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Senior Project Manager
GPRS

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Company born out of need for safety sees continued growth through addition of services throughout all 50 states.

By Giles Lambertson

ON THE COVER:

Parker Schings, a senior project manager with GPRS, uses an ImpulseRadar PinPointR to locate underground utilities at a substation in Woodville, Ohio. GPRS, based in Toledo, services all 50 states with utility locating and video inspection services. The company has 700 employees and is in its 22nd year of operation. (Photography by J.D. Pooley)

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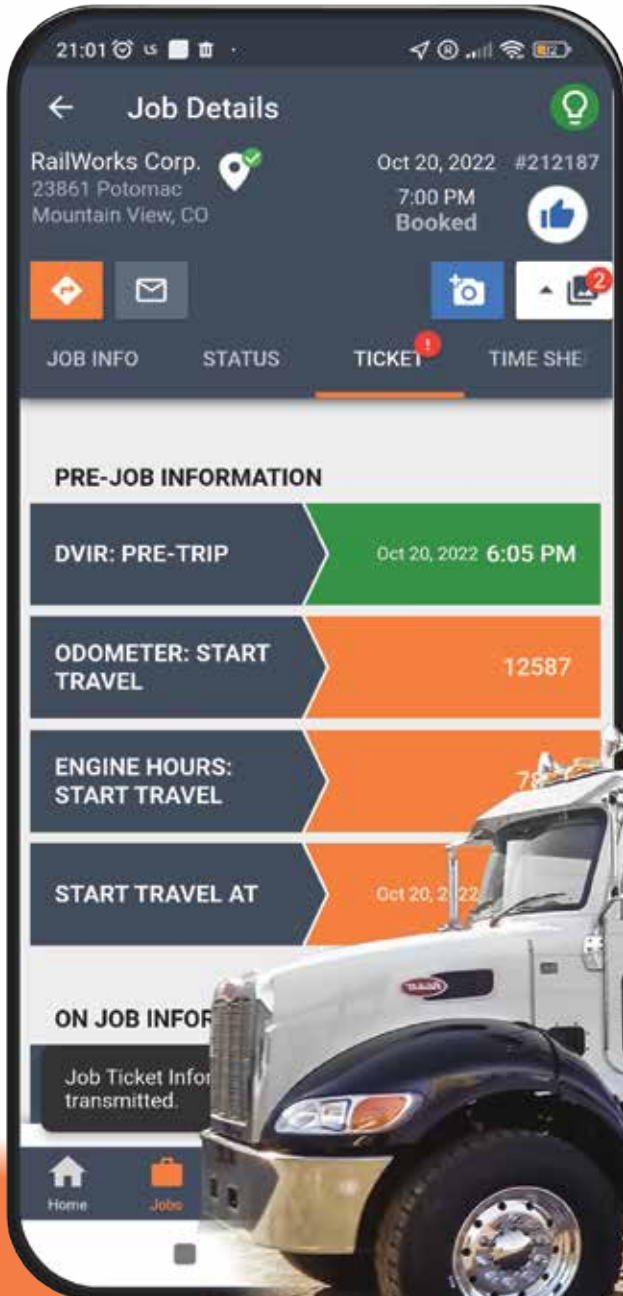
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SAFETY HABITS

Don't Normalize Deviance

When employees stray from following safe practices it can lead to bad habits. At first, these deviations may seem small and unnoticeable; they may even become the norm. But in order to prevent accidents, job supervisors and employees must know the safety standards and apply them every time.

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How to Secure Financing and Unlock Your Growth Potential
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CGA INITIATIVE

Reducing Utility Damage

Common Ground Alliance recently issued its 50 in 5 industry challenge to stakeholders with a goal of reducing damages to critical underground utilities

by 50% in five years. The challenge aims to address damages to our nation's critical assets head-on by bringing damage prevention advocates together around a targeted set of strategic, data-driven priorities.

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Below the Surface

Searching for Motivation

FIND THAT ONE THING THAT MOTIVATES YOU, AND BUILD ON IT TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL AND PROFITABLE

BY CORY DELLENBACH, EDITOR

What motivates you? That's a tough question for anyone to answer. The reasons could be many: money, family or just for the love of it.

Many contractors we profile tell me they love doing what they do because they enjoy helping others: They like coming in to "save the day."

Matt Aston, owner and founder of GPRS in Toledo, Ohio, was had a power motivation when he founded his utility locating company 22 years ago. He was motivated by making the industry safer. You could say he and his company were coming in to save the day.

NOT SETTling FOR SMALL

When Aston founded his company, as you'll read in this issue's profile, it was just a small operation with a simple goal of creating awareness of the technology and a second goal of doubling the size of the company within three to four years.

Looking at his company now, you can say he accomplished his goals. GPRS now spans all 50 states and offers a multitude of utility locating services and video pipeline

inspection services. All he wanted to do was make digging safer for the thousands of contractors that are in this industry constantly digging in the ground filled with utilities.

It wasn't easy to get to the point his company is at now and achieving goals you make for yourself is never going to be easy. Instead of tackling every single goal you might have, narrow it down to one or two and focus on those. Once you have those two accomplished, work on the others.

I bet Aston didn't work on all of his goals at once. He first worked at creating awareness of the dangers in the ground and then once that took off, he put his attention on growth of the company. One led to the other and that is how most goals should be made and accomplished.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTIVATION?

So, to echo the first line of this column, what motivates you? Tell me how you started your company or how you found your way into utility construction. Email me at editor@digdifferent.com or call 800-257-7222.

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FINDING A SAFER WAY

COMPANY BORN OUT OF NEED FOR SAFETY SEES CONTINUED GROWTH THROUGH ADDITION OF SERVICES THROUGHOUT ALL 50 STATES

STORY: GILES LAMBERTSON PHOTOS: J.D. POOLEY

CGPS used to stand for “Gotta Problem Ruining Stuff.” It was the common refrain of contractors who dug blindly into uncharted soils or drilled into concrete slabs, only to intersect and damage undetected utility lines or pipes or steel components. Sparks would fly, or worse. Service often was interrupted. The excavation or drilling project itself always was thrown off schedule. It was bad news all the way around.

The good news is that another GPRS — the initials this time standing for “Ground Penetrating Radar Systems” — has come along to give direction to engineers, project supervisors and equipment operators.

The Toledo, Ohio, firm by that name is showing contractors the way around hidden obstacles so that new and old infrastructure can co-exist beneath the surface.

A QUICK GROWTH

The company is the brainchild of entrepreneur Matt Aston, who began peddling his subsurface detection service from job site to job site in and around Toledo in 2001.

One by one, he gained construction industry converts to the concept of preventing underground collisions by probing soil or scanning concrete before tearing into it.

Twenty-one years later, Aston’s company is national in scope with field staff in all 50 states and every major city and seems to be hitting its stride. In an interview in 2021, Aston said the goal at GPRS was to continue to create awareness of the technology and to double the size of the company in the following three or four years.

GPRS didn’t invent ground penetrating radar — the technology dates from 1910 — but it certainly has helped popularize its use. Jamie Althauser knows all about the rapid growth of GPRS. He has been helping foster and manage the company’s growth for 15 of its 21 years in existence. Working from the Toledo headquarters, his title is field support director.

Althauser began out in the field, which is to say he operated a GPR unit to probe open areas and scanned concrete. Now he works from an office and principally oversees safety and skills training of new employees.





Parker Schings, a senior project manager with GPRS, programs a Leica RTC laser scanner. The company uses a variety of electronic field tools to tackle diverse projects.



GPRS Toledo, Ohio

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 22

SERVICE AREA: Across the United States

SERVICES: Utility locating, video pipe inspection, concrete scanning, 3D laser scanning, drone imagery, leak detection, CAD mapping and BIM modeling

EMPLOYEES: 700

WEBSITE: www.gp-radar.com/services/video-pipe-inspection

That is a task large enough to keep him busy, because the company now employs more than 700 people, roughly 400 of them operating in the field.

How all these people work within the framework of the company goes hand in hand with how the framework was constructed in the first place. When Aston realized how little awareness of and/or access to radar and scanning services existed in cities that he visited, he concluded that sending out and establishing field workers in cities across the country was the way to build the company.

This scattering of field personnel was key to the company's success, Althaus says. "It makes us different from other locating companies. Where they built up a big presence in one city and expanded outward, we started by expanding outward across the country and hiring people we could trust to build the business where they were."

The founder heeded his entrepreneurial instincts in deciding to give the field personnel a level of autonomy that sparked in them a sense of ownership. They are not independent contractors, as such, but are given the leeway to make decisions without first calling the home office.

"All of the field people are called project managers, rather than techs," says Althaus. "Giving them that title is part of our company culture. Each is responsible for good customer service. They are aware of pricing and can change the prices as needed to win a job. We give them a lot of ownership over the projects they're doing. They are not just techs with a goal of getting a job done. They are managers building relationships with clients."

Most of the time project managers work on their own in one city or another, though sometimes they are dispatched to jobs by Toledo managers. On large construction projects, the project managers may team up with other managers. Typically, however, their days are spent driving alone to a site in a Chevrolet Colorado service truck to electronically probe the ground or peer inside vertical or horizontal slabs of concrete.

"The project managers are incentivized to grow the business, take care of clients and work as efficiently as possible," the field support director says of the project managers, the incentives including commissions. "They are building their own little part of GPRS. That's how the company has grown so fast."



Parker Schings prepares to map an area after documenting where utilities are located at an electrical substation near Woodville, Ohio.

Adam Geer, a field service tech, prepares to use a lateral launch crawler (Envirosight) on the campus of the University of Toledo.



“ALL OF THE FIELD PEOPLE ARE CALLED PROJECT MANAGERS, RATHER THAN TECHS. GIVING THEM THAT TITLE IS PART OF OUR COMPANY CULTURE. EACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE.”

Jamie Althaus

SETTING STANDARDS

The company nonetheless holds its project managers to a professional standard. Each is “SIM-certified.” The acronym stands for Subsurface Investigation Methodology and is the company’s way of differentiating itself from other locating companies.

In essence, each project manager is certified to have completed eight weeks of mentoring in the field and 80 hours of classroom training at the company’s training grounds in Toledo. They also are schooled on the utilization of the company’s state-of-the-art electronic equipment and instructed on step-by-step procedures required to find hidden objects.

The fruit of all this training? The company claims a 99.8% success rate in locating unseen objects in tens of thousands of projects across the country. “That success rate has improved even as we’ve rapidly grown,” says Althaus, which is a fairly remarkable statistical claim.

He adds: “In the locating industry, there are no professional standards that a company has to meet to be credible. SIM is our answer to that. We created our own standard, a process that every project manager goes through. Most contractors wouldn’t even know what SIM is, but we know, and our reputation is proof of it.”

A DIVERSE CLIENTELE

About 80% of GPRS field work is locating utilities in the ground or inside concrete so that a contractor doesn’t damage them. However, the company keeps adding corollary services. Two years ago, for instance, it introduced video pipe inspections, which has grown into a coast-to-coast slice of the company pie.

Other recent additions to the GPRS lineup include leak detection, drone imaging and, most recently, 3D laser scanning. “We wanted to provide the other services to add value for our clients,” Althaus says. “All of the services are growing rapidly, including the ones added after the fact.”

While drilling or digging contractors are the typical client, actual job sites are atypical. They could be anywhere — from university campuses to McDonald’s franchise construction sites, from oil refineries to athletic facilities.

And the contractors making the calls are of all sizes, from small mom-and-pop outfits on up to prime contractors on major developments. The broad range of clientele is possible because the services are affordable, especially when compared to the costs associated with striking an active utility line or a hidden underground tank. Because locating is a preventive service, when a bore or dig is completed without incident, the cost always is deemed to be covered.

Though the bulk of the GPRS business is locating utilities and other subsurface manmade structures, clients frequently ask for more — the video inspection of a located pipe, for instance. Regardless, what always follows a scan or GPR survey is a detailed report and a map, which is produced by the project manager before leaving a site.

“Not every customer wants a map,” Althaus says. “In the last few years we’ve opted to produce a PDF reference map of everything we locate whether the client asks for it or not. If they want a CAD drawing, that’s extra and is sent to the client within three-to-five days.”

What the company emphatically doesn’t do is engineering work. Though some employees have engineering degrees, no engineering services per se are offered.

“If we offered that, we would have to be licensed and meet state and federal standards,” Althaus says. “By not offering engineering services, we also are not in competition with engineering firms and can be hired by them.”



GPRS project managers switch between ground-penetrating radar systems while on a job sites to locate utilities. The company uses Chevrolet pickup trucks to service all 50 states.



Schings uses an ImpulseRadar PinPointR to locate underground utilities at a substation. Crews from GPRS typically work solo unless a larger project requires more than one project manager.

“THE PROJECT MANAGERS ARE INCENTIVIZED TO GROW THE BUSINESS, TAKE CARE OF CLIENTS AND WORK AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE.”

Jamie Althausen

LETTING THE TECH TALK

As careful as GPRS is in hiring qualified people, it is just as picky about the equipment it employs. For the first two decades of its existence, the company relied on GSSI units to send electromagnetic impulses into the ground in search of an identifying bounce-back. The company also uses a Swedish product, ImpulseRadar PinPointR, for utility locating and a Screening Eagle Proceq 8800 for concrete scanning.

About 20 project managers doing laser scanning have Leica RTC laser scanners and numerous other electronic field tools are available. As needed, the personnel have access to Matterport 360-degree cameras for map-making and modeling and other specialized cameras. CAD maps are created by a team of 20 computer specialists using either AutoCad or MicroStation units and BIM modeling primarily is accomplished with Revit software. Drone work is pretty minimal at GPRS and the drone fleet practically nonexistent. When there are calls for photogrammetry, LiDAR, orthomosaic images and other drone survey products, the work is subbed out.

The newest electronic tool in the GPRS toolbox is what it calls SiteMap. It aggregates all mapping data from aboveground and belowground facility surveys and then digitally stores it in a common area where it can be accessed by a client for complete 3D viewing and facility management.

“It is a really exciting part of our company and completely unique,” Althausen says of the program, which is built on a proprietary software platform. “You will have access to every mapping project you ever hired, all on one platform, and you can share it with other contractors. No other locating company offers this.”

In From the Beginning

Twenty-two years ago, the Great Lakes region — including Cleveland and Toledo in Ohio — was still experiencing economic doldrums as the Rust Belt. Steel and other heavy industries had declined as sources of regional prosperity or disappeared entirely, with jobs going overseas or workforces fleeing to the Sun Belt.

In this setting, Toledo native Matt Aston cold-called on contractors, including Detroit. He tried to explain to them that greater safety and efficiency — and fewer destructive encounters with unseen utility infrastructure — was possible by scanning an area with ground penetrating radar before they drilled or dug into it.

One contractor at a time, Aston won converts to the protocol of locating unseen obstacles before crashing into them. Today, GPRS is a national company with tens of thousands of successful ground surveys and concrete scans in the books.

Jamie Althausen can attest to this success story because he has been a part of it almost from the beginning. The GPRS field support director was one of the first five employees in a company that now has 700 on the payroll.

In 2007, he started in the field operating GPR equipment. He was responsible for finding and satisfying the locating demands of contractors in Cleveland and Pittsburgh. After three successful years, he was transferred to Los Angeles, and successfully developed that market over the next five years.

At that point, Althausen was promoted to the corporate office in Toledo to build and lead the company’s training program. A training facility was built, with underground mock-ups of infrastructure a field tech might encounter anywhere in the country. Today, Althausen oversees the best practices and safety training of all new-hires.

So, how did he find himself on the ground floor of this flourishing company? Did he walk in off the street as a 25-year-old and bump into success? Not quite. Althausen knew Aston, the owner of the business, from high school and from church.

“A lot of our guys from high school are still around in the company,” Althausen says 15 years later. “We have a really strong core team who have known each other since we were kids. We knew we could trust each other as we worked together to build out the business.”

They collaborate and feed off one another to keep a rapidly growing construction industry firm on a path of expansion. “It’s a fun group to work with.” Old friends and colleagues just making it happen.

In short, GPRS isn’t just another locating company. In fact, on its website it refers to its combination of locating, scanning, imaging, mapping, and modeling as “complete facility visualization.” That’s GPRS — Got Plentiful Radar Solutions. ▼

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While contractors can rustproof their own vehicles, outside services offering specialized equipment and expertise can provide more thorough coverage in a shorter time.



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Stopping the Rust

TRUCKS AND EQUIPMENT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT. TRY THESE SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT CORROSION FROM COSTING YOU A BUNDLE.

BY PETER KENTER

Given enough time, any object made of iron or steel that's exposed to oxygen or moisture will oxidize, or rust. Exposure to chemicals such as road salts or acids only accelerate the process. The good news is that there's a host of strategies — from chemical treatments to barriers — that can be used to beat rust at its own game.

The first question any work vehicle owner should ask is whether a corrosion treatment makes financial sense, says Leslie Wong, vice president of customer and dealer service at www.unhaggle.com, a service designed to help buyers negotiate the best price for a vehicle.

He notes that new pickup trucks, for example, offer warranties against rust perforation or surface corrosion. "If you don't intend to keep the vehicle beyond the point where the vehicle's manufacturer rust warranty runs out, then there is absolutely no point in paying for rustproofing," he says.

Even GMC's own website notes: "Application of additional rust-inhibiting materials is not required under the corrosion coverage, and none is recommended."

MANY CHOICES

The home turf of the vehicle also plays a part. Locations experiencing heavy winters and lots of road salt offer more corrosion risk. So do coastal areas where salty sea spray eats metal. While rustproofing can make a big difference to vehicle longevity in salt-prone locations, simply washing the vehicle regularly is the best way to remove the salt that causes rust.

Most rustproofing treatments fall into several categories: undercoating with tar-based sprays, driplless oil sprays, drip oil sprays, rust conversion sprays and bed liners. Some of these treatments are available as do-it-yourself products while others are proprietary products that can only be applied professionally.

Undercoating with tar-based sprays

Using this method, tar-based sprays are applied underneath the vehicle and into wheel wells and harden into a solid barrier. While the barrier remains intact, the protected surface won't rust. However, undercoating should be inspected annually to ensure it remains intact. If the surface cracks or peels, moisture can penetrate the coating and migrate behind the barrier, forming unseen rust.

Driplless oil spray

Driplless oil sprays form a waxy barrier and generally covers more area than undercoating. It can be applied to wheel wells, hoods and rocker panels.

To fully apply the product, holes must be drilled into door panels and other areas of the car.

Drip oil sprays

Drip oil sprays are thinner than driplless sprays, and they are similarly applied through holes drilled into door panels and other sections of the vehicle. The upside: The thinner sprays tend to reach the inner crevices of the car a little better than driplless sprays. The downside: The car will drip a little oil for a few days after application.

Rust converters

These chemicals can transform red iron oxide into a more stable form, ferric tannate, which can be painted.

DIY APPROACH

Theoretically, truck owners can buy products in each category and perform rustproofing themselves.

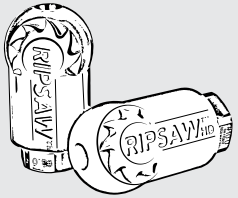
Pro Form Products Ltd., for example, sells a range of driplless oil products, wax-oil blends, rubber plugs to seal drill holes, and anything else a truck owner might need for rustproofing.

However, Pro Form Products tech expert Robin Wason points out that many of the company's customers use the products for loving restoration and maintenance of cherished vehicles — not a quick rustproofing job for a company pickup.

AS WITH MOST RUST PROTECTION PRODUCTS, THE BEST TIME TO APPLY IS BEFORE YOU SEE ANY RUST AT ALL.

"The largest part of our market is people who spend an inordinate amount of time taking their vehicles apart and putting them back together again," he says. "We sell these products with a complete kit with wands and applicators. The buyer would need to supply a wire brush, sandpaper to loosen any rust, and typical protective gear for automotive work — nothing exotic."

On the other hand, Mike Stansbery, owner of Wyandot RustProofing in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, believes that truck owners can benefit from the thorough work of a professional. He exclusively applies FLUID FILM, a lanolin-based formulation applied under nonaerosol pressure and acting most like a driplless oil spray.



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"I've rustproofed everything from farm machinery to pickups, dump trucks, and semis," he says. "If it can rust, we'll do it."

Having a full range of equipment and rustproofing experience makes all the difference, he says.

"I have a gun specially optimized for spraying the product," he says. "I also have a series of wands that you won't likely find in the average garage. One of them is a three-foot flexible wand with 360-degree spray head. With that equipment, I can be more thorough and much quicker. I had a customer in here with a pickup truck who rustproofed it himself last year. It took him more than eight hours, and it took me 90 minutes."

BED LINERS

Some truck owners choose bed liners to rustproof their trucks, using either do-it-yourself or professionally applied products.

Paul DeSmet, executive vice president at LINE-X, notes that his company's bed liner is applied using advanced equipment at high temperature by trained professionals to ensure a durable bond to the metal beneath, while do-it-yourself products are often rolled on.

"LINE-X could be considered a rustproofing treatment," he says. "Any existing rust would need to be removed and treated prior to the LINE-X application, but once LINE-X is applied, it will resist future corrosion."

The product is available in several formulations and is now often used beyond bed liners. In a formulation stable under ultraviolet light, it's used to coat exterior panels, floors, or any part of the truck that requires corrosion and abrasion resistance.

"LINE-X has been applied to Bobcats, UTVs, forklifts, tractors, haulers, trailers and more," DeSmet says.

He notes that company techs have seen LINE-X coatings that have lasted as long as 15 years in the field. The one common factor that predicts longevity is the condition of the metal substrate. ▼

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Protecting Your Company From Internal Threats

A BAD HIRE'S MISCONDUCT CAN COMPROMISE THE FOUNDATION OF A BUSINESS

BY JOAN KOEHNE

A knock on the door one Saturday morning in 2019 changed Susan and William Frew's world.

A letter carrier delivered an official notice from the Internal Revenue Service, stating that the Frews' plumbing business, Sunshine Home Services, owed \$486,000 in back taxes, penalties and interest. Additionally, Susan, president of the company, was penalized \$209,000 for signing inaccurate tax forms. But the bad news didn't end there. Sunshine Home Services also owed vendors \$175,000.

Suddenly, the Denver-area company was \$1 million in debt, and the Frews were on the verge of losing everything they had built since opening in 2008.

INTERNAL THREAT

Business owners are frequently told to be wary of external threats like cyberattacks, vandalism and theft. However, internal threats and criminal activity are just as real. Employee theft can devastate a business financially, not to mention the emotional toll it takes on everyone involved. A bad hire's misconduct or criminal acts can compromise the foundation of an organization.

The Frews abruptly learned the consequences of putting too much trust in their office manager. Looking back, Susan says she can see where mistakes were made. Serving also as an author and business consultant, she traveled a lot and left the day-to-day business operations in the hands of the office manager. Susan trusted the manager, and they were good friends. As an incentive, Susan offered the manager a monetary bonus if the company stayed within its budget.

"All of a sudden, she was on budget all of the time," Susan says.

Unfortunately, Susan failed to see this as a red flag. The office manager made only partial payments to vendors and the IRS, so the company quickly started accumulating debt. The office manager also used company credit to buy gas for her family's vehicles and purchase tools and tires from company vendors for her family. Everything came to light when the employee W-2 forms didn't match Sunshine's quarterly tax payments. Even before this occurred, Susan says she and the office manager had a falling out, and the manager was fired. Still, the damage had been done. The employee was charged with six felonies and is now paying \$100 restitution monthly.

HARD LESSONS LEARNED

As business owners, the Frews learned some important lessons from this experience. Today, Sunshine Home Services is much more careful when hiring employees. In addition to the standard criminal background check the company uses, Sunshine also runs a civil background check. The civil background check uncovers information about an applicant's financial penalties like bankruptcies, liens and garnishes. Sunshine Home Services also checks references, even in today's tight labor market when it's tempting to skip this extra step.

Additionally, Susan set up alerts on her corporate credit card, so she's notified every time the credit card is used. She also has the only key to the company's mailbox.

"You have to get your own mail," she says. "If I got my own mail, I would've caught this a lot sooner."

Now, Susan looks at every single invoice and makes it a daily habit to reconcile the business accounts between the bank and Sunshine's software.

"I really have gotten more involved in oversight," she says. "A lot of business owners don't want to do that, but it's absolutely essential. Since we've been doing that, we're able to find problems right away and fix them."

Sunshine also hired an outside accountant to review the company's books on a regular basis. Susan recommends finding a bookkeeper who is highly referred. She also recommends verifying financial statements with a third party.

"You and your bookkeeper shouldn't be the only ones looking at the books," she says.

Susan also encourages business owners to learn to read and understand business finances.

"Because this spooked me so bad, I have been doing an accounting course to get an accounting certificate," she says.



Joan Koehne

"I REALLY HAVE GOTTEN MORE INVOLVED IN OVERSIGHT. A LOT OF BUSINESS OWNERS DON'T WANT TO DO THAT, BUT IT'S ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. SINCE WE'VE BEEN DOING THAT, WE'RE ABLE TO FIND PROBLEMS RIGHT AWAY AND FIX THEM."

Susan Frew

SETTING UP PROTECTIONS

Susan realizes now that she stepped away from the business too soon, when it wasn't ready to operate without her. Plus, Sunshine didn't have the proper safeguards in place to prevent this type of employee misconduct.

Realistically, employees require a certain level of authority and trust to run operations, but employers also need to implement checks and balances. Certainly, employees can run a business, but they also can ruin a business. When business owners assume that every position has the capability of ruining their business, they realize the importance of internal protocols and controls.

To make it clear that employee theft won't be tolerated, employers can work with their attorneys to develop an anti-theft policy for the employee handbook. The policy should include examples of prohibited behaviors and the consequences of violating the policies. Consequences may include immediate termination, police involvement, legal action and financial arrangements for restitution.



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Employers may also want to install video surveillance to discourage and uncover attempts of employee theft, especially of cash, supplies and equipment.

The theft of personal and corporate data is another internal threat to companies. Several different types of data can be vulnerable, including customer lists, product research, business plans and proprietary recipes or formulas. Many businesses protect their trade secrets by having employees and business associates sign nondisclosure agreements. An NDA prohibits individuals from sharing trade secrets, processes and other proprietary information with a third party. Companies should clearly mark proprietary information as confidential, identify it with a watermark and have processes in place for handling and safeguarding. Sensitive data warrants the extra effort required to prevent unauthorized use and ensure the data is eligible for legal protection.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Employee theft comes in a variety of forms. Too often, small businesses are caught off guard by internal threats and crimes by employees.

"I know that I'm not alone. I'm not the only business owner who's gone through something like this," Susan says.

Her advice to business owners in similar situations is to take it one day at a time.

"Come up with a plan and stick with it," she says.

Sunshine made small payments to its vendors each Friday — days Susan ironically referred to as "Fun Friday." By the end of 2022, Sunshine had repaid \$750,000 of its \$1 million debt. The recovery has taken time and effort, but Sunshine Home Services is getting back on course.

"There were a couple of years that the business was just an anchor tied around my neck, and now I'm enjoying it again," Susan says. "I feel like a new entrepreneur again." ▼

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BY CRAIG MANDLI

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Ditch Witch Orange Intel

To help equipment owners keep track of their fleet's performance and increase the profitability of their business, Ditch Witch offers the Orange Intel fleet management system. Designed to centralize fleet and machine information, maintenance indicators and other vital data and insights, contractors can more efficiently monitor their job site history and equipment performance to improve their business. Through comprehensive reporting capabilities, operators have the power to track individual machine indicators, including working and idle hours, which enables them to schedule routine maintenance. The technical data provided in each machine can illuminate potential problems before they occur, such as keeping an eye on fuel and DEF levels, battery performance and other vital systems. With the ability to insert GPS-based, geofencing options, contractors can digitally construct a "fence" around their shop yards or job sites to track equipment movement and locate a lost or stolen machine. The notifications are then sent directly to contractors' desktops or mobile devices.



580-336-4402; www.ditchwitch.com

DPL Telematics AssetCommand Base

AssetCommand Base from DPL Telematics is designed to increase driver safety and productivity while decreasing the costs and risk of vehicle accidents and theft. Managers can remotely shut down their machines, wirelessly locate

them anytime via GPS, collect odometer/runtime readings, track service intervals and receive real-time alerts for speeding or potentially dangerous driving. Driver ID options include iButton or RFID badges to restrict access to authorized drivers and correctly log each driver's activity. Users can also receive alerts for loss of power and boundary or curfew violations to curb unauthorized use. It is palm-sized, has no external antenna and contains an internal backup battery to continue operating the unit if disconnected. Customers are allowed to deactivate and reactivate anytime without penalty.



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800-975-5304; www.fleetio.com

GPS Trackit GL500MG

GPS Trackit's GL500MG universal trailer management solution protects unpowered assets including construction equipment, freight trailers, flatbed trailers, freight containers, generators, tool storage boxes and recreational equipment. Features of the unit include a 5-year lithium battery; durable and waterproof shell; a user update button that immediately shares GPS coordinates; geofences that provide alerts when asset leaves pre-set area; flexible mounting options; wake up on motion; and a tamper-detecting magnet.



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888-574-3878; www.geoforce.com ▼

Success Stories:

BY CRAIG MANDLI

SOFTWARE: FLEET MANAGEMENT, FIELD SERVICE, TASK, ASSET MANAGEMENT, AND OFFICE TECHNOLOGY



Software helps create bore plan to keep directional drilling project on track

PROBLEM

Two hundred feet from Florida's Turnpike, the K3 Directional Drilling team and their Vermeer D100x140 Navigator horizontal directional drill bored under the roadway 30 times across a 6-mile area on a utility expansion project for The Villages near Leesburg and Wildwood, Florida. They needed a way to visualize the work being done.

SOLUTION

The company used **Vermeer Projects** to recreate a bore for each drill shot. The process involved walking the path using a tablet loaded with Vermeer Projects and a GPS device. Utilities and other obstacles were marked, and depth information was inputted to create a bore plan on the fly. The crew's starting elevation was around 10 feet higher than the turnpike. Within that first 200 feet, bores needed to be 30 feet below the roadway. The terrain on the other side of the road was also lower and needed to be accounted for. Then, many of the bores crossed underneath a 36-inch gas distribution with a clearance of 10 feet before exiting into a 2-foot pit 40 feet from the distribution line.

RESULT

Bore planning technology saved the crew time and provided a roadmap for the drill operator. 352-728-2222; www.vermeer.com ▼



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2. All new Brandt HX120 hydroexcavator

The all-new Brandt HX120 hydroexcavator is a high-output unit with a 1,150-gallon water tank and 11.6-cubic-yard debris tank. Nimble enough for urban settings, the HX120 helps contractors work more efficiently with maximized legal load weights, quicker debris loading and unloading time, and the capacity to take on larger jobs without load weight concerns. Real-time measurement of water and overall truck weight enables operators to



2



3

make quick, informed decisions, which reduces the risk of damage or overweight penalties. The new unit features a 28-foot boom reach with 340-degree rotation. **866-427-2638; www.brandt.ca**

3. GSSI PavScan RDM 2.0 asphalt density assessment tool

GSSI's PavScan RDM 2.0 is a second-generation asphalt density assessment tool ideal for non-destructive asphalt compaction testing, quality assurance/quality control of new pavements and determining pavement nonconformity. By uncovering inconsistencies that occur during the paving process, including poor uniformity and significant variations in density, PavScan RDM 2.0 helps to avoid premature failures like road raveling, cracking, and deterioration along joints. With seamless GPS integration, real-time onscreen data output, and export options, the system is ideal for government transportation agencies and paving contractors alike. The complete system includes a rugged deployment cart and an integrated concentrator box that accommodates up to three sensors and includes housing for cable management and hot-swappable, dual batteries. **800-524-3011; www.geophysical.com ▼**

This Issue's Feature:

Hydroexcavation nozzle designed for productive potholing, efficient water use

BY CRAIG MANDLI

Potholing has become a popular, safe and efficient method to find and expose underground pipes, cables, and utilities. It is important to have the right nozzle at your disposal, though, when performing the work. A new nozzle introduced by **Vermeer — the QuickDig** — is specifically designed to help vacuum excavation crews maximize their efficiency while potholing and daylighting utilities, hydro/slot trenching, and digging pile holes.

According to an internal study, the Vermeer QuickDig nozzle is up to 35% more efficient than a traditional rotary nozzle because of its 18-degree cone rotation and laminar flow design. All water molecules flow in the same direction at the same speed to slice through the ground, minimizing water use and delivering a high aperture of coverage. It also rotates at a slower rpm than other hydroexcavation nozzles, which maximizes its digging power.

"When it comes to potholing and hydro trenching, productive digging and efficient water usage helps crews maximize their time on the job," says T.J. Steele, product manager for Vermeer MV Solutions. "An often-overlooked component of a vacuum excavator is the nozzle a crew uses to dig with. It can significantly impact digging performance and the volume of water used during the process."

All Vermeer truck vacuum excavators and many Vermeer trailer vacuum excavators built this year will come equipped with the QuickDig nozzle. In ad-



QuickDig
from Vermeer

dition, according to Steele, this latest technology in hydroexcavation will be available at Vermeer dealers throughout North America and is compatible with most industry vacuum excavator makes and models.

"The Vermeer QuickDig nozzle is extremely efficient with the water used, so material doesn't become oversaturated during the digging and excavation process," says Steele. "It helps crews maximize digging time from their on-board water tank while extending their time between emptying the spoils tank."

The Vermeer QuickDig nozzle is also durable, with a stainless steel body, tungsten carbide nozzle tip and a heavy-duty nonconductive coating for maximum durability. It can also be rebuilt in the field quickly using a QuickDig nozzle repair kit. Simply match the repair kit to the original nozzle size to help the crew run more efficiently.

Vermeer offers six sizes of the QuickDig nozzle for contractors to choose from. Each comes with a 1/2-inch inlet connection (common on truck vacs) and a 1/4-inch adapter (common for trailer vacs).

888-837-6337; www.vermeer.com

THE LATEST:

News

Doosan construction equipment rebrands as DEVELON

The construction equipment known as Doosan will now be called DEVELON throughout the world. Work began to identify a new brand name to replace Doosan following the August 2021 sale of Doosan Infracore to HD Hyundai (formerly Hyundai Heavy Industries Holdings Co. HHIH). The name DEVELON was chosen to convey the company's drive to develop onward to bring innovative solutions to the construction equipment industry through technological transformation and the development of exceptional equipment and services.

McElroy announces new fourth Oklahoma campus

McElroy has added a fourth campus, to be housed in the recently purchased facility occupied by Baker Hughes in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Currently, McElroy operates approximately 300,000 square feet of plant and office facilities covering 47 acres across three McElroy campuses, all in the Tulsa area. In the last decade, numerous product evolutions, along with product expansions, meant additional facilities were needed to support manufacturing and final assembly operations. The new campus will provide an additional 193,000 square feet for McElroy operations, including a planned showcase assembly operation. The extensive office space available at the new Broken Arrow Campus will also allow McElroy to relocate all customer-facing departments while providing for future growth needs.

Engine & Accessory named Jurop's new North American distributor and OEM partner

Engine & Accessory announced it has been named Jurop's new North American distribution and OEM partner. The partnership will produce Jurop blowers, vane pumps, packaging, rebuild kits, pump components, four-way valves, rear-door clamps and many other products. In a release, Engine & Accessory CEO Craig Smith says, "We are thrilled to be working with Jurop and to offer our customers access to high-quality blowers, vacuum pumps and parts. This partnership is a great opportunity for EAM to expand our product offerings and better serve our customers' needs."

Vortex appoints Matt Timberlake to new role

Vortex has appointed Matt Timberlake to the newly created role of senior vice president of shared services to streamline processes and improve overall response time to bring its trenchless products and services to market. As the former president of the Ted Berry Co. (now Vortex Services, Northeast), Timberlake is in a familiar role, bridging the gap between back-office support and day-to-day operations. ▼



Matt Timberlake

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Happenings

CALENDAR

April 17-21
Common Ground Alliance Conference & Expo, Caribe Royale, Orlando, Florida. Visit www.cgconference.com.

April 30 - May 4
NASTT's No-Dig Show; Oregon Convention Center; Portland, Oregon. Visit www.nodigshow.com.

May 12-18
World Tunnel Congress 2023, Megaron Athens International Conference Centre, Athens, Greece. Visit www.wtc2023.gr.

June 4-7
Electric Utility Fleet Managers Conference, Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Center, Williamsburg, Virginia. Visit www.eufmc.com.

June 5-7
Safety 2023 Professional Development Conference & Exposition, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio. Visit safety.assp.org.

June 11-14
Rapid Excavation & Tunneling Conference, Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston. Visit www.retc.org.

Sept. 11-13
Breakthroughs in Tunneling Short Course, University of Denver - Joy Burns Center, Denver. Visit www.tunnelingshortcourse.com.

Sept. 14
Underground Contractors Association of Illinois Annual Business Meeting, Venuti's Italian Restaurant & Banquet Hall, Addison, Illinois. Visit www.uca.org.

Sept. 26-28
The Utility Expo, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Kentucky. Visit www.theutilityexpo.com.

Sept. 30 - Oct. 4
96th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference, McCormick Place, Chicago. Visit www.weftec.org.

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