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## Plumbers Without Work Toward

- ▶ Strategic planning for
- ▶ Altherm celebrates

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# SUPPLYHOUSE

## TIMES

QUARTERLY  
**Codes  
Update**  
from Jim Kendzel



## Plumbers Without Borders & Matco-Norca Work Towards Gender Parity

- ▶ Strategic planning for supply chain management
- ▶ Altherm celebrates 75 years

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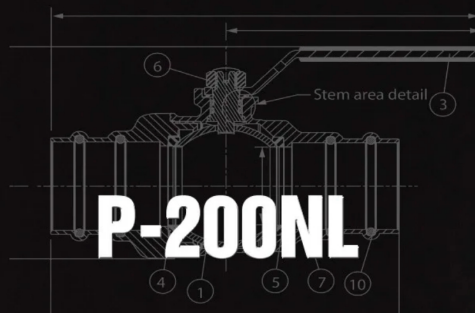
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FROM THE EDITOR || NATALIE FORSTER



Contact Natalie 

# Passion and giving shines through plumbing industry

PHCP companies give back and come together to celebrate World Plumbing Day.

I've always been amused by the number of "national" days we have. The day I'm writing this column happens to be "National Puppy Day," according to my local news station — I'll take any excuse to spoil my two pups a little extra, though. Just a quick Google search shows me that April 20 is apparently "National Lima Bean Respect Day" and May 9th is "National Lost Sock Appreciation Day."

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While many of these "holidays" are quite ridiculous, there are some that hold more importance. For example, March 11 was World Plumbing Day. Additionally, April 25 is "National Hug a Plumber Day," which is a bit more lighthearted, but still more important than honoring the lima bean.

To celebrate World Plumbing Day, *Supply House Times*, along with its sister publications *Plumbing & Mechanical* and *PM Engineer*, asked industry associations, manufacturers, buying groups, contractors and engineers to share quick notes about what the holiday means to them. The amount of response we received on short notice, along with the great content, echoed the never-changing passion our industry has for the great picture of what you do: Provide safe, clean water to communities. Check out the video [here](#).



PMI Executive Director and CEO **Kerry Stackpole** put it well when he said, "For us, every day is World Plumbing Day," because each and every day you all are working towards the shared goal of providing the product that gets safe, clean and efficient water to our nation's communities, no matter if there is an internationally recognized day or not.

Our industry even found a way to get children involved in World Plumbing Day. ASA partnered with the International Water, Sanitation Hygiene Foundation (IWISH) for its 13th annual children's poster contest. Submissions from ASA member companies' children were accepted through March 30, and in addition to cash prizes, the winning posters will be blown up and displayed at NETWORK2023. Each poster must say, "Plumbing is Essential." A pretty cool way to educate kids on the importance of plumbing and skilled trades if you ask me.

In addition to spreading passion for plumbing, I've noticed many PHCP companies giving back in various ways recently. Approximately 100 Affiliated Distributor (AD) associates participated in a giving back event with Cradles to Crayons, supporting more than 3,200 children in need and raising more than \$23,000.

Also demonstrating the spirit of giving, APR Supply Co. is using its 100-year anniversary as a reason to give back, donating 100 days worth of community service to an internal program called "100 Days of Giving." Along those same lines, Ferguson and Uponor are working together to help support IWISH by donating both product and funds.

And last but not least, A. O. Smith announced it donated \$100,000 to American Red Cross for Ukrainian relief efforts. Read more about these charitable giving announcements in our news section [here](#).

It's often easy to get bogged down with the stress of daily work and the pressure your role in such an essential field places on you. Not to mention the worry of the current events going on worldwide that are so far out of our control. But



I'm happy to see the PHCP-PVF industry taking every chance it gets to shout the importance of what you do, work together for the greater good, and give back in numerous ways. Let's take a moment to step back and say, "Job well done."

**Natalie Forster** is chief editor of *Supply House Times*. You can reach her at [forstern@bnpmedia.com](mailto:forstern@bnpmedia.com) or 224-201-2225.



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# MULTIMEDIA SPOTLIGHT

## VIDEO SPOTLIGHT



### Celebrating World Plumbing Day

The BNP Media Plumbing group gathered notes from industry associations, manufacturers, engineers and contractors to share the importance of world plumbing day, which was March 11. Check out their messages [here](#).

## ONLINE NEWS



### Winsupply welcomed more than 1,800 attendees to its annual meetings and vendor showcase in Dallas, Texas.

The conference was held from March 13-18 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. Vendors and Local Company Presidents attended annual meetings, president and manager meetings, vendor one-on-one meetings, a town hall with the Winsupply Leadership Team and training sessions on various topics. The vendor showcase had more than 200 exhibitors in attendance. The conference also included an awards gala, featuring country singers Clint Black, Sara Evans and Sixwire. Newburgh Windustrial Supply Co. took home the award for Company of the Year.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



### Supply House Times

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Studies from [Peterson Institute for International Economics](#) show that companies with women in executive roles are more profitable than those without women in leadership. What better way to celebrate [#internationalwomensday](#) than to hear what ASA's Women in Industry division has been up to since it last held an in person ELEVATE conference three years ago? [Suzanne Chreene](#), Sheri Newman and [Myra Story](#) share insight on how to support women in your organizations, as well as what to expect from ELEVATE2022 in Louisville in the article below. [Lion Plumbing Supply A. O. Smith Corporation Delta Faucet Company American Supply Association \(ASA\)](#) [#leadership](#) [#women](#)



# Plumbing industry *works towards* gender parity

Katherine Elsener is a technician with Anderson Plumbing, Heating & Air in San Diego.

## Matco-Norca partners with Plumbers Without Borders to attract more women and bridge skills trade gap worldwide.

BY NATALIE FORSTER

Sorry James Brown, but **this is no longer a “Man’s World.”** Today, women work in just about every field and industry, **proving they can do just about anything** a man can do. U.S. Census statistics show more and more women have been entering previously considered male-dominated industries, including construction.

However, though women make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce, only 2.1% are plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s **Bureau of Labor Statistics** as of January 2022.

The skilled trades — including plumbing and HVAC — can offer women a great career path with equal pay, room to advance, and in return, women can help fill the need for workers during a time when most industries in the U.S. are experiencing labor shortages. The problem is most women have never seen a woman plumber or HVAC technician, and therefore don’t see it as a career path for themselves.

The industry is working on changing that. *Plumbing & Mechanical* sat down with several women contractors to discuss women in plumbing and how to recruit more women into the field.

### The pink plumber

When you talk about women-owned contracting companies, **Mary Jean Anderson’s** name always comes up. Anderson is president and CEO of San Diego-based Anderson Plumbing, Heating & Air, a company she purchased from her ex-husband after they had a difference of



opinion on whether to focus on new construction or residential service, repair and replacement. That was back in 2004. Anderson decided to capitalize on being a woman-owned contracting business, and rebranded by adding hot pink to the company logo, fleet vehicles and uniforms. In 2007, she decided to tack on HVAC services to the company's offerings. Today, the company boasts 240 employees, 150 fleet vehicles and earned a little more than \$50 million in revenue in 2021.

Tosha Everheart is the brand manager for Grandview, Missouri-based Morgan Miller Plumbing. When a plumbing apprenticeship opportunity opened up, she took the leap to begin trade school to become a plumbing contractor with the company. Finishing school this spring, Everheart says she loves the hands-on job and getting to interact with homeowner customers.

"When you're in high school, they give you those career path assessment tests, well, I was a helper," Anderson says. "My parents talked me into going into nursing. I love to help people. But I came into this company to help my then-husband, who was really struggling. But I came to really love the industry. My father was blue collar, and growing up, I realized he probably had some kind of learning disorder, but he was very mechanical. So, while everybody went to college and ran companies, my father was a mechanic and then a commercial fisherman. I always felt like he was looked down on, that he was the black sheep. I realized as soon as I got involved in the plumbing industry that these men are very smart, but they didn't know it, didn't believe in it.

"And it sounds corny to say we're responsible for the health of a nation, but we are," she continues. "A lot of the diseases like SARS, for instance, are caused by poor water and sanitation because of their plumbing systems. Back in the day, plumbers were more important than doctors when they were building all the aqueducts because they were responsible for public health. The doctors were secondary below them. Somehow this industry changed into a butt crack joke. The way plumbing is portrayed in the movies "Moonstruck" and "Home Alone" infuriated me. I worked really hard to get our industry and the people I work with to be proud of themselves, wear a professional uniform and be spotless and immaculate in everything they do. I fell in love with this culture, and in a way, maybe it was an homage to my dad. I want to elevate this industry."

Then, in 2016, Anderson heard a statistic from Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors — National Association, that the skilled trades were aging out at 10% per year, and only 6% were entering the industry.

"I thought, 'OK, this is a crisis,'" she says. "I didn't want to steal employees from other people, but I had to grow my company. Originally, back before I turned everything pink and female-owned, I had a Rosie the Riveter framed poster in my office. So I thought to myself, what happened during World War II? Women put on their pants and went to work — that's what started women working. Then I thought women are going to be part of the answer, so we had to look at women."

Anderson thought about that for about a year then started her own school in 2017, Anderson Career Builders Institute (ACBI) to help train people for the industry, especially women. Anderson's husband, **Bryan Rominger**, a master plumber and NATE-certified HVAC technician, is the dean of the school and helps build the different curriculums. He also teaches full-time along with one other teacher. Anderson is currently looking to add a third to the school's staff.



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"I got the idea from my daughter — my first two women in the field were my daughter and another gal, **Randy Green**, who is still with me today as a service manager," Anderson says. "They did really well, and my daughter during the eighth month of her pregnancy had a 100% closing average with an average ticket of \$8,800. I'm really on a crusade to get women.

We're missing the boat because this job is not what it used to be. We're not running a cable and then digging tons of trenches to try to find the break in the pipe. You put a camera down the pipe now. There are apparatuses to help you lift a water heater into place. Women can do this job, and they do it really well, I promise you."

Anderson Plumbing, Heating & Air currently has 12 women employees in the field.

"They are by far some of the top producers in the country, not just in our company, but in the country," Anderson notes. Anderson is able to compare her employees to other contractors around the country thanks to her membership with contractor organizations like Nexstar Network and TurnPoint. "We're close to the Mexican border, and if you think about the Spanish word for home, 'La Casa,' it's female — the home is female. So when a woman goes into the home, they are able to connect with the women decision-makers. Back in the early 2000s, I did an unofficial study when I was taking all the checks into the bank. Over a span of three months, 78% of the people signing the checks were women. That's how this whole revolution started. I began making sure my employees understood the woman was going to be the decision-maker in most cases, and they really needed to know how to communicate with women, where to keep their eyes, how to bring them into the conversation and so on."

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Anderson notes that she recruits women from all walks of life everywhere she goes. She has found women trainees through mutual acquaintances, women's shelters, in the gay and lesbian community, the military and more.

"I talk about it wherever I go, whether I'm at the hairdresser, the manicurist or the doctor's office," Anderson says. "My first gal was from my dad's rehabilitation center, so you never know where you're going to find them — so you have to keep talking about it."

Anderson's next step is working on short two-minute video clips with her female employees discussing the benefits of being in the industry.

"I can promise you the only problem is that people don't think about it," she says. "It has to become top-of-mind awareness that this is an industry where women can work and succeed — and it's equal pay. There's no discrimination when it comes to pay. What I have found, and what I want this industry to know, is that yes, the women work harder than a man — they have to because they have to prove themselves. Once you find them, they're completely committed, devoted and very hard workers. We do have to accommodate their schedules (with children) to a certain degree, because still in our society, it's not totally equal. There's no better joy in my life than watching women succeed in this industry and creating a life for themselves without having to depend on anybody."

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## All roads lead to plumbing

**Beth Rovazzini**, president of Indianapolis-based B&W Plumbing and Heating and a member of PHCC of Indiana, never planned to run the family plumbing and heating business, but fate had other ideas. She actually started her career as an accountant.

"My Barbie never installed toilets or furnaces," Rovazzini notes. "I went to school, got a degree in accounting and actually went to work for a Big Eight accounting firm. Then, my brother passed away, which kind of changed the dynamics. There was just the four of us. My parents had purchased a restaurant when he died just to have something to distract them. I actually hated being in accounting, so I came over and ran the restaurant for about five years until we sold it. After that, I came to run the financial side of B&W. Then, one day, my parents told me their retirement plan was for me to purchase the business, so I did with three other partners."

Rovazzini says she has never experienced any discomfort or hard times working in a male-dominated industry. "It's not like how they portray it in the movies. There are sometimes awkward moments, but a lot of it is just confidence in yourself and really doing the right thing. You have to have the confidence — when you walk into a job trailer and there are 40 guys in there, and you're the only woman, it goes dead silent. If you let that get to you, it could be a problem. But if you just say, 'OK, are we doing this meeting or not, guys?' If you're comfortable, everyone around you will be comfortable. Rovazzini notes there have been times when job site foremen and superintendents would tell her they

thought she wouldn't know what she was talking about or that she would be hard to work with, and in all cases, the men were pleasantly surprised.

"There's a lot of advantages to being a woman," she notes. "We're usually better at following through on things. We're much better at listening, so that tends to make a lot of things go better. And I think the key, too, is knowing what you're talking about. A lot of times men fake it with bravado, and as a woman, I can't fake it. I better know what I'm talking about, so I better do my homework. I need to actually know what's what."

One of the best things about this industry is people are willing to share their knowledge, Rovazzini explains. "If you're teachable, no matter what industry you are in, people that are competent want to share their knowledge. I see that all the time with our plumbers and our apprentices. If that apprentice has the right attitude and is like a sponge, our older guys will spend a lot of time and effort teaching them. But if you've got an attitude or act like you know everything and there's nothing for you to learn, then they're not going to waste their time either."

Rovazzini says for the most part, there are no physical limitations preventing women from becoming excellent plumbers and HVAC technicians.

"It's not like you need to be able to lift 400 pounds or anything like that," she says. "Especially on the service side. Women are more detail-oriented. Most women are better communicators because they listen better. And the pay — that's one thing about construction. You hear a lot of people in business groups always talking about pay equity and the glass ceiling. You don't have that in construction. If you can do the job, you're going to be paid the same thing. It's not where if you're the executive director of an organization and you're a woman, yeah, you're probably going to be paid 20% less than if they gave that job to a man. That's just how it is. It's not right, but that's how it is. But in construction, if you're a licensed plumber and you're female, you're going to make the same amount as your male counterpart. If you can do the job, I don't care if you are purple. Do the job, and that's fine with me."

The trades benefit from having more women join as well, Rovazzini notes, because there is a larger job pool.

"What's really happened to us is everybody is recruiting out of the same young male pool," she says. "Well, young men today have so many other options. I mean, you can actually make a living playing video games these days. 50 years ago, there were not this many options — you went to work at a factory, worked on the farm, got a white collar job or you went into a trade. Today, there are so many options available to an 18-year-old male, they're choosing other things. And our pool kept getting smaller and smaller. Expanding our pool to include women doubles our potential workforce."

While B&W doesn't have any current women in the field, it has in the past. Rovazzini, like many other contractors, finds it difficult to recruit women because most women don't see themselves in the position.

"It's not like Barbie ever had a toolbox — maybe she should," Rovazzini says. "We need to get out in the middle schools, high schools, adult education centers and in the community. What I see so often with other contractors is they have an immediate need — we all do. But I also know I'm going to need somebody five years from now, 10 years from now. If we don't keep adding people to the industry, we're actually devaluing our companies because there won't be anybody down the road. Then we're going to have to consolidate because there won't be enough people to do the work."

### Once you're in, you can never leave...

**Karen Hill**, vice president of HM Plumbing in Marietta, Georgia and QSC Advisory Council member, got involved with the company to help her husband. She never planned to stay long-term, but she's still going strong 14 years later.

"My husband started the company in 2007, and I was a vice president of marketing for a high-rise condominium developer. When the mortgage market crashed in 2008, you couldn't give away a condo, so I lost my job and I was devastated. So I told my husband, 'I'm going to help get the company going because I have a business and marketing background. I have the skills and I'm going to help you get it together. But just know, when I get that phone call that I have my high-rise office back, I'm out of here, it's going to be short-lived.' That was in 2008, and I'm still here."

In that 14 years, Hill has learned plumbing as well as obtained her journeyman's license, and very recently, her master plumbing license. Hill manages everything on the internal operations side of the company from the dispatch team to insurance to payables and receivables to customer service. HM Plumbing has grown to 23 employees, including one female journeyman plumber who serves as an estimator in the office.



"I now have a passion for it," Hill says about plumbing. "My dad was in aviation mechanics, so that work ethic is the same, you're working with your hands and there's a beginning and an end. This is what my husband does and I'm here to support him. I don't have the desire to go and search for that corporate corner office any longer, it's not my thing anymore. I'm pretty comfortable where I am, and I'm very involved with PHCC on the local level. I'm hoping to get more involved on a national level to help educate not just children, but parents as well that this is an admirable industry with a great career path."

According to Hill, the industry can benefit from having more women plumbers and technicians because of their attention to detail.

"Women's skillsets are different from men, and there's nothing wrong with that," she says. "They traditionally have a strong attention to detail, they're traditionally tidier — just those two things there make a homeowner more comfortable. We need to expose the women that are in the industry to show this is not just a male-dominated business. We've already broken the glass ceiling, but it's the exposure that we — me included — are lacking. We need to be better at exposing that to the public and to colleges and other institutions."

### Third-generation going strong

**Laura Ciriello**, president of Beech Grove, Indiana-based William J. Ciriello Plumbing Co. and national secretary-designate for PHCC — National Association, came by her profession honestly — it's in the blood. Ciriello's grandfather started the company in 1952, which was passed onto her father until she finally purchased it about 12 years ago. Today, the company has 17 employees.

"Growing up in a family business, regardless of what the business is, you're always somewhat involved in it," Ciriello explains. "I had to wash trucks, sweep floors, answer phones and things like that. I didn't really think that that was the path that I was going to end up taking. All I knew was I wanted to go into business."

My dad took me to lunch one day, and he asked me, 'Have you ever considered the family business?' I said, 'No, not really.' He said, 'Well, you're kind of bossy.' I was kind of bossy. I loved business. Really, it could have been anything, but I'm proud that it's plumbing."

Ciriello holds a plumbing contractor license, which is the highest license in her state. The day she took her test, she was the only woman out of about 200 people testing.

"There was a practical portion and a written portion of the test and they split the group in half," she says. "I remember sitting in the written portion and there are two proctors of the exam walking around. The proctors said to each other, 'I hear we have a woman in here today, I wonder where she's at?' I was literally right next to them. I had my hair in a ponytail, jeans on and work boots. I guess I was a bit more camouflaged than I thought. It made me laugh. But I aced the test, both the practical and the written. I was probably more determined to ace the test because I wasn't supposed to, I guess."

As a business owner, Ciriello knows women can absolutely succeed in plumbing and views them as an untapped employment pool.

"We have a female technician on staff, and she's doing wonderfully," Ciriello says. "Unfortunately, we're still in a day and age where you're not sure exactly how they're going to be received. It probably helps that her boss is a woman, too. Every once in a while, she'll get some pushback, but for the most part, she's really been embraced. I think it has everything to do with her work ethic. I think women sell themselves short by not considering something that's not traditionally thought of for them. There are certain times when she would be the preferred technician, based on how small of a space it is, or the very fine motor skills that women have, inherently, because their hands are smaller. Typically, they're also better communicators."

Like anything in life, plumbing contractors need to show women that it's possible to succeed in this industry, Ciriello notes.

"If you can see yourself in it, then you're going to be more apt to consider it," she says. "We, as an industry, have to promote the fact that female technicians not only exist, but thrive. Then as contractors and employers, we really need to create an environment where that is encouraged and sought after."

"It's really not as hard as we think it is," she adds. "You have to be really open to being different. My female technician is tough, and she would succeed in whatever she does. That kind of doing work with this transition is not a job that's not

tough, and she would succeed no matter where she was. That kind of drive makes this transitioning into a job that's not common even easier."



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## Leadership awareness and segment-style selling propels rep agency to decades-long growth.

When **Al Pekelney** started selling Bock Water Heaters out of the back of his car while driving around New Jersey and New Jersey in 1947, he likely wasn't aware it was the start of what would become a 75-year-old company now representing 23 product lines.

The grassroots business Pekelney began has transformed into manufacturer's rep agency Altherm Inc., which is celebrating 75 years in business in 2022. In 2000, **Tom Gallagher**, president and **Vinnie Smith**, vice president, bought the company from Pekelney and have maintained its impressive list of long-term lines while setting the company on a path for growth.

"We still represent Bock Water Heaters 75 years later," Smith notes. "And we're the longest running rep agency with Unico Boilers at more than 50 years. We're also celebrating 50 years representing Delta Faucet, which is a great accomplishment for us."



Altherm's founder, the late Al Pekelney.

**Andre Zechmeister**, director of trade sales at Delta Faucet emphasizes Altherm's impressive performance over the decades. "Altherm is one of our top performing agencies in the U.S. year after year and just recently won our '2021 Showroom Agency of the Year' award," he says. "Altherm is a very well structured agency, with specialists covering all key verticals for Delta Faucet, and the principals are seasoned sales professionals, but also very strategic with planning and resource deployment, which gives us as a manufacturer the confidence that our customers are benefiting from the highest possible service levels and maximizing our sales opportunities."

Gallagher explains the agency has compartmentalized its selling strategy over the years.

"Today, we have three distinct selling teams," Gallagher says. "Our showroom segment, the trade segment and our business development segment make up the company today."

The trade side of the business — wholesaler-distributor customers and contractor customers —represents where Gallagher and Smith got their start in the business; representing boilers and heating equipment, while the showroom segment took off 15-20 years ago. **Miles Sotelo Hodge**, business development manager, heads up the business development segment which focuses on sales and marketing tactics for Altherm's various customer verticals; distributor, engineers, contractors, developers, designers, etc.

Smith points out that landing representation of Delta Faucet served as a major turning point for the business, as it helped branch Altherm into the "pretty" side of plumbing in addition to its roots in the heating side.



Tom Gallagher, Altherm's president.

### Leadership awareness

Altherm leadership certainly understands the balance between long-time experience and embracing new perspectives and technology. When it came time to launch the showroom segment, Smith and Gallagher tapped into new resources.

"As the showroom segment began, Tom and I knew we probably aren't the right demographic to sell to the designers, architects, etc.," Smith says. "So we set out to hire folks that have become a great team; the showroom team was just awarded Showroom of the Year by Delta Faucet."

This awareness transcends into all facets of Altherm's operations. Gallagher brings up channel conflict, noting Altherm is well aware of the tension on today's marketplace due to retail and eCommerce competition.

"Over the past couple of decades we've seen a lot of advancement in technology and increased competition from online retailers," Gallagher says. "So in addition to managing the ever-important trade side of our business, we're constantly adapting to stay relevant to all of our customer segments."

In terms of staying relevant, Smith says manufacturers still find tremendous value on the role of a manufacturers' rep.

"The best thing we have going for us is how we thrive with the distributor and contractor," he says. "We're still the most profitable channel for the manufacturer. We're able to provide answers and solutions for our customers that eCommerce and retail can't do."

Gallagher says Altherm's goal is to create business for its distributor partners. "When distributors come to us with a large order, it's because they're moving product to their customers. So we work as partners with our distributors and say 'thank you' for the large order, but now it's our job to move those parts off your shelf."

Smith and Gallagher hold decades of experience working with the trade segment, and both are aware that there are new strategies to reach customers where fresh perspectives are needed.

"We strive to be open minded and aware of where they may be gaps in our knowledge," Gallagher. "For example, Miles has brought many new ideas and perspectives to our team. Vinnie and I don't have the same understanding of social media or digital marketing that someone younger and/or fresh out of school studying this stuff may have, so we have no problem being open minded to the new ideas that are brought up to us."

When summarizing Altherm's success, Smith explains it's a great combination of more than 100 years' experience in the industry along with the ability to adapt and be open minded that sets the company up to win.

"Between myself, Tom Gallagher and Doug Adams, our vice president, we hold more than 100 years of experience in the PHCP industry," Smith explains. "So when a manufacturer is looking for a trusted partner, they have our experience and reputation to reference, and alongside our developed three selling teams, they feel comfortable investing in working with us."





Smith adds that the long-term established relationships Altherm has with vendors is especially important to manufacturers who have a new product like they want an agency to pioneer.

**Bob Shea**, executive director of sales at ECR International — a vendor partner of Altherm for more than 45 years — agrees, saying Altherm has been vital in training on new product launches. “Altherm has been a trusted representative of ECR International for 45 years - the longest tenured agency with ECR,” he says. “They are very customer relationship driven and are a highly active proponent of training for our customers and business partners, as well as the overall growth of our condensing products. ECR looks forward to continuing this relationship for many years to come.”

Gallagher adds that the team — 29 employees total — Altherm has put together is its greatest asset.

“There’s no question about it that our people are our most important asset,” he says. “We spend a lot of time making sure we have the right person in the right position working with the right demographic of customer, and each of our three business segment does a fantastic job in their respective areas of the market.”

**Frank Edgar**, regional sales manager for another vendor partner, Gastite, echoes the strengths of Altherm’s team. “Altherm excels at all aspects of their business. Their high levels of performance can be directly attributed to the exceptional work ethic of all their personnel,” he explains. “Altherm has been the agency I depend on the most and they always will be. It is my privilege to work with them and they are truly people I would proudly define as my friends.”

### The family you choose

Another unique characteristic of Altherm is the fact that it’s not a family business, like so many businesses throughout the PHCP-PVF supply chain.

Gallagher explains this prevents any worry of nepotism in the business. “We don’t bring family into key roles within the company; none of my kids or Vinnie’s kids are going to come in and fill a position where we may have an aspiring manager,” he says.

Smith points out that even though the team isn’t family by blood, it’s more like the family you choose to be a part of. “Longevity is a really big selling point here,” he says. “People come here and they find a home. We are loyal to our employees and can offer them longevity and opportunities to grow.”

Both Smith and Gallagher reference the company’s open-door policy.

“We aren’t stuffy, corporately structured agency,” Smith notes. “We don’t have walls; our doors are open. A warehouse employee can come into mine or Tom’s office and speak to us directly, there’s no governing structure that prevents anyone at any level from reaching us when they need to.”

After its night of dinner, drinks and dancing in celebration of its 75-year mark — happening April 8 on the waterfront in Jersey City — Altherm’s goal for the rest of this year and the years to come is focused on setting the business up for future growth.

“We’re always looking for new opportunities and areas where we can grow,” Gallagher says. “Vinnie and I won’t be around forever, so we’re focused on having a successful succession plan. We want to make sure the business continues to flourish and is filled with great people who will take us into the next generation.”





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## New water efficiency and sanitation proposals for 2022

BY JIM KENDZEL, ASA DIRECTOR OF CODES AND STANDARDS



It is hard to believe that the first quarter of 2022 has ended. As I look back over the last three months and consider the activities I have been engaged on behalf of ASA and through agreement, HARDI, the key question that comes to mind is – are our members engaged in currently or building into their growth strategies the impact of climate change policy on the market they serve and their customer's needs? This question comes to mind due to my almost 100% focus on activities associated with climate change issues such as electrification, decarbonization, and energy/water efficiency in the first quarter.

A significant amount of my time has been involved in the development of new proposed changes to the International Association for Plumbing & Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) Water Efficiency and Sanitation Standard (WE-Stand). The WE-Stand, as noted in the Foreword of the Standard, provides codified requirements to optimize water use practices attributed to the built environment while maintaining protection of the public health, safety and welfare. The Standard is a model document made available to state and local government agencies for adoption.

The following highlights the key subject areas where proposals have been developed for consideration by the WE-Stand Technical Committee later this year:

- **Premise water supply systems:** A Task Group, which I was honored to chair, developed specific recommendations that will influence the design of premise water systems if adopted into the WE-Stand and ultimately, the needs of the market.
- **Supply demand and size of water piping:** Over the years, the supply demand calculations and ultimately, the water pipe sizing requirements has increasingly become outdated due to the increased use of water-efficient plumbing systems and fixtures. The improvement on water efficiency combined with outdated supply demand calculations has led to an increased amount of time water remains in the premise distribution system leading to potential negative public health impacts and poor performance on the waste drainage segment of the systems.

To address this issue, IAPMO brought together experts to develop a peak water demand calculator (WDC) based on updated field data from single and multi-family dwellings. The use of the water demand calculator is currently only recommended and not a mandatory requirement of the WE-Stand. A recommendation is being submitted to move the use of the WDC into the body of the WE-Stand and making the use of the WDC



mandatory for single and multi-family dwellings. The rationale for moving the use of the WDC to a mandatory requirement is based on field data obtained in California that validated the calculations of the WDC. The impact of the increased use of the WDC is that water pipe and fitting sizing requirements will be reduced while still providing a 2 fold safety factor in handling the supply demand.



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- **Maximum hot water system ratio:** A proposal has been submitted to the Technical Committee to include a requirement that the ratio of the hot water system rectangle to the floor area not exceed 60% for single-story dwellings and 30% for dwellings two or more stories high. The hot water system rectangle is defined as the region of the dwelling that bounds the water heater, plumbing fixture fittings and appliances. The overall purpose of the proposal is to promote efficient floor plan layouts to limit heating energy and water use.
- **Gray water systems:** The increased reuse of gray water in premises to increase water use efficiencies led to a proposal submitted that if adopted, provides requirements that all new construction would need to have gray water drainage systems installed in residential buildings. The goal of the proposal is to ensure that all new premises are ready for future installation of gray water irrigation or reuse systems, if and when needed. If adopted, the new requirements would lead to at a minimum the installation of a diverter valve, backwater valve and stub-outs for all new construction.
- **On-site wastewater treatment:** The on-site treatment of wastewater is a common feature in residential premises through the use of septic systems, aeration systems and similar technology. However, what is not as common is the actual reuse of the treated wastewater on-site, especially for use as potable water. A proposed appendix is being submitted to the Technical Committee that provides general guidelines related to the use of onsite wastewater treatment for direct potable water reuse.

The International Code Council (ICC) has recently entered the discussions related to determining water supply-demand and ultimately, proper sizing of water piping systems based on less demands due to increased water efficiency. In January 2022 ICC announced a new Project Initiation Notification for the development of a new standard intended to address sizing of water distribution, sanitary drainage and vent piping systems. ASA has indicated its interest in participating on the committee assigned to developing the standard so stay tuned for more information as the project progresses.

In addition, there is significant state legislative activity related to climate change policy. In many cases, the legislation incorporates the requirements of the model codes and standards that ASA is engaged. If the current market you serve is not being impacted by increased activity in climate change initiatives, you can count on it having an impact somewhere in the near future.

Are you ready to meet the needs of your customers in providing the new products associated with new and more energy/water-efficient plumbing system designs, new HVAC requirements for refrigerants and energy conservation, or the increased need for new technologies associated with premise water treatment and recycle? If not, where will your customers be going to have new technology needs met and receive training related to the new climate change and sustainability requirements and the new technologies developed to address those requirements? Just a couple of questions to consider.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any additional questions you might have or insight you might provide on how climate change policy is impacting your customer and the overall market you serve. You can reach me at [jkendzel@asa.net](mailto:jkendzel@asa.net).







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Caption to come

# Hirsch Pipe & Supply honors Danny Mariscal

BY NIKKI NIXON

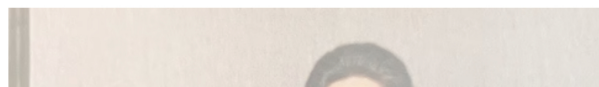
Hirsch team looks back on Mariscal's 77-year-long career.

**Danny Mariscal**, chairman emeritus of Hirsch Pipe & Supply Co. located in Southern California passed away at the age of 83 on Feb. 8. His 57-year commitment to Hirsch Pipe & Supply Co., our employees and our customers will be sadly missed, but never forgotten.

Danny started working at Hirsch as a bookkeeper in 1965 under the direction of **Joe Hirsch**. He quickly saw all sides of Hirsch, from completing odd jobs around the warehouse to assisting with sales at the counter. Through this experience, Danny fell in love with the organization, leading him to rise the ranks to become office manager. What Danny fell in love with at Hirsch was their unwavering dedication to people and service; but where he saw the opportunity was improving efficiency. His career became one dedicated to improving operations and processes at Hirsch and continuous improvement remains a core value at Hirsch today.

In 1979, after seeing the vision and dedication that Danny had for Hirsch, Joe Hirsch turned over the reins to Danny.

Once Danny took over the business, his vision led to expanding the business including adding more locations, adding new billing and payroll technology, and implementing computer systems to manage inventory. Danny's legacy of Hirsch's service-first approach, while improving the efficiencies to support scalable growth were instrumental in the growth of Hirsch.







Once he felt confident with the infrastructure he'd brought to the business, Danny refocused his energy to where it all started: sales. His insight and knack for innovation lead him to the promise Hirsch lives by to this day: **Hirsch Has It**. It was a promise that packed a lot of guarantees: that inventory would be in stock, that your product would be delivered when you needed it, and that you'd be able to complete your job and be successful.

As the 1990s approached, Danny began to think about finding a successor who could not only carry on the legacy that they had built, but continually modernize, improve, and grow the company. As legend has it, one day Danny was at a birthday party in 1991 with his daughter and her family, and got to talking with his son-in-law, Bill Glockner. Bill had just graduated from business school and was finding himself frustrated in his computer consulting role. With constant travel and a demanding schedule that didn't leave much time for family, Bill was looking to change things up. So over some cake and candid conversation, Danny and Bill struck up a deal that would become famously inked on a party napkin: Bill would join Hirsch effective immediately as Danny's successor.



Caption to come

**Bill Glockner**, president and CEO of Hirsch Pipe & Supply stated, "Danny Mariscal took over from Joe Hirsch and enhanced Hirsch's reputation for deep inventories and excellent service. More importantly, he developed a special culture and inspired the Hirsch Values which he modeled for the Hirsch family. Danny always treated everyone with respect, kindness, and grace. He brightened the day of everyone he touched. We are forever grateful for how he made everyone's lives better."

**Jiro Akasaka**, vice president of branch operations and 45 Year employee of Hirsch states, "I was lucky enough to be hired by Danny back in October of 1976. Danny taught and mentored me on how we should treat our customers and employees. He also taught me everything about our business. Danny always treated everyone with kindness and respect and made everyone feel good after talking with him. I cannot thank Danny enough for all the support he provided me throughout the years and I can honestly say that I would not have made it without him. Thanks Danny!! You are the father of the Hirsch Culture and will be truly missed."

Danny's legacy will forever be remembered by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him and working with him. He will always be known for the innovation he brought to the business and his unwavering support of all of the people he worked with. Since Danny's passing, we have received an outpouring of support and memories. Should you wish to share your memories or condolences, please email Bill Glockner's office at [teambill@hirsch.com](mailto:teambill@hirsch.com).

**Nikki Nixon** is director of marketing for Hirsch Pipe & Supply. She can be reached at [nnixon@hirsch.com](mailto:nnixon@hirsch.com).

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## WOMEN IN INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

# Meet three AIM/R female leaders

BY BRENDA CASHDOLLAR, CPMR

AIM/R highlights strong women, emphasizing importance of a diverse workplace.



It takes hard work to turn the world around. As the PHCP-PVF industry continues to seek diversity and attract talent, raising up women in the industry is more important than ever. AIM/R is proud to shine the spotlight on the inspiring stories of three hard-working women who serve as professional manufacturers' representatives.

These strong women want to ensure that the drive, talent, and commitment they have put into their success extends well beyond their own path. They each pay tribute to friends, family and colleagues who have actively encouraged them along the way. Additionally, they want to inspire and support young women to go beyond traditional roles and join an industry where they can make an impact and have prosperous careers."

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### Whitney Morgan, CPMR: Luxury Director, Harry Warren

"My father still gets asked if he has a son to take over the business..." Whitney is very aware of how far the industry still must go in terms of the future of young females in leadership roles. Having completed a design-role internship with a faucet manufacturer in Germany, Whitney was contemplating a career in industrial design. In the interim, she began working for Harry Warren in Georgia to make ends meet. It was during a conversation with a co-worker that Whitney realized that, by being dismissive of ever running the family business, she was holding herself back. She needed to change her mindset!



Whitney did just that and moved back to Florida to Harry Warren's home office. She began to work towards leadership within the agency while keeping ties with the decorative side of the business, to which she brings her talent for design and her studies in art and art history.

As the daughter of Harry Warren, who founded the agency, Whitney's mother assisted in building the business by helping with purchase orders received in the mail and taking calls on their home phone. Whitney credits her mother as the most influential person in her life and cherishes the gift of working with her and learning from her daily. She believes growing up in the industry has given her mother "incredible insight into how things have changed for women in our industry and also how things have stayed the same." Her mother accepts the different roles she and Whitney's father have taken, believing that they are both using their unique strengths to continue to grow the business: he with a highly visible sales role, she from a "behind the scenes" operational role with a keen attention to detail. "But I still take pause and feel that there was not much opportunity for her to step into a different role if she had wanted to when she was my age," reflects Whitney.

While she is thankful that women can now work in all capacities in the industry, Whitney appreciates how her mother cheered her on as she pursued her goals. Whitney believes her hard-working example and her "humility, empathy, encouragement and sometimes tough love" have shaped the woman she is today.

Whitney's gratitude also goes to the great women who took her under their wings, and values ASA Women in Industry, ASPE Women's groups, and focus groups created by manufacturers "to attract more women to our industry as a whole." Her advice for women entering the business today? Don't get pigeonholed and go after what you are interested in, "even if it is not what you see most females doing." She encourages reaching out to women in similar roles as she has found that they have not only been a positive influence on her career but that she can also rely on them when she needs advice.

Whitney believes she is facing the biggest challenge of her career right now; the combination of COVID, the great resignation, manufacturer and wholesaler consolidation, and the never-ending list of changes. She believes making mindful decisions and keeping calm are essential to navigating these tough times without burning out. Keeping work-life balance, Whitney enjoys fun or quiet times with her husband and two small daughters, whether it be silly performances of Disney songs, or spending Saturdays on the boat. Having daughters makes her especially aware of the need to not just attract young females to the industry, but more importantly to "mentor them along the way so that they want to stay." She believes that having this positive impact would give her the most sense of success when the end of her career comes. She wants her daughters to "consider this industry as they are looking at careers instead of assuming that it is for guys," as she once did.

Katie Brummund, CPMR: Principal, Midwest Sales & Marketing





#### Katie Brannaman, Owner, Principal, Midwest Sales & Marketing

Encouraged by her brother-in-law, Katie started in the industry as summer help to the local manufacturer rep agency at the age of sixteen. She had no prior experience in the plumbing industry, but that did not stop her from taking on different tasks. Her level of engagement evolved with every holiday and vacation. She graduated from college in Marketing & Management and initially joined Midwest Sales & Marketing in an outside sales position. After working for two other agencies, she returned to Midwest Sales & Marketing and was named agency principal shortly thereafter. This was a crucial moment in Katie's career. Tapping into the confidence she had gained, Katie rose to the challenge and became a leader in an industry with few women principals. She is proud to work closely with Matt Rodamer in the management of their agency team, representing top-quality manufacturers to their customers.

Katie credits her parents' impressive work ethic, kindness, and determination in shaping her. She can "remember many years when we had to wait on Christmas morning to open our presents because Dad got called away on a service call" and her mom returning to college to become a CPA Accountant" after initially being a stay-at-home mom. Katie has three boys, and believes strongly in being an example herself, "to show them the importance of values, work ethic, respect for yourself and others, and treating people with kindness."

Katie is grateful for the agency principals she has worked with during her career (Ken Kirk, Starr Hartson, Steve Stickler, and Matt Rodamer) for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and pushing her to develop her personal strengths. Having achieved success, Katie's advice is to accept that you will not be perfect, but still get yourself out there "take a chance and be confident in yourself." Mistakes are an opportunity to learn, and in fact "making mistakes is more important than not making them." To help you overcome the inevitable bumps on the road, she believes it is essential to build a strong support system of family, friends, mentors, and co-workers. She is exceptionally thankful she has a very supporting husband.

Katie's personal life keeps her busy, with her boys being active in sports, and an immediate and extended family with whom she is very happy to spend most of her free time: "I wouldn't have it any other way." Katie has learned to breathe deeply when working through challenges, adding that they have made her "stronger personally and professionally" She is held to a high standard among her peers, and this hard-earned reputation drives her to continue growing by engaging in training, deepening her knowledge and "networking to be the best partner to others and mentor to other women considering the industry". Katie believes her strong relationships are based on kindness, respect and following through on her word. Katie will measure her success at the end of her career by making sure that both her agency and the industry are a better place than when she started.

#### Kathy Dwyer, CPMR: Principal, E.J. Dwyer Co.

Kathy was struggling with what to do with her life. She found college and waitressing were not fulfilling or exciting. It was then that her father suggested she come work for his agency until she figured things out... And she is still working there today: a second-generation rep in an agency which is now an impressive 52 years old!



Kathy credits her dad, the most influential person in her life, for encouraging her to learn and "get out there." Like her father, she also insists on the need to keep learning, ask questions, and read installation instructions. One of her keys to success is not being too embarrassed to admit she does not know something. She asks herself "Who can I learn from today?," and she is sure that when she leaves the industry, she will still remember many people who have taught her and shared their knowledge freely.

Although it might upset some, Kathy thinks her tenure allows her the opportunity to reflect honestly and believes the industry is still dominated by men. She shares the story of an epiphany moment for her, when she saw how disappointed a contractor was when she turned up to troubleshoot equipment. Kathy was very much up to the task and quickly identified the issue. Based on this and many other experiences, Kathy offers to other women the encouragement to not be intimidated or hold back. "The glass ceiling you might perceive is strictly the limitations you put on yourself" she says and adds that women should not feel they should act or dress in a certain way. Success is achieved by being yourself! Kathy's individuality shines through her love for biking, hiking, and hanging out with her grandkids, especially because they can really make her laugh. She is, however, very serious in her intention to "leave a healthy and growing business for the next generation coming up" once she no longer works in the industry.

Retirement will not be too soon, though, as Kathy looks forward to many more years in the industry, which she says is "full of folks who are kind, wise and industrious." She underscores that it is essential to connect with others, and is grateful for her friends, mentors, and mentees. When she looks back to evaluate her career, Kathy will consider herself a success if the associates and families she has worked with along the way have achieved both personal and professional growth.

Thank you, Whitney, Katie, and Kathy. We appreciate your generosity and honesty in sharing your stories, insights, and advice. But above all, we thank you for your active involvement in supporting and encouraging women in the PHCP-PVF industry. Your hard work continues to turn our world around.

**Benda Chashdollar**, CPMR, is the vice president, **Synergy Sales NW** & on the AIM/R Board of Directors.

## SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT:

# Tips for strategic planning

Accessory offering and win-win plans with vendors can increase profitability through disruption.



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The past two years brought many challenges for multiple industries. The pandemic forced many of us to stay indoors and rethink how we do business. We also thought about where we live, how we use our homes, and what we deemed most important. Many industries were forced to pivot in different directions to stay relevant during a time of uncertainty and volatility.

The need to navigate problematic waters is also relevant for the home service industry. Supply chain issues created complications for distributors, dealers, and customers. For dealers, acquiring equipment, especially ultra-high efficiency equipment, became a concern as lead times stretched out as far as six months. This continues to negatively impact revenue and gross profits for dealers as well as customers who need HVAC systems now.

While there is no quick-fix solution for current supply chain issues, strategic planning can soften disruption difficulties. The message to homeowners, distributors, and dealers is clear: plan early. Building effective communication between the dealer, distributor, and customer is vital. There are multiple tools to create effective communication and messaging to your existing client base.

### Inventory management

The need to keep more inventory on hand is paramount. For years, many dealers operated on a just-in-time inventory system. That method no longer works. Inventories need to be stocked. BDR's best practice recommendation has always been to have at least a one-month supply of inventory on hand. With lead times to acquire desired equipment extending out to four months or more, we've seen that number increase to as much as three months. Building a strategic business plan will provide the dealer with the ability to project future equipment needs, allowing them to get ahead of the demand and meet the homeowners' needs.

With additional inventory on hand, space issues arise. We've seen dealers and distributors rent space to store the extra inventory. Some distributors have signed three-year leases to ensure they have enough inventory space. Dealers are having to do similar things to bring in all the products they need. With the supply chain disruption, extra inventory is a necessity to thrive.

### The vendor relationship

To combat supply chain disruption, it is important for distributors and dealers to work together to strategically plan a course of action. The two parties need to be coordinated with one another and having a sound plan will help build a



positive relationship. For dealers, create a plan based on jobs you will sell throughout the year. After the plan is developed, the dealer should plan a meeting with their distributor and territory manager. During the meeting, iron out details regarding the projected equipment needs for the next one or two quarters, equipment that should be bought, and products that can be used across multiple applications.

Developing a plan is a win-win for all parties. Many dealers do not have a plan or know how many systems they'll sell in the next three months. They do not have any projections, and this can be problematic for distributors who place orders months in advance. If a dealer comes with a proactive business plan, it provides the opportunity to better plan and meets the dealer's needs.

### Pricing and accessories

Over the past year, we have seen multiple cost increases on equipment, and it is going to continue this year and into next year. It is paramount to stay on top of price increases. Every week, and sometimes daily, the dealer will need to update pricing based on new and ever-changing prices.

The business owners' responsibility is to produce a profit. We must drive profitability to grow and pay our bills. One of the more difficult challenges we are seeing with the supply chain disruption is protecting dealers' gross profit per man day (GPMD). Maximizing GPMD on every job is vital to achieving 20% + net profit. One of the methods used to maximize GPMD is by selling high-efficiency equipment which results in increased gross profit dollars. Here lies a challenge: the high-efficiency equipment is not always readily available, thereby forcing the dealer to offer lower efficiency equipment, which drives the GPMD down. Keep in mind that it is the gross profit dollars that will cover increasing overhead. So how does the dealer maximize their GPMD when high-efficiency equipment is not an option? They offer accessories.

Accessories provide an extra revenue stream. Most customers are not aware of upgrades, but many will purchase if they know about them. These accessories can range anywhere from upgraded filtration systems, safety items to humidification. Various accessories or system enhancements drive additional GPMD, resulting in improved profitability by more quickly overcoming overhead. Offering accessories can take the gross profit per man-day on a job from \$1,200 to over \$2,000. Profitability soars because they earn additional gross profit dollars which will more quickly overcome overheads.

The combination of effective planning, inventory management, and pricing will help those in the home service industry navigate supply chain issues while also keeping up with rising overhead. Developing a plan can be the difference between your company surviving the supply chain disruption and finding yourself without the necessary equipment needed to operate.

**Kim Archer** is Vice President of Coaching and Trainer with Business Development Resources (BDR), the premier provider of business training and coaching to HVAC contractors and distributors. Every year, more than 1,000 industry professionals attend BDR's Profit Launch Business Planning workshop. The three-day event helps contractors build a detailed, five-year business plan that guides their company to new levels of profit and growth. For more information, visit [www.bdrco.com/plan](http://www.bdrco.com/plan).

FROM THE ASA PRESIDENT || **BILL CONDRON**



Contact Bill



## Positioning ASA to meet our industry's future challenges

ASA Winter Leadership meeting addresses two top concerns for PHCP-PVF supply chain.

All,

I hope you are well and spring is starting to bloom in your part of the country. I wanted to take a moment to update you on the ASA Winter Leadership meeting held in February in Scottsdale, Arizona.

As an aside, spring had not yet sprung in the desert as it was 40 degrees and raining for the entire visit. When Boston has better weather in February, you know you are in a rough climate!

This was the first winter meeting we've been able to hold in person since we met in Orlando in February 2020, right before the world shut down. This year's event included almost 100 ASA volunteer leaders from around the industry, including a great mix of wholesalers, manufacturers, reps, buying group executives and many others.

Thanks to all of those who took the time to attend. It was great to be able to get together again in person to see old friends and meet new ones. It was even more heartening to see so many people take time out of their very busy schedules to offer their insights and counsel to ASA.

I know we all realize what a great business we are in and talk often about how we have to do a better job of marketing ourselves to attract new people to our industry. And we should. But to see that many people commit their time to help their industry association find ways to provide even more **value** to their membership was remarkable. It's also a profound reminder of the many great people we have in our business.

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Nearly 100 ASA volunteer leaders gathered in Scottsdale, Arizona in February to discuss two important topics: Sustainable fundraising and whether or not ASA should create a repository of data for members to use as they build out eCommerce efforts. Pictured above, Gary Yambor of Phoenix Forge Group presents his table's perspective to the entire group. Photo by Darryl Webb, courtesy of ASA

Now, what did we talk about? ASA CEO **Mike Adelizzi** asked the group for help on two different topics. The first was

around whether ASA could create a repository of data for members to use as they build out their eCommerce effort. We all realize the need for a robust online offering as eCommerce continues to be a growing share of the market. However, as the group discussed and debated the topic, we realized how much more complex the situation is currently. Many wholesalers have already embarked on their digital journey and are somewhere down the line with their data needs. Others are members of buying groups that are attempting to provide this value on their own. In short, the group decided we needed to review the topic more deeply before making any sort of commitments as an association.

The next subject was around sustainable fundraising. ASA is constantly leading initiatives to help its members survive and thrive in the current marketplace. The recent mega initiatives around PROJECT TALENT, PROJECT VITALITY and the very innovative D-NEXT innovation lab that we host at the University of Illinois are great recent examples.

But all of these great initiatives need financing to get them off the ground. The volunteers worked through a great discussion around ways ASA could build a sustainable fund that could be used for these incredibly important programs for our members.

Overall, the time in the desert was extremely productive. More than anything, it always impresses me to see Mike and the team at ASA look for ways to continue to push themselves to provide even more value for their members. It is the sign of a very vibrant and valuable organization.

I know all the volunteers who joined me at this year's winter meeting can attest to this and so can every current member of ASA.

And if you are not a member, for all the reasons shared above and so many more, please consider joining your industry association.

Be well,  
Bill

**Bill Condron** is president and CEO of Concord, New Hampshire-based The Granite Group and is the 2022 ASA president.





# ASA Platinum Supplier Partner Spotlight

## Connecting with customers in a digital age

By: David Chisolm, Vice President of Marketing and Customer Experience, A. O. Smith

At A. O. Smith, innovation is part of our DNA. Whether pioneering new technologies with a focus on the future or reengineering products in our portfolio to address current needs, providing effective solutions to real-world issues is inherent in everything we do.

Last year, unprecedented disruptions to the supply chain wreaked havoc on industries across the globe. Despite these challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing customers with essential water heating products, reliable customer service and advanced technologies and training to help make our products even more relevant in today's world.

With a focus on sustainability, efficiency and connectivity, our team continues to push the envelope on product innovation, incorporating new IoT technology to optimize overall performance and efficiency and extend product lifecycles.



David Chisolm

### Modernized virtual learning

Recent years have brought a tremendous change in training resources like A. O. Smith University. Thanks to connectivity software, A. O. Smith has been able to continue training through virtual classes, reaching more than 100,000 participants in the last year.

The A. O. Smith University class schedule is flexible month-to-month, and sessions are offered on a variety of topics, including residential, commercial, tankless and heat pump water heaters.

A. O. Smith has a state-of-the-art broadcast studio located in Ashland City, Tennessee that allows instructors to provide real-time, full-scope demonstrations on a range of A. O. Smith products.

For contractors and technicians who are unable to attend extended training sessions, A. O. Smith is also providing shorter-form resources, including its new monthly virtual live show, "In Our Element." Each episode runs roughly 30 minutes and features a variety of guest stars and topics, including industry news, product launches, resources and more.

As part of our efforts to make our customers' lives easier, we're developing new customer service features utilizing QR code technology. Each product will feature a code that customers can scan, which will lead them to specific FAQs, product registration, videos and quick tips to self-service simple errors, and even help them locate the nearest qualified technician. By putting these tools and resources at their fingertips, we're hoping this helps simplify the service process and give the user more control.

### A full-service approach

As a result of fewer face-to-face interactions with customers throughout the pandemic, we've had to examine the best ways to support our customers virtually. Early in the pandemic, we identified a need for better technology in our call center to improve our interactions with customers. We introduced new technology that connects into our current phone system and analyzes our incoming calls. It assists A. O. Smith in improving the quality of our customer service calls as we're able to learn how to better address our customers' needs.

A. O. Smith has also implemented new training technology for our employees that teaches them the best way to go through the various steps of a customer service call. When a customer calls, they are sent directly to the customer service agent with the most experience in handling a specific issue. This process decreases call time and provides a more valuable customer service experience.

We're also working on meeting the needs of our tech-savvy channel partners. To do that, A. O. Smith is implementing additional video and augmented reality (AR) customer service options. Troubleshooting videos are already available for those who would prefer to learn through a virtual format rather than calling our customer service number with questions.

Meanwhile, we're working with AR technology that will allow a customer to connect with a customer service agent through video so the agent can get a full 360-degree view of the water heater, provide immediate troubleshooting, and potentially decrease the number of service calls needed.

Like the American Supply Association, A. O. Smith continues to evolve to meet and exceed ever-changing conditions through the thoughtful application of innovation, creativity and problem-solving to help provide customers with the products and service they've come to expect.

## Submit your data for the 2022 ASA Operating Performance Report

Data collection is underway for ASA's **2022 Operating Performance Report** — the gold standard in benchmarking for the PHCP-PVF distribution industry for the last four decades. This nearly 100-page spiral-bound book is loaded with vital benchmarking data in a plethora of important financial categories. How does your company shape up compared to the industry?

**Early participation deadline:** April 29  
**Final due date:** June 3



### How to Fill Out the Survey

The survey is available in the **Business Intelligence Dashboard**. Participants have the option of completing and submitting the survey online, in addition to, the traditional option of downloading the survey in Excel and submitting the survey by uploading the file into the dashboard.

If desired, you can fill out a paper copy of the survey and [mail it in](#). The final industry report will be accessible within the dashboard online reporting tools or downloadable in PDF and Excel formats.

### Cost

**ASA member companies that submit data for the survey:** \$269

**ASA member companies that do not submit data but would still like an OPR copy:** \$439

**Non-ASA members that would like an OPR copy:** \$1,050

### Is Our Data Secure?

Yes! Your data is secure and is submitted directly to Industry Insights, ASA's partner for the past four decades in collecting the data and compiling this report. All data is treated as strictly confidential and ASA does not see any individual company data, only the final overall report.

### Can I See A Sample of an Old OPR?

Sure! Click on [this link here](#) for a few pages from the 2021 report.

### Questions on the Survey

Reach out to Industry Insights' Tom Noon at 380-223-9163 or email him at [tnoon@industryinsights.com](mailto:tnoon@industryinsights.com).

### How Do I Get Started?

Participate now at <https://secureii.com/ASA/Account/login.aspx>

For additional information on this and other valuable **Business Intelligence Reports**, visit the [ASA website](#).

## ASA distributor members report mixed results

**20.9% growth comparing January 2022 to January 2021; Keep eye on downward trend in previous month comparison.**

January 2022 results of ASA's monthly sales report reflect another month of robust performance compared to the same month a year ago, through most respondents reported declines in sales when compared to December 2021, noted Industry Insights, ASA's business intelligence partner that prepares the report each month for ASA member distributors.

For the trailing 12 months ending January 2022, sales remained strong when compared against much of 2020, a year that had multiple weeks, if not months, of closures or partial closures.

Respondents to the monthly sales report survey reported a median sales increase of 20.9% for January 2022 vs. January 2021.

In comparison to the previous month, however, January 2022 vs. December 2021, respondents reported a significant decline in sales of -8.9%.

Half the respondents reported sales growth for the trailing 12 months between 15.5% to 29.6%.

Inventory jumped 37% for January 2022 vs. January 2021. The median three-months average days sales outstanding remained steady at 40 days for January.

"It was another strong month in terms of year-over-year sales performance, though it is concerning that the January vs. December figures were down for most respondents," Industry Insights Senior Vice President **Greg Manns** said.



### Industrial PVF

Industrial PVF distribution firm respondents to the monthly sales report showed a median sales increase of 36.8% for January 2022 vs. January 2021. On a trailing-twelve-month basis, industrial PVF respondents reported a median sales increase of 25.7%. Inventory rose 35.5% for January 2022 vs. January 2021, while the three-months-average days sales outstanding rose decently to 51.1 for industrial PVF respondents.

### Economic indicators

The "Real GDP" figure for the fourth quarter of 2021 was revised up slightly to 7.0% growth. Total wholesale sales for December grew 21.8% year-over-year, while inventories grew 18.5% vs. the prior year. Though housing starts declined in January, housing permits recorded an increase for the fourth consecutive month. The unemployment rate for January edged up to 4.0% and initial claims for unemployment increased slightly in January, but remained below 300,000 for the fourth consecutive month.

### What ASA distributor members are saying

Some comments from ASA member distributors that participated in the monthly sales report:

- "Holding steady."
- "Inventory costs continue to rise and we continue to invest in more of it due to the uncertainty of the supply chain. Fortunately, demand is still strong, but we don't know how long that will last."
- "January is historically our toughest month of the year, a challenge which was compounded this year by supply chain problems."
- "The market remains strong despite Washington doing its best to screw it up. We continue to struggle with vendors being realistic about lead times and when they believe they will get over the hurdle."
- "Bidding is very busy and I would anticipate a better year than last year. Labor and product availability remain the biggest concerns. I am also concerned inflation and the policies of the current administration both nationally and in our state may significantly reduce our anticipated growth."
- "We were slowed in January by weather conditions. Supply delivery is much better than in previous months. Inflation is much higher than government figures and it is skewing our sales numbers."



## The AmCross Industry Compensation Report now available

ASA once again teamed up with more than 20 other wholesale-distribution-centric associations to compile the 2022 Cross-Industry Compensation Report.

The report provides ASA member companies a comprehensive view of compensation and benefits levels as it relates to the distribution industry in general. ASA conducted two special surveys in late 2021 that focused almost exclusively on the PHCP-PVF industry.

This biannual study was last conducted in 2020 during the height of the pandemic where 23 distribution-related associations and 905 distribution companies representing more than 10,000 locations participated in the study — providing report recipients with data generated from a robust sample size.



### How do I get the report?

If you are an ASA member company and submitted data for the study, you already received the report free of charge.

ASA member companies that did not submit data for the study can purchase the report for \$399.

Non-ASA member companies that would like to purchase the study can do so for \$799.

Contact ASA's **Mike Miazga** at [mmiazga@asa.net](mailto:mmiazga@asa.net) to purchase the report



## VIDEO: Join an ASA CONNECT virtual peer networking community today



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Registration is open for ASA's CONNECT virtual peer networking communities. Based on a proven facilitation concept, ASA CONNECT offers a solution that provides professionals in **10 vital** job functions an ability to meet online in monthly peer-to-peer-facilitated sessions led by The Distribution Team's **Jason Bader** and **Marshall Jones** to discuss common challenges, gain insight and practical solutions, and learn from peers on critical topics.

Available CONNECT communities include: accounts receivable managers; finance managers; human resources managers; marketing professionals (distributors only); operations managers; outside sales managers (distributors only); purchasing managers (distributors only); showroom sales managers (distributors only); technology managers and training managers.

Watch this [short video](#) to learn more about the CONNECT program.

To register yourself or an employee in your company who would benefit from becoming part of the CONNECT community, [click here](#).



## OSHA 300A's due soon: Apply for the ASA Safety Award



While you're filling out your OSHA 300A's for your company's 2021 incidents, please take a moment to apply for the [ASA Safety Award](#). By applying and submitting your 300A and incident descriptions, you help ASA provide the most relevant educational resources possible. Not only will you win by making your and fellow member's workplace safer, but you just might also win the award!

ASA and the ASA Safety Committee aim to lift you and your workplace up to a higher level of safety (don't worry, we're bending at the knees!) We offer an array of [safety training](#), plus **FREE safety resources** which include safety articles, toolbox talks, best practices information and more to come. Keep your eye out for updates as we keep an eye out for your safety.

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Contact Mike 

## CONNECT program offers great online peer-to-peer networking opportunities

How many people over the last two years do you think have uttered the following phrase?

"Man, I wish I had invented Zoom."

More than a few, I'm guessing.

Say what you will about the online meeting platform, but it helped many businesses continue to conduct business during the pandemic and has opened up a new, proven form of communication that continues into current day.

Zoom plays a mighty big role in one of ASA's newer benefits for its members — the CONNECT online peer-to-peer networking communities.

CONNECT offers a solution that provides professionals in 10 vital job functions an ability to meet online in monthly peer-to-peer-facilitated sessions led by The Distribution Team's Jason Bader and Marshall Jones to discuss common challenges, gain insight and practical solutions, and learn from peers on critical topics.

Available CONNECT communities include: accounts receivable managers, finance managers, human resources managers, operations managers, technology managers and training managers. These six communities are open to all ASA member companies (distributors, manufacturers, reps and master distributors).

The marketing professionals, outside sales managers, purchasing managers and showroom sales managers are open to ASA member distributor companies only.



Each ASA CONNECT community is limited to 18 non-competing participants and will be filled on a first come, first served basis. As each community fills, ASA will open registration for the next community in that job function.

What's the value you ask in investing company funds and employees' time in the CONNECT program? For starters, CONNECT members develop solutions to challenges through this online facilitated format that provides interaction with peers of the same job function.

CONNECT also provides an efficient, exclusive and economical online forum for professionals to build relationships with their peers. No hopping on an airplane or making a three-hour drive for these once-a-month gatherings.

And the final piece to the puzzle is simply building deeper relationships within the ASA member community.



When I coached high school baseball, reaching for the phone (a landline in those days) and picking another coach's brain was commonplace (whether seeking new drills, how to deal with a problem player, scouting opponents, etc.). CONNECT is along those very same lines — folks in like job roles talking about common challenges and sharing ideas — the only difference is through that online platform that we all wish we had invented because we'd all be on some private island right now well into retirement.

We constantly talk about the importance of the networking piece in ASA's value proposition along with our education, advocacy and business intelligence/data/benchmarking offerings. CONNECT is a further extension of the great networking value being a member of ASA provides.

I am going to stop typing on the keyboard for a second and let your screen do the rest of the talking. Take a second and watch this short video on the CONNECT program, which includes testimonials from several executives from ASA member companies who participate in the program.

**And hit on this link** for a complete description of all the CONNECT online communities available.

If you want to get involved in **CONNECT**, shoot me an email at [mmiazga@asa.net](mailto:mmiazga@asa.net) and I will help you get the ball rolling.

Last month I wrote about all the hidden gems contained within an ASA company membership. CONNECT is yet another example of the great value ASA provides its membership. Get your employees involved in the CONNECT program and strengthen their networking reach.

It will only benefit them in the long run.

**Mike Miazga** is vice president of sales and membership at the American Supply Association and former longtime chief editor of Supply House Times and group editorial director of BNP Media's Plumbing Group. Reach him at [mmiazga@asa.net](mailto:mmiazga@asa.net).



Contact Dan



## I can see clearly now

Remove your hydronic cataracts with analogies.

Five years ago, I had cataract surgery. I had no idea that I needed cataract surgery because I thought what I was seeing was normal. But then one day I drove into the tunnel that goes under Baltimore Harbor and everything got dark. Scary dark.

I saw my doctor and got the news a few days later. He told me that cataracts sneak up on you over many years and that's why I thought that what I was seeing was normal. It wasn't.

They do one eye at a time with several weeks in between, which is a good thing because it takes your brain that long to get used to what's going on. I felt like Dorothy when she opened the door and saw Munchkinland.

My left eye was now seeing color that was so vibrant it almost hurt. And when I closed that eye, and looked at the world through my right eye, it was all sepia. I spent two weeks opening and closing one eye after another and looking at the world with wonder. I could see clearly now.

My doctor explained how humans accept the abnormal as normal because, well, that's what they're seeing, and that made me think of many of the people I've met in my travels who were having heating problems. They all knew that they had a heating system, but when I asked them what sort of heating system they had, they almost always said, "I have gas" or "I have oil," and please note how it was the fuel that focused their attention and not the heating system itself. I figure this is because the fuel is what they see clearly. They get bills for the fuel and those bills have their full attention, especially nowadays. What's actually delivering the heat to them, well, not so much attention, if any at all.

So I would ask more questions and we'd figure it out together. In the end, they could see more clearly, and that made it easier for them to know how to get their heating problems solved.

This of course takes some patience.

Our daughter, Meghan, who grew up in a house that was home to hundreds of heating books on creaking shelves, who listened to me, a man who wrote and spoke about heating to put food in her belly, once called from her Manhattan apartment to tell me that there was a noise coming out of this little silver thingy that was sticking out of the hot pole in her kitchen.

I wondered where I had gone wrong as her father.



But then I remembered to be patient and I explained to Meg that the hot pole was actually a steam riser and the little silver thingy was an air vent.

"What's an air vent?" she said.

I sent her a copy of *The Lost Art of Steam Heating*, along with a love note.

She now lives in Maryland with her family and a horrible furnace ("the air-blower thing"). I continue to be patient.

"Radiators are ugly," a New York City apartment dweller once told me. "They're old and big and ugly."

I told her about a time when radiators were part of a room's decor and how people would swoon over their Victorian beauty. "There were showrooms for radiators and boilers," I said. "Right here in Manhattan. People would go to look at them like people go to look at beautiful cars nowadays. Can you think of old radiators like classic cars?" I said. "They just need a little buffing and a bit of love. Can you see that?"

"No," she said.

Okay, so some people can't see clearly now when it comes to old things. But I'm going to continue to see the beauty and functional artwork of those old, iron workhorses.

Another layperson, this one on Long Island, told me she hates her copper fin-tube baseboard heaters because they make the walls dirty.

"Look at them," she said, pointing at the streaks of dirt that marked the walls above the baseboards. "That's from the oil," she said. "We have oil heat. Oil heat is dirty, right? I'd like to switch to gas, which is clean and natural. Natural gas, right? But we don't have gas in this neighborhood, and that's such a shame."

"That's not oil on your walls," I said.

"It's black and greasy," she said. "It must be oil. Look."

"The oil burns inside the boiler," I said. "It doesn't have a way to get into the baseboards."

"It doesn't?"

"No, it doesn't."

"Then why is it there?" She pointed.

"Do you burn candles?" I asked.

"Yes. Burn them every night. Love the smell of candles. Can you smell them?"

res. I burn them every night. I love the smell of candles. Can you smell them?

I smiled, thinking about how I gag whenever I get near a Yankee Candle store at the mall.

"Yes, I can smell them," I said. "And that's probably what's staining your walls."

"My candles?" she said. "That's not possible. I place them over here on the table. See? They're not near the baseboards."

"But the smoke from the candles is," I said. "It moves by convection into the bottom of the baseboard and then sticks to the wall on its way out of the baseboard. We call that ghosting. It's a common problem."

"Really?"

"Yep. Can you see it in your mind's eye? Convection is like a Ferris wheel."

"Yes, I get it," she said. "I had no idea. What's the solution?"

"Don't burn candles. Or clean your walls," I said.

"Really?"

"Yes, and keep in mind that what you're seeing on the walls is also going into your lungs."

"Oh," she said.

She could see clearly now.

For most of my career I've heard lay people say that it doesn't pay to turn down the heat when they're away from home because it takes much more heat to heat the house up again once it goes cold. They believe this because someone told them it's true, even though it's not true.

A fuel burner that is not running is 100% efficient. Turn down the heat and you'll save fuel. Keep your house at 50 degrees if you want to save money. You'll probably be cold, sure, but you'll save money. Anytime you're not burning fuel you're saving fuel. That's clear, isn't it? So if you lower the temperature of the house when you're away you're going to save fuel.

Think of a house as a bucket with a hole in it. The water in the bucket is the heat. If you fill the bucket to the top and keep it filled to the top as it leaks from the bottom you're going to use a certain amount of water (think fuel). How fast you lose the water depends on the size of the hole in the bucket and the height of the water (think insulation).

Okay, leave the bucket full in the morning and go to work. The level of water is going to drop because you're not home to keep filling the bucket. As the water level drops, the hole leaks less water because there's less water to leak.

When you get home all you have to do is fill up the bucket. You saved water (think fuel) because the bucket was leaking less while you were at work.

Or maybe you didn't leave home to go to work. Maybe you were working at home because of the pandemic. Did you notice during the pandemic that you used more fuel? You weren't setting back the thermostat when you were at home right?

Get it?

Analogies work with laypeople when you need to explain things that are a bit technical. Use them to remove those hydronic cataracts. When people are seeing clearly, everything else gets easier.

Clear enough for you?

**Dan Holohan** can be reached at [dan@heatinghelp.com](mailto:dan@heatinghelp.com). He loves hearing from you!



# PRODUCT FOCUS



## PUMPS AND MORE

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### Zoeller Pump

Sewage system



### Grundfos

Inline pumps



### Armstrong Fluid Technology

Light duty installations



### Franklin Electric

Non-clog pumps



### Engineered Solutions

Pipe shields



### General Pipe Cleaners

Water leak detection system



### Bradley Corp.

Digital mixing valve



### CircuitSolver

Cold water balancing valve



### U.S. Boiler Co.

Condensing, gas-adaptive boiler



### ENPRESS

In-Out head





## Facilities Resource Group

Tankless rack system



## Mikrofill Systems

Pressurization unit



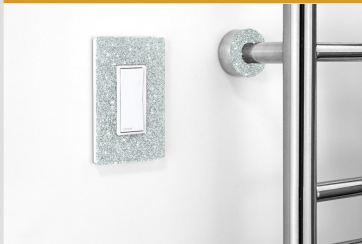
## Oventrop Corp.

Pressure independent control valve



## WarmlyYours

Towel warmer accessories



## Basement Guardian

Smart sump pump





Contact Jeff



## Who does your showroom cater to?

Data points to collect in order to have an edge over the competition.

I remember walking into a magnificent showroom in the early 1990s. Decorative plumbing showrooms had moved from rare to regular, but most were a simple, clean space with desks and manufacturer displays. This particular showroom's space was originally built as an automobile showroom. Its windows soared to the roof and the terrazzo floor was stunning. This was a marvelous space. I smelled money.

Then I looked around and was surprised by the merchandising mix. The products were mostly mid-market, builder grade. I was confused until I met the owner and manager and they realigned my view of their business. They told me they had no desire to deal with the many unique deliverables for premium and luxury jobs. There are too many participants and these professionals and clients expect perfection. This showroom could not make that formula work, so they created and ran a mid-market builder showroom. The builder comes in, selects what they want and it's delivered when needed. Simple and profitable.

That day, I learned that the word "showroom" does not have to mean luxury; it does not always mean premium. A great showroom is a business that presents products that are carefully selected to fill the need of a significant, targeted customer niche. It does not mean that a showroom might occasionally reach outside its market focus to support a good client. It does mean that the product mix, pricing structure and quote pecking order are highly skewed toward both a specific market segment and targeted client definition. Adopting such a strong market and customer stance creates a strong product-market fit and companies with a strong market fit are market leaders and quite often highly profitable.



"The only thing that matters is getting to product/market fit," entrepreneur and software engineer Marc Andreessen once said.

Defining product market fit is not an easy task for a stand-alone decorative plumbing showroom. It's especially complicated for showrooms that are a part of a multi-product brand that may supply PVF targeting plumbers, HVAC targeting builders or any of the many building products with re-distribution models.

Today, the phrase "decorative plumbing products" conjures up vastly different images in people's minds. The term can refer to a shiny faucet in Home Depot or a hand-crafted, jewel-adorned gold lavatory ensemble from the French manufacturer THG. With such a broad definition, each showroom has the opportunity to discover the market they think best fits their talent and create its own unique decorative plumbing showroom's brand definition. That definition then becomes the foundation to build your showrooms go-to-market strategy.

How can we do this without a deep dive into your brand's local market makeups and having to completely rework our showroom model?

Let's keep it simple and build from your success. If your showrooms currently have a good history of generating a strong cash flow and profitability, we can build from that foundation. Ask your showroom sales data the following questions:

- What is your average single bathroom lavatory faucet?
- Sales dollar value?
- Percentage gross margin?
- What is your most profitable vendor by:
  - o Total dollars;
  - o Overall gross margin percentage; and
  - o Gross margin dollars per item.

**"When a great team meets a lousy market, market wins. When a lousy team meets a great market, market wins. When a great team meets a great market, something special happens."**

-Andy Rachleff

Take those numbers and walk your showroom and see how they align with what you have on display. This information will show which displays are earning their rent and, more importantly, what market level your should be focusing on. Let's go back to the showroom data and ask it two more questions.

- What are your total sales and sales gross margin percentage selling to:
  - o Designers;
  - o Builders;
  - o Plumbers; and



- o Homeowners?
- What are your total quotes and quote gross margin percentage for:
  - o Designers;
  - o Builders;
  - o Plumbers; and
  - o Homeowners?

I think these numbers will speak for themselves.

This is a simple process that will deliver information that will help you better understand your decorative showroom business. To add more depth to this information, reach out to your buying group network of like-business in non-competing markets and compare your information. Discuss your data versus theirs. There is nothing better than learning from trusted professionals by bouncing thoughts, processes and sharing information with your colleagues.

If you are still not comfortable adjusting your showroom based on these simple data points and your intra-trade group discussions, there are more in-depth methods hinted at about and we can discuss those in later articles. Please email me at [jwvals@gmail.com](mailto:jwvals@gmail.com) with your thoughts and concerns.

Today competition is coming from all sides and the showrooms that will likely win their target market will be able to first identify their most advantageous target market and then laser focus on that market's strongest customer.

**Jeffrey Valles** is a Decorative Plumbing and Hardware Association Lifetime Fellow. Contact Jeff at [jwvals@gmail.com](mailto:jwvals@gmail.com).



Contact Nate



## Evaluate mental state behind the wheel

Coburn Supply Co. takes driver safety seriously.

At times, our thoughts can feel like they're racing faster than the traffic around us while we're on the road – but letting our minds stray behind the wheel is a form of distracted driving. Mental distractions can be just as dangerous as physical ones, whether we're consumed by anger, worry and stress, or just simply letting our minds wander.

This wandering is also known as "inattention blindness," or looking but not seeing. You may have experienced inattention blindness if you've suddenly found yourself pulling into your destination and wondering how you got there. This autopilot mindset means that your brain was less focused on the important task of driving safely, leading to slower reaction times behind the wheel.

Mental distractions to be mindful of while driving include:

- Worrying;
- Daydreaming;
- Strong emotions, including road rage;
- Being too caught up in music or podcasts;
- Overly engaging in conversation; and
- General stressors, such as the pandemic, family matters or future plans.



Driving with intention can be a safe way to combat inattention blindness. Drivers who are in tune with their personal mental state and who use situational awareness can better anticipate the actions of others on the road and react appropriately. April is typically Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and is an excellent time to teach company drivers about inattention blindness while reminding them of other safe-driving tips, such as:

- Multi-tasking is a myth. Studies have proven that our minds can only focus on one thing at a time;
- Take a few deep breaths when feeling strong emotions;
- Never engage with aggressive drivers on the road — emotionally or physically;
- If weather permits, open a window for fresh air to help stay alert;
- Listen to the radio as a less interfering task alternative;
- Plan ahead: Have directions ready, check the weather and pack all needed items before leaving;
- Take care to not "zone out" when driving on familiar roads or routes. You can't anticipate the actions of other vehicles, pedestrians, or animals; and
- Take personal accountability for your mental state behind the wheel. Only you will recognize when inattention blindness starts, so it is your responsibility to stay focused on the road.

**Chad Boyer**, director of safety at **Coburn Supply Co.**, in Beaumont, Texas, takes these messages to heart, especially during Distracted Driving Awareness Month. He notes that their drivers are trained through weekly and monthly safety meetings that address various distracted driving events, including inattention blindness. They've even taken their distracted driving training a step further by utilizing a cell phone policy, along with an in-cab technology solution in their vehicles to help keep their drivers focused on the main task at hand: helping prevent distracted driving so that employees reach their destinations safely.

"Here at Coburn Supply Co., as we monitor our drivers and continue to coach them on a daily basis, we have seen a decrease in distraction by mobile devices," Boyer said. "And monitoring of our cameras by our managers and our DOT Compliance manager has had a huge impact on addressing distracted driving issues," he said, adding that their company is quick to step in and take corrective actions when drivers are observed not complying with their distracted driving policies while driving.

By taking these proactive approaches to safe driving, Coburn Supply Co. proves that focusing on helping prevent various kinds of distracted driving, while reminding drivers of the seriousness of inattention blindness and other driving distractions, is necessary for the safety of their company drivers, and others on the road.

By reinforcing the message that you want them to make it home safe today, businesses can lead company drivers in the right direction through regular training and involvement. Being cognitively aware and present while driving can help prevent a devastating crash — so evaluate your mental state before you drive.

For more information on safe driving and Distracted Driving Awareness Month, reach out to a [Federated Insurance marketing representative](#) today.

**Nate Oland** is senior national account executive at Federated Insurance, an ASA Association Partner. The ASA Safety Committee provides the Eye on Safety column each month.







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## NIBCO ANNOUNCES WROT RACER PUSH FITTINGS PROMOTION

NIBCO announced its Wrot Racer "Start Me Up" promotion to celebrate its next generation of push fittings it recently launched. The multifaceted promotion centers on the Wrot Racer C8 Corvette that will tour the U.S., making stops at distributor locations that have qualified.

The "Start Me Up" promotion provides a quick and easy way for distributors to take on immediate inventory of the new Wrot Racer copper push fittings. Distributors who meet the minimum stocking order requirement will receive a free marketing kit that includes POP merchandising.

NIBCO's Wrot Racer Corvette began its tour at AHR Expo in Las Vegas on Jan. 31, before moving to the West Coast, making various stops along the way, including Phoenix and Los Angeles. The "Start Me Up" promotion runs through 2022. "We're excited for our Wrot Racer Corvette to head out on the road to visit qualifying distributors across the U.S.," said Ashley Martin, executive vice president, NIBCO. "This is a great opportunity for distributors to create additional coverage for their businesses and for everyone attending to have fun."

Introduced in 2021, Wrot Racer push fittings are a line of premium copper push fittings engineered to join copper, CPVC-CTS, PEX and PE-RT (with stiffeners) for easy transition between piping systems. With a patented fitting design, installations are easily made within seconds.

Wrot Racer push fittings are made with 99.9% pure wrot copper, NIBCO noted. Naturally lead-free, the fittings feature antimicrobial properties and are dezincification resistant, providing for safe, clean drinking water connections for both residential and commercial applications.

Available in 1/2" to 1" sizes, the lightweight and compact Wrot Racer fittings are able to be installed wet or dry and can handle applications up to 200 psi and 200 degrees. The new fittings feature stainless steel gripper rings to ensure a secure connection. Wrot Racer fittings are ideal for tight-space installations, and can also be removed and reused, avoiding wasted materials, the manufacturer noted.



## MRC GLOBAL AWARDED MAJOR EQUIPMENT SUPPLY CONTRACTS

MRC Global announced Aker Solutions AS has awarded MRC Global Norway AS contracts to provide the complete scope of valves, instrumentation, piping, tubing and fittings for the Sunrise Wind offshore wind power project located east of Long Island's Montauk Point in New York state.

The Sunrise Wind project will be the largest offshore wind farm by power generation capacity in the state of New York. Located over 30 miles offshore east of Long Island's Montauk Point, the 924 MW project will be sufficient to power nearly 600,000 homes and supply 100% renewable energy to help realize New York's vision of becoming a leader in clean energy, MRC noted. The Sunrise Wind project is a joint venture between Ørsted and Eversource.



## AD ASSOCIATES PARTICIPATE IN CRADLES TO CRAYONS EVENT

AD associates participated in a giving back event on March 17 by supporting Cradles to Crayons, a Philadelphia-area nonprofit organization providing children from birth through age 12 living in homeless or low-income situations with the essential items they need to thrive. AD's volunteer efforts, monetary donations and children's item collection will support about 3,200 children in the Philadelphia region.

About 100 AD associates volunteered at The Giving Factory, Cradles to Crayons' warehouse at its Philadelphia location, to inspect and organize donations of clothing that will be distributed to local children in need. This process ensures the

inspect and organize donations of clothing that will be distributed to local children in need. The proceeds and the clothing items children will receive are high quality and supportive of their needs.

During the event, AD's Giving Back Committee, which organizes AD's giving back events and fundraising activities, presented Cradles to Crayons with a check for \$23,302, AD associates' largest donation in company history. AD's donations for giving back events are entirely associate-funded and were obtained through several successful fundraisers. AD also collected new and gently used items at AD Wayne, donating children's clothing, diapers, baby hygiene products, books, socks, underwear and pajamas.

**Jeffrey Beall**, president of AD's PHCP Business Unit and executive sponsor of the Giving Back Committee, addressed AD associates during the event and emphasized their generous support.

"It's always amazing to see what the AD team can accomplish when we come together for a great cause," Beall said. "Our Giving Back Committee goes above and beyond by organizing these volunteer experiences and encouraging our associates to get involved with difference-making organizations like Cradles to Crayons. The fundraising challenges and day of giving engaged the AD community across multiple countries, and we know our efforts will have a positive impact for local children."

**Bill Weisberg**, AD's chairman and CEO, highlighted the company's commitment to the community. "Giving back aligns with our core value of serving others, a value that connects to everything we do at AD," Weisberg said. "Our associates are committed to supporting not only our local communities, but also the communities we share with members and partners. I am proud of our team for their generous contributions, and I look forward to our next volunteer initiatives."



## MATCO-NORCA ANNOUNCES PRICE INCREASE

Due to continued and unprecedented escalation in raw materials and transportation costs, Matco-Norca announced the implementation of a 21% price increase on Schedule 90 PVC pipe nipples.

Increases were slated to go into effect April 1.

# DOWN THE PIPE



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## FERGUSON ANNOUNCES Q2 FINANCIAL RESULTS

### Q2 highlights:

- Strong sales growth as core strengths drove market share gains in supportive end markets;
- Price inflation increased to high teens driven largely by finished goods; and
- Operating leverage led to particularly strong profit growth, the distributor noted.

### First-half highlights:

- Sales growth of 29.1% and robust operating leverage led to operating profit growth of 68.3% (adjusted 62.5%);
- Completed six acquisitions, four within Q2, with annualized revenues of about \$235 million; and
- Repurchased \$417 million of the \$1.0 billion share buyback program announced Sept. 28, 2021.

### Corporate highlights:

- Interim dividend increased by 15% to \$0.84 per share;
- Increasing share buyback program by \$1.0 billion to \$2.0 billion. Through March 11, 2022, Ferguson has completed \$659 million, leaving \$1,341 million outstanding which it expects to complete over the next 12 months; and
- Vote to enable a U.S. primary listing approved on March 10, 2022, expected to take effect May 12, 2022. **Kevin Murphy**, group chief executive stated: "Our associates delivered another excellent performance with continued market share gains and strong price realization while navigating industry supply chain pressures. We are pleased with earnings growth that significantly outpaced revenue growth to generate another quarter of strong operating leverage."



## IMARK PLUMBING HONORS MEMBERS AND SUPPLIERS

IMARK Plumbing recognizes members and suppliers that go above and beyond in all aspects of business and participation within the group. **Ted Havel**, vice president of marketing and suppliers relations said, "I am thrilled to recognize these suppliers and members who have shown exemplary levels of leadership and group participation throughout the year."

The IMARK Plumbing preferred suppliers listed below were recognized based on the results of a member ranking process, which was determined by the suppliers' level of involvement in the following areas: IMARK marketing, communications and training programs, IMARK program execution and the support of IMARK members. Awards were given within each of the following categories, marketing, merchandising, product and promotion.

**Marketing award:** Suppliers that excel in promoting their brand, product training, creating end-user demand, provide helpful marketing resources and offer effective marketing funds: **Liberty Pumps**.

**Merchandising award:** Suppliers that excel in offering effective merchandising displays/signage and training member personnel on merchandised products: **Milwaukee Electric Tool**.

**Product award:** Suppliers that excel in offering top-quality products, and developing new and innovative products: **Sioux Chief**.

**Promotion award:** Suppliers that excel in creating consistent and effective promotional offers and create the most effective IMARK exclusive promotions: **Pioneer Industries**.

**Supplier of the year:** Suppliers that received numerous ratings in each of the four categories (Marketing, merchandising, product and promotion) and suppliers that achieved status on the 2021 Supplier Gold / Platinum Program. **Legend Valve & Fittings**.

IMARK Plumbing recognized the following members for distinguished performance in 2021. The members listed below were recognized (based on objective criteria tracked by IMARK HQ) for their effective implementation of IMARK marketing and training programs, their exemplary support of IMARK preferred suppliers and achieved status on the 2021 Member Premier Program.



Abilene Plumbing Supply (Abilene, Texas); Northwest Pipe Fittings (Billings, Montana); Prier Pipe & Supply (Salem, Oregon); The Part Works (Seattle, Washington); The Tap of Kansas (Wichita, Kansas); William Betz JR (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).



## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR AIM/R 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

AIM/R will celebrate its 50th anniversary this fall at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Colorado. The association is returning to its roots and where the first conference was held back in 1973. The theme is "Mission Celebrate." 2022 Conference Chair - **Katie Hubach**, CPA, **Signature Sales** - hopes everyone can join the association in Colorado.

Registration and housing for the **AIM/R 50th annual conference** (Oct. 12-14) is open. Check out the program lineup with speakers from inside and outside the industry.

### What's new this year?

Manufacturers join later in the week from Oct. 13-14 (Thursday to Friday). Rep agents attend from Oct. 12-14 (Wednesday to Friday). On Friday evening, attendees will enjoy AIM/R's first-ever reception, dinner and 50th gala. Attendees can indulge in the VIP lounge that would tempt James Bond himself. "Bondified" activities, drinks and dinner on AIM/R will be enjoyed by all attendees.

AIM/R greatly appreciates your continued support of the industry and its events. If you have any questions, please contact AIM/R at [info@aimr.net](mailto:info@aimr.net) or at 630.942.6581.



## A. O. SMITH FOUNDATION DONATES \$100,000 TO UKRAINE RELIEF EFFORTS

A. O. Smith Corp., along with the A. O. Smith Foundation, the company's charitable arm, has made a \$100,000 donation to the American Red Cross to help support humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine. With operations across the globe, A. O. Smith believes in helping communities through efforts that focus on health and human services.

According to the American Red Cross website, more than two million people have fled Ukraine to nearby countries and an estimated 18 million – one-third of the country's population – will need assistance. Red Cross teams have donated food, water, medical supplies, household items and hygiene parcels to families seeking safety.

"Our foundation's leadership agreed unanimously to offer this contribution as a small gesture to provide basic human necessities — food, water, shelter, medical care — to those affected," said **Kevin Wheeler**, A. O. Smith chairman, president and CEO. "The foundation deeply believes in giving back to our communities, and while the company doesn't have operations there, it is impossible not to have compassion for those suffering in Ukraine."

In addition to the foundation's direct financial support, A. O. Smith also partnered with the American Red Cross to create a donation microsite to assist employees in making personal contributions to the relief efforts if they choose.

The A. O. Smith Foundation is committed to making communities a better place to live and work by partnering with and supporting nonprofit organizations around the world. Established in 1955, the foundation has provided more than \$50 million in financial support for worthwhile organizations, institutions and programs.



## FERGUSON, UPONOR SUPPORT NEW COMMUNITY PLUMBING CHALLENGE IN ALABAMA

Ferguson and Uponor North America have both announced their continued support for the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation's (IWSH) Community Plumbing Challenge program, the most recent of which started in March in Lowndes County, Alabama.

in March in Lowndes County, Alabama.

IWSH's latest CPC effort is a collaboration with the Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP) and LIXIL to provide plumbing repairs and upgrades for five homes and develop a framework for ongoing plumbing industry support to the BBUWP. The weeklong project addresses a critical issue for public health and safety in the surrounding community, where many low-income homeowners are unable to afford an on-site sewage disposal system, instead resorting to straight piping, which releases sewage above ground.

In cooperation with its nearest branch — in Montgomery, Alabama — Ferguson is generously donating all necessary plumbing products for the project, while Uponor is providing monetary support toward the new program.

"It's unfathomable to think about the more than two million Americans living without access to clean water and proper sanitation," said Denise Vaughn, Ferguson's vice president of environmental, social & governance (ESG). "We are honored to partner with IWSH, Uponor and LIXIL, along with many talented and kind plumbers, to bring this project to life in Alabama. This is just the beginning — and we know that, with the leadership and vision of IWSH, change is on the horizon for many other communities, too."

"We are honored to be able to support IAPMO/IWSH in their important work alongside a valued partner like Ferguson," said Ingrid Mattsson, director of brand and sustainability for Uponor North America. "Uponor has a long history of supporting plumbers in their role of providing health and safety to the nation, and I'm happy to hear that Lowndes County, Alabama will benefit from this collaboration."

IWSH greatly appreciates the support and sponsorship of a multitude of leading plumbing industry organizations, from sectors including labor, manufacturing and supply. More details of current IWSH Global Partnerships may be found at <https://iwsh.org/iwsh/get-involved/sponsors>.

"Bringing together the expertise of the plumbing industry to address this need demonstrates our commitment to begin to solve a long-standing issue in Lowndes County," IWSH North American Program Director Jed Scheuermann said. "We are grateful to Ferguson, LIXIL, Uponor and United Association locals in Alabama who join us in our latest Community Plumbing Challenge. Despite various challenges, we team up with support and guidance from community and state officials. Given March 11 (was) World Plumbing Day, our CPC could not be more perfectly timed to draw attention to how plumbers protect the health of the world."



## APR SUPPLY ANNOUNCES 100 DAYS OF GIVING PROGRAM

As part of its centennial year celebration, APR Supply Co. has set the goal of its teammates giving back to the communities in which they conduct business by donating 100 days' worth of community service through an internal program called 100 Days of Giving.

APR Supply Co.'s 100 Days of Giving strives to honor the local communities in which employees live and work through the donation of volunteer hours. The program encourages employees to become involved and to give their voluntary support to programs that positively impact the quality of life within the community. APR will reimburse team members who donate their time to a non-profit organization, up to eight hours per fiscal year. The goal is for each location and department to donate at least two days, or 16 hours, to their local community.

To kick off the initiative, two members of the APR Supply Co. marketing department volunteered with the Junior Achievement Program (JA) of South-Central PA to teach STEM skills and resume writing to local seventh and eighth-graders. The JA YES! Program utilizes community volunteers to work within middle schools to prepare students for the importance of financial and career decisions they will face as young adults.

# MOVERS AND SHAKERS



GOODWIN



O'BRIEN



HECKMAN

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## PEOPLE NEWS

**A. O. Smith Corp.** announced the retirement of **Eddie Goodwin**, senior vice president of A. O. Smith Corp., and president and general manager of **Lochinvar**, will retire July 1, and **Stephen O'Brien**, COO, has been named the successor.

"Since joining the company over 40 years ago, Eddie's vast experience and steadfast leadership has helped shape Lochinvar into the industry-leading, high-efficiency boiler and water heater manufacturer it is today," said **Kevin Wheeler**, chairman, president and CEO. "He has built a strong team committed to designing, manufacturing and selling high quality, innovative products that meet our customer's needs. We thank him for his vision and commitment to our customers, our employees and the A. O. Smith values over the past four decades."

In his new role, O'Brien will build on the strong foundation Goodwin and his team have established, by implementing the strategic vision for the organization and further expanding Lochinvar's innovative product lines, the company noted.

O'Brien has served as chief operating officer for Lochinvar since August of 2021 and is uniquely qualified to assume the role of president going forward, it added. O'Brien joined Lochinvar from Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US (METUS) and prior to that, worked for A. O. Smith Electrical Products Co. for 14 years before the company was sold to Regal Beloit Corp. He holds an MBA from the University of Dayton in Ohio and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from State University of New York at Potsdam.

"With his extensive experience in the HVAC industry, his strong leadership skills and focus on customer satisfaction, Steve is the ideal person to lead our Lochinvar business unit going forward," Wheeler added. "I am confident the transition will be seamless, and Steve's extensive background and business development skills will further strengthen Lochinvar's channel partnerships and our presence in the market."

**Julia Heckman** has joined the T&S Brass team as sales coordinator. In this role, Heckman will provide a wide array of marketing and sales support across T&S, the global plumbing manufacturer headquartered in Travelers Rest, South Carolina.

"Julia started with T&S in customer service last year, where she quickly learned a great deal about T&S and serving our customers," said **Ken Gallagher**, T&S vice president of global sales. "This knowledge and experience, combined with her education and work history in communications and marketing, makes Julia a wonderful addition to our sales team. I'm excited to have her on board."

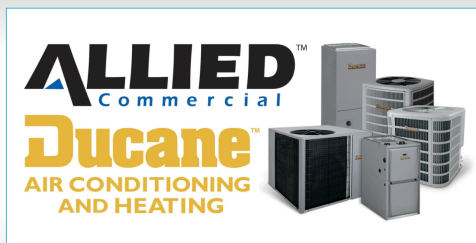
Heckman, who previously worked in various marketing, project management and operations roles, holds a bachelor's degree in communication from the College of Charleston.

"This circular tendency was pivotal to our sustainability program, as you think about recycling initiatives and lifecycle analysis programs," Fitzgerald explained. "We are trying to understand the impact of activities and products from their raw materials through the disposition at the end of its life."

Rheem also announced the promotion of **Chee Wee Gan** to a new role as senior vice president, strategy and sustainability. Chee Wee joined Rheem in 2018 and will continue to drive global strategic planning for the organization while advancing global brand and sustainability initiatives. Additionally, he will continue spearheading Rheem's global licensing strategic initiatives in his expanded role.

Rheem's sustainability initiative is on pace to meet or exceed 2025 goals, designed to coincide with the company's 100th anniversary, it added.

Fitzgerald's retirement became official Jan. 1. He has planned a series of outdoor adventures such as climbing, rafting and hiking in destinations including Alaska, Utah, Colorado and Oregon.



**The Granite Group** announced the signing of a distribution agreement with Allied Air Enterprises related to their residential Ducane Air Conditioning and Heating products, as well as their Allied Commercial offering.

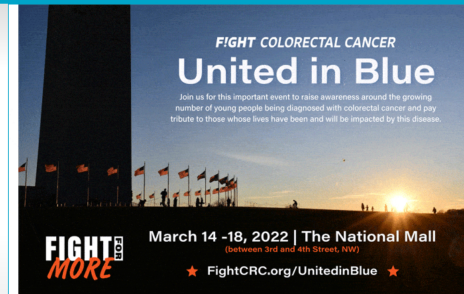
The Ducane line of residential unitary HVAC equipment will be available to contractors through any of the 50 TGG wholesale locations across the six New England states. Inventory has already started to land and will be fully stocked across the Granite Group branch network in mid-March. Available products will include gas and oil furnaces, air handlers, condensing units and heat pumps, many of which qualify for homeowner rebates in New England. This, combined with the addition of packaged rooftop units from Allied Commercial, will allow The Granite Group to offer a full range of equipment from 1.5 ton up to 25 ton.

"We have always tried to provide our customers with high-quality, reliable products that help them to be successful. The addition of Ducane and Allied Commercial will no doubt do that," said **Michael Kelly**, senior vice president of business development at the Granite Group. "As the HVAC contractor base continues to grow, we must grow our



offering along with it."

The Ducane product line will nicely compliment the Granite Group's existing residential HVAC equipment offering that includes Mitsubishi, Bosch, Gibson and Miller. While the Allied Commercial products will be their flagship commercial brand allowing The Granite Group to expand its HVAC and mechanical contractor customer base, the distributor noted.



**Bemis Mfg. Co.**, a manufacturer of toilet and bidet seats, teamed up with advocacy organization, [Fight Colorectal Cancer](#) (Fight CRC) for March, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

The family-owned manufacturer donated 100 toilet seats that were to be displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., as part of Fight CRC's United in Blue installation. Each seat will display an awareness fact or statistic about the disease, which is the second-most fatal cancer in the U.S.

The seats will surround more than 27,000 blue flags on the National Lawn, each of them symbolizing a projected case of colorectal cancer in someone under age 50 by the year 2030.

The non-profit advocacy organization is hosting the first-ever installation for colorectal cancer on the National Mall to gain attention from lawmakers about the fact that colorectal cancer is projected to be the No. 1 cancer killer among those ages 20-49 by 2030. There is an urgency to fund more research to uncover groundbreaking treatments to save lives, it noted.

"As a manufacturer of toilet and bidet seats, we produce a type of product that people sometimes don't want to openly talk about because of its private nature," said **T.J. Stiefvater**, director of marketing for Bemis. "The same can be said for colorectal cancer. We feel strongly about shining a light on it and helping raise awareness about what can be done to alleviate the suffering it causes." Contrary to what most people believe, colorectal cancer is not an "old man's" disease. One in 23 men and 1 in 25 women will be diagnosed with this type of cancer in their lifetime. In 2022, the American Cancer Society estimates there will be 106,180 new cases of colon cancer and 44,850 cases of rectal cancer.



**Ferguson's** Business Development team recently donated nearly \$520,000 worth of new tools to SkillsUSA state chapters, Rebuilding Together affiliates and Good360. Through a network of organizations, these tools will do good works in our communities:

- SkillsUSA's vision is a highly skilled workforce. Providing tools to aspiring skilled trade professionals provides new educational opportunities, improving the future skilled trade workforce;
- Tool donations routed through the Rebuilding Together affiliates provide free critical health and safety repairs and accessibility modifications for low-income, disabled, senior, and veteran homeowners at no cost, using the services of volunteers and contractors; and
- Good360, the global leader in product philanthropy and purposeful giving, distributes the tools with its own diverse nonprofit network to support its defined purpose, creating new opportunities for the communities where they operate.

Ferguson Cares is part of the company's overall Sustainability program and seeks to build partnerships with transformational nonprofit organizations within clean water and sanitation, housing, the skilled trades and our hometown, the company's four key focus areas.

"All our nonprofit partner organizations are excellent stewards. Generally, nonprofits are renowned for performing with restricted budgets and minimal personnel," said **Melissa Hazelwood**, senior Ferguson Cares manager. "That doesn't mean when it comes to providing housing or services for the communities they serve, they can or should skimp on quality. Everyone deserves to live with dignity and respect."

Hazelwood added it is essential to change the narrative about in-kind donations within the nonprofit community, whether to the organization or an individual. "When I first became a mom, friends shared baby items that their children could no longer use. I was so excited and appreciated their thoughtfulness. I was more connected to them and their children through their act of generosity."

Hazelwood said experiencing first-hand how generosity connects you to a larger community informs her philosophy and approach to Ferguson Cares. "Nonprofits and their communities no longer look at items as hand-me-downs. Some nonprofits are labeling items as vintage! Perhaps the phrase should be, 'hand me next?'" she said.

#### Hand me next tools

"When Ferguson recently concluded a test program of power and hand tools, we concluded with a surplus of new, unopened tools. Therefore, the decision of how to distribute the remaining inventory was easy," explained **Jeff Puckette**, Ferguson business development manager – residential trade. "We hoped that these tools would provide a solid foundation in developing aspiring trade professionals and fulfill a great need for our nonprofit partners. Supporting our future industry leaders and communities has always been and will continue to be a top priority for Ferguson."

"We are so grateful for the donation of tools from Ferguson," commented Jesse Porter, Executive Director of Rebuilding Together Austin. "Not only are tools and tool replacement a consistent need for our organization, but this donation also allows us to put more of our resources towards essential repairs that keep our neighbors in need safe in their homes."e company explained.

As articulated on DDS' website, it's one thing for manufacturers to make their product content available to their channel partners, but another thing entirely for them to verify whether those partners are actually publishing the information online, let alone consistently and as the supplier intended it to look.

"There is a major challenge for manufacturers with this 'last mile' of the journey to get their product information published to hundreds of individual distributor and retailer websites," said **Matt Christensen**, president of DDS. "Manufacturers are really at the mercy of their distribution partners not only in terms of how their products look online, but whether they're listed at all, and from the initial data we've been helping them gather, the results are pretty alarming."

In other Distributor Data Systems news, DDS announce the launch of its wholly redesigned website. The site's updated design and messaging unveil new branding while clarifying the company's solution offerings and directing visitors to the most relevant and efficient customer experience according to their needs.

DDS offers solutions to help both manufacturers and distributors deliver improved product content — along with a superior delivery experience — to their end customers, primarily for e-commerce websites and other digital applications. The new site features streamlined customer journeys and valuable new resources for manufacturers and distributors, helping them explore and engage with the company's sophisticated offerings, it explained.

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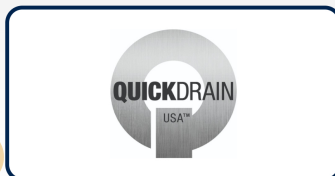
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