

THE



# WHOLESALER

**News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution**



*The breathtaking Spring Creek residential community is nestled among the Canadian Rockies on the site of a historic former dairy farm. The developer — who actually grew up on the property — was especially mindful of preserving the natural beauty, providing energy efficient amenities and exploring alternative energy sources. REHAU has been heavily involved with the project, supplying radiant heating components and manifolds.*

## Joint venture forms Carrier Enterprise

ORLANDO — HVAC contractors will start to notice a new look as Carrier Sales and Distribution becomes Carrier Enterprise.

On July 1, 2009, a joint venture was formed between Carrier Corporation and Watsco Inc. to form Carrier Enterprise (CE). The new Carrier Enterprise consists of former Carrier  
*(Turn to Carrier... page 62.)*

## Niagara unveils new wholesale sales division

CEDAR KNOLLS, N.J. — In an effort to continuously develop new technology and new products to keep customers ahead of the curve, Niagara Conservation, maker of the Stealth™ 0.8-gpf, gravity-assist ultra-high-efficiency toilet, has established a new Wholesale Sales Division under the direction of plumbing industry veteran Paul Kwiat.  
*(Turn to New wholesale... page 47.)*

## Opening new branches

# Cregger Co. to become Goodman distributor

HOUSTON — The Cregger Company, a 31-year-old firm with its roots in plumbing fixtures and a history of double-digit growth, is poised to grow its HVAC business, inking a deal to become a distributor for Goodman® brand products.

According to Morris Cregger, CEO and

president of Cregger Company, the pact between a strong, regional distributor and one of the nation's largest manufacturers of heating and air conditioning units brings together two brands that are dedicated to exemplary customer service. "Goodman's extensive line of air conditioning and heating products — backed by industry-leading warranties — will help us remain the supplier of choice for both residential

and commercial contractors," he said.

An expansion into HVAC two years ago began as a strategy to diversify Cregger Company's business and open avenues for growth. "We believe our partnership with Goodman Manufacturing will enable us to continue our tradition of growth," Cregger noted.

Through the agreement, the independently owned Cregger Company will dis-  
*(Turn to Plumbing distributor... page 47.)*





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## Metropolitan Industries' Green Technology Expo a success

ROMEDEVILLE, ILL. — The 2009 Green Technology Expo held at Metropolitan Industries of Romeoville, Ill., and co-sponsored by Grundfos Pump Corporation, on September 22 attracted over 200 people interested in such technologies and variable speed circulators, solar technology, rainwater harvesting and more.

The focus of the event was to educate and inform decision makers regarding "green" pumping technologies through displays demonstrating wind and solar power, gray water recycling, rainwater harvesting, eco-friendly waste treatment, variable speed pumping technology and other energy conservation techniques.

"Preserving our natural resources is the responsibility of every individual and it is great to see our local businesses partner to provide information on advanced green technologies as displayed at the expo," said Romeoville Mayor John Noak, who attended the event. "We commend Metropolitan Industries and the other businesses on this successful event."

Among the special features was Grundfos Pump Corporation's 1,500-square-foot tractor trailer display that travels the country educating customers about the Alpha variable speed circulator pump. The Alpha incorporates a permanent magnet motor design that reduces

power consumption by 50%.

Another event highlight included touring Metropolitan's 800-square-foot Metro Green Display demonstrating the most advances in green technology under one roof. This display is off the city's electric and water grids and allows visitors to see exactly what it takes to become energy and water independent. Features include a wind and solar water well, on-site wastewater treatment, solar domestic hot water and radiant floor heating, rainwater harvesting for irrigation and laundry, gray water recycling, a whole house inverter and more.

Seminars were conducted on various green topics such as "Energy Savings through Air Elimination," "Advances in Chemical Dosing," "Energy Conservation Related to Pumping Applications" and, the most popular of the day, "Water Harvesting and Recycling Design," which attracted more than 115 attendees.

As a system supplier of wind, solar, rainwater harvesting and gray water recycling systems, Metropolitan Industries has taken a leadership role by educating decision makers through public and private special events to help contractors, plumbers, engineers and inspectors navigate their way through this new frontier of opportunity.

This proactive approach allows



Metropolitan Industries of Romeoville, Ill., and co-sponsor Grundfos Pump Corporation put on the 2009 Green Technology Expo to educate attendees about 'green' pumping technologies through displays demonstrating wind and solar power, gray water recycling, rainwater harvesting, eco-friendly waste treatment, variable speed pumping technology and other energy conservation techniques.

association groups, universities, government leaders, decision makers and others the chance to witness green technologies on the market and takes theory to the field.

Metropolitan Industries will continue to advocate for education and awareness, and encourages all who are interested to visit [www.metro-green.us](http://www.metro-green.us).

## Grundfos upgrade program offers big savings

OLATHE, KAN. — On October 1, Grundfos Pumps Corp. launched an aggressive initiative to replace old, low-efficiency pumps with new, higher-efficiency pumps, providing optimized pump performance as well as energy and operating cost savings.

The Upgrade Program, which is designed to enhance business in the short-run, will afford users the opportunity to purchase a higher efficiency pump at a discounted price, and replace lower-performing pumps with an innovative, energy-conserving solution.

"The program is not limited to only replacing other manufacturers' pumps," said market development

manager Edward Smiley. "Older Grundfos models in some of the categories will qualify as well, providing widespread benefit to the marketplace. We are offering an unprecedented incentive to upgrade old technology to new, while at the same time improving the customer's use of energy."

Pumps included in the Upgrade Program cover wide-ranging industrial and commercial building applications, as well as machine tool, vertical multi-stage, ANSI and dosing pumps. Additional information is available through authorized Grundfos distributors and sales staff.

For more information, visit [www.grundfos.us](http://www.grundfos.us).

## G-O-N receives U.S. patent

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. — G-O-N (Glue on Nozzle) LLC, was awarded U.S. Patent No. 7,618,067 for their design of the first nickel-bronze-to-PVC downspout nozzle. The Patent, issued on November 17, provides almost 18 years of patent rights.

Plumber-turned-entrepreneur Scott Danboise recalls the initial idea of a glue-on nozzle and the arduous task of bringing it to fruition. "It really has been a blessing," said Danboise, "from spending years in the field, to learning all of the nuances of creating and manufacturing a product from scratch was quite a process."

Now celebrating the two-year mark since its inception, G-O-N has become a relative staple to many plumbing contractors and engineers who utilize PVC on their jobs. Citing the ease of installation and labor sav-

ings, the nozzle literally sells itself.

"The savings in time and material is the key behind this product," Danboise said, "as the plumber is no longer having to buy transition couplings, no-hub bands, and waiting on the bricklayers or stucco crew to complete the rough in."

Recent improvements to the Glue-On Nozzle provide long-lasting security, including a reverse-thread PVC insert and a new secure escutcheon.

Even in a tumultuous period for the plumbing industry, the company has seen increased sales and market penetration. Jason Shirey, director of sales, noted, "Our market presence and penetration is increasing every day, and so is our goal of becoming an industry standard."

For more information, visit [www.glueonnozzle.com](http://www.glueonnozzle.com).

## American Standard brands launches online repair parts store

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — On October 1, the American Standard Brands online repair parts store opened for business, with 150 American Standard parts available for sale any time, day or night.

The easy-to-use site includes a number of features to help customers find and order the parts they need with just a few simple clicks. Once located, clicking on an individual item automatically adds it to the shopping cart where it can be purchased and shipping information entered. For added convenience, user profile information may be stored on the site for future access.

The online store also includes a handy repair parts diagram tool to help users visually identify parts.

Customer service support for the new store is available at 800/488-8049 Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. EDT, and on Saturdays between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. EDT. This service provides callers

with additional product information, help in locating products, or assistance in purchasing parts and access-



ories offline.

American Standard Brands is a leading North American manufacturer of a wide range of quality kitchen and bath products serving the residential and commercial markets; employs more than 6,000 people in the U.S., Canada and Mexico; and markets products under the American Standard®, Crane Plumbing®, Eljer®, Porcher® and Jado® brands.

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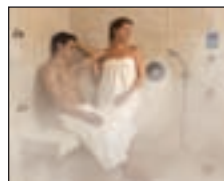
## THE WHOLESALER

### The Front Page



Geothermal energy and radiant heat go hand in hand at the Spring Creek residential community nestled among the Canadian Rockies of Alberta. REHAU is working with Geo Furnace Technologies on the project, providing radiant heating system components and identifying the best manifold solutions to provide comfortable, economical heating for the development. For more, turn to page 48.

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### Next Month

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## Thoughts from HARDI meeting

## Strategies for business success in 'the new normal'

As I begin this column I am traveling home from HARDI's annual meeting in Orlando. From what they tell me, attendance was down about 10% from their all-time peak in 2008. I find the high level of attendance really amazing, and I am sure that it is due to the ongoing dedication and efforts of the board, staff and members to make their meetings meaningful and worth attending.

I think HARDI's unwavering focus has allowed them to grow while other industry groups struggle. From my vantage point, here's what I see:

- First and foremost, the members come to the meeting and they come to work. The wholesalers and suppliers are asked to have one decision-level executive attend the meeting. Many companies send several senior execs to the meeting. While I enjoy meeting with people at all levels in a company, meeting with decision makers provides the highest value to our company.

- Second, the members attend the committee meetings, the educational sessions and the conference booth program. While the meetings are always held in a nice venue, very few, if any, people "skip out" of the working sessions. As a vendor, I know that the right people will be at the meeting

— and show up at all the planned activities. Someone once told me that the members do it out of respect for suppliers and other members who are in attendance. (As an aside, I was at another association's meeting several years ago and a wholesaler's president was telling me how he had played golf during the conference booth session. It was difficult not to show my anger since we had just wasted a ton of money to get a table in the poorly attended conference booth area. Our mission was to see guys just like him, but many of them were AWOL (absent without leave),

playing golf and gambling instead.

- Third, there is a long-term commitment to high-quality programs at the meetings. While there isn't normally any earth shattering, meaning-of-life insight disclosed at any association's meetings, there are always new insights, new points of view and plenty of reminders that we all need to pry ourselves out of our personal ruts. I always come back from HARDI tired from the intense meetings and reenergized about one

or two specific topics. I have always considered that the meeting was well worth the dollar and time costs.

- Finally, they provide a pre-registration list prior to the meeting and an attendee list at the meeting. This may seem like a simple detail, but it allows wholesalers and vendors to plan and prepare for appointments at the meeting. (For the most part, we will no longer attend meetings where the attendees are not published. We have been to way too many meetings where the attendance was not worth the cost and the trouble. I suspect that, in some cases, no list is produced because the

**This recession continues to have ripple effects and some markets may not yet have been impacted since they are at the far end of the ripple. Stay lean, keep your eyes on the gauges and take action if the business starts south.**

planners are embarrassed by their inability to get members to attend. At one such meeting last year, another vendor told me that he felt cheated by the lack of attendance after being promised "record attendance." He said, "Next time I'll be smart enough to ask if it is a record because it is so low.")

We have been attending HARDI meetings for 20 years and now have a handsome plaque to prove it. My dad started attending 20 years ago; we attended several meetings together and now Jen, my daughter, and I attend. We feel that this association has been the highest ROI marketing investment — in terms of dollars and time — that we have made over those 20 years. Congrats and thanks to everyone at HARDI who make it happen.

While at the meeting, we had an opportunity to talk with a lot of wholesalers who have reconfigured their businesses for the "new normal." As you might expect, there were a mixture of reports ranging from: "We're growing"; "We're down a little"; "We're down a lot," to "We're really struggling and the jury is out regarding our long term future."

In the remainder of this column, I'll share some thoughts for each of these groups in reverse order.

**We're struggling**

Get yourself into turn-around mode. Struggling companies have their best shot when they get out of "business-as-usual" mode and into a highly focused turn-around configuration.

- **Stop the bleeding.** You have



**BY RICH SCHMITT**  
Management specialist

more time when you are not bleeding. Make the changes required to get into the black, even if just a little.

- **Get right-sized.** The struggle becomes easier when you are not carrying additional weight. This applies to all expenses in all areas. Get your expenses right for the size business you are, not the business that you want to be, wish you were or hope you will be.

- **Watch your pricing.** Many companies are dropping their pricing to keep cash flowing. While this may be required in the short-term, this is seldom a long-term fix. Further, most companies drop their pricing more, or far more, than is really required to keep cash flowing. If this is your strategy, be sure to adjust your expense budgets to match the anticipated lower gross margins available to cover those expenses.

- **Get about selling.** Don't sit hoping that the economy will recover and business will again flock to you with little real selling effort. Those days may or may not be gone forever, but they are certainly gone for now.

- **Get help.** It is a very human trait to procrastinate getting help. Most of us wait too long to call a doctor — even as our health is changing dramatically. It is the same with companies. Many times a turn-around-focused consultant can get your company back on course with the least trauma. Don't wait until the situation is desperate or beyond hope to make the call. If a potential consultant recommends a new strategic planning process or offsite executive retreat as the solution to your crisis, keep looking.

**We're down a little or a lot**

While many companies find themselves in this situation, some have become resigned to and actually comfortable with their plight. So they have downsized and are sitting to wait out the storm. I think the team should be fighting to offset any downward trend in every way possible. Selling, pricing for profits and prudent expansion should be on the agenda in a very determined way. There are some acquisitions that may now make sense as some owners no longer have the stomach for (Turn to Still doing OK... page 62.)

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## Gerber recognized for successful turnaround



Arthur T. Perkins Jr. (left), TMA chairman of the Board of Directors, and Michael Werner, Gerber CEO and president.

WOODRIDGE, ILL. — Gerber Plumbing Fixtures LLC received the 2009 National “Turnaround of the Year Award” for a mid-size company as honored by the Turnaround Management Association (TMA), an international non-profit organization with over 9,000 members dedicated to corporate renewal.

The mid-size category is for companies with revenue between \$50 million and \$300 million. Gerber, based in Chicago, was selected in honor of its strategic revival from near bankruptcy in 2002, prior to the acquisition of its assets by Globe Union, to profitable growth in the current recession. Gerber’s corporate restructuring was led by CEO and president Michael Werner, who in 2003 took over the family-run 70+

year old company and modernized the business while maintaining its loyalty to the professional trade.

“After globalizing our manufacturing, introducing hundreds of new products and strengthening our professional heritage, we are proud that Gerber is now one of the strongest suppliers in the plumbing wholesale channel,” said Werner.

During Gerber’s re-building, which took five years to

complete, the company’s manufacturing processes, supply chain and quality systems were significantly enhanced, hundreds of new products were created, including many award-winning green and high-performance toilets and faucets, and delighting customers became the company’s number one priority. Further, Gerber

**Gerber has continued to grow its sales by maintaining its loyalty to the professional channel and by working on behalf of its plumbing wholesaler customer base.**



has continued to grow its sales by maintaining its loyalty to the professional channel and by working on behalf of its plumbing wholesaler customer base.

In October 2009, TMA publicly recognized Gerber’s corporate restructuring and turnaround success with increased profits in spite of the economic downturn. Werner accepted the “Turnaround of the Year” award during the October 8 keynote luncheon at the TMA Annual Convention in Phoenix.

For more information, visit [www.gerberonline.com](http://www.gerberonline.com) or call 866/538-5536.

## Panasonic launches online resource for HVAC professionals

SECAUCUS, N.J. — As a part of its commitment to assisting and educating building professionals, Panasonic Home & Environment Company has launched a new online resource specifically targeted to HVAC distrib-



utors and contractors. [www.panasonic.com/hvac](http://www.panasonic.com/hvac) provides resources and information about Panasonic ventilation fans that meet various green building standards and improve overall indoor air quality issues.

“The demand for airtight constructions has made the HVAC’s role in building indoor environments even more critical,” said Anita So, marketing specialist. “By providing an online tool that gives the HVAC professionals an easy-to-use and immediate overview of Panasonic’s ventilation solutions, we hope to help them meet new IAQ standards and grow their business.”

Select Panasonic ventilation fans, such as the company’s flagship WhisperGreen models, are Energy Star rated, Home Ventilating Institute certified and ideal for complying with ASHRAE Standard 62.2, which is the ventilation platform adopted by LEED for Homes, Energy Star Indoor Air Quality Program and California Title 24.

For more information visit [www.panasonic.com/ventfans](http://www.panasonic.com/ventfans).

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# Piping Industry Under Scrutiny

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

There is a growing concern in our industry with distributors and end users about defective products in the supply chain. Further investigations with our customers have confirmed many instances where other manufacturers' products have been below the ASTM and ASME minimum standards for wall thickness. Customers have asked Core Pipe to expand our efforts to help identify these problems for them, especially in the higher alloys. In response to these requests, we will now 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.

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12.

•THE WHOLESALER® — DECEMBER 2009

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### LA-CO Industries acquires majority of Intrama

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, ILL. — LA-CO Industries, Delaware (a wholly owned subsidiary of LA-CO Industries Inc.) acquired the majority ownership of Intrama S.A.S. Intrama is a leading European industrial marking products manufacturer and distributor based in Blyes, France. Over the past several years, Intrama and LA-CO Industries have built a strong cross distribution relationship. Intrama's brand and products lines strongly compliment the Markal® range of markers which are widely used in industrial applications ranging from steel production, automotive assembly, ship building, metal fabrication, building construction, lumber/timber processing and many more.

Olivier Magnin, the former majority owner of Intrama S.A.S., will re-

tain the role of president, director general for the new company. He will continue to be supported by his current team of personnel mainly based at their headquarters in Blyes, France.

Dan Kleiman, CEO of LA-CO Industries noted,

"The experience of the Intrama personnel will strengthen our knowledge base in several ways, including marker manufacturing, European logistics, R&D and accelerating our commercial interests via their sales team."

LA-CO Industries was assisted in this acquisition by Bulkley Capital L.P. of Dallas Texas. Bulkley Capital provided expertise during the acquisition process and acted as a financial advisor during this transaction.

For details, visit [www.laco.com](http://www.laco.com) or [www.markal.com](http://www.markal.com).



### Increase in home improvement projects a further sign of promising economic recovery

GOLDEN, COLO. — Americans are, once again, devoting significantly more of their resources to discretionary home improvement projects, according to the ServiceMagic.com *Home Remodeling and Repair Index* for the third quarter of 2009. Homeowners who previously delayed elective projects or had, instead, focused on DIY projects swung the pendulum back this quarter by hiring home professionals with an emphasis on remodeling projects, up 14% from the third quarter of last year.

Economic challenges and limited available credit lines in the preceding four quarters forced consumers to reevaluate spending — including the method of payment — leading to much less financing and more cash-in-hand transactions for discretionary projects. Results from ServiceMagic.com's quarterly consumer sentiment survey indicate that of the 67% of cash-paying homeowners who took part in a remodel or addition project, 85% actually preferred this method of payment over financing (15%) or using a credit card (7%).

The Q3 2009 ServiceMagic.com *Home Remodeling and Repair Index* is based on the 1.5 million service requests received by homeowners across the country, using ServiceMagic.com. The entire survey can be found at <http://servicemagic.com/survey>.

For the first time in 2009, ServiceMagic.com — a website connect-

ing homeowners to prescreened, customer-rated contractors — reported an increase in requests for 'Cleaning & Maid Services,' a category that was a tell-tale sign of tightened home spending at the beginning of the recession. Once-shunned discretionary projects are now on the rebound including:

- Window coverings
- Siding
- Deck construction
- HVAC.

With the onset of the recession, homeowners had begun to shift away from elective improvement projects and putting more of their resources into repairs. But in Q3, larger remodeling projects, which showed modest gains in Q2, continued to build steam along with smaller projects such as countertop and cabinet replacements.

"Homeowner optimism continued to improve and more people are willing to confidently invest in home improvements beyond required repairs and maintenance," said ServiceMagic.com CEO Craig Smith. "The combination of consumer sentiment and available cash contributed to an uptick in remodeling categories and foreshadows continued growth for the foreseeable future."

According to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies, homeowner spending was cyclically in its steepest rate of decline a year ago and "we are seeing consumers once again taking action in this quarter versus daydreaming about opportunities for home advancements," concluded Smith.

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## SHOWROOM STYLE

# Turn your problems into opportunities!



BY PETER SCHOR  
Showroom specialist

Many of us are having financial challenges in these tough economic times. If you followed my monthly column this year, or can go back and look in *The Wholesaler* magazine's digital archives (you can find them at [www.thewholesaler.com](http://www.thewholesaler.com)), you will find many proactive things that can be done to meet and overcome these challenges.

When faced with problems or set-backs in business or life, what is your immediate reaction? If you are like most people, you probably curse them. Why did this happen to me? What am I going to do now? My plans are ruined. This response is only natural. However, after the initial disappointment wears off, you have a choice to make. You can swallow the misery and dwell on the negative aspects of your situation or you can find the benefit or lesson that the problem is offering. Yes, you will probably face a period of uncertainty or struggle, but there is always a flip side to the difficulty. You see a "problem" that is often not a problem at all. It may actually be an opportunity!

You probably know or have heard about someone who lost his or her job and then went on to start a successful business or obtain a new position in another company. In most instances, that person will tell you that if he or she had not been laid off, the new business opportunity would have never been started.

How about the times you were absolutely convinced that a particular job was perfect for you; you had a great interview, and just couldn't wait for the offer. But you ended up being rejected. Days or months later, a new job came along and you realized that the first position would have not worked out. In fact, it was a blessing.

### How adversity serves us

In my experience, adversity can serve us on the following levels:

- **Adversity gives us perspective.** Once you have recovered from a life-threatening illness, a flat tire or a leaky roof doesn't seem so troubling anymore. You are able to rise above petty annoyances of daily living and focus your attention on the truly important things in life.
- **Adversity teaches us to be grateful for the many blessings we normally take for granted.** Through problems and difficulties, especially those that involve loss or deprivation, you develop a deeper appreciation for many aspects of your life. It's trite but it's true — you don't usually appreciate something until it is taken away from you. When you have no hot water, you suddenly value hot water. It isn't until you're sick that you learn to cherish good health. The wise person continues to dwell on blessings, even after the loss or deprivation has passed.
- **Adversity strengthens us and allows us to discover a reservoir of previously untapped abilities.** After surviving a difficult ordeal or overcoming an obstacle, you emerge emotionally stronger. Life has tested you and you were equal to the task. Then you are better equipped to handle it. Problems and challenges bring out of the best within us — we discover abilities that we didn't know we possessed. Many of us would have never discovered these talents if life hadn't made us travel over the bumpy terrain.
- **Adversity encourages us to make changes and take action.** Most people cling to old, familiar

patterns, regardless of how boring or painful their lives have become. It often takes a crisis or a series of difficulties to motivate them to make adjustments in their lives. Problems are often life's way of letting you know that you are on the right course and need to take corrective action.

• **From adversity, we gain valuable knowledge that we can use at a later date.** Take the example of a failed business venture. The entrepreneur may learn something that enables him or her to succeed spectacularly on his or her next endeavor.

• **Each problem or difficulty leads us to something better.** A relationship terminates and you go on to a more satisfying relationship. You lose your job and find a better one. In these instances, the "problem" is not a problem but rather an opportunity in disguise.

• **Overcoming adversity makes you feel better about yourself.** When you muster all of your courage and determination to overcome an obstacle, you feel competent and gain confidence. You have a greater feeling of self-worth and you carry these positive feelings into subsequent activities.

Sure, you'll have your share of problems and adversities in life. I'm not suggesting that when tragedy strikes you deny your emotions or refuse to face reality. What I am saying is don't immediately judge your situation as a "tragedy" or dwell on how bad off you are. Sometimes you won't be able to instantly spot the benefits of these adversities that come from being in your situation.

Don't give up! Don't ever, ever, ever give up! Continually ask yourself what you have learned from your trying experiences and focus on moving forward and growing as a person. In times of crisis, always strive to maintain an optimistic attitude and an open mind — for this is the environment that will allow you to turn problems into opportunities.

During this holiday season, live in the gratitude of whatever you currently have in your life. You can never achieve true satisfaction unless you find gratitude in your existing situation. Cherish your family, friends and business associates and tell them so. Let us make this a time of giving to the less fortunate. It is a great way of basking in the rays of the bright light. Please say a prayer for the safety of our armed forces around the world and find a way to let them know that we are proud of them. Be gentle toward yourself.

Thank you for following my monthly column (since 2004) and allowing me to impact your life in a positive way. ■

*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 816/408-5346, fax: 916/408-5899. e-mail pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com or visit his web site: www.dynamicresultsonline.com.*

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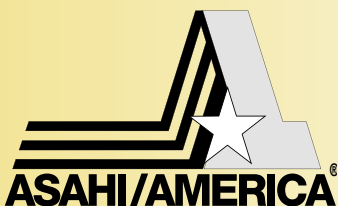
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*A tribute to one of the best*

# People are the strong glue that holds our industry together

Another month has come and gone! Putting together a “Martin’s Corner” reading for you all is a lot of fun and allows me the ability to step out of the routine “box” that I thrive in on a day-to-day basis. “Out of the box” allows me to stretch my thoughts and try to share new ones with you in reference to our industry and even our industry needs as seen by yours truly!

Out of the box this month came from making a sales call on and paying a visit to one of my many long-time customers and friends in this industry — Mr.

Gary Cartright of Piping & Equipment in Houston, Texas. It would be more exact to state that he is one of our industry’s most beloved long-time friends indeed! I decided to entitle this month’s issue as I did to stress what good people and strong leadership really means to the success of the business we all love.



Gary Cartright

It is acknowledged that while Mr. Cartright is not the only person (man or woman) who falls into the category of well-thought-of friends and leaders of the industry, he is certainly — in my opinion — at the top of that rather distinguished list! I’ve known about Gary for many years, but have really known him for about 15 years.

My first real contact with him (one on one) was during the start-up campaign of the ASA Education Foundation. Piping & Equipment was put on my list (by the late Karl Neupert) of contacts to speak with about the agenda for the foundation and to ask for a donation. In reality, here I was about to make a presentation and ask for a donation commitment to what was really a “plumbing foundation” — at that time — from a very successful PVF house in the middle of Houston! Well, my friends, that may be old news now, but it represents the foundation (no pun intended) for my belief that he indeed is one of the best, and really cares about industry support and efforts. I was about halfway through my presentation to Gary in his office, and he wrote on a scratch piece of paper and handed it to me. I took it and saw his financial commitment to the foundation — a

plumbing foundation — written on that piece of paper!

I asked him a little later why he so quickly gave from deep in his company’s pocket for an education effort and dream that at that point really had nothing for a pipe, valve and fitting industrial house. As I recall, his answer was solid, honest and matter of fact. He said, “I know, but I have faith that we will have PVF-oriented training some day, and if the industry doesn’t get behind the effort as a team, we’ll all fail.”

It’s all this and more that led him to receive the Industrial Piping Division of the American Supply Association’s IPD Award of Excellence recently at the ASA Annual Convention held in Washington, D.C. (I’ll have a couple comments on the convention at the close of this article.) I believe the industry is indeed better off due to Gary and people like him who have paved the way for many years to help ensure us all of a piping and plumbing industry we can be very proud of for years to come.

He sure made my day some 15 years ago during that meeting with him — and we have been solid

**“We treat our people with dignity and respect. I believe that we deliver outstanding customer service. The most valuable asset we have at Piping and Equipment is our employees, and we truly have a great team.”**

friends ever since.

Having the opportunity to sit down with Gary recently (after I asked him for an order) to discuss his career, the industry and what it all has meant to him was a real pleasure for me and I believe it will be for you, too. So, get yourself a cup of Joe, settle back and “read up” on my friend and one of our industry’s best friends, Mr. Gary Cartright, ‘cause after all, it’s people that hold our industry together!

**Martin:** Gary, it is great to be able to spend some time with you today. Let’s get to the issue at hand, which is your career, our industry, and simply as you look back and ahead, what has it all meant to you?

**Cartright:** Thanks, John, to you and *The Wholesaler* for getting together with me. I love to talk about the success of our company. Piping and Equipment was founded by Roger D. Patterson, chairman;

Ronald N. Yeakle, president; Guy Fisher, vp; Roger Foss, treasurer; and myself as secretary on January 20, 1969. We opened in Pensacola, Fla., and Baton Rouge, La., with the help and support of our chosen major suppliers: Jamesbury, Wm. Powell, Henry Vogt, Ladish, Flowline, Swepco, Armco (Outokumpu), Grinnell (now Anvil International), LTV, U.S. Steel, and Stockham.

Roger Patterson established the following statement, which became the single motivating factor for our beginning: “Our attitude must be an enthusiastic desire to please our customers in any and every way possible!”

We grew to seven locations — Pensacola & Panama City, Fla., Gonzales, La., Houston, Freeport and Beaumont, Texas; and Decatur, Ala. Houston is the home of the Transportation Products Group, the Texas Automation Group, as well as the standard PVF location.

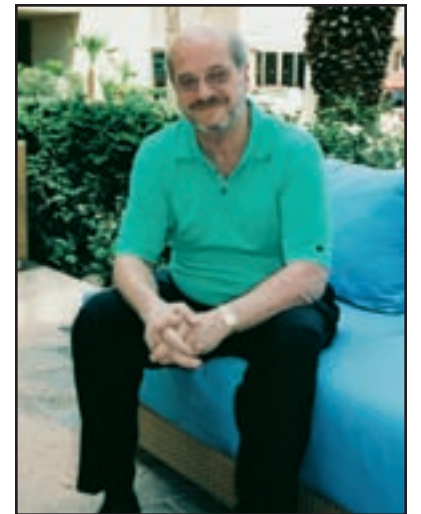
**Martin:** What are some of the key ways you’ve partnered with your suppliers and customers over the years to ensure profitability and good business relationships?

**Cartright:** The Florida Group has

always held the philosophy that both our customers and suppliers are true partners. We believed that you must be open and honest at all times with both of them.

As an example, in negotiations with major customers, we have offered to self audit, and we have actually returned cash to a customer who insisted on firm pricing for the contract. Market pricing fell over the course of that contract, and without pressure or any prodding, we reviewed our situation and returned money back to our customer. I do not believe they ever forgot our honesty and thoughtfulness. Through this process, the vendors on this project cared for the relationship that they knew we had with the end user. That gained us the best service and the best follow through on every order that was possible.

**Martin:** You had the opportunity



BY JOHN E. MARTIN  
PVF industry veteran

several years ago to sell your company to one of the first roll-ups of some major wholesalers in the country, yet you did not. Later, you in fact did sell your company to the well-known Fairmont Supply Co. As a two part question:

• Could you share a couple points with the readers as to why and how you came to the decision that you and your people were better off staying the course as a viable independent wholesaler in the game?

• And, then recently (other than the obvious reason of prosperity), what were the other determining factors causing you to indeed become part of the Fairmont family?

**Cartright:** Well John, in reference to the first question, as you know, we talked to a number of competitors and firms about selling total P&E. It was very tempting to be part of the large roll up that the other P&E (Georgia) decided to be involved with. I just did not want to be part of a large organization where someone else would be telling us how to operate, what we would sell, to whom we could sell, and all the other issues that being part of a large controlling company can bring. We simply wanted to stay independent and protect our people.

To the second part of your question, the timing was perfect for us when Fairmont entered the picture. In fact, at the time, we were meeting with another large competitor who was spending a lot of time giving us reasons why we should sell to them, but we just did not feel comfortable.

We had to tell Fairmont on their first call to us that we were under an obligation to speak to no one else for 45 days. I told them to call back after the 45th day if they were still interested. On April 2 of that year, they indeed called back and stated their interest was still keen, so we set a date for the first meeting. On July 2 (just a few short months later), the sale was completed.

(Turn to Piping... page 36.)



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See contact information on page 66



## Hilti expands production with new facility in Mexico

SCHAAN, FLA. — Hilti is expanding its production network with a new facility in Matamoros, Mexico, to manufacture fastening products for the



North and Latin American markets. During a grand opening event at the site, Hilti and local community officials toured the plant, which began production in November.

The facility allows Hilti to ship products directly to locations throughout North and Latin America. This saves freight costs while also reducing delivery times and the environmental impacts of transportation.

Encompassing some 15,000 square meters of production space, the facility cost \$14 million Swiss francs to build. It initially will employ 50 people, but this figure is expected to grow to 150 by 2015.

The facility is another important link in Hilti's international production network that now includes nine plants worldwide. Scott Tindle, an experienced, long-time Hilti employee, has been named plant manager.

### New brochure available on Acryline spa baths

LYSTER, QUEBEC — Acryline® Spa Baths has produced a new eight-page full-color *Experience Wellness* brochure. This informative brochure includes images and information to make a knowledgeable decision about the right spa bath for each

The most modern technology and equipment is used to ensure Hilti's high standards of quality and efficiency. The Mexico-based facility enables Hilti to limit negative currency influences because both material procurement and production take place in the same economic area.

"The opening of our plant in Mexico represents the next step in the development of our global plant structure," said Hilti Group chairman Pius Baschera. "The further strengthening of our international production network ensures the improvement of our competitive ability and our presence with the customers."

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# Letters to the editor

## Readers appreciate Schmitt

Re: Rich Schmitt

His piece on "Smart Management" was a good read and such articles are of continued interest to our company.

Thanks for publishing and keep the good stuff rolling.

Phil DePaul  
Coastal Plumbing Supply Co.  
Staten Island, N.Y.

Through my years in P/HVAC/R distribution, I have enjoyed reading *The Wholesaler*, and especially Rich Schmitt's column. You have been an ongoing resource for running our company. Keep up the good work.

Bill Sasse  
South Central Company  
Columbus, Ind.

I have been reading articles by Rich Schmitt in your recent maga-

zines and have found them very helpful. He really seems to capture the issues of the moment and gives good information on how to resolve those issues. Most recently, I have read the article on Smart Management, "Prepare your company for the new normal," and find it insightful.

Brad W Jordahl  
Dakota Supply Group  
Fargo, N.D.

Just wanted to take a moment to say that the articles by Rich Schmitt have been very insightful, and helped our organization rethink and implement a new and better way of operating in this new economy. Thank you for including his articles in your publication, *The Wholesaler*.

Jackie Dyer  
Sunshine Plumbing  
West Palm Beach, Fla.

# NAHB commends Congress on extending home buyer tax credit

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association of Home Builders applauded Congress for passing legislation that will extend and expand the \$8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit.

"We commend lawmakers for acting in a bipartisan manner to extend the first-time home buyer tax credit beyond its November 30 deadline and expand it to a wider group of home buyers," said NAHB chairman Joe Robson, a home builder from Tulsa, Okla. "The tax credit has proven to be a powerful economic incentive. Today's action by Congress will further stabilize housing and the economy by creating new jobs, stimulating home sales, reducing foreclosures, cutting excess inventories and stabilizing home prices."

The new law extends the \$8,000 credit for first-time home buyers for sales contracts entered into by April 30, 2010 and closed by June 30. Fur-

ther, it was expanded to include a \$6,500 credit for owners of existing homes who purchase a new principal residence. Existing home owners can claim the \$6,500 tax credit if they have resided in their principal residence for five consecutive years out of the last eight. The income eligibility limit to claim the full credit amount for both groups of buyers were raised to \$125,000 for individuals and \$225,000 for married couples.

NAHB estimates this action will create 211,000 jobs and generate 180,000 additional home sales in the coming year. It is also expected to generate \$9.6 billion in wage income and \$6.9 billion in federal, state and local taxes. The legislation, which also extends unemployment benefits and provides broader tax benefits for businesses with net operating losses (NOLs), was expected to be signed into law shortly by President Obama.

"The new NOL rules will throw a lifeline to struggling businesses, allowing them to continue making payrolls, paying business loans and otherwise keep their doors open until the economic recovery takes hold," said Robson.

## Legend Valve opens northern Nevada DC

RENO, NEV. — Doug Roberts, partner with Sacramento-based Panattoni Development Company, announced that Legend Valve and Fitting has leased 40,000 square feet of space in Panattoni's Lear Industrial Center, located in the Silver Lake area of the Stead submarket.

Legend Valve and Fitting ([www.legendvalve.com](http://www.legendvalve.com)) was formed more than 20 years ago and continues to expand to meet the needs of customers in the Western U.S. region. The Lear Industrial Center location is key in Legend's support of California's lead-free law and allows shipments to reach California customers in two days or less. The company guarantees 100% fill rates, error-free transactions, shipment within 24 hours and a hassle-free return policy to allow their customers to maximize inventory turns and inventory return on investment.

The Lear Industrial Center includes approximately 1,400,000 square feet of industrial product. Legend Valve will be located in Lear 400, the first of four phases of the project to be completed.

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## Murray Supply participates in local events

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Murray Supply Company's kitchen and bath showroom supplied plumbing fixtures for a number of builders including Colby Homes, Buck Horn Construction Company, Alan G. Fletcher Construction Company and Morgan and Parker Builders Inc. and Westmoreland Construction, in the 2009 Parade of Homes this year. This event was held October 10-11 and 17-18. The Parade of Homes was sponsored by the Home Builders Association of Winston-Salem and the Greensboro Builder Association.

The Triad Parade showcased the latest in new home construction featuring unique exterior and interior designs. These homes also offer the latest in energy efficient technologies. The Parade tour spanned five counties: Guilford, Forsyth, Stokes, Northern Davie and Davidson.

In related news, Murray Supply Company's MRO Division recently participated in the Triad Annual Apartment Association Trade Show.

President David Murray, MRO Division manager Patrick Oran, director of national accounts Cameron Clark and account manager Greg Stewart worked at the trade show, where they had the opportunity to meet a number of potential customers.

Murray Supply Company is a family owned and operated company based in 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 serves their customers from six branch locations and a showroom in North Carolina. For more information visit [www.murraysupply.com](http://www.murraysupply.com).



Patrick Oran (left), MRO Division manager, and Cameron Clark, director of national accounts, participate in the Triad Annual Apartment Association Show.

 An advertisement for Walworth featuring a black and white photograph of an astronaut on the moon. The astronaut is standing next to an American flag. The Walworth logo and 'Since 1842' are in the top right corner. The slogan 'Our commitment is out of this world' is written in the moon dust. At the bottom, contact information for TWC The Valve Company is provided.
 

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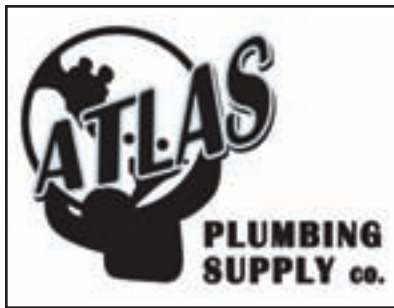
## Q&amp;A with Marc Wolf

## Utilizing DDI helps Atlas gain efficiency

BY MARY JO MARTIN  
Editorial director

Much has changed since Max Wolf originally founded Atlas Plumbing Supply on Detroit's Gratiot Avenue in 1935. Originally, Wolf was a jobber of supplies who supplied local plumbers.

During the ensuing years, Wolf saw many other plumbing supply



houses in his area come and go. However, Atlas prospered thanks in part to growing its product offering along with its customer service and commitment to the community. Atlas covers metro Detroit, concentrating especially on the downtown area.

Wolf's descendants continue the tradition at Atlas today, serving second- and third-generation customers — plumbing contractors, handymen, consumers, businesses and municipalities. Not only do they provide traditional plumbing supplies, such as piping, valves, fittings and replacement parts, but also a wide variety of antique and hard-to-find items, parts and colors of product. Approximately three-quarters of their sales are for the residential market.

"We have always concentrated on the repair and replacement market,

thus when new construction stopped, we did not just stop," commented president Bill Wolf. "We have had to get a little more creative, and add products to fit our market. We began supplying ice melting products to our commercial customers, and began to stock a knock-down kitchen cabinet that provides good quality at a reasonable price for the people, rehabbing and renting homes. As well, we took this time to adjust to more aggressive pricing. We looked at items that we could make a better purchase on, pass the savings and lower the margins, but our sales started growing."

In fact, the company's website proclaims: "Great selection. Excellent service. Fair prices. It's the way grandpa wanted it and we see no reason to rewrite that history."

Atlas Plumbing Supply has been in the same location since 1965, adding a 8,500-square-foot warehouse in 1998 and acquiring a neighboring building three years ago that added another 4,000 square feet under roof as well as a large yard. The Wolfs are assisted by five full-time employees — and with its small "family feel," everyone pitches in where needed. "We can have a salesperson making a delivery or our main delivery man working on the counter when it is busy, for example," Bill noted.

A key asset to Atlas Plumbing Supply's business is its use of DDI System software. In this interview with editorial director Mary Jo Martin, vice president Marc Wolf recently shared some insight into the efficiencies they have realized since the conversion.

**MJM:** Are you comfortable dis-



President Bill Wolf (left) and vice president Marc Wolf are the second and third generation of their family to head Atlas Plumbing Supply in Detroit. The company maintains many of their tried-and-true traditions, while diversifying their product offering and using technology to streamline operations.

cussing any savings or growth you've experienced as a result of implementing your DDI software?

**Wolf:** It is difficult to put a dollar on the savings. DDI has helped with our efficiency. With DDI, we have been able to convert 75% of our accounts to receive invoices and statements by either fax or e-mail. This has provided us a large savings in postage, and I look to continue growing that number. We have found that our average collections time improved since the customer already has a priced copy when they get in the next morning. DDI has also helped improve our purchasing and inventory levels.

**MJM:** Were you using another software system previously? If so, what was your reason for wanting to switch to a new system?

**Wolf:** It began when we wanted to streamline our invoicing (faxing, emailing and laser printing). These were all "modules." Then after being with the old system for only five years, they called and told me that they could not support our old server, and we would have to purchase a new server (only through them). I had a hard time comprehending why a five-year-old Dell server could not be maintained or was in risk of not getting parts. By the time I added up what they wanted for each module and the server, it was time to price a new system.

I had looked at DDI prior to purchasing my old system. I was aware of Adam Waller's plumbing background and felt it deserved a look. I revisited it, and saw the growth that DDI had realized. I felt that they covered many areas very well. It seemed that not only was the system able to do the accounting and backend, but

could also handle the plumbing mind on the front end.

**MJM:** What was it about the DDI software and its key features that interested you?

**Wolf:** As small business owners and managers, we must often multitask. In much the same way, the DDI System can multitask, too. For example, I can have multiple sales going,

**"...we have been able to convert 75% of our accounts to receive invoices and statements by either fax or e-mail. This has provided us a large savings in postage..."**

have the product screen up, take a phone call for A/R (and fax a copy of an invoice), and still be in the middle of a purchase order.

As I mentioned earlier, I was looking to improve our back end. DDI integrated sales orders to POS, streamlined our A/R and A/P, provided electronic captured signatures (freeing up our filing task and being able to recall and view an invoice and know who signed it). DDI gives us much better reports. Our past program had codes to run each report, and most reports would not print to the screen. This software gives us the ability to view almost all the reports, with drop down menus and clicks — rather than an abundance of codes you can not remember.

Also, DDI's quoting, special orders, order tracking and order copying features are all very helpful.

**MJM:** How did DDI support you during the purchasing, installation and training process?

**Wolf:** After my second conversa- (Turn to 74-year-old... page 28.)



Operating from the same Detroit location since 1965, Atlas Plumbing Supply offers 'great selection, excellent service and fair prices' with a family atmosphere. Its level of efficiency has improved with the use of DDI System software.



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## 74-year-old supply house prospers with DDI software

(Continued from page 26.)

tion with DDI, they scheduled a webinar to work around my time. And then, after further talks they had a salesperson fly into Detroit to show us the system live in our environment. He took questions and feedback from all of my employees.

DDI gave us the specs for the purchase of hardware and did not lock us into buying their server. They said this is the price for X number of units. It was not a module price on every detail. We had a few options, but the bulk of the system was complete with everything we wanted.

DDI sent a team of two people to implement the change over. They worked remotely with the main office, and by the end of the second day we were live and writing orders. The support crew stayed with us and trained for a few days, and then we had remote and phone contact with the team that was at our location. They knew our information, and were familiar with us, it made the transition that much easier.

**MJM:** Have you had to use their customer support much over the last few years? If so, how would you rate their level of support?

**Wolf:** We are in touch with customer support often. Support was a problem on our old system. They had the “pay-for-X-level-support” system and they would prioritize. I am still

waiting for a call back from a printing issue I had three years ago. With DDI, their support is excellent. The call back time is almost always less than 30 minutes. They listen to our complaints or recommendations. They have implemented a number of our suggestions in new versions, which are free-of-charge upgrades. DDI seems to look at their customers as a partner, not a pain — at least on the phone it seems that way. They know that we are using the system every day and may see things that they do not.

**MJM:** Do most of your employees use the software in one way or another?

**Wolf:** Everybody uses our system. Of course I would like to use more of it, and that is slowly happening. From printing staging labels, to linking a special order to a PO, the system can really tie orders together. I like the inter-system e-mail, however only a few of us look at it daily. This function alerts me when items sell below margin, or at a zero price, when an order has faxed or e-mailed.

**MJM:** What are some particular areas of the system that you use?

**Wolf:** The pricing functions are very flexible. This has helped us tailor pricing for specific groups of customers, and also for specific customers. This capability has given us consistency in our pricing; we can price one item or line for one cus-

tomers. I had a customer who wanted us to match a price on a certain item, and he said if we could, he would start buying that item from us. After a salesperson brought this to my attention, we adjusted the system so customer will always get the correct price — no matter who helps him.

We began to push our walk-in cash customers to sign up for a cash account; now we can focus on what they use and help in the pricing, as well as look at their history, and market directly to them. The sales analysis reporting also helps to see where we stand with each customer, and

lower margin, in the next picture I see an increase in sales dollars and profit dollars, so we may need to accept the lower margin in that area. Most of this information is in charts and yearly comparisons.

**MJM:** When it comes to inventory management specifically, how does inform help you better determine accurate purchasing based on specific sales trends, and more quickly determine dead stock and slow moving inventory?

**Wolf:** We did not have good inventory history prior to this system. Now we are developing the data to

**“We have found that our average collections time improved since the customer already has a priced copy when they get in the next morning. DDI has also helped improve our purchasing and inventory levels.”**

where the focus needs to be.

The A/R side of the system is very easy to use. This has helped us collect faster, invoice faster, track easier and maintain contact with the person paying the bills. I use the note feature and send out friendly reminders that a customer’s account is past due with attached copies. It’s not so difficult to do it weekly when it is just a click and not physically faxing and stapling eight pages.

In today’s challenging economy, DDI has helped us become more efficient. It has given us the tools to keep on track. When I know we have falling margins, I can look and see where we need to improve. The system allows me to see if margins are down and why. And sometimes, it shows that while we may have a

look at the trends. I almost always click back and forth between a purchase order and the product analysis screen. This has helped me keep a watch on inventory levels and turns. We can make the decision to purchase smaller quantities or perhaps a better buy on faster-turning item. As far as slow-moving products, it helps determine what is worth stocking.

**MJM:** Do you envision that even more of your business will be done electronically in the future?

**Wolf:** Yes, I see more vendors switching to electronic invoicing. We have started to do EFTs, I see electronic payments increasing and I would like to push our A/R to develop more paperless users, and possibly electronic transfer payments. I envision having a web-based site for online order entry.

**MJM:** How do you balance the wonderful benefits of electronic technologies with continuing to build close relationships with your vendors and customers?

**Wolf:** I try to embrace it. I would like to get to the point where my customers can think of us electronically. Much of what we currently do is face-to-face and hands-on. That is why we have developed the relationships that keep our customers returning. It is difficult to develop a friend online; I try to make a point of returning e-mails as fast as possible, and often turn an online inquiry into a phone or in-person sale. We continue our phone and personal relationships and use technologies to help enforce and enhance the sale. If we continue to build relationships every day with our customers and vendors, we can then use electronic technologies to help us make smarter decisions on how we market and do business. ■

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BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS  
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

With year-end 2009 rapidly approaching, PVF manufacturers, wholesalers and end user/specifiers are viewing 2010 optimistically. I had occasion to echo such a forecast at the October 20 meeting of the quarter-annual PVF Roundtable at the Houston H.E.S.S. Club.

Although the deep recession of early 2009 was unsettling to many — especially due to both business downturn and credit availability — I have been impressed by the ability of most of the PVF core group to maintain its equilibrium and infrastructure.

Coming off the boom year that hit a brick wall in the 2008 fourth quarter, the biggest transition problem was the u-turn from earlier inflationary trends in cost and selling prices to a complete reversal. It was like falling off a cliff, remarked some of my interviewees.

But despite the credit problems that surfaced in late September and the order cutbacks soon after, none likened the current throwback to the 1981-83 PVF oil collapse disaster, or even the slowdowns earlier in this decade.

All emphasized the need to pull in their horns by cutting back on personnel, capital spending and inventory. While inventories have been brought in line, most manufacturers and distributors are showing scant disposition to reversing course in 2010.

A “wait and see” attitude seems to be dominant. Everyone I spoke to feels that the worst is behind us and is girding for a slowly evolving comeback in the first quarter of 2010. With the U.S. government healthcare imbroglio, cap and trade, and union card check hanging over their heads, Washington, D.C., is the biggest problem mentioned standing in the way of a healthy recovery next year.

Chief concerns are the cutbacks in oil and natural gas drilling, and the question mark hanging over the tar sands in Alberta, Canada’s Athabasca region. With the Environmental Protection Agency running amok, no one yet knows what limitations will be placed on coal, natural gas, oil and even nuclear. Oil from tar sands imports may even be forbidden due to the massive effluence generated by its production — even though it’s

## PVF sector views 2010 with increasing optimism

produced in Canada.

However, refinery maintenance business is brisk and there is a stabilization in the activity in offshore drilling, which had been sharply cut back earlier. Power generation should pick up substantially, depending on the extent of the recovery, while exports appear to be better than expected. U.S.-based manufacturing facilities are benefitting somewhat from the

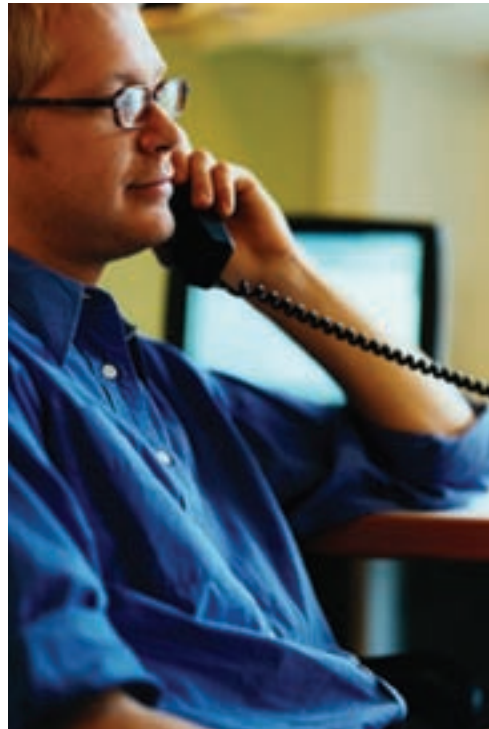
slowly moving stimulus plan, which includes a “buy American” provision.

The big question mark concerns commercial activity, which is threatening to become another credit crunch as banks are calling in their development loans. So far this has not materialized. There is increasing hope that the commercial sector will be buffered by the TALF program, set up to assist developers and builders

in overcoming this potential credit obstacle. Credit conditions have improved immensely, but banks are very penurious in dealing with any but the most creditworthy customers.

At this stage of the economic recovery, those PVF manufacturers and distributors who have withstood the worst look toward a greatly improved performance in 2010.

(Turn to Beschloss, page 30.)



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## Beschloss

(Continued from page 29.)

In retrospect, the PVF sector as a whole has come through in far better shape than its plumbing-heating-cooling colleagues who depend primarily on the residential and light commercial arenas.

The following are some interesting comments that Glenn L. Mosack, president and CEO of Apollo Valves/Conbraco, shared with me recently:

*"While we are currently seeing a slight up tick in customer orders, this is primarily because wholesale inventories were driven to extremely low levels. We expect this to continue to run well in the first quarter of 2010. We also have been fortunate as we have not strayed from our initial strategic sales and marketing plans that called for aggressive initiatives to continue to grow our market share, though the high expectations from the 'Buy America' provision of*

*the ARRA act has too many loopholes preventing us from seeing much benefit from it.*

*"In 2009, we saw regions of the country where commercial construction was slightly less impacted by the recession, primarily parts of the Mid-South and Northeast. We feel that the historical 'lagging' process might catch up here in 2010 and could have a negative affect on construction employment, project starts, etc.*

*"If we find ourselves in a continued economic downturn where federal and local governments start to cut funding for institutional, educational, health and other infrastructure projects, the 2010 construction landscape will be no less disheartening than in 2009.*

*"Bottom line, we feel we will tract close to GDP growth forecasts. Therefore, we are projecting a sales growth in the 2% to 3% range for 2010. We project 0% to 1% in the first quarter and ticking upward all year to reach the 2% to 3% target for the year."*

### Federal Reserve exit strategy needs deferred

With the stock market seeming to perk along and the dollar getting weaker during October, it looked as if the Federal Reserve Board would need to construct an exit policy from the multi-month record-low Fed funds rate and inject more liquidity into America's financial arteries. For now, the Fed is off the hook. Unemployment is cresting, the stock market is running out of steam, and the Treasury bond market is oversubscribed.

In the latter part of October, a cold shock hit the stock and bond markets with the realization that corporate top line revenue growth was practically non-existent. This is accompanied by Washington's runaway spending plans, as well as producer and consumer pockets staying zipped.

A combination of these factors has made it incumbent on the Fed to stay the course and continue the easy money policy that has kept the economy afloat in the face of unprecedented deficits and debt. Ironically,

the fact that this searing recession is based on deflation rather than inflation removes the danger that such continued freewheeling by the Fed will lead to a new monetary bubble.

With excess employees, manufacturing capacity and surplus commodities so prevalent, the far greater danger is economic slippage, re-igniting a new phase of the two-year-long recessionary blight. The Federal Open Market Committee is expected to announce a continuation of the current 0% to 0.25% Fed funds rate and 0.5% discount rates, which banks use to borrow at the Fed window. ■

To stay up to date with my twice daily blogging, log on to my hyperlink at [www.theworldreport.org](http://www.theworldreport.org) and then click on 'Morrie's page,' announced in the middle of the *World Report* website. Your recommendation for my blog is much appreciated.

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

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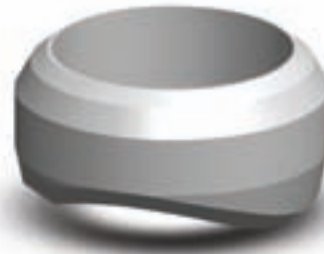
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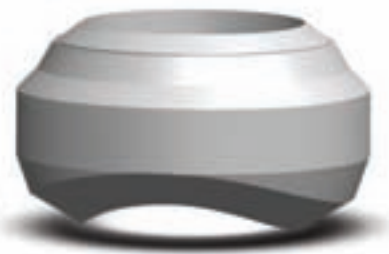
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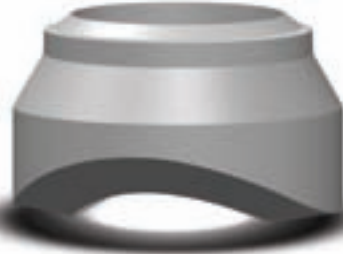
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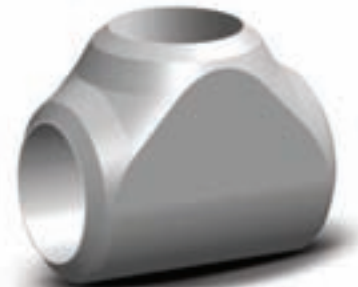
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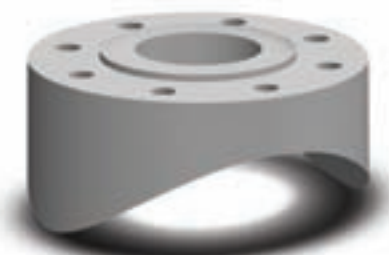
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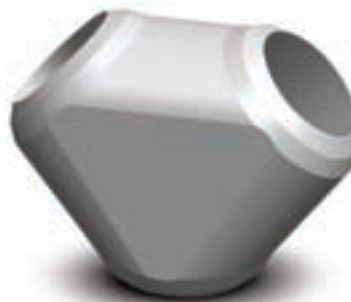
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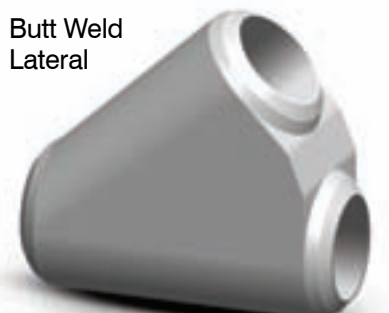
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# Your products have changed, but you haven't

BY JASON BADER

*Inventory management specialist*

I recently had the opportunity to spend some time with a nursery wholesaler. These are the folks that cater to the commercial landscaping trades. Like all distributors, they found themselves having difficulty communicating with suppliers and choosing the most appropriate vendors. We talked about line consolidation, freight issues and general

distributor on how to manage a less-perishable inventory, I kept wondering if this was something that all distributors face. Does one segment of the overall product mix dictate how we make decisions affecting the entire range of items we stock? In this example, the company was clearly trying to treat every supply challenge as if they were buying perishable plant stock. The words free freight, or freight minimum, were foreign concepts to them — “You mean we don't

**At your next management team meeting, pose this question to your group: “Does one segment of our product mix dominate the way we handle all the products in our offering?”**

buying best practices.

Over the course of the visit, I noticed that they kept referring to how they buy the plants and trees. They talked in terms of yard layout and how to get the green products off the trucks or on the trucks. In fact, every issue we discussed was framed in how they handled the “green” side of their business. This seems logical because I was working with a company focused on the distribution of plant material. The only problem was that two-thirds of their revenue came from hard goods! Their products had shifted over time, but their perspective remained in the past.

As I continued to work with this

have to pay freight on our pumps and irrigation materials?” If you buy them right, probably not.

Take a look at your own organization. Are your purchasing habits based on a specific category? Do you set up the primary stocking locations based on an outdated business model? Have there been changes in the source of revenue? Does the management team reflect the longevity of the organization? Old habits die hard.

#### Industry type

Some industries may be more susceptible to a dominant inventory segment. Industries that rely on early buy programs, like the heating and air con-

ditioning market, will probably be heavily influenced by the dominant category. When asked about the seasonal nature of their product, these distributors generally say that everything fits that category. When they actually go back and look at the selling patterns, the distributor will find a large portion of their overall inventory does not behave in a seasonal manner.

Industries that rely on a calendar selling cycle, such as residential construction, often identify a majority of their business as seasonal. This influences the way they move inventory levels and can result in stock outs during the traditional non-seasonal months. The intuitive selling perceptions force the distributor to make uninformed stocking decisions.

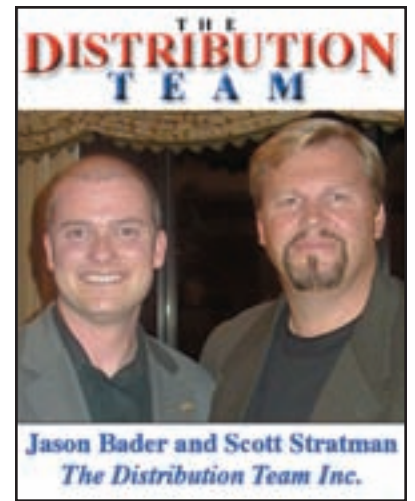
In the fastener industry, the dominance of bulk products and importing practices can pull the distributor away from a more prudent domestic source. I recall a visit to a fastener distributor where the CFO and I mathematically proved that it was more expensive to use an offshore supplier. The salespeople and the president were convinced that the company should make these large container buys for a 6% lower unit cost. In this case, the carrying cost would have made the purchase less profitable. Again, the majority of the business focused on buying containers, so the perception was rooted in the mind of the buyers.

In the beauty supply business, anything with color tends to be very volatile. I worked with a distributor who was heavily focused on the nail salon industry. One of the biggest challenges comes from the media. When someone appears on *Oprah* with a new shade of polish, the sales patterns can change overnight. Try stocking for that type of demand. This forced this supplier to be very hands on with his buying. This method infiltrated his entire stock purchasing. Only 25% of his sales actually came from polish, but this inefficient method washed all the way through the inventory.

I am sure there are several other industry examples out there. I encourage you to look at your own to see if these perceptions exist.

#### Product mix

Has your product mix changed over time? Many distributors started out catering to a specific trade or customer type. Over time, and perhaps generations, that customer base has evolved. In the electrical supply business, low-voltage contractors were not part of the traditional customer base. This is an example of how changes in technology can create an entire category for a supplier. How do



we alter the way we buy for a new customer base? Is it always compatible with our existing replenishment methods?

I recall when my former company acquired a distributorship focused on the concrete accessories business. We were a commercial contractor supply company. How different could the two be? Let me tell you, the headaches were immense. The concrete world tends to work in bulk and full truckload shipments. We had never been forced to deal with these buying parameters. We were trying to shoehorn these new product demands into our existing buying parameters. Ultimately, the fit was so uncomfortable that the unit was sold off.

In the landscaping example, the customer had not changed. The breadth of product that the distributor was supplying had changed. It had changed to a point where the hard product became the majority stream of revenue. This is an example where the purchasing methods had to be split between the green and hard products. By separating the two functions, hard products could be purchased more efficiently using traditional indicators like lead time, review cycles and safety stock.

At your next management team meeting, pose this question to your group: “Does one segment of our product mix dominate the way we handle all the products in our offering?” Cite some of the examples in this article and look for the similarities. You may not distribute plants or nail polish, but distributors tend to be more alike than you think.

Good luck. ■

*Jason Bader is the managing partner of The Distribution Team. The Distribution Team specializes in providing inventory management training, business operations consulting and technology utilization to the wholesale distribution industry. Bader brings over 20 years of experience working in the distribution field. He can be reached at 503/282-2333, Jason@distributionteam.com, or at www.thedistributionteam.com.*

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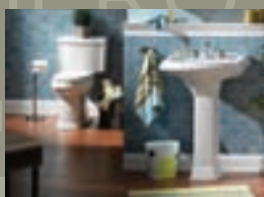
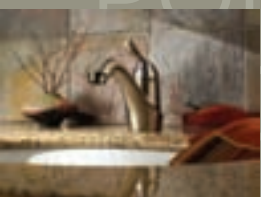
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# Piping and Equipment strives to listen, learn, solve

(Continued from page 16.)

They agreed to our requests about keeping our locations and people in place. They agreed to provide capital to allow us to grow our company and retain the P&E name. They allowed us to keep our close relationship and involvement with Affiliated Distributors — one of the best, if not the best, independent wholesale marketing groups in the country today.

Our company would most likely not have had some of the success that has come our way if the power of A-D was not with us. To me, this was an awesome deal for our company and everyone involved. We are very proud that we selected Fairmont and they selected us to merge together. It has been great!

**Martin:** *You are known as one of the nicest and most respected gentlemen in our great industry today. Are relationships still as important today in our business environment as they used to be?*

**Cartright:** You bet they are John, but you cannot expect your relationship alone with someone to make you their choice for products and services in today's world. You must still be professional, knowledgeable, hard working, entertaining and committed to providing the best products and services that the customer expects — market by market.

My relationship (much the same as yours) opens lots of doors, but the P&E local marketplace people must perform and close a deal. For instance, we have a company policy that we will not sell a surplus or re-built valve to a customer under any circumstance. Having said that, it is the practice of many of our people to locate a re-built valve for a customer (if that is the only way we can help them get up and running during a critical time period) and then advise him where he can call to purchase it. Being open, honest and trustworthy in our daily dealings is at the top of the P&E list!

**Martin:** *Gary, now that your top-side ownership has changed, do you buy through centralized purchasing or does each branch still have purchasing autonomy?*

**Cartright:** We have a central purchasing group that purchases all material for stock at all locations. Our inside people are able to purchase direct buys, specials or non-stock material. Number one issue is to take care of the customer as needed. We do not use large re-distribution inventories. We operated this way prior to

Fairmont and since we have been part of the Fairmont family.

**Martin:** *How do you differentiate P&E from the competition in the marketplace? Has being part of Fairmont made any major differences?*

**Cartright:** We differentiate ourselves every day by listening to our customers to know their needs and try to provide a solution. We truly believe in under-promising and over-delivering! We strive to do what we say we will do, do it when we say we will, and communicate it all clearly, including when we have completed the project. Actually, Fairmont has been encouraging me to have our people continue to be P&E. Walk the walk, and talk the talk! We treat our people with dignity and respect. I believe we deliver outstanding customer service. The most valuable asset we have at Piping and Equipment is our employees, and we truly have a great team.

**Martin:** *Okay my friend — last question. You just received the Industrial Piping Division of the American Supply Association's top award — The IPD Award of Excellence — at the ASA Convention in Washington, D.C. This is a wonderful tribute to you and so well deserved. Having said that, would you share some final thoughts with the readers referencing your feelings about this top recognition from all your industry peers? Also from the very beginning of your great career, if you had it to do all over again, would you go about it the same way?*

**Cartright:** I'll tell ya John, it is really very hard to put into words my feelings from receiving such an award. An award like this is not something you set out to receive or even think about receiving, but when you are so honored by your friends and peers, it is simply overwhelming! Your emotions run wild feeling elated, surprised and wondering, "What did I do to receive such an award?" It is truly awesome! It makes you think back to all the people who helped you and mentored you along the way and made your life so rich in the first place. To be the recipient of this recognition is purely tremendous!

If I had to do it all over again, I do believe I'd try very hard to do it all the same way! My success has been molded and formed by so many wonderful customers, suppliers, associates, friends, mentors and family along the way. God has been with me and guided me each step of the way.

For that, I am truly grateful.

**Martin:** *There you have it readers! You heard it first from "Martin's Corner" and THE WHOLESALER! Gary, you're the best and thanks so very much for your time and the generous sharing of your business life.*

## A couple of closing comments

For those of you — both wholesaler and vendor — who attended the ASA Convention in Washington, D.C., I extend a heartfelt thanks for your action and dedication to the industry. Mr. Cartright commented to me that he was not only pleased by all the strong and fresh efforts of Mike [Adelizzi] and the ASA headquarters staff to make the convention a breath of fresh air, he also was very impressed with the choice of speakers this year. Even though it feels like no one is listening in D.C. these days, he now feels there are people — like some of the speakers we had — who are helpful and indeed talking a lot in D.C.

**"We differentiate ourselves every day by listening to our customers to know their needs and try to provide a solution. We truly believe in under-promising and over-delivering! We strive to do what we say we will do, do it when we say we will, and communicate it all clearly including when we have completed the project."**

"Keep it up" was his final comment.

I also believe Mike and all his folks at ASA headquarters did a great job in preparing for this event. Is it ever going to be the same as years ago? No! Is it going to be a big money maker? No, it's not intended to be! Is it structured now to support the real needs of all the associated members? I say it is!

ASA has no one to depend on but the wholesale industry and the vendors that serve same. I believe that the large majority of the folks that attended would support me in this fashion: While the new structure in total needs a bit more flexing and tweaking to fine tune the end result product, benefits could be seen at the show from the efforts of all. For our company, I'll tell you that we feel we got our monies worth during the one-on-one meetings alone.

We plan to give it a strong effort next year in Chicago, which will have roughly the same agenda/outline with the exception of the day we had on the Hill. If you were there, please plan to support ASA again next year, and if you were not, talk to someone who was, and try to set your time and agenda to join us all in Chicago.

Times are changing, and I support ASA in their renewed strong efforts to give the industry what it wants and needs! (This was not a paid political announcement — it comes to ya independently from "Martin's Corner" and I believe it!)

And lastly, not only do I hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving season, I certainly send to you all my wishes for a wonderful Holiday season in total. May the New Year of 2010 really start well for you, your family and your business!

Remember this: No matter how bad things get — or how totally horrific some of the past and recent happenings in the world and here at home have been and have made our hearts and minds feel — the United States Of America still stands head and shoulders above all other places in this world (in my mind) to live, prosper, worship and succeed in the pursuit of happiness! Blessings to all, and *thanks* so much for taking the

time to read "Martin's Corner." See ya in the New Year! ■

*Born Johnney E Martin in Venus, Texas in 1944, he is one of nine children raised 100% on a cotton and grain farm that his father share-cropped. After high school, Martin went into the Army and then Reserves. From there he joined what was then Grinnell Co. in 1968 and has been with them every day of his life since then through four different owners, now Anvil International, A Unit Of Mueller Water Products. He currently serves as vice president of national account sales for the Anvil Mechanical Unit. Holding various sales and management positions for the company over the years, Martin has received numerous industry and association awards and has been involved with industry education foundation boards, and the Board of Directors of both ASA and MCAA. Martin currently resides in Castle Rock, Colo., with his wife Kathy of 27 years; they have a daughter Kayla who is 25 years old. He is committed to staying involved in the plumbing and PVF industry (which he loves) for many years to come.*

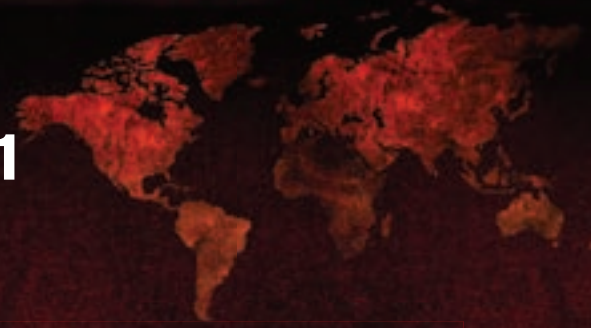


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## ASA marks 40 years

The American Supply Association hosted Network ASA 2009 in mid-October at the JW Marriott in Washington, D.C. This marked the 40th convergence of ASA members.

Unveiling a new format designed to provide more one-on-one time for manufacturers and wholesalers —

and with scheduled visits for members to Capital Hill — the convention drew solid participation and featured an outstanding lineup of speakers. Among those taking the podium were political pundit George Will, NAHB chairman Jerry Howard and Kohler Co. president and COO David Kohler.

All of the speakers shared extremely insightful remarks and generated quite a buzz among attendees.

Two major awards were presented during the event — AIM/R honored Anvil International's Harold Arrow-smith with its Golden Eagle Award, while the Industrial Piping Division of ASA bestowed its Award of Excellence on Gary Cartright of Piping & Equipment.





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## Meeting objectives

## Innovative products drive Steamist growth

BY MARY JO MARTIN  
Editorial director

When Jeff Noll and Jeff Carney partnered with RAF Industries, a private equity firm, about three years ago to acquire Steamist, they realized that while the brand had a reputation of high-quality products, the line was somewhat lacking in aesthetic design and the vision for the brand had become a bit stale. So the long-time plumbing industry veterans — who had previously worked together at Grohe — set about with a three-pronged approach to improve Steamist's offering to the market.

For Noll, who serves as president, and vice president-sales and marketing Carney, their first order of business was to develop a new branding strategy.

"Both Jeff [Carney] and I have long thought that a steam generator is an essential element of a 'power shower,'" Noll explained. "We were both familiar with the growing popularity of power showers from our Grohe days, and thought the best way to grow the steam business was to tap into this growing product segment.

"However, we also recognized that very few showroom salespeople were comfortable with the process of selling 'steam.' Formal product knowledge training had been dependant on local reps and was sporadic at best. To overcome this issue, we hired industry veteran Fred Fedewa to be our



Three models of Total Sense generators cover steam baths of all sizes to simplify the selection process. An enhanced design ensures quiet, continuous steam output modulated to the precise specifications of the room.

**"So far, sales are ahead of projections, and we are very encouraged for what future sales will be for this exciting line."**

full-time corporate trainer. Fred's mission is to travel the country and train showroom associates on how to sell steam. We aren't as concerned with making Fred's training program Steamist-specific as with simply making showroom consultants more comfortable in the general process of selling steam. Our thought is if the category grows, then our slice of the pie will grow with it. The first step is to get the showroom consultants as

comfortable selling steam as they are with selling faucets and fixtures."

The second challenge for the new Steamist leadership to tackle was to quickly freshen up the product offering — and, over time, create an entirely new product line that would truly enhance the steam bathing experience.

To do that, Steamist launched an aggressive product development campaign. They started by freshening up the look of their digital control package and steam head. As Noll described it, this "relatively simple design project" enabled Steamist to roll out some targeted new products in spring 2007.

"More challenging was the creation of a totally new premium line — the Total Sense Collection — that creates a spa-like environment for the user by bringing steam, aromatherapy, chromatherapy and music together through a single digital control that is mounted in the shower," Noll shared. "This project was very complex and ultimately took us about twice as long as planned. However, we launched the Collection earlier this year to rave reviews. So far, sales are ahead of projections, and we are very encouraged for what future sales will be for this exciting line."

The final step in their initial strategy was to relaunch the brand in relation to these innovative new products and the new corporate vision. Over the past few years, this has evolved into a complete remake of Steamist's marketing collateral, website and logo.

Carney noted that the entire Steamist team is very pleased with the progress they have made toward achieving these goals. They believe Steamist is now viewed as a fast-moving, energetic company with



As consumers become accustomed to the home spa concept, and as showroom associates get comfortable selling steam, Steamist executives are confident that the steam category will grow.

products that meet the needs of consumers in today's market.

"The new product initiatives, along with the brand re-launch, have been very capital intensive, but well worth it," Carney said. "The steam category is only going to get bigger. As consumers embrace the home spa concept, and showroom associates get comfortable selling steam, we are poised to benefit greatly."

#### Innovative product launch

The recently launched Total Sense Collection is something completely new in the marketplace and includes several residential steambathing options that provide a complete, customized experience for users.

"This is without a doubt the most exciting launch in company history and a game-changer for the industry," Noll explained. "The Total Sense generators are available in three models that cover steam baths of all sizes, which simplifies the selection process for the customer. Their enhanced design ensures quiet, continuous steam output modulated to the precise specifications of the room, and the selectable InstaMist™ feature provides quick-response steam in less than a minute.

"Enhanced controls are also a huge component of the Total Sense Collection. The Total Sense Digital Control

[TSC] is designed for installation inside the steam shower. It offers user-friendly touchpad operation and provides the full menu of Total Sense functions. Two user profiles can be programmed into the control memory, allowing each user to step into a



Steamist recently moved its headquarters to this larger facility near Rutherford, N.J. It houses corporate offices, customer service, manufacturing, and sales and marketing operations.

steam shower customized to his or her personal preferences, including temperature, duration and any additional sensory settings."

In addition, the radio-frequency Total Sense Remote Control allows users to turn on the steambath from other areas of the home, which sets the stage for a relaxing retreat before they even enter the room. The package also includes the 3199 Series "Halo" Steamhead, which offers a stylish, low-profile look and is de-

(Turn to Steamist... page 44.)





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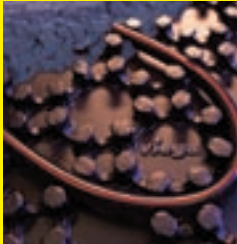
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## Hotel toilet replacement project yields significant savings

KOHLER, WIS. — A recent report released by Koeller & Company, along with Veritec Consulting Inc., determined that the replacement of guest

# KOHLER.

room toilets significantly reduced water use and maintenance costs at San Francisco's luxury Parc 55 Union Square Hotel.

The study cited an annual savings of \$170,000 on water and sewer charges, along with a near 1 million gallons of monthly water use reduction. Maintenance calls were reduced by more than 50%. The Kohler Highline Pressure

Lite 1.0-gpf toilet was used exclusively for this project — replacing all 1,030 3.5-gpf toilets in the hotel.

“The results of this study is further proof that replacing old, water-guzzling fixtures makes economical sense, and is a sure-fire method to save a lot of water,” said Shane Judd, senior product manager for water conservation at Kohler Co. “Kohler offers the widest portfolio of water-saving plumbing products that remain true to a singular level of quality for performance and design.”

The Highline toilets used in this project meet the WaterSense label requirements. WaterSense, the EPA's voluntary public-private partnership

program, seeks to protect the future of the nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs and practices. Plumbing fixtures and faucets that qualify assure consumers of actual water savings and strict performance standards.

To download a copy of the report, visit [www.Kohler.com/press](http://www.Kohler.com/press).

## Moen supports quality, affordable housing for communities in need

CLEVELAND — Moen and the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation have joined forces in support of more affordable housing and home ownership in the Hispanic community. Moen, a leading bath and kitchen fixtures brand in North America, is com-

mitted to helping Hispanic families achieve the American dream of owning their home and access to affordable housing through its national program “Alcanzando Sueños con Moen.”

Through this program, Moen will donate state-of-the-art bath and kitchen fixtures for two major CHLDC housing developments projects: Liberty Apartments, 43 energy efficient affordable rental apartments, and Glenmore Grove, 12 highly attractive condominiums over four townhouse buildings — both of which are located in Brooklyn. Partnering with CHLDC and donating products will help to assuage the costs associated with the development of the homes.

A kick-off event was held October 20, with numerous government officials invited to attend including New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

## Steamist launches new products, sees sales grow

(Continued from page 42.)

signed to provide even, 360° halo steam dispersion to eliminate hot spots.

Among the innovative features of the Total Sense Collection are the AromaSense™, ChromaSense™ and AudioSense™ options. Truly making this a custom steambath experience, customers can select one or all three of these add-ons:

- With AromaSense, fragrant essential oils are released directly into the shower's steam line from the generator. Two essential oil canisters can be stored, allowing the user to make a scent selection from inside the

built into the control module, allowing users to tune into their favorite music from an iPod® or any other audio source. A special wall-mounted iPod cradle located outside of the shower protects the device from water exposure. The cradle is wired to speakers, which are available as either “classic” exposed speakers or “invisible” speakers that mount out of sight and transmit sound through the wall for a more seamless look.

In addition to the Total Sense Collection, Steamist launched a new digital control for its commercial line. The control is designed to allow

Rutherford, N.J., area this year.

“The new facility houses our corporate office, customer service, manufacturing, and sales and marketing operations,” said Noll. “The move has helped us improve efficiency and streamline operations across all areas of our business. We're in the midst of an unprecedented series of exciting changes here at Steamist. This new facility provides an ideal home base for our team and will support our operations as we continue to grow and evolve.”

To help customers do advanced research on steam and the products they are interested in, Steamist recognized the need to redesign their website. With a new look and streamlined navigation, the site allows customers access to the most up-to-date and reliable information.

“In addition to the redesign, we added a microsite with detailed information on the Total Sense Collection,” Carney explained. “The microsite, which can easily be reached from the home page of [steamist.com](http://steamist.com) or directly at [totalsense.biz](http://totalsense.biz), also features a new video we created to educate consumers and industry professionals about Total Sense and to truly capture the steam experience.

“Not only does the site refresh showcase our dedication to innovation and continued improvement, it also makes it easier to find the information users need — in much the same way that the Total Sense Collection makes it easier to get the individual steam bath options you want and need.”

The Steamist team continues to value their relationship with plumbing wholesalers and recognizes their

importance in getting the company's products to market.

“Steamist is a technical product that needs to be presented and sold by sales professionals,” Carney said. “Wholesale plumbing showrooms offer the best environment for our products to be sold because they typically have well-trained sales staffs and excellent product displays. We strongly believe in training the showroom consultants, and we have continued to develop new materials and provide our reps with the tools to train on a consistent basis. Our goal is to solidify the base, so that when things turn around we will be in the best possible position to maximize sales.

“Thankfully we enjoy many strong relationships with some of the top plumbing wholesale distributors in the industry. Having quality products shown and distributed by top quality distributors is a key ingredient to Steamist's continued success.”

Despite the challenging economic climate, Noll said that the Total Sense Collection launch has given the company a nice boost. And he looks forward to a solid future for Steamist.

“Long term, we see the steam category growing quite strong,” Noll said. “Homeowners are becoming better acquainted with the health benefits and enjoyment of steam bathing. At the same time, plumbing showrooms are becoming better trained and comfortable with selling steam into their power shower packages. Combined, these two forces should make for strong growth going forward.”

For additional information, visit [www.steamist.com](http://www.steamist.com).



Shown from left: The Total Sense™ digital control; the AudioSense™ cradle; and the AromaSense™ panel.

steambath. Each of the scented oils is designed with a specific purpose in mind, such as to restore, relax, renew or energize; an additional fragrance is also available to aid those with respiratory problems. The canisters are easily replaceable for change-out.

- Users can set the mood with ChromaSense, a single overhead fixture that produces white light as well as six unique color effects. Each color represents a different emotion: relax, soulful, harmony, bliss, creative and energize.

- The AudioSense amplifier is

health clubs and spas to independently program two different steam rooms from up to 100 feet away, meaning that it can be placed in a manager's office for added convenience. By using an idle setback feature that allows the system to be efficiently tailored for off-peak hours, the unit also helps clubs save money.

### Strategies to support its growth

To better accommodate the production of the new Total Sense Collection, Steamist relocated its headquarters to a larger facility in the





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## Plumbing distributor Cregger, Goodman forge deal

(Continued from Cregger, pg. 1.)

tribute Goodman brand HVAC products through its South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia locations. All told, the company operates 23 branches and design centers across five states from its headquarters in West Columbia, S.C. Cregger Company also has five new facilities opening within the next few months that will operate as stand-alone HVAC outlets. These new facilities will further enhance their ability to service HVAC customers.

In addition, Cregger's Design on Tap decorative showrooms now sell indoor air quality products alongside upscale plumbing fixtures, and Goodman offers an extensive line of IAQ products. "Demand for IAQ is growing, and we see an opportunity to showcase Goodman's IAQ products to architects, interior designers and custom home builders," explained Cregger.

Pete Alexander, senior vice president-independent sales for Goodman, added, "It takes hard work and dedication to double your volume every five years, but that's exactly what the Cregger Company has done since it was founded in

1978. It is a special company with a vision of growth and a focus on customer service. Goodman is honored to have the Cregger Company join our network of independent distributors."

Morris Cregger credits the company's success on his associates' discipline and drive. He started

**"We believe our partnership with Goodman Manufacturing will enable us to continue our tradition of growth."**

the company in 1978 with his wife Shelia and \$60,000. Now Cregger is shooting to be a \$200-million company by 2014.

"These may be challenging times but we believe we can better serve our customers by growing through product diversification, new facilities and new affiliations," Cregger said. "We are giving our customers more reasons to do business with the Cregger Company. In the end, it is all about providing our customers the best value in the business."

For additional information, visit [www.creggercompany.com](http://www.creggercompany.com).

## New wholesale division for Niagara

(Continued from Niagara, page 1.)

Niagara Conservation was founded in 1977 by William Cutler, who began developing and selling water conservation products from his garage with his wife. Today Niagara is a leader in developing new, unique technologies, including the Stealth.

Still family owned after three decades, the company is driven by an entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to designing revolutionary,

**"We...can help drive business to wholesalers and contractors by linking them up with new customers as distribution and installation partners."**

eco-friendly toilets, showerheads, faucet aerators and other high-efficiency products that utility companies, government leaders, energy management officials, environmentally conscious consumers and now plumbing wholesalers and contractors have come to rely upon.

Niagara's success originally resulted primarily from partnerships with water utilities, housing authorities and apartment managers to retrofit existing properties with its water-saving products such as Flapperless® toilet which resulted in significant reductions in water, sewer and energy costs. Major communities have also recently partnered with Niagara to help retrofit homes and businesses with high-efficiency toilets, showerheads and aerators, including Los Angeles, Fort Worth, Austin, Dallas, Atlanta, Seattle, Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia. The company's water- and energy-saving mission is also international in scope, with successful projects completed or underway in Europe, the Middle East and South America.

Though Niagara has been flying under the

radar in the plumbing industry, the company has recently launched a major initiative to expand its customer base to include more traditional plumbing wholesalers and professional plumbing contractors. One of the key elements of the company's new distribution efforts is the introduction of the Stealth.

"At a time when the importance of saving water and energy has become increasingly obvious to customers at all levels, our new Stealth toilet, plus other eco-friendly products, offer the lowest flow and flush rates in the industry," said Carl Wehmeyer, Niagara Conservation's executive vice president.

Kwiat, director of wholesale business, noted, "Because of Niagara's considerable experience and contacts working with utilities, housing authorities and other market segments that are highly-receptive to high-efficiency combined with low maintenance, we can do more than just provide superior products. We're a well-known brand among utilities and the preferred 'green spec' in the apartment market, which can help drive business to wholesalers and contractors by linking them up with new customers as distribution and installation partners."

Founder and president William Cutler established Niagara in 1977, and the company is still family owned, headquartered in Cedar Knolls, N.J., with satellite offices in California, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, and an affiliate company in Toronto. Niagara also serves a global client base.

For more information about doing business with Niagara, contact Paul Kwiat at 800/831-8383, ext. 169, or via e-mail at [pkwiat@NiagaraConservation.com](mailto:pkwiat@NiagaraConservation.com). For more information about the patented Stealth toilet, visit [www.StealthToilets.com](http://www.StealthToilets.com).

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## REHAU radiant system combines with geothermal energy source for Alberta project

CANMORE, ALTA. — Nestled among the Canadian Rockies on the former site of the historic Canmore dairy farm in Alberta, the 70-acre Spring Creek is an innovative residential community gently integrated to preserve and enhance the area's natural waterways, forestry and mountain views. With his long-standing experience developing mountain communities throughout Alberta and British Columbia, developer Frank Kernick — the latest in a three-generation lineage of the original property's owners, brought personal interest to the project — as well as a concern for its high level of environmental responsibility.

"Spring Creek has special meaning, both as the original site where my family and I grew up, and as the first sustainable community to be developed in the valley," said Kernick. "While mountain community development is, overall, a business that really makes you appreciate the beauty of nature, Spring Creek provides a signature example of what can be accomplished by working with and respecting the splendor of natural surroundings."

In addition to incorporating the natural environment into Spring Creek pathways, medians, playgrounds and courtyards, all buildings slated for construction over the course of the next 12 years have been designed to include energy-efficient amenities and alternative energy sources.

"Both the scope of this project and its strong emphasis on alternative en-



*In total, the project is expected to use several million feet of RAUPEX.*

ergy sourcing has made it very exciting, while also challenging us to identify and work with the ideal product partners," said Ralph Salm, president of Geo Furnace Technologies in Canmore, Alta. Geo Furnace Technologies is the designated heating contractor for the Spring Creek project, and will be working with Kernick during its complete 15-year duration.

The project, currently in its third year of construction, presently includes a 50-, 48- and 59-unit residential building community, within which a number of live-work units have also been designed with cus-

tomized ventilation and thermostat configurations to meet commercial code standards. Each of the three buildings has been designed to incorporate integrated low-temperature radiant heating and geothermal systems as the main source of heat.

"Working with Frank and the de-



*Each of three buildings at Spring Creek residential community incorporates low-temperature radiant heating via 550,000 feet of RAUPEX, and geothermal systems from Geo Furnace Technologies as its main source of heat.*

velopment team, it is our goal to design each of the buildings with as little outside energy dependency as possible," explained Salm. "This means not only identifying the ideal alternative energy source, but also a heating distribution system, like REHAU's RAUPEX® radiant heating system, that works as a complement to that energy source."

Salm's infloor heating experience, which now spans 12 years, led him toward geothermal energy sourcing after learning about the ideal low-temperature relationship between the two systems.

"I'd become familiar with this concept from my building experience in Europe," Salm explained, "and when I was weighing the energy source options for my own home's infloor system, I thought I'd give geothermal a try. That was in 1996, and I haven't looked back since."

Geo Furnace Technologies selected the cross-linked polyethylene (PEXA) pipe-based system from REHAU after learning about its unique advantages in relation to some of the project's installation challenges.

"When kinks occur, we really liked the ability to reheat the REHAU pipe and have it 'heal' back to its original state," Salm said. "With the frequent temperature changes, kinks can be quite common in this area, and a job as big as Spring Creek Mountain Village can be significantly slowed without this kind of capability."

Salm and his crew tested an initial

20,000 feet of RAUPEX on the job site, in temperatures ranging from below freezing to 70°F, after which the decision was made to continue with the product.

"Everyone loved how much easier the pipe made the job," said Salm, "and as I already knew we were deal-



would easily balance all the system loops, while also operating quietly," Salm said. "Also, for the larger penthouse suites, we needed a manifold solution that could accommodate up to 16 loops, which was no easy task to tackle on our own.

"The PRO-BALANCE® manifolds REHAU recommended are very high quality, with exceptionally quiet actuators. Also, I'd estimate that the built-in balancing valves for each loop allow for about a 15% increase in labor efficiency. The service and support REHAU has provided thus far is nothing less than exceptional, and we couldn't be happier with it." According to Salm, a total of 170 manifolds have been installed in the first three buildings, with additional manifolds planned for installation as future projects move forward.

In total, the project is expected to include several million feet of RAUPEX. "It's pretty phenomenal if you think about it," Salm said, "and we're expecting to hit the 'one million feet' mark in just the next two years."

With the third residential building completed last April, Frank Kernick and Geo Furnace Technologies are already looking toward some of the community's future projects.

"We are planning for a number of small shop spaces to enhance the 'village feel' for both residents and visitors from the nearby town," Kernick said. "Other plans include an opera house, 22 townhomes, 32 multi-family houses, and a 200-room, five-star hotel. Needless to say, we're going to be quite busy over the next few years."

Salm added, "Frank and I have done some great work together in the past, from a 100% geothermal-driven 26-unit residential project in the Invermere, B.C., community of Lakeview Meadows, to the conversion of its recreation center pool from propane to geothermal. Spring Creek continues to be one of the most rewarding projects I've worked on to date though, and I still get excited when I see the pleasantly surprised reaction of new residents to the quiet, comfortable and environmentally responsible way their home is heated. I look forward to our further efforts in moving the Spring Creek project to completion, and to working in partnership with REHAU every step of the way."

For additional information, call 800/627-3428 or visit [www.na.rehau.com/heating](http://www.na.rehau.com/heating).

ing with a quality product, that's all I really needed to hear."

Since that time, approximately 350,000 feet of RAUPEX has been installed in the first two residential buildings, which are completed and occupied. The third and most recently completed building, comprised of 69 vacation rental units, includes an additional 200,000 feet of RAUPEX. The radiant heating systems have contributed to Built Green™ ratings for all three buildings, which achieved respective Silver, Gold and Platinum status on their completion.

"We're really excited to be part of this project, which allows us to work in a true side-by-side partnership with the people at Geo Furnace Technologies," said Ben VanPanhuis, REHAU account representative in Vancouver. "As a company we are focused on providing the latest in eco-minded and energy efficient heating technologies, such as the integrated low-temperature radiant heating and geothermal systems being incorporated into the Spring Creek buildings. It's wonderful to see our joint efforts with Geo Furnace already resulting in Built Green-status heating system efficiencies."

In addition to supplying its radiant heating system components, which are slated for inclusion in all future buildings, REHAU also worked with Geo Furnace Technologies to identify the best manifold solution for each type of residential unit.

"We were admittedly having some challenges developing manifolds that





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## UPA achieves phenomenal success by betting on industry growth during recession

BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS  
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

While many PHCP organizations have been pulling in their horns during the current all-encompassing recession, the United Purchasing Affiliates is focusing on expansion and intensive growth.

As a 31-year-old buying and marketing group, comprised of hundreds of financially strong industry manufacturers and distributors, UPA has created a logistically effective bond between producers and industry wholesalers to optimize more effective service at a time of severe inventory reduction.

Owners Doug and Bill Corp did not get involved with our \$75-billion industry by accident. Their father, William Corp, an industry leader whom I knew well, served for years as director of purchasing for Grinnell Corporation's dozens of branches. This distribution group was paramount in pipe-valve-

fitting distribution for decades until its ultimate dissolution after Grinnell merged into Tyco International.

Being well-schooled in all aspects of manufacturer/distributor relationships, the Corps have built a nationwide distribution/marketing network supported by a central distribution center in Orlando, Fla., with a large inventory. UPA has additional satellite warehousing space throughout the U.S., equipped with state-of-the-art logistics management to streamline the supply chain. This is proving of particular value to the nation's wholesalers, beset by the need for inventory reduction in these trying times of limited credit. This is particularly significant, as distributors are faced with the need for giving maximum service to contractors, builders, new commercial industrial projects and maintenance, as well as original equipment manufacturers. More and more manufacturers are being added to the Central Distribution program. The

product categories range from plumbing and HVAC to PVF and lighting. Some of the items that occupy the UPA CD are tankless water heaters, faucets, disposers, bathroom fans, lighting fixtures, plumbing fixtures and a host of additional products.

UPA's reactive service capability has garnered the respect of the company's growing affiliate network and prospects. This has allowed for phenomenal growth as the need for such service has become increasingly indispensable.

However, an ongoing understanding of the PHCP industry's changing needs has not been restricted to coordination between manufacturing suppliers and distributors, who have become increasingly dependent on the expert-

ise supplied by UPA.

This need has been required by the development of a cadre of inside service specialists, as well as intensive marketing efforts to effectuate this unique effort. UPA president and seasoned PVF veteran Roy Jacobs heads this effort, which has led to a growing affiliate network and strong relationships between headquarters



Bill Corp (left) and Doug Corp in the parts department of UPA's 50,000-square-foot warehouse near Orlando.

and its members. Such a process anticipates problems and minimizes glitches at a time when the industry as a whole is attempting to work its way through the worst recession since the end of World War II.

UPA claims not to stint when ordering in truckload and container load quantities on a monthly basis. UPA prides itself on dealing with the most quality-oriented manufacturers within the PHCP industry. These are constantly reviewed for continuing relevance to the ultimate cost-effective needs of the marketing affiliates dependent on UPA's purchasing capabilities.

As a fervent believer in ongoing communication, UPA sponsors periodic meetings. By inviting manufacturing partners and distributor affiliates, the group establishes face-to-face relationships between industry influentials. UPA is committed to continuing these more intimate get-togethers within the context of its meeting concept.

The group claims that the exchange of ideas between non-competing members and the development of stronger relationships have strengthened UPA in its effort to facilitate communication between its affiliates and manufacturers. It provides greater understanding as to what makes our worldwide industry tick at a particular time.

When it comes to developing the latest technology in communications, inventory optimization and distributor service, UPA claims to be unstinting and ongoing.

With a track record that has surpassed even the owners' most optimistic expectations, the developing success story of UPA within a slowly recovering economy speaks for itself. ■

For more information, visit [www.upaonline.com](http://www.upaonline.com), or call 407/323-6250.

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### Bath suite

The Oxford Suite's geometric lines evoke England's ornate towers and steeples. Refined, distinct look fits a range of décor options from traditional to contemporary. Includes a 2-handle widespread lav faucet with pop-up; a Roman tub faucet with optional hand shower; and a complete tub/shower system with Temptrol pressure balancing mixing valve. **Symmons Industries.**

[www.symmons.com](http://www.symmons.com)

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PEX tubing manufactured to ASTM Standard F876/877. Applications include potable water/heating systems in residential and commercial structures, as well as potable water plumbing applications. **Matco-Norca.**

[www.matco-norca.com](http://www.matco-norca.com)

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grated alarm and optional auto-dialer calls you if the unit has activated — es-

pecially important if the main sump pump has failed and you're away for an extended period of time. **Liberty Pumps.**

[www.libertypumps.com](http://www.libertypumps.com)

### Boiler fill fitting

The new Series RBFF residential boiler fill fitting is a unique, patent-pending fitting intended for the hydronic heating professional who installs and services hot-water heating boilers. Designed to facilitate the servicing and/or replacement of the expansion tank and water pressure regulator valve, and provides a convenient solution to comply with boiler manufacturers' piping requirements in a clean, compact package. Features an integral 3-way ball valve design and 1-piece construction that eliminates up to 11 threaded joints. **Watts Regulator Company.**

[www.watts.com](http://www.watts.com)



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These AB 1953-compliant brass fittings and nipples are in stock and ready to ship with your next order. This company also has ball valves, gate valves, check valves, dielectric unions, galvanized malleable iron threaded fittings and galvanized nipples that meet the AB 1953 low lead standard.

**Smith-Cooper International.**

[www.smithcooper.com](http://www.smithcooper.com)



### Cast carbon steel valves

Cast carbon steel gate, globe and swing check valves are available in 150# thru 600# class. Trims are available in API 8, 5 to NACE, and 12 to NACE. End connections are flanged and butt-weld. Available at all of this company's branch locations for immediate delivery. In addition, watch for forged steel A105 valves in the coming months. **Warren Alloy.**

[www.warrenalloy.com](http://www.warrenalloy.com)



### Carbon steel valves

This carbon steel 24" 1500# gate valve stands 10 ft high and weighs 11 tons. It and all accompanying valves for a large hydrocracker project were completed and shipped to arrive on-time at the project site. All of this company's valve castings are poured at their own foundries in South Korea and Japan. **Kinka Kikai.**

[www.kinkavalves.com](http://www.kinkavalves.com)

### Quality control for valves

TCI Valve is designed, cast, machined, assembled and tested by this supplier. Vertical integration allows better quality control, shorter production times.



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### Cast iron pipe, fittings

Service weight cast iron pipe and fittings and extra heavy cast iron pipe and fittings meet ASTM A 74 standard and carry UPC approvals. The hub and spigot cast iron pipe and fittings with Neoprene sealing sleeve gasket conform to ASTM C 564. For underground applications including sewers and building drains. **NewAge Casting.**

[www.newagecasting.com](http://www.newagecasting.com)

### Hybrid water heating system

Two components for the Eternal hybrid water heating system boast added convenience. The Multi-Con-



troller Unit (top) allows linking up to 16 Eternal hybrids — ideal for commercial applications. For residential and commercial uses, the Remote Controller makes it easier to adjust and monitor units installed in hard-to-reach areas. Automated staged firing promotes efficiency; built-in redundancy program keeps remaining units working if one breaks down. **Grand Hall.**

[www.eternalwaterheater.com](http://www.eternalwaterheater.com)

### Water heater/space heater

The fin-type stainless-steel heat exchanger and premixed burner of this condensing combiwater heater/space heater is unique. With a Btu input of up to 200,000, it also utilizes the manufacturer's features such as dual heat exchangers, PVC venting and a sleek, compact design. **Navien America.**

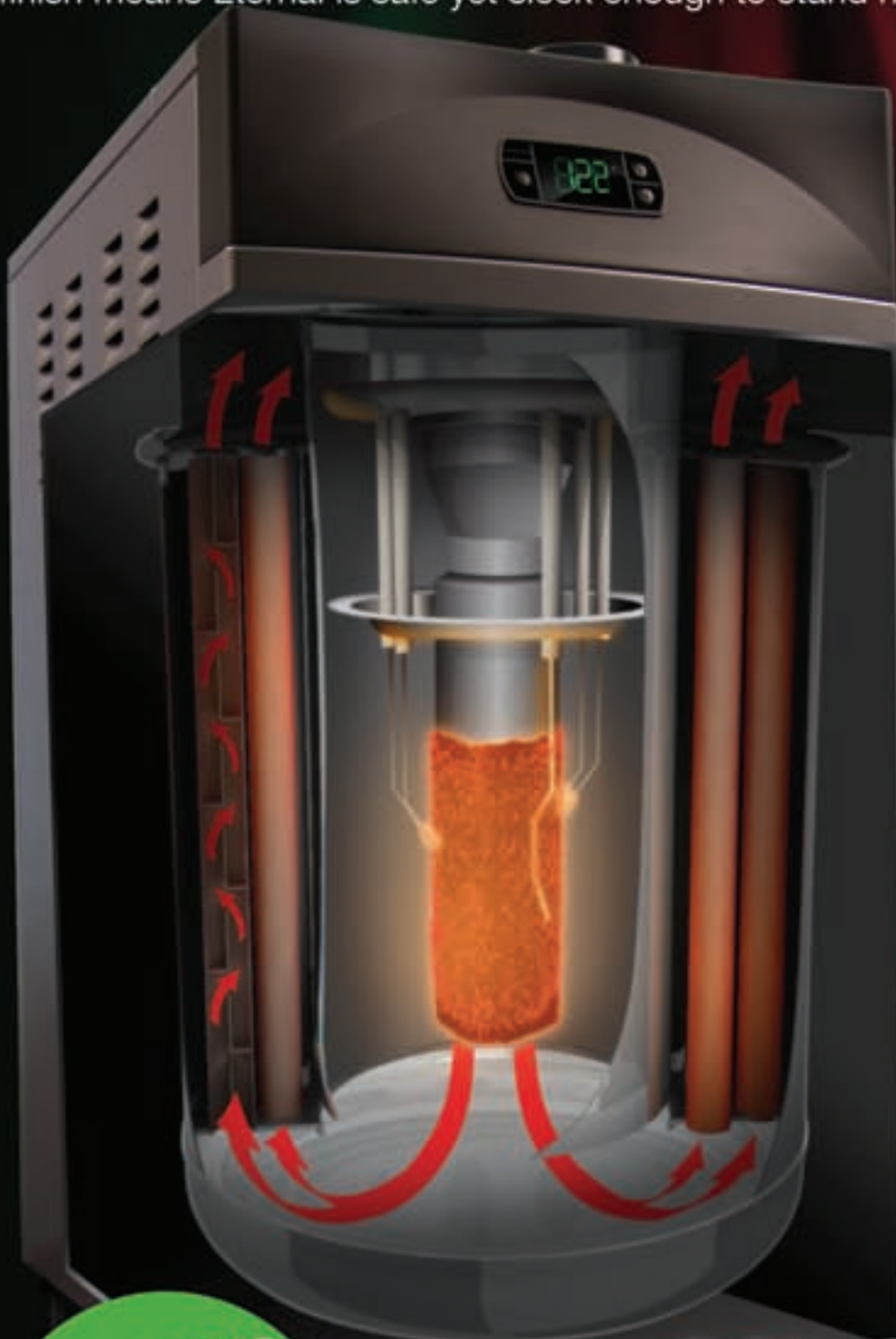
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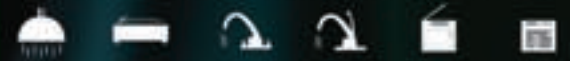


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Having killer looks is a great start. Add a heart of gold, and it's magic. Our patented hybrid heat exchanger keeps the hot water flowing, which makes Eternal so amazing. It produces almost no harmful emissions and is environmentally friendly. The sealed combustion system and designer finish means Eternal is safe yet sleek enough to stand next to your most prized possessions.



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Replaces multiple water heaters and supplies endless hot water

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Patented counter flow design maintains at least 86% efficiency to save energy cost and the environment

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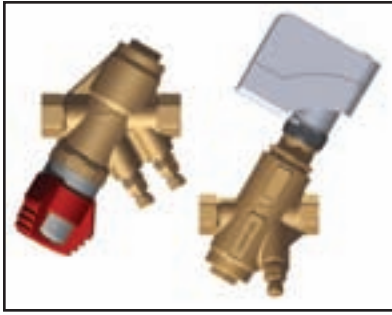
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### Differential pressure/temp valves

OPTIFLO™ pressure independent control (right) and Circuit Setter® ULTRASET™ valves have integrated pressure/temperature ports to easily verify differential pressure and temperatures. OPTIFLO has externally adjustable automatic balance valve and a full modulating control valve for 100% valve authority. Sizes 1/2" to 1 1/4"; flow rates .3 through 13.2 gpm. ULTRASET has external locking handle for easier on-site flow adjustments. Sizes 1/2" to 2"; flow rates .18 to 45.46 gpm. **Bell & Gossett.**

[www.bellgossett.com](http://www.bellgossett.com)

### Backflow prevention

RP4A Series reduced pressure principle backflow preventers fit in tight spaces. Allow for easier maintenance, thanks to a unique modular check



valve design. Stainless steel handles on the shutoff valves are standard and the all-bronze body resists corrosion. Maximum working pressure is 175 psi; operating temperature range is 33° to 140°F. **Apollo Valves.**

[www.apollovalves.com](http://www.apollovalves.com)

### Light commercial tankless unit

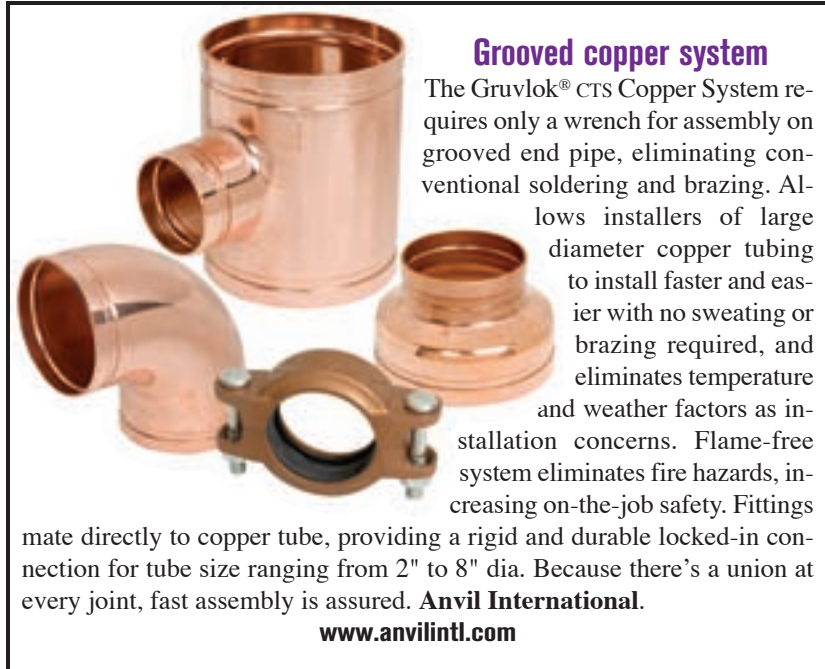
Light commercial version of the popular T-K3, called the T-K3-Pro, uses commercial-grade quality materials.



Its heat exchanger is made with heat-resistant HRS35 copper alloy that is stronger and harder than standard copper to resist erosion, leaks. Thermal rating of 84% for

liquid propane and 82% for natural gas; starts heating water at 0.5 gpm, generates unlimited hot water at a max flow rate of 7.0 gpm. Can connect up to 4 units together without the need for a system controller. **Takagi.**

[www.takagi.com](http://www.takagi.com)



### Grooved copper system

The Gruvlok® CTS Copper System requires only a wrench for assembly on grooved end pipe, eliminating conventional soldering and brazing. Allows installers of large diameter copper tubing to install faster and easier with no sweating or brazing required, and eliminates temperature and weather factors as installation concerns. Flame-free system eliminates fire hazards, increasing on-the-job safety. Fittings

mate directly to copper tube, providing a rigid and durable locked-in connection for tube size ranging from 2" to 8" dia. Because there's a union at every joint, fast assembly is assured. **Anvil International.**

[www.anvilintl.com](http://www.anvilintl.com)

### Intelligent control valve

The ICON System™ next generation gas control valve will be standard equipment on almost all of this manufacturer's residential and light duty commercial products at no extra cost. Features advanced temperature control, exclusive performance software, intelligent diagnostics, pilot-on indication, millivolt-powered operation, separate immersed thermowell, integrated Piezo igniter. **Bradford White.**

[www.bradfordwhite.com](http://www.bradfordwhite.com)



### 1.28 gpf toilet

The Avalanche™ 1.28 is a sophisticated and powerful single-flush gravity fed toilet, using only 1.28 gpf. Clears the bowl fast and efficiently;



3" flush valve, Fluidmaster fill valve, uniquely designed jet feed, rim structure and trapway configuration all contribute to its performance. Large water surface helps with cleaning and maintenance. Slimline tank includes a color-matched side-mounted trip lever. Now available in comfortable ErgoHeight model; soon to be offered in round front and elongated models as well as 10", 12" and 14" rough-in configurations. **Gerber.**

[www.gerberonline.com](http://www.gerberonline.com)

### Freeze unit

The SF-2500 SuperFreeze™ pipe freezing unit quickly and easily isolates sections of copper or steel pipe with ice plugs, eliminating complete system shut-downs and draining. Forms ice plugs in as little as 5 min



in steel pipes up to 2" and copper tubing up to 2 1/2". One or two plugs can be formed with a single unit at the same time. Operates automatically once freeze heads attach to the pipes and the unit is turned on. Continues to run during repairs, ensuring the ice plugs do not melt. Flexible rubber hoses connect the freeze heads to the unit; makes them easier to handle and allows quicker coiling and storage in its rugged stainless steel carrying case. Does not use any hazardous refrigerants, carbon dioxide or nitrogen. **RIDGID.**

[www.ridgid.com](http://www.ridgid.com)



### Twist & lock fittings

Speedfit® plastic twist & lock fittings require no sweating or crimping to make leak-free, reliable pipe connections and provide faster installation time, even in confined spaces. Reusable many times over without compromising connection integrity. Use with copper, CPVC and PEX pipe. Comply with ASTM F876, ASTM F 877, CSA B137.5, ASSE 1061, ESR #1931 and NSF 14 and 61. Lead free. **John Guest.**

[www.johnguest.com](http://www.johnguest.com)

### Variable speed power cable feed

The compact, portable Drain-Rooter PH features a variable speed power cable feed and variable speed motor for complete control at all times; feeds



and retrieves the cable at 16 ft/min. A 4-ft guide hose prevents cable whipping. Works in horizontal and vertical positions. Drum speed can be varied with the foot pedal, for easier threading through strainers and crossbars. **General Pipe Cleaners, a division of General Wire Spring Co.**

[www.drainbrain.com](http://www.drainbrain.com)

### Condensing unit

The super-efficient N-0842MC condensing unit for residential use is an extension of this company's commer-



cial N-0841MC tankless water heater. Yields 93% energy efficiency. Super Heat Exchanger integrates a primary heat exchanger comprised of K-copper and a secondary one of stainless steel. Has a powder coat casing and built-in PVC adapter (purchased separately on commercial unit). **Noritz.**

[www.noritz.com](http://www.noritz.com)



# INTRODUCING THE NEW SMARTHANDLE™

**up** for **liquid** waste  
**down** for **solid** waste



Delany Products is introducing the markets first truly smart handle. Any flush valve ordered with our **SmartHandle™** or the Retro-Fit kit will provide a dual flush that reduces the water volume by approximately 30% when pulling the handle up for liquid waste versus pulling the handle down for a full flush. It's up to you!

In addition, the SmartHandle™ is supplied with a lifetime antimicrobial coating which protects against germs.

See contact information on page 66



[www.delanyproducts.com](http://www.delanyproducts.com)

Changing for the Better...Working to be the Best!





### Upgraded mixing stations

This manufacturer's mixing stations are now available in six upgraded base configurations. Features include low or high-head, 3-speed circulators, new sensor wells and new ball valves. Can be used in conjunction with various heat sources such as conventional and condensing boilers, water heaters and geothermal heat pumps. Red and blue caps on the Pro-Press® Ball Valves indicate system supply (red) and system return (blue). Three boiler connection options include ProPress PEX Press and copper (male). **Viega**.

[www.viega.com](http://www.viega.com)

### PDV water heaters

A new line of power direct vent, tank-type water heaters is designed to meet the rigorous demands of today's tightly constructed new homes that seek to maximize energy savings and air quality. Offered in 40- and 50-gal sizes with both standard inputs and high inputs (40,000 to 65,000 Btuh). Draw all the air needed for combustion directly from outside the home through PVC, CPVC or ABS piping. The by-product gases of that combustion process are then vented to the exterior with the use of a blower through a second pipe line, also made of plastic. **Rheem**.

[www.rheem.com](http://www.rheem.com)

### Lead-free mixing valve

Navigator® lead-free thermostatic mixing valves recently earned certification from IAPMO. Fully



comply with current lead-free legislation; now safer for drinking or cooking water and better for the environment. Meet California, Vermont lead-free legislation. Pre-assembled, fully tested at the factory. **Bradley Corp.**

[www.bradleycorp.com](http://www.bradleycorp.com)

### Tankless installation kits

All-in-one tankless water heater installation kits come in a complete, self-contained, quick-install package. Among the benefits: 1-piece forged

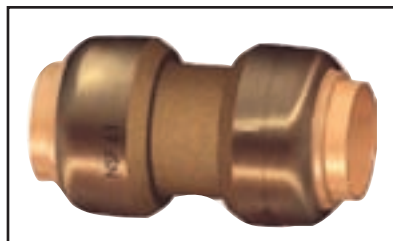


brass valves for simplified installation and complete confidence; Pro-Coat® gas connectors for corrosion resistance and superior flexibility in tight spaces; comfortable, color-coded valve handles for quick identification and ease of installation. Built-in features like integrated drain valves and pressure-relief ports offer greater convenience. **BrassCraft**.

[www.brasscraft.com](http://www.brasscraft.com)

### Push-fit valves and fittings

Push-Fit valves & fittings connect to copper, PEX and/or CPVC pipe. Pipe/tube end preparation is not required with the use of the supplied beveled stiffeners. No soldering,



crimping or solvent welding is necessary with rubber gasket and stainless steel grip ring within the fitting's socket end. Low lead forged brass for use on above-ground plumbing, water systems and hydronic heating. Pressure rated at 200 psig from 0°F to 250°F. **A.Y. McDonald**.

[www.aymcdonald.com](http://www.aymcdonald.com)

### Solar mixing system

Solar X-Pump Block® complete solar mixing system combines a variable speed solar mixing control, heat source circulator and heat exchanger. Stainless steel, brazed plate heat exchanger isolates the heat creation source side of the system (solar collector) and the heat sink side (storage tank). Maintains a setpoint differential between the solar collector and a primary and optional auxiliary storage tank; can support a booster pump as part of a drainback system. **Taco Inc.**

[www.taco-hvac.com](http://www.taco-hvac.com)

### Condensing tankless

Delivering up to 95% thermal efficiency, these tankless condensing units are ideal for residential and commercial applications. The unique condensing design incorporates 2 innovative heat exchangers to achieve optimum heating performance. Available in 4 models, suitable for mid- to large-sized homes, they offer all the same benefits homeowners have come to expect from this manufacturer. **Rinnai**.

[www.rinnai.us](http://www.rinnai.us)



### Push to fit

The manufacturer now offers a full line of push-to-fit fittings and valves. These push-to-fit fittings connect to



copper, CPVC, or PEX tubing without the use of tools, glues, or soldering. Certified for permanent use, but offer the advantage of easy removal and reuse for system repairs, renovations, or additions. All fittings and valves are certified to appropriate NSF, ANSI and IAPMO specifications and standards. **JMF Company**.

[www.jmfcompany.com](http://www.jmfcompany.com)

### Water-powered back-up system

Home Guard Max is a high-capacity, high-efficiency, water-powered back-up system. No electricity or batteries required; takes over seamlessly when a primary sump system fails. Comes fully assembled for fast, easy and trouble-free installations; and its small footprint allows for installation in even the smallest sump pits. With superior performance and discharge capacity, it uses less water and costs less to operate. **Zoeller Corporation**.

[www.zoeller.com](http://www.zoeller.com)



### Shower enclosures

Preceria shower enclosures feature an elliptical-shaped header suspended above thick glass. Oversized curved pull handle and decorative hardware complement overall product design. Glass-to-glass hinges offer choice of swinging the door panel in and out, and of either a curved or straight door. Frame finish options include silver, brushed nickel or 9 powdered-coated finishes. Clear glass showcases tile and emphasizes an open feel; Silk glass is a beautiful effect offering more privacy. **Basco**.

[www.bascoshowerdoor.com](http://www.bascoshowerdoor.com)

### High-efficiency water heaters

The high-efficiency ARMOR water heater line includes 3 new commercial models with inputs ranging from 150,000 to 800,000 Btuh. Stainless steel heat exchanger, 5:1 modulating turndown and SMART SYSTEM™ operating control.



Install with a separate storage tank. Protects against the harmful effects of lime scale buildup. **Lochinvar Corp.**

[www.lochinvar.com](http://www.lochinvar.com)

### Residential zone controls

Three new residential zone controls are loaded with features that ensure easy, trouble-free operation of zoned hydronic heating systems. Models include single, 3 and 4 expandable to 6 zone configurations. High-resolution LED display for system status and zone function; priority and freeze protection options; multi-panel linking; 2-wire with one 3-wire thermostat capability; separate terminals for cold start or tankless coil boilers. Only one service relay is required for all models. **Grundfos**.

[www.grundfos.com](http://www.grundfos.com)





SEASON'S

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*God*

*Bless*

*America!*

**WELDBEND**

®





BY DAN HOLOHAN  
Wet head

## Tweaking for dollars

Maybe it's because of all the traveling I do, or because I live in the suburbs of one of America's largest cities. Or maybe it's because of the seminars that I've been doing for the past 35 years, and how heating people keep asking the same questions year after year. Maybe it's because there's such a focus these days on things that are green and the rising cost of energy.

Maybe all of those things are why my thoughts keep straying toward the old stuff that's out there. And sure, it's fair to ask, why in the 21st Century anyone would want to heat a building with 19th-Century technology? Why do they continue to use steam in places like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago and so many other great American cities?

Let's face it, there are heating systems available these days that are better

than steam. Radiant heating systems, for instance, are more efficient because they operate at low temperature and heat people and objects without heating the air. Low-temperature hydronic systems that use panel radiators and condensing boilers are also very efficient and use less fuel than the typical steam system will use (providing they're in a well-built, tight building).

Ground-source heat pumps can extract the natural heat from the sun, which the earth stores below its surface. These wonderfully modern systems can heat buildings very efficiently, and they're getting lots of news lately. But let's face it; they are costly to install. You have to bury lots of pipe in the ground to get at that natural heat.

Geothermal systems that send water way down to where the rocks are hot are wonderful. But you do have to be living in a neighborhood where the rocks are hot, and at a reasonable depth. And you also have to bring plenty of money to those projects.

The ultimate in heating these days seems to be the Passive House, which involves no heating system at all (humans come with their own heating systems). We measure the thickness of walls in a Passive House in feet, not inches, and the windows are ridiculously efficient. Passive Houses have heat-recovery ventilators to keep the natural heat from people, as well as the heat from any appliances, inside the building. That's the only mechanical equipment you'll find. You'd best expand into building supplies if Passive House catches on in a big way.

All these technologies are modern and viable and very interesting. I love reading about them, and thinking about them, but it seems to me that people are going to consider the payback period before making any decisions. People are like that. How much will it cost? And how soon will I get it back?

Isn't that what you want to know?

Me too.

If someone has an old steam-heating system, I know for certain that it pays for them to do a bit of tweaking before they think about tearing it all out. You can make your money back very quickly with a bit of tweaking — if you know what you're doing.

But I also know for certain that many contractors don't take the time to learn about the older systems, which is a legitimate part of their trade. None of it is that complicated, but it does take time to learn. And there's opportunity for those who do take the time. You know why? Because those who don't take the time to learn are out there telling building owners that they have to tear out those old systems and begin anew.

But that may not be practical. And it may not make economic sense.

These building owners cry out for someone who can step in and tweak. I know this is true because they show up every day on our website, and I send them to the contractors who have done their homework. Trouble is, there aren't enough of these

WHERE QUESTIONS  
GO FOR ANSWERS

TAKE

WALL

FREE

ALWAYS OPEN

HEATINGHELP.COM

See contact information on page 66



knowledgeable contractors.

Take steam, for example. It's a magnificent way to move lots of Btus from one place to another. There's really nothing better when it comes to flat-out moving heat, but steam is also an old way of heating. Does that mean it has to go? Because it's old? The cities of the Midwest are filled with steam-heated buildings. Hardly anyone works on them. The same goes for other parts of the country. All of this work is there for those who have the knowledge, but so many contractors just want to rip it all out and start over, and it's because they don't know. They wish all the old stuff would just go away.

It went away in Europe. The European governments passed laws establishing a maximum temperature leaving any heating boiler. That's how they got rid of steam and the older hot water systems. Do you see a time coming when our politicians will outlaw steam heating and older hot-water systems? Do you think they'll get around to that? Seems to me they have more pressing issues to deal with right now.

And could you get the owners of large, old buildings to change from steam heat unless it was against the law? Could you get all of those co-op boards in our big cities to agree to switch to something more modern? I've yet to meet a co-op board that is eager to spend money on anything — especially on a heating system. Usually, they arrive at this decision kicking and screaming, and almost always in response to an emergency.

No, unless there's a law banning it, I think steam heating will be around for some years to come. In the meantime, I'm going to keep thinking of it as America's low-hanging energy fruit. You can do a lot with a few bucks, and it's a great business to be in. Fix the traps and get the right air vents in the proper places. Tweak the controls. Insulate the pipes. Check the quality of the water. There's plenty of money to be made with these old systems, but you have to know what to look for, and you have to have the right attitude about older systems.

And consider all of our historically significant buildings. What if we could get them working more efficiently without changing the entire heating system? Take the Empire State Building as an example. Right now, they're putting that magnificent building through a \$20 million energy renovation. They're putting reflective insulation behind the 6,500 radiators. They're changing the windows. They're replacing the chillers. They're keeping the steam system. They expect to save \$4 million a year when they're done, and their investment will pay back in five years.

Why tear it all out and begin anew? It makes no sense.

Having knowledge of the old systems allows you to do things that others say can't be done. That's a wonderful feeling. To me, working on an old steam system is a lot like working on a classic car. You can rebuild the engine (the boiler). You can work

on the body (the piping network). You can fix the upholstery (the radiators). Why junk a classic when, with a bit of thought, planning and work, you can make it gleam?

Besides, being able to do this brings a certain sense of pride. And, if you're a heating professional, it also brings new business because when you can do what others say is impossible, people will find you. Trust me.

It comes down to how much you know, and how willing you are to learn a bit more. And it comes down to tweaking. It is possible to make those

old systems much more efficient, but you first have to believe that you can.

I know that you can. ■

*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](http://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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## CONGRATS!

**Danze Inc.** named *Ron Cox* Mid-west regional sales manager servicing the wholesale business. Cox oversees sales in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois,



Ron Cox

Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. He joined Danze in 2005.

*Shelly Hirshman-Olsher*, CEO of **El Cajon Plumbing & Heating Supply**



Shelly Hirshman-Olsher



Doug Cohen

**Co.**, was nominated for San Diego's East County Chamber's "Women in Leadership" award. She was honored at a luncheon on October 30.

*Doug Cohen* is now president of **GT Water Products**. Cohen has spent 20 years in the industry, with companies including Marco Products, Brasscraft/Cobra and Waxman. Founder *George Tash* will now be CEO.

**Hyde Tools Inc.** promoted *Rob Scoble* to executive VP and COO, to oversee Hyde's professional products and industrial blade divisions.

The **International Code Council** appointed *Shawn Martin* director of industry relations in its Plumbing, Mechanical and Fuel Gas group. Martin had been technical director for

Plumbing Manufacturers Institute.

*Earle Cohen* has retired as president and CEO of **Kelly Pipe Co. LLC**. Cohen has been in the steel pipe distribution industry for the past 55 years and served as the president of State Pipe & Supply and National Pipe & Casing prior to rejoining Kelly Pipe in 1993. *Leonard Gross*, Kelly's COO and a 34-year veteran of Kelly and its affiliated companies, will continue in that role and assume the



Rob Scoble



Earle Cohen

## Still doing OK? Recession might not have caught up with you yet

(Continued from page 8.)

the fight and they have more realistic expectations regarding the value of their company.

### We're growing

While everyone else is struggling, some companies are still doing well. Some of these companies have been run so well, are so lucky or both, that they seem "recession-proof." Before you sprain an arm patting yourself on the back, look carefully at the light at the end of the tunnel to be sure that it isn't an oncoming train.

I don't want to rain on your parade but several senior executives confided that mid-year they were thinking they had escaped the recession without a scratch, and then were surprised as their market and business dropped into the tank just like every-

one else's. It turned out that their community was a "late-bloomer" in the recession. This recession continues to have ripple effects and some markets may not yet have been impacted since they are at the far end of the ripple. Stay lean, keep your eyes on the gauges and take action if the business starts south.

**One recommendation for all of the groups** — Get out of the office. Senior management needs to get out and reconnect with customers, prospects and the market, for several reasons:

- To tell the customers that you appreciate their business. In all economies, and in all markets, this is a good investment in time.
- To humbly ask what your company needs to do to earn a greater share of their business. Just asking will give you a better position in the

customer's mind. A single visit will not cause a revolutionary change, but multiple visits, calls and e-mails will make a difference over time.

- To meet potential customers and to develop relationships with other people within the customer's business who may, in the future, be valuable. Walking out to the counter and waiting on the occasional customer is good but, make no mistake, it is not the same as visiting customers and prospects in their shops or, even better, at a job site. The customers at your counter already like you and buy from you, but talking to them often just reinforces the status quo. Talking to contractors who are not buying from you can be gut-wrenching but extremely enlightening.

- To gather first-hand information about the market, the competition, the customers and how your company is perceived. Second- and third-hand information is never as precise and comprehensive as first-hand, feet-on-the-ground observations of any situation.

In a storm, the captain always steers the ship from the helm where he can see and react to the situation immediately, not after it has been described to him second- or third-hand. As far as I am concerned, getting into the field is manning the helm of *your* ship. For a reprint about operating in turn-around mode or on field visits, e-mail me at rich@go-spi.com. ■

*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](http://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](http://www.go-spi.com)

## Carrier Enterprise grows from joint venture

(Continued from Joint, page 1.)

Sales and Distribution regional offices of Mid-Atlantic, South East, Florida, South Central, and Carrier Caribbean and Puerto Rico, as well as Watsco's Comfort Products Distributing division. As part of this transition to Carrier Enterprise, a new corporate logo has been introduced. This logo will begin to appear in stores, as well as on business correspondence such as letterhead, invoices, packing slips and business cards.

Integrated into the logo is CE's new tagline: comfort | excellence. The tagline communicates that CE is in the business of comfort and will strive for excellence in serving its customers.

Even though CE has a new name and new logo, the company still has

the same great employees serving dealers with the same Carrier/Bryant/Payne and Totaline products, at the same convenient locations.

In fact, in an effort to better serve customers, CE is in the process of adding more team members in key areas of the business. One example is in the warranty administration area, which is being brought back to the local offices in an effort to process dealer claims on a more timely and efficient basis.

"CE is committed to making doing business with us easier," said David Meyers, CE president. "We hope dealers like our new look and our renewed commitment to customer service — a commitment to providing the very best customer experience."

For more information, visit [www.carrierenterprise.com](http://www.carrierenterprise.com).

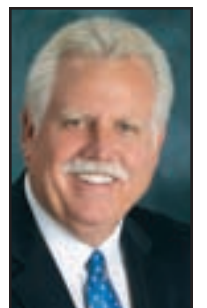
position of CEO.

**PathGuide® Technologies'** chairman *David Allais* received The University of Arizona College of Engineering Lifetime Achievement Award. Allais is credited with creating five barcode symbologies and is named inventor on seven U.S. patents.

**Plumbers Supply Company** promoted *Jay B. Johnson* to president and COO. After starting with the company in October 2001 as a senior op-



Jay B. Johnson



Greg McDonald

erations manager, Johnson was promoted to VP in December 2002. During the announcement to company personnel, Plumbers Supply Co. CEO *Bruce Madison* noted, "Under Johnson's leadership the company has implemented strategic initiatives and cultural changes that make Plumbers Supply Co. a markedly different wholesaler serving the plumbing and heating contractor community."

In addition, *Doug Madison* will assume the position of VP, and CFO *Jay Wilson* has taken on the additional roles of secretary and treasurer. *Jay Werst* remains chairman.

**Plumbing Manufacturers Institute** elected *Lee Mercer*, director of product compliance for **Moen Incorporated**, Board president for 2010. He succeeds *Walt Strader*, VP-strategic technology for Price Pfister (Ret.), who will serve as immediate past president.



Also elected to serve on the Executive Committee were:

- **William Ball**, VP of **WCM Industries Inc.**, first vice president
- **Jack Krecek**, VP and general manager, Commercial Business Unit for **Elkay Manufacturing Co.**, second vice president.
- **Stewart Yang**, VP-engineering, global faucets, **Kohler Company**.

Newly elected directors at large are **Casey Hayes**, director of engineered solutions for Haws Corporation, and **John Watson**, director, technical services for **Sloan Valve**.

**Reed Manufacturing** welcomes **Jeff Esmont** as regional manager for Ohio, Kentucky, southern Michigan, western New York and northwest Pennsylvania. He spent 25 years at Milwaukee Electric Tool, most recently managing accounts in northeast Ohio and western Pennsylvania.

**Greg McDonald** was named **SJE-Rhombus** international sales director. He had been director of sales for the Asian Pacific region for a thermal management materials manufacturer and worked closely with OEMs while traveling extensively in Asia.

**Slant/Fin** announced several recent promotions:

- **Charles Famoso** is now VP & CFO. He joined Slant/Fin in January 2006 and had been managing internal financial administrative require-



*Charles Famoso*      *Russ Trifilio*

ments, as well as external finance, insurance and banking needs. He also actively participates on the executive management committee.

- **Russ Trifilio** was promoted to VP-manufacturing operations and process engineering. He is responsible for materials and planning, as well as freight/traffic for two operational facilities.

• With 24 years of experience in the hydronic heating industry, **Bob Flanagan** is now VP-sales. During his



*Bob Flanagan*      *Martin Quinn*

time with Slant/Fin, he has served as New England regional sales manager and director of sales.

The **Thermadyne® Holdings Corporation** Board of Directors announced the appointment of **Martin Quinn** as the company's president. The 25-year Thermadyne veteran has held a variety of positions, most recently executive VP-global sales and marketing. He has substantial experience in every aspect of managing the company.

**THG USA** named **Keith Amado** commercial project manager. Amado will oversee sales development in the commercial, hospitality, yachting and multi-housing industries. In addition, he will maintain existing dealers in the Chicago market, and increase market penetration by opening new dealers. He had been general manager of the Los Angeles market for Waterworks.

**Wilo USA LLC** has hired two new district sales managers for its leader-

ship team:

- **David Kemp** — Northeast district sales manager. With more than 30 years in the plumbing and heating industry, Kemp most recently served as Eastern regional sales manager for Laing Thermotech.

• **Nelson "Rocky" Randolph** — Southeast district sales manager. He has 22 years of plumbing and heating industry experience, including 15 years as a regional sales manager for two plumbing manufacturers. ■

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## RIDGID redesigns website, expands use of social media outlets

ELYRIA, OHIO — The redesigned RIDGID® website (www.ridgid.com) allows for easier navigation to make the experience more efficient and productive for the user.

Featuring rotating banners that highlight the latest products and prominent drop down menus, users



can quickly navigate to their desired RIDGID tool information. Visitors can also find out about the latest news and events where they can personally participate with RIDGID. From any page, users can join RIDGID on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

The updated Forum contains a new section called RIDGID Central. Accessed from the Forum home page (www.ridgidforum.com/rc), users can view new product information and request demonstrations. Users can also share their thoughts with over 28,000 Forum members.

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# It's a new day in publishing



BY MARY JO MARTIN  
Editorial director

For 65 years, *The Wholesaler* has been bringing you the news of the industry through its printed pages. Today, the stream of information is almost instantaneous, thanks to the internet, outlets such as 24-hour cable news, hand-held mobile devices and other similar vehicles. We've become accustomed to getting our news quickly — and in our choice of format. As a result, newspapers, magazines, catalogs and other forms of print media are exploring additional mediums with which to share content with their audiences.

*The Wholesaler* is no exception. So in our ongoing effort to be fresh, relevant and innovative, we have rolled out two new initiatives.

Starting with the ASA Convention in mid-October, we began shooting short video interviews with industry executives. These generated such a positive response that we continued the practice at the PVF Roundtable, the HARDI Convention and GreenBuild. Members of *The Wholesaler* team will be shooting videos throughout our travels and then posting them on our website. You can find them — organized by event — under the heading "On the Road."

The videos are a great opportunity for executives to share information about their companies, give their opinions on any of a number of front-burner issues, discuss new product rollouts and offer their thoughts on the event they are attending. And, unlike our monthly print publication cycle, using these video segments allows *The Wholesaler* to bring you information almost immediately; give you a front row seat at trade shows, events, companies and organizations; and provide a form of networking that brings you up close to the opinions and wealth of experience of key industry players.

In addition, I've begun recording regular video blogs called "Between Us," that also can be found on the home page. These short clips allow me to bring you first-hand accounts of meetings, trade shows and special events, previews of upcoming issues of the magazine, and share other newsworthy information — all in my own voice!

But that's not all that's new at *The Wholesaler*. Beginning in January, we will launch another very exciting new venture — **The Wholesaler Radio**. During these weekly 15-minute programs, you'll hear from *The Wholesaler's* highly respected and knowledgeable columnists and other astute industry observers, along with leading executives from wholesalers and manufacturers of all sizes, rep firms, associations and buying groups. Our sincere thanks to Bradford White for sponsoring the first four weeks of *The Wholesaler Radio*. Their continued support of our endeavors is truly appreciated. Bradford White is a full line manufacturer of residential, commercial and industrial products for water heating, space heating, combination heating and storage applications.



Our kick-off program will be posted on Monday, January 11, with management columnist Rich Schmitt as the special guest. Schmitt, who generates tremendous feedback from our readers, is highly experienced in distributor operations and management. His insight will provide listeners with valuable suggestions to strengthen their businesses.

The segment set to air starting January 18 — the week prior to the AHR Expo — will feature key leaders in the HVAC segment. They will be discussing standards, legislation, product development and other areas of interest for that market in 2010.

We will follow up with Schmitt as the guest for our third installment the week of January 25, which will give him a chance to drill a little deeper on management policies and procedures he feels most strongly about.

And during week four — February 1 — be sure to tune in for a roundtable discussion between one of our industry's leading manufacturers, one of their wholesaler customers and the independent representative who serves as a strong link between the two.

The programs are hosted and produced by Kent Covington, a 15-year veteran radio host and entrepreneur. He started his first business at age 21, which he built and sold a few years later. He has been providing radio and marketing consulting services to various organizations ever since.

Listener questions are encouraged, and each week guests will answer some of your questions. We have created an e-mail address — [mailbag@thewholesaler.com](mailto:mailbag@thewholesaler.com) —

that is designated solely for our radio and video segments. Readers may ask questions of any of our columnists or other guests. We will post a schedule of upcoming programs on our website as well, to best accommodate your questions. And in addition to questions, we also welcome your feedback and ideas for future programming through this e-mail address.

To tune in, it's simple. Just go to [www.thewholesaler.com](http://www.thewholesaler.com) and click on *The Wholesaler Radio* icon. You can listen at your desk, or easily download the program to an i-Pod or other mobile device. You can also subscribe through i-Tunes or traditional RSS feeds, which will automatically update the program through your web

browser. But because it is streamed directly through our website, you don't have to download it or subscribe to listen. Similar to the videos described above, the radio segments will be archived on our website for easy access. In addition to *The Wholesaler Radio's* value to a company's management, it's designed to be a great tool for sharing information with employees — individually at their own computer stations, or through Lunch & Learn programs or company/department meetings.

Just as our readers and advertisers emphasize relationships as key to the success of their partnerships, we at *The Wholesaler* very much value our relationship with all of you. We know that our success is due to the loyalty and support of our readers and advertisers. By putting an even more personal touch on our communication efforts, and offering greater value through new insight into the distribution channel and an even more timely dissemination of news, we hope to further strengthen those relationships. This is truly a new age in publishing, and we're delighted to embark on this journey with you. ■

Mary Jo Martin is editorial director of *THE WHOLESALER*. She can be reached at 972/867-0724 or [editor@thewholesaler.com](mailto:editor@thewholesaler.com).

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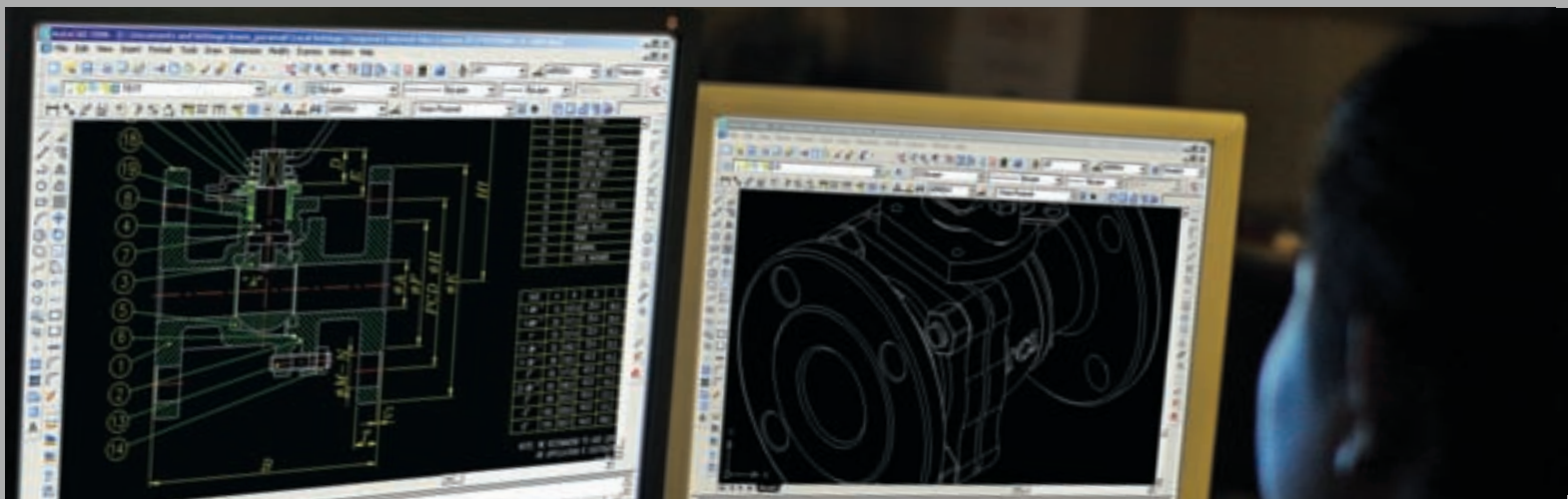
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