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By Suzan Chin-Taylor

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Ben Horaitis, left, Poseidon Hydro Excavation hydrovac operator, and Bill Lietzke, company owner, daylight for utilities at a job site near Milwaukee using one of the company's Westech Vac Systems hydroexcavation units. Poseidon, based in Glendale, Wisconsin, offers potholing and location services, as well as directional drilling support, trenching and manhole clean outs in an area around Milwaukee. (Photography by Michael McLoone)

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Water and Wastewater: No Industry Is More Essential

WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN YOU'RE ESSENTIAL, AND WE ARE THANKFUL AND SUPPORTIVE AS YOU CONTINUE YOUR WORK DURING THIS UNCERTAIN TIME

In its response to the coronavirus pandemic, the federal government identified you as essential critical infrastructure workers. At COLE Publishing, we've always known you're essential. That's why we're here.

Since this company was founded in 1979, we have been shining a light on the water and wastewater industries, showing the recognition and appreciation you and your work deserve.

In its overview of the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce, the Department of Homeland Security includes a section on Water/Wastewater workers, but reading through that document, your jobs are represented by multiple categories: Public Health, Public Safety, First Responders, Transportation, Logistics, Public Works and Hazardous Materials.

You are much more than water and wastewater workers. Running water and wastewater systems is a commitment that goes way beyond the standard workday. You're not just earning a paycheck; you're taking care of your community.

Clean water is essential to life, and proper sanitation is one of the greatest factors in public health. Ensuring we have both is a monumental task that rarely gets the respect it deserves. We take it for granted until suddenly there's a problem. Most often it's a water main break that leads to a temporary loss of service, or a clogged sewer line backing wastewater up into our basements. Maybe the occasional boil water advisory or a frozen line. But those are all short-term. We act inconvenienced, but only because we're used to such incredible convenience.

A lot of people were taking a lot of things for granted before this pandemic began shutting down our normal lives. And then suddenly hand sanitizer vanished from shelves. Then toilet paper. Imagine if instead of people suddenly deciding they needed every roll of toilet paper they could get their hands on, this pandemic compromised our water supplies and people fought for every bottle of water they could find. But that's not how it played out. Our water is safe; anyone blocking access to the toilet paper aisle is in grave danger. And we flush our toilets and send all the waste to you.

Our water and wastewater systems are still working as they should, because you're still on the job. You still won't get the appreciation you deserve in most cases, but that's absolutely not the case here. We, the entire staff at COLE Publishing, know your role is just as important as any doctor, police officer or elected official. You are unsung heroes, and we are here to say *Thank You*.

Sincerely,
The COLE Publishing Team



To read the complete memorandum and infrastructure guidance document released by the federal government, visit www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA_Guidance_on_the_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workforce_508C_0.pdf.

Showing Pride

COMPANIES, EMPLOYEES CAN EACH DO THEIR PART IN PROMOTING THE INDUSTRY AND DRAWING POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS IN

BY CORY DELLENBACH, EDITOR

Taking pride in your business is a topic that comes up often in profiles that *Dig Different* runs. Owners and employees both take pride in their companies and the work they are doing.

By doing this, not only will the company continue to grow and evolve, but the employees will too. An employee who doesn't take pride in his or her work will likely not go far in the business or the industry.

Bill Lietzke, owner of Poseidon Hydro Excavation in southeastern Wisconsin definitely takes pride in what he does. His company, featured in this issue, ensures its hydroexcavation units are cleaned at the end of each day and ready for use the next, and he makes sure best practices are observed when his crews are hydroexcavating.

"I believe we've been successful and profitable because we stick with what we know and do that to the best of our ability," Lietzke says. "Looking back, starting a business like this from scratch with no help was an unbelievable task, but the dedication and having my heart full-in with everything on the line just kept me going."

The main reason for taking pride in your work is to strive to be the best in the crowd and give your all in every task. Taking ownership of your work can increase the value of your company and your value as an employee.

TIPS FOR TAKING PRIDE IN YOUR COMPANY

1. Build a good reputation. Try to build a good reputation by having a constant record of great performance and work. Try to always produce the best results possible. This can build your company's reputation within the industry as a go-to company and can make you more noticed and recognized among supervisors and customers.

2. Try to be satisfied with your role. As an employee, you should try to remember that each and every person has an important role in the company. From the swamper to the operator, learn as much as you can in your role and succeed in it.

3. Always try to improve. As a crew member, always try to learn things you don't know. Then try to slowly improve by yourself. Same goes for the company — improve on the jobs you are working on. On each job, your crews can learn a new way of doing something; so have them implement that on the next job.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Taking that pride and using it in your next step is important. Don't just sit there and do nothing with it. If you are an employee, work toward that promotion or toward running your own truck or company someday.

If you are the owner of a company already, have goals set out — to be a million-dollar company, grow by a set number of trucks or employees each year, or gain so many new customers in a year.

Having goals to work toward will only help you take even more pride in what you do and what your company does.

ENJOYING THE RIDE

It can be fun to learn and grow with a company, no matter which position you hold. There will always be challenges and ups and downs, but if you continue to take pride in what you do, you'll be heading in the right direction all the time.

How do you show pride in what you do? Email me at editor@digdifferent.com or call me at 715-350-8436. I'd like to hear your story.

Enjoy this issue! ▼

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THE MAIN REASON FOR TAKING PRIDE IN YOUR WORK IS TO STRIVE TO BE THE BEST IN THE CROWD AND GIVE YOUR ALL IN EVERY TASK. TAKING OWNERSHIP OF YOUR WORK CAN INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR COMPANY AND YOUR VALUE AS AN EMPLOYEE.





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WORK BETTER

Manufacturers' Tech Developments Focused on Fast and Easy

Finding an easier and faster way to work is a goal of nearly every contractor, though actually accomplishing that goal can be tricky. Since it is the goal of contractors, it is also the goal of manufacturers when it comes to designing equipment. A large trade show like CONEXPO-CON/AGG, held earlier this year in Las Vegas, is a good place for manufacturers to highlight their latest wares, and this online exclusive takes a look at the efficiency-minded tools companies were promoting.

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GETTING TOGETHER

Why You Should Take Staff Meetings Seriously

Many business owners are probably used to hearing some groans when announcing that everyone needs to gather in the conference room. But such meetings don't have to elicit that type of response. If done properly, they should help focus a team and energize employees. This online exclusive provides some tips on how to get the most out of staff meetings.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

"GO IN WITH AN OPEN MIND. YOU'RE DIAGNOSING, NOT CONDEMNING. YOU MAY NOT KNOW ALL THE VARIABLES CAUSING THE PERSON TO DO THE THINGS THEY'RE DOING."

How to Have Tough Conversations Without Damaging Employee Relationships

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THE QUIET MAN

Tap Introverts' Potential to Improve Your Staff

Introverts can create negative impressions — that they're not friendly or not team players or don't have a lot to add to the conversation. But that's simply a personality type and not truly reflective as to how effective they can be as employees. This online exclusive looks at strategies you can adopt to bring out the best in quieter crew members.

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VACUUM
EXCAVATION
Profile



FINDING A NEW LOVE



WISCONSIN CONTRACTOR SHIFTS INDUSTRIES, GROWS A RESPECTED AND DIVERSE HYDROEXCAVATION AND UTILITY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

STORY: SUZAN CHIN-TAYLOR PHOTOS: MICHAEL MCLOONE

Like the lyrics of the chart-topping Beatles hit, *All You Need Is Love*, Bill Lietzke's almost instant love for hydroexcavating has provided the answers to his dream of making a great living doing something he enjoys, creating a family-first workplace culture and securing his family's future.

After suffering an accident and needing to get out of the housing construction industry, Lietzke found his way to hydroexcavating, doing small jobs for a local company until he got the chance to jump in a truck and operate it.

Today, Lietzke owns Poseidon Hydro Excavation, a hydroexcavation company based in Glendale, Wisconsin, near Milwaukee. The company provides an extremely diverse set of services centered around Lietzke's great love and operation of hydrovac.

A TOUGH START

Lietzke had always been involved in the construction field, initially in housing construction and roofing, but an accident that left him seriously injured for a long while prompted him to seek a new direction for his career. He began asking a good friend and then-owner of Hawk Construction, a local hydrovac firm about potential opportunities with his firm. The only position available was for the daily cleaning of the fleet trucks.

"It was a tough pill to swallow, and I had to suck up a lot of pride taking such a significant pay cut, but I knew it was an excellent opportunity to get in and learn something new and I was confident I could work my way up quickly," Lietzke says. "It didn't take long after working with the trucks to know I had to get on one of them and run it."

Fate smiled upon Lietzke not long after he began his new job. An operator failed to appear for work and there was a critical job scheduled. He was the only one in the shop, and when asked if he could handle it and pitch in, he didn't hesitate to accept the challenge and chance.

"That day sealed my fate: I dug a hole to set a new telephone pole for one that had been struck in an auto accident," Lietzke says. "Once I did that, it was love at first sight — I was addicted."

He continued to work slowly and diligently, biding his time to get a truck he would call his own. Being someone who enjoyed working outdoors, hydroexcavating offered a chance for year-round work, unlike his previous construction positions where he would find it necessary to take on factory work in the off-seasons rather than be on furlough with limited financial resources from unemployment compensation.

Louie Kelly, Poseidon Hydro Excavation hydrovac operator, potholes for utility lines on a city street in Milwaukee. Kelly is using one of the company's Westech Vac Systems hydroexcavation units.

Poseidon Hydro Excavation LLC Glendale, Wisconsin

OWNER: Bill Lietzke

EMPLOYEES: 8

SERVICES: Potholing and location, directional drilling support/drill head recovery and mud removal, trenching and slot trenching, splice pits, subsurface utility and test hole work, piling holes, manhole clean-outs, light pole and signal base excavation, remote excavation, culvert cleaning, elevator shaft excavation, silt removal from ponds, petroleum tank/line assistance and core drilling

SERVICE AREA: Wisconsin

WEBSITE: www.poseidon-hydrovac.com





Louie Kelly potholes for utility lines at a Milwaukee intersection, where street work is occurring. The company marks off an area where they are working and has a crew member directing traffic for further safety.

“YOU CAN HAVE A GREAT OPERATOR BUT A TERRIBLE TRUCK AND YOU’RE GOING TO BE HAMSTRUNG AND VICE VERSA. BUT YOU PUT A GREAT OPERATOR AND A GREAT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT TOGETHER AND THERE’S NOTHING THAT CAN’T BE ACCOMPLISHED.”

Bill Lietzke

Accepting that first entry-level position opened many doors, and after approximately seven years, Lietzke accepted a position as an operator at another firm and was quickly promoted to management within a year. He was responsible for a fleet that was challenging to keep operational due to its age and constant maintenance issues; however, he persevered until it became evident it was time to move on.

Lietzke learned quickly that due to his quick career rise, he would be considered “overqualified” for operator positions and managerial opportunities were simply nonexistent in the area at the time. There was only one option available: Take a leap of faith and strike out on his own.

USING LESSONS LEARNED

His prior experiences at other hydrovac firms helped Lietzke create a business model and modus operandi that would incorporate the best practices observed and set a new standard in the area for how hydroexcavating service firms should deliver client services and the type of fleet they would operate.

Lietzke had learned in all too painful a way what having the wrong truck for your environment could do to a firm and its effect on operating profitability.

“You can have a great operator but a terrible truck and you’re going to be hamstrung and vice versa,” he says. “But you put a great operator and a great piece of equipment together and there’s nothing that can’t be accomplished.”

This approach and belief are what drove the firm forward. Trucks being the lifeblood of the operation, he decided that as a startup, leasing would be the best option, having new units every two years. He believed this would enable the firm to provide the excellent service and dependability he had promised when his former clients gave him a chance.

It was good in theory, but what his new firm could afford through leasing was problematic — the units were not capable of withstanding the punishing climate of Wisconsin winters. Brand new, they broke down, making the firm’s debut with an important new client not as smooth or impressive as Lietzke had hoped. Again, his love for the work got him through, and he and his team found ways to “make it work” until a better, more sustainable solution could be found.

NORTH OF THE BORDER

Lietzke began to demo numerous trucks from various manufacturers, carefully exploring all his options until he settled on Westech Vac Systems, a Canadian manufacturer affiliated with Federal Signal. Westech became the obvious choice for Lietzke’s next truck since the manufacturer is based in an

Keeping tech simple

With all the office software and enterprise tools available, Bill Lietzke, owner of Poseidon Hydro Excavation, has opted to keep things lean and mean, yet still highly efficient, with a somewhat unusual tool from a fuel card company.

WEX GPS, a telematics and GPS fleet tracking system has proven itself to be a powerful ally in making Poseidon's service scheduling and equipment maintenance more efficient.

The GPS tracking features allows Lietzke's dispatcher to see where everyone is working, so as project orders arrive, they can readily determine who is closest and available to deploy and serve the client the fastest. The vehicle routing feature can also track the crew's location in real time on interactive 2D, 3D or satellite maps. This allows them to use live traffic data to find faster routes for the fleet, which saves Poseidon time and money.

In addition to the GPS tracking, the system also provides a number of variables that can be customized such as maintenance schedulers that can read hours on each hydrovac truck and alert Lietzke when service items may be due, like oil changes and brake and fluid checks, all of which help Poseidon keep its fleet in top condition — essential in a tough climate like Wisconsin.

extreme climate and designs units for firms that must work under the same conditions as Lietzke and the Poseidon team.

The switch from leasing to purchasing took place, and Poseidon now runs a fleet of exclusively Westech hydrovac units that includes two Western Star 4900s and two Western Star 4700s, with a fifth unit on order. The fleet also encompasses support trailers for remote hose and smaller pickup trucks.

LIGHTENING THE LOAD

One challenge facing hydroexcavating operators and other related hauling contractors are the new weight restrictions imposed by the local department of transportation. Hydrovac trucks are a target for monitoring by state law enforcement of late. Although a weight maximum of 73,000 pounds sounds like a lot, once the truck chassis, tank and water are factored in, the amount of debris that can be hauled becomes quite limited.

To comply and still be profitable and extend its hauling capacity, Poseidon has switched its units' cross cabinet that houses the hot-water burner and the pump to one made of carbon fiber.

"Anywhere we could get rid of steel and replace it with aluminum, we did," Lietzke says. "By doing this, we were able to curb about 10,000 pounds. Our trucks are some of the biggest, baddest trucks in the state, and it was a big surprise to find we

were hauling loads that were pushing the envelope of the weight limit, so these little changes have made a big difference in efficiency and capacity."

By consistently looking for and implementing ways to make the fleet more efficient and extend capabilities, Poseidon has been able to enter interesting markets and become involved in some very specialized projects, which Lietzke enjoys taking on. One such application involved excavating vertically to a depth of 175 feet for a construction project in downtown Milwaukee. The prime contractor, Michels, called Lietzke in need of a truck to help them with creat-

ing space to pour concrete in for footings surrounding pilings that had been driven down in sandy soil.

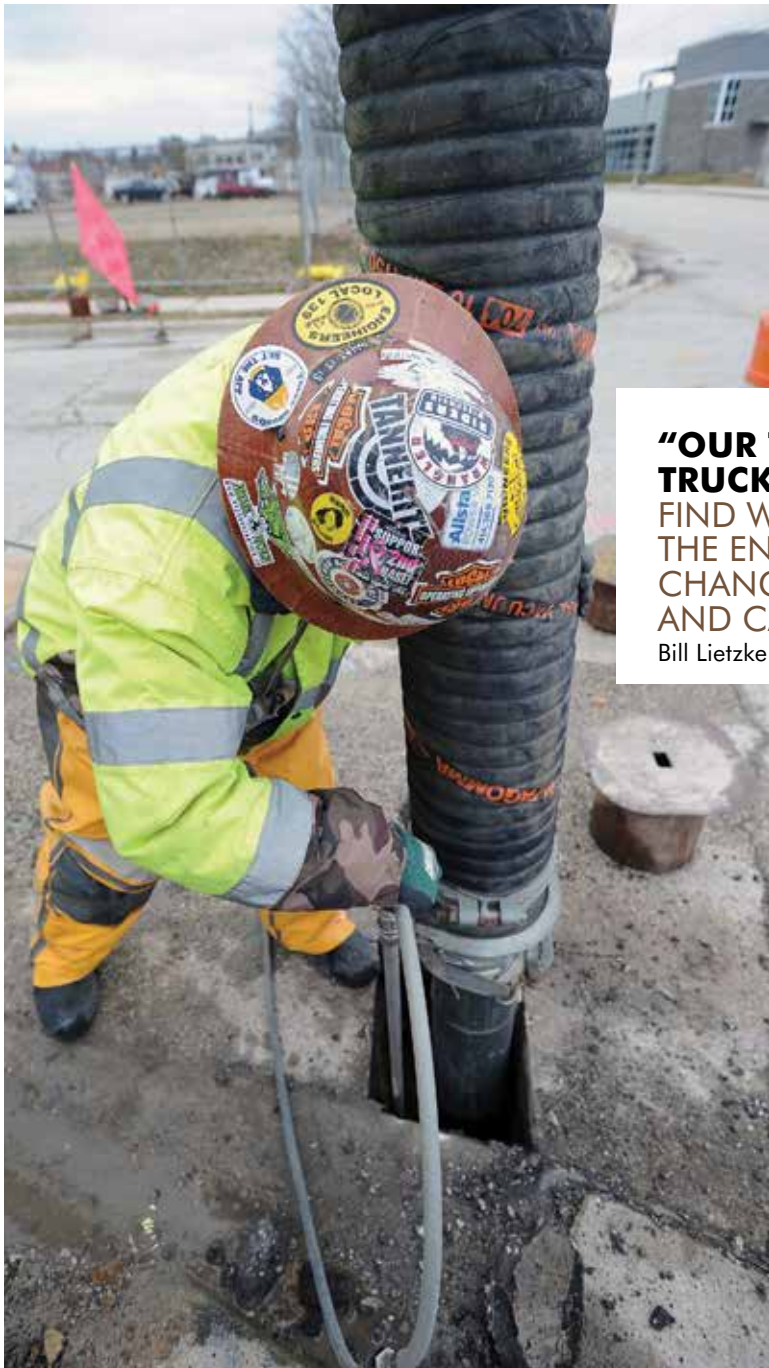
The Poseidon team had never tried a vertical this deep. Being unsure it would be possible, they relayed that to the client but indicated they were willing to try if the client was open to the experiment. Knowing that sand and water from such a depth would be more demanding than typical mud, it would be a chance for Lietzke and his team to see just what their unit could do.

"We have one of the biggest blowers and truck models available on the market so I felt pretty confident that if a truck could do it, our unit and team could make it happen," he says.

The project required all the remote hose that Poseidon had available, along with the strength and willpower to handle it. The hose was triple-lashed to structures for added control and safety, and the crew also used a large track-hoe to hold part of it so if the hose went down, they wouldn't lose it into the hole. On projects like this, the Poseidon crew understood that nature and physics will shoot the remote hose straight down until the operator throttles down



Ben Horaitis, left, hydrovac operator, and Bill Lietzke, company owner, get the hydroexcavator ready for a job near Milwaukee. Lietzke still enjoys getting out and working with his crews as often as possible.



Louie Kelly holds the dig tube with his shoulder as he gets the digging wand in place to break up more soil while potholing for utilities. The Westech Vac Systems hydrovac units allow the company to work year-round, even in Wisconsin's winter months.

and turns the vacuum off and that they wouldn't win the battle with the hose. Knowing this and when to let go ensured a successful and safe completion of the job.

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL — LOVING IT ALL

Poseidon's variety of services includes potholing and location, directional drilling support/drill head recovery and mud removal, trenching and slot trenching, splice pits, subsurface utility and test hole work, piling holes, manhole clean-outs, light pole and signal base excavation, remote excavation, culvert cleaning, elevator shaft excavation, silt removal from ponds and petroleum tank/line assistance. This gives Poseidon's crews the opportunity to broaden their skills with applications that require both horizontal and vertical methods.

The team has been contracted to tunnel underneath residential housing, often working blind, using the exterior of a building to line up and gain a sense of direction. One such project involved a mobile home that had a sanitary line made of Orangeburg, which was backed up and failing.

The crew tunneled horizontally nearly 35 feet to locate the line using remote hose technique. It was an arduous task, requiring the hose to be fed in slowly, retracted and then taken a little farther until hitting the target utility. But to Lietzke and the Poseidon crew, the challenges make the work more rewarding.

PAIRING TECHNOLOGIES

Always one to keep learning, the addition of core drilling to Poseidon's portfolio of services was a natural progression.

“OUR TRUCKS ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST, BADDEST TRUCKS IN THE STATE, AND IT WAS A BIG SURPRISE TO FIND WE WERE HAULING LOADS THAT WERE PUSHING THE ENVELOPE OF THE WEIGHT LIMIT, SO THESE LITTLE CHANGES HAVE MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN EFFICIENCY AND CAPACITY.”

Bill Lietzke

“One of the things I've always enjoyed doing is subsurface engineering,” Lietzke says. “These specialty projects give us a chance to utilize both our core drill and hydrovac trucks and make a real impact in the success of a project and its planning.”

Lietzke performed a lot of due diligence prior to making the decision to add core drilling as a service and invest in the needed equipment. His goal was to bring the service to his clients in a more efficient and effective way than it had been available in the past. He and the team spent extensive time configuring the support truck and tools, as well as the SIMCO Drilling Equipment PTC 255 core drill itself, to give it the capabilities of coring deeper and larger-diameter core than other firms in the market.

These extended capacities have made using Poseidon's core drilling service another option for utilities to mitigate cross bores. Utility locating and marking allows for inaccuracy, as the pinpointing will be only as good as the utility locating technician and the equipment used. This can be critical with fiber optics, and core drilling provides project engineers a physical, visual method for calculating and knowing exactly what is buried and how deep.

FLOWING FORWARD

With its growth, Poseidon has extended its staff of operators and Lietzke spends more of his time in the office these days, but he's structured the operation so he still has the opportunity to be out in the field, running a rig and doing what he loves.

Although the opportunities are there to add more services, Lietzke plans to stay focused on his true love.

“I believe we've been successful and profitable because we stick with what we know and do that to the best of our ability,” he says. “Looking back, starting a business like this from scratch with no help was an unbelievable task, but the dedication and having my heart full-in with everything on the line just kept me going. When things were tough, I'd remember that tomorrow was another day. So, if you love it, you'll make it if you keep your heart in the business and your business in your heart.” ▼

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SAFETY FIRST

A Commitment to Safety

FOCUSING ON SAFETY REQUIRES ACTIVELY SEEKING EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT, AND IT STARTS FROM THE TOP DOWN

BY GILES LAMBERTSON

There are many workplace safety mantras, such as “safety is a habit” and “safety is everyone’s business.” While there is truth in the maxims, they nevertheless are just words — and cheap, as they say. Danger arises when the words become substitutes for the work of actively teaching safety and monitoring a workplace for unsafe situations.

It’s the job of safety managers to move a company beyond just talking about safety — and that job is a tough one. A safety manager’s very worth to a company ultimately is measured by how many accidents or injuries do not happen on his or her watch.

Safety personnel may have different approaches to their work, but all seem to agree that the most insidious cause of unsafe behavior is routine, and how important it is for everyone to be committed to returning home unharmed at the end of a workday.

START FROM THE TOP

“I’m the safety manager,” says Chris Ravenscroft of Koberlein Environmental. What’s interesting about that is Ravenscroft is also president and owner of the diversified wastewater services firm in Pennsylvania with commercial, residential, industrial and municipal clients. Considering all the responsibilities that come with ownership and administration of a burgeoning company, delegating employee safety to a subordinate certainly could be justified.

But Ravenscroft’s decision to be directly involved in the company’s safety program reflects his fundamental belief that the integrity of the program determines its success. “I really do think that it all has to do with credibility,” he says. “Management and ownership have to show their genuine interest in what employees have to say.

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“Employees come to the monthly safety committee meetings with their own ideas and concerns and we have an open forum. Their active participation starts with the belief that we’re having a meaningful discussion. They have to see that we really are concerned about their safety.”

Daily operations of the company occasionally interfere with assembling a safety committee quorum. For the meeting to occur, at least four committee members besides management representatives are required to be present. That requirement alone serves to validate the meeting in the eyes of employees. They can see their presence at the meeting truly is valued.

The meetings are not allowed to drone on either, Ravenscroft says. “Realistically, we try to keep them as short as possible and as long as necessary. That means usually about 45 minutes. After that much time, everyone’s attention starts to wander. There are diminishing returns after 45 minutes.”

While each meeting has an agenda, urgent topics are raised as determined by circumstances, he says, including accidents. The company has gone several years without a lost-time accident, but incidents do happen from time to time. “Whenever an accident does occur or a near miss of an accident, it definitely focuses people. Such incidents go to the top of our agenda.”

He adds that sometimes committee members respond to an incident “sooner than the next month’s regularly scheduled meeting. We sometimes call a special meeting or decide to act on something immediately and follow up at the next meeting. These meetings are not window dressing. The safety committee is not a token or a gesture.”

One indicator that management means business in stressing safety is how readily it will pay for it. Ravenscroft says: “There has to be a willingness to consider real solutions based on employee input. Sometimes this includes spending money. There has to be a willingness to make the investment for safety.”

“I REALLY DO THINK THAT IT ALL HAS TO DO WITH CREDIBILITY. MANAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP HAVE TO SHOW THEIR GENUINE INTEREST IN WHAT EMPLOYEES HAVE TO SAY.”

Chris Ravenscroft

SAFETY IS A CULTURE

As safety manager of North American Pipeline Services (NAP), John Flanagan brings to the table hands-on experience keeping workers safe: He spent years in the oil refinery industry where, he says, “safety is huge.” Leading a refinery crew of 40 workmen, Flanagan each day stressed to employees the necessity of working safely and looking out for one another.

“It was easy to do that then because everyone met in the construction trailer every morning. Here, everyone is scattered to different workplaces,” he says. The scattering comes from NAP being a full-service underground utility rehab and repair contractor serving customers in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

A year ago, safety became Flanagan’s sole focus after Tom Mullen, NAP owner, hired him to enhance the company’s environment. Flanagan says the new program is a work in progress. “Tom asked me to enhance the company’s safety culture while he continues to grow the company.

Safety is a culture. We’re still developing it.”

Flanagan’s first undertaking was to develop a health and safety manual. “It tells employees what they can expect the company to do for them and what the company expects of them to help protect themselves and each other.”

Flanagan also began to hold monthly safety meetings with individual groups of employees. Topics include hand safety, eye protection, the dangers of hydrogen sulfide gas in manholes and confined-space entry procedures. Eventually, that gathering of employees will become a monthly safety committee meeting with a representative from each division of the company.

He recently held a “refresher” meeting; a classroom gathering he convenes every six months for half of the employees. The other half has their next scheduled safety awareness refresher a few months later. “It’s an eight-hour course,”

Flanagan says. “I’m not teaching it. I call in a certified trainer to lead a discussion on a safety topic for one whole day.”

While topics are thoughtfully chosen, sometimes they are dictated by what’s in the news — such as a workplace accident. One example: A confined-space incident in a neighboring state where hydrogen sulfide gas killed a worker and two would-be rescuers. The tragedy captured everyone’s attention and became a springboard for discussion.

“There always is something happening somewhere, some sort of accident,” Flanagan says. “And the biggest reason for accidents is the repetitiveness of every job. The danger is complacency. That’s what we have to guard against. Don’t take safety for granted. Every day. That’s what I tell employees. All accidents are preventable.”

INVOLVE EVERYONE

Kyle Irwin got into the safety business the old-fashioned entrepreneurial way: As president of an employment company, he witnessed a less-than-satisfactory safety management performance at a job site in 2009 and believed he could do a better job of it. So, he started his own firm, Irwin’s Safety. Today, the Calgary, Alberta, enterprise operates from eight offices scattered throughout the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

The 39-year-old founder leads a program that teaches safety online, on site and in instructor-led classrooms with simulated workplace environments. In respect to meeting length and frequency, Irwin counsels company safety specialists to hold 20-minute meetings if they are scheduled weekly and to limit monthly meetings to an hour or less.

“Weekly meetings are especially valuable if employees are involved in an ongoing project because things can happen on a weekly basis, particularly if multiple subcontractors are employed,” he says. “But if you are routinely operating ... a monthly thing is OK.”

“IT CAN BE A GOOD THING TO MENTION IN A MEETING THAT, NOT TOO FAR AWAY AT ANOTHER COMPANY, AN EMPLOYEE WAS, FOR EXAMPLE, WORKING IN A CONFINED SPACE AND DIED FROM HEAT STROKE. MAKE THE EXAMPLE AS RELEVANT AS POSSIBLE.”

Kyle Irwin

He says safety committees should be comprised of labor, supervisory and management personnel. In every case, a meeting’s agenda should include an “old business” section to ensure that safety recommendations actually were implemented after a prior meeting. “You need to make sure you resolve any questions employees have. If you put a safety practice in place and it’s not enforced, employees come to believe you are just doing it for paperwork. They don’t believe you actually care.”

Irwin also believes in teaching from shared experience, that is, periodically having “safety moments” keyed to a workplace incident somewhere. “It can be a good thing to mention in a meeting that, not too far away at another company, an employee was, for example, working in a confined space and died from heat stroke. Make the example as relevant as possible.”

The universality of such a workplace episode is the lesson there: A reminder that working routine can be deadly. “For people who are pretty confident in their performance of a job, this is a way to remind them to take a step back every single time they start to work. It’s a way to tell them that just because they’ve been doing a job for a long time doesn’t mean they shouldn’t take a step back daily and make sure they are proceeding safely. A safety moment in a meeting can help them do that.”

The key to having lively and meaningful safety meetings, Irwin says, is management giving employees the opportunity to tell what’s on their minds. “Provide feedback opportunities,” he says. “People like to talk. They like to feel that they are making a difference. Create that open and welcoming environment and you will get employee engagement big time.” ▼

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Making a Deal

WORKING WITH DEALERSHIPS AND DISTRIBUTORS CAN PROVIDE DIFFERENT ADVANTAGES FOR CONTRACTORS LOOKING TO EXPAND OFFERINGS

BY TIM DOBBINS

Dealers, distributors and suppliers have a unique opportunity to support contractors in multiple ways that manufacturers sometimes can't. Through numerous product name offerings, equipment training, extended service and repair work, they are set up to help a company succeed from the beginning all the way through the job.

"We definitely have the experience and the knowledge in the industry, and we are out in the field," says John Thomson, business development manager of John Brooks Company Limited (Dynablast).

A properly set up truck for vacuum excavation doesn't come together in one day. By having large inventories of products, dealers can provide options for comparison when shopping for vacuum excavation equipment and have the capability of putting together packages of different product names if it best suits the customer.

"We are a one-stop shop for the whole solution to a hydrovac truck," Thomson says. "We have the heaters, water pump packages, hydraulic packages, hoses, guns and nozzles; we really have the whole 9 yards to build a hydrovac truck."

By carrying brands from more than 20 manufacturers, dealers like Thomson are able to put together complete packages that offer job site readiness right out the door. The knowledge to put together equipment packages is perhaps the most valuable item dealers can offer.

"Contractors may come to us for an issue with a water pump, and we have all the technical expertise in this area and know exactly how it should serve in a truck," Thomson says. The firsthand involvement with the equipment offerings demonstrates to customers that the service provided is coming from in-field experience and that they can be confident in the equipment and advice they are receiving.

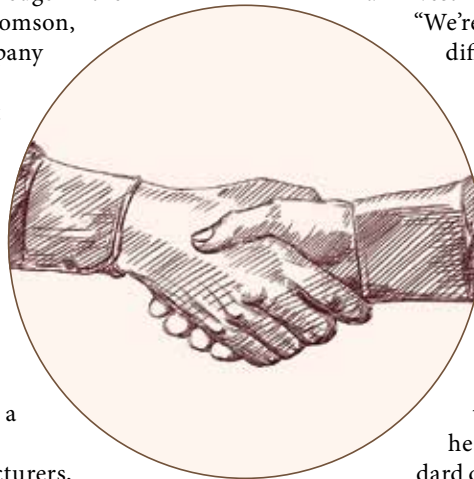
SERVICE COUNTS TOO

Along with carrying an extensive line of product names, contractors benefit from extended service offers provided by many dealers.

"We've got 150 road techs — actual guys out in service trucks with welders and cranes all across the country," says Paul Brouwers, vac product manager of Custom Truck One Source. "That's key to service. We're able to help respond to incidents and service issues."

Custom Truck One Source is a coast-to-coast provider of specialized trucks and heavy-equipment solutions including a large selection of hydrovac trucks. They focus on sales of equipment, aftermarket parts and equipment customizations through 26 locations across the U.S.

Brouwers offers advice to contractors looking to buy: "Before you make an investment, demo the units and see what they can do," he says. "We're willing to go out somewhere and do a demo of a couple different units."



GIVING SOME BACKGROUND

Getting the best service isn't completely up to dealers, however. Contractors can help dealers assist them by being prepared when they are ready to buy. Buyers can start by giving the dealer some background information about the service they are trying to accomplish.

"We want to know the application of what they are looking for," Brouwers says. Things such as geographical location, what type of job are you mostly going to be using the equipment for and where. Brouwers says

he will ask standard questions about what the customer is trying to achieve before pointing them in the direction of a specific truck. Questions such as: How far from the truck are they going to work? What type of substrate will they mostly be digging in? What type of dumping needs will they have?

Doing some research and providing information about your specific job requirements will help dealers steer you toward the product that is right for you. Working together can benefit both sides and make for a long-standing business relationship.

"The key advantage is that we develop relationships with customers. We look at the long term instead of the short term," Thomson says. "And part of the relationship building is trust." ▼

"BEFORE YOU MAKE AN INVESTMENT, DEMO THE UNITS AND SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO. WE'RE WILLING TO GO OUT SOMEWHERE AND DO A DEMO OF A COUPLE DIFFERENT UNITS."

Paul Brouwers

Your Employee Just Asked for a Raise. What's Next?

IT TAKES GUTS TO APPROACH THE BOSS AND ASK FOR MORE MONEY. TREAT THE REQUEST WITH RESPECT, AND FOLLOW THESE IMPORTANT STEPS BEFORE YOU BLURT OUT A YES OR NO.

BY JEFF HADEN

Years ago, I got fired over problems that arose regarding an employee's raise. So I may care a little more about what you should say, and do, when an employee asks for a salary increase.

But you should care just as much because how you handle the raise request will immediately impact your employee's motivation, performance and, ultimately, the success of your entire team. Let's make sure the outcome is positive — even if you have to say “no.”

We'll break down the process into three stages:

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOUR EMPLOYEE ASKS FOR A RAISE

Let's start with some basics. What a particular employee may need is certainly important, but it should not be part of the discussion. Some employees have families. Some have lots of bills. Some have major expenses to pay off. While it may sound harsh, no matter how pressing an employee's need, their pay should always be based on their value to your business. Not their needs.

Make sure you're prepared to discuss hard numbers, not just opinions. Before you meet:

- Check your payroll system to see what the employee's current salary or wage is and how that compares to others in similar roles and of similar performance.
- Read through previous performance reviews and action plans.
- Check other tools you use that collect data, like your CRM software or POS system, to see employees' sales figures and progress against targets, if it applies to the employee's job.

Higher pay should result from greater value provided — so make sure you know just how valuable your employee is.

How an employee performs compared to their peers is important, but it shouldn't be a part of the discussion. Maybe Jim does outperform Jessica. Maybe Melody does outperform Mark. However, engaging in that discussion opens a can of worms you can never close.

(Besides, great bosses *never* discuss another employee's performance.)

The only thing that matters is your employee asking for the raise. What they've done (and how they did it), what they've achieved, and what value they create. Be prepared to shift the focus back to your employee and their accomplishments.

Your company's financial position is certainly important, but it should only be a small part of the discussion. Your employees should already know if cash flow is extremely tight. So don't automatically respond with some version of “You know I can't afford to pay you more” and end the conversation.

If money is tight, feel free to say so. But be prepared to quickly move on to discuss your employee's performance, and if your answer will be “no,” what the employee can do to someday earn that pay increase.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEE ASKS FOR A RAISE

An employee comes to your office, closes the door and says, “I want to talk to you about getting a raise.” While the thought might make you uncomfortable, put yourself in your employee's shoes. It's hard to ask for a raise. (Have you ever done it? Nope. Me neither.) They're nervous. They're uncomfortable. They're putting their professional relationship with you on the line.

Don't blow the moment by deflecting or demurring. Embrace the moment for what it is: an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation with a valued employee. Nod your head and say, “Great. Let's talk about it. Tell me why you feel you deserve a raise.”

And then listen. Don't argue. Validate your employee's feelings by giving them the opportunity to talk. And if you do ask questions, make sure they're clarifying questions. In short, seek to understand. Then respond.

If you're a great boss, chances are your employee is already paid fairly. But if you decide your employee does deserve a raise, don't just say “yes.” Explain why. Make sure the employee doesn't just feel you “gave” a raise. (Or somehow gave in.) Make sure they understand they earned it. In short, if your employee's accomplishments persuade you that they're underpaid, rectify the situation.

But if that's not the case, you'll have to say no. But don't stop there. Offer hope, and more important, offer a path by explaining exactly what your employee will need to do in order to earn a raise.

WHILE IT MAY SOUND HARSH, NO MATTER HOW PRESSING AN EMPLOYEE'S NEED, THEIR PAY SHOULD ALWAYS BE BASED ON THEIR VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS. NOT THEIR NEEDS.

Here are some ideas you can give them:

Create a side project. Excelling at an assigned project is expected. Excelling at a side project makes people stand out. The key is for your employee to take a risk while making sure your company or customers don't share that risk.

Raise less issues, solve more problems. Plenty of people take verbal stands. Fewer put effort behind their opinions and back them up with research and work product. Instead of showing everyone how smart they are by pointing out a problem, the best employees fix the problem. Encourage your employee to do the same.

Be the person who drives important results. No matter the business, one or two things truly drive results. Maybe it's quality. Maybe it's service. Maybe it's being the low-cost provider. Other aspects are important, but for every business, one or two are absolutely make-or-break. The best employees focus most of their efforts on those areas because that will help the business succeed.





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Do the next job. Most people wait to get a raise before they consider working harder. The smart approach is to work harder now so employees can prove they're capable for the next more advanced, higher-paying job. Great employees say, "I want to earn more ... so I will do everything possible to prove I should make more money."

Hard work always comes before the reward.

And one last point. If you suggest ways an employee can earn a raise and they're unwilling, that's OK too. Ultimately, all you can do is lay out the path. Your employee will decide whether they wish to walk that path.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU'VE HAD THE RAISE REQUEST CONVERSATION

As a boss, the worst thing you can do after an employee asks for a raise is pretend the conversation never happened. You may be tempted to forget it, especially if things didn't go particularly well. But your employee definitely won't forget. Use that fact to your advantage.

Follow up. Ask how a project is going. Ask how a development plan is progressing. Ask about problems solved, informal leadership roles assumed or unusually positive outcomes. In short, follow up because it shows you care, you take their initiative seriously and you want to motivate them for the future. Follow up because it shows you want them to get that raise.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeff Haden is a contributing editor for *Inc.com* and a *LinkedIn Influencer*. He is the author of *The Motivation Myth: How High Achievers Really Set Themselves Up to Win*. ▼



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The Machete hydroexcavating nozzle from Hydra-Flex channels water in an oscillating motion, creating a smaller spray angle. This in turn provides a direct stream with a more forceful impact. This premium penetration will allow faster digging and more precise trenching capabilities. Its durable, replaceable cover allows for instant changeability while increasing the overall nozzle's life span. It is available in three sizes, with operating pressure ranges from 1,000 to 3,200 psi with a heat rating of 180 degrees F. Generating more power, it will last in excess of 500 hours, improving digging times and replacement costs.
952-808-3640; www.hydrflexinc.com

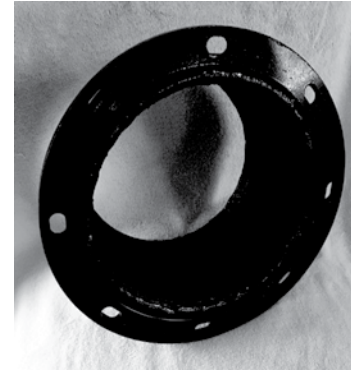


Rival Hydrovac T7 Tandem

The T7 Tandem hydrovac from Rival Hydrovac was designed primarily to be loaded with debris and driven within legislated road limits with most types of debris on board. The unit comes standard with a scale that reads real-time weights both in the cab and on the wireless remote to confirm weights prior to travel. It is operator-friendly, and the operating system is engaged



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through one PTO switch. The remainder of the operation occurs from the rear panel or the wireless remote. The components are high performance, and the unit will dig at levels competitive to large units, according to the maker.
403-550-7997; www.rivalhydrovac.com

Super Products Mud Dog

The Mud Dog hydroexcavator from Super Products is designed for operator convenience and consistent performance in the harshest environments, according to the maker. It offers an air excavation option, allowing the operator to choose water or air.



It is available with 12- or 16-yard debris capacity. It comes standard with safe tilt ejection unloading and is equipped with a rear-mounted boom that can reach 27 feet with a 335-degree rotation and can move in a 45-degree-upward and 25-degree-downward pivot. This allows for versatility within dig areas so units do not need to be constantly readjusted into position.

800-837-9711; www.superproductsllc.com

Tornado Global Hydrovac F4 ECOLITE

The F4 ECOLITE from Tornado Global Hydrovac has a 12-cubic-yard mud tank and holds 1,550 gallons of freshwater. The unit is more than 7,000 pounds lighter than the company's older models and offers more than double the payload. The boom has a 342-degree rotation and a 26-foot reach. The smaller F3 ECOLITE is a 10-cubic-yard, 1,250-gallon tandem-axle unit that more than doubles older payload capacities. It features an 8-inch boom and 3,800 cfm blower.



877-340-8141; www.tornadotrucks.com

(continued)

Transway Systems Terra-Vex HV38

The Transway Systems Terra-Vex HV38 has a 12-yard debris tank with onboard scales for efficient hauling and off-loading, complete with a 26-foot-by-8-inch telescopic boom. It has a one-touch-operated hydraulic half-door with a 3,800 cfm at 27-inches Hg hydraulically driven blower. Water pressure is achieved with a hydraulically driven triplex pump, delivering 10 gpm at 3,600 psi from a 1,000-gallon HDPE baffled water tank. The water is heated with a 420,000 Btu diesel-fired burner for cold-weather operation. **800-263-4508; www.transwaysystems.com**



TRUVAC by Westech Coyote

The TRUVAC by Westech Coyote midsize vacuum excavator delivers easier maneuverability in urban environments and boasts a rugged design for harsh environments. With a maximized payload configuration and classic style controls, the truck features a 6-inch vacuum system and high airflow capabilities to maximize performance, a 6-inch hose that reduces hose clogging frequently found on smaller vacuum systems, and a powerful vacuum system capable of up to 3,200 cfm and 16 inches Hg. The 9-cubic-yard, 45-degree-tilting debris body is positioned on the optimal spot of the chassis to ensure the payload is proportionately distributed across all axles simultaneously. It can be upgraded to a 20 gpm at 3,000 psi water pump.



800-627-3171; www.truvac.com

Vac-Con X-Cavator

The X-Cavator from Vac-Con is designed to be powerful, durable, efficient and easy to operate. It features a hydrostatic drive using the chassis engine for vacuum, eliminating the need for PTO, clutch and gearbox operation. It is available with water systems up to 4,000 psi and a mobile, wireless remote-control system for chassis engine revolutions per minute, boom, automatic vacuum breaker, dump controls and hydraulic door locks from up to a half-mile away. The boom rotates 270 degrees. **904-284-4200; www.vac-con.com**



Vacuum Truck Rentals Vacall AllExcavate

The Vacall AllExcavate, available from Vacuum Truck Rentals, combines power and hydrotechnology for efficient excavation in sensitive areas. Hydroexcavation allows for safe, fast, precise and economical work since it greatly reduces the risks of damage to buried lines and reduces the environmental impact. The unit boasts positive displacement blowers ranging from 16 to 27 inches, an 8-foot 6-inch boom and 1,000- to 1,300-gallon water tanks. Oil and gas and high dump options are available. The unit includes a high-pressure water system, rugged debris body, optimized performance in cold weather, double-cyclone filtration and three boom/hose options. **888-955-2087; www.vactruckrental.com**



Westech Vac Systems Wolf

The Wolf noncode hydrovac truck from Westech Vac Systems is suitable for work in extreme conditions. The debris body is positioned on the optimal chassis location to ensure the payload is proportionately distributed across all axles, maximizing legal payload for customers and improving operational efficiency. The side-mounted water tanks reduce the weight by more than 40%, lowering the overall cost of the truck. The 1,500-gallon capacity ensures ample water for large or remote jobs. A top-mounted, no-touch water fill system is easily accessible from the passenger side of the vehicle. The debris body is lifted using a telescoping, dual-acting hydraulic cylinder capable of 36,000 pounds of force. When fully extended, the debris body exceeds a 45-degree dump angle for fast and efficient off-loading. To help the off-loading process, a heavy-duty, hydraulically powered tank vibrator is mounted to the belly of the debris body.

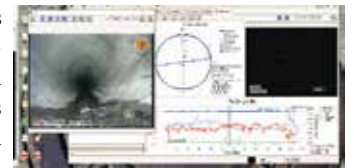


780-955-3030; www.westechvac.com

Laser Equipment

RapidView IBAK North America LaserScan Continuous Profile Analysis

RapidView IBAK North America's ORPHEUS 2.0 and ORPHEUS 2.0 high-definition camera heads include LaserScan Continuous Profile Analysis that allows users to pair their inspection system with IKAS Evolution software to detect deformation of the whole pipe in one continuous motion. When the LaserScan measurement is started, the camera will begin to rotate 300 degrees per second while moving in reverse (reversing speed determines accuracy of measurements). The camera takes a measurement every 12-degree rotation. With the profile analysis report completely integrated, identifying ovality, corrosion, reduction of cross-section, and internal geometry is easy. It is possible to analyze the data report right from the inspection vehicle. **800-656-4225; www.rapidview.com**



Mapping

CUES GraniteNet

GraniteNet from CUES is a next-generation condition assessment software for the public works industry. It is asset based, which enables it to easily interface with other asset-based software products such as Esri ArcGIS mapping systems and asset management systems including Cityworks, Infor, IBM Maximo and others. Intuitive and easy to use, data and video can be accessed via a web portal. **800-327-7791; www.gnet.us.com**



Vivax-Metrotech VM-MAP

The VM-MAP application from Vivax-Metrotech is a real-time solution for mapping of buried utilities. Push one button to store depth, GPS coordinates and distance between locates. Download this data onto a PC for further analysis or send it by email from within the application. The data is compatible with Google Maps, asset management and GIS software. It will generate maps in real time, giving confidence to the operator that the data is accurate. Location data is obtained from the mobile phone, the locator's GPS or an external GPS device of the technician's choice. Additional site data such as notes and photographs can be manually input as the log is created. It is compatible with both iOS and Android devices and can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play. **800-446-3392; www.vivax-metrotech.com**



THE LATEST:

News

NUCA announces Associate Member of the Year award

The National Utility Contractors Association awarded its Associate Member of the Year honor to Chad Pendley of U.S. Shoring and Equipment. Pendley was presented with the award at NUCA's Annual Convention & Exhibit, held Feb. 27-29 in Tucson, Arizona. The award is presented annually to an associate member who has made a significant contribution on the national level to the industry and the association.

CNH Industrial names new head of construction equipment

CNH Industrial has named Leandro Lecheta as head of construction equipment for North America, overseeing both the Case Construction Equipment and New Holland Construction Equipment businesses. He will also lead the company's parts and service organization, CNH Industrial Aftermarket Solutions. Lecheta previously served as the chief financial officer for the agriculture segment at CNH Industrial, as well as the company's North American chief operating officer.



Leandro Lecheta

Earthwave Technologies celebrates 20 years in construction telematics

Earthwave Technologies celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2020. The company's FleetWatcher Construction Management Solution and FleetWatcher Materials Management Solution allow users to see what is happening with connected equipment so they can make decisions in real time.

Pelican Products' Corti promoted to chief commercial officer

Pelican Products has combined its consumer division (outdoor/adventure, hunt, fish, camp, etc.) and commercial/government division (military, fire/safety, police, industrial, aerospace, etc.) into a single unit. Stephan Corti has been promoted from his previous position as president of the company's commercial/government division to chief commercial officer, leading the combined entity. ▼

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THE LATEST: Products



1. Cat Pumps hydroexcavating pumps

For more than 50 years, Cat Pumps has been manufacturing long-lasting and low-maintenance triplex pumps. With dedication to zero-defect manufacturing, ease of service and availability from stock, Cat Pumps designs and builds high-pressure pumps and systems to the highest quality standards for the hydroexcavation industry. Popular models include the Model 3560 with 25 gpm, 3,000 psi or 20 gpm, 4,000 psi; Model 3570 with 30 gpm, 3,000 psi; Model 660 with 10 gpm, 3,000 psi; and Model 56 with 5.5 gpm, 3,500 psi or 8 gpm, 2,500 psi. **763-780-5440; www.catpumps.com**

2. Talbert modular 65-ton trailer

Talbert's 65SA modular trailer incorporates multiple axle configurations based on customer requirements for optimum versatility. The trailer's unique design features a flip extension to accommodate a tandem- or tri-axle jeep dolly, allowing for maximum load configurations. It can also pair with Talbert's E2 or E3Nitro axle extension, which dampens axle movement and controls load transfer. The modular trailer maintains a 65-ton rating at half the deck length with a 16-inch loaded side deck height and 6-inch loaded road clearance. **888-489-1731; www.talbertmfg.com**

3. Vactor iMPACT combination sewer cleaner

The iMPACT, a versatile new combination sewer cleaner from Vactor, replaces the outgoing Vactor 2103. The iMPACT has a compact design that allows it to easily maneuver through tight spaces and is ideal for cleaning catch basins, sanitary/storm sewers, laterals and lift stations. It features the IntuiTouch control system. Inside the cab, one-touch controls are used for quick PTO activation and engagement. Outside the cab, a rotating control panel with up/down adjustment has a touch screen and glove-friendly tactile buttons, providing immediate data. The exclusive Jet Rodder water pump provides continuous flows through its entire operating range. **800-627-3171; www.vactor.com**

4. VMAC throttle control for UNDERHOOD and DTM systems

VMAC has upgraded the throttle control on all new UNDERHOOD and direct-transmission mounted air compressor systems from an analog system to a digital system. The digital throttle control connects to a vehicle's OBD2 CAN data bus connector, allowing it to zero in on revolution-per-minute setpoints faster and more efficiently than previous analog controllers. As a result, the air compressor systems can quickly achieve the desired revolutions per minute, with minimal revving. The digital throttle control is also easier to set up: Simply plug the throttle control into the vehicle and it's ready to go. Adjustments to base idle and max air idle are typically no longer required, as the system automatically finds the right settings for the air compressor's cubic-feet-per-minute output. **800-738-8622; www.vmacair.com**

5. Vermeer VXT500 vacuum excavator

The VXT500 from Vermeer is an 8-inch vac with an 8-yard spoil tank capacity. It is ideal for utility applications where a higher-capacity machine with a smaller footprint is desired. The VXT500 joins a family of Vacuum X-Traction Products vacs featuring vacuum blowers that deliver 5,000 to 6,400 cfm and spoil tank capacities ranging up to 16 yards. **800-837-6337; www.vermeer.com**

6. Pettibone Traverse T1246X telehandler

The Traverse T1246X telehandler from Pettibone is the third Traverse model to join its next generation X-Series lineup. The telehandler has a traversing boom carriage with capability to move loads by traveling horizontally. This allows for the safe placement of loads at full lift height without having to coordinate multiple boom functions. The T1246X has a specified lift height of 46 feet, 6 inches, which matches its landing height. The traversing boom provides up to 70 inches of horizontal boom transfer, allowing for a maximum forward reach of 35 feet, 10 inches. The telehandler is powered by a 117 hp Cummins QSF3.8 Tier 4 Final diesel

engine that helps it achieve a maximum load capacity of 12,000 pounds. The engine is mounted on a side pod for easy service access while allowing excellent curbside visibility and ground clearance of 19 inches. 906-353-4800; www.gopettibone.com

7. Doosan DX62R-3 mini-excavator

Doosan's DX62R-3 mini-excavator has a reduced tail swing profile with 4.9 inches of side overhang, allowing for work in confined areas with more flexibility to maneuver. The design utilizes the basics of the existing Doosan mini-excavator and builds on it by adjusting the positioning of the excavator upper structure to the undercarriage to reduce tail swing length. Moving the swing center forward extends the machine's digging reach by 11 inches while maintaining the desired machine balance. 770-831-2200; www.doosanequipment.com

8. CUES Lifter Plus II access cover tool remover

The CUES Lifter Plus II access cover tool remover can be rear- or front-mounted. The hydraulic tool can be used on conventional-size covers and grates and for more challenging removal tasks. It is ideal for front-mounting on vacuum trucks; a connection to the vehicle battery is all that's required. The cover removal tool is a quick solution for stuck-in-place covers, and it prevents worker injuries. 800-327-7791; www.cuesinc.com ▼

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2011 Vac-Con V390LHA combination cleaning truck. Low miles, great condition. 1998 Vactor 2110-36PD ex-city owned, low miles. See details of these units and CCTV inspection trucks at www.empireequip.com. Contact Craig at 714-639-8352. (CBM)

2014 Freightliner 114SD with a VacAll AJV1215; 12-yard debris body, 1,500-gallon water, combination vacuum/jetting unit. (Stock# 052R). www.VacuumSalesInc.com (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (CBM)

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This Issue's Feature:

Grade checking system increases safety and efficiency on job site

BY RICHARD RYBKA

Checking the depth of cut is a necessary step that excavation contractors must take to ensure their work meets design elevations. Conventional methods require sending a person into an excavation with a grade rod while another person reads the depth from a tripod-mounted level. But that process not only potentially puts an employee in harm's way, it is also inefficient.

iDig is an innovative, economical **grade checking system** that enables an operator to see his excavator's bucket position in relation to grade right from the cab. The need for personnel to manually check grades is eliminated. The system consists of four sensors, mounting plates, an LED display and a control unit. An LED light bar is positioned in the operator's field of view. He can easily watch the movements of the bucket and simultaneously obtain visual grade information.

"The sensors are powered by solar-charged batteries, so there is no need to plug them into a 120-volt AC outlet," says Drew Williams, Eastern U.S. territory manager for **INTEQ Distributors**. The system is wireless and works by radio. "There are no cables to snag on tree limbs or other obstacles, and no connectors to keep clean,"



iDig from INTEQ Distributors

Williams says. "iDig is a very simple and easy-to-install system that provides many benefits to excavation contractors."

Many contractors own more than one excavator. One iDig system can be deployed on any number of excavators. Once the system is installed and calibrated on a particular model machine, the configuration is saved for future use. Swaps can be made quickly and do not require technical personnel.

"The fact that one system can be used on several different excavators is a huge cost saving for

contractors," Williams says. "We have some customers running three machines. They don't need to purchase three separate systems to be able to accurately check grades on any of their excavators."

According to Williams, excavation contractors using the iDig system save 30% to 40% in labor costs and nearly double their productivity.

"Safety is an important benefit of the iDig system," Williams says. "Sending personnel into open holes and trenches to check grade is a risk in the excavation business. Working with the iDig system eliminates this risk."

405-789-9900; www.inteqdistributors.com

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May 19-21

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) Washington Summit, Holiday Inn Washington Capitol, Washington, D.C. Visit www.nuca.com/summit

May 31-June 3

Electric Utility Fleet Managers Conference (EUFMC), Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Center, Williamsburg, Virginia. Visit www.eufmc.com

June 7-10

North American Tunneling Conference, Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee. Visit www.natconference.com

June 23-25

Safety 2020 Professional Development Conference & Exposition, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida. Visit www.safety.assp.org

Aug. 19-20

Water Finance Conference, Washington Court Hotel, Washington, D.C. Visit www.waterfinanceconference.com

Sept. 14-16

Breakthroughs in Tunneling Short Course, Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality Management, University of Denver, Denver. Visit www.tunnelingshortcourse.com

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