# digdifferent.com NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

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### **SMART BUSINESS:**

TRAINING THAT **DELIVERS RESULTS** 20

Atlanta hydroexcavation company builds huge customer base

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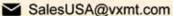
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# An Eye on the Market

#### TAKE YOUR TIME AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK WHEN IT COMES TO ADDING NEW EQUIPMENT TO YOUR COMPANY FLEET

BY CORY DELLENBACH, EDITOR

arlier this year I had the unfortunate task of searching for a new family vehicle after ours was totaled following an accident.

As many of you know, it can be a big pain looking for a new vehicle. You have to take the time to first decide what type of vehicle you want, then look at all the manufacturers on the market, then what options each vehicle has and how it compares to similar models on the streets.

It takes time, effort and patience as you seek out your next ride. I imagine it's even harder when you're in the market for a new piece of equipment for your company, whether it be a vacuum excavator, directional drill, trencher or any other that you use for work.

#### **GOING SHOPPING**

In September I attended The Utility Expo in Louisville, Kentucky. It's always one of my favorite shows to attend because I get to meet many contractors working in the industry. Most of those contractors attending the show are shopping for that next piece of equipment to add to their company.

They're talking to manufacturers at the show, they're talking to other contractors, and they're trying the equipment. Those are all important steps to take if you're looking to make an equipment purchase. The manufacturer representatives will be able to answer any questions you have, the other contractors will give you their take on the equipment — good or bad — and trying it out yourself will give you an idea of how it will function for you and your team.

One tip for when you are "shopping" is to make sure you write down the positives and negatives to each piece of equipment you are scoping out. It will help you finetune your search and will give you something to look back on when it's decision time.

#### TAKE EMOTION OUT OF IT

The best piece of advice I received when I was looking for a new vehicle was not to rush to a decision. It's hard to do sometimes when you're in a major time crunch, but try to take your time and look at everything.

You may love the first piece of equipment you see because it looks spiffy or has a feature on it that knocks its competitors' socks off, but you need to take the time to look at it closer and decide if you really need that feature or just want it because it has it.

The last thing you want to do is jump into a purchase quickly and then realize later that there was something else on the market that would've worked better or came at a better price point.

You really need to take five and decide if this purchase is right for you. You want something that will compliment what you are doing and make you and your team better.

#### **ALWAYS WATCHING**

Even if you aren't in the market for a new piece of equipment right at this moment, make sure you are keeping your eye on what is out there. You never know when an equipment breakdown or other unfortunate accident might happen and you need something in a pinch.

Keeping tabs on what is on the markets and the features available will help narrow your time searching when it comes, and it could save you some headaches.

#### **YOUR TURN**

What features or functions do you look for when shopping for a new piece of equipment? Is there a brand that you're loyal to or a feature that draws you to one? Let me know by emailing me at editor@digdifferent.com.

Enjoy this issue! ▼



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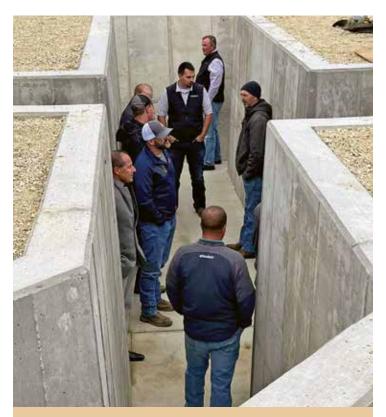
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### **State-of-the-Art Facility Opens**

Realistic training for first responders is required to support successful trench rescues, and a new training site recently opened in Urbandale, Iowa. It will help play a crucial role in enhancing the safety of industry employees who work in subsurface excavations and help prepare those in the state who are leading the rescue at any accident scene.

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#### **EMPLOYEE RETENTION TAX CREDIT**

#### Do You Qualify?

To incentivize employee retention during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government provided a tax credit, initially authorized in March 2020, and renewed multiple times since then. It's called the Employee Retention Tax Credit, and if your business paid qualified wages to employees after March 12, 2020, then you may qualify. Here's everything you need to know.





#### **BREAKING BARRIERS**

### **Minority-Owned Business**

Four of the six certifications promoted on the US Hydrovac's website are tied to company owner KP Panchal's heritage. That is, he was born in India, moved to the U.S. with his family at age 3 and grew up in Indiana as a minority. Learn more about what it means to be a certified Minority Business Enterprise in this online exclusive article.

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One of the many job site teams at Hydro-X, located in Atlanta, includes, from left, operators Gary Ratliff, John Beam and Neil Barrington. The three stand near one of the company's many Mud Dog (Super Products) hydrovac units.

#### OWNERSHIP GROUP INVESTS BIG ON EQUIPMENT, LEADING ATLANTA-BASED HYDROEXCAVATION COMPANY TO SEE HUGE GROWTH IN SERVICE AREA AND CUSTOMER BASE

STORY: KEN WYSOCKY PHOTOS: MATTHEW ODOM

It's not unusual for contractors to invest in equipment so they can do the kind of work they typically hire subcontractors to do — and leave money on the table in the process.

But at Artera Services, a national pipeline and energy-service infrastructure company, officials took that strategy to a whole new level by establishing an entire new company — Hydro-X, based in Atlanta — in 2019 so the companies under its corporate umbrella wouldn't have to hire outside hydroexcavation contractors anymore.

The playbook worked so well that in 2021, Artera created another company — Hydro-X II, based in Wisconsin — to broaden its geographic reach in the hydroexcavation industry.

"We made a decision to keep that spend [on subcontractors] inside the company," explains Stan Pitts, president of both Hydro-X and Hydro-X II. "We knew there was a strong market for hydroexcavation in metro Atlanta and we wanted to capitalize on that — and we've been very successful at doing so."

The numbers back up Pitts' assertion. In just four years since the company's inception, its fleet of hydroexcavation trucks expanded to around 90, more than four times as many as the 20 vehicles Hydro-X started out with.

Employment rose to 160 workers (plus another 60 at Hydro-X II) compared to around 20 at the start. And along with its headquarters in Atlanta, the company now operates eight other facilities in four other states: Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and North Carolina.

"We've established a physical presence throughout the southeastern United States," Pitts notes. "Having this many trucks and facilities allows us to flex a bit on asset location, based on workloads or upcoming needs."

An expanded business base also testifies to the company's growth. At the outset, Hydro-X was hired primarily by Artera-owned companies, Pitts says.

"But now only 40% of our business in the South comes from Artera-owned companies," he explains. "That's a testament to our marketing efforts and our expansive capabilities."

The company's primary customers operate in the energy market, but it also provides civil infrastructure customers space with sewer cleaning and inspections and pipeline jetting.

"We do any kind of construction work where environmental issues or concerns about unknown utility lines are prevalent," Pitts explains.

#### **LARGE TRUCK FLEET**

A key factor in the company's growth is the sheer size of its truck fleet, enabled largely by financial backing from Artera, Pitts says.

The company owns between 50 and 60 Mud Dog hydroexcavation trucks built by Super Products on Peterbilt chassis and featuring 12- and 16-cubic-yard debris tanks, 1,500- to 2,000-gallon water tanks and blowers built by Hibon Inc. (a division of Ingersoll Rand).







The digging wand effectively exposes utilities using high-pressure water.

#### SIZE IS AN ASSET

In 2021, that wide scope of capabilities helped Hydro-X more firmly establish its reputation in the southeastern United States after Hurricane Ida slammed into Louisiana's southeast coast on Aug. 29. Packing sustained winds of 150 mph, the Category 4 storm was one of the worst to ever hit the United States, killing more than 100 people and doing more than

\$75 billion worth of damages — including the destruction of more than 30,000 telephone poles, Pitts says.

"We took trucks from Georgia, North Caroline and Florida to do potholing for new telephone poles for a major utility there," he says. more than 30,000 phone and power poles were broken. "We had 18 to 20 trucks working around the clock for more than two months.



Rounding out the fleet are model X-13 and X-15 hydrovac trucks from X-Vac (a brand owned by Hi-Vac Corp.). Built on Peterbilt chassis, they're equipped with 15-cubic-yard debris tanks, 1,150-to-1,400-gallon water tanks and blowers from Roots (a brand owned by the Howden Group). Trucks from GapVax also factor in, featuring mostly Peterbilt chassis, 14-cubic-yard debris tanks, 1,600-gallon water tanks and blowers built by Hibon.

"We have a very large fleet of hydrovac trucks, which differentiates us from competitors," Pitts points out. "That enables us to tackle larger jobs that smaller companies can't tackle.

"We have the resources and the ability to go in ten different directions at one time."

The company also owns Camel combination vacuum sewer trucks from Super Products. They're built on Peterbilt chassis and used for jetting new pipelines prior to final inspections. They feature hose reels that can hold up to 1,000 feet of hose and rotate 270 degrees, 1,500-gallon water tanks and single-piston water pumps (3,000 psi at 100 gpm).

"Having the resources to do all that solidified our position as a leader in the market," Pitts continues. "Word gets around when you're able to do things like that. It was pretty impressive."

The trucks also offer two less tangible but important benefits: They help market the company and build positive brand recognition while also serving as employee-retention tools.

"Our trucks look really good and we work hard to maintain them," Pitts says, noting the company recently hired a fleet director and a fleet manager.

"We have a contractor that regularly pressure washes our trucks in Atlanta," he continues. "Taking pride in our equipment is critical. Our brand is very important to us and we have very positive brand recognition."

#### **SOFTWARE BOOSTS EFFICIENCY**

Investments in business-management technology also drove growth. A good example is the HydroTraX, a custom-built customer-relationship management platform. The system took about six months to develop and went online in 2022 at Hydro-X and 2023 at Hydro-X II, Pitts says.

"We use it for scheduling, invoicing, payroll and pushing all necessary information to our operators via tablets," he continues. "It provides us with a high level of operational sophistication — makes us more than just a company that digs in the mud."

The HydroTraX system significantly improved the company's flexibility and responsiveness. For example, when an operator submits a completed work



#### An Employee-Centric Culture Helps Company Attract, Retain Employees

Attracting and retaining truck operators — and employees in general — is a widespread problem for contractors nationwide.

At Hydro-X, a regional hydroexcavation company based in Atlanta and owned by Artera Services, management is combatting the problem with a multifaceted approach that includes something that many people don't typically associate with heavy-equipment companies: building an employee-centric culture of continuous improvement.

From job reviews for all employees and competitive pay to performance bonuses and developing career paths, the company strives to let employees know it cares about their well-being, says Stan Pitts, president.

"I think these initiatives make a difference in the quality of our team," he says. "When I came on board, I was told we had a morale problem as well as some leadership and process gaps. And while sometimes people don't realize it, team members in the field feel those gaps."

After spending ample time observing operations, Pitts says the management team developed and implemented a plan that has made Hydro-X a much stronger company.

"We flipped the team upside down and brought in some fresh faces for leadership," he explains. "We also identified that we had an operator-quality problem. Our best employees appreciated the efforts we've made to improve the overall quality of the team.

"We asked multiple people to verify any problems we heard about and then fixed them," he adds. "It's all about transparency and walking the walk. We've received a lot of compliments from employees, which has been very satisfying."

To instill company loyalty and boost employee engagement, field workers get the same job reviews as office employees. Managers also

talk to them about career paths and the company strives to promote from within, Pitts says.

These are things that differentiate Hydro-X from competitors and make it an attractive place to work. In fact, Pitts points out that in several instances, truck operators have left the company to get a nominal hourly pay raise and a promise of plenty of overtime work, only to come back and ask if they can work at Hydro-X again.

"If they had a good work record, we welcome them back," he says.

The company also is very particular about the people it hires, Pitts says, noting that it's important to hire people who will present themselves professionally and engage well with customers. "We have a very rigorous interview process."

In the end, it all boils down to treating people the same way you'd want to be treated, he says.

"You just treat people well," Pitts says. "For instance, if employees have an incident, we sit down and coach them through it.

"We emphasize that it's an investigation, not a witch hunt — we're just trying to prevent bad behavior and mistakes from happening again, without berating people," Pitts continues. "We use every opportunity as a learning experience and that has really improved our team and made our company a place where people want to work — and stay.

Pitts says he constantly emphasizes to managers that they should "feel the burden of the families of employees" every time they make a decision. That doesn't mean you don't make tough decisions, but it helps ensure they're made for the right reasons, he says.

"In the end, if you treat people well and do the right things, it builds a great reputation in the market and in the industry," he says.

order from a tablet, it automatically goes to a supervisor for review. If needed, a supervisor can send it back to an operator for refinement; then approve it and send it digitally to the billing and payroll departments.

"We can do in about four hours what used to take two days — and possibly even longer if a supervisor sent an invoice back to an operator for corrections," Pitts says. "It also improved cash flow and made us a virtually paperless operation.

"Almost everything is done electronically," he adds. "It also gives us a platform for communicating with customers — sending information back and forth. It's been very beneficial."

#### **BRIGHT OUTLOOK**

Looking ahead, Pitts is very optimistic about continued growth at Hydro-X and Hydro-X II, especially as more and more entities mandate hydroexcavation services because they're so much safer and environmentally friendly than conventional excavation techniques.

"People are willing to pay a premium for the service because of the safety factors," he notes. "We recently completed a project in Atlanta and located 76 unknown, unmarked utilities — power lines, water and sewer lines, and gas and fiber optic lines.

"It's very likely that some of those lines would've been damaged by a backhoe had we not located them," Pitts continues. "Our customer was very pleased with the result of our services."

But Pitts isn't looking for exponential growth that could jeopardize customer service and work quality.

"We want sustainable, measurable and profitable growth," he explains. "I'd be disappointed if we didn't generate revenue and profitability growth year-on-year. And we should be able to keep doing that and keep our people safe, too.

"We see nothing but opportunity on the horizon." ▼



Neil Barrington removes a dig tube off the back of his truck for use on site.

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# Unveiling the Future

#### **SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE POWER** TRENDS ARE HITTING THE UTILITY **CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND** IT'S TIME TO TAKE A LOOK AT A FEW OF THEM

#### BY THE UTILITY EXPO STAFF

ustainability initiatives, new regulations, and technological innovation have opened a world of possibilities for the utility industry.

With intense global initiatives to reduce carbon emissions, equipment manufacturers are exploring ways to lessen the carbon impact of their machines. A range of alternative power solutions are being considered: replac-

ing the diesel engine, reconfiguring the engine to run on alternative fuels and making the diesel engine as efficient as possible.

#### **CHANGES TO DIESEL ENGINES**

The utility industry is well on its way to lessening its carbon footprint with efficient diesel engines. Compared to Tier 1 engines, today's Tier 4 Final engines offer a 96% reduction of oxides of nitrogen and a 97% reduction in particulate

The proposed Tier 5 emissions regulations will reduce emissions even further. The gradual retirement of an aging fleet will also reduce emissions, especially when you consider the significant reduction in emissions that occurred between Tier 3 and Tier 4.

#### MANUFACTURERS ARE BEGINNING TO PRODUCE FUEL-AGNOSTIC ENGINES AND EXPLORE THE USAGE OF VARIOUS LOW-CARBON FUELS, INCLUDING HYDROGEN, NATURAL GAS AND ETHANOL.

Modifying these already efficient, conventional engines allows them to burn alternative fuels, which doesn't typically require widespread changes in job site practices, machine componentry or fueling infrastructure.

#### **ALTERNATIVE FUELS**

Manufacturers are beginning to produce fuel-agnostic engines and explore the usage of various low-carbon fuels, including hydrogen, natural gas and ethanol.

Hydrogen, the most abundant element in the universe, can be used as both a low-carbon fuel and a fuel cell to charge a battery-electric machine. In a fuel cell, electrical energy and water are produced through an electrochemical



As more contractors push for different — cheaper and cleaner — fuel options, many manufacturers are looking at everything from changes to diesel engines to alternative fuels and electric-powered equipment.

process combining hydrogen and oxygen. A clean and renewable source of high-density energy with good energy efficiency, manufacturers are working alongside the U.S. Department of Energy in the early stages of hydrogen fuel cell implementation.

#### **FOCUS ON ELECTRIC**

Much of the alternative power conversation has centered on electric, particularly in the compact and utility equipment industries.

Commercially available electric machines feature varying degrees of electrification, offering zero emissions, less noise and instant response while delivering the same breakout force as a diesel-powered engine. Battery power density continues to increase as manufacturers utilize technologies to make

better use of battery energy.

The instant response of electric machines also correlates directly to real-time efficiency, minimizing idle time and reducing wear and tear on the machine. With fewer components and moving parts than their fuel-burning counterparts, electric machines typically require less overall maintenance, reducing downtime and operating expenses. As the reliability of these electric machines is validated in the market, the utility

industry will begin to meet regulatory and societal pressures to reduce carbon emissions while seeing operational gains.

#### **NO SINGLE SOLUTION**

There won't be one singular solution to reduce carbon emissions. The utility industry will adopt a variety of alternative power solutions over the next handful of years.

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## Getting Investments on Training

### EXPLORE THESE THREE ROOT CAUSES WHY TRAINING DOESN'T STICK WITH YOUR CREW AND MAKE SOME CHANGES

#### BY KATE ZABRISKIE

ach year, businesses waste thousands of dollars on training that doesn't deliver expected results. Consequently, many company owners or managers determine that either training has no value to their employees, the training facilitators don't know what they're doing, the program designers are out of touch with reality, or all three.

If only the root causes of training failures were as simple as those. Even with willing learners, great content and strong facilitation, a host of problems could keep you from realizing strong returns on those training investments. If your training isn't delivering what you think it should, you may be suffering from one of three major problems that plague organizations large and small.

#### **PROBLEM 1:**

#### TRAINING ISN'T PART OF A LARGER LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Just because people participate in a workshop, it doesn't mean they will change their behavior back on the job. In fact, even if while in class they demonstrate an ability and willingness to do whatever is being taught, all may be lost once participants exit the classroom.

Why does this happen? Good workshops usually fail to deliver because they are treated as a training solution instead of a component of one. In other words, a workshop isn't the answer in itself; rather, it should be part of a larger apparatus or ecosystem.

#### **SOLUTION**

Creating a strong learning ecosystem is an ongoing and often complex endeavor. It takes time to build a holistic structure that supports continuous development. That said, start small. For example, ask yourself:

- Prior to training, do managers explain to workers why they will attend a course and how they are expected to use what's learned after the session?
- Will someone with authority in your company (other than the facilitator) launch the session by explaining how the workshop ties into the bigger picture?
- Are there check-in opportunities after training to ensure that participants are implementing new behaviors?

If you answer "no" to any of those basics, do what you need to do to shift those answers to "yes."

Next, think about the incentives you can put in place to encourage behavior change and the barriers you need to remove to encourage success, and the corrective action you will take if what's happening in the classroom isn't replicated on the job.

Once you start thinking holistically and view courses and workshops as a component of learning versus learning in its entirety, you will have taken the first step in getting the most out of your training dollars.

#### **PROBLEM 2:**

#### CONTINUOUS LEARNING ISN'T PART OF THE CULTURE, AND TRAINING ISN'T TREATED AS A PRIORITY

You have great content, you have a skilled facilitator in place, and half the people sched-

uled to attend the course don't attend because training isn't a priority.



When training occupies a position of "nice to have" and not "need to have," getting the most from it becomes problematic. This most often happens when people are in survival mode instead of on a growth trajectory. In other words, they are scrambling to get through the work instead of thinking mindfully about the work they're completing and how they're completing it.

In practical terms, if people are always putting out fires and don't regularly ask "what have we learned" and "how can we improve," why should they care about learning new skills?

#### SOLUTION

Shifting from a reactive culture to one that is deliberate about its activities takes months or even years. However, it's not difficult to make big strides

# JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN A WORKSHOP, IT DOESN'T MEAN THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR BACK ON THE JOB. ... ALL MAY BE LOST ONCE PARTICIPANTS EXIT THE CLASSROOM.

over time when you begin by asking the right questions up, down and across your workforce.

Start the improvement conversation at multiple levels and at different times. Frequently ask, "What have we learned?" "What do we need to do better next time?" "What do we wish we'd known earlier?" and other such questions after projects, meetings, presentations and so forth. In the rare instances when something goes perfectly, remember there are still questions to ask: "How can we replicate what we just did?" "Why did that work well?" "Is there any reason this approach won't work again in the future?" and so on.

When questioning becomes the norm, the solutions offered via training should have stronger importance and value. For example, if turnover is an issue, a learning organization wants to know why and may ask several questions: "Are we hiring the wrong people?" "Are we expecting too much?" "Is there something better for the same money somewhere else?" "Do our managers not manage well?" "Do we need to provide people with better tools?" and so on.

#### REGARDLESS OF LEVEL, EVERY EMPLOYEE SHOULD HAVE A DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### AND SOME LEARNING AND GROWTH GOALS THAT CONNECT TO THE BIG PICTURE AND ENHANCE THEIR SKILLS.

Then, when learning and improvement are a priority, you'll hear such things as, "Today is a training day for me. I'll be unavailable until 4 p.m. If you have an emergency, please see my supervisor Melissa. The workshop I'm attending is of top importance and part of my effort to reduce the turnover."

Who can argue with that? The logic sounds right and ties into big-picture improvement goals.

To get larger returns from training, use questioning to drive improvement. The answers will help people connect the dots and understand why training is a priority and not just something they do because

it's on the calendar.

#### thoughtful goals and development plans are put in place for workers, it is almost impossible not to realize a stronger return on your training dollars.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works Inc., a Marylandbased talent development firm. Reach her at www.businesstrainingworks.com.



#### **PROBLEM 3:**

#### FEW ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS EXIST

The world doesn't stagnate, and your employees shouldn't either. If they're doing their work the same way they were five years ago, and nobody is encouraging or demanding change, why should they care about training or think you care about them?

#### **SOLUTION**

Regardless of level, every employee should have a development plan and some learning and growth goals that connect to the big picture and enhance their skills.

"I want to improve XYZ skill to drive ABC result, and 123 is how I plan to grow," is a quick and easy format to follow when setting development goals and three to five goals is a good number for most people.

Better still, if you can tie those goals to performance reviews, you'll be amazed at the interest people develop in improvement, training and implementing new skills.

As with the other two solutions, start small. If your company, for example, has no development plans, choose one area — such as service technicians — and pilot them.

#### **ACT NOW**

Whether you suffer from one, two or all three of the problems described, take action now. When





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## Recognizing the Danger

#### DON'T LET A DISMISSIVE ATTITUDE LEAD TO WORKPLACE INJURIES

#### BY RONNIE FREEMAN

e've probably all heard or used the phrase, "It's no big deal," in regard to safety concerns. Basically, a hazard isn't a big deal as long as no one gets injured. Until someone does get injured and then it becomes a big deal. Then we are getting a lot of people involved, there's investigations, there's medical involvement to deal with the injury and worst case there could be liability issues involving managers, lawyers, etc. So, how often does this phrase get used at your workplace?

Usually when this phrase gets used it means something has happened but it's not something that requires a lot of action or even getting excited about. It usually amounts to nothing and that's why we say, "It's no big deal."

How many times during a normal workday have you walked right past a hazard and kept on walking? You knew it was a hazard such as an unrolled electrical cord, an unsafe trench, a spilled chemical, unlabeled containers, damaged equipment, etc., but you made the decision to ignore it with the hope someone else would address it. Perhaps you were too busy at the moment and forgot about it later on. Maybe you didn't see the seriousness of the hazard. Or have you become complacent with having hazards around?

There are some other common phrases and excuses that contribute to this phenomenon. They include, but are not limited to:

"It's not my job." Perhaps it's not, but it's worth speaking up about to avoid getting someone injured.

"It will be OK; someone will deal with it." If we all think that way, nothing will get done and the hazard will continue to exist.

"It's one of those things that has been that way for a long time."

There's no time like the present to correct a hazard to avoid an injury.

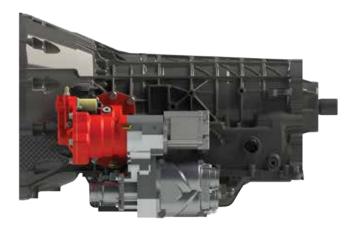
"I don't have the time to deal with it right now." But do you have the time to deal with an injury?

"I don't want to cause trouble if I speak up." If you don't speak up, how will you feel if someone is injured?

"It's no big deal." Hazards are always a big deal, and this can be reflected in your company's safety culture.

Bottom line, hazards are a big deal and can lead to serious injuries to employees. We have all seen a hazard that didn't get addressed, and we know they are workplace injuries waiting to happen. Knowing what needs to be done and doing the right thing can be two different things. Let's make them one by doing the right thing in speaking up about hazards and getting them corrected before they become a really big deal!

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The company calls it the Yeti! Anecdotal in the name or not, this wet/dry vacuum truck is a beast. Based in LaGrange, Georgia, Blackwell's Inc. uses its vacuum trucks for hydroexcavation and air excavation for potholing, sewer pipe jetting, manhole rehabilitation and stormwater collection system maintenance. The unit shown here is a GapVax HV56 on a 2023 Kenworth T880 chassis with a 15-cubic-yard debris tank. This GapVax has a 1,000-gallon freshwater tank and is capable of 19 gpm at 2900 psi from its GIANT LP 200 pressure washer

system. The blower can produce 5250 cfm. The filtration system, with its six cyclonic separators, achieves very effective separation of heavier particles. The 40 filtration socks add an additional layer to help prevent secondary blowby. Equally important to the company in its industrial cleaning work is the truck's DPF/SCR exhaust/aftertreatment. The boom reach on this GapVax extends from 17 feet to 25 feet. Company president/CEO David Blackwell says the logo on the GapVax features the Blackwell's coat of arms from 12th century Anglo-Saxon ancestry. It was modified by adding a cross to the bottom of the crest. On the side of the truck is the quote "Safety, Integrity, Quality, Value, but above all Faith." More information on Blackwell's Inc. can be found at www.blackwells-inc.com.



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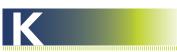
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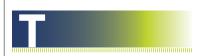


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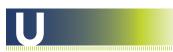


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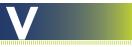
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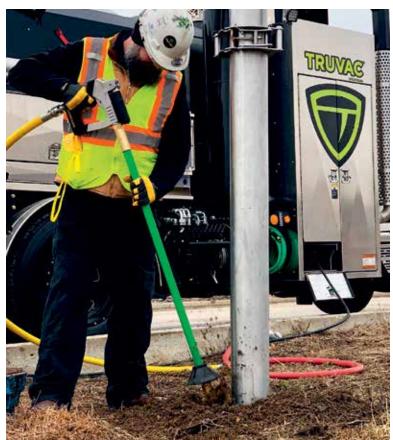
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#### **Pumps - Diaphragm**

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#### **Pumps - High Pressure**



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**Pow-r Mole Trenchless Solutions** 

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**Global Pump** 

866-360-7867 • www.globalpump.com

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by Sewer Equipment

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Pearpoint (USA)

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Vivax-Metrotech Corp.

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AGRU America, Inc.

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Tech Products, Inc.

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PE Equipment

406-499-8136 • www.pe-equipment.com Ad on page 37

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Source One Environmental 877-450-3701 • www.sleonline.com

**Warrior Trenchless Solutions** 

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#### **Suttner America Company**

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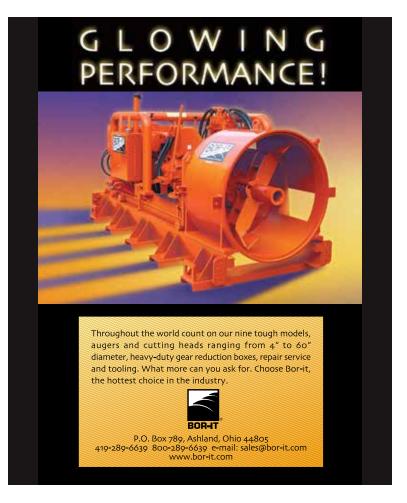
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Over 50 years of high-pressure pump manufacturing experience has earned Cat Pumps a reputation for producing the highest quality, longest lasting pumps in every market it serves. Engineers at Cat Pumps designed Model 2560 with 16 gpm at 3,000 psi and Model 2565 with 20 gpm at 2,500 psi for continuous-duty applications. The 2560 and 2565 pumps are dependable, high-quality products backed by outstanding customer service, training and support. BH versions have a machined-bearing cover to mate with the company's 76SAEC.25FR hydraulic bell housing so the 2560BH and 2565BH can be directly driven by an SAE C hydraulic motor. The compact direct drive allows for a space-saving footprint and is simple to install and maintain. 763-780-5440; www.catpumps.com



#### 2. Southco Universal Latch Sensor

Southco's Universal Latch Sensor is a simple magnet that attaches to an existing latch, and a magnetic sensor that attaches to the inside of an existing door frame. When the door is closed, and the latch is engaged, the magnet comes into proximity with the sensor, sending an electronic signal to a security system. This lets you know the door is closed and the latch is secure. The ULS can be used in a variety of ways, from integrating security systems, to turning on existing lights inside an enclosure. The ULS monitors the latch itself, so users always know if a door is closed, and the latch is secure. **610-459-4000**; www.southco.com

## This Issue's Feature:

# Agile excavator offers power in lightweight package

BY CRAIG MANDLI

When you work smaller jobs — the type that typically take only a few hours to complete — the ability to schedule several jobs a day is important. That means time is money.

For contractors looking for an excavator that can help complete jobs faster, **Komatsu's** upgraded **PC130LC-11** with a longer undercarriage design increases lifting capacity by up to 20% compared to the previous model. This durable, reliable and productive 97.2 hp small conventional tail-swing excavator is easily transportable, and according to Andrew Earing, director of tracked products for Komatsu, it offers a unique combination of lightweight power and agility in a small package.

"The upgraded PC130LC-11 excavator can easily handle a wide variety of utility work or small construction jobs," Earing says. "It provides a versatile workhorse for you as your business expands and grows."

Engineered for efficiency, the PC130LC-11 uses up to 12% less fuel than Komatsu's previous similar-sized model, the PC130-8. Fuel consumption on this excavator can also be reduced with an auto idle shutdown feature that can be set to automatically stop the engine after a preset amount of idle time. The Komatsu diesel oxidation catalyst helps reduce particulate matter by using passive regeneration over 98% of the time. An equipment management monitoring system continuously monitors machine operation and vital systems to identify machine issues and assist with troubleshooting.



PC130LC-11 from Komatsu

Komatsu excavators benefit from fast cycle times, seamless multifunction motions, exacting bucket movements and exceptional lifting capabilities. On the updated PC130LC-11, high hydraulic pressures help optimize high arm and bucket digging forces. For long-term durability, steel castings in the boom foot, boom nose and arm tip help spread working loads away from high-stress areas. In addition, a longer undercarriage design increases track length by 8%, improving lifting capacity by 20% versus the previous model. This new design also increases stability and can help to boost overall productivity. A variable-flow turbocharger improves engine response and provides optimum airflow under all speed and load conditions. The large one-piece hood, ground-level grease points, engine oil and fuel filters provide quick-and-easy service access for this upgraded excavator.

"A powerful engine and heavy-duty work equipment provide exceptional performance in an easy to transport package," says Earing. "A conventional cab provides a quiet, comfortable and spacious work environment."

847-437-5800; www.komatsu.com



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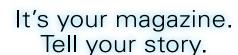
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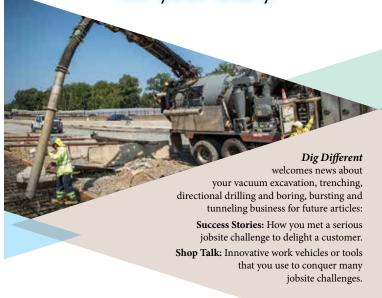






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#### THE LATEST:

## News

## Vanair expanding operations in Indiana

Vanair Manufacturing, based in Michigan City, Indiana, announced plans to expand its facilities and create additional employment opportunities in the region. The expansion project will involve the construction of a new facility and is expected to generate 75 new jobs. This is Vanair's third expansion in 15 years to accommodate the addition of new staff to meet the demand of rising sales.

# Ditch Witch enters agreement with HEC to offer HDD training

Ditch Witch has entered into a unique partnership with Heavy Equipment Colleges of America, a nationally accredited institution recognized by the Department of Education. Through this partnership, HEC is now a Ditch Witch authorized provider of training courses and brings instructor-led training that covers basic machine operation and job site safety applications. Course materials cover everything from proper PPE and job site preparation to the importance of traffic control and equipment inspection procedures. Participants will receive hands-on training in mud mixing and drilling, along with HDD tracking and locating.

#### Komatsu donates \$250,000 to Vision 2025 initiative

To address the current skills gap and workforce shortage issues facing OEMs and equipment distributors, the AED Foundation created Vision 2025. It's a project aimed at helping to increase the number of qualified technicians entering the equipment distribution industry. Komatsu announced it has contributed \$250,000 toward this important initiative. Vision 2025 aims to address these issues by growing the foundation's impact to include a minimum of 120 accredited college programs (currently 71) and a minimum of 200 recognized high school programs (currently 36).

#### Sierra Machinery acquired by ROMCO Equipment

ROMCO Equipment, a Volvo Construction Equipment dealer that has been serving Texas for over 60 years, is expanding its footprint in the Southwest with the acquisition of Sierra Machinery. ROMCO and its parent company, SMT, have acquired 100% of Sierra Machinery, which has been the exclusive Volvo CE dealer in southwestern Texas and southern New Mexico. SMT is a global Volvo Group dealer with Volvo CE distribution in North America, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and more than 26 African countries.

# CASE and Team Rubicon expand its heavy equipment operator training

Last fall, CASE Construction Equipment asked its dealers to help support a new initiative with Team Rubicon: train more volunteers to operate heavy equipment for its veteran-led humanitarian organization that serves global communities before, during and after disasters and crises. Earlier this year, the pilot program commenced with two of the interested CASE dealers: RPM Machinery, out of their Franklin, Indiana, location; and Lawrence Equipment, at their Roanoke, Virginia, store. On a monthly basis, these dealers provide machines for Team Rubicon volunteers to train on, an indoor classroom and outdoor operating space. This training has been put to use by Team Rubicon in all phases of the disaster cycle across the United States and Canada, including wildfire mitigation, hurricane response and long-term storm recovery. CASE and Team Rubicon plan to expand the number of dealers participating in this heavy equipment operator training program in 2024. ▼







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**Underground Contractors Association of Illinois Annual Convention**, Casa de Campo Resort, Dominican Republic. Visit uca.org.

Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. Visit

#### Feb. 22-23

Horizontal Directional Drilling Academy: Undergrounding Utility Infrastructure, Arizona State University SkySong Center, Scottsdale. Visit hddacademy.com.

#### March 4-13

Ohio Contractors Association Annual Convention, Fairmont Grand Del Mar San Diego, San Diego. Visit ohiocontractors.org.

**Underground Construction Technology International Confer**ence & Exhibition, Oklahoma City Convention Center, Oklahoma. Visit uctonline.com.

#### March 19-21

Global Excavation Safety Conference, Earnest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. Visit globalexcavationsafetyconference.com.

#### March 21-23

Mid-America Trucking Show, Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville. Visit www.truckingshow.com.

#### March 27-28

Atlantic Heavy Equipment Show, Moncton Coliseum, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. Visit ahes.ca.

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