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PROfile

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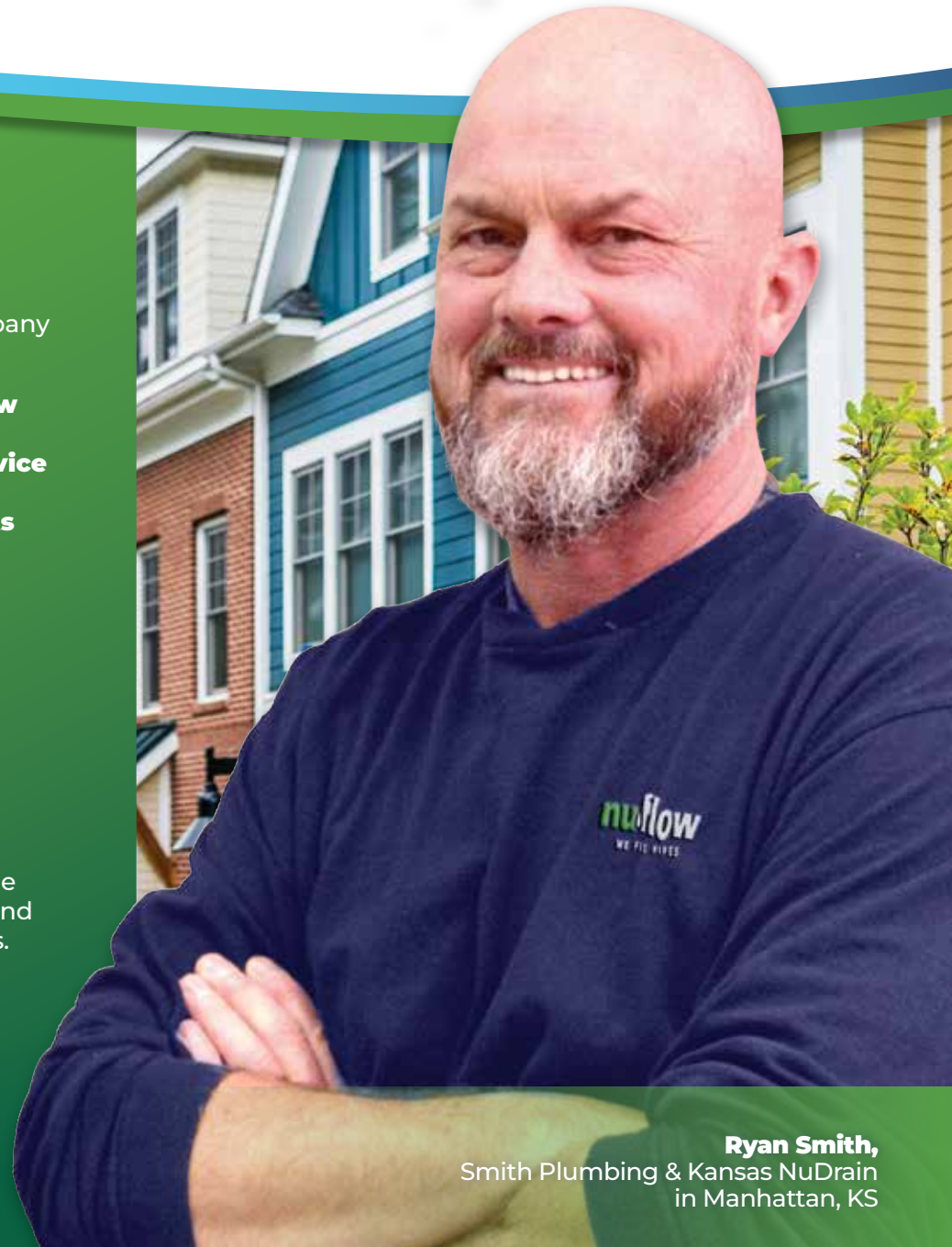
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“The learning process was great. The NuFlow trainer really taught us the ins and outs of the process.”

In addition to residential jobs, Ryan and his team have completed several larger projects on commercial size buildings. He has expanded his crew to keep up with the work, half plumbers and half pipe liners, and continues to grow his pipe lining business.

“We've grown way beyond the just one guy and a truck business like we started. We broke a million dollars in revenue and have more commercial size projects coming up.”



Ryan Smith,
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ON THE COVER // When Gary Hoover established Hoover Electric in Troy, Michigan, back in 1980, the company only did new-construction electrical work. But in the ensuing decades, the company — now owned by Hoover's sons-in-law, Marcus Piwonski and Matt Hedges — has completely reinvented itself, as evidenced by its current name: Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling. Plumbing, sewer and drain cleaning services are the backbone of the company. Electrical work now brings up the rear. "It's pretty crazy how we started out in electric and now it's the smallest division in our company," Piwonski says. (Photography by Eric Seals)



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Published monthly by COLE Publishing, Inc.
PO Box 220, Three Lakes, WI 54562

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Mon- Fri., 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. CST

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CONTROLLED CIRCULATION: 21,500 per month. This figure includes both U.S. and international distribution.

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DO LESS

Escaping the clutches of micromanagement isn't always easy for leaders accustomed to a hands-on approach, but it's worth creating an employee culture with more autonomy and trust

IN THE MOVIE *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, there's a scene in which a surf instructor, Kunu, attempts to teach the main character, Peter, how to stand up on his board.

"The less you do, the more you do," Kunu says, his way of advocating for a more instinctual approach. As Peter practices standing up on the board, Kunu continually says that he's doing too much: "Remember, don't do anything. Nothing."

Eventually Peter is just lying still on the board and Kunu's tone shifts: "Well, you gotta do more than that."

It makes for a funny moment, but there's also a truth to the advice of doing less. This scene came to mind when I was thinking

about the concept of micromanagement. The owners of one of the companies featured in this month's issue, Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling in Troy, Michigan, pride themselves on not being micromanagers and empowering their employees.

"I just stay out of the way and let them do what they need to do," Hoover co-owner Marcus Piwonski says. "People love that management style. I had one employee say he never believed there was a business that runs like ours."

The less you do, the more you do. By having a more hands-off management approach, Hoover has had a lot of luck in the area of employee recruitment and retention. People want to come work for a company like Hoover. And having talented, happy employees doing good work translates into success for the overall company.

But having a hands-off management style doesn't literally mean doing nothing. It takes effort to have the training, tools, and processes in place that then give you the ability to provide that employee autonomy. Of course personality is a factor as well. Some people simply struggle with letting go. Even if they recognize that micromanaging is a bad thing, they can't help themselves. I read through some articles to compile a few tips:

Communicate and set clear expectations. If your employees have a thorough understanding upfront of what they need to accomplish, you'll hopefully have less temptation to hover over every detail. Maybe a micromanager is just someone who hasn't expressed objectives clearly, and thus feels the need to be over-involved in everything.

Focus on results. Sometimes a task requires a specific procedure, and if so, be ready to explain why that is. But other times the how doesn't really matter. What's important is the end result. Perhaps an employee doesn't do something in exactly the same way you would've done it. But what does it matter if it works for them and is achieving the intended goal? If the how doesn't matter, stay out of it.

Encourage feedback. You're not a mind-reader, so it is helpful to get feedback from employees about how your management style is perceived. For example, one option is a multiple-choice Goldilocks test: "Am I too hands-on, too hands off or just right? I'm asking because everyone operates differently, and it's important to me that we work well together."

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

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

“Office politics can include anything from alliance-forming to under-the-table negotiations, and often, it erodes trust and morale across the entire team.”

— 8 Tips for Keeping Office Politics Out of Your Workplace
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HAVING A PLAN

Mastering Project Bidding and Execution

The success of a job not only relies on technical skills but also on careful planning, efficient project management and accurate bidding. Going over on material costs and labor can seriously jeopardize profitability, and thus it is crucial to master the bidding and job completion process. In this online exclusive, regular contributor Anthony Pacilla discusses key strategies and processes that will help contractors avoid “killing” a job, ensuring that projects are completed within specified budgets. >> cleaner.com/featured



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BEAST MODE

Raptor cutting machine preys on built-up scale and rust to get pipes in good lining condition // By Ken Wysocky

AS THE SERVICE MANAGER at American Rooter & Drain, David DeMayola has used a wide variety of drain cleaning machines, some good and some bad. His biggest takeaway: Reliability and power rule.

That's why the company, based in Caldwell, a city about 25 miles west of Boise in southwestern Idaho, invested in a Raptor cutting machine from American Pipelining Supplies.

"A lot of tools out there work great out of the box," DeMayola says. "But when you put them to work, it seems like they always need a lot of maintenance. You're always fixing things. All we wanted was a reliable product that we could use every day and that would do a good job. And so far, the Raptor has done just that — and we use it every single day."

The company, which was established in 1945, employs 25 people and runs about 18 service vehicles, bought the Raptor a little more than a year ago. It's primarily used to remove scale from residential and commercial cast iron sewer laterals in preparation for pipe lining. But the company also uses it occasionally to reinstate pipes, DeMayola says.

"We mostly run it in up to 4-inch-diameter pipe," he explains. "We haven't had any breakdowns in the field from snapping cables, which is pretty good compared to most types of machines. In addition, it cleans pipes quickly, too. Some machines won't break your cables, but they won't clean very well, either. This machine cleans as good as anything we've ever seen."

DeMayola says he gives the Raptor "a solid nine" on a scale of 1 to 10 for cleaning ability.

"If there's anything left to be desired, a little more torque would be good," he notes. "But on the other hand, it doesn't snap cables either. So on balance, it does really good. It's a great machine."



David DeMayola, service manager at American Rooter & Drain, poses with the company's Raptor cutting machine from American Pipelining Supplies.

AMERICAN ROOTER & DRAIN

CALDWELL, IDAHO

OWNER Joshua Jordan

MACHINE Raptor cutter from American Pipelining Supplies

FUNCTION Milling scale from pipes, reinstatements

FEATURES Three interchangeable cable reels with quick-change capability — no tools required (either 75 feet of 1/2-inch-diameter cable, 85 feet of 3/8-inch cable and 100 feet of 1/3-inch cable); electric clutch and motor; wireless remote and foot pedal; weighs 82 pounds without cable; roughly 31 inches tall by 28 1/2 inches wide by about 18 inches deep.

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PRODUCTIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY

DeMayola says the machine's adjustable torque settings are a great feature, especially since they can be set by remote control — a real time-saver.

"It's really nice to be able to [adjust the settings] on the fly, based on what size cable you're using and what size pipe you're in," he says. "It makes the machine very versatile."

He's also a fan of the machine's clutch, which he says reacts quickly when a cable binds up.

"The Raptor does a good job of clutching out at low torque so that when the cable binds, it doesn't snap," DeMayola says. "A lot of times, clutches don't react fast enough and end up breaking cables. But the way this one is engineered is top-notch."

That's a key to its reliability. Nothing kills productivity and profitability faster than on-the-job machine breakdowns, so DeMayola prizes reliability.

"It's critical for us because of the volume of work we do," he says, noting that crews line about five to six pipelines a week. "I need to keep our crews working. We always have extra machines on hand, so we can swap one out and keep working. But if a machine tears up cable, it doesn't matter. Reliable equipment saves us a lot of time and headaches."

CRITICAL FEATURES

The Raptor is also lightweight and portable. The chassis weighs about 82 pounds without cable and measures roughly 31 inches tall by 28 1/2 inches wide by about 18 inches deep.

Other features include three interchangeable cable reels with quick-change capability — no tools required (they hold either 75 feet of 1/2-inch-diameter cable, 85 feet of 3/8-inch cable and 100 feet of 1/3-inch cable); an electric clutch that protects the user, machine, tools and pipe integrity; anti-vibration and heavy-duty rubber pads that keep the machines from

"A LOT OF TOOLS OUT THERE WORK GREAT OUT OF THE BOX, BUT WHEN YOU PUT THEM TO WORK, IT SEEMS LIKE THEY ALWAYS NEED A LOT OF MAINTENANCE. ... ALL WE WANTED WAS A RELIABLE PRODUCT THAT WE COULD USE EVERY DAY AND THAT WOULD DO A GOOD JOB. AND SO FAR, THE RAPTOR HAS DONE JUST THAT."

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MONEY MACHINES

sliding around when used vertically or horizontally; and an electric motor.

“Another thing I really like is that you can run it on a 120-volt power input, so we can run it off most regular home outlets,” DeMayola says. “That’s really handy because we don’t have to pull a generator to every job. We just plug the machine in and go to work.”

DeMayola also likes the machine’s flexshaft technology, which allows users to camera lines while cleaning them.

“That means we don’t spend more time cleaning a portion of pipe that didn’t need it or less time cleaning a part of a pipe that needed more cleaning,” he says.

PROFITABILITY BOOSTER

How does the Raptor make the company more money? No breakdowns means crews complete more jobs per week. And its portability reduces time spent on jobs.

“When our guys have a choice of what machine to use, they pull the Raptor off the truck,” DeMayola says. “You can unload it with one person and can carry it up and down stairs easily. It saves time and time definitely is money.”

Overall, DeMayola says the Raptor provides a great return on investment for the company, which focuses primarily on drain cleaning and trenchless pipe rehabilitation. The unit sells for about \$12,000.

“It absolutely has paid for itself,” he says. “Even just a little bit of increased efficiency makes all the difference in the world in terms of saving time. So in that regard, this has been a really good unit. We’d definitely buy another one. In fact, I need to phase out another machine, so we’re thinking about buying another Raptor within the next several months.” c



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SHIFTING GEARS

A MICHIGAN ELECTRIC COMPANY STRAYS FROM ITS ORIGINS TO FIND SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS IN PLUMBING AND SEWER WORK

// By Ken Wysocky



WHEN GARY HOOVER ESTABLISHED HOOVER

Electric back in 1980, the company only did new-construction electrical work.

But in the ensuing decades, the company — now owned by Hoover’s sons-in-law, Marcus Piwonski and Matt Hedges — has completely reinvented itself, as evidenced by its current name: Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling. Plumbing, sewer and drain cleaning services are the backbone of the company, based in Troy, a far northern suburb of Detroit. And electrical work now brings up the rear.

“It’s pretty crazy how we started out in electric and now it’s the smallest division in our company,” says Piwonski, who joined the company in 2005. He and Hedges bought the company in fall 2023.

In fact, in the past year and a half alone, plumbing-related revenue has nearly doubled and it now contributes about 40% of overall revenues, while electrical work generates about 20%, he says.

Hoover’s story illustrates the benefits of offering a diverse array of services that provide a one-stop shop for customers, who generally prefer to deal with one contractor instead of multiple contractors. It also underscores the importance of flexibly adopting new strategies as business conditions evolve.

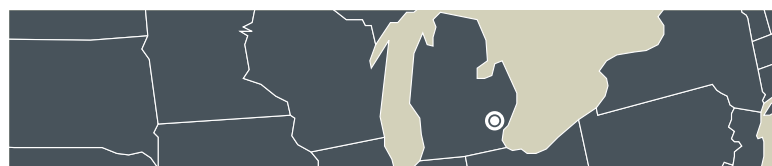
« Marcus Piwonski, co-owner of Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, with some of the company’s 74 employees at the Hoover shop in Troy, Michigan.



« Connor Murphy and Trevor Gilbert use an M18 series inspection camera from Milwaukee Tool on a residential job in Oak Park, Michigan.

As an example, Piwonski cites the company's decision around 2008 to add residential electric, due to increasingly longer wait times to get paid by new-construction contractors. Residential customers pay significantly faster, which substantially improves cash flow, he says.

"Working on a time-and-materials basis is a tough way to do business," Piwonski says. "You often don't collect payment from contractors for 90 days. And instead of dealing directly with decision-makers like homeowners, you meet with certain (lower-level) managers, make a repair and leave. That gives you no opportunities to grow your service tickets."



Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

TROY, MICHIGAN

OWNERS Marcus Piwonski and Matt Hedges

FOUNDED 1980

EMPLOYEES 74

SERVICES Drain cleaning, trenchless pipeline rehab, plumbing, HVAC, electric

SERVICE AREA 20-mile radius around Troy

WEBSITE callhoover.com



« Gilbert and Murphy prepare for a sewer lining job. Lining is a growing part of Hoover's business.

"IT'S PRETTY CRAZY HOW WE STARTED OUT IN ELECTRIC AND NOW IT'S THE SMALLEST DIVISION IN OUR COMPANY."

MARCUS PIWONSKI

NEW MARKET BECKONS

In 2011, the company evolved further by opening a plumbing and drain cleaning division for residential customers.

"We saw that there was much more demand for plumbing, sewer and drain work than electrical work," Piwonski explains. "Plus whenever we'd go to conferences, it seemed like electrical contractors were always struggling while plumbing, sewer and drain contractors seemed to be making it.

"There's more breakage, too," he adds. "You do electrical work and you're usually done for a long time. But in plumbing, things like water heaters and plumbing and sewer systems break down and the repairs are larger and cost more to make."

Starting the division from scratch was a huge challenge, Piwonski says. It involved building a customer base, initiating direct mail marketing campaigns, developing a presence on the internet, buying equipment and hiring technicians.

» Gilbert and Murphy go over the specifications of a lining job. The pair average about four lining jobs per week.





« Gilbert and Murphy move equipment into place for a lining job. Among Hoover's lining tools is a steam-cured system from Perma-Liner Industries.

A BIG BUSINESS BREAK

Around 2015, a game-changing event occurred: Hoover was hired as a plumbing subcontractor for a property management firm that did work for 37 Home Depot stores in the Detroit metro area. Hoover primarily installed water heaters — sometimes up to 30 a day — for people who bought them at Home Depot.

“That was our big chance,” Piwonski says. “Before that, we were struggling. But after that, things really started picking up for us.”

Bolstered by the Home Depot work, plumbing and drain revenue roughly doubled. The company used the money to further build a customer base through more mass mailings, radio and TV ads and digital marketing, he says.

Furthermore, installing residential water heaters provided a chance for Hoover to introduce its plumbing and drain services to even more potential customers. The Home Depot work also prompted the company to go all-in on only residential plumbing and drain work, he says.

“We were incredibly busy hiring people, doing background checks, buying trucks and obtaining licenses for our plumbers,” Piwonski recalls. “It was an absolutely insane time — just crazy.”

By about 2017, aided by ServiceTitan business management software, the company finally had the necessary employees, systems and processes in place, putting it on firm footing. Hoover decided to stop doing the Home Depot work in summer 2020.

“We couldn't handle the stress anymore — it was too much,” Piwonski says. “We had too many plumbers committed to doing this low-

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EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Finding good employees is difficult. Keeping them on board is no picnic, either.

But at Hoover Electric, Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, co-owners Marcus Piwonski and Matt Hedges deploy a simple but effective team building strategy: Hire good people and don't micromanage them.

"A lot of times, people have overbearing managers who just won't get out of the way," Piwonski says. "We don't do that here."

Piwonski firmly believes that employees prize empowerment — the ability to work independently and make decisions without interference from managers — more than money, time off and other employee perks.

"The CEO of Delta Airlines doesn't fly planes," Piwonski emphasizes. "That's someone else's job. I think we do a good job of getting out of the way and letting people do what they do."

In that vein, the company encourages technicians to think of themselves as running mini companies from their service vehicles. Hoover supplies the training and the materials; the rest is up to technicians.

This approach has positively impacted not only employee retention, but recruitment as well. Word spreads quickly among technicians about local companies' reputations, and Piwonski says it's not unusual for a technician to come aboard from another company, followed by more from that same company. In fact, Piwonski estimates that 75% of the company's employees were hired through referrals from family members or friends.

"I sometimes worry about the perception that we're poaching technicians," he says. "But lots of people reach out to me or my managers and sometimes there's even a domino effect where two or three people leave from the same company to come to us. The way I see it, we're not poaching those employees — those companies are losing employees."

Piwonski also cites three other factors that help attract employees: reliable equipment, no on-call work and a simple pay structure. Technicians can choose hourly pay accompanied by bonuses if they hit certain targets or commission-based pay, he explains.

The key to using the latter is setting attainable goals, as opposed to setting unrealistically high targets that can motivate technicians to sell customers things they don't need, Piwonski says.

"Upselling is a dirty word around here," he says.

Technicians use iPads equipped with ServiceTitan software to perform evaluations of every home's plumbing system and create three levels of service recommendations graded green, yellow and red (the latter is the highest priority). The recommendations include photos taken by the technician, Piwonski says.

"They're just recommendations, so there's nothing to upsell," he says.



▲ Gilbert attaches an air hose to a Perma-Liner system before beginning work on a liner installation.

margin work, which prevented them from doing higher-margin work. And we had technicians on call six or seven days a week, not to mention we had to carry a large inventory of water heaters, constantly pull permits for installing them and chase customers to arrange for inspections by local municipalities. It involved a lot of logistics."

EQUIPMENT INVESTMENTS

As the company grew (it added HVAC services in 2015), so did its fleet of vehicles and equipment. Hoover now owns 52 service vehicles, including Ford and Chevrolet box trucks, Ford Transits, Dodge ProMasters and Isuzu box trucks. Most of the box bodies are made by Supreme Corp. (a company owned by Wabash National Corp.) and Morgan Truck Body. J&M Commercial Van Outfitting upfitted the service vans with storage systems.

For drain cleaning, the company primarily relies on Spartan Tool 100 and 300 drum cable machines; a Maxi Miller milling machine from Picote Solutions; and a Raptor Cutter high-speed drain cleaning machine from American Pipelining Supplies.

To inspect pipelines, Hoover owns a variety of SeeSnake pipeline inspection camera models from RIDGID and M18 series inspection cameras from Milwaukee Tool. It also owns an M12 pipeline locator from Milwaukee and NaviTrak Scout pipe locators from RIDGID.

The company has invested in Soldier and Warrior trailer-mounted water jetters from Spartan Tool (3,000 psi at 12 gpm and 4,000 psi at 18 gpm, respectively) and has another Warrior on order.

Hoover also does pipe lining with a steam-cured system from Perma-Liner Industries and a hot-water-cured system from American

"I JUST STAY OUT OF THE WAY AND LET [EMPLOYEES] DO WHAT THEY NEED TO DO. PEOPLE LOVE THAT MANAGEMENT STYLE. I HAD ONE EMPLOYEE SAY HE NEVER BELIEVED THERE WAS A BUSINESS THAT RUNS LIKE OURS."

MARCUS PIWONSKI



« Murphy grabs more equipment out of the truck on a lining job.

Pipelining Supplies. It has an LED-based UV SpeedyLight+ pipe lining system on order from Pipeline Renewal Technologies.

“Pipe lining has been a game-changer for us,” Piwonski says. “I see a very bright future in pipe lining.”

Hoover is sharply focused on developing its trenchless work. That was a struggle for a while, but a recent hire, Korey Covington, who now manages the trenchless division, has turned things around. A two-person pipe lining crew currently averages about four jobs a week, and Piwonski expects to establish another crew within about six months and raise production to eight pipe lining projects a week.

HIRING GOOD PEOPLE

Investments in reliable and productivity-enhancing equipment have played a key role in growing the company’s plumbing and drain division. But zeroing in on hiring the right people to operate the equipment has been just as important.

There was a time during Hoover’s go-go growth years when there was little due diligence done when hiring.

“For many years, we were so desperate that if you were a plumber, we’d hire you,” Piwonski says. “Now we’re a lot more careful and hiring the right people has made a night-and-day difference.”

How big a difference? By late spring of this year, the company generated about \$4.6 million in sales, compared to about \$2.3 million in sales during the same period in 2023.



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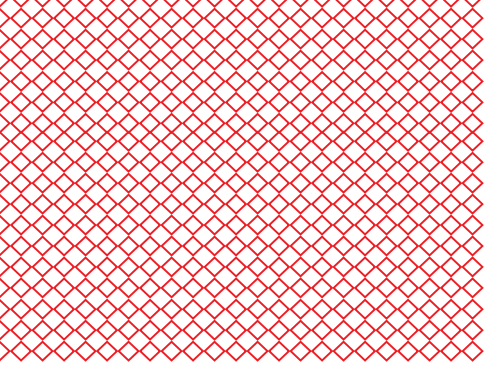
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» Hoover's employees, like Murphy and Gilbert, have a lot of autonomy when they're out in the field working. "I just stay out of the way and let them do what they need to do. People love that management style," Piwonski says.

» Equipment and materials at Hoover's shop in Troy, Michigan, have to keep the company equipped to handle a diverse array of work — drain cleaning, trenchless pipeline rehab, plumbing, HVAC, and electric.



"WHEN THINGS GO WRONG, WE STAND BEHIND OUR WORK 100%. ... IT KEEPS US IN CHECK, MOTIVATES TECHNICIANS TO DO THOROUGH EVALUATIONS. IF WE DON'T DO A PROPER EVALUATION AND DON'T PROVIDE OPTIONS THAT FIX A PROBLEM, THEN WE'VE FAILED AND THAT'S ON US, NOT THE CUSTOMERS. IT'S JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO."

MARCUS PIWONSKI

"I'm very confident we can attribute that growth to one thing: the good people we were able to bring onto our team," Piwonski says. "Our job leads are only a little higher this year than last year for the same time period, so the only real difference is the people."

Those key hires include an HVAC salesperson who, in turn, referred two technicians to Piwonski; a drain technician that also referred another technician who also referred yet another technician; and a plumbing manager.

"They're all amazing people," he says. "I just stay out of the way and let them do what they need to do. People love that management style. I had one employee say he never believed there was a business that runs like ours."

QUALITY COUNTS

A commitment to doing quality work also has been crucial

to Hoover's growth. Piwonski says it's a big differentiator in the company's market.

"That means when things go wrong, we stand behind our work 100%," he says. "And our people know it. If you're not going to do good work, it's not going to fly here. That's a strong part of our culture and it has allowed us to build a really great team. We've been very blessed."

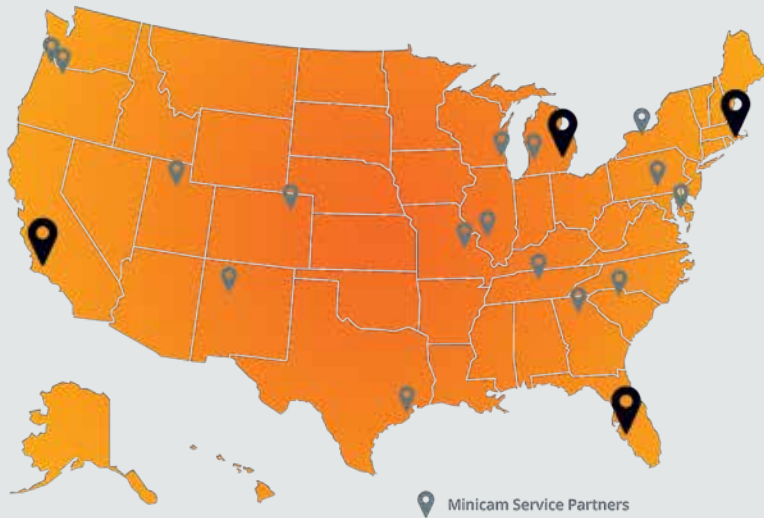
Piwonski notes that anyone can market a company — come up with a cool name, create a great logo and buy ad space.

"That's the easy part," he says. "But how you deliver your services and get people to call you back — that's the hard part. But good people help you do that."

To demonstrate its commitment to quality work, the company has a 100% customer satisfaction guarantee and doesn't charge anything if a technician can't repair something, Piwonski says.

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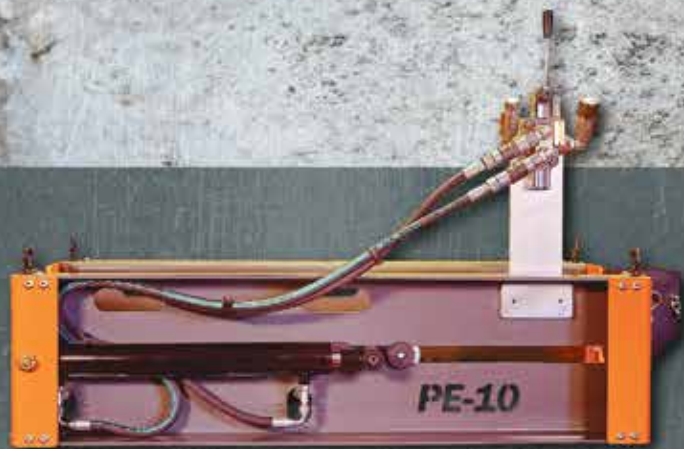
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Why establish policies like this?

"It keeps us in check, motivates technicians to do thorough evaluations," he explains. "If we don't do a proper evaluation and don't provide options that fix a problem, then we've failed and that's on us, not the customers. It's just the right thing to do for our customers."

Have those guarantees ever come into play?

"Absolutely," Piwonski says. "But situations like that usually stem from a poor evaluation. It's not rocket science. A proper evaluation should prevent problems from happening. And if we don't do a proper evaluation, we need to eat it, as well as evaluate why it happened. It's a self-policing policy because no technician wants to fail, so they usually take enough time to do a thorough evaluation. Our culture promotes doing the right thing every day."

As Piwonski looks ahead to the next five years or so, he has high hopes for the company.

"If we stay on the same trajectory, I foresee us doubling our business," he says. "I think we can become one of the Detroit metro area's largest home services providers. And with the right people, I think that's very doable." **c**

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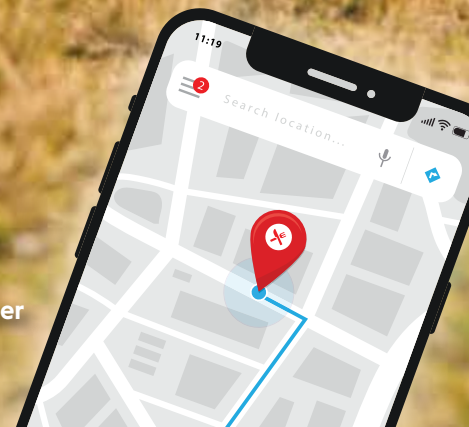
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EASING THE BURDEN

BEN SMITH EXPERIENCED THE DARK SIDE OF BUSINESS GROWTH AND IN THE PROCESS LEARNED SOME VALUABLE LESSONS ABOUT TRUSTING YOUR TEAM AND DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITIES

// By Ken Wysocky



Six years ago, Marvel Sewer and Drain in suburban Minneapolis was a one-man operation, with owner Ben Smith wearing multiple business hats and eyeing future growth.

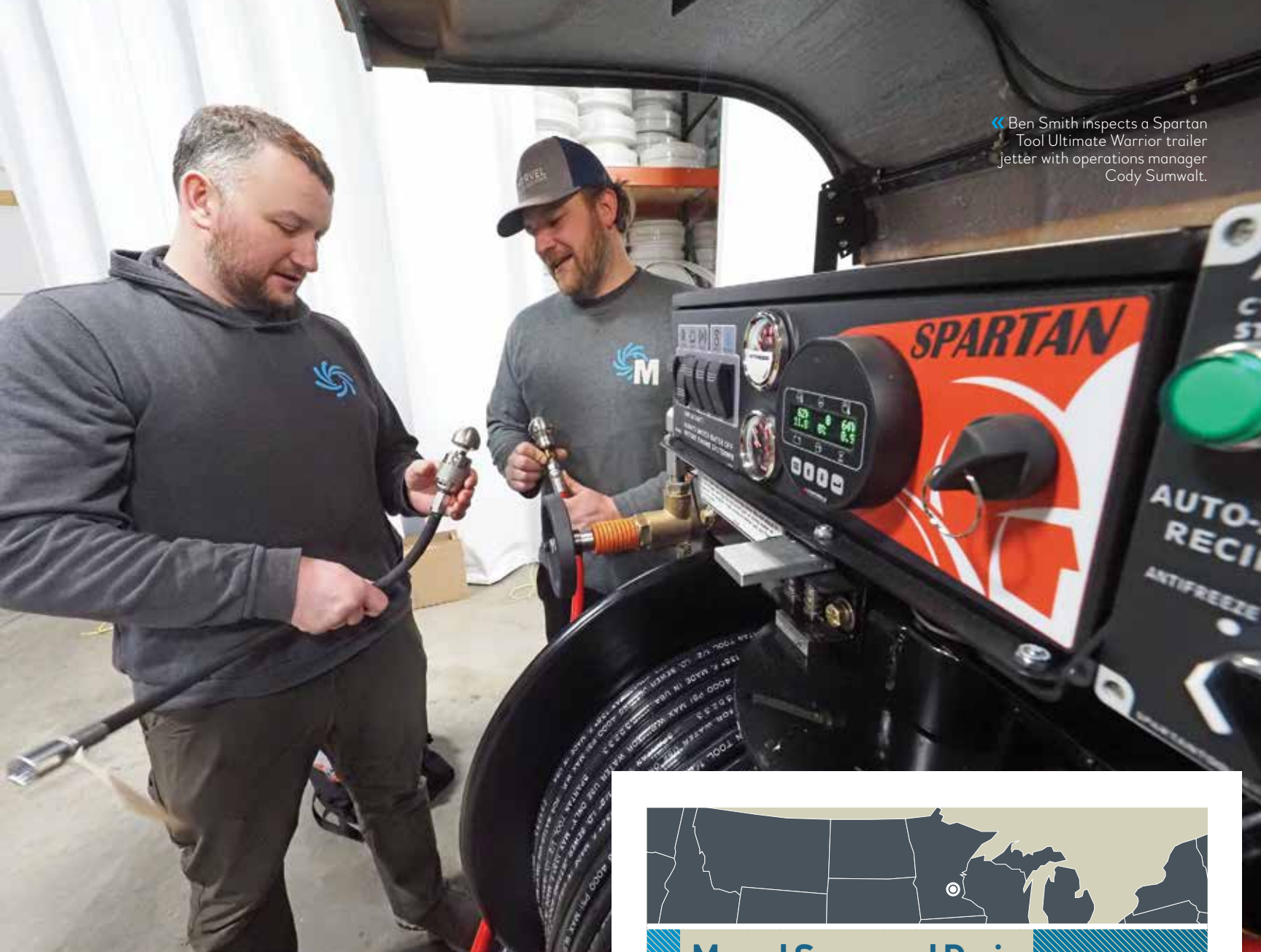
Things have changed dramatically in the ensuing years. Revenue nearly quadrupled to about \$3 million in 2023. And the company now employs 15 people, not one.

In addition, Smith has invested roughly \$1 million in advanced, productivity-enhancing equipment and technology, replacing almost all of his original fleet of equipment along the way. And the company now operates from a 10,000-square-foot building that Smith owns, instead of working out of his house.

But growing came at a cost. About five years ago, the 40-year-old entrepreneur suffered a significant anxiety attack that forced him to rethink his work/life balance. By focusing more on his mental health, Smith learned a critical lesson that other drain cleaners might do well to heed: hiring good people and delegating responsibilities can be good for both personal and business growth.

“It definitely was an ‘aha’ moment,” Smith says. “It made me realize that trying to do everything leads to a

« Ben and Emily Smith pose in Marvel Sewer and Drain’s Spring Lake Park, Minnesota, garage with their customized Ford Transit vans in the background.



« Ben Smith inspects a Spartan Tool Ultimate Warrior trailer jetter with operations manager Cody Sumwalt.

miserable life. Sometimes you just get so used to the stress that you think it's normal. You literally don't know you can lead a different kind of life until you actually lead a different kind of life.»

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Smith never intended to get into the drain cleaning field. But after eight years of working as a bartender, along with doing construction work during summers, he made a drastic change.

At the time, Smith's father, David, was working as a drain cleaner for a Twin Cities-based contractor. He agreed to pay Smith's rent if Smith worked as an on-the-job helper, which also gave Smith drain cleaning training along the way.

Smith discovered that he really enjoyed the work and solving customers' problems. So in 2012, the self-described "nerdy" comic book enthusiast established Marvel Sewer and Drain, naming the company after the noted comic book publisher. (Marvel Sewer and Drain was first featured in *Cleaner* in the January 2018 issue, when Smith was still a one-person operation.)



Marvel Sewer and Drain

SPRING LAKE PARK, MINNESOTA

OWNER Ben Smith

FOUNDED 2012

EMPLOYEES 15

SERVICES Drain cleaning, pipe lining, pipe bursting

SERVICE AREA Metro Minneapolis/St. Paul area

WEBSITE marvelseweranddrain.com

The company grew slowly but steadily, aided by investments in equipment and a strong marketing program centered on social media platforms and online reviews. But Smith really kicked things into a higher gear when he started hiring employees. That gave Marvel Sewer and Drain the workforce to expand the business, which primarily focuses on residential drain cleaning and trenchless pipeline rehabilitation.

Smith also benefited greatly from developing a peer group that consists of other drain cleaning professionals, including Shane Wyant,

SHARPENING SKILLS

Ben Smith, owner of Marvel Sewer and Drain, has made sure to put an emphasis on developing his employees' skills.

"Shiny new tools alone don't make you money," Smith explains. "You have to put systems in place and get the right people around them. So many of us are good at the work we do but have a blind eye to everything else. It's critically important to focus on both sides."

For example, Smith hired a company called Power Selling Pros to coach his customer service representatives. He also hired a leadership training and coaching firm called Forward By Choice. Smith acted on a recommendation from his general manager, Trevor Armstrong, and invested in a program called EOS — short for Entrepreneurial Operating System.

The program offers simple concepts and practical tools for building effective teams, defining roles, improving accountability, developing a shared company vision and so forth.

"It was like the company changed from a teenager into a responsible young adult who pays rent, buys his own groceries and cooks his own meals," Smith says.

Smith also had employees read a book called *The E Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, by Michael E. Berger. The book is made to order for most contractors, who often possess sound technical skills but few business management skills and no place to get help.

Many contractors suffer from what the book calls "entrepreneurial seizures" — the mindset that if people are good at a technical skill, then they'll also understand what it takes to run a business centered on that technical work.

"For instance, I'm good at fixing sewers," Smith says. "But I learned that fixing sewers is the easy part. It's all the other things that are hard."

Keeping employees trained well and on a constant path to self-improvement has been essential to the company's success. The goal, Smith points out, is to keep surrounding himself with enough competent employees to the point where he's no longer needed — a goal he says he's largely met.

"If you hire the right people and treat them the way you'd like to be treated, you'll have a happy team," he says. "And a happy team will keep customers happy, too."



vice president of Allan J. Coleman, a well-established, Chicago-based distributor of drain cleaning equipment, and Ken Beyer, founder of Michigan-based Clog Squad and developer of the Clog Dog and its flexshaft technology.

"I also rely heavily on peer groups on Facebook," Smith says. "I've developed amazing relationships with other people — more people than I could ever list — who have been incredibly helpful. They've all acted as great sounding boards. We all love to talk about what we do well. People think other people

won't make time to help them out, but all you have to do is ask. It's kind of like dating — you just have to put yourself out there."

Using social media also helped grow the company. Smith says he's always focused on generating good online reviews, but a business management software program called Housecall Pro, which includes an online review component, took things to the next level.

"We went from about 90 reviews six years ago to more than 1,000 now," he reports, noting that Housecall Pro sends

« Drain technician Nick Hobbs goes through an exterior clean-out at a Mounds View, Minnesota, home to inspect and unclog a sewer line. He's using a RIDGID FlexShaft machine and a RIDGID SeeSnake camera.

customers a text with a link they can click on to easily generate a review.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

An emphasis on continually upgrading equipment to take advantage of new technology also keyed growth.

“Having the right tools for the job is important,” Smith says. “It also helps retain employees by making their jobs easier. I don’t ever want them standing on a job site and thinking to themselves, ‘Why are we doing things the hard way?’ I want them to work safer and do less back-breaking labor as well as maintain our team’s morale and health.”

For service vehicles, Marvel Sewer and Drain owns three Ford T-250 Transits, two Transit Connects, two 3/4-ton Dodge RAM



« CIPP technician Thomas Garvey unrolls felt liner to be wetted out on a lining job in St. Anthony, Minnesota. Marvel Sewer and Drain uses MaxLiner materials and a system from Vortex.

“SOMETIMES YOU JUST GET SO USED TO THE STRESS THAT YOU THINK IT’S NORMAL. YOU LITERALLY DON’T KNOW YOU CAN LEAD A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE UNTIL YOU ACTUALLY LEAD A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE.”

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"I'VE DEVELOPED AMAZING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE. ... THEY'VE ALL ACTED AS GREAT SOUNDING BOARDS. ... PEOPLE THINK OTHER PEOPLE WON'T MAKE TIME TO HELP THEM OUT, BUT ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK. IT'S KIND OF LIKE DATING – YOU JUST HAVE TO PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE."

BEN SMITH

pickup trucks, a Chevrolet 3/4-ton pickup and an Isuzu NRR truck with a 20-foot box body from Morgan Truck Body. The company also relies on a Ford F-550 dump truck with a dump body from Rugby Manufacturing.

For drain cleaning, the company relies on an Ultimate Warrior trailer-mounted water jetter from Spartan Tool, featuring a 600-gallon water tank and a Giant pump (4,000 psi at 18 gpm); two Brute skid-mounted water jetters (4,000 psi at 9 gpm) from Jetters NorthWest; Warthog nozzles from StoneAge and Reaper nozzles from HydraFlex; RIDGID K9-102 and K9-204 FlexShaft drain machines; Clog Dog drain machines from Clog Squad; RIDGID K-45 handheld auger drain machines; Spartan 100 drain machines; and RIDGID SeeSnake Mini and microDrain pipeline inspection cameras.

The company also owns the following RIDGID equipment: NaviTrak Scout pipeline locators, a SeekTech SR-20 utility locator, an ST-305 line transmitter and an MR-10 magnetic pipeline locator.

In addition, Marvel Sewer and Drain has invested in an R8 pipe bursting machine from Roddie; a skid-steer and a mini-excavator from Bobcat; a TX 1000 Dingo mini skid-steer from The Toro Co.; a Micro S robotic milling machine from IMS Robotics; MaxLiner pipe lining liners and supplies and a pipe lining system from Vortex (all purchased from Six One Six Trenchless, a distributorship owned by Smith); and PipePatch point-repair kits from Source One Environmental.

PIPE LINING IS THE FUTURE

Pipe lining in particular has become a key service for Marvel Sewer and Drain.

"Getting into pipe lining totally changed our business," Smith says. "It led us to bigger-ticket jobs than just drain cleaning. I believe we're in the Golden Age of sewer repair. Pipelines are failing all around us and this technology is so much less intrusive. I really can't say enough good things about it."

Six years ago, the company was lining about one pipe every other week. But for the last three to four years, the company has been lining about nine pipelines a week, mostly residential sewer laterals.

"Pipes keep failing, so there's more and more work," Smith says.

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It used to take about three working days and two to three people to line pipes. Now a two-person crew can do an average lateral in about six hours, Smith says.

WEARING TOO MANY HATS

About five years ago, Marvel Sewer and Drain was on a residential pipe lining job when sand started to fill the host pipe. The sand also flowed into a city sewer main and plugged it. Smith suddenly found himself contending with upset municipal officials while also making a service call at an automotive repair shop.

“The city was calling me, our guys on the job site didn’t know



Lead CIPP technician Greg Simon (right) wets out a liner in one of Marvel's operations trailers as Garvey assists him.

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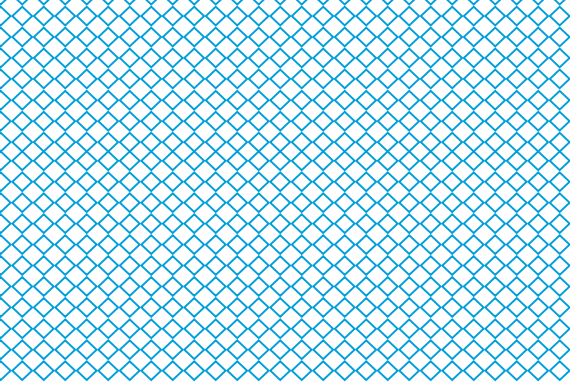
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» Garvey and Simon prep lining materials before injection into the sewer line on a job in St. Anthony, Minnesota. There wasn't a break in the line, but the job was being done as a preventive measure.

» Simon and Garvey compress felt liner filled with blue epoxy resin. Lining has become a significant part of Marvel's work in the past few years, as the company has gone from one job every other week to about nine per week, largely residential laterals.



how to proceed and I was talking to this guy at the auto repair shop," Smith says, recalling the day when his mental health collapsed like the sand in the sewer main. "While talking to the customer, I excused myself and ran out to my truck and cried uncontrollably for about an hour and a half. I was totally freaked out. I thought I'd never go back to work again. It was a huge moment for me. It showed me where you can go if you don't pay attention and listen to your body and your mind."

Smith called his wife, Emily, and told her to tell the guys on the job site to go home. Then the customer at the auto repair shop, John Klarkowski, went out to Smith's truck and consoled him.

"He was so caring," Smith says. "We're still friends today. He's a great man and a good person."

The city eventually had to excavate further to fix the problem where the Marvel Sewer and Drain crew had been lining the residential sewer lateral.

"SHINY NEW TOOLS ALONE DON'T MAKE YOU MONEY. YOU HAVE TO PUT SYSTEMS IN PLACE AND GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE AROUND THEM. SO MANY OF US ARE GOOD AT THE WORK WE DO BUT HAVE A BLIND EYE TO EVERYTHING ELSE."

BEN SMITH

"I ended up paying for all of it," Smith says. "It all worked out in the end, but it was really hard at the time."

While the problem with the sewer lateral was fixed relatively quickly, it took a while longer — including a lot of therapy — to repair Smith's mental health. But along the road to recovery, he took the advice of a mentor and hired a general manager, Trevor Armstrong.

"Trevor definitely has taken a lot of things off my plate," Smith says.

Encouraged by the results, Smith began hiring other people for other office positions, which further reduced his stress by allowing him to delegate more and more responsibilities.

Was it good for the company?

"Absolutely," Smith says emphatically. "We started bringing in different office people, which gave me more time to care about my family, my life and my team, rather than just putting out brush fire after brush fire. The new employees also brought new ideas into the company, which resulted in new beneficial processes and systems."

Smith joined an online platform called the Dad Edge Boardroom, an online community that teaches and empowers men to improve their marriages, their fathering skills and their communities.

"We meet once a week on Zoom calls and in person once a year,"

CONTINUED >>

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The Pumps with Nine Lives



👉 Marvel Sewer and Drain staff includes (from left): CIPP technician Thomas Garvey, general manager Trevor Armstrong, installation coordinator Tony Stroschein, CIPP technician Gavin Karl, CIPP lead Isaiah Davis, CIPP lead Greg Simon, co-owner Ben Smith, drain technician Jesus Calderon, co-owner Emily Smith, drain technician Nathan Jacobs, operations manager Cody Sumwalt, administrative assistant Pia Charles, and drain technician Nick Hobbs. Not pictured are administrative assistant Robyn Ranfranz and proposal manager Blake Mendez.

says Smith, who has two children. “We build the skills needed to live a good life and develop good relationships with wives, kids and work teams. It’s basically teaching me all the stuff I didn’t learn from fixing sewers. I now have a deeper sense of purpose.”

OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

Looking back, Smith says it’s been a “wild ride” for the past 12 years. But even with many setbacks and tribulations, he has no

regrets about the career choice he made years ago.

“We have 15 people that come here to work every day, row in the same direction and are happy to be here,” he says. “What we’re doing is working. What we’ve built is very cool and very awesome.”

As for what lies ahead, Smith expects continued growth.

“I feel like I owe it to our people,” he says. “I want to continue to offer more opportunities for our employees.” **c**

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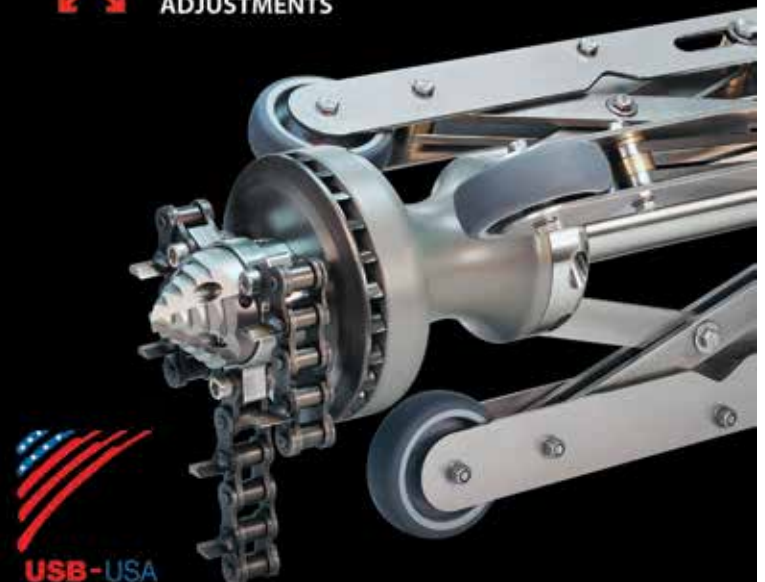
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STYRENE SOLUTIONS

There are options for dealing with the health and safety concerns related to fumes emanating from styrene-based resins during CIPP lining // By Giles Lambertson

CURED-IN-PLACE PIPE LINING has been around for more than 50 years, and for just as long, fumes emanating from styrene-based resins in the linings have concerned installers and some public health officials. The good news is that there are ways to mitigate the emissions.

The culprit is styrene, a liquid compound utilized in synthetic rubber and plastic. More to the point, styrene is in the resins that cure, harden and adhere lining to pipe interiors. Because styrene resins work well and are relatively inexpensive, many CIPP installations employ material containing the petroleum product.

Yet the fumes remain a problem. They are emitted during the CIPP installation process and, if they are inhaled in sufficient amounts, they can affect the inhaler's balance, concentration, color

vision and reaction times. Anything that thus impairs workplace performance becomes a health and safety issue, in a municipal setting or anywhere else.

The rest of the story is that the emissions usually are a momentary event. If a resin, for some reason, is incompletely cured during the lining process, there is a chance for lingering fumes, but that's not the rule. That may be small comfort to lining crews smelling it in real time.

Styrene emissions must be present in concentrations more than a thousand times greater than found in the natural environment to pose a threat, according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report. So the fumes emitted during installation mostly are noisome. Still, it is recommended that total exposure of laborers be kept below EPA-recommended levels.

"IT WAS A NIGHT-AND-DAY DIFFERENCE ... PEOPLE STANDING THERE WITH ME DIDN'T BELIEVE THERE WAS STYRENE IN THE TRUCKS AT ALL."

LANCE CULLEN

» A technician with Hall's Plumbing of Woodland, California, prepares a lining sleeve.

» Styrene emissions must be present in concentrations more than a thousand times greater than found in the natural environment to pose a threat, according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report.



» Because styrene resins work well and are relatively inexpensive, many CIPP installations employ material containing the petroleum product, but the fumes emitted can be a concern.

Be that as it may, the stuff smells. That alone is nettling to contractors, property owners and municipal managers, some of whom worry about adjacent populations being exposed to threatening concentrations of the gas. What can be done?

FINDING SOLUTIONS

One solution is to use epoxy resins, which don't contain styrene. Problem solved. Non-styrene resins have been available and in use for two decades. Unfortunately, there are other considerations with that choice, with perhaps the main one being cost. Resins without styrene can cost considerably more.

There are additional considerations. Different CIPP resins vary in their mechanical properties — things like a cured lining's hardness, flexibility and corrosion resistance. Different resins also respond differently to curing methods — that is, to hot water, steam or ultraviolet light. So, curing speed and the ultimate properties of the cured lining are factors to consider in looking at nonstyrene lining agents.

A second solution to reducing vapors is to employ a so-called "barrier product," a coating that seals the styrene odor in a liner so it can't migrate into ambient air — neither during installation of the liner nor afterward.

To test the performance of the barriers, an industry study was undertaken recently. It drew upon the fact that styrene fumes are most noticeable during the insertion process and when refrigerated trucks containing infused liners are opened at the job site.

In the study, some trucks were loaded with styrene-infused lining and some with identical lining that had been coated by the barrier product. When the trucks were unsealed, their relative concentrations of styrene fumes were detected and recorded.

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TECH PERSPECTIVE

» One solution is to use epoxy resins, which don't contain styrene, but they can cost considerably more.

“It was a night-and-day difference,” says Lance Cullen, new markets business development manager at Haartz.

The study concluded that opened trucks with unblocked lining recorded between 200 and 300 parts per million of styrene fumes, while trucks containing the coated lining registered less than 0.30 ppm.

“That’s a drop of more than 99%,” Cullen says. “People standing there with me didn’t believe there was styrene in the trucks at all.”

Cullen would, of course, tout the success of the barriers. Among the lineup of products at his company are styrene-barrier coatings. Haartz has a hundred years of specialty automotive fabric experience in which coatings and adhesives are an integral feature. The company had its CIPP barrier products under development for five years and began marketing them two years ago.



Other companies also produce barrier products and the effectiveness of such coatings is widely acknowledged. They can be designed to be compatible with particular curing methods and are durable enough to withstand an abrasive flow of liquids through a pipe. Cullen says Haartz barriers, for example, have been tested for adhesion and durability and are deemed able to support the 50-year design life of lining.

Cullen says that barrier coatings should be capable of withstanding the CIPP inversion process and be flexible enough to “dimple” when the lining passes an intersecting line, so that the covered opening can subsequently be found and reinstated.

He also strongly recommends using two barriers — one affixed to the wall of the pipe before the lining is inserted, the other on the interior of the lining so the lining is sandwiched between the barriers. However, the pre-liner barrier is considered optional.

CONSIDERING THE OPTIONS

The bottom line: There are choices for dealing with concerns about CIPP fumes. A nonstyrene resin can be used in the lining, or a barrier product can be affixed to the lining. Depending on the size of a project and lining material selected, using a barrier could be less expensive than lining a pipe with a nonstyrene resin. **c**



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Jessica Rector

THE BURNOUT BATTLE

Company leaders who prioritize the well-being of their employees and take proactive steps to prevent and combat burnout are safeguarding the long-term success of their organizations // By Jessica Rector

BUSINESS LEADERS OFTEN FIND themselves in the trenches, navigating through the chaos and driving their teams toward success. However, amid the pursuit of goals and objectives, there's a lurking enemy that can undermine all efforts — burnout.

Burnout is impacting every industry, company and role. There are no exceptions. In the burnout battle, we often find the great divide.

Leaders believe that their employees aren't being impacted by burnout or that their people have everything they need to beat it. Yet, employees are struggling in the day-to-day and believe they don't have the strategies, tools or support to help them. We call this the burnout gap — the distance between what leaders think and how employees feel.

BURNOUT WON'T GO AWAY ON ITS OWN OR WORK ITSELF OUT. YOU MUST BE INTENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC AS A LEADER AND ORGANIZATION TO PREVENT IT.

Much of the burnout battle begins with educating leaders not only on the importance of burnout, but also the urgency of it because burnout won't go away on its own or work itself out. You must be intentional and strategic as a leader and organization to prevent it.

Our research has uncovered two components of burnout: the company and individuals. More specifically, a company's culture and an individual's habits.

If one of these is misaligned it will lead to burnout. Your organization might have a wellness program, but that solely focuses on what employees can do to prevent or beat burnout in themselves, so it leaves out almost half of the contributing factors for burnout.

In other words, if employees work through a wellness

program, they will still be headed toward burnout, because it doesn't incorporate the company side of the contributing factors to burnout.

Here is why it's crucial for leaders to take proactive measures to prevent and combat burnout within their teams, along with small, actionable steps leaders can take for massive results.

BURNOUT KILLS PRODUCTIVITY

Burnout doesn't just sap employees' energy and enthusiasm; it also wreaks havoc on productivity. Exhausted and disengaged workers are far less likely to perform at their peak, resulting in more mistakes and decreased efficiency. The detrimental outcomes often can lead to safety issues. When leaders fail to address burnout, they inadvertently sabotage their team's performance and jeopardize the organization's bottom line.

Action: Find one way to acknowledge or appreciate your people at least on a weekly basis. When employees get recognition six times a year (once every other month), performance increases by 32%, according to WorkHuman. Imagine how much their performance would increase if they received recognition weekly.

BURNOUT BREEDS DISENGAGEMENT

A burned-out workforce is a disengaged workforce. When employees feel overwhelmed and undervalued, their commitment to the job dwindles, and they become more prone to absenteeism and turnover, which costs U.S. employers \$300 billion annually due to burnout. Leaders who turn a blind eye to burnout risk losing their top talent to competitors and creating a toxic culture of apathy and discontent.

Action: Address the elephant in the room and start talking about burnout. When you talk about burnout, employees lean in and become engaged, knowing that you're creating a safe place where they will be met with compassion, empathy and understanding. They recognize their work community is operating on the same foundation on which they can all build and thrive.

BURNOUT UNDERMINES CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Innovation thrives in environments where individuals are energized, motivated and encouraged to think outside the box. Unfortunately, burnout stifles creativity and dampens innovation. Exhausted minds lack the clarity and focus needed to generate fresh ideas and problem-solve effectively. By neglecting to address burnout, leaders inadvertently stifle their team's creativity and hinder their organization's ability to adapt and thrive.

Action: Encourage frequent breaks. People are most productive when you work for 50 minutes and take a 10-minute break. Instead of pushing through to finish a project or a task, give their brains the time and space to unwind and decompress. When they get back to it, they're more creative and innovative and are able to finish things faster by taking that much needed break.

BURNOUT DAMAGES HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Beyond its impact on productivity and performance, burnout takes a significant toll on employees' health and well-being. Chronic stress and overwork can lead to a host of physical and mental health issues including anxiety, depression, cardiovascular problems and weakened immune systems. Leaders who prioritize the bottom line over their team's wellbeing not only jeopardize individual health but also incur long-term costs in terms of healthcare expenses and employee morale.

Action: Implement more fun into the work days. Fun and work aren't mutually exclusive. The more fun employees have at work, the more they will stay at the company. Fun shows up in different ways for people. Ask them what they like to do for fun and then find opportunities to work it into the company culture a little.

BURNOUT LEADS TO LEADERSHIP FAILURE

Ultimately, leaders bear the responsibility for the well-being and success of their teams.

Failing to address burnout is a failure of leadership. Leaders who ignore the warning signs of burnout, or worse, contribute to its proliferation through unrealistic expectations and poor

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Rector, MBA, author of the No. 1 best-selling *Blaze Your Brain to Extinguish Burnout* and nine other books, helps organizations, leaders, and teams eradicate burnout and enhance mental health. As a burnout trailblazer, her research is used in her consulting and speaking and often shared on her podcast, "The Say Yes Experience." For more, visit jessicarector.com.

Action: Do a two-word check-in. Ask your team, "How are you really feeling?" And don't allow them to just say, "Fine." Inspire them to tap into other feelings. When they say anxious, stressed, depressed, sad, hesitant or words like these, it's an opportunity to dive into a deeper conversation and ask, "How can I help?" This lets them know you care about them as a real person and not just a worker.

The battle against burnout is more critical than ever. Leaders who prioritize the wellbeing of their employees and take proactive steps to prevent and combat burnout are not only fostering a healthier and more engaged workforce but also safeguarding the long-term success of their organizations. By leading by example, cultivating a supportive work culture, and promoting work/life balance, leaders can empower their teams to thrive under any circumstance. Remember, the fight against burnout begins at the top, and it's a battle worth waging. **c**

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

BARESHAF T PUMP PROVIDES VERSATILE DESIGN IN A COMPACT PACKAGE

By Dodie Wiesner

Jetstream of Houston has rounded out its UNx water pump lineup with the release of a new compact 2000 Series Bareshaft pump, designed with efficiency in mind for low-horsepower waterblasting operations including hydroexcavation jobs.

“Our customers love our pumps because of their easy maintenance and ability to maximize uptime on the job,” says Jordan Koster, product and marketing manager for Jetstream.

A central part of that efficiency comes from its design, which includes three crankshaft-propelled plungers allowing for smooth operation and efficiency on the job site.

Pressure outputs ranging from 6,000 to 15,000 psi and compatibility with 75 hp engines make the 2000 Series the smallest pump in Jetstream’s arsenal, yet it retains all the core features Jetstream is known for, from versatility to efficiency to ease of repair.

“The thing we kept hearing was that our customers wanted to have those benefits in a smaller pump for lower-horsepower applications,” Koster says. “Operators can quickly and easily convert between pressures in the field, making it ideal for crews that take on a range of waterblasting jobs that require different flow rates.”

Repairs are doable in the field too, thanks to a design approach that allows easy swap-outs of the pump’s packing, univalves and plungers



in under five minutes, according to the maker.

“Operators are able to complete any repairs in the field with just a few parts and ordinary hand tools,” Koster says. “Our UNx fluid ends don’t require difficult service procedures, don’t contain small, easy-to-lose parts and don’t require specific torque to assemble.”

While Jetstream specializes in waterblasting equipment, the efficiency features of the 2000 pump make it a good fit for industries that require oilfield inspection services and hydroexcavation.

“It can achieve a flow rate of up to 20 gallons per minute at up to 6,000 psi, offering the ability for multiple operators to run hydroexcavation jobs at the same time,” Koster says. “This, combined with its ease of maintenance for maximum uptime, offers a high level of efficiency for hydroexcavation services.”

Jetstream began offering the standalone 2000 Series UNx Bareshaft pump last summer, and it is now available integrated with the X-Series diesel waterblasting unit. Between test markets and a January showing at the WWETT Show, Koster says the pump has been well received.

“This pump opened doors to new applications that require less power than what our other pumps operate with, and it’s been a lot of fun to hear about how our customers have been using it,” he says. **800-231-8192; www.waterblast.com**

1 // ISUZU DEVELOPS NEW CRAFT BEER TRUCK

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America developed a new craft beer truck in collaboration with Summit Truck Body. This truck was showcased during the 2024 Craft Brewers Conference in Las Vegas in April. Isuzu’s Ultimate Craft Beer Truck debuted in 2019. The beer truck starts with a diesel-powered 5.2-liter I4 turbocharged engine that generates 215 hp and 452 ft-lb of torque. Its robust B10 durability rating of 375,000 miles is evidence of the engine’s long-term dependability. The Class 5 chassis provides payload for weekly deliveries and does not require a commercial driver’s license to operate. The truck’s low-cab-forward design provides drivers a view of the ground as little as 8 feet from the front of the truck. The new tap system’s insert has been redesigned to incorporate the Isuzu logo and a numbering system for the 8 Perlick 650SS taps. It is taller than previous generations to accommodate larger tap handles, and it is deeper so the drip tray can catch the overpour easier. **866-441-9638; www.isuzucv.com**

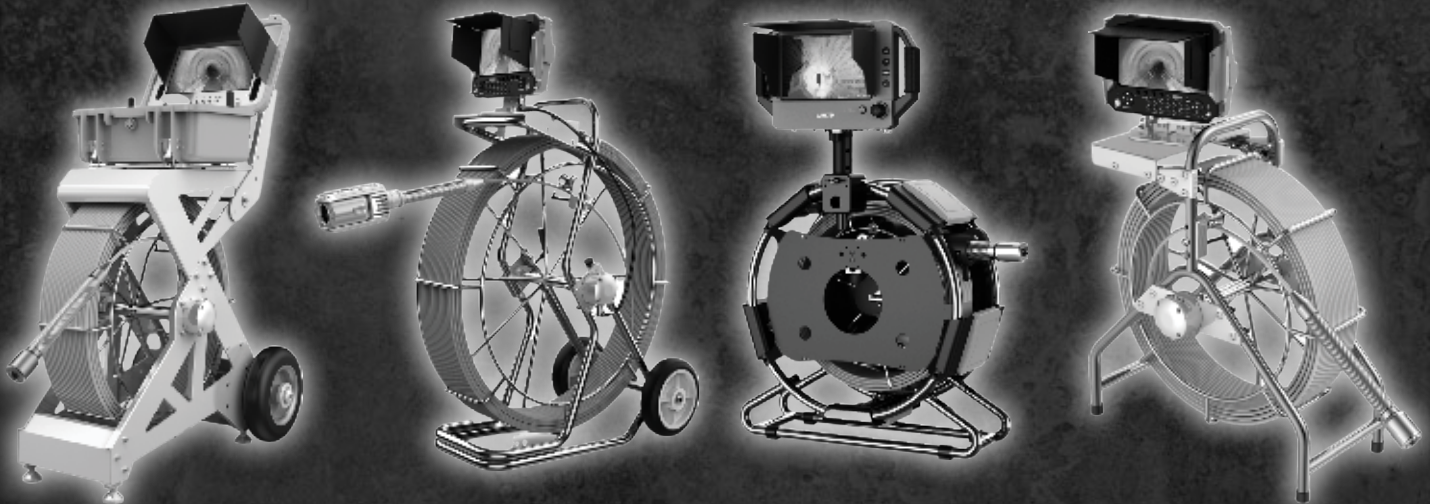




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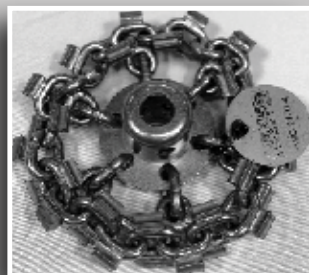
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2 // COXREELS INDUSTRIAL-DUTY LED LIGHTS FOR PC10 SERIES

Coxreels introduced a new line of three industrial-duty LED lights now available on the PC10 reels. The new LED lights feature a variety of industrial-grade features and options, including a 50,000-hour rating, internal light diffusers and shatter-resistant polycarbonate lenses. Coxreels' new LED lights also feature adjustable steel hooks for hands-free placement. Whether you are looking for the compact LED light feature (-M), the LED light with the additional power source (-K), or the industrial-duty, UL Listed LED light (-H), these reels have the perfect features to complement a variety of applications. **800-269-7335; www.coxreels.com**

3 // SUBSITE UTILIGUARD 2 RTK RECEIVER

Subsite launched its new UtiliGuard 2 RTK (real-time kinematic) receiver. Designed with survey-grade technology and dual-band antennas, the receiver delivers centimeter-grade accuracy, making it an ideal solution for locating abandoned and untracked utilities that are often difficult to pinpoint. Its high-precision capabilities provide valuable insights into underground infrastructure, helping crews avoid cross bores during future projects. Like the UtiliGuard 2 Standard and Advanced units, the RTK receiver features integrated data capture, GPS positioning and an intuitive user interface to improve work quality and maximize locate awareness. Additional enhancements include dead-reckoning capabilities, which help operators maintain accurate locates in heavy tree canopy or areas where GPS signals falter. A multifrequency fault-finding capability also allows contractors to accurately identify and locate faulted power lines using a broad spectrum of customizable frequencies, up to 10 kHz. **800-846-2713; www.subsite.com c**

Avanti becomes minority owner of US Grout

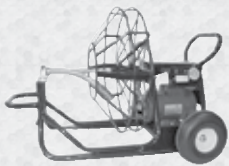
For more than 20 years, Idaho-based US Grout and Texas-based Avanti International have partnered to deliver Ultrafine cementitious grouts — a permanent, deep-penetrating, densely curing cementitious grout for sealing fractures in rock, controlling groundwater and stabilizing weak soils. The companies have now formalized their long-standing partnership. US Grout was formed in 1998 with the primary purpose of producing a grout for sealing microfractures within the underground nuclear Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Eunice, New Mexico. In the fall of that same year, US Grout and Avanti joined forces for the distribution of this specialized grout into other markets.

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C08

JET VACS



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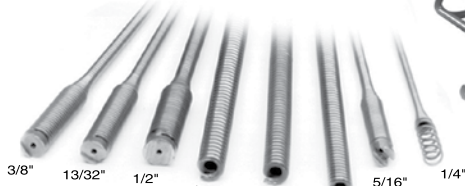
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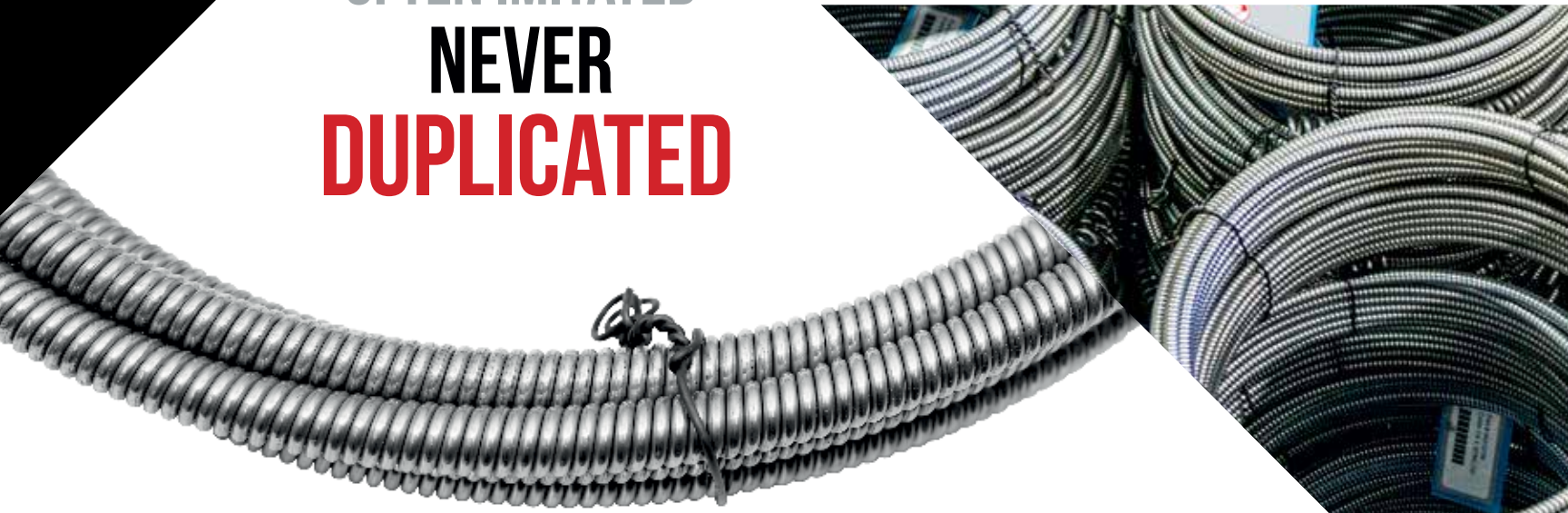
GAPVAX OPEN HOUSE - SEPT 26 - SAVE THE DATE!!



MACHINES
AS THAT
HARD
AS YOU DO

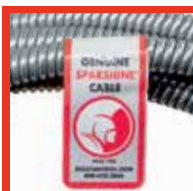


OFTEN IMITATED
**NEVER
DUPLICATED**



Count on Genuine Spartan Cable

Manufactured in Michigan on our new, state-of-the-art cable production line from the highest quality iron ore on the planet, our cable is specially heat treated for the ultimate consistency and galvanized with zinc for an added barrier of protection. Genuine Spartan Cable outperforms and outlasts the competition, even in the most demanding jobs.



LOOK FOR THE LABEL

Did you know?

Only Genuine Spartan Cable manufactured by Spartan Tool comes with the Sparshine label. When in doubt, look for the label!

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