sales and market shares, our Pacesetter winners also excelled in every aspect of their business. They're truly top performers and very deserving of this honor and recognition."

The Pacesetter Awards were presented at Trane's annual awards event on March 2-3 at the Ritz-Carlton in Dallas.

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Ft. Worth

(Continued from page 4.)

of-the-art Scroll and Rotary air compressors throughout North America. Coaire added HVAC products to their product offering and added a location in Carlisle, Pa., in 2009.

All three of its training and distribution centers — Santa Fe Springs, Calif., Carlisle, Pa., and Fort Worth — inventory, sell and support the HVAC product lines in addition to air compressors. "Our sales focus is through independent sales representatives to wholesale distribution with a great emphasis on training the installing service contractor throughout North America," said Ernest. "Coaire continues providing our customers with quality mini-split and unitary air conditioning systems and tankless water heaters and dual purpose water heaters. We also have third-party warehouses in Florida and Ontario, Canada."

Among the products offered through Coaire are:

- Samsung DVM, a complete variable refrigerant flow line-up
- Samsung, a complete features and benefits mini-splits line-up
- Quietside, a standard mini-split line-up
- Quietside on demand tankless and dual purpose water heater line-up
- Coaire standard mini-split line-up
- Coaire on demand tankless and dual purpose water heater line-up
- Coaire standard unitary condenser, A-coil and air handler line-up.

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The fully adjustable docking arm mounts onto a big capacity reel. It's loaded with tough Gel-Rod™ push rod that protects against moisture damage if the rod is cut or abraded. And the color self-leveling camera makes it easier for you and your customers to follow the action. With this easily maneuverable, all-in-one package you're set to trouble-shoot 3" to 10" lines. You can even mount the SD onto a mini reel to get down to 2" to 4" lines.

The Gen-Eye SD also includes built-in voice over microphone, on-screen distance counter, date/time stamp, AC and DC power cords, and 512 Hz transmitter for camera location.



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WaterFurnace names new Calgary distributor

FORT WAYNE, IND. – WaterFurnace Renewable Energy Inc. announced that CleanEnergy Developments Ltd of Calgary, Alberta, is its newest GeoStar distributor. GeoStar is a brand of WaterFurnace Renewable Energy, a manufacturer of residential,

commercial, industrial and institutional geexchange and water source heat pumps.

CleanEnergy, part of Alter NRG Corporation, works with homeowners, residential and commercial developers to help them integrate



energy-efficient geexchange systems into their projects.

The agreement with WaterFurnace provides CleanEnergy with exclusive

distribution rights for GeoStar products in British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the vast majority of Ontario. Within these territories, CleanEnergy has 55 dealers who will benefit from the broader product offerings that come from this agreement to distribute the GeoStar line. CleanEnergy handles all aspects of a geexchange project from feasibility and conceptual analysis to design, installation and commissioning.

“We are excited that CleanEnergy has developed a solid geexchange distribution channel within Canada, and together with the GeoStar line they will be able to target additional markets providing greater energy savings for all Canadians,” said John Preston, director of distributor sales for WaterFurnace.

Mark Montemurro, president and CEO of Alter NRG, added, “The GeoStar heat pumps are among the best in the market and will provide our dealer network, residential customers and commercial customers

CleanEnergy handles all aspects of a geexchange project from feasibility and conceptual analysis to design, installation and commissioning.

with a consistent high-quality product across a broad geographic region.”

Geexchange units are similar to ordinary heat pumps, but use energy stored below ground-level to provide heating, air conditioning and hot water. In the winter, heat is brought in through a loop, concentrated, and then delivered throughout the home to utilize that stored energy. During summer, excess heat in the home is removed and put back into the earth. Because geexchange units use the earth’s natural heat, they are among the most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling technologies currently available.

The GeoStar product line includes the G Series geexchange heat pumps with units available from 2 to 6 tons, and up to 4.8 COP and 28.0 EER, plus console units and indoor and outdoor splits; and the Q Series all-in-one geexchange boiler, furnace and air conditioner. All units are AHRI certified and Energy Star rated, as applicable.

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Control Supply prepares to host Open House

COPIAGUE, N.Y. — Control Supply Corporation is preparing to hold an Open House on June 10. Over 50 manufacturers will be on hand to display many different products.

One manufacturer Control Supply is particularly excited about is Johnson Controls. Control Supply has made a commitment to have more than 200 new Johnson Controls models in stock. One such product, the new system 450 modular electronic series, can control temperature, pressure and humidity application simultaneously as a stand-alone or in conjunction with expansion modules to control a wide range of applications.

Honeywell will feature their new L7224R1000 aqua reset system for outdoor reset and Q3200U1004 glowfly hot surface igniter.

Grundfos will display the Alpha 15-15 pump, the next generation of energy efficient circulators that reduce power consumption by up to 50%.

Schneider Electric (formerly Erie) pop-top zone valve can provide any combination for water and steam, two-way or three-way, any voltage, gpm, normally open or normally closed. Control Supply is one of the largest Schneider Electric Redistributors in the country with very competitive pricing.

The IF95EZ-0671 from White Rodgers has a selectable seven-day or non-programmable feature that can be hard-wired or battery powered with an easy-to-read 6" square display.



Many other manufacturers will attend, including Accustat, Allanson, Argo, Cash Acme, Field, Floodstop, Garber, Danfoss, Hydrolevel, Lux, Maxitrol, McDonnell and Miller, Parker, Petrometer, R.W. Beckett, Robertshaw, Siemens, Suntec, Tekmar, Tork and Zurn.

An assortment of hot and cold food and beverages will be provided by Felico's catering.

Doug Solow, PGA co-head professional at the Eisenhower Park golf facility, will be available to analyze customers' golf swings and offer tips. His instruction has helped many of his students improve and lower their handicaps.

In addition, manufacturers will hold raffles and prizes during the day.

Control Supply is a distributor that sells to wholesalers only and offers technical support for HVACR controls and systems. Call 800-872-3300, fax 631-789-3885 or visit www.control-supplycorp.com.

Burn wood and reduce emissions: A new green concept

CORONA, CALIF. — Earth's Flame™ was developed to prevent the extinction of wood-burning fireplaces. It is so innovative and effective that it won the 2010 Vesta Green award and is being considered for the EPA's Clean Air Excellence Award. More importantly for consumers — Earth's Flame reduces emissions 33% below the Phase 2 Emissions Level of the EPA's Voluntary Wood-Burning Fireplace Program as tested in a typical 36-inch zero clearance fireplace.

"Independent studies estimate there are approximately 37 million households in the U.S. with one or more fireplaces that emit 50,000 to 70,000 tons of harmful pollutants each year," said Lisa Leighton, owner of Canterbury Enter-

prises. "Due to pollutants and emissions, many homeowners are not allowed to build a wood burning fireplace in new housing, use their existing fireplace or they feel guilty about burning it. In Southern California, the South Coast Air Quality Management District has banned wood burning fireplaces in

new construction. Earth's Flame offers a simple solution because it easily retrofits into most of the existing fireplaces and allows home owners to once again enjoy their fireplace. We extol the Green nature of the product because it improves ambient air quality and reduces the health risks associated with harmful emissions."

With the high price of energy and the tightening air quality regulations, many homeowners are frustrated and confused. Earth's Flame is a cost-effective and viable solution for new and existing fireplaces that dramatically reduces fireplace emissions. "The reason most fireplaces have such high emissions is because they have poor combustion," explained Steve Marple, project engineer. "Earth's Flame promotes good combustion and we believe it has the added benefit of directing more of the fire's heat into the living space." Official burn tests compliant with ASTM E-2558 show an average emission factor of 3.4 g/kg; this is up to a 72% reduction in standard fireplace emissions.

Visit www.earthsfly.com.



Earth's Flame™ promotes more complete combustion and retrofits in most existing fireplaces.

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Alsons products meet new WaterSense criteria

HILLSDALE, MICH. — Alsons® Corporation, a leading manufacturer of distinctively-styled shower products, has partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the WaterSense® program. The company recently announced that 40 of their shower head and hand shower SKUs have received WaterSense certification for shower heads.

The WaterSense label provides trade professionals and consumers



with the assurance that select shower heads and hand showers are at least 20% more water efficient than the current federal standard of 2.5 gpm, flowing at a pressure of 80 psi. To receive the label, qualified shower heads and hand showers must be independently tested and certified to meet the EPA's performance specifications for flow rate over a range of pressures, force and spray coverage.

"As a WaterSense partner, we are dedicated to offering water-saving shower products that meet the performance requirements as specified by the EPA, while still providing users with an enhanced shower experience," said John Davies, vice president-sales at Alsons. "The unique spray dynamics featured in the patented Fluidics Technology gives users the sensation of a high-flow

shower experience while using 20% to 40% less water."

The Fluidics Spray Technology is featured in 14 of Alsons' Water-Amplifying® shower heads that meet the WaterSense criteria. This patented technology controls the water's shape and velocity, producing larger spray droplets that retain their heat longer. These shower heads feature either a single 1.5-gpm or 2.0-gpm spray, or

a model with both flow rates that can be selected with an easy-turn lever.

Other Alsons products meeting WaterSense criteria have a flow rate of 2.0 gpm, and feature multiple spray settings. In addition to the water savings, the WaterSense products also conserve energy, requiring less gas or electric to heat the reduced amount of water.

Visit www.alsons.com.

EPA honors Panasonic with Energy Star award

SECAUCUS, N.J. — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency named Panasonic Home & Environment Company as a 2010 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for its outstanding

commitment to educating both industry professionals and consumers on the importance of sustainability."

With the help of ENERGY STAR, last year alone Americans

Panasonic ideas for life USA

contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by manufacturing energy-efficient products and helping educate consumers about those products. Panasonic was recognized at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on March 18.

"Panasonic is honored to be named an ENERGY STAR partner for 2010 because it validates our efforts related to energy efficiency," said marketing manager Anita So. "The award not only acknowledges our energy-saving ventilation fans and their role in preserving indoor air quality cost-effectively, but it also recognizes our

saved \$17 billion on their energy bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 30 million vehicles.

"Today, EPA is recognizing Panasonic for taking the lead in addressing climate change through their commitment to energy efficiency," said Gina McCarthy, EPA assistant administrator for Air and Radiation. "Panasonic is producing and promoting products that have earned the ENERGY STAR, showing customers that together, we can increase our nation's energy efficiency and reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases."

American Standard stands in support of safe, sustainable global sanitation

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — American Standard Brands took a stand for global safe drinking water and basic sanitation for all, by standing up 12 high-efficiency toilets outside the U.S. Capitol on March 23 in a Guinness World Record attempt to create the World's Longest Toilet Queue.

The event was part of two days of activities to support World Water Day

"Lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene is a serious global issue. Nearly 1 billion people around the world still lack access to clean drinking water, and more than 2.5 billion people lack even basic sanitation."

(March 22), with toilet queues being set up in Europe and Asia, as well as North America, to draw attention to WASH, an acronym for water, sanitation and hygiene. Lack of access to fresh clean water, the world's largest environmental health crisis, kills 4,500 children every day.

The World's Longest Toilet Queue is one of many happenings taking place in Washington, D.C., next Monday and Tuesday, bringing together thousands of campaigners from around the world to identify ways to achieve the United Nations' 2015 Millennium Development Goal of reducing by

half the proportion of people who lack safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

On March 22, a series of high-level roundtables entitled "Paths Forward for the Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sector," hosted by the Global Water Futures Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, were held. Their goal — to generate strategies on how to improve the outcome of WASH programs and increase participation of U.S.-based public and private sectors in global WASH initiatives. Jim McHale, American Standard Brands VP-operations and engineering, was an invited participant in the roundtable discussion "Making Our Investments Count," contributing ideas to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH programs.

"Lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene is a serious global issue," said McHale. "Nearly 1 billion people around the world still lack access to clean drinking water, and more than 2.5 billion people lack even basic sanitation.

"In our country, we are fortunate that trained plumbers protect our health and safety, a fact American Standard celebrated in the 1930s with our iconic advertising campaign, The Plumber Protects the Health of Our Nation."

First Supply hosts trip to Mexico

MADISON, WIS. — First Supply recently returned from Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico, as part of their 2010 World of Opportunity program. The trip was held in late January and early February and included nearly 400 customers, vendors and employees over two weeks.

Each group enjoyed seven fun-filled days relaxing and enjoying Mexico's culture, including shopping, fine dining and exciting tours. The fabulous all-inclusive Vallarta Palace Resort hosted the group in style. Guests experienced exceptional dining, exciting waves,

thrilling parasailing and lazy days by the gorgeous pool. Several guests enjoyed adventures watching whales, exploring the Sierra Madre and bargain hunting in Puerto Vallarta.

First Supply LLC is a regional wholesale distributor with 26 locations in the upper Midwest. Founded in 1897, First Supply, employing over 500 people, is a family-owned, single source provider of plumbing, heating, cooling, pump/well & septic, municipal, waterworks, builder and industrial supplies.





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Based on looks alone, the answer is simple. The stylish one on the left is LG's new Art Cool™ Mirror Inverter Air Conditioning System. The unique design with its sleek mirrored finish also has a variety of attractive panel options to complement any room's décor.

But good looks are just part of what sets LG's Art Cool apart. Their innovative new inverter technology means that it runs quiet and has an energy efficient rating up to 19.7 SEER. And that saves you money. What's more, LG Art Cool's duct-free design makes installation fast and economical. And with the wide variety of cooling capacities available, it's easy to find a unit that matches almost any size room.

Discover the full line of LG products at www.LGusa.com.

Innovative Comfort Solutions



Luxaire donations \$200,000 to Make-A-Wish during 2009

NORMAN, OKLA. — Luxaire® Heating and Air Conditioning donated \$200,000 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America in 2009, bringing the total amount Luxaire has donated to the nation's largest wish-granting organization to \$1.95 million since 2001.

"When we embarked on this relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation more than nine years ago, we could not have imagined the im-



perfect our donations would have, both on the deserving children in the communities where we live and work and on the Luxaire family, whose members generously support our commitment to this organization," said Brian Michael, Luxaire brand manager.

During 2009, Luxaire's contributions helped Make-A-Wish fund a number of events:

- The 26th Annual Make-A-Wish® Triathlon at Sea Colony. Held in Bethany Beach, Del., this event generated \$250,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic. Participants competed in a 1.5K ocean swim, 40K bike race and a 10K run.

- The 2nd Annual Wish Ball — Magic Carpet Ride. This year-end fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Oklahoma was held in Oklahoma City, Okla., and raised \$79,060. Attendees enjoyed dinner, drinks and dancing to the music of All-Funk Radio Show and participated in a raffle and live auction.

- The 13th Annual Golf Outing for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York. As many as 240 golfers played 18 holes of golf at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., and helped raise \$492,000 for the Metro New York chapter. In addition to golf, participants enjoyed breakfast, contests, golf tips with the course pro, dinner, a raffle and awards presentations.

Jon Gottlieb, president of Luxaire distributor ABCO Refrigeration Supply Corp., and Michael Senter, CEO of ABCO and a member of the board of directors of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York, received the Champions at Winged Foot award, presented to individuals or corporations that make contributions exceeding \$50,000.

In addition to these events, Luxaire's contribution to the Make-A-Wish Foundation also helped sponsor wish kid Tony's meeting with an actor last November on the Oasis of the Seas cruise ship in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Visit www.joinluxaire.com.

Grundfos 'Pumps on Tour' truck begins 48-city journey



The 1,200-square-foot Grundfos 'Pumps on Tour' mobile educational center for trade professionals will visit 48 cities throughout the U.S. this year.

OLATHE, KAN. — Grundfos "Pumps on Tour" — a fully equipped, mobile educational center for trade professionals in the residential, commercial and industrial pumping industry — will be visiting 48 different cities throughout the U.S. from March through November 2010. Each tour stop allows trade professionals to gain hands-on training from Grundfos staff and the chance to experience interactive pump displays.

The 1,200-square-foot vehicle includes a mini-theater for viewing training videos and presentations, as well as a series of interactive, working displays of a wide selection of residential, commercial and industrial pump solutions from Grundfos.

Pumps on Tour features:

- ALPHA™, an energy-opti-

mized, 115-volt circulator featuring a permanent magnet motor design that will cut power consumption by a minimum of 50%, as compared with other circulators in its class.

- Thinking Buildings Universe (ThinkingBuildings.com), a new online resource offering contractors and engineers a complete range of information and tools on commercial pumps to help make their building projects come together more smoothly.

- The award-winning Multi-Stage CR-H, the perfect solution for ANSI (American National Standards Institute) pump users seeking improved efficiency and increased longevity for their existing pumps.

A complete list of tour events and registration can be found at www.PumpsonTour.com.

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A. O. Smith earns Brand Leader Awards

ASHLAND CITY, TENN. — A. O. Smith Water Products Company has earned two Brand Leader Awards in *Builder Magazine's* 2010 Brand Use Study.

The survey looked at four brand areas — brand familiarity, brands used by firms in the past two years, brands used most and brand quality — and evaluated manufacturers accordingly. A. O. Smith was among the top four brands in all categories, while ranking first as the brand used by firms in the past two years and the brand used most.

This year's study included a new question in the water heater category, asking participants about their willingness to try new brands over the past two years. The results showed that 42% of participants were somewhat more willing to try new brands known for quality, advanced or new product features or "green" features.

Visit www.hotwater.com.

See contact information on page 114

Are Piping Specifications Losing Credibility?

Core Pipe Products, President, Steve Romanelli speaks on this issue.

Core Pipe recognizes and supports the hard work that organizations such as ASTM, ASME, and MSS have put into creating specifications that the piping industry uses as standards for design and procurement. These specifications are more than simple guidelines that should be loosely interpreted by manufacturers. They can make the difference between quality performance and disastrous product failure. Over the past several years, Core Pipe has been conducting quality checks on a variety of materials for our customers and it is disheartening to see so many manufacturers disregard key components of these standards yet continue to identify their products as compliant. Such fraudulent practices diminish the credibility of industry standards and risk the safety and satisfaction of end users who are expecting quality products from their suppliers.

There are plenty of trustworthy manufacturers that follow industry standards, but unfortunately it will be the actions of those who disregard the specifications that will question the credibility and enforcement of these standards. We believe that manufacturers are the industry stewards who have

a moral duty to inform and educate our customers of potential problems in the hope that such actions may prevent even one accident from happening in the future. Perhaps one of the fine independent organizations such as ASTM, ASME, or MSS can develop a certification process that will only allow qualified companies the authority to use their markings on product.

We give our full support to any efforts that will help protect the dedicated people who depend on quality piping products for their safety and well being.

Core Pipe will continue to offer FREE QUALITY CHECKS for any weld fittings (regardless of manufacturer) sent to our facility in Carol Stream, IL where we will conduct non-destructive verification inspections for wall thickness and material grade. Results will remain confidential. Please contact your sales representative to arrange your FREE inspection.

Our customers depend on us to provide the highest quality products to serve their needs. We will not compromise that trust.

QUALITY

Our Commitment to You.

Quality and innovation are not just words to us. They represent a commitment embraced throughout our organization. At Core Pipe Products, we deliver Piping Solutions That Fit[®] the growing needs of our customers, the ever-changing global marketplace, and the quality expectations of the end user. Going beyond the industry standards to exceed our customers' requirements is the norm - and we are proud of it.

Because every customer has different needs, we have both standard and custom fittings and flanges. To learn more about our products and solutions give us a call. We'd be happy to explore how Core Pipe Products can leverage the versatility of its four major brands to precisely fit your needs.

Free Quality Checks

Core Pipe Products, Inc. will provide free quality checks at our facility for any weld fitting products, regardless of manufacturer. Please contact your sales representative at Core Pipe Products, Inc. to arrange the testing.



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See contact information on page 114

C&C Valve

Human relations at the core of their business

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

In just 12 years, C&C Valve has expanded from a limited line of cast iron butterfly valves and very little working capital to offering a full line of quality, competitively priced pipe, valves and fittings for the upstream (drilling and exploration), midstream (gas gathering, compressor stations, metering, etc.), and downstream markets (refineries and petrochemical plants), along with transportation, HVAC, shipbuilding and other industries.

In addition to their 50,000-square-foot headquarters in Houston, C&C also has a 16,000-square-foot sister operation in Edmonton, Alberta, and has consigned inventory in 20 locations in 11 states. Co-founder Dale Lutz proudly noted that C&C has grown from just two employees to now having “25 of the best people in the industry,” including a very highly skilled outside sales team that spends much of their time calling on end users and engineers.

C&C also is represented by 12 manufacturers’ rep firms. “We use both our outside sales team and a great group of manufacturers’ reps strategically located throughout the U.S.,” said Lutz. “Most of our reps have inventory that we consign to them. We believe having inventory close to the activity is a great tool and also makes it very convenient for our customers. We also have an inside sales staff whose responsibilities are divided by product and geographic area of the country.”

Currently, C&C has a broad customer base with approximately 300 active accounts — most of which have one or two locations and are owner operated. But, they also do business with most of the major dis-



Founders Dale Lutz and K.C. Chin formed C&C in 1999.

tributors as well. C&C adopted the policy to sell through distribution when it was originally founded, and continues to remain loyal to its distributor base.

“The wholesalers are the ones who have the day-to-day contact with the users,” explained Lutz. “They are the ones who can make you or break you. If you have a close relationship with your wholesalers then you are going to get the necessary feedback on your products, such as pricing and performance. And, this is where you get the ideas for new product development. Communication with our distributor base is key to our mutual success.”

Building a reputation

Lutz and K.C. Chin formed C&C in 1999, becoming incorporated in early 2000. After getting his start with J.B. Smith in 1986 selling high-pressure pipe fittings, Lutz went on to manage sales for a major manufacturer of oil-



field products. Meanwhile, Chin has introduced many well-known Korean manufactures such as TY Cast Steel Valves, KUKA Valve, Cofsc Forge. Chin has been a great ambassador for many Korean factories.

“Both Chin and I are very hands on, and here almost every day,” Lutz noted. “We see every order that comes through. We even take sales calls. Our style would best be described by saying ‘Hire the best people you can, give them the tools they need to do their job and get out of the way.’ From a customer standpoint, our goal is to provide quality products and stand behind them, offer competitive prices, and ship orders the same day. Customer satisfaction is our number one goal.”

Originally their product line consisted of 2" through 6" wafer and lug type cast iron butterfly valves. Maverick International in Beaumont, Texas, was C&C’s very first customer and they still do business to-



C&C carries products ranging from threaded ball valves, pipe line valves, butterfly valves, hammer unions, needle valves, bolted sleeve couplings, expansion joints, actuators, grooved valves and couplings, swage nipples, bull plugs, red iron, high pressure plug valves, and swivel joints.

gether today. C&C now carries products ranging from 1/4" threaded ball valves through 30" pipe line valves, 2" through 54" butterfly valves, 1" through 12" hammer unions with pressures ranging from 1000 to 15,000 psi, in addition to needle valves, bolted sleeve couplings, expansion joints, actuators, grooved valves and couplings, swage nipples, bull plugs, red iron, high pressure plug valves, and swivel joints.

Over the years, C&C has developed exclusive marketing arrangements with its major suppliers in the U.S., South Korea and China.

“We have worked with these suppliers to engineer and develop a product offering of the highest quality,” Lutz commented. “Our suppliers meet the applicable U.S. standards

required by the oil and gas market in North America. All of our sources meet ISO 9001 and are licensed by API. Products are designed to meet the requirements of the NACE standard MR-0175.

“We have built our reputation on hammer unions and butterfly valves. However, throughout our history we have continued to introduce new products. Depending on the market sector, C&C is known for many different products. These include our FORCE API 6D trunnion and floating ball valves, API 6D swing check valves, threaded ball and check valves in carbon steel and ductile iron, needle valves, flanged gate valves, bolted sleeve couplings, a complete line of 15,000 PSI Flow Line products, and our newest offering which is a non-freeze tank valve.”

C&C recently re-invested in its business with the purchase of a Hydro Static test stand. This allows the company to test all of its flanged

ball valves in Houston prior to being shipped to a customer. A similar acquisition is being made for the Edmonton location, and it should be operational by presstime.

Similar to most industry companies, C&C has experienced a general slowdown in business over the last few years, but foresees improving market conditions in 2010 and beyond.

“The slowdown hit us hard in early 2009,” Lutz said. “Beginning in February, sales fell overnight by 50% and the decline continued through May. But by the time the fourth quarter hit, we began to see demand pick up and that trend has continued through the first quarter of 2010. Going forward through the rest of this year I believe we will see a slow down beginning in the third quarter, but overall demand will be stronger than what we saw in last year. However, we remain optimistic about continued steadying of oil and gas prices and steady growth for our industry.”

Lutz is convinced that no matter how much business changes over the years, it still all comes down to human relations.

“It’s simple,” he said. “If a customer doesn’t like you, it doesn’t matter what you’re selling. They will not support you long term. If you take care of your customers’ needs and service their business they will support you, but you can never take them for granted. We always keep in mind that our customers do have many other choices. We have also kept the philosophy of ‘Right Product, Right Price, Right Now,’ and it has proven very successful for us.

“We see a lot of potential for growth as many of our competitors are gobbled up by M&A. So much is often lost in these transactions. We plan to continue to introduce new products and services — making C&C a more appealing option for new customers.” ■

Visit www.candcvalve.com.



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~ M. Dorn, Plumbing Manager, Godby Plumbing and Heating, Indianapolis, Indiana

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See contact information on page 114

Chippewa Nature Center's geothermal heating made possible by Dow

MIDLAND, MICH. — The Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) is using chemistry from The Dow Chemical Company to heat and cool its newly built Nature Preschool. The facility's geothermal heat pump system uses 165 gallons of DOWFROST™ Heat Transfer Fluid. The system was installed by Answer Heating and Cooling of Freeland, Mich.

The Chippewa Nature Center is a non-profit organization designed to facilitate the enjoyment and understanding of natural and cultural resources as relevant to the Saginaw Valley's ecosystems, promote environmental awareness, and foster responsible stewardship. Over 60,000 people visit CNC every year, including 20,000 school kids and 700 Nature Day campers.

Geothermal heat pump systems are designed to deliver energy efficiency savings by leveraging the consistent temperatures underground. While the air temperature varies as the seasons change, the temperature of the earth, from four to six feet down, stays constant year-round.

A geothermal heat pump system circulates a heat transfer fluid such as DOWFROST™ Fluid from the dwelling through loops of pipes buried underground.

This inhibited propylene glycol heat transfer fluid is ideal for applications like the one at the Chippewa Nature Center. Mixtures of propylene glycol and water provide good heat transfer performance and have excellent freeze protection properties.

DOWFROST™ Fluid also contains corrosion inhibitors that help provide effective, long-term protection against costly corrosion of heat transfer system components.

By using heat naturally provided by the planet, a geothermal system reduces dependence on fossil fuels and cuts greenhouse gas emissions. And while the initial expense of a heat pump for a geothermal system is higher than for a traditional system, owners can expect the money saved on energy to pay back the added investment.

Visit www.dow.com.

Zoeller Pump recognized by *Extreme Makeover*

LOUISVILLE, KY. — *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* has selected Zoeller Pump Company as a preferred vendor to work with on upcoming build projects for the ABC reality show.

The Emmy Award-winning series selected to use a Pro Pak 53, sump pump and battery backup pump combination, on a recent home built in Bloomington, Ill. Zoeller is proud to donate product for a family in need and hopes to continue this affiliation in the future.

Each episode of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* is self-contained and features a race against time on a project that would ordinarily take at least four months to achieve, involving a team of designers, contractors and several hundred workers who have just seven days to totally rebuild an en-

tire house, plus the exterior and landscaping.

For 70 years, Zoeller Pump Company has been building on a core value of customer service. Zoeller has steadily established a reputation as a leader in the plumbing industry, offering an ever expanding line of quality sump/dewatering, effluent, sewage and grinder pumps. They also offer hazardous environment pumps, pre-assembled package systems, basins, back-up systems, and controls and accessories.

"Quality, Service, Innovation and Integrity are the core values of our company," said CEO/president John Zoeller. "When it comes to customer service, we hold ourselves to what we feel is a high standard, and measure ourselves against that standard."

Hansgrohe supplies bathroom fittings for the Burj Khalifa

SCHILTACH, GERMANY — When the highest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa was officially opened on January 4 in Dubai, Hansgrohe AG from Schiltach in the Black Forest joined in the celebrations.

The German bathroom fittings and shower manufacturer supplied more than 5,000 fittings for the 828-meter skyscraper, designed and built by the American architect Adrian Smith and located on Shaik Zayed Road in the heart of the Gulf metropolis. The wash basin mixers from the Axor Starck luxury collection were made in the mixer manufacturing plant in Schiltach owned by the international company which has been operating its own subsidiary in the United Arab Emirates for years.

"Hansgrohe was given a great deal of credit for not pulling out of the market in the face of the economic crisis," said Siegfried Gänblen, chairman of the Management Board of Hansgrohe AG, in explaining the continuing success

of the bathroom and sanitation specialist in the Middle East. Orders such as the supply contract for prestigious projects like the "Tower of Khalifa" – the English translation of "Burj Khalifa" – show that in the competitive project business in this region, principals and property developers as well as architects and interior designers rely on the strength of German innovation, on high-quality products "Made in Germany", and on working with dependable partners.

"This is why we were able to acquire numerous projects in the United Arab Emirates even during the crisis year of 2009, such as the ones in Masdar City along the new Formula 1 track in Abu Dhabi," said Siegfried Gänblen. "We anticipate further great potential in this region, and consequently Hansgrohe will be opening a new subsidiary in Abu Dhabi later this month, as well as a new flagship store in Dubai – not far from the Burj Khalifa."

Visit www.hansgrohe-usa.com.

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American Standard Heating & AC honors outstanding distributors

TYLER, TEXAS — Eight distinguished American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning independent distributors were honored for their outstanding business performance in 2009 at the company's annual Pinnacle Awards event. The presentation, which honors top HVAC distributors from throughout the U.S. and Canada, was part of a grand celebration held March 2-3 at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Dallas.

The awards were presented by Jamie Byrne, VP-sales for American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning. "Our top performers deserve all the recognition we can give them," said Byrne. "Not only did they increase sales and market share over the previous year, but they also excelled in every other measurable area of their business. They have all reached a new pinnacle of success and we're honored to have them on our team."

American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning's Pinnacle Award Winners included:

Group 1

Winner — ACES A/C Supply Inc., Houston, Texas; Accepting award was Mike Davenport, president and David Collins, VP

Runner-up — ACES A/C Supply Inc. North, Carrollton, Texas; Accepting award was Michelle Shearer-Rodriguez, president and Able Rodriguez, VP

Group 2

Winner — Lyon, Conklin & Co.

Inc. Richmond, Va.; Accepting award was Troy Kingsbury, general manager and Robert Crawford, sales manager

Runner-up — Northeastern Supply Inc., Baltimore, Md.; Accepting award was Steve Cook, president and Russ Everson, VP

Group 3

Winner — EMCO Plumbing & Heating Supplies, a division of EMCO Corporation, Vancouver, Canada; Accepting award was Gary Fabbro, senior manager

Runner-up — Duncan Supply Company Inc., Indianapolis, Ind.; Ac-

cepting award was Randy Roberson, division manager and Doug Kearns, sales manager

Group 4

Winner — Wolff Bros. Supply Inc., Medina, Ohio; Accepting award was Dave Chenoweth, sales manager and Dave Artrip, general manager

Runner-up — VP Supply Corp., Rochester, N.Y.; Accepting award Troy Bane, sales manager and Gary Perkins, regional manager.

Visit www.americanstandardair.com.

Zurn urinal receives WaterSense listing

ERIE, PA. — Zurn Industries announced that they received the coveted EPA WaterSense® commercial urinal listing for The Pint® (0.125 gpf) Ultra Low Consumption Urinal Systems.

Zurn Industries manufactures one of the largest product offerings for



0.125-gpf HEU urinal systems. These systems include six models of high-quality vitreous china and six models of manual, battery and hardwired sensor flush valves. The complete line of Pint Urinal System models from Zurn are now EPA WaterSense listed. Visit www.zurn.com or call 800-997-3876.



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BLUE HAWK, Embassy, IMARK to form new cooperative

ELGIN, ILL. — In a joint communication, BLUE HAWK, Embassy Group Ltd. and IMARK Group — all cooperatives with distributor members serving the HVACR, plumbing and PVF, and electrical industry — announced the formation of “United Cooperative Alliance of America.”

The new group’s mission is to enhance business practices across multiple verticals and help build upon the foundation already in place within

The new group’s mission is to enhance business practices across multiple verticals and help build upon the foundation already in place within BLUE HAWK, Embassy and IMARK.

BLUE HAWK, Embassy and IMARK. All three organizations are member owned and governed with each sharing a firm commitment of full disclosure to its members on all financial and directional issues of their respective organizations.

The newly formed alliance has put together a Board of Advisors consisting of two board members from each organization, along with the three respective presidents and/or CEOs. United Cooperative Alliance of America looks to help attract and retain the best membership for their respective verticals to enhance the cooperative model for the benefit of its members as they move forward in a diverse and dynamic market.

BLUE HAWK was established in 2005 as a cooperative of independent HVACR distributors throughout the

U.S. It focuses on HVACR distributors serving the residential and commercial markets and has 224 members with more than 1,000 branch locations. BLUE HAWK is supported by 109 supplier partners.

Embassy was established in 1991 as a cooperative of independent plumbing and PVF distributors throughout the U.S. It focuses on plumbing and PVF distributors serving the residential, commercial and industrial markets, and has 67 members with over 500 branch locations. Embassy is supported by 86 supplier partners.

IMARK was established in 1996 as a cooperative of independent electrical distributors throughout the U.S. It focuses on electrical distributors serving the residential, commercial and industrial markets, and has over



1,000 members with over 2,000 branch locations. IMARK is supported by 98 supplier partners.

For further information about each group, visit www.bluehawk.coop, www.embassygroup.com and www.imarkgroup.com. A new United Cooperative Alliance of America website will be launched in the near future.

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Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc. joins a vaunted group of manufacturers and distributors

The high standards of distinction for induction into *The Wholesaler's* PVF Hall of Fame are evident when browsing the list of legendary PVF manufacturers and distributors below.

This is the ninth consecutive year for the Hall of Fame, and we continue to maintain the high standards of excellence in selecting new inductees that we initially unveiled when founding the Hall of Fame in 2002.

This year's inductee, Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc., based in Greenville, S.C., was chosen by the selection committee — headed up by PVF and economic analyst emeritus Morris Beschloss, along with *The Wholesaler* publisher Tom Brown and

editorial director Mary Jo Martin.

As you will read in the following pages, Eastern has 12 locations throughout the Southeast, and employs 155. Roughly 80% of their sales are in the PVF sector, from vendors such as Anvil, Apollo, Bell-O-Seal, Felker Bros., Georg Fischer, Howell Metals, Matco-Norca, Milwaukee, Nibco, Norca-Industrial, Silbo and Warren Alloy. They also have a unique program called "Eastern Cares," designed to give back to the less fortunate both in their own communities and the world.

Our sincere congratulations to Eastern and, once again, recognition to all the past inductees. ■



The Wholesaler PVF Hall of Fame

• Inductees •

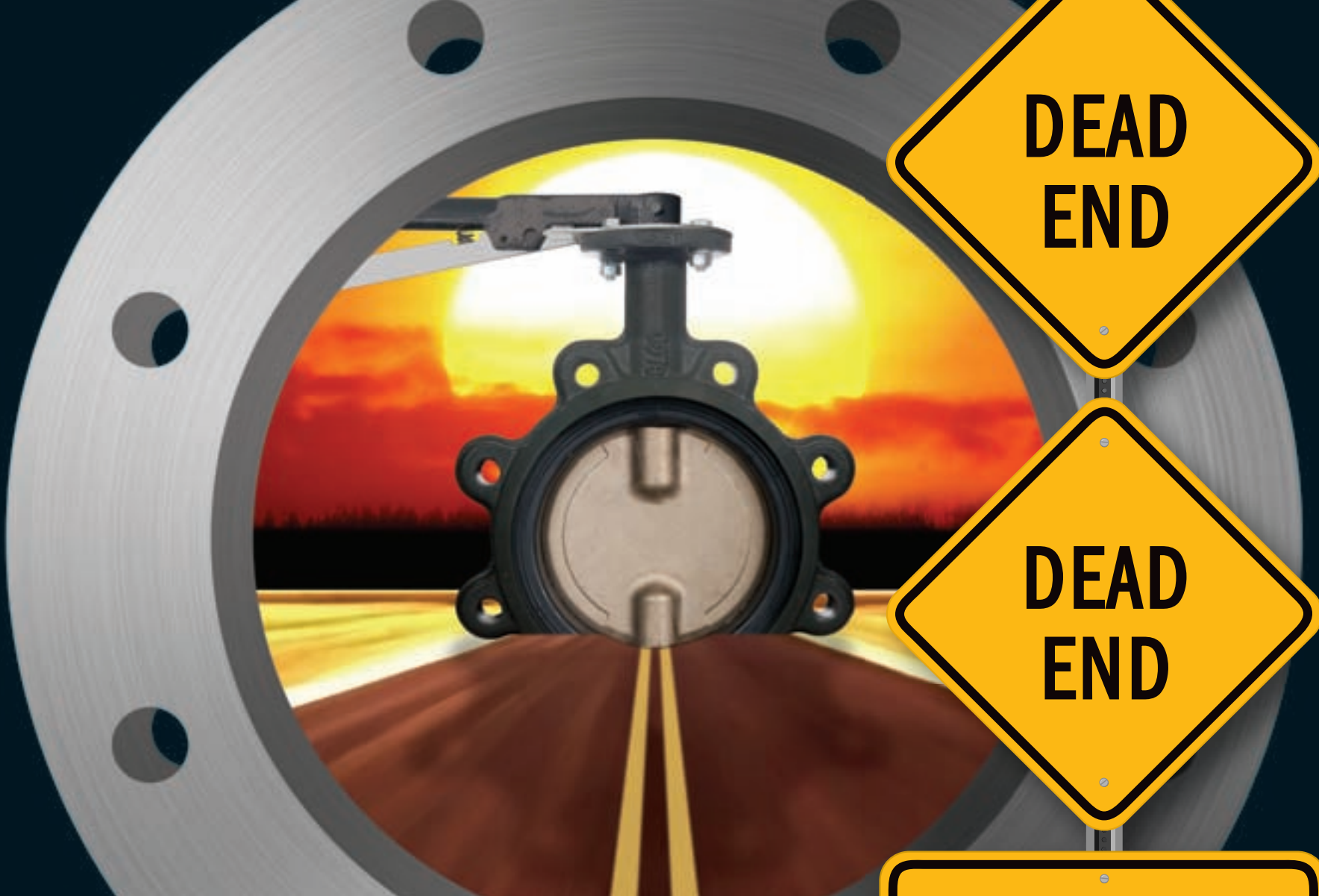
Manufacturers

Company	Honoree	Year	Company	Honoree	Year
<i>Anvil International</i>	<i>Tom Fish</i>	2009	<i>Mueller Industries</i>	<i>Bill O'Hagan</i>	2005
<i>Bonney Forge</i>	<i>John Leone</i>	2002	<i>Nibco, Inc.</i>	<i>Lee Martin</i>	2002
<i>Conbraco</i>	<i>Carl Mosack</i>	2002	<i>Powell Valve</i>	<i>Randy Cowart</i>	2009
<i>Crane</i>	<i>Shel Evans</i>	2004	<i>PVF Roundtable</i>	<i>Sidney Westbrook</i>	2006
<i>Fisher Controls</i>	<i>Terry Buzbee</i>	2007	<i>VMA</i>	<i>Morris Beschloss</i>	2002
<i>Jamesbury</i>	<i>Howard Freeman</i>	2002	<i>Velan, Inc.</i>	<i>Karel Velan</i>	2002
<i>Keystone</i>	<i>Galen Brown</i>	2002	<i>Victaulic</i>	<i>Gary Moore</i>	2007
<i>Legend Valve</i>	<i>David Hickman</i>	2008	<i>Watts Industries</i>	<i>Tim Horne</i>	2004
<i>Milwaukee Valve</i>	<i>Herschel Seder</i>	2002	<i>Weldbend</i>	<i>James Coulas Sr</i>	2002

Distributors

Company	Honoree	Year	Company	Honoree	Year	Company	Honoree	Year
<i>Affiliated Distributors</i>	<i>William Weisberg</i>	2006	<i>Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc.</i>	<i>Kip Miller</i>	2010	<i>McJunkin</i>	<i>Bernie Wehrle</i>	2003
<i>All-Tex Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>Jill Brock Hurd</i>	2007	<i>Ferguson Commercial & Industrial</i>	<i>Rob Braig</i>	2006	<i>MKS Pipe Valve & Fittings</i>	<i>Pat Adams</i>	2009
<i>Bergen Industrial Supply</i>	<i>James LaPorte</i>	2003	<i>Frischkorn</i>	<i>Jack Clark</i>	2003	<i>National Oilwell Varco</i>	<i>Robert Workman</i>	2008
<i>Chicago Tube & Iron</i>	<i>Donald R. McNeeley</i>	2003	<i>F. W. Webb</i>	<i>John Pope</i>	2005	<i>Piping & Equipment Inc.</i>	<i>Gary Cartright</i>	2003
<i>Columbia Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>William Arenberg</i>	2005	<i>Independent Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>Ed Nierman</i>	2003	<i>Porter Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>James Porter</i>	2007
<i>Consumers Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>Michael Abeling</i>	2008	<i>Kelly Pipe Co. LLC</i>	<i>Earle Cohen</i>	2003	<i>Red Man Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>Lew Ketchum</i>	2003
<i>Davidson Pipe Supply</i>	<i>Peter Davidson</i>	2003	<i>Liberty Equipment</i>	<i>Larry Senescu</i>	2003	<i>USFlow</i>	<i>Rick Waters</i>	2003
			<i>Macomb Pipe & Supply</i>	<i>Bill McGivern</i>	2004	<i>Wilson Supply</i>	<i>Jim Owsley</i>	2004

(Hall of Fame continues on page 28.)



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2010 Wholesaler PVF Hall-Of-Fame

Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc. inducted into PVF Hall of Fame

Editor's Note: This is the Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc. story, as told by the Eastern management team.

Seizing an opportunity in 1980 to start a new company, three partners broke away from an existing competitor to launch Eastern Industrial Supplies, Inc. — today known as Eastern, headquartered in

tions throughout the Southeast.

Kip Miller, president and CEO since 1987, was hired six months after the launch of the company. Starting in the warehouse receiving and shipping material, he quickly learned the business from the bottom up and was soon working inside sales. “It was an opportunity I never could have imagined,” Miller said. “Upon

graduating from college, I entered a tough job market and wound up working for the Census Bureau, taking on odd jobs to make

ends meet. My initial interview with Eastern was for a position they weren't looking to fill for another three months. Imagine my surprise when the company called and asked



Gathered in president and CEO Kip Miller's office at Eastern's corporate headquarters in Greenville, S.C., are (seated) executive VP Kim Miller and Kip Miller; and (standing, from left) VP-procurement Alyn Judkins, VP-operations John Snover, VP-sales and marketing Richy Milligan, and VP and CFO Robby Davis.

when I could start. I knew then that the Lord had answered my prayers.”

To accommodate the need for more space, Eastern built its first new building in 1982. Over the next few years, the company continued to steadily grow, becoming known for

its inventory and quality customer service. In the fall of 1985, Miller was named vice president and placed in charge of the entire sales division. These important steps allowed Eastern to become more profitable and established an opportunity for Miller to learn other aspects of the business.

“The owners of Eastern were great mentors for me when it came to running a business,” said Miller. “They provided me with valuable tools for successfully owning and maintaining such an organization, and I began thinking of how I would handle situations, if ever allowed to be the boss. Overall, it was a tremendous experience I'll always be grateful for.”

An unexpected turn

Tragedy struck the young company on New Year's Eve 1986 when then-owner George Bagwell suddenly passed away. The succession plan he had created offered Miller, through a Buy/Sell agreement, the opportunity to purchase the majority of company stock and to assume leadership — a step that left an indelible mark on Miller and one that would seriously influence his career path just a few months later.

During this time, a major Eastern competitor was heavily recruiting Miller. They had presented him with a very attractive offer that he was praying over and evaluating that very same New Year's Eve night, as he was expected to provide an answer within a short time frame. “I was rocking my newborn son to sleep that evening when one of the minority shareholders called to say that ‘George had died, the company was mine, and that he'd see me next week.’ I wasn't over the shock of George's death before realizing I had (Turn to A leap... page 30.)



Greenville, S.C. With a steadfast look to the future, the company began to grow in size and reputation as a PVF and plumbing distributor. Since then, Eastern has built 12 operating loca-

Rooted in faith

“One thing that's been constant in my life — something that rings true now as it did 30 years ago, in my personal as well as professional experiences, is that I've never met someone who didn't want to be cared for,” noted Kip Miller. It is this deep-rooted understanding that helps explain the difference at Eastern and what an impact its caring philosophy has made in the lives of so many people. As the company began to expand, one of the chief concerns from associates was that Eastern seemed to be losing its small, family-focused atmosphere. Miller began researching ways to recapture this important element.

He attended a “Business by the Book” conference on how to implement biblical principles into the workplace. It was here that he realized he'd been concentrating on what *not* to do as a Christian businessman and needed to focus instead on what proactive steps he could take. Soon after, a customer introduced him to the concept of workplace chaplains. Miller was inspired by this idea and in the early 2000s, Eastern partnered with Marketplace

Chaplains USA to provide all branch locations with chaplains who serve at no cost to the associates and their immediate families. This confidential, complimentary service was first introduced as the Eastern Industrial Cares Program; however, Miller wanted to expand that to care for the communities around them, which led to the launch of Eastern Cares in 2002.

Eastern Cares (www.easterncares.org) was established to exhibit profound care for people with the ultimate goal of having a positive impact upon the lives of others not only within the Company, but also within its Communities, the Country and other Cultures around the world — what Eastern calls the four “C's” of caring. Associates remain committed to the program's central tenet of offering helping hands of service, concern and compassion for others in need.

One of the key components of Eastern Cares is its associate-sponsored emergency fund, established to provide associates with financial support in times of personal crisis. Other aspects include assistance for those looking to

further their education and training, scholarships for college-bound children and grandchildren of associates, adoption assistance, and marriage seminars. In addition to providing chaplains in the workplace, Eastern partners with Teleios Services (www.teleiosministry.org) in giving associates access to a financial management specialist to assist them with planning for the future.

Eastern demonstrates care for its communities by participating in local blood drives, supporting rescue missions, youth homes and children's shelters. It demonstrates com-

passion on a national stage through participation in various health and wellness-related fundraising endeavors, as well as support for Samaritan's Purse, Special Olympics and sending care packages to U.S. troops serving abroad. Care for other cultures is exemplified through its Missional Program supporting associates with non-vacation, paid leave to take part in special projects — some locally within the branch communities, some throughout the U.S., and some around the world. Associates have led business conferences in Romania, served the needs

of others in the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Kenya; and continue to provide special care to the orphans at the Daily Bread Life Children's Home in Tanzania. These and other projects are part of the company's yearly strategic planning process.

As Miller explained, “Eastern Cares is Eastern's brand. It is the heart of our company, the way we do business. It provides the standard for our core values of honesty, integrity, caring, self-responsibility and being positive. This is how we strive to live and work each day with everyone whom we come in contact. I



believe it is how we've managed to stay profitable during these trying economic uncertainties. It's been hard, as we've watched many friends and competitors struggling in this economy. We've certainly had to make some tough decisions of our own, but I believe that these core values and what they mean for our 'second-mile' customer service and our commitment to exceeding customer expectations have helped make all the difference.” ■



Congratulations to our friends at Eastern Industrial Supply.

All of us at **Matco-Norca** extend our best wishes to **Eastern Industrial Supply**. Their induction into the prestigious Wholesalers Hall of Fame is well deserved. Here's to your continued success in the years to come.

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Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc.

A leap of faith

(Continued from page 28.)

some very important decisions to make and very little time.”

Prior to his death, Bagwell had announced his succession plan to the organization and its shareholders, emphatically stating that should something happen to him, Miller was his choice to take over the role of president/CEO, and he expected that staff and associates



would stay with the company and give Miller their full support.

“It was the memory of this meeting that really solidified my position,” Miller noted. “I was tasked with ensuring that George’s estate, the company, its customers, and its associates and families were taken care of, and I knew in my heart that I would stay. I raised my salary just enough to cover the debt payments incurred with purchasing George’s

stock and made no more money over the next several years, as I concentrated on growing the business and caring for our associates and customers.”

Miller slowly began to implement a three-point plan to help Eastern modernize its operations and establish a means for future growth:

- Point one was to purchase and implement a new computer system that could handle all elements of the business including inventory, sales and keeping accurate financial records. This system also needed to handle multiple locations, as one of Miller’s long-term goals was to establish other branches.

- Point two was to secure a location that could serve as Eastern’s home branch and central operating center. In 1993, land was purchased for the site that still serves as the



At the Branch 1-Counter area in Greenville are (from left): Robby Davis, Kim Miller, John Snover, Kip Miller, Richy Milligan and Alyn Judkins.

Greenville branch today.

- Point three was to establish a second location. The Anderson, S.C., branch was opened in 1995. “We knew we needed to and wanted to ex-

pand but also understood that we’d never operated remotely, and an adequate test facility was necessary before spreading ourselves too thin.”
(Turn to Eastern... page 32.)

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Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc.

(Continued from page 30.)

Miller explained. “Anderson allowed us to learn how to operate a branch

while maintaining our high level of service and care for the customer.”

Since then, through a combination

of organic growth and acquisition, Eastern has opened 10 other branch locations – Florence, S.C. (1998); La-

Grange, Ga. (1999); Jacksonville, Fla. (2000); Spartanburg, S.C. (2003); Charlotte, N.C. (2004); Asheville, N.C. and Huntsville, Ala. (2006); Buford and Atlanta, Ga. (2007); and Charleston, S.C. (2008). This large footprint provides product to some of the most recognizable contractors and manufacturing facilities in North America.

Other key business decisions during this time of expansion enabled Eastern to grow and prosper. In the mid-1990s, Miller realized he needed a strong support structure in place that would allow him to care for company associates and customers in a manner that reflected his principles of dedication, devotion and family loyalty. He began building a team that would enable him to focus on his strengths, while providing top-of-the-line customer service — a quality that

Eastern’s enthusiastic Branch 1-Greenville associates are joined by the six corporate officers.



Congratulations to Eastern Industrial Supplies

The Wholesaler’s
2010 inductee into the
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was quickly becoming a hallmark of the Eastern brand. Today's corporate management team, representing many years of knowledge and experience in the industry, includes:

- Kim Miller, executive vice president
- Alyn Judkins, vice president-procurement
- John Snover, vice president-operations
- Richy Milligan, vice president-sales and marketing
- Robby Davis, vice president/CFO.

In 1998, Miller hired a consultant and initiated the first strategic planning process Eastern had ever engaged – out of which came the company's "success plan" that is updated by the staff annually. Ultimately, this strategic planning effort provided a much needed road map that resulted in a smartly planned and timed business expansion.

Additionally, in the late 1990s, Eastern joined The Piping Connection, a buying and marketing group that provided the company increased purchasing power, subsequently allowing it to pass along better pricing options to its customers. Soon after, The Piping Connection merged with a larger group, C.L. Watt. Miller was president of

"I was rocking my newborn son to sleep that evening when one of the minority shareholders called to say that 'George had died, the company was mine, and that he'd see me next week.' I wasn't over the shock of George's death before realizing I had some very important decisions to make and very little time."

The Piping Connection at the time of the merger, which provided him with a position on the board of the new entity. Then in the early 2000s, C.L. Watt merged with Affiliated Distributors (A-D), and his role with C.L. Watt afforded him a seat on the PVF board at A-D. "We've had a tremendous ride with these organizations," Miller explained. "We were trying to build our own vendor incentives program when we first joined. These memberships allowed us to forge deeper relationships with select vendors, and these partnerships provided deeper purchasing power. Plus, being a member of Affiliated Distributors has been an invaluable educational tool. Its roundtable discussions and

networking opportunities have taught us many crucial lessons from our peers about this business."

Eastern currently employs 155, and its key PVF vendors include Anvil, Apollo, Bell-O-Seal, Felker Bros., Georg Fischer, Howell Metals, Matco-Norca, Milwaukee, Nibco, Norca-Industrial, Silbo and Warren Alloy. Purchasing is centralized; however, as Miller explained, "Our distribution and replenishment is neither centralized nor decentralized, with no predetermined rules other than wholly supporting our key vendor partners and driven by how best we can service the customer."

PVF accounts for 80% of the company's product mix; 65% of Eastern's business is commercial/mechanical with the remainder being in the industrial/MRO market. In addition, Eastern offers vendor managed inventories, pipe cutting, threading, grooving, quarter-turn and linear valve automation, and a 24/7/365 national emergency Watts line.

It is evident that Eastern leadership has made wise and astute business

choices over the years – from hiring practices to expansion plans. Bagwell knew what he was doing in 1986 when he identified Miller as the future of the company. But Miller will tell you, with a heartfelt sincerity rarely seen in this modern age of

business, that there is another force responsible for his personal and professional success. A man of deep faith and solid commitment to a value system many take for granted, Miller has allowed his Christian faith and the *(Turn to Keeping it... page 34.)*



Eastern's long-range vision is titled PVF150 (People, Values and Faith). They believe that by making people and values a priority over profits, and with an abiding faith at its core, Eastern will become a \$150-million annual enterprise within the next five to seven years.

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Keeping it real with a caring philosophy propels Eastern Industrial Supplies Inc.

(Continued from page 32.)

honesty and integrity instilled in him to be a driving force in the planning and success of Eastern.

"I have to go all the way back to high school to really talk about my path to Eastern," he explained. "I was much more interested in girls and baseball than making good grades, but I knew I needed a college education. I watched my father work hard in his own business field my entire life and wanted to emulate him in many ways. At the time, gaining entrance to what was then Anderson Junior College required the applicant to write an essay on why you should be accepted to the school. I wrote mine on becoming a Christian businessman. Somehow, they let me in, where I continued to debate whether to join the ministry or move into the

business world. After completing the two years at Anderson, I went on to get a B.S. in Management and Marketing from the University of South Carolina, and then returned to the Upstate of SC where I was ultimately hired by Eastern."

A life lived by Christian principles, 30 years in business and eight years totally invested in Eastern Cares (see sidebar, page 28) have helped create an organization that is not only profitable, but thriving in a way that can't be measured with net receipts and sales figures. It is the basis for Eastern's future and what has led to its long-range vision, appropriately titled PVF150 — People, Values and Faith. It is the belief that by making people and values a priority over profits, with an abiding faith at its core, the company will become a

\$150-million annual enterprise within the next five to seven years.

In 2006, the corporate leadership began a 360° peer review process to determine if the team was working to its full capacity. They learned that the workload could be better shared based on a deeper understanding and appreciation for individual strengths and abilities. From this, Miller put together an inverted organizational chart — with the executive team placed at the bottom — that would leave many questioning his logic. But to Miller, it was simple: "As the leaders in our company, we exist to support the other team members and associates, enabling them to do their jobs and to serve both our internal and external customers. It only makes sense to reflect this structure of support in a way that clearly demon-

strates this message." From this process, Miller spent the following year casting the PVF150 vision. He made branch visits and implemented associate and customer surveys to ensure the success of his mission by adequately caring for the company.

Even in these tough economic times, each branch is in the process of preparing a five-year strategic plan directly in support of this goal based upon the PVF150 philosophy. These plans will allow smart and timely growth as Eastern continues to prove that its business model, while it might be viewed as unconventional, is most definitely successful.

"This is who we are and this is how we operate," said Miller. "We never push our beliefs on anyone; we are convinced that our core values are the key to our success. We understand that living out deeply held values sometimes comes with a price. Our associates are committed to taking this risk."

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheryl Lynn Michalak".

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Closing the sale

Editor's Note: This is excerpted from Chapter 13 of Kahle's book *TAKE YOUR PERFORMANCE UP A NOTCH*.

Whenever I ask salespeople to rate themselves on their competence at all the different parts of the sales process, they invariably rate themselves low at closing the sale. Unfortunately, salespeople who don't close consistently waste a lot of their time, waste their customers' time, and are not nearly as effective as they could be.

Being adept at closing the sale, and every step in the process, is an impor-

As you proceed through the sales process, you continually ask for some kind of action in order to keep the project moving forward.

tant key to productivity. So, let's examine the issue of closing, beginning with the first principle: *Closing is a process which always ends with your customer's agreement to take action.*

As you consider this principle, you'll realize that closing is not just asking for an order, although it certainly is that. In addition, it is a process you repeat at every stage of the sales process. In fact, almost every time you interact with a customer, you can close the interaction by asking for some agreement. Whenever your customer agrees to take some action, you have closed that step in the sales process.

Let's illustrate this principle with

a typical real life situation. Suppose you're talking on the phone to a prospect, and he says, "Sounds interesting. Send me some literature." You say, "OK, I'll put it in the mail today." Have you closed that step of the process?

The answer is no. You have agreed to take action — send some literature — but your prospect hasn't agreed to do anything. Remember, a close always ends with your customer agreeing to take some action.

Can you turn the same situation into a close? Back to the same situation. Your prospect says, "Sounds interesting. Send me some literature." You remark, "I'd be happy to. After you review it, will you discuss it with me over the phone, say next Friday?" If your customer says, "Yes," you've closed. He's agreed to take some action.

"Just last week I made a sales call with a salesperson, who left the call unclosed." The prospect was definitely interested, but the salesperson never asked for any action. Instead, the salesperson said, "I'll check back with you in a couple of weeks." We walked out of the sales call with absolutely no resolution of the issue, and the chance of making the sale significantly diminished.

Understanding this principle is crucial to closing the sale. Many of the offers and proposals on which you work are very involved, requiring a number of steps in the sales process. As you proceed through the sales process, you

continually ask for some kind of action in order to keep the project moving forward. When it comes time for the final decision — the agreement to buy — that decision is often the natural, logical consequence of the decisions that led up to it.

Closing, then, is not an isolated event that only happens at the end of the sales process. Rather, it's a routine part of every sales call. That leads us to the second powerful principle of closing the sale: *Every interaction can and should be closed. In other words, at the conclusion of every interaction with your customer, ask for an agreement on the action he or she will take.*

The telephone conversation described above is a good example of closing the interaction. Here's another common situation. Let's say you've discussed a product or proposal with your customer. He says, "It looks interesting, but we're not ready for that now." You might then say, "When do you think will be a good time?" Your customer responds, "Probably around June." You might typically say, "OK, I'll make a note to discuss it with you then." At this point, you haven't closed the interaction, nor have you resolved the issue.

Let's take the conversation one more step further. Suppose you now say, "At that point in time, will you spend a half hour with me to discuss it in detail?" You have now attempted to close the interaction by getting an agreement for action on the part of your customer. You've put the issue on the table, and are attempting to resolve it.

Let's take the conversation one step further. Suppose your customer says, "No, probably not." You now have a decision to make. Should you probe the reasons why, or should you accept his decision? Let's say you decide to accept his decision. The conversation has value to you in that you learned that this proposal isn't going to fly in this account. The early "no" was valuable to you. You didn't waste months chasing something that wasn't going to happen. That's the value in resolving the issue.

Let's now say that your prospect, instead of responding "no," responds to your close by saying, "Yeah, I think it has enough merit to spend that time discussing it with you." You now have his commitment to spend some time with you, so you have moved the issue forward. You're one step closer to the ultimate sale.

Implement these two principles and you'll dramatically improve your productivity. Keep in mind that closing is an agreement for action on the part of your customer, and make it your goal to close every interaction. ■



BY DAVE KAHLE
Sales specialist

Dave Kahle has trained tens of thousands of distributor and B2B salespeople and sales managers to be more effective in the 21st Century economy. He's authored seven books, and presented in 47 states and seven countries. Sign up for his weekly *Ezine*, or visit his blog. For more information, contact The DaCo Corporation, 835 West River Center Drive, Comstock Park, MI 49321, www.davekahle.com; phone 800/331-1287.

A message from Martin's Corner

BY JOHN MARTIN
PVF industry veteran



Hello, Readers!

This is the 10th edition of Martin's Corner, which I have had so much fun producing for you during these last 10 months. I asked *The Wholesaler* management for a breather this month, and of course they said yes! While I believe they were simply trying to make it easy on me to be sure I am totally healed from my heart surgery 10 months ago, here are the real reasons I asked for some extra time:

- My main paying job (Anvil International) has been very active the last couple months.
- Conventions, buying group meetings and contractor associations always take up a lot of time this time of year, and last but not least...
- The Wine Country in Napa was calling me to check out a couple new places and visit some old friends. Had to replenish some of my "stock!"

Add this all up, and I just ran out of good productive writing time, so I promise you if you turn to "Martin's Corner" again in the June 2010 issue I will treat you right with some good reading, facts and humor! Until then, remember this: "The Minute You Stop Learning, Is The Minute You START LOSING!"

God Bless ya'll! See ya next month in the "Corner!" ■

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On questionable quality

Even though I spend most days sitting alone at a desk in a darkened room, there are some benefits to living a life on the Internet.

For instance, I hear from my buddy, Roohollah, just about every day. Roohollah is a heating-and-plumbing installer and he lives in Iran. He started writing to me about a year ago and he reminds me of many of the U.S. installers that I know. The trade is the trade, no matter where you live.

I got this from him the other day. I'm giving it to you word for word, and please don't laugh at the way he writes unless you can write Persian. This man is educated and he is learning our language.

Dear professor

Hello, deeply I am wishing you and your family, the best thing. It is my goal to appreciate from someone like you, who spends a lot of valuable times to teach and help me.

Here, there is a big problem with imported products. You know they

“There is the ulterior motive that we can cut the competition's product down the middle and look at their welds and examine the entire product. We learn quite a lot from that....”

manufacture all kind of things to export to all other countries, especially to Middle East. Unfortunately, most of our merchants that they are importing these things from other places have a just focus on the price not quality. They think how can make a money more and more.

In the field of heating, controlling is more important. However, all room thermostat and immersion thermostat and contact thermostat are manufactured by Chinese people with awful quality. We must monitor the systems by these products. I remember in one of my project I used one of the immersion thermostats. When I set up the systems on the 60-Celsius degree, the thermometer showed me 40-Celsius degree — twenty-degree difference between right and wrong set point.

By the way, is there any problem like this in the U.S.?”

*Your apprentice,
Roohollah*

Over the years, as I've spent time at the big AHR show, I've marveled at the groups of foreign visitors that will spend time in a manufacturer's booth, taking close-up photos of the manufacturer's products with expen-

sive cameras. The following year, there will be small booths in the lesser-traveled areas of the show, usually with two people on folding chairs. There's nothing fancy about these booths, just a small sign and samples of what looks like the exact products they were photographing last year at the show.

When I travel to the ISH Frankfurt show every other year, I am the foreign visitor. I have to go to the Press Office and get a pass that allows me to take photos. I have to prove to them that I'm a trade journalist. If I try to take photos of products without first showing my Press pass, the manufacturers will climb up my back and grab for my camera. Those folks have had enough of the copycat nonsense.

But there's something going on now that I think is even nastier.

An American manufacturer, a good company that makes a piping product, wrote the other day to let me know that they have been getting products back from contractors that were not their products. These were

coming back to them through their wholesalers. Listen:

“They have flooded the market with products that leak, are misaligned, and sell for a very cheap price. They're threading metric pipe with NPT threads, which cut deeper into the pipe and are found to snap as they're tightened, but because of the low price, many supply houses jumped on that offer and purchased them, not knowing this.

“As the slow season progressed, plumbers were finding problems with the imported products. Unfortunately, what they don't realize is that not all products are the same. When they go to the supply house, unless they ask for a specific brand, they get the cheaper product, often for the same price as the quality product.

“How do we educate people so our product's reputation is not tarnished by bad quality products?”

Good question, isn't it?

I asked the manufacturer some more questions about the difference in the products and they sent me samples of their stuff and the stuff coming into the country. I look at welding as an art form, and what this manufacturer was producing was just that

— art. What the others were making looked rushed, weak and just plain sloppy. Side by side, the difference was glaring.

I asked the manufacturer what they did when the wholesalers returned to them the flawed products from the angry contractors. And if their answer doesn't make you stop and think, I feel sorry for you.

“We don't sell direct to the consumer or professional. We only sell to the supply houses and rest assured, they know exactly who they are purchasing these products from.

“Since we've been in this business we have always replaced our competitor's product with our own when their cheap stuff comes back to us. We want the professional to see what a quality product looks like. It's just our practice.

“There is the ulterior motive that we can cut the competition's product down the middle and look at their welds and examine the entire product. We learn quite a lot from that. We do inform the supply house that they sent us a return product that is not ours. Our products are clearly marked, and even if the label is removed, there is no doubt between an imported product and our product. Anyone can look at two and know which one is the import.

“Also, there is no patent for these

...We do inform the supply house that they sent us a return product that is not ours. Our products are clearly marked.”

because they are simple and basic products with so many shapes and sizes. They claim it cannot be done. You can, however, file for a patent and tie legal matters up for 10 years. This has already been done by companies who sell the imports.”

Another manufacturer friend told me a story the other day. One of his company's top guys was in a foreign land on business and decided to stop by a factory where they were having a part of one of their products produced. The guy was so appalled by the brutal and dangerous working conditions in this sweat shop that he cancelled his orders right on the spot.

A few months went by, and the for-



BY DAN HOLOHAN
Wet head

eign supplier invited the guy back to see the changes they had made. They had upgraded their factory to a point where the American now found it acceptable enough to do business with them once again. He saw this as a small victory for human rights, and I suppose that's true.

I thought a lot about that guy recently when I was in Michigan, where Americans used to make things. I thought about it for days.

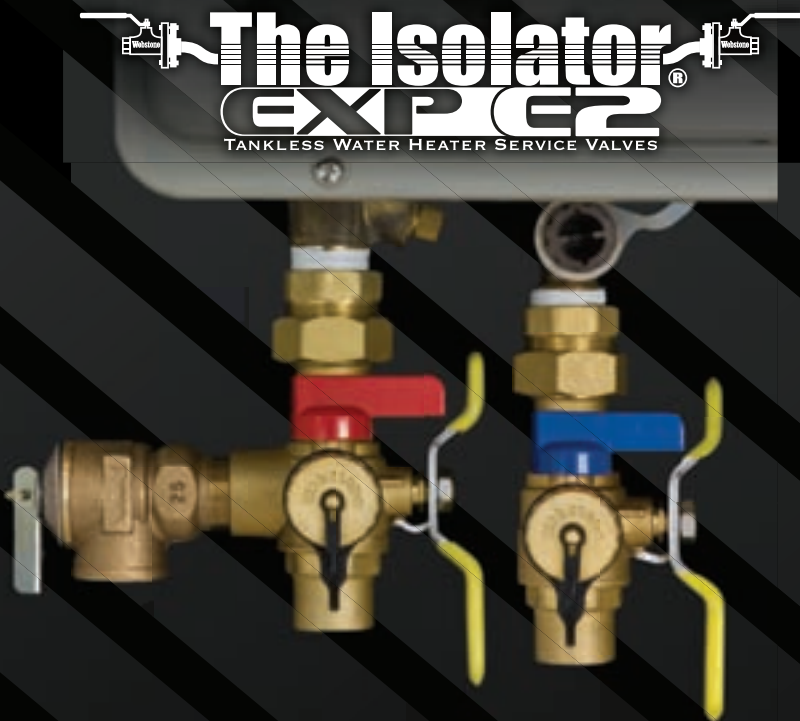
Think about the way it goes on most days when everyone is in a hurry. Someone behind the counter may grab something of a lesser quality and just hand it over to a contractor, hoping he won't notice that he's holding a fistful of potential trouble. This could be an honest mistake, or it could be that the wholesaler is passing off the cheap stuff and charging the price for the better stuff because, well, that's just the nature of the times in which we live. You know, business is off, so it's okay to screw people. Quality is damned and who cares if it leaks?

Is that the new American way?

I can't wait to tell Roohollah. ■

Dan Holohan began his love affair with heating systems in 1970 by going to work for a New York-based manufacturers representative that was deeply involved in the steam and hot-water heating business. He studied hard, prowled many basements and attics with seasoned old-timers, and paid close attention to what they had to say. Today, Holohan operates the popular website, www.HeatingHelp.com. He has written hundreds of columns for a number of trade magazines, as well as 15 books on subjects ranging from steam and hot water heating, to teaching technicians. His degree is in Sociology, which Holohan believes is the perfect preparation for a career in heating. Holohan has taught over 200,000 people at his seminars. He is well known for his entertaining, anecdotal style of speaking. Holohan lives on Long Island with his wife, The Lovely Marianne. They have four incredible daughters, all out in the world and doing wonderful things.

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Home improvement show features WFI geothermal

FORT WAYNE, IND. — Geothermal products from WaterFurnace International are being featured in an episode of the *HOMETIME* TV show.

Hosted by Dean Johnson, *HOMETIME* is a home improvement television show broadcast on public television and in syndication across the U.S. The weekly show is designed to help homeowners achieve professional-looking results from their home improvement projects.

On February 27, *HOMETIME* aired the first half-hour episode in a 19-part series that documented the construction, from groundbreaking to furnishing, of a well-designed, state-of-the-art house — The Stone Cottage. Designed by Minnesota architect Mike Sharratt, The Stone Cottage showcases a number of innovative systems for foundations, framing, roofing, insulation and HVAC, including a WaterFurnace geothermal heating and cooling system that provides hot

water for radiant heat. The house also features attractive solutions for design, layout and landscaping.

The first phase of the installation of geothermal equipment and the radiant floor heating system is the subject of episode nine in the Stone Cottage series. The episode was scheduled to release to PBS stations around the country on April 24. Those interested should check their local listings or use the online station finders in the On TV section of the *HOMETIME* website to find stations, airdates and times for broadcasts in their area.

A vertical ground loop will support the home's geothermal heating and cooling system, which includes units from the WaterFurnace Synergy3D and Envision™ NSW Series. The energy-efficient Synergy3D Series provides forced air heating and cooling, hydronic heating for radiant floors and a desuperheater hot water assist

option that can provide homeowners with free supplemental domestic hot water in one convenient package.

Two-step Copeland Scroll Ultra-Tech™ compressors and variable-speed fan blowers consume less energy and provide comfort. The compressors are mounted on double-isolation plates made of acoustic metal and are wrapped in a compressor blanket to provide whisper-quiet operation. Available in 3-to 6-ton capacities, the Synergy3D also features environmentally friendly R-410A refrigerant. Coated air coils add durability and longer life.

Envision NSW Series hydronic units,

which also use environmentally friendly R-410A refrigerant, are available in 1.5- to 6-ton capacities.

Designed to efficiently provide hot water for radiant floor heating, domestic hot water, pool heating and snow and ice melt, NSW hydronic units can reduce hot water costs by as much as 60% per year. In addition, NSW units are capable of providing chilled water for cooling applications.

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General Pipe Cleaners celebrates 80 years in business

McKEES ROCKS, PA. — Customer satisfaction, product reliability and cre-



ative solutions have fueled General Pipe Cleaners' success for 80 years.

Founded by Abe Silverman in 1930, General spearheaded key industry developments — including heavy-duty Flexicore® cable, power-

driven and hand-held machines, and integrated visual and audio inspection technologies.

Keenly committed to innovative ideas and quality products, Silverman eventually developed the company's first power-driven drain cleaner — Sewerooter™. Since then, General has continued serving plumbing and drain cleaning professionals with what the company calls "the toughest drain cleaning tools down the line."

Generations of trust and service

The core, literally and figuratively, of General's business remains its pioneering Flexicore® cable — a radical design first introduced in the 1940s. General Pipe Cleaners

patented a process of wrapping spring around a braided wire core — and has remained an industry standard for drain cleaning "snakes" ever since.

"Product reliability and innovation have forged our reputation," noted Lee Silverman, company president and son of the founder. "We've met the needs of two, three and — occasionally — four generations of customers."

That's because General's performance and reliability help plumbing and drain cleaning professionals boost bottom lines. "Our customers count on General reliability to enhance profitability," said national sales manager Andy Zelazny.



Abe Silverman, circa 1930.

ularized new technologies to find and diagnose blockages — before actually clearing clogs. Available in a variety of models and sizes, Gen-Eye™ video inspection systems pioneered Digital Locators for instant depth-finding capability without cumbersome triangulation. And the advanced Gen-Ear™ acoustical leak detection device quickly and accurately pinpoints problems in a wide range of conduit, work, soil and surface conditions.

Today, General boasts a full line of advanced drain cleaning tools — including reliable cable drain cleaning machines, gas and electric powered water jets, video inspection and location systems, acoustical water leak location equipment, pipe freezers, thawing machines and accessories.

Abe Silverman's legacy of product reliability and innovative solutions continues with nine of his descendents managing General. And over 40% of its work force remains multi-generational — with children



Nine of founder Abe Silverman's descendents continue to manage General Pipe Cleaners.

The hand-held Super-Vee™ certainly confirms that. Derived from General's revolutionary Handylec™ of the 1940s, the tough, dependable Super-Vee remains a weapon of choice for unclogging narrow-diameter lines in sinks, showers, toilets and laundries.

"The only way one customer's Super-Vee — originally purchased over 30 years earlier — stopped working was when it was stolen!" Zelazny laughed.

Innovation cements leadership

In the mid-1960s, automatic cable feeds boosted the appeal of new General equipment. Shortly thereafter, the popular Super-Vee bolstered the company's position with hand-held drain cleaners. And for two decades, General's respected range of water jets — with Vibra-Pulse® for superior nozzle thrust around tight bends and down long lines — have armed plumbing and drain cleaning experts with vital weapons against grease, sediment, ice and other soft blockages.

From the late 1990s, General pop-

Abe Silverman's legacy of product reliability and innovative solutions continues with nine descendents managing General.

often working shoulder-to-shoulder with their parents.

General remains a leader in innovative drain cleaning and inspection technologies. And the people of General continue working hard to serve even more generations to come with the "Toughest Tools Down The Line."

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Mark A. Whitlam
Sr. Vice President Sales
Great-Grandson of Founder

Understanding the vital role of a distributor field sales team

BY TOM METCALF
Special to THE WHOLESALER

Often it seems that the highest-producing field sales reps wish to distance themselves from management as much as possible.

The following are three very interesting observations on how people, companies and teams are hoping to gain a competitive advantage:

- The U.S. military invests *billions* of dollars in gathering and reviewing field intelligence. UAVs or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles are on the front lines 24/7 scanning, photographing, monitoring and safeguarding our men and women of the armed forces. It can be said that UAVs are the “eyes and ears” of the military.

- NASCAR has implemented HD video use in pit row to analyze their crews and to see how they can shave

off as little as .001 of a *second* for the time it takes to get a car back on the track.

- Professional athletes and their coaches spend countless hours poring over game film to break down and analyze not only their own performance, but also the competition.

As you can see, companies invest incredible amounts of money on improving how they gather market intelligence, increase performance, and focus on gaining a competitive advantage.

Wholesale distributors, how much do you *invest* in the management and coaching of your field sales teams? Your field sales reps are your “eyes and ears” in the field. They should be the revenue-producing engine that

drives sales through your front door!

Have you ever heard “I’m a commission sales rep, just look at my numbers and if they drop, we can talk. Otherwise, stay out of my way!”? Often it seems that the highest-producing field sales reps wish to distance themselves from management as much as possible. Or worse, the mid-level producer or bottom producer gets very defensive when his or her manager wants to ride along and make some calls. (By the way, have you ever noticed that those days, the “ride-along” days are the best-planned and well-thought-out days you have ever experienced? Perhaps the next question should be “How come every day is not like that?”)

Here are three suggestions to ensure that your field sales team is maximizing their time in the field, and maximizing the profits on the bottom line:

- **Have your reps track the time they enter their first sales call each** (Turn to Invest... page 46.)

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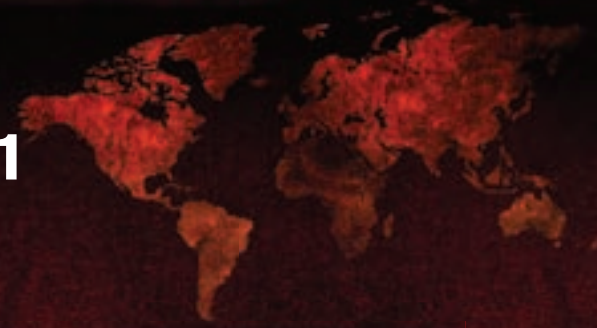


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Stainless Steel Floaters



Exotic Alloys

Invest in the management, coaching of your 'eyes and ears' in the field

(Continued from page 44.)

day. Suppose they stop by the office or branch every morning and afternoon to start and end their day. Suppose while in the office they do call reports or update their contact management program, visit with co-workers, check stock on certain products, sip a hot cup-o-joe and then head out to make sales calls. If they only do that for three hours each morning that's 63 hours per month of lost face-to-face selling time! (Keep in mind, that's only allowing for two hours of office time and one hour for commuting.)

• **Have them track what time they leave their last customer/prospect each day.** What would happen if your reps made just one more call per day, at the end of the day?

Could they stop by their customer's shop when the workers are off loading for the day? Could they buy a drink for an owner who is finishing up his day in the office before heading home? If they made just one more visit each day that's an additional 21 sales calls per month!

• **Have them total the number of calls they make each day.** I will be the last one to sacrifice quality over quantity in this economy. However, are they spending too much time with clients/prospects that do not have the potential to buy more products? If they are able to shorten their visits by just 15 minutes, without sacrificing the quality of the visit, they could add 1 hour and 15 minutes per day to see more clients (assuming they make five

sales calls per day).

Now for the simple math: Add 63

Have you ever noticed that those days, the 'ride-along' days, are the best-planned and well-thought-out days you have ever experienced? Perhaps the next question should be: 'How come every day is not like that?'

hours from implementing suggestion #1. Next, add one more sales call per day, totaling an additional 21 sales calls per month. Finally, add 26 hours a month by implementing #3.

In total that is 21 additional sales calls plus 89 hours to make even more calls each month!

"But Tom," you say, "that is unrealistic; there are so many variables to consider." Okay, cut that number in half. Let's say 44.5 additional hours of face-to-face selling time and 10.5

additional calls per month! Still too outrageous – cut the numbers in half once again — 22.25 hours and 5.25 calls per month that *each* of your reps could add to their productivity.

Let's face it, you have assessed, hacked, whacked, cut and removed all the slush you had in your business.

Last year was brutal but your doors are still open. From today moving forward it's all about building. It's all about increasing the visibility, accountability and productivity of your field sales team, and coaching them to the success of your company. ■

Tom Metcalf is the president and CEO of the Telenotes Sales Productivity System. He can be reached at tomm@telenotes.net or by dialing 866-835-3668.

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See contact information on page 114

Hansgrohe products a big hit in Heathrow's new passenger lounges

(Continued from page 4.)

which consists of one main and two satellite terminals – offers the 67 million passengers that pass through it every year plenty of freedom of movement and every comfort.

Terminal 5 has the widest, and one of the best-quality airport lounges anywhere in the world. There is room for up to 2,500 passengers to enjoy unbeatable luxury. In the lounges, First and Business Class passengers can lean back and enjoy

The highlight of the comfortable lounges is the Galleries Arrival Lounge, which is reserved for the airline's First and Club World passengers and Executive Club members with Gold status who have booked long-haul flights. It has a special hydrotherapy area with 94 shower rooms...

the comforts of a 5-star hotel, work in peace or enjoy a snack or meal – or be pampered in their very own spa center.

At the beginning of the planning stage, a group of specialists addressed the subjects of sustainability and the efficient use of resources. This resulted in a whole series of measures, ideas and processes that would reduce the burden on the environment to the minimum. Among them: Any rainwater that falls on the glass roof or other parts of the building is collected and used for purposes that do not require water of drinkable quality. This reduces the supply requirements by 70%.

The designers paid special attention to the bathroom and sanitary areas. The focus in the design and selection of products was on the careful use of a resource that is precious and often in short supply: water. The client and planners chose the international bathroom and sanitary specialist Hansgrohe AG as their partner for the fitting out of the bathrooms.

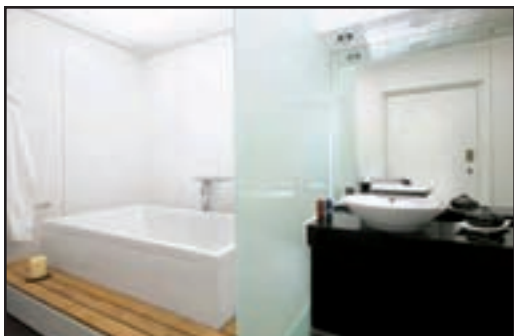
In all six lounges, the number of bathrooms and shower rooms was doubled to that of the previous site and the number of washrooms increased by 60%. It was particularly important that water should be saved in this area. Fittings from Hansgrohe's Metris S line were chosen for

the washing areas and bidets. The single-lever mixer is notable for its clear lines, timeless elegance and easy operation and, apart from its modern design, has water-saving characteristics such as Hansgrohe's EcoSmart technology: an integrated dynamic flow limiter reduces the water consumption to seven litres a minute. At the same time, Hansgrohe's AirPower technology adds air to the water inside the tap to ensure that the water jet is rich and full. This means that water and energy are used economically without missing out on any of the comfort.

The highlight of the comfortable lounges is the Galleries Arrival Lounge, which is reserved for the airline's First and Club World passengers and Executive Club members with Gold status who have booked long-haul flights. It has a special hydrotherapy area with 94 shower rooms that include jet showers, steam showers and luxury massage showers. The showers all have Hansgrohe's Pharo Lift 2 shower panels. With full water drops enriched with air from the head shower, three different types of jet from the hand shower and the revitalizing massage jets from the six side showers, users are guaranteed a pleasant, highly beneficial showering experience. The pleasant shower panels in aluminum have a timeless appeal in satin chrome. The unique adjustment function offers flexibility for the bather: a simple movement is all that is required to raise or lower the shower panels, as required. The thermostats have an integrated hot water limiter to guarantee a consistent water temperature whilst showering. The high response speed of the thermostat also reduces the need for manual adjustment, and thus the energy and water consumption. Showers also have Hansgrohe's AirPower technology. The combination of water and air inside the showerhead results in luscious, comfortable water drops and helps to reduce the water consumption.

Fittings from the Axor Massaud bathroom collection by Axor are used in the luxurious spa of the Galleries Arrival Lounge. The single-lever washstand fitting is more like a sculpture, where the focus is not on the technology but on the object as a purely functional tap: with its asymmetrically offset, generous area, it becomes a shelf from which the water streams into the basin in a wide, natural flow.

Visit www.hansgrohe-usa.com.



Terminal 5 at London's Heathrow Airport features the Galleries Arrival Lounge that boasts a special hydrotherapy area with 94 shower rooms that include jet showers, steam showers and luxury massage showers. The showers all have Hansgrohe's Pharo Lift 2 shower panels.

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May 1, 2010

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We understand the importance of providing our customers not only with the highest-quality products in the world but also industry-leading support after the sale. Our goal is to exceed your expectations by employing knowledgeable and dedicated employees working in state-of-the-art facilities.

To ensure fast and efficient delivery, Viega maintains four strategically located distribution centers totaling more than a million square feet across the United States. This allows us to support our wholesale partners with products delivered just in time to help reduce your inventory and put more money in your pocket.

No matter where you are located, you can rest assured that Viega is incorporating the latest technology to meet your needs. From order placement to product shipping, Viega delivers value when you need it most. Our commitment to customer service allows us to extend our reach to exceed customer expectations around the globe.

To those who have been with us for many years, thank you for your loyalty; to those new to Viega, thank you for your trust. You are a vital part of our growth and our number one priority.

Sincerely,

Robert Boots
VP of Supply Chain Operations

Hastings Tile & Bath celebrates rich 125-year history

FREEPORT, N.Y. — There are 800,000 hexagonal pavers surrounding the Statue of Liberty, all provided by a company then called Hastings Pavement. Begun in 1885, the company now called Hastings Tile & Bath began its life in Hastings-on-the-Hudson, N.Y. For 85 years, they had a solid reputation as providers of as-

phalt pavers for large outdoor installations. In the 1970s, inspired by some beautiful Mexican terracotta tiles, then-president Mario Paone decided to take the company in a different direction and began importing indoor floor and wall tiles. On a buying trip in Bologna, he expanded from primarily tiles to faucets, basins,

vanities, and bathtubs. The Hastings Tile & Bath Collection was born.

This year marks Hastings' 125-year anniversary and the company could not be prouder of its accomplishments. Hastings Tile & Bath continues to thrive and grow its product lines, dealer network and company-operated showrooms. Two products from their VOLA line were just awarded the prestigious Chicago Athenaeum GOOD DESIGN Award 2009 for Bath and Accessories. Presented by The Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design



and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies, these awards are the world's most prestigious global awards for new product design and graphics.

The VOLA line is just one of Hastings Tile & Bath's Collections of contemporary products. The Hastings Tile & Bath Collection encompasses a wide selection of European bath brands, including Fantini, Catalano and Tulli Zuccari. They have a full complement of high-style, contemporary shower and bath collections, vanities, storage solutions and mirror collections. Hastings' tile collection is ever-evolving, and with their prior expertise in pavers, they continue to specialize in large-format tiles. Hastings carries brands such as Grazia, Bardelli, Viva, Rex and Tagina. The designers whose products they represent are industry giants, such as Philippe Starck and Arne Jacobsen.

Visit www.hastingstilebath.com.

Mark's names Willoughby its Vendor of the Year

FORT WORTH, TEXAS — At Mark's, it vendors play an integral role in helping the company attain its business goals and provide customers with "Service Beyond Delivery." Willoughby Industries' commitment to Mark's has allowed them to offer customers tremendous service and quality, earning them Mark's Vendor of the Year Award for 2009.

Willoughby is one of the nation's top manufacturers of stainless steel products for the security plumbing market. While their product line can be found mostly in penal institutions, a significant number of their stainless steel and solid surface products can be found in commercial, educational and industrial facilities as well.

Willoughby security products are designed to exceed the highest standards of today's demanding security needs. The company's fixtures are constructed with 14ga stainless steel and components machined from solid steel.

Mark's stocks an enormous amount of Willoughby security products including stainless steel lavatories, toilets and combination units, as well as valves, valve repair parts, shower heads and bubblers. They even custom-build repair assortments for all of the most popular Willoughby valves to help customers and their maintenance teams keep the parts they need on hand and organized.



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ONE CALL *STILL* GETS IT ALL

Murray Supply showroom participates in Home and Garden Show

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — In February, Murray Supply Company's Kitchen and Bath Showroom participated in the Triad Home and Garden Show at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. This three-day event was sponsored by the Home Builders Association in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The Triad Home and Garden Show featured vendors and builders that showcased exhibits and participated in seminars focused on giving the consumer a better understanding of the available home and garden products in today's marketplace.

Murray Supply Company displayed a variety of products in the 40-foot booth space at the show, which included an American Stan-

dard flushing station, Aqueous faucets, Hansgrohe faucets, Sigma Designer faucets, A. O. Smith water heaters, Wellborn cabinets and many other items from a number of high quality vendors.

Murray Supply Company is a family owned and operated company that is based out of Winston-Salem, N.C. The company is engaged in the wholesale distribution of residential and commercial plumbing products, industrial and commercial piping, MRO products, as well as kitchen and bath fixtures. Murray Supply Company serves their customers from six branch locations and one showroom in North Carolina.

Visit www.murraysupply.com.



Family-owned Murray Supply Company participated in the Triad Home and Garden Show at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, N.C., displaying a variety of products in the 40-foot booth space.

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Q&A with Oasis executives

At 100, Oasis thrives under ownership by Patriarch Partners

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

As part of the tremendously successful private equity firm Patriarch Partners and its maverick CEO Lynn Tilton since 2005, Oasis International is flourishing with new products, new leadership and a new vision.

Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, Oasis International traces its roots back to the D.A. Ebinger Sanitary Company, a manufacturer of kitchen and industrial sinks and wash stations as well as drinking fountains. Ebinger evolved into the EBCO Manufacturing Company in the 1930s, and grew its business by



John Kucharik, president and CEO, Oasis International



Lynn Tilton, Patriarch Partners CEO



Mark Laing, VP-sales plumbing wholesale, Oasis International

branching into refrigerated pressurized water fountains and bottled water coolers.

Over the next 10 years, the company began branding these products under the "OASIS" name, and by the 1960s, its distribution network had grown to more than 50 countries. The popularity of all of EBCO's product lines — especially its bottled water coolers — continued to gain strength throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In recognition of the well-established OASIS brand, the company was renamed the Oasis Corporation in 1996, and last year became Oasis International.

Today, Oasis International employs 21 at the corporate office in Columbus, Ohio, nine full-time staff at the Distribution Center in McAllen, Texas, and 200+ at plants in Ireland, Poland and Mexico.

Recently, editorial director Mary Jo Martin interviewed Patriarch's CEO Lynn Tilton, and Oasis executives John Kucharik, president and CEO; Mark Laing, VP-sales plumbing wholesale; and Lou Busick, VP-engineering.

MJM: *I have to start by congratulating you on this remarkable achievement of your 100th anniversary. Are there any special celebrations planned with your customers and/or employees?*

Kucharik: In January we celebrated the 100th anniversary with the opening of an Oasis Time Capsule from 1985, which contained many historical documents from the first 75 years of Oasis history. Many former employees, customers and reps were invited.

We are also planning a Summer Reunion with former employees and will be inviting many groups to celebrate with us. We are working on a "100th Anniversary" product introduction and also want to schedule a series of "100 Year Flashback" advertising campaigns.

MJM: *Today's Oasis International is extremely strong, and has the backing of Patriarch Partners. Can you share what a difference that has made in your organization?*

Kucharik: Patriarch Partners has shown an unwavering commitment to the success of Oasis since it acquired the company in 2005. Quite frankly, without Lynn Tilton and her support, Oasis would not exist today. She saw the value in the Oasis products and

brand name and saved the company from liquidation. Her vision is to grow Oasis and make it a global water solutions company.

Lynn is the epitome of a self-made, highly successful business leader who has committed her life to helping distressed businesses turn from certain failure to success. Her energy level is amazing and she truly works 24/7 to help each of her companies on the path to renewal. She is tough minded and no nonsense, and expects the best from her people. She provides guidance and vision along with the strength to work through difficult situations.

MJM: *Many people are familiar with your incredible success, Lynn, but for those who aren't, can you tell us how you built one of the world's most successful private equity firms?*

Tilton: With an eye towards rebuilding those companies that others would leave behind and place on the pile of creative destruction, we built a fully vertically integrated platform



MJM: *Why is taking these undervalued companies and returning them to profitability, often preserving U.S. jobs, so important to you?*

Tilton: Having lost my father at a young age, I know first hand the disruption to a family structure caused by the loss of a working parent. Each family that we are able to save from that pain, each child that is therefore not left behind, makes me feel that we, as a company and platform, make the world a better place each day. I also believe that joblessness has become a plague upon America. The joblessness, hopelessness and homelessness



prevalent in America could become unbearable, if no action taken, and lead to collective anger and

Oasis' product line includes the Versacooler® P8AC that delivers 8.0 gallons of chilled drinking water per hour. Mechanically Activated Push Pads control water flow, and require no electrical connections.

that focused on fulfilling the needs of companies on the long-term path of restructure. We understand the risks high, the rewards great but above all, the journey long and the road fraught with obstacles. We never look for nor expect the task to be easy or rewards instant.

We find that success is most likely when we have a brand name, a product coveted by the customer and a talented management team. In the end, it takes a team and talent is the driving force behind the successful rebuilding of value.

the consequences thereto.

MJM: *Has the fact that the economy has been challenging, to say the least; over the last few years led you to use a different tactic either in your management style, strategies or acquisitions?*

Tilton: I am forever the student and we all learn more from our failures and challenges than from our successes. As such, I have tried to grow as a leader and as an industrialist during this time of great challenge. I am less patient with the time to rebuild. (Turn to Oasis... page 58.)

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Oasis, Patriarch envision next 100 years

(Continued from page 56.)

tionalization and I demand of management teams a sense of urgency with the cessation of bleeding and an end to cash losses. I am also more focused on the need to innovate, create new products and use direct to consumer and new media markets. As for acquisitions, we are concentrated on add-on acquisitions to supplement diminishing revenues or additional companies whose brands create new platforms for the future.

MJM: Could you give us a rundown of the Oasis management team — especially those who are recognizable to our wholesaler readers?

Kucharik: I serve as president and CEO, and joined Oasis in November 2007. Previously, I spent 30+ years with industrial manufacturing companies including Ingersoll Rand, General Signal Pump Group (Hydromatic-Aurora Pump-Layne-Fairbanks Morse) now a part of Pentair Water, and Dover Corporation's RPA Filtration. I've worked with both public and private equity companies creating value for both investors and customers. I believe in the bond between our rep agencies and our wholesale distribution, and I serve as the support link for our Sales and

Marketing team.

- Mark Laing, VP-sales for Plumbing Wholesale, came to Oasis in 2006 from an extensive background with

The Oasis Time Capsule from 1985 contained historical documents from the first 75 years of Oasis history.



ing department also fall within his responsibilities. He works with our Western sales representatives and all



plumbing fixture companies Crane Plumbing, Mansfield Plumbing and Briggs. These assignments gave him the experience of both retail big box distribution and wholesale distribution, which has helped the company cross distribution lines with much success. Mark reviews all production schedules for water coolers and fountains with plant management weekly, all job pricing, national and regional programs, product development and design with our engineer-

national accounts.

- Jimmy Robinson has been with Oasis since 2003 after a 22-year career with Coca-Cola Company as a general manager. He is Southeastern regional manager and handles some Midwestern territories as well. Jimmy builds relationships that last a lifetime with his distributors. His knowledge of the industry gives him the advantage over competitors when dealing with our rep groups and distributor base. Persistency, determination, the desire to win, and brand loyalty explains Jimmy's passion and work ethic.

- Chris Romagnoli has grown up within the Oasis family, starting his career on the production line 14 years ago. His product knowledge is extraordinary and his work ethic is exceptional. Chris moved up through the sales department and is now our Northeast regional manager and also covers some Southwestern territory in 17 states. His passion and loyalty for the Oasis brand drives him to be exceptional at all aspects of his job, from relationships with customers to the persistent search for more orders from our rep groups.

- Lou Busick is our VP Engineering and New Product Development. During his 22-year Oasis career, Lou earned his MBA, has been key on over 20 issued patents and nominated as a Central Ohio Inventor of the Year. He works closely with the marketing and sales team to identify and develop new product opportunities to help keep Oasis strong for the next 100 years.

MJM: What types of efficiency strategies do you employ, and how do they improve your order fulfillment, accuracy and lead times, as well as communication with customers?

Laing: In today's market condi-

tions, available inventory and quick order fulfillment is critical to our success with distributors. We review our inventory levels, production schedule and anticipated increase in order entry with our production manager

multiple times per week. We build electric water coolers and fountains in our manufacturing facility with no other distractions or product lines to take away from production requirements. (Turn to Rejuvenated... page 62.)

Industry Firsts

Today's Oasis International has had a long and storied history. Here are some of its most notable milestones:

1910s-1930s

- First electric refrigerated water coolers and the drinking "bubbler"

1940s

- First integrated water cooler components in a compact unit

- First electric dehumidifier

1950s

- First "Hot 'N Cold" models for tea and instant soup and coffee

1970s

- First removable side panels for ease of bottled cooler servicing

1980s

- First countertop bottled water cooler

1990s

- First plastic cabinet bottled water cooler for ease of cleaning and refurbishment

- First "Waterguard" No-Spill bottle loading device

- First removable reservoir "RR" bottled water cooler

- First fully integrated point of use filtration water cooler

- Manufacturing facility in Ireland opened to service the European market

2000s

- Manufacturing facility in Mexico opened to service North, Central and South American markets

- Manufacturing facility in Poland opened to service Central and Eastern Europe

- First "Pressure Vessel" direct chill "Kalix" point of use filtration cooler

- First integrated point of use water bottle filler "Aqua Pointe".



A water cooler is complex and tricky to design and manufacture. Here employees at the Oasis plant in the 1950s do the exacting work of assembly.



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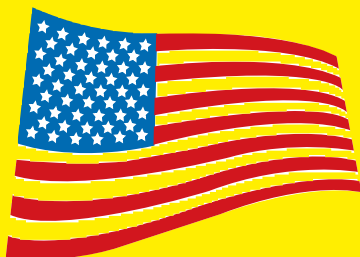
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Rejuvenated Oasis draws on experience

(Continued from page 58.)

ments. With a day's notice, we can change our direction and production schedule to build the required products to fill orders quickly. We still maintain a large but controlled amount of inventory in our Distribution Center in Texas and also in our consignment warehouse locations strategically located around the U.S. and Canada.

MJM: Describe how important your relationships with wholesalers are to your business?

Laing: With the changes our company has gone through, the one con-

stant has been the relationships we have maintained with our distributors. From our independent rep groups, regional managers and up to our president, we have worked extremely hard to strengthen our relationships with distributors. Over the past few years, we have done what we said we would do — kept our customers in stock, given them a better quality product and offered them a competitive price. We make sure we have the strongest rep organizations for each territory. Without our rep organizations and the relationships they have maintained through the years,

we would not be having the success we are having today.

MJM: Talk about the tremendous efforts that go into R&D to develop and launch new products?

Busick: A water cooler is one of the most complicated products to design and manufacture. There is frigid and sometimes piping hot water combined with electricity and a hermetically sealed gas/vapor phase change refrigeration system all combined into a product that is connected to a pressurized water system. Any number of things could go wrong during the manufacture or use of the cooler that must be anticipated and addressed before the product can go to market. Add in a list of state and federal agency requirements and a number of state regulatory boards, and you have an ominous set of hurdles before getting to market. But Oasis has been doing it successfully for 100 years.

Product development at Oasis involves the customer, marketing, sales, procurement, engineering, state

“In today’s market conditions, available inventory and quick order fulfillment is critical to our success with distributors. We review our inventory levels, production schedule and anticipated increase in order entry with our production manager multiple times per week.”

and federal government and agencies such as UL and NSF.

Once the product specification has been determined, the engineering development begins. The heart of the water cooler is the refrigeration system. We refer to decades of experience developing refrigeration systems to cool water. Cost control, energy efficiency and cooling performance are the norm. Each refrigeration/water system is extensively tested in two environmentally controlled rooms of the UL-certified lab. The rooms run 24/7, during which performance data on the cooling system is gathered — amps, watts, temperatures and pressures — and then analyzed to determine

(Turn to Oasis, page 111.)

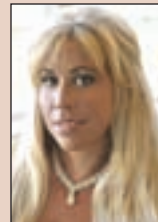


At left, the classic Oasis pressurized water cooler from the 1930s contrasts with the Odyssey (below), a sleek, modern, premium point-of-use cooler with a true refrigerator.



A closer look at Lynn Tilton

Patriarch Partners LLC was founded by Lynn Tilton in 2000. In the past decade, Patriarch has evolved into a global investment firm that manages more than \$7 billion of equity and secured loan assets with equity investment in more than 70 companies, and controlling interests in two-thirds of them. It is estimated that her endeavors have saved over 200,000 jobs and more than 100 companies from liquidation.



she told *The Glass Hammer*, “I tried not to show that I was a single mother. There wasn’t going to be any sympathy for my plight anyway. There was no flexibility, no understanding for going home early, so I missed every parent-teacher interview, every play, every event. When I had to make a choice between being home and leaving a project in the middle, I wouldn’t leave the project. I just couldn’t afford not to be working.”

After realizing that she needed to realign her priorities, Tilton made some changes in her professional life and eventually accepted an offer to work from home for Amroc Investments, which she describes as “the first firm that traded private paper and bank loans.” Five years later when a group of her accounts asked her to go out on her own, she formed Patriarch Partners. They traded \$1 billion in paper in their first year.

Her career spans 28 years and encompasses private equity, distressed asset management, financial engineering, high yield loan sales and trading, investment banking and senior management. Tilton began her career at Morgan Stanley in 1981. She also worked for Goldman, Sachs & Co. and Merrill Lynch as an investment banker until 1989.

Her success did not come without struggle, however. At the age of 25 and the single mother of a 2-year-old, Tilton was working 100 hours a week at Morgan Stanley and later put herself through the MBA program at Columbia University while working full time. “My early years were difficult, dark and bumpy,” she said in an interview with *The Glass Hammer*. “I may have been the first professional woman to have a child at the firm. It was not easy. Survival was the noblest of my causes.”

As she moved through the business world and climbed the ladder, she was forced to make significant sacrifices. As

“My business is about proving that making money and making the world a better place are not mutually exclusive concepts,” she has said. “Every year, each fund has demonstrated a minimum of 25% returns on an internal rate of return basis with certain funds returning in excess of 60% in some years. But in reality I want to be remembered for how many lives I have touched. For every company saved, those people’s lives are changed.”

“In the end, it is people standing shoulder to shoulder walking in the same direction that creates a force of nature. We can’t change things until we all start thinking about the pain and plight of others.”



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One-stop PVF

GSS/FFF establish strong foothold in PVF master distribution

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Master distributor Global Stainless Supply Inc. was established by Sumitomo Corporation of America in April 2002 and began shipping steel pipe, fittings and flanges from their Houston warehouse a few months later. Initially, GSS's core suppliers included Tubacex for seamless pipe, Metalfar and Bebitz for stainless steel flanges,

“Global sourcing is routine today. Our focus has been on adding value through diversification and specialization.”

IML for forged stainless fittings and Erne for seamless butt weld fittings. GSS still places regular orders with all of its original suppliers.

GSS continues to sell strictly through distribution — no fabricators, no contractors, no end users and

no exceptions. Its sales staff initially consisted of industry veterans Keith Thomas, Charlotte Horton and Jeff Motley. This experienced trio had a distributor customer base that spanned North America.

The company was faced with a major turning point in its develop-



ment shortly after the doors opened. Due to the effects caused by 9/11 and the collapse of Enron, demand for GSS's core product — seamless stainless pipe — dropped by 40%. (The business plan for GSS was written in October 2001 and tentative approval was received November 16. At that time, the economic implications of the terrorist attack were not fully appreciated.) By August 2002, there was a critical oversupply of commodity grades of seamless stainless pipe. GSS management realized their initial business plan was inadequate so



In April 2002 GSS began shipping steel pipe, fittings and flanges from their Houston warehouse and continues to sell strictly through distribution.

their product line was expanded to include welded butt weld fittings and a wider variety of material grades in seamless pipe. The first orders for new material grades were placed in September 2002. The process began with 347H in double random lengths. 317L and Duplex 2205 followed in three-month increments. Today, GSS carries a comprehensive range of stainless and nickel alloys.



The Houston headquarters has 210,000 square feet under roof and 14 acres of outside storage. In less than a decade in business, GSS has

opened several additional facilities:

- The Richmond, Va., branch began operations in January of 2005. The 125,000-square-foot operation is managed by Billy Reeder.
- The 120,000-square-foot Indianapolis operation, under the direction of Dan Noblitt, opened in October 2006.
- The Los Angeles operation was formed in April 2009 as a result of the

acquisition of the assets of Specialty Valve and Fitting. Steve Martinez manages the 125,000-square-foot Los Angeles facility.

However, it was the acquisition of FFF in September 2006 that created the most significant opportunity for long-term growth. FFF brought 25 years of relationships and an experienced management team to the table. In fact, the previous owners of FFF still retain equity and act as an important part of the GSS management team.

“We like to think of ourselves as a hybrid company,” said CEO Bill Bootz, who has more than 20 years of experience in master distribution. “Sumitomo provides large corporation resources and expertise but we still offer the operational environment and customer service of a family business. Human resources are our most important assets. Creating a management team as opposed to a group of managers takes time. Our experienced management team is broad and deep, and includes:

- Danny Lee and Stan Lee, who founded FFF.
 - Ken Albano, a metallurgical engineer with an MBA and extensive turnaround experience. Before GSS he played a key role at Ameriforge.
 - Lee Brown, who had a long ca-
- (Turn to PVF... page 66.)



CEO Bill Bootz operates from the ‘bullpen’ of the company’s Houston facility. Bootz, who has more than 20 years’ experience in master distribution, says that although the company has grown tremendously since its establishment by Sumitomo in 2002, human resources are still its most important asset. He believes GSS/FFF offers the operational environment and customer service of a family business. Being entrenched in the bullpen allows Bootz and the management team hear and see the daily issues encountered by employees.

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PVF master distributor continues its solid growth

(Continued from page 64.)

reer at Southwest Stainless.

- Bill Thomas, who learned a tremendous amount from his time at Allied.

- Paul Brahier, known for his time at Dixie Pipe and Texas Pipe.

- Joe Phoenix, a chemical engineer and ASQ-certified quality engineer.

- Robert Horton and Joe Flores run the Houston warehouse operations.

“The combination of GSS and FFF offers customers one of the broadest ranges of process piping components under one roof in the master distribution business. Transaction cost economics are the focal point of our growth going forward and carbon pipe inventories will soon be arriving in Houston. GSS and FFF are now hitting their stride. Carbon seamless pipe, valves, and a large scale manu-

“Based on our product mix, we feel like we are the most viable source of material for all PVF sectors.”

facturing operation will be a catalyst for rapid growth in the future.”

Recently, Bootz, along with VP Ken Albano and sales/marketing manager Nathan Green, gave editorial director Mary Jo Martin greater insight into the GSS/FFF organization.

MJM: Give us a look at the SKUs you stock and how you keep transactional costs as low as possible?

Green: We strive to lower transactional costs to our customers by offering a one stop shop for distributors of process piping components, and we are constantly expanding the

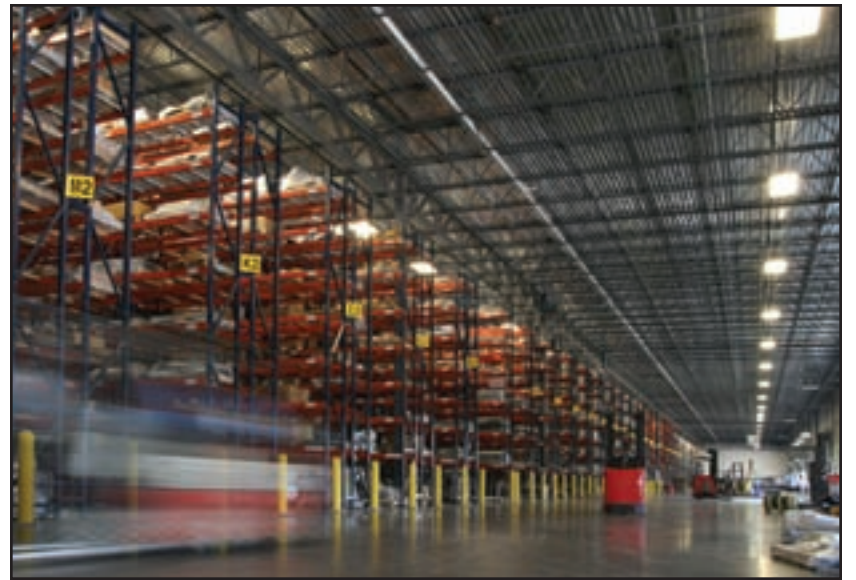
breadth and depth of our offering to do so. Currently, GSS/FFF inventory approximately 37,000 line items; 20,000 of those encompass the stainless, nickel and non-ferrous grades (stainless, nickel, aluminum, duplex, etc.) and the remaining 17,000 fall under our carbon product mix (carbon, chrome and low-temp).

A recent inventory purchase and expanded credit lines have allowed us to add more than 2,000 new, never-before-stocked line items. The majority of our inventory is imported, with approximately 65% being from “approved” Western European mills and the rest coming from low-cost countries like India, Malaysia and Vietnam. Our domestic product mix is continually growing and we have even started to inventory Chinese material in select markets because it’s becoming more widely acceptable. Consequently, we can accommodate any Approved Material List (AML) or country of origin restrictions. In addition, because of our unique buying method consisting of long-term agreements and tonnage commitments, we are able to guarantee a continuous influx of material at lower costs, helping ensure we never quote “no stock.”

Our latest inventory venture is in carbon steel pipe, in which we will inventory 1/4" to 24" welded and seamless pipe in STD, XH and True Schedules.

MJM: How are your sales divided between industrial and commercial?

Green: Based on our product mix, we feel like we are the most viable source of material for all PVF sectors. Because we maintain such a large inventory of Western European-approved import material and are



GSS/FFF inventories some 37,000 line items; 20,000 include the stainless, nickel and non-ferrous grades (stainless, nickel, aluminum, duplex, etc.), with the remaining 17,000 making up the carbon product mix.

headquartered in Houston, we have become a dominant player in the Gulf Coast refining and petrochemical sector. Our strategically located branches allow us to reach similar markets in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and West Coast.

We have been successful in carving out a niche in the approved sector, but it’s the commercial side of the industry that comprises 60% to 80% of demand for pipe, flanges and fittings. Multi-million-dollar investments from Sumitomo have allowed us to make tremendous strides in growing our commercial-grade inventory. This expansion is helping position us to increase commercial market share and ultimately become a “cost leader.”

MJM: Do you have special training programs for employees to increase their technical knowledge?

Albano: Our approach to the training and development of our employees is broader than increasing only their technical knowledge. We develop individual training and development programs based on the needs and aspirations of each employee. Training for new hires generally begins with a multi-week assignment working in the warehouse. This allows the individual to learn our products, manufacturers and the order fulfillment process. We utilize the American Management Association for training in areas such as selling skills and leadership. The American Supply Association is used for warehouse operations and inventory management training. We have a close working relationship with the Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution at Texas A&M University where we send employees for training in branch management, marketing and sales, and other areas.

I have a M.S. in Metallurgy and Material’s Science and 30 years of

manufacturing experience, which provides me with a solid background in providing training in specifications review, metallurgy, and manufacturing practices. I’ve also developed a technical and manufacturing training syllabus that includes visits to the metallurgical testing laboratory that we use, and visits to our suppliers, both in the U.S. and overseas. The visits to manufacturers train our key employees in steelmaking, forging, pipe manufacturing, heat treatment and quality assurance.

MJM: Who are your primary suppliers?

Bootz: Long-term relationships are at the heart of our supply strategy. Relationships are forged over time through open communication and information exchange. The relationships always take precedence to price.

Our core suppliers for GSS include Tubacex, Enlin, Erne and Metalfar, while FFF has an exclusive marketing arrangement with Ulma Forja. Other key suppliers include SKB, Erne, Metalfar, USK and Benkan.

MJM: How do you evaluate potential new suppliers and what is the process you go through when adding a new line?

Albano: Prospective suppliers are subjected to a rigorous quality and manufacturing capability assessment. This is a three-phase program. After an initial “paper” survey of manufacturing capability, prospective suppliers are audited. The audit examines the prospective supplier’s quality system, testing and inspection capability. In addition, the manufacturing capability and practices are carefully evaluated to ensure that the equipment and practices are capable of meeting specification requirements.

Audit findings are exhaustively documented and shared with the sup-
(Turn to One-stop... page 70.)



According to CEO Bill Bootz, the combination of GSS and FFF offers customers one of the broadest ranges of process piping components under one roof in the master distribution business.



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One-stop PVF source

(Continued from page 66.)

plier. Recommendations are usually made to improve the supplier's quality system or process. Parts are then selected at random and marked with a unique stamp. These parts are sent to us for "First Article" testing in accordance with one of our specification-specific testing protocols. Results of the first article testing are also shared with the suppliers. Prospective suppliers must demonstrate a sound quality system, manufacturing capability, and acceptable first article testing to become an approved supplier. Random inspection, and sometimes destructive testing, is performed on parts culled from shipments of new suppliers as a validation of product quality.

MJM: *Do you have an outside sales force, or are all sales done through inside personnel?*

Bootz: Our sales force is expected to do inside and outside relationship development. We do not have any full-time road warriors. We do, on the other hand, encourage all sales personnel to invest their time with cus-

tomers at ball games, concerts, dinners and other activities. In optimal situations, we like to have our facilities toured, which is our most effective sales tool.

MJM: *How do you market your business and target potential new customers?*

Bootz: We sell through distribution. The majority of distribution companies are well known and long established. The challenge is to create a value chain that offers an edge over other market participants.

The key to doing this is to understand the strengths of our competitors and the needs and operational differences of our customers. This process has led to the continual expansion of our product offering and supply base.

Our website, www.OneStopPVF.com, provides continual updates on the company and has useful information for customers. Many people are familiar with our advertisements in trade publications like *The Wholesaler*. These tools are designed to assist the most important part of our marketing — person-to-person contact.

MJM: *How have your customers' expectations changed over the years, and how has FFF/GSS adapted to those changing needs/wants?*

Bootz: The industry is in a con-

stant state of transformation. Global sourcing is routine today. Our focus has been on adding value through diversification and specialization. Diversification is in terms of new suppliers and the combination of carbon and stainless under one roof. Specialization in terms of nickel alloys, rare grades of stainless, chrome, low temp, large diameters and high pressure parts.

Our focus has been on value creation. We believe our course is sound as others have begun to follow.

MJM: *Are you pleased with the amount of activity you are seeing on your website?*

Green: When you think of GSS, we want the next thing that pops into your head to be FFF, and vice-versa. We want the names to be synonymous. With the onslaught of the "green" movement and internet growth, physical brochures and line cards are becoming a thing of the past. Because of this, and staying loyal to our business philosophy, we have merged our company websites into www.OneStopPVF.com, offer-

ing one location where you can go to find all of the information and resources that you need.

To bring more visibility and raise awareness of the site, we have started e-mail-blast marketing campaigns also. These periodic blasts are sent to our over 3,000 contacts and contain new product information and pertinent GSS/FFF news. We have had a great response to these email campaigns with many people "clicking through," which directs them to our website. We want it to be a resource for our customers so there is lots of useful information on the site. Things like product listings, new products, contact information, weights and dimension charts, links to metal market pricing, and dollar conversion rates are just a few of the things you can expect to find. We recently added a page making Online MTRS available to our customers. We want to keep the site fresh, so each time customers visit we want to highlight something new they might not have seen or a service they didn't know we offered.

MJM: *With so many sources of competition in the marketplace, how does FFF/GSS differentiate itself?*

Bootz: Trust. We are trusted by the industry. We define our role and stick to our mission. We do not take expedient shortcuts.



In addition to expected additions to the management team, during the near term GSS will offer carbon, chrome, stainless, nickel alloys and aluminum in pipe, valves, fittings and flanges under one roof.

MJM: *How do you ensure that you have the right type and numbers of product on hand at all times, while not getting to the point of having too much of your resources tied up in inventory that might not be moving?*

Bootz: Our business is to have it. We have a unique approach which relies only slightly on historical usage. Primarily we focus on maintaining target amounts on the floor. The majority of products are procured on a monthly basis providing a constant inflow of goods.

FFF has recently adopted the GSS procurement model and correspondingly fill-rates and inventory turns have increased.

Turns are not the priority in master distribution as many items will sit for years. Niche items always make the turns low. On the other hand that is our value in the supply chain.

MJM: *Can you describe the leadership philosophy at FFF/GSS, such as accessibility to customers and employees, and hands-on activity by the owners?*

Green: As with any merger, there are always concerns as to how well the company identities and cultures will mesh. When our new Houston facility was built, the carbon and stainless sales forces remained segregated. For customer service purposes and the overall cohesion of the group, the sales staffs were eventually merged. Now our Houston sales office houses approximately 25 total salespeople and four executives.

Our "bullpen" format facilitates more information sharing and learning opportunities for younger salespeople. While the "bullpen" is not a new concept to PVF, we put an interesting twist on it. You'd be hard pressed to walk into any office and find the CEO and VP of a \$150-million company sitting smack dab in the middle cubicle. It brings new mean-

ing to "open door policy." Hierarchy still exist for practical purposes, but information flows more freely because employees are encouraged to take ownership of certain areas and research and develop suggestions and strategies for company improvement. The information chain is more circular as opposed to the top-down method of larger corporations.

Our "control tower" method allows for executives to be in tune with employees' needs by hearing and seeing the daily issues that plague all companies. It also helps our executives gather valuable information and stay on top of market trends and changes, allowing for quick and decisive action with regards to operations and purchasing.

It's an atmosphere where people feel free to speak their mind and no ideas are dismissed — leading to what we call our "culture of inclusion."

MJM: *Is there anything you can share with me regarding the company's near- or long-term goals and strategic plans?*

Bootz: Our objective is to be the preferred supplier to distributors of process piping components. We will continue to lead in terms of quality, cost and product diversity. Soon you will see additions to the management team. Attracting top talent to continue product diversification will fuel our growth. Over the near term GSS will offer carbon, chrome, stainless, nickel alloys and aluminum in pipe, valves, fittings and flanges under one roof.

We expect 2010 will be a time of realignment. Inventories have been shed by many. Recent acquisitions will transform traditional supply channels. More and more suppliers will target direct sales. We remain curious about the impact of private equity going forward. ■



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Time management for the inventory investor

BY JASON BADER

Inventory management specialist

In previous writings, I have talked about the poor utilization rates of many distribution software packages. I often ask audiences in my travels what percentage of their current distribution management package they actually utilize. Most of the honest ones realize that they only use about 20% of the capacity of the system. Every blue moon I run across the power user at a whopping 35% utilization. My next question is always, “What percentage of the package did you actually pay for?” Nothing like a swift kick to the gut to make an audience love me.

The antidote for this poor return on investment is product knowledge. Not product knowledge in the traditional sense of knowing what you sell. Instead, I am talking about taking time to get to know the software you bought.

Contrary to popular belief, most inventory management modules in distribution software packages are well designed. Used properly, your inventory investors will be able to

The review cycle is one of those little gems that so many people tend to overlook and ultimately leave at the default setting.

keep tabs on the movement of thousands of different SKUs. When we go around the system by some form of SWAG (scientific wild assed guessing), we create more work for the investor and ultimately negate any efficiencies we could have gained from the inventory management tools. I am referring to spreadsheets and custom reports that keep inventory managers chained to their desk into the wee hours.

In this article, I want to talk about a field in the item record that continues to baffle many inventory management professionals. The review cycle is one of those little gems that so many people tend to overlook and ultimately leave at the default setting. Let's face it. When we went live, the last thing we were thinking about

was, “Man, I need to make sure that review cycle is set properly.” It is a shame that most people haven't really learned to leverage the power of this field. This is time management for the inventory investor.

How often do you review a supplier line? Is it monthly? Weekly? Daily? I know companies that review every supplier daily – on paper no less. Talk about killing trees. Several distributors set up a review

we always hit that target on multiples of seven? This is the assumption if we review lines once a week or bi-weekly. In order to determine how many days to set the review cycle, we need to do a little math. For this example, let's say that we have \$26,000 in annual cost of goods sold with a supplier. They have a freight prepaid of \$1000. Where should we set the review cycle to take maximum advantage of the prize?

$$\frac{\text{Annual Cost of Goods Sold}}{\text{Target Level Order}} = \text{\# of Opportunities to Reach Prize}$$

$$\frac{\$26,000}{\$1,000} = 26 \text{ Opportunities to reach prize annually}$$

$$\frac{365 \text{ Days}}{26} = 14.03$$

schedule based on weeks. They do it this way because that is the way they were taught. Some base the review on the lead time. If they have an average lead time of 30 days, they review every 30 days. Unfortunately, they are missing the power of proper timing.

In a line buy methodology, the review cycle creates a window in time where we can accumulate enough requirements to meet a vendor prize. The most common vendor prize is free freight. My friends in the logistics business would argue there is no such thing as free freight, but for this discussion, let's remain blissfully ignorant. When a vendor offers free freight at a specific dollar amount, this becomes our recommended order size. You will often find a field in the vendor record called “target level order.” During the vendor set up, you typically populate this with the amount of money required to receive the prize.

Free freight is not the only vendor prize out there. There may be discounts available for placing orders of a certain size or rebates involved with placing certain size orders. These dollar amounts would populate the target level order field. Dollars are not the only unit of measure. Sometimes suppliers base the prize on placing orders of a certain weight or the ability to fill a container. These are all factors in determining the optimum time to place an order.

The review cycle is designed to help us take advantage of the prize as many times as possible in a year. Do

In this example, we should set the review cycle at 14 days. In practical terms, when we run the replenishment requirements for this supplier every 14 days, we should have accumulated enough items to meet the \$1000 freight prepaid. If our annual cost of goods sold was higher, the review cycle would be shorter. Perhaps we could reach the prize in 10 days. If we were still working on the weekly buying schedule, we would be short of the prize. Conversely, if we waited until two weeks passed to accumulate requirements, our requirements would be greater than the prize. Not the kiss of death, but we won't be maximizing the incentive from our supplier.

Looking at the previous year is not always the best crystal ball. Sales trends change from year to year. If you looking at an upward trend this year, then subtract a day or two from the review cycle. If sales are slowing, add a day or two. Making adjustments throughout the year is prudent inventory investing.

I think you are getting the picture about the financial benefits of setting proper review cycles, but what about the time management aspects? In my experience, most companies review suppliers far too frequently. I know several distributors who feel that they need that daily look. How much time are we wasting pouring over replen-



ishment reports to then say, “looks like we aren't there yet, maybe tomorrow...”. I would rather redirect my inventory investors to spend time analyzing ways to get a better return on investment.

Consider this scenario: What if our annual cost of goods sold in the above example was \$260,000 vs. \$26,000 and the freight prepaid was \$250. We can hit the prize three times per day. Theoretically, we should run the replenishment report three times a day. This kind of defeats our time management agenda. In this case, I would generally put my review cycle at somewhere around three to five days. But we shouldn't overlook an opportunity here.

If you can grossly exceed the offered prize by a supplier, why can't you negotiate something better? In the above example, I could easily put together orders of \$5000 in a week. Is there a cost savings realized by the supplier when I place a larger order? Absolutely. Is there any reason that we should not participate in this cost savings? None that I can think of.

As margins squeeze, we are all looking for ways to find a nickel, dime or quarter in the operating expenses. I challenge you to take a look at how frequently you are reviewing your replenishment reports. Setting proper review cycles can give your inventory investors the time to discover a better return on your purchasing dollar.

Good luck. ■

Jason Bader is the managing partner of The Distribution Team, a firm that specializes in helping distributors become more profitable through operating efficiencies. The first 20 years of his career were spent working in distributor operations. Today, he is a regular speaker at industry events and spends much of his time working with individual distribution companies. For more information, call 503-282-2333 or contact him by e-mail at Jason@Distributionteam.com. Also visit The Distribution Team's website at www.thedistributionteam.com.

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Creating the 'experience' in your showroom

Most of you who have followed my showroom column since 2004 know that I wrote an article called "Creating the Experience" in your showrooms in October 2008. The column talked about how to create the experience for your clientele and how to brand your showroom. Furthermore, in the May 2009 issue, I talked about the DPHA and their October 2009 Conference at The Broadmoor Hotel and Spa in Colorado Springs. I also addressed what you would learn, for Schor, at this hotel, in "Creating the Experience" for your clientele. You

Is the Internet a friend or foe to showrooms? Clear thoughts on what is right and wrong. First of all, the Internet is a big friend and will continue to grow regardless of your views and knowledge of it.

can access these two showroom columns in *The Wholesaler* archives at www.thewholesaler.com.

I had spoken at The Broadmoor to a 5-star hotel conference on baths and guest expectations two years ago and I recommended the hotel to the DPHA senior executives. During the conference last fall, Danielle Roberts, The Broadmoor's director of training, conducted a "knock your socks off" workshop on "The Secrets of World-Class Customer Service" and "Why Thank You is NOT Enough." If you are a DPHA member (whose membership is a steal for \$775 yearly; \$100 is a one-time processing fee), I highly encourage you to access and read the entire article in the Novem-

ber *Newsleak* magazine.

Roberts heads a two-week intensive training course that includes testing accountability for employees. In the seminar she talks about The Broadmoor's 16 Service Standards. These standards are

- Make eye contact, smile and greet every guest or employee immediately
- Use the guest's or employee's name
- Escort guests or employees to their requested location
- Immediately approach someone who seems to be lost and offer your

assistance

- Know what is expected so you can anticipate guests' needs and the needs of employees whom you serve
- Follow up on requests even when it is not the duty of your department to do so
- Never say "I don't know"; say "I'll find out"
- Never appear hurried, even if you are very busy
- If unable to comply with the guest's wishes, offer an alternative; avoid negative expressions like "That's against hotel policy" or "This is not my table"
- Keep your organization spotless
- Act professional in public areas at all times; stand erect and avoid

leaning against walls or furniture

- Take ownership of a problem; ensure that the matter is resolved and that the guest is satisfied with its resolution
- Take each problem to heart (where HEART is an acronym): **H**ear what the guest has to say; **E**mpathize with the guest; **A**pologize for the situation; **R**espond to their needs; **T**ake action and follow up
- Respond to guest requests within 10 minutes
- Know the services that the hotel offers and the locations of banquet facilities and meeting rooms
- Go the extra mile.

Do you think you can extract out some of these 16 service standards for your showroom?

Internet – friend or foe?

I am going to write a separate in-depth column about this during the year where I will get into the IMAP (Internet Minimum Advertised Price) and more. Is the Internet a friend or foe to showrooms? Clear thoughts on what is right and wrong. First of all, the Internet is a *big* friend and will continue to grow regardless of your views and knowledge of it. Many Americans use the Internet to find out exactly what they want and go through search engines looking for bath, plumbing and kitchen products before they come into your showroom to touch, feel and see the products first hand prior to purchasing. I would guess that less than 10% of products are bought sight unseen over the Internet, although in the downturn, it may be slightly higher.

One of the most popular tools for consumers and professional trades is Home Portfolio (www.homeportfolio.com) where over 700,000 products can be viewed by consumers, designers, and other trades, for manufacturer products and to provide showroom links where they can buy the products. The positive aspect of Home Portfolio and other similar websites is that your clientele has some idea of what they want when they come to your showroom. The now-defunct EXPO Design Centers (The Home Depot) were looked at by some industry people as the foe (competition), but most people felt they brought great pace of awareness to the masses and helped buyers and specifiers accept the sticker price, which was -25% off net. If the Internet seller is pricing bath products at 25% off; most people consider this pricing to be at a level playing field to the showroom. It only becomes a problem if the pricing is greater than a 25%.

Let me get to the bottom line for

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BY PETER SCHOR
Showroom specialist

the showrooms: If someone is selling on the Internet less than 25% off and let's say paying the freight. It is *your* responsibility to get proof and contact the manufacturer national or regional sales manager directly. You are to ask them nicely to contact the internet vendor to stop this practice. No threats, please. The manufacturers need this feedback to police their side as most have IMAP programs in place. Keep in mind that some Internet sellers, some who have local showrooms under different names, thought that they could use their internet site as a dumping ground to slash prices because they felt they have no overhead. If this continues beyond two to three weeks, you need to make the call again, this time saying, "I am a member of the _____ buying group," and unless you cease to stop these practices *now*, we will file a complaint with our organization (like the DPHA) and buying groups (too numerous to list) of which you are a member. There is strength in numbers. If the manufacturer persists in allowing these practices, you may want to make a change in product lines. Manufacturers: It is your responsibility to listen and take appropriate action with showrooms. Yes, I understand what you are up against, with your competition while looking for more volume. I caution you to police the situation and don't bite the hand that feeds you! ■

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. e-mail pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com or visit his web site: www.dynamicresultsonline.com.

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Schor shares optimism for plumbing wholesaler showrooms

LINCOLN, CALIF. — According to Peter Schor, showroom columnist for *The Wholesaler*, “In these tougher economic times, there are some incredibly positive things happening that are giving plumbing wholesaler showrooms and their staff something to cheer about and look forward to the future”.

First, The Omni Luxury Product Group (www.luxuryproducts-group.com) opens the arena for

The World Plumbing Council created World Plumbing Day, to be celebrated on March 11 each year.

members to network with like-minded people sharing ideas and challenges to expand their decorative plumbing and hardware showroom business, and to buy from and see products from a variety of show-

room-oriented worldwide vendors.

About 80% of Omni’s plumbing wholesalers operate showrooms focusing on high-end luxury products — more than 200 wholesalers totaling over 500 locations. Over 45 major quality luxury bath, plumbing, kitchen, and decorative hardware (door and cabinet) manufacturers participated in this inaugural event in January 2010. Owners and their showroom managers must attend the yearly three-day conference meeting to qualify for LPG.

The Omni LPG is the first plumbing wholesaler showroom buying group. The DPH showroom industry has two buying groups: Forte and Premier DPH; and the Kitchen and Bath Dealers have two: SEN and BKBG. The DPHA, an educational venue, is for both DPH and plumbing wholesaler showrooms. The Omni showroom group gives more credibility to

all plumbing wholesalers among luxury manufacturers.

Another group is the National Association of Plumbing Showroom Professionals, with 500+ members (www.naopsp.com) and growing. Two-thirds of the members are showroom managers and salespeople. Don Devine, CEO of American Standard; Tim Murphy, Klaff’s; and Kip McFarland, national sales manager at Oceania Baths, strongly endorse the association.

According to NAOPSP co-founders Steven Conneen and John Murphy, the website hits have been as much as 29,000 in one month, and the site is a great tool for the showroom professional. NAOPSP has sites on LinkedIn, Facebook and collectiveX.

NAOPSP is putting together an educational team of vendor reps, manufacturers and showroom professionals to develop fresh, fun, relevant educational materials.

The NAOPSP is formed by and for the plumbing showroom professional to foster better interaction between the PSP, manufacturers and the indus-

try as a whole. The group is providing a networking forum and pioneering a visible industry for plumbing showroom professionals, so showroom consultants and showroom managers can interact with people at all levels of the plumbing showroom profession.

A third organization, the World Plumbing Council (www.plumbing-council.org), created World Plumbing Day (www.worldplumbingday.com), to be celebrated on March 11 each year. This event has been established to help the general public better understand the vital role the plumbing industry plays in protecting public health and safety, the extent to which it helps limit mankind’s environmental footprint and other important work performed by contractors, inspectors, installers, engineers, manufacturers and others.

For information, contact Schor at pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com.

OBITUARY Paul Henry Nankivell Plumbing industry icon

FULLERTON, CALIF. — Paul Henry Nankivell, 92, died peacefully with his wife at his side on February 28 at The Morningside Retirement Community in Fullerton. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, his 3 sons; 4 grandchildren; 2 nephews; 3 nieces; and 1 aunt.

Nankivell went to work for NIBCO Inc. in Elkhart, Ind., in 1936 as a clerk/typist. As World War II approached, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy Submarine Corps. Rising to the rank of Chief Petty Officer, he spent most of the war in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. After World War II Nankivell returned to work for NIBCO, where he was mentored by owner Ross Martin. Nankivell rose to the position of vice president-sales & marketing, and was instrumental in NIBCO’s success in copper fittings and the development of the commercial valve line. During his career, NIBCO became one of the largest manufacturers of plumbing products in the U.S.

In 1967 Nankivell and his family moved to Southern California where he established Nankivell/Rollins & Associates, a manufacturers’ representative for NIBCO. He was involved in all facets of the plumbing industry and loved the people he worked with. He retired in 1981 after being a part of the NIBCO organization for over 45 years.

Throughout his life Nankivell always had a great sense of humor, hearty laugh and twinkle in his bright blue eyes. He lived a long and happy life and enriched everyone who came to know him.

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PVF Roundtable to host unified festivity with PVF Hall of Fame and ASA's IPD

It seems only yesterday that I had the privilege to join three industrial pipe-valve-fitting leaders in New York City to help form ASA's Industrial Piping Division. It's hard to believe that this happened 40 years ago, in 1970. The distribution titans were Fred Keenan of Keenan Pipe, George Keenan from Keenan-Cashman, and Charles Ransburg of Pittsburgh Gage, who joined in laying the groundwork of the newly-formed ASA's Industrial Piping Division.

ASA had simultaneously been formed from the merger of the Central Supply Association and the American Institute of Supply Association. My role of being part of this August group came from my chairmanship/presidency of the Valve Manufacturers Association at that time. Prior to this union, there had not been a formal organization of wholesalers who had primarily focused on pipe-valve-fittings, but were also involved with plumbing-heating-cooling products.

Fast forward to 1987, when energy industry entrepreneur Sidney Westbrook brainstormed the idea of a vertical PVF organization that included manufacturers, distributors, industrial end users, OEMs, specifiers, turnkey constructors and others associated with this fast-growing sector. The resulting PVF Round-table now meets in concert four times a year.

Although I am honored to be a director emeritus of this group, and provide a 15-minute analysis of the economy at each meeting, the greatest benefit in being active in this quarter-annual get-together at the H.E.S.S. club in Houston is the unparalleled networking that is available at these functions. Although such outstanding speakers as Professor Michael Economides of Houston University and the editor of the *Oil & Gas Journal* have represented the high caliber of speakers, the one and a half hours of "mixing it up" with some of the PVF sectors movers and shakers makes attendance especially worthwhile.

The recent meetings have established attendance records, and have been getting rave reviews. But what makes this year's meeting on Tuesday, May 18, so special are the conjunction of the Industrial Piping Division, the host PVF Roundtable, and the ninth consecutive induction celebration of the PVF Hall of Fame.

This highly touted honors organization was a brainchild that I pre-

sented to Tom Brown, owner of TMB Publishing Company, when I joined his organization in May 2001. With a combination of PVF industry founders, including manufacturers and wholesalers entering the Hall of Fame, it's been a matter of great pride to me that the leading lights of this industry are today's shakers and movers who have come together under a common banner of legendary performance. They are truly qualified to keep alive the shining example of their forebears and their subsequent successors.

Although only 40 members have been inducted so far in eight years, future inductions will be limited to a single candidate per annum.

The IPD, which will be holding their periodic meeting in Houston the next day, have also begun to pick their outstanding member of the year. In 2008 in Atlanta, Tim Arenberg of Columbia Pipe received the initial honor, with Gary Cartright, Piping &

According to latest estimates, this plumbing-heating-cooling-piping segment represents in excess of \$25 billion, almost a third of revenues generated by wholesale distribution nationwide.

Equipment, being granted the award last year in Washington, D.C.

A further honor was bestowed on the pipe-valve-fitting sector when Affiliated Distributors established a separate division for this fast-growing group in the late 1990s. According to latest estimates, this plumbing-heating-cooling-piping segment represents in excess of \$25 billion, almost a third of revenues generated by wholesale distribution nationwide. With power generation, fossil fuel production and renewable energy development destined to grow dramatically in the decades ahead, PVF is a sure bet to expand today's already voluminous activities.

With this combined stellar celebration coming up imminently at Houston's H.E.S.S Club on May 18, 4:30 p.m. You can't afford to miss this great event presentation of PVF industry highlights. Please go to www.pvf.org and indicate your attendance.

U.S. trade deficit narrows significantly

With just about every financial aspect of America's world-leading global economy generating widening

deficits or target shortfalls, the U.S. trade deficits seem well-behaved by comparison.

Based on a percentage of America's \$14.3-trillion gross domestic product, the latest current account deficit of 3.2%, the quarter annual analysis of all imports/ exports of goods and services was down to \$115.6 billion in the final 2009 three-month period. During the heady economic growth of 2005-6, this gap had reached double the current percentage deficit at 6.5%.

Although this may be trumpeted as an economic achievement in certain quarters, it's really a reflection of a substantially shrinking import volume and price reduction, while lagging exports were able to hold their ground more effectively.

Obviously, the Great Recession engendered a dramatic reduction of imports, including oil derivatives, which still make up about 20% of the revenues expended for incoming goods. Since Americans' highway travel remains severely curtailed, it's not expected that this statistic will change much as the economy recovers this year. However, continued dependence on foreign oil could increase this major portion of the trade gap, as oil prices climb back toward the \$100-per-barrel price. The more severe restrictions placed on domestic offshore drilling make "energy independence" a distant dream, which is unlikely to be fulfilled in the indeterminate future.

But a greater emphasis on American-made products, supported by the \$800-billion stimulus, will likely deter a major return to offshore goods expenditures any time soon.

With annual government outlays reaching increasingly voluminous record amounts, trade deficit improvement will make little impact on the unprecedented and growing deficits now being experienced by the U.S. overall economy.

U.S. mfg future increasingly in doubt

Despite a greater emphasis on high and bio-technology, and the attempts of focusing more aggressively on products primarily manufactured in the U.S., the latest manufacturing capacity utilization figures emphasize the extent to which existing production facilities have contracted. Following capacity utilization running in the low 80s percentile for the preceding three year period (2005-6-7), the manufacturing, mine and utilities sec-



BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

tor hit an air pocket in early 2008, which reached a multi-decade low of 68.3% in June 2009.

Much of this was due to the near collapse of the automotive sector, abetted by the thousands of component providers that fell in tandem with the major car and truck manufacturers that they supplied.

Renewable energy and a significant increase in technological upgrading for both back office and shop floor will do little to utilize much of the existent excessive capacity, not to mention the absorption of the current large number of unemployed. Almost all capital expenditures are targeted at making businesses more efficient by reducing labor costs and lessening the need for additional employees.

As previously mentioned, the current Administration is focusing on government employment, climate control and forced unionization, instead of national infrastructure development, oil and natural gas drilling, and expanding the utilization of American-made fabricated products to utilize the facilities now in existence. This lack of industrialization also puts a crimp in export potential, since two-thirds of this potentially leading U.S. economic sector is made up of industrial products.

Continued avoidance of broadening the base of U.S.-made manufactured products by the current Administration will neither utilize existing facilities nor lead to expansion investment.

It's a given that the absorption of those seeking employment, now estimated at over 17% of a potential 155 million strong workforce, will be left stranded on unemployment payments, or 'make work' government jobs. ■

To get the financial and economic news on my daily blog, please log on to www.theworldreport.org, then click the link to "Morrie's Page" at mydesert.com. Please recommend the blog if you find it informative.

Morris R. Beschloss, a 54-year veteran of the pipe, valve and fitting industry, is PVF and economic analyst emeritus for THE WHOLESALER.

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Omni survey reveals buying group activity

Dear Mary Jo,

While reading the February 2010 issue of *The Wholesaler Magazine*, I was drawn to your survey that was entitled, "2010 Purchasing Decision-Makers Survey."

On page 42, there was a short segment of the survey concerning buying and marketing groups. I was taken aback by the answers from the participating wholesalers — especially on the question, "What percentage of your purchases are done through buying group Vendors?" I know from past surveys that the growth and success Omni has enjoyed was due to increased participation and loyalty among its Members. I cannot speak for other groups, but the survey results were not indicative of the performance level within Omni.

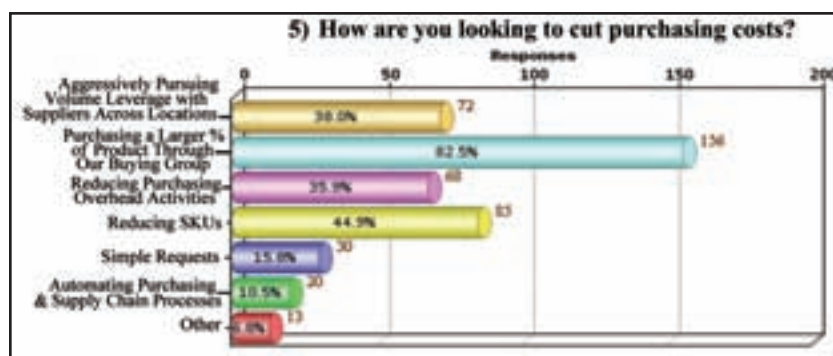
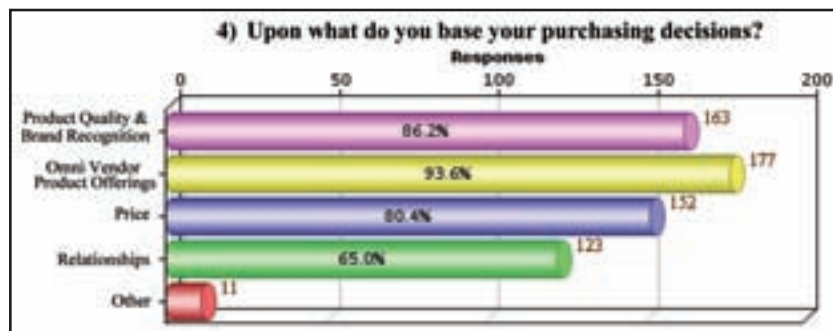
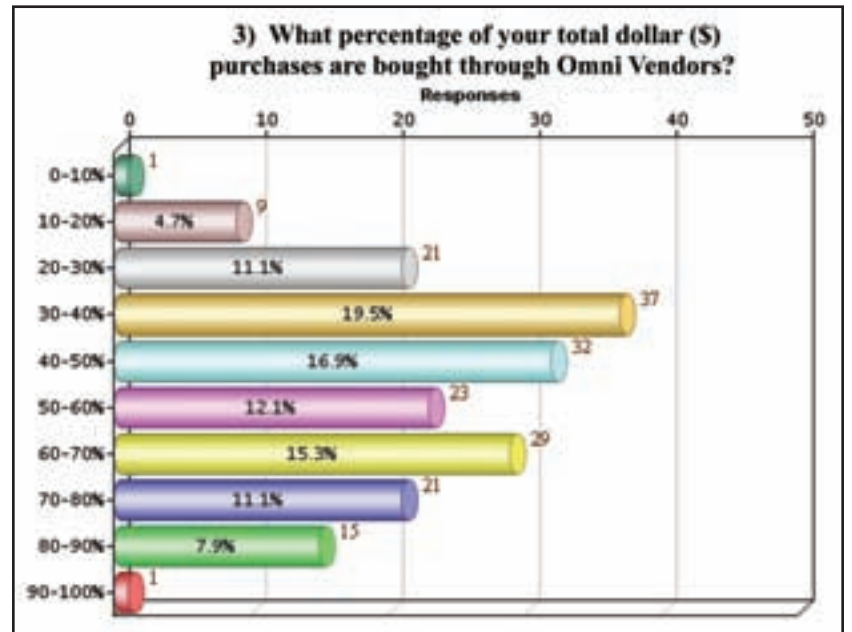
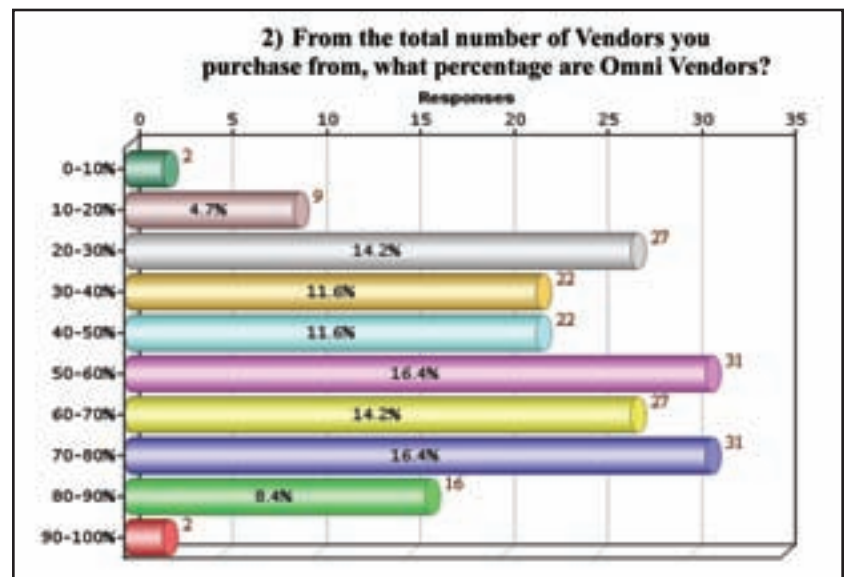
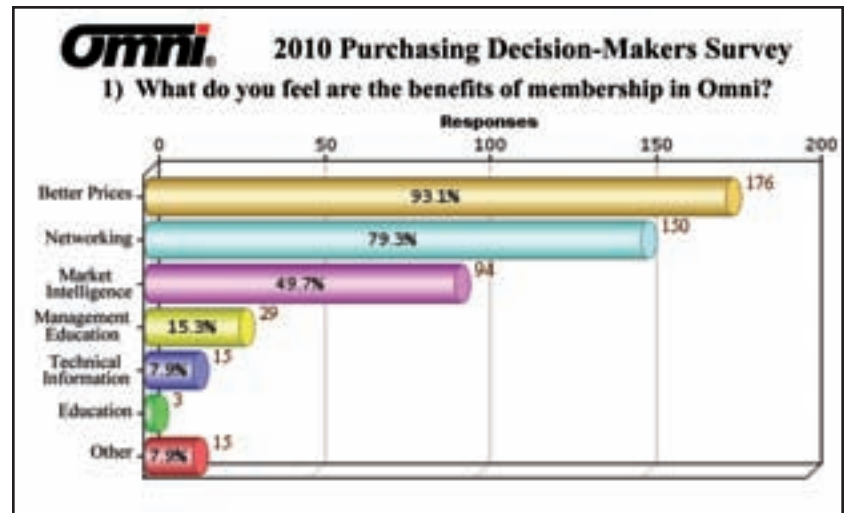
To put my mind at ease and that of our Members and Vendors, I decided to update the facts and run a current survey of the Omni group. Over 75%

"I know from past surveys that the growth and success Omni has enjoyed was due to increased participation and loyalty among its Members."

of our Members responded to the survey (190 Members) giving a good cross section to answer the questions. I must say that I was not surprised at the answers in that Omni prides itself upon building the programs and policies that encourage participation with our valued supporting Vendors. The information from the survey is charted here, and I felt compelled to share it with you as well as our industry friends and partners.

— Robert D. Hoff,
President,

Omni Corporate Services Ltd., Inc.



Hastings Tile & Bath celebrates rich 125-year history

FREEMONT, N.Y. — There are 800,000 hexagonal pavers surrounding the Statue of Liberty, all provided by a company then called Hastings Pavement. Begun in 1885, the company now called Hastings Tile & Bath began its life in Hastings-on-the-Hudson, N.Y. For 85 years, they had a solid reputation as providers of asphalt pavers for large outdoor installations. In the 1970s, inspired by some beautiful Mexican terracotta tiles, then-president Mario Paone decided to take the company in a differ-

ent direction and began importing indoor floor and wall tiles. On a buying trip in Bologna, he expanded from primarily tiles to faucets, basins, vanities, and bathtubs. The Hastings Tile & Bath Collection was born.

This year marks Hastings' 125-year anniversary and the company could not be prouder of its accomplishments. Hastings Tile & Bath continues to thrive and grow its product lines, dealer network and company-operated showrooms. Two products from their VOLA line were

just awarded the prestigious Chicago Athenaeum GOOD DESIGN Award 2009 for Bath and Accessories. Presented by The Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies, these awards are the world's most prestigious global awards for new product design and graphics.

The VOLA line is just one of Hastings Tile & Bath's Collections of superior contemporary products. The Hastings Tile & Bath Collection en-

compasses a wide selection of European bath brands, including Fantini, Catalano and Tulli Zuccari. They have a full complement of high-style, contemporary shower and bath collections, vanities, storage solutions and mirror collections. Hastings tile collection is ever-evolving, and with their prior expertise in pavers, they continue to specialize in large-format tiles. Hastings carries brands such as Grazia, Bardelli, Viva, Rex and Tagina. The designers whose products they represent are industry giants, such as Philippe Starck and Arne Jacobsen.

Visit www.hastingstilebath.com.

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Northeastern renews NASCAR sponsorship

BALTIMORE — Northeastern Supply is commemorating its 17th straight season of NASCAR sponsorship in 2010 by renewing its partnership with Braun Racing in the NASCAR Nationwide Series and again with the #38 Great Clips Toyota race car.

Highly popular driver Jason Leffler will again carry the Northeastern Supply banner in an associate capacity on the #38 Braun Racing Camry but will do so in just 25 of the 35 scheduled Series races in the upcoming campaign. NASCAR Sprint Cup Series standout Kasey Kahne signed a contract to drive the Great Clips machine in the other 10 events with Leffler to pilot the #10 Braun Racing Toyota in these races to again make Jason eligible for the driver points title.

Driving one of the Nationwide Series' most competitive race cars on an exclusive basis since 2007, Leffler has finished in the top 10 in season-long driver points each time. Leffler finished a career-high third in the Championship hunt during the 2007 campaign and was fourth last year when he posted 20 top 10 finishes in 35 starts that included eight top fives. He was a runner-up finisher twice and led laps in four races.

Leffler has also completed nearly 98% of all the laps Nationwide Series teams could run over the last four seasons and has earned one victory with that one coming at the O'Reilly Motorsports Park in Indianapolis during his productive 2007 season. Leffler is looking forward to getting back to Victory Lane and in continuing his relationship with Northeastern Supply in 2010.

"I have really enjoyed working with the Northeastern Supply folks and their customers over the last two seasons," Leffler said. "I really appreciate the way the company has used its NASCAR sponsorship to entertain their customers and enhance their business relationships. I am privileged to have become such a big part of the marketing activity and look forward to doing it again this coming season," he added.

Braun Racing made tremendous strides in 2009 and had contending cars in virtually every race, often boasting a trio of cars running regularly with the lead pack. Leffler sees the 2010 campaign as more of the same and possibly better.

"We've added some things last year as an organization that we really needed to become more competitive, and now that I have had a full season to work with [crew chief] Scott Zi-

padelli, I know we'll be even better this coming year," Leffler explained.

The two, most prominent races on the 2010 schedule for the Baltimore-based Northeastern Supply will again be the two scheduled events to be run at the Dover International Speedway in Dover, Del. — the firm's "home track."

Leffler and Kahne will share the driving chores in the #38 Great Clips machine in the two Dover races, which should provide some added zeal to the Northeastern Supply program and increase the interest.

"The relationship we have formed with Braun Racing over the last two seasons was by far the best we have en-



Jason Leffler will pilot the Northeastern Supply #38 Braun Racing Camry in 25 of the 35 scheduled races in the 2010 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

countered in all of our years of NASCAR support," noted Northeastern Supply president and CEO Steve Cook. "Some of the Nationwide Series' best race teams and drivers have provided a lot of excitement for our company, its

employees and customers over the years and there doesn't seem to be any drop-off in the way our customers have embraced our NASCAR activity and look forward to seeing what we're going to do from one year to the next."

Kohler residential faucets comply with new lead-free standards

KOHLER, WIS. — Kohler Co., the 2008 and 2009 WaterSense Partner of the Year, announced that all of its residential bathroom and kitchen faucets have been converted for compliance with California legislation AB1953 and Vermont's bill number S.015 in regard to lead content in faucets that are used for drinking water.

"Kohler is committed to a proactive approach when it comes to legislation that changes the plumbing industry, and this conversion was no exception," said Rick Reles, vice president-global faucets at Kohler Co. "Kohler thanks all of its customers for their support during this transition, and reassured, Kohler faucets continue to

offer a singular level of quality for design and performance."

To ensure compliance, each residential faucet is certified by an independent third party organization. The certification organization, NSF International, the public health and safety company, verifies all faucets meet the new requirements.

Kohler anticipates that other states and possibly Canada may follow the actions of California and Vermont. However, every residential faucet shipped from Kohler meets the new requirements. This strategy is part of an ongoing effort to stay on the leading edge of design and technology, added Reles.

Over the past 18 months, customers, distributors and partners have been contacted about this transition, and Kohler has provided updates on the product selection and low-lead conversion to provide visual confirmation its plumbing allies are informed about the lead issue, and equipped with the appropriate product. A 1/2" silver decal on each faucet box ensures customers that their faucet meets the new requirements.

Kohler Co. offers plumbing products under its KOHLER and STERLING brands that are designed to conserve natural resources while remaining true to a singular level of quality for performance and design.

Hoffman Fixtures acquires Phoenix Fabrication

TULSA, OKLA. — Hoffman Fixtures Company of Tulsa has acquired Phoenix Fabrication LLC in Oklahoma City. Hoffman Fixtures is a fourth-generation company that has been providing quality kitchen and bath products for 60 years. Products include Artisan Stone Collection granite, marble and soapstone, as well as Heritage Wood, solid surface, laminate, and cultured marble countertops. Hoffman Fixtures also offers custom cabinets, plumbing fixtures and tile, as well as shower doors and mirrors, making it a true "one-stop shop" for kitchen and bath remodeling needs.

"Adding HFC's product mix and 61 years experience to Phoenix Fabrication's 17 years experience will provide existing and new OKC customers a broader selection of fabricated surface options for the kitchen and bath," said Julia Crist, facilities

manager. "HFC's state-of-the-art fabrication techniques and equipment will greatly enhance our OKC customer experience."

Phoenix Fabrication LLC has been in business since 1994, and will now join the Hoffman Fixtures family and display the Hoffman name.

"Phoenix Fabrication has done a great job forging commercial contacts and now with our upgraded systems, we will not have any production limitations," said Crist. "Another change Oklahoma City customers will see in the near future is an indoor slab viewing area. This will greatly improve the selection experience."

Beginning in 1949, Hoffman Fixtures

Company manufactured products in a small garage. Today, through four generations of leadership, Hoffman Fixtures Company manufactures products at two facilities, totaling 45,000 square feet. In October of 2008 Hoffman Fixtures Company merged with Aztec Kitchen & Bath, a leader in the bathroom remodeling industry. Visit www.hfcountertops.com.



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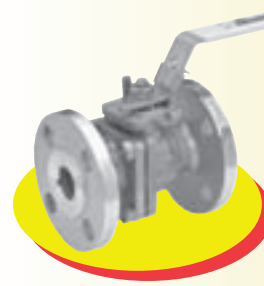
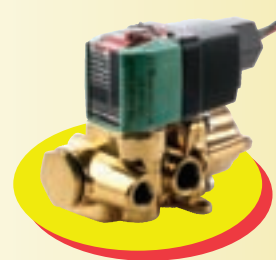
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Your well-meaning professional doesn't always have all the answers

I'll bet the farm that this article will save many business owners (who want to transfer the family business to their kids) a ton of taxes.

Let's set the stage by quoting an e-mail a loyal column reader sent to me: "Mom is 82 with an estate worth about \$20 million. Included is an S corporation, recently valued at \$1 million for IRS purposes. My dad started the company and ran it until he died two years ago."

"Sam [my brother] and I [Larry] are the only heirs and want to continue to run the company. You state in your articles that the estate tax can be avoided completely [true]. Mom has excellent tax attorneys and CPAs who say it can't be done with an S corporation... they have done what they can... but my brother and I will end up with a \$7 million tax bill payable over 15 years."

Next, let's:

- Set up the problem the way it comes up most often in real-life (the business owner is married)
- Determine what most professionals get wrong
- Find the solution.

Okay, here's the typical problem: Joe (married to Mary) owns Success Co., which is worth say \$10 million. Steve, Joe's son, runs Success Co. The plan proposed by Joe's professionals is for Steve to buy Joe's stock for \$10 million (to be paid over 10 years).

Steve must earn about \$16 million, pay \$6 million in income tax to have the \$10 million to pay Joe. Joe must pay about 1.5 million in capital gains tax... only \$8.5 million left. So, Steve must earn a stratospheric \$16 million for Joe's family to keep \$8.5 million. That's nuts.

• **Lesson #1** — A sale of all (or even a portion of your stock) to your kids is a lousy idea for tax purposes.

Sometimes professionals use various strategies (most likely a stock redemption or stock purchase agreement) requiring insurance on Joe's life as a means to get the company stock to Steve. Better than Les-

I never use life insurance in a business succession plan to get your Success Co. stock to your business kids. You'll always guarantee the IRS a big pay day when you go to the big business in the sky.

son #1, but the IRS will collect estate taxes on every dime of that life insurance (roughly \$4.5 million to the IRS on \$10 million of insurance using 2009 tax rates). In most real-life cases the insurance is either too much (stock was gifted to Steve while Joe was alive) or too little (Success Co. just kept growing in value).

• **Lesson #2** — Life insurance can play an important part in your estate planning, but never (and I mean never) use it in a business succession plan to get your Success Co. stock to your business kids. You'll always guarantee the IRS a big pay day when you go to the big business in the sky.

Now, let's give credit to the professionals Sam and Larry's Mom are using. They avoided the pitfalls in Lessons #1 and #2. True, there would be an unnecessary \$7 million

Sometimes professionals use various strategies [most likely a stock redemption or stock purchase agreement] requiring insurance on Joe's life as a means to get the company stock to Steve... but the IRS will collect estate taxes on every dime of that life insurance. In most real-life cases the insurance is either too much [stock was gifted to Steve while Joe was alive] or too little.

estate tax bill, but they jumped on Section 6166 of the Internal Revenue Code, which allows certain business owners to pay their estate tax liability over a 15-year period, plus a low rate of interest (not deductible) on the amount of estate tax due. Never in my 50-plus years of practice have I used Section 6166 as part of an estate plan. Why? It cannot save a penny of taxes, just stretches out the time of payment.

In every case my network of professionals has been able to pass all of each client's wealth (whether worth \$5 million or \$50 million – or more) to their heirs 100% intact (no tax or all taxes paid in full). For example, if the client is worth \$5 million, the entire \$5 million to the client's heirs, if \$50 million, the entire \$50 million to their heirs.

• **Lesson #3** — Never use Section 6166 as part of your overall estate tax plan. Instead, create a comprehensive plan (as described below) to eliminate the estate tax.

Now let's turn to the solution for the typical family business owner (the Joe's of the world) who wants to transfer his business to his kid(s). Most business owners have four

kinds of assets: (1) the business (Success Co.); (2) a residence (often 2 or more); (3) funds in a qualified plan (for example, an IRA, 401(k), profit-sharing plan or similar plan); and (4) investments (like real estate, stocks, bonds cash, CDs and other investments).

The solution (really a system to create a comprehensive plan) requires two plans: first a traditional will and trust (one for Joe and one for Mary). This is really a death plan. It cannot save you a dime in taxes. It just defers the estate tax blow until both Joe and Mary have gone to Heaven.

The second plan – a lifetime plan – beats up the IRS... legally

Let's look at the lifetime-plan strategies most often used in practice. The system uses strategies that are

implemented during your life and are based on the assets you own.

• **Your business** — We use an intentionally defective trust (IDT), which means the trust is intentionally defective for income tax purposes. What does this accomplish? The transfer of the Success Co. stock (typically nonvoting stock, while Joe keeps the voting stock and control) is tax-free. The tax savings – compared to selling the stock to the kids – usually are \$456,000 per \$1 million of the value of Success Co. (\$5,016,000 for Sam and Larry's mom; \$4,560,000 for Joe).

• **Residence(s)** — The most common strategy is called "50/50." We transfer the title of each residence by having 50% owned by Joe's traditional trust and the other 50% owned by Mary's trust. Tax result? We get about a 30% discount for estate tax purposes (for example a \$600,000 house is only valued at \$420,000 in the estate). Of course, Larry's mom cannot take advantage of this strategy (her husband is gone).

• **Funds in qualified plans** — These funds are double taxed. Sorry, but the IRS winds up with about 70%, the family only 30%. For exam-



BY IRVING L. BLACKMAN, CPA
Tax and succession specialist

ple, \$1 million in a rollover IRA will only yield \$300,000 to the family. Ouch! We use strategies like a sub-trust or retirement plan rescue to boost that \$300,000 to the \$2 million to \$7 million range (all tax-free) depending on age and health of the business owner (and spouse).

• **Investments** — A family limited partnership (FLIP) is almost always the strategy of choice. Joe transfers his investments to a FLIP (could be more than one FLIP). Immediately the value of the assets transferred to the FLIP are discounted about 35% for tax purposes. Hey, \$1 million of intrinsic value is a worth only \$650,000 for tax purpose yields estate tax savings of \$158,000. Works for Joe and Larry's mom too.

• **Still an estate tax liability** — Often 1 through 4 above kills the estate tax liability. But what if it doesn't? We fall back on one of about 20 life insurance strategies to create tax-free wealth (Easier if you are married, like Joe and Mary because you can buy second-to-die insurance, which cost much less in premiums than single life) to pay the estate tax.

What if the business owner is uninsurable (and so is his wife if married)? We then use a strategy called a charitable lead trust (works very similar to life insurance) to create tax-free wealth for the heirs. That's exactly what Jacqueline Kennedy – who was uninsurable – did to get her heirs about \$250 million – tax-free.

• **Lesson #4** — The system as described above always works (kills the estate tax), whether you are young or old, married or single, insurable or uninsurable. If your professional does not eliminate all of your estate tax burden, get a second opinion. ■

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.taxsecretsforthewealthy.com.



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REP RAP

Bootz Industries appointed two independent sales agencies:

- **Barger & Associates LLC** of Newport News, Va., will handle the Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., markets. Barger & Associates, established in 1995, has over 95 years of collective experience, principally representing plumbing industry products to the wholesale/distributor and contractor markets.

- **Next Associates** will represent Bootz in the New York City territory. Next Associates has over 100 years of combined plumbing industry experience, with long-term roots and relationships that extend from Kitchen and Bath dealers to wholesalers and the developer community.

Dectron Internationale Inc. named **SRS Enterprises** of Brooklyn, N.Y., its Rep of the Year for 2009

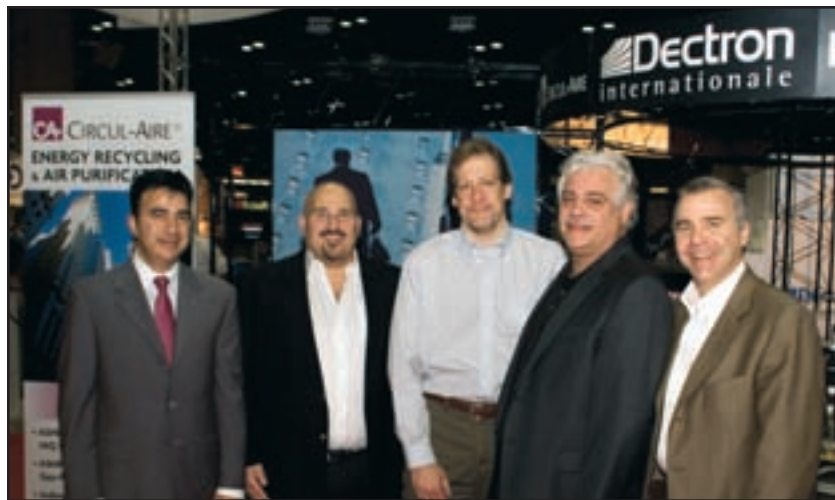
technology and their own truck fleet.

John Guest USA is expanding its network of independent manufacturers' rep agencies with recent additions of nine firms covering 16 states and the District of Columbia. The following rep agencies now represent John Guest USA:

- **Action Sales** of Morgan Hill, Calif., and **Spectrum Sales & Marketing** of Alamo, Calif., for Northern California and Northern Nevada. Spectrum Sales concentrates on the retail market.

- **NSC Marketing Group** of Tulsa, OK for Oklahoma and Arkansas and **TRI-REP Sales Inc.** for south Texas.

- **BWA Company** of Cleveland for Ohio, and **Summit Sales Inc.** of Olathe, Kan., for Kansas, Missouri and southern Illinois.



Harry Topikian, VP-business development at Dectron, with SRS Enterprises' executives Richard Rose, Ralph Schlenker, Robert Senia and Eric Berkowitz.

at the 2010 AHR Expo in Orlando in January. The 16-year-old manufacturers' representative firm operates offices in Brooklyn as well as Middletown, N.J., and covers New York City, Long Island, Westchester County and some New Jersey areas with a portion of its lines.

Eemax Inc. named **Davenport Associates**, Wallingford, Conn., its primary sales representative firm for the New England region. Davenport has successfully partnered with Eemax for many years, distributing products and supporting sales throughout Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Western Massachusetts. Davenport will now take on responsibility for Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and the entire state of Massachusetts.

Established in 1965, Davenport focuses on a small number of high-quality lines, devoting the proper time and attention to make each line successful. Davenport operates an 85,000-square-foot warehouse with state-of-the-art inventory control

- **Rich-Tomkins Company Inc.** of Aston Pa., for southern New Jersey, Delaware, eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and D.C.

- **Duhart Company** of Richmond for Virginia and **Carolina Sales** for North and South Carolina.

Midland Metal appointed **Covenant Sales** of Birmingham, Ala., its manufacturers' representative for the Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida Panhandle territory. Covenant Sales will promote Midland Metal's full line of yellow brass compression and flare fittings, black, galvanized, stainless, bronze, red brass, wrought copper, and PVC fittings, as well as our plumbing specialties and valve lines. Covenant Sales can be reached at 205/995-7670.

Klaus Reichardt, CEO of **Waterless Company**, announced the appointment of **AH Deveney & Company** as their representative agency for Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee and part of West Virginia. AH Deveney has been in business since 1916.

Watts announced that **Soderholm and Associates** of Anoka, Minn., is the recipient of its 2009 "Golden Regulator" Representative of the

support," noted **Kevin Sossin**, who along with partner **David Vaccari**, is a principal at **Advanced Hydronics**. "And this year, despite the current



Watts presented its 2009 'Golden Regulator' Representative of the Year Award to Soderholm and Associates. The award recognizes Soderholm and Associates' integrity, ingenuity and level of professionalism. It was presented at Watts' national sales meeting recently in Henderson, Nev.

Year Award. Soderholm and Associates represents all facets of the Watts product offering with integrity, ingenuity and a level of professional that is second to none. "We are truly proud of what this group accomplished," remarked **Dave Johnson**, senior VP-sales. The award was presented by **Jim Gawlowski**, North Central regional sales manager, at the 2010 Watts National Sales meeting in Henderson, Nev.

Advanced Hydronics was named 2009 **Wilco** Rep of the Year. "Our goal is always to provide our customers with outstanding service and sales

economic downturn, we were pleased to meet or exceed all of the sales and marketing goals Wilo asked us to meet. It's easy to sell Wilo because we believe in the product and have great faith in the direction management intends to take the company."

Advanced Hydronics has been serving the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut areas for more than 15 years. The company has two offices in New York and New Jersey, with a state-of-the-art training facility in the Babylon, N.Y., location. Full warehousing and trucking services are available as needed. ■

WaterSense releases final specs for showerheads

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On March 4, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program released its final specification for showerheads. Manufacturers can now submit their showerheads for testing to earn the WaterSense label, and consumers will soon be able to renovate their bathrooms with the full suite of WaterSense labeled products.

Showering is one of the leading ways we use water in the home, accounting for nearly 17% of residential indoor water use, or about 30 gallons per household per day. WaterSense labeled showerheads will use 20% less water and perform as well or better than standard models. The final specification sets the maximum flow rate at 2.0 gallons per minute at a flowing pressure of 80 pounds per square inch.

Like all WaterSense labeled products, showerheads must be independently tested and certified to meet EPA's criteria for water efficiency and performance. To determine what makes a good shower, EPA conducted consumer testing and worked

with a variety of stakeholders to develop performance attributes, such as water coverage and spray intensity. As a result, WaterSense labeled showerheads can be tested and certified to ensure that users will not have to sacrifice a good shower in order to achieve water savings.

With WaterSense labeled showerheads expected to be on the shelves later this spring, contractors can offer their customers a full bathroom makeover that saves about \$60 each year on utility bills. Replacing older, inefficient fixtures with WaterSense labeled toilets, faucets and showerheads can save a home more than 7,000 gallons of water annually, or enough to wash six months' worth of laundry.

WaterSense is an EPA partnership program that seeks to enhance the market for water-efficient products and services. WaterSense is both a label for products and a resource to help people use water more efficiently.

Visit www.epa.gov/watersense/products/showerheads.html.

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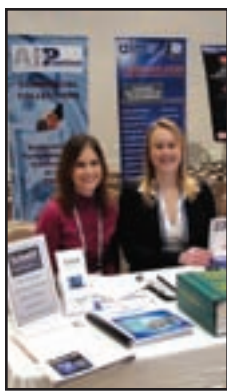



Franklin Electric

www.franklin-electric.com/lg

See contact information on page 114

Omni hosted the inaugural Luxury Products Group meeting in late January, followed by its Annual Omni Spring Meeting. Both events took place in Miami Beach. Tom Brown, publisher of *The Wholesaler*, participated in the Omni Spring Meeting.





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See contact information on page 114

The PVF Roundtable held its quarterly meeting in Houston last February. Representing *The Wholesaler* were Western sales manager Diane Spangler and PVF and economic analyst emeritus Morris Beschloss.



AHR

The Wholesaler was well-represented at the 2010 AHR Expo, held in Orlando last January. Among those attending were publisher Tom Brown, and the sales team of David Schulte, Brad Burnside and Diane Spangler.



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Embassy Group Ltd. held its Spring Conference in Orlando in mid-March. *The Wholesaler's* publisher Tom Brown participated in this annual event.



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	825	(NO 8825)	C-12A
Inconel®	600	(NO 6600)	C-5
	625	(NO 6625)	
Hastelloy	C-276	(NO N10276)	Stainless; A351 CF8C
Duplex	A995	(4A)	CF8M
	A351	(CD4MCuN)	CF3M
	A351	(CD3MN)	
	A351	(CD3MWCuN)	
Alloy 20	CN7M	(NO 8020)	
Monel™ 400		(NO 4400)	

GRADES NOT LISTED ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

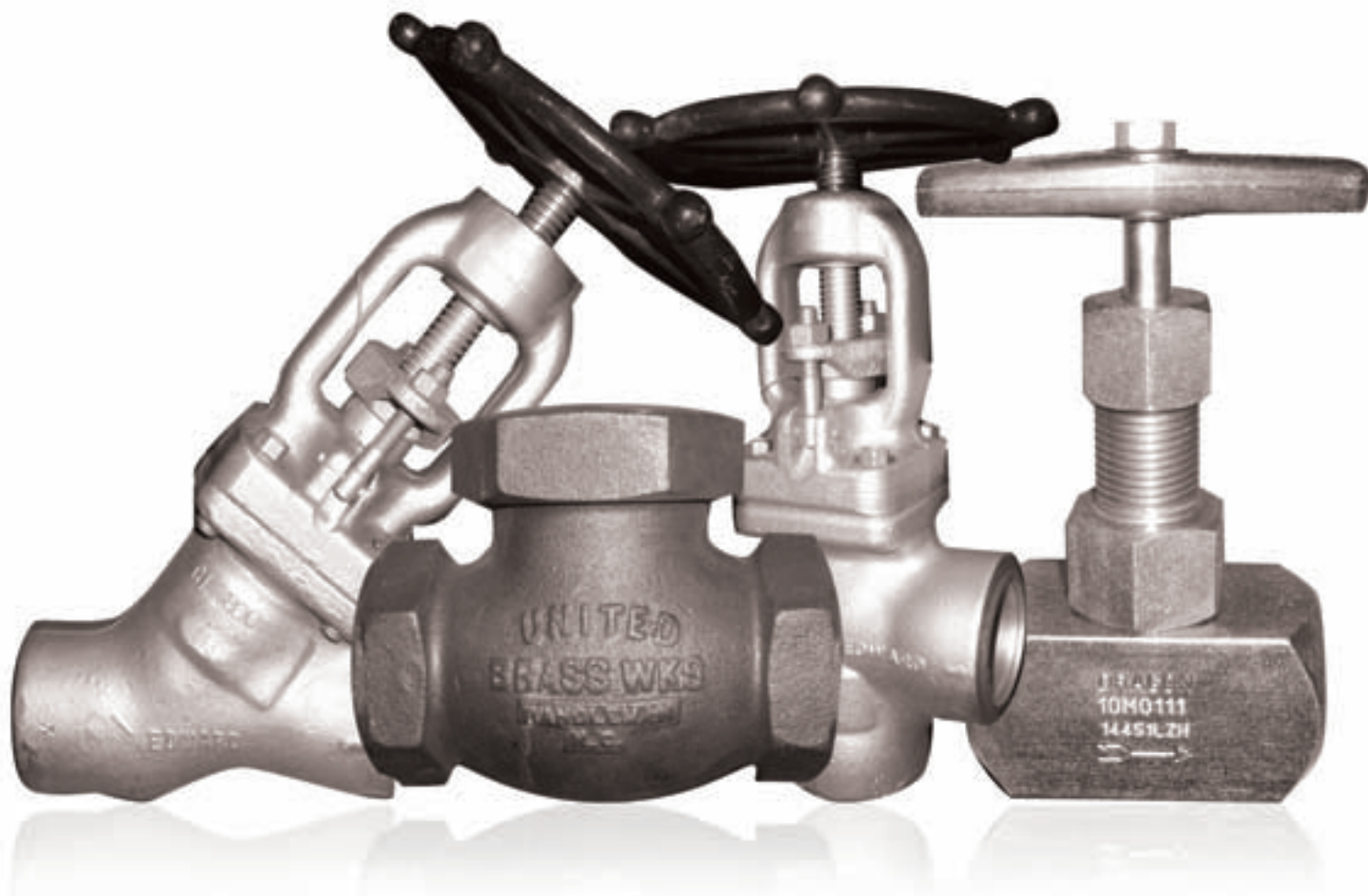
The AIM/R Annual Management Conference took place in Las Vegas in mid-March. Editorial director Mary Jo Martin and Western sales manager Diane Spangler represented *The Wholesaler* at the event.





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Prices recovering but industry worries about upward pressure on raw materials

Stainless Steel Pipe

Pricing ↑ Stainless steel pipe manufacturers indicate pricing increase of 8% - 10% for 2nd quarter 2010.

Lead Times: Deliveries are running 6 - 8 weeks. Fill rates are running 30% - 50%.

Comments: Stainless steel values are rising in most markets around the world. Producers and distributors hope this is a chance to see an increase in business. Nickel on the LME has risen over the past few months. Scrap containing nickel and chromium is in short supply. Demand from developing markets, particularly in Asia, con-

Fill rates are forecast for 50% - 70%.

Comments: The Dow Jones reports 3-month Nickel ended the day and week at \$11.42/lb still residing within its bullish trend. The price jumped by \$1,000 per ton in one day 04/07/10. Three-month nickel ended 2009 at \$8.41/lb and is now trading 35% higher.

The Nickel LME monthly average cash price increased nearly 22% from January thru March (\$18,349/metric ton to \$22,461/metric ton). The April month to date average is \$24,845/metric ton which is a robust 10.6% over March's average. With respect to

strong exports to scrap-short, developing markets. Spring weather should help improve supply, scrap prices may stay high from fiscal contract-year increases in iron ore prices, strong demand from the export market and increased scrap purchases by integrated steelmakers – which have restarted production in hopes of improved second-half demand.

Carbon Steel Weld Fittings and Flanges

Pricing ↑ Carbon steel weld fittings and flanges are forecast for an increase of 5% - 8% thru March 2010 due to raw material costs.



BY GARY CARTRIGHT
Special to THE WHOLESALER

Special bar quality (SBQ) steel is the raw material utilized in forged steel production. The SBQ market has experienced a slight demand uptick complied with historically low inventories and extremely high scrap prices, consequently a \$30-per-ton increase is effective May 1st. These ensuing factors have pushed SBQ steel price up 40% - 43% since January. Product price increases will follow.

One negative factor facing our industry, according to comments from a manufacturer, is the uncertain direction of our current government administration. Many refining companies have delayed work until “cap and trade” legislation is determined. Others have slowed upstream products until the time a comprehensive energy policy is determined. The

Lead Times: Deliveries are scheduled for 6 - 8 weeks and as much as 8 - 12 weeks for commodity material with fill rates of 80% - 90%.

Comments: Manufacturers indicate business is starting to pick up especially in the energy market

One manufacturer comments that the price increase is driven almost entirely by speculators with no relationship to supply and demand. They do add there is a slight uptick in consumption, but still not seeing large projects. The lack of project work continues to dampen any enthusiasm for an improving economy at this time.

(oilfield); however, construction starts are still down. More imports are being accepted.

Forged Steel Fittings

Pricing → Manufacturers indicate no pricing change on forged steel during the second quarter of 2010.

Lead Times: Lead times are running 2 - 3 weeks with fill rates of 85% - 90%.

Comments: One manufacturer comments that the forged steel industry is predicted to run at approximate 75% - 80% capacity through the second quarter. During the second and third quarter of 2009, the import presence decreased. The deflation of the domestic product resulted in domestic companies seeing share increases. The number of import forged steel “private labelers” continues to increase. Import inventories and availability of product at these outlets continues to outpace demand in the US. This condition increases competition and the use of price as a marketing tool for import, non-approved product.

news of potential offshore drilling is welcomed, but coincided with the reduction of available leases in Alaska and the “rolling back” of previous Bush Administration outer continental shelf leases. These actions send mixed messages to the energy community, and reduce capital investment for new products until “firm” policy directions are agreed upon.

Stainless Steel Gates, Globes, and Check Valves

Pricing → No price change for stainless steel gate, globe and check valves forecast for the second quarter 2010.

Lead Times: Deliveries are forecast for 6 - 8 weeks with fill rates of 70% - 80% for commodity material.

Comments: One manufacturer notes that raw material costs are increasing slightly, but they anticipate costs to stabilize through 2010. Overall there is still a lot of high-priced inventory of commodity product in the USA stock. One manufacturer see
(Turn to Report, page 100.)

The North America Stainless Steel price Index (Grade 304)

	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10
US\$/ton	2107	1998	2040	2223	2428	2760	2945	3320	3214	3290	3115	3175	3405
Index	101.3	96.1	98.1	106.9	116.7	132.7	141.6	159.6	154.6	158.2	149.8	152.7	163.7

North America Index, 1997=100 as furnished by MEPS International

tinues to increase. Other factors supporting the current escalation in stainless: (1) Mills have had a number of increased input costs on the supply side. (2) Producers have been selling at or below break-even levels for some time and are now trying to ensure decent margins. (3) On the demand side, most supply chain participants need to replenish depleted inventories, while distributors and end-users may attempt to place orders in advance of anticipated further hikes.

One manufacturer comments that the price increase is driven almost entirely by speculators with no relationship to supply and demand. They do add there is a slight uptick in consumption, but still not seeing large projects. The lack of project work continues to dampen any enthusiasm for an improving economy at this time. Also, the lack of a clear-cut national energy policy has stalled countless projects from starting.

According to manufacturers, stainless steel pipe will certainly increase on a month-to-month basis by the impact of rising monthly surcharges at a minimum. Tightening supply with relatively healthy demand levels may service to increase pricing up and above the impact of surcharges.

Stainless Steel Weld Fittings & Hi-Pressure Fittings and Stainless Steel Flanges

Pricing ↑ Manufacturers indicate prices to increase by 8% - 10% with a leading factor being increased nickel prices.

Lead Times: Deliveries are running 2 - 4 weeks for commodity material and large OD fittings out 4 - 6 weeks.

Molybdenum, monthly mean molybdenum oxide pricing has increased 24.46% from January thru March after a relatively stable fourth quarter of 2009. This surge in moly has translated in to 316 welded stainless steel pricing increasing at a higher rate percentage wise than 304 during the first quarter time period. Supply and demand dynamics continue to be the most impactful issue affecting stainless steel PVF products. Manufacturers expect that demand will remain relatively healthy into and through the second half of the year and noted economists expect that the US GDP will be at a higher level in the second half versus the first half of 2010. The likelihood for any major correction therefore is small.

Manufacturers are observing far less indent activity than in years past, which is a reflection that the traditional savings for placing indent requirements is currently not attainable versus pricing available out of manufacture / distributor inventories.

Carbon Steel Pipe – Seamless, ERW & Continuous Weld

Pricing ↑ Carbon steel manufacturers indicate price increasing from 8% - 10% thru the 2nd quarter. The price of scrap is at 470 ton forecast to 700 ton. Prices increase by 350 ton with little demand.

Lead Times: Fill rates are running 90% with deliveries of 8 - 12 weeks for commodity material.

Comments: One manufacturer indicates that OCTG is causing mills to book up. In the U.S., scrap prices have risen steadily since mid-November, with the increases driven by seasonal supply constraints and

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Steel market update

Final findings by the U.S. Department of Commerce in the antidumping case against Chinese OCTG have been issued with margins of 30-99%. In the final phase of its investigation, the Department found that the Chinese respondent's preliminary margin was based on fraudulent documents. As a result, the DOC assigned the respondent an "adverse" final dumping margin of 99%. Alan Price, head of international trade practice at the Washington law firm of Wiley Rein and counsel to Maverick Tube remarked that the determination sends a clear signal that manipulation of documents is not tolerated and confirms the substantial dumping by the Chinese producers. In addition to Maverick, the case was brought by U.S. OCTG producers US

Steel, V&M Star, V&M Tubular, TMK Ipsco, Evraz Rocky Mountain Steel and Wheatland Tube. The DOC also determined that Chi-

& Thai Hong, 29.89%; and Thai Union, 37.55%. The all others rate continues to be 15.67%. This administrative review is being conducted at

two months of 2009.

The price of Nickel reached a 23-month high at \$24,750 a ton (\$11.74/lb). Nickel is a key ingredient of

The Allegheny Distributor Surcharges for US 304 /316 Stainless Steel are as follows:

	5/09	6/09	7/09	8/09	9/09	10/09	11/09	12/09	01/10	2/10	3/10	4/10	5/10
304	.44	.49	.62	.76	.87	1.10	1.10	1.03	.93	.96	1.09	1.19	1.44
316	.62	.62	.78	.97	1.21	1.60	1.60	1.37	1.23	1.27	1.50	1.64	1.94

nese OCTG producers also received illegal subsidies in the amount of 10-16% of the product's value.

The U.S. Department of Commerce in the Thailand antidumping duty case also determined a preliminary AD margin of 4.35% imposed on imports of welded carbon steel pipe and tube from Saha Thai. The duties paid on standard pipe imports from other Thai companies remain individually at: Pacific Pipe Public, 5.14%; Thai Steel, 15.8%; Siam Steel

the request of American tubemakers Allied Tube and Conduit and Wheatland Tube.

U.S. scrap metal prices are moving upward \$30 - \$50 ton April over March 2010 and have been growing for six months in a row. James Coulas in the *Weldbend News* said, "Scrap metal is the a driving force in the welding fitting and flange market because of the percentage of steel used. Scrap is a large component in the production of seamless pipe and used almost 100% in the production of steel for flanges. If steel prices increase another \$50 a ton for April, we will be flirting within approximately \$200 a ton of the all-time high for billet since the very high-priced and turbulent times of August 2008, and only \$155 for scrap in May of 2008."

Coulas also noted that iron ore, a key ingredient in steel production, is being sold by the largest mining company at market prices. He goes on to say that this move will translate into higher costs and could bring violent price swings for steel makers. Also noted in the newsletter is an announced \$200-a-ton increase in

stainless steelmaking and accounts for two-thirds of the global nickel demand. A series of strikes, project delays and production problems are expected to send the market for nickel into deficit in 2010, the first time in four years. LME nickel inventories hit a record high above 166,000 tons in early February; but since then they have dropped around 6% to their lowest since late 2009.

Nickel mines have been plagued with United Steel Workers on strike at Vale Inco in Ontario, Canada and collective bargaining agreements at Xstrata in Switzerland. Nickel consumption has reported a 5.5% increase January over December and a 39% increase over consumption of January 2009. The AMM reports that demand for nickel has increased and several suppliers have asked for accelerated availability for their April shipments.

Ed Scott, editor of the *ASA Materials Market Digest*, reported on ThyssenKrupp in the April newsletter saying, "If all goes well for ThyssenKrupp, the Stainless Steel 'Big Three' - Allegheny Ludlum,

Steel Business Briefing reports the following steel price trends:			
N. American Domestic	1st Quarter 2010	2nd Quarter 2010	Change %
Welded Pipe ERW (4")	\$916 - \$995 / ton	\$992 - \$1047 / ton	+ 6.7%
Welded Pipe OCTG ERW (4 1/2 - 8")	\$1268 - \$1364 / ton	\$1433 - \$1543 / ton	+ 13.1%
N. American Import			
Welded Pipe ERW (4")	\$886 - \$910 / ton	\$909 - \$937 / ton	+ 2.8%
Welded Pipe OCTG ERW (4 1/2 - 8")	\$1101 - \$1185 / ton	\$1323 - \$1488 / ton	+ 23.0%

The values noted in the chart above are price indicators for orders placed.

Report

(Continued from page 98.)

very strong growth opportunities beginning in 2010 through 2015.

Bronze and Iron Gates, Globes and Check Valves

Pricing ➔ Bronze valves are forecast to increase 5% - 8% during the second quarter due to raw material costs. Raw material costs of bronze ingot have increased greatly and expected to continue to increase through 2010. Iron valve pricing is forecast to remain stable.

Lead Times: Valve deliveries are forecast for 4 - 8 weeks for commodity material, and fill rates are running 70% - 80% on both bronze and iron valves.

Comments: Manufacturers indicate that overall demand for bronze and iron valves are up 25% versus 2009. Pulp and Paper business is stable. Chemical plant opportunities are increasing. Export business is strong, but mechanical construction continues to remain at lower levels. They see MRO activity at high levels.

Cast Steel Gates, Globe and Check Valves

Pricing ➔ Cast steel manufacturers do not anticipate price changes thru the second quarter.

Lead Times: Fill rates remain at 80% - 90% with forecast lead time of 4 - 8 weeks.

Comments: Raw material costs

have increased slightly. Inventories on the ground remain at high levels in the US.

Forged Steel Gates, Globe and Check Valves

Pricing ➔ Forged steel valves are increasing 3% - 5% this quarter according to manufacturers.

Lead Times: Delivery lead times are 6 - 8 weeks with fill rates of 60% - 70%. Non-stock specials are shipping in 12 - 20 weeks.

Comments: Forged steel manufacturing plants around the world have scaled back capacity by 10% - 20% compared with 2009 production levels.

Quarter Turn Valves - Ball and Wafer

Pricing ➔ Quarter turn ball and wafer manufacturers indicate that pricing should be holding steady.

Lead Times: Deliveries are running 8 - 12 weeks. Fill rates are 50% - 60%. Non-stock specials are forecast for 8 - 12 weeks.

Comments: Primary concerns for manufacturers are raw material costs and a surge in demand. It appears that projects are starting to creep back in. Foreign supplier pressure is having an effect on pricing, especially from those stranded with lots of inventory. The biggest challenge in our industry is the declining industrial infrastructure. The shift in production from major chemical and petro-chemical producers to plants outside of North America is a major concern. ■

RAW MATERIAL UPDATE									
The following chart reflects raw material prices for the period April 09 thru March 2010:									
Raw Material	09/09	10/09	11/09	12/09	01/10	02/10	03/10	% Change April 09	% Change Feb 10
Scrap Shredded /ton	282.67	273.14	246.84	275.24	329.28	345.53	388.48	126%	12%
Scrap #1 Busheling /ton	336.43	317.14	274.47	333.10	370.99	398.95	460.87	157%	16%
Copper per/ hundred lb	281.48	287.86	303.53	318.48	333.77	311.92	339.54	66%	9%
Nickel per hundred lb	848.84	902.37	844.04	841.74	918.51	949.22	1,111.45	106%	17%
Stainless 304 / hundred lb	141.81	158.00	151.26	152.71	143.68	145.37	156.04	48%	7%
Stainless 316 / hundred lb	175.02	205.50	190.76	187.10	175.63	178.79	197.76	65%	11%
Crude Oil per barrel	69.28	70.10	74.70	70.94	75.10	72.32	77.34	74%	7%

seamless pipe from a Japanese company effective April 1st, and he expects mills in the U.S. to follow in the next few months.

The World Steel Association report for February 2010 estimated total crude steel production for the 66 countries reporting to be 107.5 million tons, an increase of 24% on February 2009. The total for the two months to date was nearly 28% up on the same period in 2009 at 221 million tons. However, excluding China, global crude steel production rose by almost 30% in the two months. All regions showed an increase in both the month and year to date with the largest regional increase being in North America, up 44% over the first

North American Stainless and AK Steel - will become the Big Four. The company reports that ThyssenKrupp's completion of its steelmaking and melt shop will reach completion as early as 2013 according to a company spokesman." The plant in Calvert, Alabama will start production with cold-rolling mills, hot-and-cold rolling mills, pickling lines, and other processes. ■

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CONGRATS!

Chicago Tube and Iron Co. welcomed *Mike Mowrey* as the Wisconsin Division's new sales manager in Fond du Lac. Mowrey will be responsible for both outside and inside sales functions.

Dakota Supply Group's Mechanical Group manager *Ryan Tracy* will now focus his energies on managing DSG's growing presence in plumbing and HVAC, passing on the day-to-day oversight of the Aberdeen, S.D., branch to his experienced staff.

Corrosion Materials Inc. made two key appointments:

- *Michael King* is now general manager. He joined the company in 2008 as national sales manager.

- *Rita Fang* was named international sales manager, responsible for all non-domestic sales efforts worldwide, working with the corporate offices and agent network.

Crane Energy Flow Solutions named *Tony Favilla* to the newly created position of general manager-North American Valve Group. He will lead the North American sales and marketing resources focused on the industrial and commercial valve business. Favilla had been director of sales for Crane's Commercial Group before taking on the role of VP-sales and marketing for Apollo Valves in 2008.

Eemax Inc. appointed *Kevin Dokla* marketing manager. Dokla has 12 years experience in marketing communications, product marketing, brand management, product development and sales generation.



Ray Torres



Karen Condren

Generac Power Systems named *Terry Dolan* senior VP-sales. Dolan has helped lead and implement the sales and marketing strategies on a global level for major U.S. manufacturing companies.

The Supervisory Board of **Hansgrohe AG** decided early to extend the contract of its chairman of the Management Board, *Siegfried Gänßlen*, for another three years. "Even during the crisis year 2009, Siegfried Gänßlen managed to keep our enterprise on a steady course," said chairman of the Supervisory Board *Klaus Grohe*. "We are confident that with him, Hansgrohe AG is in very safe hands." Together with his deputy

Richard Grohe, grandson of founder *Hans Grohe*, Gänßlen will lead the organization until 2013.

In other news at Hansgrohe:

- *Stefan Hammann* was promoted to the expanded role of VP-operations. He will continue to focus on quality improvements and lean manufacturing while restructuring manufacturing, logistics and the DC. He will also lead the Hansgrohe Operations Strategy 2015 project.

- *Sibylle Mair* was promoted to VP-finance & controlling. Mair joined Hansgrohe in 2006 after holding positions with Siemens and EPCOS AG.

Stephen P. Eberhard, president and CEO of **Simpson Dura-Vent**, announced organizational changes:

- *Mike Wolfe* is general manager of the Albany, N.Y., operations. Wolfe was most recently with Interline Brands as operations leader for several distribution locations, and their North Carolina manufacturing plant.

- *Mike Bruce*, VP-manufacturing, was also appointed VP-R&D for Vacaville operations. He will now manage all engineering and R&D functions.

- *Victor Lambert* is general manager of Vacaville operations. He will manage manufacturing operations and purchasing, and supervise the accounting department for all branch locations.

- *Dave Kowalski* was named manager of manufacturing. He was formerly materials and purchasing manager.

Hastings Tile & Bath made two key appointments:

- *Jody Rosenberg* will head sales and marketing. He brings 23 years of experience in the luxury kitchen and bath industry, including an earlier position at Hastings. He had been national sales director at Sonia America.

- As executive sales manager-Eastern U.S., *Stephen LaMachia* will manage both the sales division and independent reps east of Minnesota. His main focus will be managing independent reps, hospitality specifications and overall showroom support. He had been Eastern regional sales manager for Sonia America.

Jacuzzi Luxury Bath announced two key leadership changes:

- *Chris Peetz* was promoted to VP-operations. He joined Jacuzzi in 2008 to help build out the firm's primary North American bath products manufacturing facility, the Georgia Operations Center in Valdosta. Peetz will take on additional responsibilities for purchasing and global sourcing initiatives for all of the firm's North American business units. He will continue to be based in Valdosta, Ga.



Ryan Tracy



Kevin Dokla



Jody Rosenberg



Chris Peetz

- *Ray Torres* was named director of engineering for bath product lines. He has 22 years of experience in luxury whirlpool and air bath development and manufacturing. Most recently with Lasco Bathware, Torres holds several patents and will be based in the Southern California operations facility in Chino.

The Keeney Manufacturing Company appointed *Karen Condren* sales manager-national accounts. Condren had been regional sales manager. She will maintain her territory responsibilities while driving sales and market growth with buying groups and national accounts.

Scott Graham was named industrial sales manager of **LASCO Fittings Inc.** He has 14 years of experience with companies like BF Goodrich, Noveon and Lurbrizoll. He will operate simultaneously with existing regional managers while aligning Lasco's sales efforts toward key industrial manufacturers' reps.

MIFAB promoted *Lois Rayner* to customer service manager and *Dwight O'Brien* general manager. Both are located in Chicago at MIFAB's 119th Street head office.

Noland Company announced two appointments:

- *Keith Northey* was named area leader for the Northeast/Central region. The Northeast/Central region includes Arkansas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Northey previously was with Johnstone Supply.

- *David Butler* is HVAC business director. Butler, who came to Noland from ICOR International, is responsible for growing the HVAC business in Noland's 12-state market.

Owen Doss has joined **PAC Stainless Ltd.** Doss is a director of the PVF Roundtable and has over 30 years experience in the stainless and alloy industry and will be responsible for sales to PVF distributors.

Phillips Supply Company, a plumbing wholesaler based in Winder, Ga., recently appointed 35-year industry veteran *Kenny Truelove* VP-sales and marketing."

PRIER Products named *Anthony Carey* director of manufacturing. Carey joins Prier after a successful career as the operations manager for Martin Logan, where he was respon-

sible for manufacturing, engineering support, logistics, inventory management, quality assurance and the operations budget.

REHAU appointed *Rainer Schulz* global CEO. Schulz, who has been with the company since 2001, formerly served as Deputy CEO, and was also COO with responsibility for the group's operative business. He additionally represented a business division as part of the board of directors. Moving into a role on the REHAU supervisory board, former CEO *Wolfgang Faber* has served at the company for nearly 40 years, starting as assistant to the personnel division manager in Rehau, Germany in 1971. He was appointed chairman of the board of directors in March 2000, and CEO of the executive board in early 2007.

Uponor has made two appointments:

- *Sandy Hoyt* is now national account manager for Ecoflex®. He has more than 20 years in the pre-insulated pipe systems market.

- *Jason Woodman* was named Western regional sales manager for Western Canada. He is also responsible for leading the sales force in Western Canada, including revenue and sales development, demand planning, distribution management and field technical support.

Westbrook Manufacturing announced the following executive promotions and additions at its Houston headquarters:

- *Howard Houston* has been promoted to VP-operations

- *Danny Westbrook* was promoted to VP-national accounts

- *Larry York* has been promoted to VP-sales & administration.

- *Pete Cronquist* joined the company as VP-finance & accounting.

The company's co-founders are *Charlie Westbrook* and *Sidney Westbrook*. Charlie will continue in his role as president and CEO, while Sidney will advise the Sales, Marketing & Business Development functions.

According to Charlie Westbrook, Cronquist is succeeding *Tom Davidson*, who has served in the role of CFO for more than 20 years. Davidson has played an instrumental role in the company's past successes and will remain on Westbrook's Management Advisory Committee. ■



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Ohio distributor Noland broadens reach in Florida market

(Continued from Noland, Page 1.)

coast since December when the Pinellas Park location in the Clearwater area began operation.

“Florida is an important market that our new Cape Coral HVAC location fits into very well,” said Jim Adcox, Noland chief operating officer. “Our strategy continues to be carefully growing the business in selected markets with quality HVAC and plumbing products delivered by knowledgeable people. Their main goal is to do whatever it takes to meet customers’ needs.”

The new location, managed by Noland veteran Tommy Lanier, serves contractors in an area that includes Cape Coral, Port Charlotte and Fort Myers. It’s co-located with Noland’s

plumbing operation in Cape Coral but has a separate entrance, warehouse, counter area and showroom. The 4,000-square-foot showroom has three 5-ton, 16-SEER heat pump systems serving it. Customers can see the air handlers in operation on the floor and the condenser units on a pad outside the building.

NuTone is Noland’s exclusive brand. It is one of the highest efficiency air conditioners in the industry at 24.5 SEER with IQ Drive Technology.

Noland Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of WinWholesale Inc., has more than 70 locations throughout the southeastern U.S. providing plumbing supplies and equipment, and heating and air conditioning systems.

New commercial division for Noritz

(Continued from Noritz, Page 1.)

“Our new Commercial division will consist of the top technical experts within the industry who will be able to handle the needs of the nation’s entire business community due to our outreach in every major region of the country,” said Asano. “Their sole focus is to develop and assist businesses in the switch to tankless, whether it’s converting their existing system to our more energy-efficient method or setting up their business with our new Noritz Modular System Commercial Line.”

The Noritz Modular System is a precise and energy-efficient method of heating water for

commercial projects and is based on a single self-contained, interchangeable unit that can combine and communicate with like units to meet any hot water demand. In this multi-system application, Noritz units can be linked together for outputs up to 9.1 million Btuh and 316 gpm. Noritz’s fully modulating technology ensures the units use only the energy necessary to heat the water. In a multi-system setup, the units communicate with one another and work in unison to even out the load on each individual unit, maximizing output.

Call 877/986-6748 or visit www.Noritz.com/commercial.

Clarus Environmental is newest member of Zoeller Family of Water Solutions

(Continued from Zoeller, Page 1.)

able solutions to water quality problems. Whether a project deals with wastewater treatment, effluent dispersal or anything in between, it upholds the highest standards for reliability.

The Clarus team of experts is ready to help. With deep roots in the onsite wastewater industry, Clarus has a complete product line that covers wastewater collection, treatment and disposal. Clarus can tailor high-quality and proven technol-

ogy solutions for any project from residential Fusion Series treatment systems to community and commercial decentralized systems.

“Clarus Environmental is a great opportunity for Zoeller to serve the onsite, as well as the larger environmental market,” said Matthew Byers, Ph.D. “Clarus staff are dedicated professionals with a passion for their work.”

Visit www.clarusenvironmental.com or call 877/244-9340.

Martin *(Continued from page 114.)*

right people are:

- Actively recruit new salespeople, even if you don’t have an opening. That way, when you a position opens, rather than going into panic mode and making a snap decision, you will have already done the legwork, background checks and assessments, and have candidates in mind.

- Have a true system in place for hiring A-level talent, rather than just relying on your gut instincts. The system should be the same for all candidates to produce the best results.

- Use all the tools available – Internet, networking, job benchmarking, behavioral and values assessment — to measure talent and skills. Team interviews offer different perspectives and allow you to see how candidates react to a variety of personalities.

- Use reference checks, even though references are limited in what they can say. Listen carefully and get a feel from the language or tone they use.

Hauck provided some eye-opening stats: With an interview only, there is a 1 in 6 chance your new hire will last a year; with a reference check, 1 in 4 will remain. Adding a personality profile brings odds to 2 of 5; with an ability and skills assessment, the number goes to 1 of 2. Behavioral and values assessments improve odds to 2 of 3; throw in job match/benchmarking, and that number goes to 3 out of 4.

As an added incentive to make hiring the right salespeople a top priority, Hauck said estimates are that the impact of a failed hire is 1.5 times their annual compensation. Everyone’s time is valuable these days when we’re all doing more with less, but taking some extra steps up front may save a great deal of time and aggravation later on. ■

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THG
Wolverine Brass



P.O. Box 2812

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See contact information on page 114



Gold highlights

This manufacturer has taken many of its best sellers and adorned them with a new polished gold finish. With over 40 styles to choose from, this new collection will add the finishing sparkle to cabinets. Alcott knobs and pulls are very retro, yet transitional, with designer details like beveled edges and an ergonomic feel. Adorned in finishes of polished nickel, brushed nickel and venetian bronze, Alcott defines modern decor with style and timeless class. **Atlas Homewares.**

www.atlashomewares.com

Faucet aerators

Changing faucet aerators is one of the most affordable components of a water conservation program in commercial and institutional buildings as well as multi-family housing and residential buildings. This company's products are WaterSense listed, help save 30% or more and gain LEED points towards building certification. **Neoperl.**

www.neoperl.com

Humidity sensing fan & light

ENERGY STAR® qualified recessed fan/lights now feature SensAire® technology to help ensure that moisture is effectively exhausted at the source by automatically ridding the



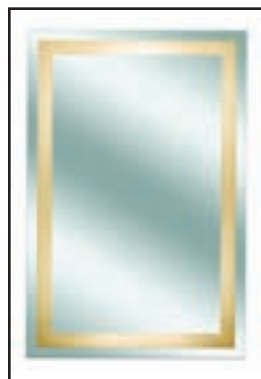
home of excess humidity. While it may look like a recessed light, inside is a humidity sensing switch that triggers the concealed and quiet ventilation fan. Like many other ENERGY STAR qualified fans from Broan and NuTone, this new Recessed Fan/Light costs only \$1 a year to operate – a small price to pay for superior indoor air quality in the home. **Broan NuTone.**

www.broan-nutone.com

Bottle filling station helps environment

The EZH2O bottle filling station is an environmentally-friendly innovation developed to provide consumers with a pure, clean and affordable filtered water option, while also offering plumbing professionals and specifiers high-quality, in-demand drinking water solutions in the ever-growing, ever-changing marketplace. Provides a rapid fill of cold, filtered water at a rate of 1.1 – 1.5 gpm, allows an end user to fill a 20-oz sports bottle in as little as 6 1/2 seconds. Can be retrofitted to any existing "EZ style" water cooler, installed in new construction as a stand-alone in-wall unit or paired with a SoftSides® or SwirlFlo® drinking fountain. **Elkay.**

www.elkayusa.com



Back-lit mirror

Back-lit mirror is a multi-tasking marvel. The frosting on the glass comes in three different styles to customize the look of your mirror to match or compliment your décor. At 36"X24", it mounts either horizontally or vertically over any standard vanity. The lighting is bright enough to reduce and, in some cases, eliminate the need for additional lighting in the bathroom. This mirror changes an ordinary bathroom necessity into an attractive, decorative and functional piece. **Aptations.**

www.kimballyoung.com

Filter system

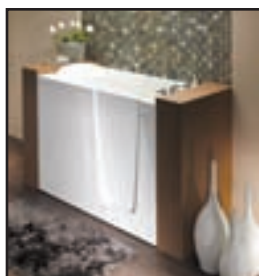
The Body Glove water filtration systems are available through this master distributor. The Body Glove filter system is manufactured by 3M and offers significantly more flow and up to 0.2-micron water filtration through a patent-engineered carbon-block technology. The Body Glove genuine recyclable filter cartridge contrasts systems that are made with fused aluminum and plastic compositions, which cannot be feasibly recycled. **Water Inc.**

www.waterinc.com



Walk-in bathtub

Advanced, environmentally friendly tubs made in America with U.S. Veterans being actively hired. Manufacturing process is similar to that used



in marine applications so hazardous emissions are eliminated and substrate consistency is improved. Both sides are finished smooth and the high cross-linked polymer is highly resistant to bacterial growth. ISO 9001:2008 compliant and ETL, UPC and USPC certified. Leading name in walk-in bathtubs is now a leading name in green manufacturing. **Home Living Solutions.**

www.homelivingsolutions.com

Mosaic panel door

Comprehensive glass product line consists of JewelStone glass mosaics, braided glass mosaics, stained glass,



Murano Vena glass, signature series, Dazzling green glass mosaics and panel collections. Add "tile" to your bath and plumbing showroom to make it a one-stop shop. It is a highly profitable line with a great display program. **Hirsch Glass.**

www.hirschglasscorp.com



WaterSense labeled

The manufacturer has earned the WaterSense™ label on the majority of its lavatory faucets. The company recently converted those faucets to 1.5 gpm, saving 20-30% water usage over other faucet options. The company's collections feature toilets, bidets, pedestal sinks, premium vanities, vessel sinks and matching mirrors that complement the brand's wide array of kitchen and bath faucets, specialty faucets, showerheads and bath accessories. **Danze.**

www.danze.com

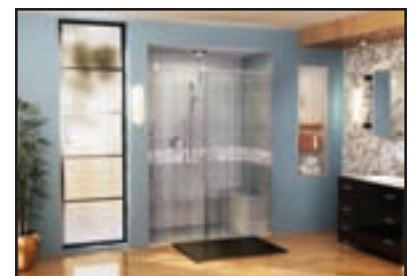
Backlit vanity mirror

Backlit vanity mirror balances high fashion and functionality by integrating light and glass, to replicate a natural light and eliminate shadows. Add sleek luxury to any modern bathroom. The Impression Mirror TV (shown) combines simplicity and sophistication and is defined by strong lines, luminescent properties and advanced engineering. **Electric Mirror.**

www.electricmirror.com

Rolling shower door

Rolaire's rolling door mechanism provides a distinct, simple design that results in a contemporary, edgy look. Its fixed panel options fit well in



spaces with limited accessibility or obstructions. Features 3/8" thick glass in a variety of options. The door includes a raised, roller-style header and 8" pull-through ladder handle. Additional hardware options include towel bars and knobs (in stainless steel finish only). **Basco.**

www.bascoshowerdoor.com



Bamboo kitchen sink

Bamboo kitchen sink has all the organic warmth and natural beauty of wood; highly durable and can easily withstand the rigors of daily use. Attractive apron front design with practical equal double-bowl with low-rise divider. Crafted from fully matured Moso bamboo using a 13-step process, then finished with a SGS-certified safe binding adhesive with low VOCs and a water-resistant top coat. Lifetime warranty. **Lenova.**

www.lenovasinks.com

Accessible bath

The Ava Bath offers an unprecedented ease of access; a roomy,



benchless, bathing well system; and a patent-pending, quick drain system. "We listened to what our customers wanted and, inspired by that, we leveraged the company's 65 years of experience to create an exceptional product and experience for everyone, including people who have the greatest needs for easily accessible hydrotherapy," said Gary Anderson, president of **Aquatic.**

www.aquaticbath.com

Unique tub

From the CUBE collection, this bathtub model displays four distinct sides and its design features slender edges and straight lines for compact outer dimensions. Narrow, flat edges allow



for a spacious interior with abundant space for two bathers, each of whom has an individual backrest for comfort. Manufactured with WETMAR™, an ultra-resistant composite material, this model comes in a glossy or matte white finish and with a built-in overflow and a soft toe touch drain in polished chrome or brushed nickel. **Wetstyle.**

www.wetstyle.ca



Walk-through shower system

Walk into the shower of your dreams with the WALK shower system. The finest Italian technology and manufacturing combine to create a therapeutic retreat. Featuring curved safety-tempered glass, shower sprays, accessories (i.e. seats and right or left handed fittings) and a variety of profile finishes in white, chrome and bright silver with antibacterial protection. This shower's sleek design maximizes space, allowing it to be placed in a corner. The enclosure can be mounted on a tray or a tiled floor for compatibility with all bathroom designs. **Novellini.**

www.novellini.com



Vanity valet

The Vanity Valet (model VVF) turns unused cabinet space into a storage solution. Modifies existing false panel to store up to four appliances under the sink and save drawer or cabinet space. Eliminates clutter, organizes styling tools, hides cords when not in use, and allows styling tools to heat up in a safe and stable location. The VVF system provides customized cabinet efficiency economically. **POJJO.**

www.pojjo.com

Shower products

This manufacturer offers a wide variety of products that can meet the physical needs of all family members. Shown is the low-profile shower base with a teak shower tray



and coordinating teak shower seat, which folds up and out of the way when not in use. Complementing the manufacturer's extensive assortment of shower bases is the Teutonic Enclosure, which features a sliding glass door that glides with rollers along an overhead stainless steel rail, making shower entrance and exit of the shower easier. **MTI Whirlpools.**

www.mtiwhirlpools.com



Aromatherapy towel warmer

This aromatherapy towel warmer releases aromatherapy oils that may help with relaxation, reduce anxiety and invigorate the body. Easy to install, affordable and stylish, all Model 200 towel warmers contain the aromatherapy oil well that releases aromatherapy essences upon each use. The use of aromatherapy has become increasingly popular due to the potential healing benefits attributed to this alternative medicine, including stress reduction and mood improvements. **Mr.Steam.**

www.mrsteam.com

Pressure assisted flush

FLUSHMATE® pressure assisted technology is the leading flushing system for high performance and low consumption. The pressure assisted system harnesses the pressure from



the water supply line to provide the energy needed to complete the flush. The ULF model offers less than 1.6 gpf flushing and the HET model offers less than 1.0-gpf flushing. For outstanding one-flush performance and 25 years of proven reliability, look for Flushmate and its 10-year warranty.

Sloan Valve Company.

www.flushmate.com

Clean lines shower drain

Low-profile linear shower drain is clean and unintrusive; it is easy to clean and has a very high flow rate.



Ease of installation keeps this shower drain in demand by home builders and contractors as well as by discerning homeowners. **Quick Drain USA.**

www.QuickDrainUSA.com



Expansion valve

EcoFlow™ helps achieve balanced distribution of refrigerant in AC systems and avoids maldistribution in evaporator circuits. Install it on the evaporator and it automatically monitors the flow of refrigerant into the evaporator, adjusting the flow to each circuit independently. Corrects uneven refrigerant distribution and reduces superheat temperature. Equally applicable in systems between 1- and 7-ton capacities. **Danfoss.**

www.danfoss.com

Lead free tankless valve kit

A “no-lead” version of the CimKIT™ tankless water heater valve kit has the same features and benefits such as a compact, integrated design and forward-facing, color-coded handles; but is in full compli-



ance with California's AB 1953 and Vermont's S.152 laws. Available with 3/4" threaded or sweat connections; with or without a lead free pressure relief valve. **Cimberio Valve.**

www.cimberiovalve.com

Wall-mount split systems

Three new ductless wall mount split system



heat pumps have longer refrigerant pipe lengths and high energy efficiencies. Each offers an extended line set capability, providing a line set maximum of 165 lineal ft. 18RLXS is an 18,000-Btu, 19-SEER, 10-HSPF heat pump that qualifies for Tier 2 Energy Star ratings. 24RLXS, a 24,000-Btu heat pump with an 18.0-SEER, 10.0-HSPF rating, qualifies for Tier 2 Energy Star ratings. 30RLX heat pump provides 30,000 Btu of heating and cooling with ratings of 16 SEER and 9.5 HSPF. **Fujitsu General America.**

www.fujitsugeneral.com

Drain cleaning machines with autofeed

Four models of drain cleaning machines feature auto cable feed that advances and retrieves cable with the push of a lever. D-5



cleans 3"-10" dia lines up to 100 ft; a quick-remove continuous auto cable feeder and drum. Z5-P-AF cleans 1 1/4"-3" lines up to 100 ft; runs 1/2" galvanized aircraft wire inner core cable. E-P-AF cleans 1 1/4"-3" lines up to 100 ft; inner drum eliminates cable buckling. CT cleans 3/4"-2 1/2" lines up to 50 ft; unique variable speed motor feature gives operator maximum control. **Electric Eel Mfg.**

www.electriceel.com

Service sink

The FS-WM Spec-Line wall-mounted service sink has been added to this supplier's already-comprehensive product line. Offered in two model sizes, a 23"×19"×10" and a 27"×21"×12", these sinks are constructed of 14-gauge, 304 stainless steel. Stainless steel tubular wall brackets secure the sink to the wall for added support. Sink bowl corners are 3/4" radius. **Advance Tabco.**

www.advancetabco.com



Fireplace hybrid retrofit



Earth's Flame™ hybrid retrofit for fireplaces reduces emissions up to 72%. Easily retrofits into most existing fireplaces.

Features a gas-enhanced combustion system and emission-reducing grate. No-maintenance 304 stainless steel construction ensures reduced emissions with the same efficiency over the product's entire lifespan. Unique design addresses the three “T”s of good combustion: Time, Temperature and Turbulence. **Canterbury Enterprises.**

www.earthflame.com

Forged and cast steel valves



Trusted master distributor's exclusive line of valves now includes forged carbon and cast carbon steel selection of gates, globes and checks in a variety of sizes and pressure classes. Each valve is built, tested and inspected to stringent quality assurance criteria and rigorous industry standards. Ready to ship same day from six locations; an economical, high-quality valve. **Warren Alloy.**

www.warrenalloy.com

PVC pipe

The newest member of the True Fit System, RePVCTM is a coextruded, solid-wall PVC Sch. 40 pipe that uses 100% recycled content as the center layer. Using recycled PVC expands the market for recycled materials, slows the consumption of raw materials and reduces the amount of waste entering landfills. The durable, cost-effective system is simple to install. Manufactured to ASTM D 4396, ASTM F 1760 and NSF listed. **Charlotte Pipe and Foundry.**

www.charlottepipe.com



Video inspection system



Gen-Eye SD™ video pipe inspection and location system has all the features of a full-size video inspection system in a compact, lightweight package. Command Module has 8" LCD color monitor for clear pictures, an SD Card Reader to store video or still images and a full keyboard for on-screen titling. All are safely contained in a padded 10-lb package. Docking arm mounts it on a full-size reel to trouble-shoot 3" to 10" lines, or on a mini reel for 2" to 4" lines. **General Pipe Cleaners, a division of General Wire Spring Co.**

www.drainbrain.com



Hinged grooved coupling

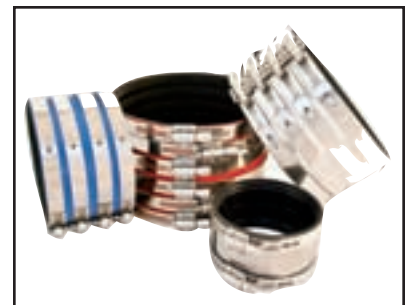
Figure 780 Grooved Snap Coupling features a hinged lever mechanism for quickly and safely connecting grooved piping systems. Unique 2-step closing feature partially locks then closes the coupling, minimizing chances for injury. Pushing the lever handle initially snaps the housing segments together. Continuing to push the lever then smoothly locks the coupling into position. Available in sizes 1 1/2" to 8" and rated for pressures up to 300 psi. Sizes 5" to 8" feature a cross-ribbed housing design for added strength.

Grinnell Mechanical Products.

www.grinnell.com

HD no-hub couplings

Heavy 80 & Super Heavy 80 heavy



duty no-hub couplings feature premium neoprene gaskets and all stainless steel construction. Engineered for maximum performance, these couplings are independently 3rd party listed by IAPMO to ASTM C1540 standards and FM Global Approved to FM 1680 standard Class I rating. **Star Pipe Products.**

www.starpipeproducts.com

Test plug

Test-Tite® pressure relief pneumatic test plug has an internal-pressure, safety relief valve that reduces the risk of exceeding proper inflation pressure.

Reduces potential for damage to plugs and DWV systems. If the recommended pressure is exceeded by the user, the excess is released, returning the plug to its proper size and pressure. Relieved pressure exhausts through the top of the plug, not into the test area. **IPS Corp.**

www.ipscorp.com





Pump guide rail

This line of pump guide rails has been expanded to include the GR22. Allows easier installation or removal of submersible pumps in deeper pits. Heavy cast iron construction and an efficient single rail design. With a discharge size of 2", the GR22 fits series FL150 thru 200-series effluent pumps, and LE70, LE100, LEH150 and LEH200-series sewage pumps. Internal 2" thread on the pump mating claw allows for adaptation to other pumps. **Liberty Pumps.**

www.libertypumps.com

Geothermal heat pump

The Prestige Series™ 27 to 31 EER Geothermal Heat Pump features Comfort Control® System™ serial communicating. Offers the ultimate in energy savings and flexibility; supply heating, central A/C and domestic hot water. Offered in package (2-6 tons) and split system (2-5 tons) configurations. Two-stage compressors and advanced variable speed air delivery automatically adjusts to changing weather conditions. **Rheem.**

www.rheem.com

Macerating toilet

The redesigned SANIPLUS has a more streamlined, contemporary look to complement any modern décor, but dimensions for the 3 inlets and the discharge and venting outlets on the unit remain exactly the same, making replacement more convenient. Quieter operation thanks to a 20% smaller, more powerful pump motor; sound-absorbing "silent blocks,"



made of rubber and strategically placed around the motor and at the base of the macerator; and anti-vibration studs that lift the unit slightly above the floor. **SFA Saniflo.**

www.saniflo.com



Building control system for residential, light commercial

iWorx is an affordable web-based building management, monitoring and control system designed specifically for residential and light commercial markets. The easy-to-install, simple-to-use, internet-enabled control networking solution delivers effective cost control over a building's energy usage and HVAC equipment maintenance. It is a flexible, easily-scalable means of building control. Ideal for integrating forced air and hydronic systems, including geothermal and solar, and for assuring that each system communicates effectively and works smoothly together. **Taco Electronic Solutions.**

commercial.taco-hvac.com



Duct-Less line sets

This company offers a wide selection of Duct-Less line sets, all of which come with insulation on both the suction and liquid lines and are available with flared fittings at each end. As an option, they offer Duct-Less line sets with the power supply cord and communication cable to meet your specific requirements. **JMF Company.**

www.jmfcompany.com

Low-lead valves

These products meet the requirements of California's AB1953 and fully comply with NSF61 Annex G. Initially, the new material will be offered in brass ball valves and Class 125 gate and check valves in Stockham and Crane brands. Figure numbers for these products are the same as current offering, but use the LF prefix. Visually, they are easily identifiable by their white handle and/or hand wheel and are inventoried in the company's Long Beach, Calif., warehouse. **Crane Energy.**



www.cranevalve.com

Valve automation

A new *Automation & Control* catalog helps customers better understand the options available for automating valves. This includes the pneumatic SPN II actuator, pneumatic 4x4™ actuator, solenoids, limit switches, positioners and electric actuators. **Sharpe®.**

www.sharpevalves.com



Ball valves

Full Port 757 Series ball valves are available in lead free and standard versions with sweat or threaded ends. Both versions are 600 WOG-150SWP and come with a blow out-proof copper alloy stem and Teflon seats. Conform to NSF, CSA and MSS-SP-110 specifications. Available in sizes ranging from 1/4" up to 4". Threaded ends comply with ANSI B2.1 and are UL/FM approved 1/4" - 2". 757C (Sweat) ball valves are also available in sizes ranging from 1/4" up to 4", and are UL/FM approved 1/4" - 2". **Matco-Norca.**

www.matco-norca.com



Redesigned closet flange

A new version of the Push Tite™ closet flange features a 1-piece molded flange and a newly designed, 3-fin elastomer gasket. Designed to work with and install easily into any 4" pipe — including small ID cast iron pipe. During repair installations, when pipe's inner walls have become corroded or have an uneven surface, its 3 points of contact help provide a positive seal. Maintains a full 3" flow. **Sioux Chief Manufacturing.**

www.siouxchief.com

Solar thermal collectors

The Smart 10, 15 and 20 Solar Thermal Collectors received formal SRCC industry certification. They are tested at the factory, lightweight and come fully assembled to reduce labor up to 75% during installation. Engineered to withstand hailstones up to 1" diameter and wind gusts up to 155 mph. Provide excellent performance in both warm and cold climates and produce heat in both sunny and cloudy conditions due to superior tube and collector insulation. Feature a lightweight aluminum frame and stainless steel manifold that will not scale or rust. **Solar-Smart.**

solars-smart.com



Rigid coupling

The Style 107H QuickVic® rigid coupling for HVAC, utility and process piping features enhanced pressure ratings and expedites project construction by only requiring standard hand tools for installation. Has no loose parts and does not require any disassembly before installation. Allows installation to be faster, easier and safer. Enhanced pressure rating up to 750psi; available in sizes 2"-8". Designed for joining standard roll grooved and cut grooved steel pipe. **Victaulic.**

www.victaulic.com



Evolution should be an ongoing feature of your firm

(Continued from page 8.)

ably better to provide some high-level numbers but you must take the time to explain and interpret the information. **Important Note:** Whenever you do provide information, always mark it as confidential, explain to the team that you expect it to

be kept **confidential** (but expect that some or all of it will be leaked.)

- **Measures related to the individual's job and to areas that the individual impacts** – Knowing the company's delivery errors are up is critically important to the operations team because their performance may

be a direct cause of the errors. That same information may cause a salesperson to emotionally feel that she/he needs to reduce prices to compensate for the service issues — even when the problem was promptly corrected and your delivery accuracy is far better than anyone else in the market area.

- **Keep it focused and trimmed** – Most people can only assimilate and understand a limited amount of data. The flight attendant I spoke with may

have been a genius, but I'll bet most FAs can understand that the company makes money when there are more than 72 passengers on the plane. They also understand that satisfied customers use the airline more regularly and that their efforts are directly related to happy customers. The company's fuel arbitrage and futures activities may be interesting but of little relevance to the way the FA does her job.

- **KIS (Keep It Simple)** – Most companies that share, share too much to too many. It is not that the information is a secret. It is that too many details can distract attention from the "critical success factor" activities that an individual has direct and maybe exclusive control over. To a shipping guy, the EBITDA for the company has no meaning on his daily activities. The number of misships is spotlight on his department's performance.

- **Spend time to help people understand the measures and what their reactions should be to various values** — Even better, work to develop "pro-actions" that prevent problems or are early-warning indicators that can reduce the impact of a problem. Example: If the inventory quantity on hand for a "Never-Be-Out-Of" item is zero, we expect you to treat it as an emergency replenishment situation.

That means that you are to get this item into your warehouse and ready to sell in the most direct and immediate manner possible to prevent lost sales and poor service to customers. You are expected to immediately initiate one or more of these actions: 1) Transfer stocks from another branch, today; 2) Buy the product from another wholesale, today. When the product arrives, you will ensure that any markings with the competitor's name are removed prior to sale; 3) Buy the product from a big-box or other retailer in the area, today. The same expectations regarding markings on the product apply.

- **Falsification of or "gaming" measures** – Measures must be legitimate and trustworthy. The company must not game the measures and employees must not play games either. There must be a clear understanding that falsification of any company records or data is a serious action that may result in various actions by the company ranging from a reprimand, to dismissal, to prosecution. (As always, talk to your labor attorney first.) Further, companies need a base policy stating that employees are expected to honor the letter and spirit of the company policies and to do their jobs with the best interests of the company.

1. I have heard of instances where a company had a strict never-be-out-

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“When it comes to saving dollars on heating, old steam systems are delicious low-hanging fruit. There is so much you can do to make them better, and most of what you do won't cost a fortune.”

Dan Holohan

See contact information on page 114

of policy. The president personally reviewed how each occurrence was handled. Some misguided branch staff “gamed” the measure by never selling out of an item. The unwritten branch rule was that nobody ever sold the last item off the shelf.

The branch team thought it was better to disappoint the customer than to tell HQ that they ran out. The customer might have been mad, but nobody had to go through the fire-drill to get the product back into stock and answer to the president about the situation. Or someone would sell out of an item, but create a “pretend” receipt to simulate that the product was back in stock so HQ wouldn’t be on their back. These falsifications are very bad; plus, they can really mess up the company’s inventory management data.

2. I have seen salespeople change the cost of a product so their gross margin based commissions were “enhanced” or to avoid triggering a review by management of their aggressive discounting. Both are inappropriate and should not be tolerated. (It is important to understand that this is fraud. Both fraud and theft cannot be tolerated.)

3. Over the years, I have seen salespeople do really dumb things to meet their quota. Selling product at or below cost. Falsifying orders in order to “book” business knowing that the company was not smart enough to figure it out and recover the overpayment of bonus monies.

Some companies take a “boys-will-be-boys” attitude to people who game the systems, performance measures, commission plans or bonus programs. I think the company must be clear that these fraudulent activities will not be tolerated.

So the assignment for this month is to look at whether you have the right team, the right supervisors and the right processes in place. If not, start evolving your company. Even small changes can have a huge impact on your future. Next month I’ll suggest some of the base measures that should be available to people to manage their part of the business. ■

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

www.go-scg.com

Rich is also the co-owner of Schmitt ProfitTools Inc. (SPI), a business producing print, CD-ROM, web and palm-based catalogs as well as pricing management and analysis software for wholesalers.

www.go-spi.com

Schor lauds Commercial Construction Show

LINCOLN, CALIF. — According to Peter Schor, showroom columnist for *The Wholesaler*, “The Commercial Construction Show is an exceptional tool for numerous P-HVAC-E product manufacturers, especially in these tougher economic times. I’ve been to this show and it is a great opportunity for industry manufacturers to get their products specified and bought through channels of distribution. I would also think that it would be a great opportunity for larger or regional wholesalers to look at.”

Schor says anyone seeking the best way to connect with the industry’s top executives and decision-makers, find the latest in new products and services or network should consider attending the 2010 Commercial Construction Show June 9-10 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

This cross-industry event offers a wealth of opportunities to connect with key commercial construction decision makers in the retail, hospitality, restaurant, management and green markets.

Attendees can also view hundreds of new products and services in the Exhibit Hall. Also featured is Direct-Connect Central, an exclusive networking opportunity available only to exhibitors and sponsors only and al-

lows them to set up 30-minute appointments with vendors and buyers seeking partnerships.

The show’s two key networking opportunities bring attendees face-to-face with their industry colleagues. The Gala Casino Night, open to all attendees, mixes a little pleasure with business, as attendees can take their winnings and turn them into tickets for a chance to win thousands of dollars in valuable prizes. The Executive Reception connects fellow end-user executives at this special industry reception for buyers only.

Author Chester Elton will deliver the keynote address on June 10. He will discuss *The Invisible Employee: Unleashing Hidden Potential*, based on his best-selling book.

Attendees include a cross-section of the commercial construction industry, including buyers in architecture/engineering; construction; corporate management; energy/utilities; facilities maintenance; information systems; landscape and grounds; operations; purchasing; planning; development; infrastructure; real estate and security. Participants also include consultants, general contractors, designers and sub-contractors.

For additional information, visit www.cc-mag.net.

Oasis

(Continued from page 62.)

agency compliance and customer requirements.

MJM: *Has the increased awareness of “green living” by the public led to a greater interest in your water coolers and filtration products?*

Laing: Green Living is in everything we do today and we look at the effect a product would have on the environment during development. We have introduced Water and Energy Conservation units, available in more than 80 of our current coolers and fountains, and with the addition of a one-piece low flow bubbler and a more energy efficient compressor we have reduced waste water and energy consumption by over 40% on our new Green units.

We introduced a new Biodegradable Green Filtration product, which we believe is the only truly biodegradable filtration system for water coolers and fountains in the industry today.

MJM: *Lynn, are you pleased thus far with the results from Oasis?*

Tilton: I am very pleased with the change of focus, the depth of innovation and the number of new product offerings both for commercial and

consumer purchase. We have re-energized our product line and enhanced that traditional line with many new products including those for the home. We have more to do on our marketing and distribution of such products and I expect that 2010 will be our transitional year as we focus on our new green water and energy products.

MJM: *John, can you share with us any specific information going forward on your strategic long-range planning? What are the key focus areas of the plan?*

Kucharik: In today’s fragile economy, long-range planning can be a challenge since the timing of the industry’s recovery is, in itself, an issue that is unknown. With past issues well behind us, our goal is to continue to prove to the customers that grew up respecting the Oasis brand that we are strong and will be in the industry for another 100 years. Consistency in production, quality and a competitively priced product are high priorities today and will remain as such for years to come. Product development to meet the 21st century needs is a must; we have many projects on our plate today for new products with innovative technology that will be coming to the market very soon. ■

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EMPLOYMENT



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or email to:
recruiting@bonneyforge.com

(Classifieds continue on page 112.)

EMPLOYMENT

KINDRED USA Invites Applications for an EASTERN REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

We are a division of Franke, the world class leader in the design and manufacture of stainless steel sinks and we require an aggressive and self motivated professional Sales Manager to develop and administer residential and commercial sales throughout the Eastern region of the USA.

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Applicants will need to be highly motivated, able to work independently, have excellent leadership skills and be able to demonstrate a superior, proven, results oriented track record in sales management.

To be considered as a candidate, the successful applicant must also have the following minimum qualifications and experience:

- A University Degree.
- A minimum of 5 years recent full-time directly related industry sales experience in the wholesale residential/ commercial plumbing field preferably with direct reports.
- Demonstrated computer proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Demonstrated superior problem solving, verbal and written communication skills.
- Established network/knowledge of sales agencies along with proven new business development skills and abilities.
- A broad understanding of, and the needs of, the plumbing distribution and builder industry.
- Demonstrated superior organizational and efficiency abilities.

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Nationally recognized manufacturer of kitchen and bath products seeks two seasoned Regional Sales Managers to service Wholesale Channel. Current openings in the Northeast and Midwest Regions. Candidate must reside in their region and have experience with the customer base in their respective territory. Bachelor's degree is preferred. Must have 5+ years of relevant sales management experience. Travel is required. Please submit resumé to:

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Year after year, AIM/R Conference provides solid value



BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Each year, one of the events I look most forward to is the AIM/R Annual Management Conference. There is really something special about this group — besides the fact that they are just an all-around nice bunch of people. They are some of the hardest-working, most creative and entrepreneurial folks in our industry today.

AIM/R executive director Bryan Shirley kicked off this year's conference by explaining the reason behind its theme: "We chose 'Back to Basics' as the theme this year because it's time to put the focus back on selling, making cold calls, strategizing on sales efforts, and rethinking our practices and habits. We have to make some changes if we're going to succeed in today's environment.

"It's time to come back to two words — 'hard work' — that were kind of forgotten about for a while when times were good and business was booming. Sales is a contact sport, and it's important to get out there into the mix. Even with technology and gadgets and all those tools now available to us, sales is still about relationships. So enhance the ones you have and create new ones."

This was the third year that AIM/R invited manufacturers to participate during a portion of the conference. Just prior to the manufacturers and reps dividing into breakout sessions that afternoon for discussions on key topics, AIM/R president Mike Parham of Pepco Sales encouraged attendees to share what they learn, saying, "We don't want you to keep 'what happened in Vegas' here. We want you to take it back to your companies, your employees and your channel partners."

Among the topics tackled during the breakout sessions were: transitioning manufacturer relationships through business succession; evaluating lines for consolidation; communications and product promotion; and ways firms have cut costs or streamlined operations.

Without a doubt, the manufacturers felt very strongly that it was important for rep firms to have succession plans in place — even to the point of suggesting they might make a change in representation if they felt uncomfortable with the future stability of the firm. They also encouraged reps not to assume their manufacturers know what is going on within their firms, but rather to share these plans with their

manufacturers.

When it came to cost-cutting measures and how reps were dealing with the economic challenges of the past few years, a number of great ideas were generated. Among them were:

- Using interns who worked free of charge or for very little compensation
- Dropping lines that weren't growing and concentrating instead on those that offered greater profitability and growth
- Taking pay cuts and reorganizing territory assignments
- Realigning an existing health care policy with a unique program that saved tens of thousands of dollars a year
- Taking a hard-line look at entertainment budgets.

Once again, the candor with which attendees shared best practices and what in many circumstances might even be considered proprietary information was so refreshing. This group really does want each other to succeed to ensure a stronger foundation for manufacturers' reps and a future for the industry as a whole. The ideas generated during these networking sessions were so valuable and were, in themselves, well worth the cost of attending the conference.

In addition to the breakout sessions, several presentations really captured the attention of attendees. John Sileo shared valuable insight from his first-hand experiences with both personal and business identity theft, giving attendees a punch list of ways to protect themselves and their businesses. Among his suggestions:

- You can control who surrounds you by thoroughly checking into people's backgrounds and controlling the sanctity of private information about you, your clients and your families.
- Set up account alerts so that every time you use one of your credit/debit cards you will be alerted. That will help you learn the instant someone uses your card without your knowledge.
- Don't leave laptops unattended, even in your hotel room, because it is so easy to steal them and all the information within them.
- Hire a technician to install strict security measures on your computer.

Another speaker, Charlie Hauck of Growth Dynamics, got down to the nitty gritty in encouraging firms to go the extra mile in screening salespeople before hiring them. According to Hauck, 55% of the people earning their living in sales should be doing something else.

Some of the ways Haucks believes firms can improve their odds in hiring the

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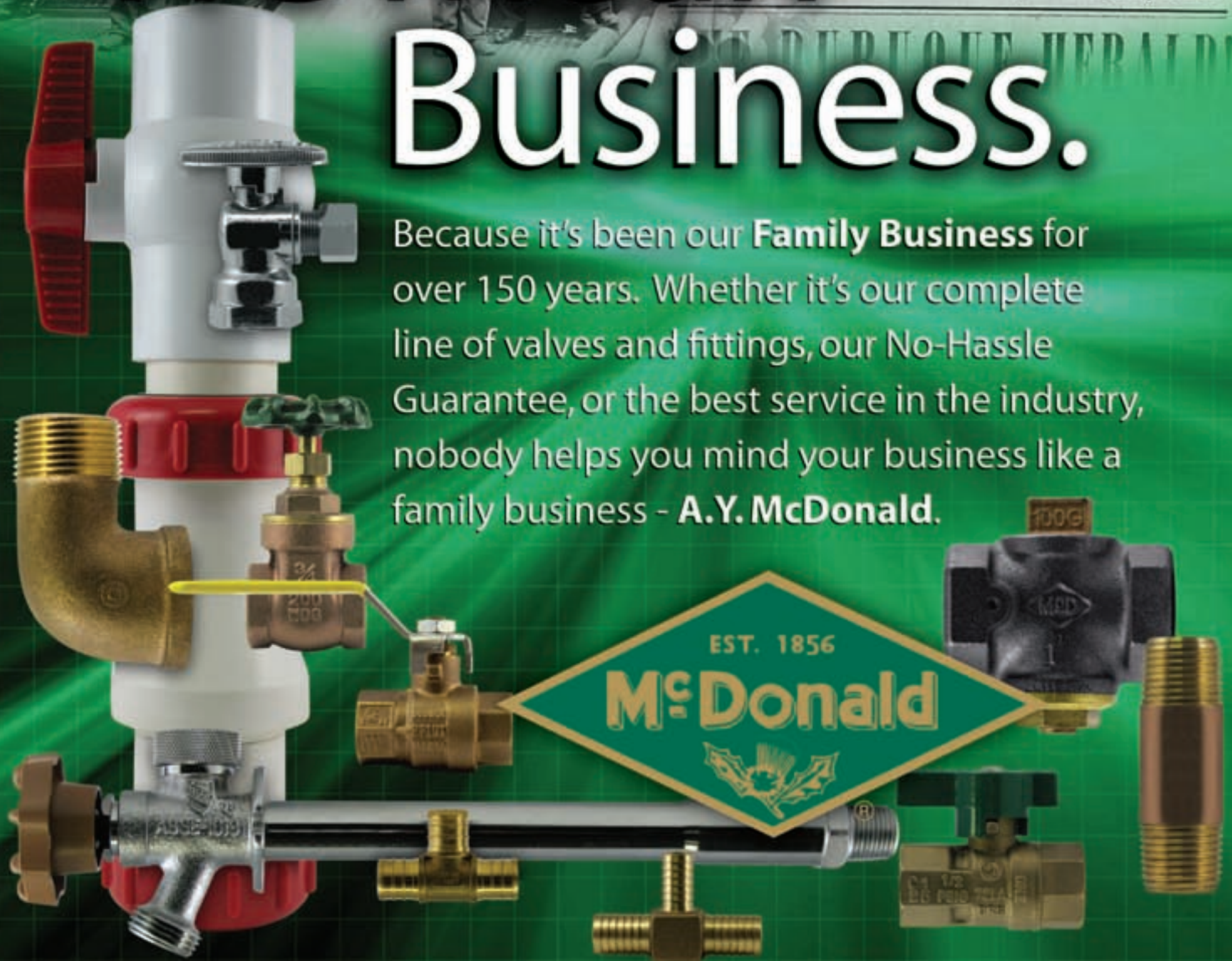
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