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DCA NEWS

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022



**Feature Story:
When Pipelines
Grew on Trees**

**Fall Meeting
Convention**



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Pipe made of birch plywood, used in the 19th century

When Pipelines Grew on Trees

Lloyd Gillespie was on the hunt for a gas leak. The year was 1977 and he had been dispatched to River Forest, Illinois, a well-to-do suburb of Chicago and home to two universities and the old stomping grounds of luminaries like Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway. The Northern Illinois Gas Company crew that Gillespie worked for was digging up old cast iron gas pipe — often in such deteriorated condition it crumbled to the touch — to replace with more modern and corrosion-resistant lines.

Down in the trenches, the young laborer struck something hard — something made of wood. It wasn't totally unusual to hit tree roots or old construction debris, so he ignored it at first, until he struck it again a few feet away. As the covering dirt was cleared away, the older crew members started getting excited. They had uncovered a six-foot section of wooden pipe and, judging by the tar coating and the joints at both ends, it was clearly part of some of the oldest gas lines in Chicago.

Technically this wasn't the first time Gillespie had encountered such a thing; it had happened twice before. Both times, though, what he'd found had been little more than a few rotting shreds of wood barely recognizable as pipe. This line was in far better condition. After some discussion, a piece of the find was mounted on a plaque and presented to the vice president of Northern Illinois Gas, who figured the line had been installed about 1903. Gillespie also managed to save a piece as his own souvenir of work in the field, which still holds a place of pride in his home today.

Even 45 years ago, such a discovery seemed a bit puzzling. Who would try and run gas through a wooden pipe? Prone to warping, rotting, and cracking (not to mention burning), wood hardly seems like the safest material to transport flammable gas over long distances. And it's not — gas pipe has gone through several changes of increasingly safer material construction over the last century and a half, but as with all modern technologies, it had to start somewhere.



Source: Lloyd Gillespie
Location: River Forest, Illinois



Source: NUPI Americas, www.nupiamericas.com
Location: St. James Place & Madison Street, Manhattan, NY

The Dawn of the Gas Age

The first widespread commercial use for natural gas came in the form of gas lighting for street lamps. Invented in London in the 1790s by William Murdoch, the first lights used coal gas made from the distillation of coal, chosen from several candidate gases because it gave the brightest light. In 1807, Pall Mall in London became the first street in the world lit by gas. The idea quickly jumped the pond, with Baltimore becoming the first city in America to install gas streetlights in 1816 — four years before they debuted in Paris, the “City of Lights.” Pipelines carried gas to each lamppost along the street, where lamplighters would light them every evening and douse them the next morning.

In 1821, Fredonia, New York, saw the first successful natural gas well when William Hart noticed gas bubbles rising to the surface of Canada way Creek along the south shore of Lake Erie, where Native Americans had been lighting gases seeping from the shale outcrops for centuries. Hart's crew dug a 27-foot-deep hole with shovels to try to increase the flow. A pipe made from hollowed out logs coated with tar and rags delivered the captured gas to a nearby customer, who also purchased 30 burners to put it to use. Today Hart is considered “the father of natural gas.”

Two years later and a few miles south along the Erie lakeshore in Westfield, New York, another wooden pipe made of pine logs was run from the shale outcrops to the Barcelona Harbor lighthouse. A few other gas discoveries were known to have used wooden pipelines in the Appalachian basin around that time as well.

In 1836, the Philadelphia Gas Works opened as the first municipally owned gas distribution company (still the largest and oldest of its kind today) to fuel its streetlights. By 1841, cities as far-flung as Sydney, Australia, were installing their first gas lights, and using wooden pipes to supply them. In Chicago, the Chicago Gas Light & Coke Co. began selling gas for lighting in 1850, and on August 21, 1858, the Ottawa Gas Light and Coke Company provided light for the first of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates in nearby Ottawa, Illinois.

Also in 1858, a group of entrepreneurs would expand on William Hart's work to found the Fredonia Gas Light Company, the first private natural gas distribution company. The very next year, and a bit farther still down the south shore of Lake Erie, ‘Colonel’ Edwin Drake famously dug a well using an innovative iron pipe drive and struck oil and gas at a depth of just 69 feet for the Seneca Oil Company. A two-inch diameter pipeline was built to transport the gas five-and-a-half miles to the town of Titusville, Pennsylvania, proving that natural gas could be moved relatively safely and easily from its underground source to a paying customer. This was an important first step in replacing inefficient coal gas as the main source of light in modern cities.

Wooden Pipe Construction

Pipe construction in those early days was clearly not a standard affair. A coating of tar and cloth for sealant seems to be the most common element. The longer

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Source: Andy Brill, www.flickr.com

Location: Kent Street, Millers Point, Sydney, Australia

cross-country pipes at early sites like Fredonia (1821) were literally hollowed out tree trunks butted together end to end. Images of the 12-inch diameter pipe from Sydney, Australia (1841), show a barrel-like construction made of staves in the cross section, probably held together by iron hoops.

Lloyd Gillespie described the circa-1903 pipe he uncovered in River Forest as a solid piece of wood about eight or nine in outer diameter. An inner channel with a diameter varying anywhere from three to five inches appeared to have been burned out. The ends of the segment were butted square joints joined by a metal band. Gillespie believes this was likely a “gas main” at the time that would have branched off into still smaller distribution lines running to houses and street lamps.

A smaller diameter pipe likely dating to 1902 found by Tom Shepstone in Pennsylvania shows a clean, round outer casing with a neatly bored inner shaft that looks much more uniform than the pipe Gillespie found. It also had metal bands around the ends and what look like male-female joints in an accompanying video.

While this wild variation in quality is clearly appalling to any modern engineer, it's worth remembering that the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which sets standards for all manner of construction materials in the

U.S., didn't even exist in its earliest form until after World War I. Even for the highest quality of equipment and materials in the first century of the industrial revolution, standardization of design was a long way from reality. Building a pipeline to stretch miles across the countryside was up to the raw creativity of the driller and the availability of local materials in the earliest days, until the gas supply became sufficient to demand the need for a piping industry.

The Slow Replacement of Wood

The irony of the wooden pipeline era is that metal pipe-making technology had already been around for millennia. Ancient Egyptians had made metal pipes from copper as far back as 3000 B.C.E., and the word “plumbing” itself comes from *plumbum*, the Latin word for the lead they made their pipes out of. Cannons began their existence as simple cast-iron tubes in the 14th century, and of course guns required the manufacture of a finely-tooled metal barrel. In fact, William Murdoch, the aforementioned inventor of gas lighting, tried using metal pipe made from the barrels of discarded muskets joined together to distribute gas in his earliest systems.

In 1824, Englishman James Russell rose to the demand of the new gaslight industry by inventing the



Source: Lloyd Gillespie
Location: Ottawa, Illinois



Source: Tom Shepstone, www.naturalgasnow.org
Location: Honesdale, Pennsylvania

first manufacturing process for steel tubing involving a drop hammer and a rolling mill. His process was almost immediately surpassed in 1825 by Comenius Whitehouse's invention of butt-welding, which drew hot sheets of iron through a cone-shaped outlet to form a tube that was welded at the ends. Philadelphia opened its first pipe manufacturing plant using Whitehouse's process in 1832—four years before the formation of the Philadelphia Gas Works. Both methods generated a pipe with a welded seam, however, which was more likely to fail and leak. In the 1840s metalworkers began experimenting with drilling through a solid steel billet to create seamless pipes, but this proved inefficient and inconsistent until a better process was found in 1888 to cast a billet around a fireproof brick core. Meanwhile, the discovery of the Bessemer process in 1847 significantly increased the volume and efficiency of steel production in general.

So if steel pipe existed, and gaslight and steam power created a viable market for it, why keep using wood as late as 1900 in a place like Pennsylvania, the heart of the American steel industry? Or Chicago, just a short boat ride away through the Great Lakes? The likely answer is simply that lumber was cheap and plentiful, and the lowest bidder could get away with a lot in the golden age of laissez-faire capitalism. Old technologies have often lived side by side with their replacements far longer than anyone expected.

The dawn of the 20th century would be a critical turning point for the pipe industry, however. Just as new technologies had been developed to more easily make

seamless pipe, vast oil and gas fields were discovered in Texas and Henry Ford figured out how to mass produce automobiles. Demand for metal pipe skyrocketed just at the time supply learned how to keep up. As electric lights replaced gas light, the gas went to fuel the power plants instead. The intense mechanization for World War I drove nearly every industry to new heights and created demand for national engineering standards just as progressive political movements for workplace safety were gaining traction in popular culture. Together, these elements and more signaled the death knell of old, unreliable wood pipe.

Today, despite the odd sensational headline now and then, there is no evidence that any remaining wooden gas pipe in the U.S. is still actively transporting gas. Even if a handful are remarkably well-preserved, like the one Lloyd Gillespie found, they were replaced over a century ago by better, sturdier technology. What remains today serves as a powerful reminder of just how far the gas industry has come from its murky origins and that pioneer spirit of making things work with what they had available.

Story suggested by Lloyd Gillespie, Business Development Manager at INTREN.

If you have an idea for a future story in this newsletter, please submit it to Candace Green, DCA Director of communications, cgreen@dcaweb.org. ▲



2022 DCA Fall Meeting Wrap-Up

A cycle completed itself this October as DCA members returned for the second Fall Meeting since the great pandemic hiatus, marking the conclusion of a full year's regular meeting schedule for the first time since 2019. Gorgeous reds and golds speckled the landscape beneath the planes descending on Grand Rapids, Michigan, Monday afternoon for the short yet packed event. Gathering at the Rendezvous Bar in the lobby of the Amway Grand Plaza hotel on the banks of the Grand River, members picked up where they left off in Coeur d'Alene over the summer, enjoying drinks, dinner, and conversation as the skies turned from blue to gray outside the giant windows.

Bright and early Tuesday morning on October 25, the DCA kicked off a busy day with the Town Hall and Business Meeting in the Gerald R. Ford Ballroom, a grand classical hall built in the 1920s that Executive Vice President Rob Darden believed was one of the most beautiful rooms he'd ever held a meeting in. Darden opened with the numbers from the Treasurer's Report and the latest membership statistics, calling attention to the fact that the majority of members lost in the last year had never become active in the organization and discussing how the Strategic Vision Committee plans to attack this problem and others. One particular key is marketing — the DCA does a lot of work that members hear little



a proper energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables in places like Portland, Oregon. Though corporate tax rates are more competitive than they were a few years ago, the labor market is facing numerous challenges from declining confidence in capitalism to accelerated retirements. To counter these challenges, Manzella advocates for more legal immigration, more investment in training and employee benefits like day care and flexible hours, and more automation where suitable. Noting that globalization is like fire—it can keep you warm or it can burn your house down—he praised free-trade agreements and busted the myth of “buy American” programs, saying they raise prices and destroy more jobs than they create. Summing up, Manzella predicted that global instability is likely to continue, but labor shortages should improve slightly. In the current economy, he advised that risk reduction is more important right now than efficiency in your future planning.

The Membership Committee opened with the results of the latest equipment survey, which showed capital spending down by 20 percent in 2021-2022. They noted that less than half of all recipients filled out the survey last year, reminding the audience that the equipment survey is particularly valuable to associate members (equipment providers) and helps to justify their continued membership in the DCA. The survey is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete. They also reviewed the results of a membership participation survey, identifying member companies to approach later in an effort to encourage more participation. First-timer attendance reached 44 at the Mid Year Meeting and looked good so far at the Fall Meeting as well. Vince King briefly addressed the Strategic Vision Committee's work in concert with Membership, and asked members to be mindful to get the next generation involved.

The Workforce Development Committee started with a SkillsUSA update, reporting that a heavy equipment operator competition was in the works, which could be very beneficial for the DCA. They called for contractors to get involved to help build the challenge and define the necessary skills. Rob Darden urged those planning to attend the next SkillsUSA TECHSPO to reserve booths early, and a member suggested creating a TECHSPO guide to help attendees better prepare for the event. The Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) is still looking for more contractor involvement, particularly at the state level. Its Workforce Development Conference in Washington, D.C., will be back in person this year for the first time since Covid hit. The next DCA/AGA workforce panel will focus more on leadership development and

about, and the organization needs to promote it better to show new members what they're getting and give them more reason to engage.

Next it was time for the featured speaker of the event, John Manzella, author and editor of *The Manzella Report* on global business and economic news and analysis. His talk focused on “Economic Trends, Labor, Global Trade, & What's Ahead.” His core tenet is that the key to free-market capitalism is the ability to innovate new products and services and to deliver them worldwide. With that in mind, he worked his way through the long list of current risks to continued growth in that capability, ranging from the political unrest of people left behind by the modern economy to inflation, housing shortages, tensions with China, and possible food shortages due to Russia's war on Ukraine. Manzella lamented the lack of planning to make

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tools to foster people who know the work, but need people management skills. The committee debuted two more new videos from the BuildWitt campaign, and Jeri Lamerton of Lamerton Strategic Communications gave an overview of the marketing campaign she is developing for launch in January 2023.

Next, the Safety/Risk Management Committee announced the upcoming Safety Congress in New Orleans and the development of a new DCABesafe.com website before turning the stage over to speaker Tracy Messenger from ASTAR. Messenger's talk on best practices from the OQ Evaluator Program covered issues like scheduling, evaluator preparation, evaluator performance, and evaluator monitoring, each with the goal of ensuring that OQ evaluators meet the highest standards of professionalism when interacting with clients. During the audience feedback portion, one member predicted that new OQ rules in New York are likely to spread to other states soon, urging those present to pay close attention.

Javen Moore from Ditch Witch was the featured speaker for the Trenchless Committee, where he presented the advantages of auger boring as an alternative to trenching and directional drilling. The highlight was his segment on new electric auger boring

technology, which offers a wider speed range than diesel with consistent power, greater safety, versatility, and longevity, and better compliance with emissions regulations. Moore noted that electric is more popular overseas than in the U.S. right now, and though it costs more up front, the electric machines also last longer. Michael Ryback from InRock followed with the announcement of a new Texas-based organization, the Horizontal Directional Drilling Association (HDDA), formed to develop standards and offer training, and which is currently seeking feedback from the DCA and other organizations. Some discussion followed on how much the DCA should get involved with other like-minded organizations early on versus waiting and observing first. The committee also asked for feedback on how much the DCA Trenchless website is actually being used by members, and how to make it better.

The ever-busy Government Relations Committee began things with an update on fuel choice laws and the OQ pilot programs, noting that the pilots were doing well and showing proof of concept, so much so that a gas company in Michigan has already adopted the model for its own practice. Speaker Erin Kurilla, Vice President of Operations and Safety for the American Public Gas Association (APGA), described the PHMSA grant program



for public gas utilities to replace aging infrastructure and mitigate future methane emissions. Targeted mainly at smaller municipalities with less money, the program offers \$1 billion per year over five years and has already received more than 400 applications in its first year alone, particularly from the southeastern states. Other priorities for APGA advocacy include industry-related aspects of the Infrastructure Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, appliance efficiency standards like the Energy Star program, and keeping an eye on how agencies as diverse as the Department of the Treasury, SEC, CFTC, and FDIC talk about climate change risks and costs. Eben Wyman's legislative update followed with speculation on how a potential flip in control of Congress after the midterms could affect the flood of climate legislation from the current Congress. Wyman also touched on risk reduction, GIS mapping centralization, and arguments over the definition of contractor versus employee for purposes of benefits.

By that evening, damp, dreary weather had settled in and most members chose the shuttle to cross the Grand River to dinner at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, though a few hardy souls decided to walk the short distance from the hotel. Guests were given free roam to tour the museum upstairs while drinks were served in the

lobby below, near a donated section of the notorious Berlin Wall. Many were moved by Ford's story of service, sacrifice, and uncompromising decency during one of America's darkest scandals, with economic and political headwinds buffeting him at every turn. When dinner came out, Rob Darden took a moment to address the crowd from the staircase, where a giant stone presidential seal adorned the wall behind him. The special setting inspired many great discussions that evening as the Fall Meeting drew to a close.

The DCA will meet next at the historic Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida, February 20-25, 2023. Arrive in style to the hotel made famous by James Bond and Frank Sinatra and don't miss the special finale at the world-renowned Club LIV. ▲

Committee News

October 25 – 26, 2022 Meetings



The DCA Board of Directors (BOD) and five working committees met at the DCA Fall Meeting, October 24-26, 2022, at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Board of Directors

At the October 26 BOD meeting, board members approved the 2023 Board of Directors' ballot:

- President – Ray Swerdfeger, K.R. Swerdfeger Construction LLC
- Vice President – Mark Albert, AGI Construction Inc.
- Treasurer - Dan Carson, Carson Corporation
- Immediate Past President – Kevin Parker, Mears Holdings LLC
- Past President Director – Kevin Michels, Michels Crop.
- Director nominees (three to be elected to a two-year term): Bill Colson, Pretec Directional Drilling LLC; Chad Davis, Miller Pipeline; Rob Hotz, Laney Directional Drilling Co.; and Jim Lagios, Atlas Trenchless LLC
- Directors (one year remaining on a two-year term):

Doug Anderson, Hydrovac Excavators II LLC; Pete Fojtik, Michels Utility Services Inc.; and Doug Reeves, Primoris Services Corp.

- Director at Large – Andy Miller, Alex E. Paris Contracting Co. Inc.
- Senior Associate Member Director – Scott Cooper, Caterpillar Inc.
- Junior Associate Member Director nominees (one to be elected for two-year term): Dustin Kraft, Vermeer Corp. and Sarah Mahlik, TT Technologies Inc.

A full write-up of the 2023 Board of Director nominees will appear in the Jan/Feb 2023 *DCA News*. Elections will take place February 22, 2023, in conjunction with the 62nd DCA Annual Convention in Miami Beach, Florida.

The BOD announced that the 2023-24 scholarship amounts for the DCA-Dale R. Michels Scholarship and DCA-Curtis Allen Scholarship will total \$137,000, based on the current allocation formula. The BOD also approved \$3,000 for the Upton Scholarship, and revised convention sponsorship benefits. Updates on the Arthur

Everham Safety Award, the Strategic Vision Committee (SVC), and the DCA Future Leaders' Program were also given.

Membership Committee

The Membership committee met Tuesday, October 25, and reviewed several items:

- **Membership Summary** – Attendees reviewed the membership report presented to the BOD. Since the July meeting, two new contractor members and one new associate member has joined DCA. Five contractors and five associate members have been dropped, resigned, or merged with other members. As of the meeting, current membership was 85 contractor members and 115 associate members.
- **Prospective and Resigned Members** – It was noted that the pandemic and the resulting economic conditions have hurt the associate members. Attendees were asked to reach out to members who have dropped and encourage them to rejoin DCA. Chairs and volunteers will also be contacting inactive members about attending the annual 2023 meeting in Miami.
- **Impact Purchasing Study** – The link for the Impact Purchasing Study will be sent to all contractors in mid-November. The committee emphasized how important the compiled information is to the associate members for determining their financial commitment to DCA through convention sponsorship and the auction.
- **Membership Campaign** – DCA Executive Vice President Rob Darden announced that the membership committee will be working with the SVC on member participation and retention strategies, with emphasis on current member involvement.

The charge of the Membership committee is to actively solicit and evaluate potential DCA members and make recommendations on member programs and awards to help recruit and retain members in the association. The vice-chairmen are Mike Aydt of MP Technologies and Brad Everett of Caterpillar.

Workforce Development Committee

At their October 25th meeting, the Workforce Development committee meeting updated attendees on efforts since the July meeting.

- **SkillsUSA** – It was announced that the 2023 SkillsUSA Conference will be June 19-23 in Atlanta. For the first time, there will be a heavy equipment operator competition. Contractors interested in serving on the committee should contact Pete Fojtik. Booth space is available and all DCA members are encouraged to get involved.

- **Center for Workforce Development (CEWD) Update** – The CEWD Workforce Development Conference will be held November 15-17 in Washington, D.C. Programming is for everyone whose role touches workforce development and DCA contractors were encouraged to attend.
- **2023 Workforce/Professional Development Summit** – A DCA Workforce Summit and Professional Development Conference (PDC) is being planned for 2023. The event is expected to attract personnel from human resources, marketing, rising middle managers, and superintendents, with the emphasis on soft skills training. Dates will be announced soon.
- **2022 BuildWitt Video Update** – Two videos were presented involving backhoe & hydro excavator operators and welder/fusers. The remaining videos should be completed by Thanksgiving. A campaign to launch the eight videos will begin in January 2023 to target Gen Z and Millennials.
- **Workforce Development Efforts** – Are we reaching the right people? – There was a general discussion on sending the right personnel to the workforce trade-shows. The target audience is the younger generation, so companies should be sending younger employees to engage. It was suggested that there be an industry toolkit of talking points.

The charge of the Workforce Development committee is to develop, coordinate, and implement strategies to support the growth of the expanding work force within the industry. The committee accomplishes this through the promotion of the industry as a career by using the vast knowledge and leadership of the DCA membership, and promoting coordination with other industry professionals and national organizations. Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer Corp. and Pete Fojtik of Michels Utility Services are the vice-chairmen of the committee.

Safety/Risk Management Committee

Tracy Messenger, President of ASTAR, gave a presentation titled *OQ Evaluator Program: Best Practices* at the October 25 meeting. ASTAR is a new DCA associate member that specializes in OQ evaluations.

Committee attendees also received updates on:

- **Arthur Everham Safety Award Questionnaire** – The Arthur T. Everham Safety Award Questionnaire has had its final revisions and will be sent to all contractors in early November with a January deadline.
- **2023 Safety Congress** – The annual safety congress will be April 17-19 at the Royal Sonesta New Orleans. Chairmen for meeting will be announced soon. Registration will open February 1st.

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- **DCA Safety Microsite (www.dcabesafe.com)** – Jeri Lamerton, of Lamerton Strategic Communications, said the safety microsite is being formatted like the other sites but needs more content. The launch date is set for late December or early January.

The charge of the Safety/Risk Management committee is to review all information concerning safety in the industry and safe jobsite practices. The committee also has oversight for the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award and the Annual Safety Congress. Bill Colson of PreTec Directional Drilling and Randy Bunch of Aaron Enterprises are vice-chairmen.

Trenchless Committee

The Trenchless committee received a presentation and updates on several discussion items at their meeting.

- **Auger Boring Presentation** – Javen Moore of Ditch Witch gave a well-received presentation on *Auger Boring Advancements & the Current State of the Industry*.
- **Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC)** – A note from GPAC member Dr. Sam Ariaratnam said the committee is reviewing an issue with pipe trenchers on the jobsite after a worker's death.
- **NASTT Hall of Fame** – Kevin Miller of Miller Pipeline has been named to the NASTT Hall of Fame. The induction will be held during the NASTT No-Dig Show, April 30-May 4, 2023, in Portland, Oregon.
- **AGA Trenchless Workshop** – The AGA Trenchless Workshop will be held February 28-March 2, 2023, at the Loews Hotel in Atlanta. Questions may be directed to Alan Goodman of HammerHead or <https://www.aga.org/events-community/events/2023-aga-trenchless-technology-workshop/>.
- **Revamped Trenchless Website** – Attendees received an update on the DCA Trenchless website, www.dca-trenchless.com. The website is evolving and improving with new sections and more content. Members were encouraged to have their employees and co-workers review the site. The more clicks, the higher the site moves in search engines.

The charge of the Trenchless committee is to support safety, training, technical developments, and voluntary operational guides that sustain professional practices and contractors in the trenchless industry. The vice-chairmen of the committee are Rob Hotz of Laney Directional Drilling and Dustin Kraft of Vermeer Corp.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations committee received updates on pertinent topics at their October 25 meeting. For more

details about the following topics, please see the *DCA Insights* section of the *DCA News*.

- **Natural Gas Bans versus Fuel Choice Legislation** – DCA has worked with the Gas Bans Coalition for the past several years to preserve the key role of natural gas as a critical American energy source. While attacks are coming out of the U.S. Congress, the real fight has been and continues to be within the states.
- **Legislative Push re: 811 Study** – DCA's letter to state governments addresses state damage prevention performance and takes a different approach than traditional evaluations of state programs. The letter reflects DCA's position that implementing policy adjustments based on national recommendations provided in the 811 Emergency Report would bolster damage prevention and reduce inefficiencies that cost the nation almost \$61 billion every year.
- **OQ Integrity Process** – Brad Heck, Miller Pipeline and Chair of OQ Integrity Coalition (OQIP), provided an update on the pilot projects conducted as part of the OQ Integrity Process. The pilots are again up and running after many delays stemming from the Covid pandemic, and initial written reports on each pilot project are expected over the next few months.
- **American Public Gas Association (APGA)** – Erin Kurilla, Vice President of Operations and Pipeline Safety for the APGA, gave a presentation on PHMSA's new "Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Maintenance" (NGDISM) grant program.
- **Legislative Update** – Attendees were given brief updates on the impacts of the 2022 midterm elections and the 2023 agenda. When the 118th Congress commences in January 2023, DCA will continue to support implementation of the ~\$20 billion authorized by the bipartisan infrastructure package to facilitate demonstration projects that include pipeline construction projects to support carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS) efforts, as well as increasing use of hydrogen as a viable "clean energy" source. Pipeline safety will be another focus of DCA's agenda next year, where promotion of GIS mapping by pipeline operators will be a priority issue.

The charge of the Government Relations committee is to target specific regulatory and legislative items and report their findings through the following publications: *DCA Insights*, *DCA News*, and the DCA website. The vice-chairmen are Andy Miller of Alex E. Paris Contracting and Brad Burris of National Equipment Dealers.

The next BOD, leadership council, and committee meetings will be in conjunction with the 2023 DCA Convention, February 20-25, at the Fontainebleau Miami Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida. ▲

Calendar

DCA & Industry Events

2023

FEBRUARY 7-11

Pipe Line Contractors Association (PLCA)
2023 Convention
Grand Hyatt Kauai
Kauai, Hawaii
www.plca.org

FEBRUARY 7-9

Underground Technology Conference (UCT)
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Florida
www.uctonline.com

FEBRUARY 14-16

Global Excavation Safety Conference
Tampa Convention Center
Tampa, Florida
www.globalexceptionsafetyconference.com

FEBRUARY 20-25

DCA 2023 Convention
Fontainebleau Hotel
Miami Beach, Florida
www.dcaweb.org

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 3

AGA Trenchless Technology Workshop
Loews Atlanta Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia
www.aga.org

2023 (cont.)

MARCH 3-8

PCCA Annual Convention
Eden Roc/Nobu Hotel
Miami, Florida
info@pccaweb.org

MARCH 14-18

CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.conexpoconagg.com

MARCH 27-29

DCA & AGA Workshop
Trump International Hotel & Tower
Chicago, Illinois
www.dcaweb.org

APRIL 17-19

DCA 2023 Safety Congress
Royal Sonesta New Orleans
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.dcaweb.org

APRIL 30 - MAY 4

NASTT 2023 No-Dig Show
Oregon Convention Center
Portland, Oregon
www.nodigshow.com

ATTENTION ALL DCA MEMBERS!

So you do not miss out on future meeting and event notices, please have your company's IT representative whitelist all emails from dcaweb.org. If you have any questions, please contact Teri Korson at tkorson@dcaweb.org.

Registration is Open: www.dcaweb.org





DCA 2023 CONVENTION

FONTAINEBLEAU MIAMI
FEBRUARY 20-25







DCA 2023-24 Scholarship Applications

The application process for the 2023-24 DCA-Dale R. Michels Scholarship and Curtis Allen Scholarship is open on the DCA website at: <https://dcaweb.org/page/Scholarship>.

All applications will be completed online.

Students should click on the link above, scroll down the page to find the scholarship they are interested in, click the button, and follow the instructions, including how to upload a transcript in PDF format.

Basic guidelines:

- **The DCA–Dale R. Michels Scholarship** encourages students from all academic levels to apply. The **Curtis H. Allen Scholarship** focuses on those planning to attend a trade, technical, or vocational school.
- Applications must include an unofficial or official copy of a transcript. See the specific scholarship for the correct transcript that should be uploaded.
- All applications and supporting documents must be completed no later than **Thursday, January 12, 2023**.
- If DCA receives more than three applications from a member company for either scholarship, the member company will be asked to review and select three for inclusion in the application pool.
- The winning applicants will be awarded an unspecified amount of financial aid for the 2023-24 academic year. This amount could be renewable for up to four years with proof of academic success for the Michels scholarship and two years for the Allen scholarship.
- Financial need, academic major, and community service will be considered by the scholarship committees.

The DCA-Dale R. Michels Scholarship Committee is comprised of: the DCA President, Treasurer, Past President Director, Associate Member Director, and up to five members appointed by the DCA President.

The Curtis H. Allen Scholarship Committee is comprised of: the DCA Vice President, DCA Director at Large, DCA Alternate Associate Member Director, two Halliburton Representatives, and one member appointed by the DCA President.

Contact tkorson@dcaweb.org if you have any questions. ▲

Industry News

U.S. Gas Production Hits Record High, Storage Still Trails



The record production contributed to September's natural gas stock builds of 428 Bcf, which were 20% higher than the five-year (2017–2021) average. Despite the above-average builds, natural gas inventories at the end of the month were 3,135 Bcf, which is 8%, or 280 Bcf, below the five-year average.

U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports averaged 10.1 Bcf/d in September, as liquefaction terminals other than the off-line Freeport terminal operated near full capacity.

The 12-month rolling average of natural gas demand has exceeded supply since February 2021, which has contributed to an elevated Henry Hub spot price that doubled between June 2021 and July 2022. Monthly storage inventories have remained below the five-year average since June 2021, except in December 2021, when unusually warm weather led to lower-than-normal storage withdrawals.

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects the Henry Hub spot price to remain elevated until the second quarter of 2023 when it forecasts the 12-month rolling average of supply to rise closer to average

demand and inventories to rise above the five-year average.

As a result of higher forecast natural gas prices and consumption, EIA analysts expect households that use natural gas as their primary space heating fuel will spend 28% more this winter (October 2022 through March 2023) than they spent last winter. Nearly half of all U.S. households heat primarily with natural gas. The EIA expects average household winter consumption to be 58,000 million cubic feet (Mcf), up 5% from last winter.

The EIA forecasts the Henry Hub spot price will start to decline in the first half of 2023 as producers continue to increase supply. In the first three quarters of 2022, U.S. dry natural gas production grew steadily. The EIA forecast that dry natural gas production would continue to increase, averaging 99.1 Bcf/d in 4Q22.

EIA analysts expect natural gas spot prices to remain elevated in late 2022 before falling in 2023. They forecast the Henry Hub spot price to average about \$7.40/MMBtu in 4Q22, then fall below \$6.00/MMBtu in 2023 as U.S. natural gas production rises. ▲

Trenchless Technology Center Report: TTC Research Initiatives Booming

The Trenchless Technology Center (TTC) at Louisiana Tech University — a leader in trenchless education and research, and industry workforce development and training — is in the midst of the most active research year in its 33-year existence. The TTC, which serves trenchless technology manufacturers, contractors, engineers, and owners, has recovered from the lull of the global pandemic in all aspects except in-person training, which is expected to bounce back.

Research and Development

Currently, TTC has more than 15 active research projects underway, and approximately five that were completed during the past year. The majority continue to be funded by industry, although government-related projects at both the state and federal levels increased in 2022. Studies continued to explore the potential impacts of CIPP emissions from steam-cured projects.

Most recently, the team focused on examining the impact of different internal barrier coatings on the release of styrene while the liners are stored in the transport truck. Led by Dr. Shaurav Alam, TTC Associate Director for Research, this study was performed for NASSCO. It will be published and will detail the breakthrough times of emissions on working trucks by varying the coating materials and thicknesses on the uncured CIPP liners. Additionally, TTC researchers led by Dr. Jason Howell have developed a styrene mitigation device that can be used during liner curing to eliminate virtually all styrene emissions from the exhaust stack.

Dr. Alam also led internally funded work this year in the area of innovative materials. His team has been investigating innovative cementitious materials for infrastructure components and coatings, as well as innovative curing of both construction materials and pipe lining materials. The findings have potentially widespread impacts for the construction industry.

Dr. Sudhir Amritphale has been exploring various applications for innovative cementitious and geopolymer materials with exciting new benefits, recently resulting in a large (more than \$1 million) project with the U.S.

Air Force. Meanwhile, Dr. Arun Jaganathan, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering, is a thought leader in the area of non-destructive testing (NDT), obstacle detection, and its application to solve problems related to in-pipe inspection, through-wall defect detection, and obstacle avoidance.

TTC is currently in talks with various energy agencies to apply its expertise to oil and gas pipelines and power undergrounding challenges by further developing testing methods and protocols for innovative materials and designs. The most recent focus has been on spray-in-place pipe (SIPP) materials for large-diameter pressure pipes and long-term validation of CIPP pressure pipe materials, as well as evaluating installation loading for CIPP materials to improve productivity.

TTC conducts many non-standardized tests due to the fact that many of the materials/methods in the trenchless industry are on the cutting edge of technology. Despite this fact, TTC has been able to meet ISO 17-025 standards and has the ability to add more tests to its accreditation in the future, if needed.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Industry/University Collaborative Research Center (I/UCRC), which TTC is heavily involved, is currently completing its first-year projects. Known as the Center for Innovations in Structural Integrity Assurance (CISIA), the research focuses on a variety of structural integrity-related issues, including sensing, inspection, testing, analysis, and prediction, which are strengths of both center sites for various industries. Currently CISIA has seven industry members (Aegion, Baker Hughes, Dow, Lockheed Martin, Meld, Mide/Hutchinson, and Shell) and is currently recruiting additional members and projects for year two. ▲

Insights



2022 Midterm Elections Fail to Deliver GOP “Wave” – Democrats Retain Senate

In what turned out to be a very unpredictable election season, Democrats managed to avoid the dreaded “wave” that is so common in midterm elections, where the party of the sitting president is often subject to significant losses in both chambers of Congress. This year’s races resulted in Democrats retaining control of the Senate after incumbent Democrat Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto was declared the winner of a closely contested race in Nevada. Sen. Cortez Masto’s victory over Republican Adam Laxalt was the death knell for GOP hopes to control the Senate when the 118th Congress convenes in January 2023. This effectively means that the Georgia Senate runoff election in December will only determine the margin that Democrats have in the chamber, rather than control itself.

So, now what? Congress returned to Washington in mid-November in an unsettled political environment that will serve as the backdrop for a robust year-end push on spending, taxes and, potentially, raising the debt limit, in a “lame duck” session in the remaining weeks of 2022. At press time, Republicans appeared on course to gain a narrow House majority next year, putting Democrats under enormous pressure to finish FY 2023 spending bills and

enact any other Democratic priorities in the remaining days of single-party control in Washington.

Permitting Reform Still Possible in Lame Duck

President Joe Biden wants to see an energy permitting bill supported by Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) passed in the remaining weeks of the year, although passage of the measure this year is by no means certain. The proposal aims to speed energy project permits in a way that benefits both fossil fuel production and renewable projects. This policy is of course strongly opposed by liberal Democrats and collapsed in September when Republicans refused to back Manchin’s version of the bill as part of the last stop-gap spending bill. Manchin has said he intends to make changes to get Republicans on board. Whether he will succeed remains to be seen.

At the time this was written, Republicans were a handful (seven) seats away from retaking the U.S. House, albeit by a very narrow margin. Future editions of DCA Insights will explain changes in committees of interest to the association and the agenda moving forward, but for now a few things are crystal clear: Republican control will at least slow down consideration of overzealous climate proposals, at least in the House of Representatives; Democratic con-

trol of the Senate will allow for harmful energy proposals to be considered and advanced; and the onslaught of harmful regulatory proposals and executive actions from the Biden administration should not be expected to go away anytime soon.

In other words, the gas distribution construction industry has a lot of advocacy work coming its way.

CGA Expands Scope, Outreach, and Influence in 2022

DCA remains an active member of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the leading underground infrastructure damage prevention organization in North America. This year, CGA has quite a bit to be proud of, releasing another stakeholder white paper evaluating gas distribution operations and related damage prevention efforts and another insightful report on CGA's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT), and making progress on a number of issues included in the "Next Practices" initiative. Perhaps most important to DCA, the organization in 2022 established the Damage Prevention Institute (DPI), which will rely on industry-leading insights to develop performance metrics that reflect adherence to CGA Best Practices and a true commitment to improving the reliability of the nation's damage prevention system.

The following describes the latest activities and supporting literature regarding leading efforts coming out of CGA. Information on all of these reports, programs, and initiatives can be found at www.commongroundalliance.com.

White Paper on Gas Distribution

In September 2022, CGA released a white paper based on recent research among natural gas distribution stakeholders. The white paper, entitled "Natural Gas: Leading the Damage Prevention Industry," analyzes data from a survey of some 180 individuals and from 15 interviews with decision makers in the industry to better understand the perceptions of gas distribution operators and related initiatives around damage prevention.

CGA's research shows that there is a strong emphasis on safety and damage prevention among gas distribution operators that gives them an opportunity to influence other stakeholders for improved damage prevention and safety outcomes. As a heavily regulated, high-consequence facility, the gas distribution industry is subject to rigorous requirements and CGA contends gas operators are therefore incentivized to invest in effective damage prevention awareness and training.

The CGA white paper summarizes data from the survey and one-on-one interviews with natural gas distribution professionals and consolidates them into four key takeaways:

- Natural gas distribution stakeholders are deeply engaged in damage prevention and can expand what they perceive as their central role in the industry.

- Shifting the focus to internal processes and programs is more likely to drive immediate industry-wide improvements.
- Improving locating through greater emphasis on mapping and fair contracts could help advance U.S. damage prevention as a whole.
- Seizing opportunities to increase investments in technology will be critical to reducing damages to natural gas facilities.

The third takeaway is particularly encouraging. Excavation contractors have long complained about the lack of quality maps provided by certain facility operators. While the problem is not limited to any specific underground facility operator, DCA appreciates that gas distribution operators are beginning to recognize the merits of today's mapping technologies, especially geographic information systems (GIS) that manage, analyze, and map all types of data. GIS connects data to a map, integrating location data with a range of descriptive information regarding the area of excavation.

Contractual language also matters. CGA's white paper describes how gas distribution operators can more efficiently prevent excavation damage by focusing on two CGA Next Practices opportunities: the need for improved facility mapping, and fair contracts with other stakeholders that make damage prevention a priority.

In fact, according to CGA, "natural gas distribution stakeholders' relationships with contract locators and third-party excavators can also help restore confidence and reliability in the U.S. damage prevention system," and "[l]ocate contract structure can have a significant impact on safety outcomes..."

CGA has previously published white papers examining the roles of two other key stakeholder groups in damage prevention: excavators and locators. Updated facility maps were a nearly unanimous request from locators surveyed for CGA's white paper on facility locating: *99% of locators said more up-to-date maps would be an effective method to improve locating*. While they may not emphasize how improved facility locating can help resolve stubborn damage rates, 61% of natural gas employees surveyed expressed high hopes for mapping and locating/marketing technology's abilities to reduce damages.

The main point here is that providing updated maps is increasingly considered the most effective way to improve the facility locating process. The fact that these sentiments are now coming from gas distribution operators is very encouraging in ongoing efforts to promote shared responsibility in damage prevention.

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2021 DIRT Report

Only a few years after its establishment in 2000, CGA rolled out the DIRT program, a secure web-based program for reporting excavation-related damages and near-miss events involving subsurface utilities. Every year hundreds of thousands of excavation-related damages occur in North America, and collected data is used to gain understand of where, how, and why these damages and near-misses are occurring.

Data from all contributing stakeholders is aggregated and summary trend analyses are performed to identify ways to reduce these incidents. CGA and its Data Reporting & Evaluation Committee use the data submitted to DIRT to produce annual reports and supplemental material to provide a comprehensive account and analysis of excavation-related damages and near-miss events to buried infrastructure in North America.

Because of Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill"), in addition to already-record high construction activity, the DIRT Report will continue to be critical to damage prevention. CGA's analysis of damage trends reveals that over the last few years, damages have plateaued or slightly increased.

Root cause analysis continues to paint a clear picture, where the vast majority of damages are caused by: 1) digging without notification to the one call center/811; 2) excavators failing to pothole and failing to maintain sufficient clearance between digging equipment and buried facilities; and 3) facilities not being marked or being marked inaccurately due to locator error and/or incorrect facility records/maps.

Natural gas and telecommunications (including broadband and cable TV) are the facilities that incur the most damages, with excavation practices contributing to the majority of natural gas damages and locating practices contributing to the majority of telecom damages. According to the 2021 DIRT Report, telecom facilities are damaged at shallower depths and by facility owners themselves, their subcontractors, or other service providers within their industry about twice as often as natural gas facilities.

The latest DIRT Report also addressed horizontal directional drilling (HDD), an important practice in the gas distribution construction industry and therefore an important issue area for DCA. Three main points in the DIRT Report regarding HDD are:

- When HDD is utilized, excavators (and engineers) are the leading source of damage reports, locating is the leading root cause group identified, and telecommunications is the leading type of work performed.

- Many damages involving HDD are facility operators or their subcontractors hitting each other and/or themselves.
- HDD projects can be expected to increase in future years due to increased infrastructure spending.

2022 CGA Technology Report

In July, CGA published its fifth annual Technology Report. CGA's Technology Committee's work focuses on highlighting innovative ideas and incentivizing the next generation of damage prevention technology, and the 2022 report showcases new technology applications, integrations, and insights.

Case studies submitted to the Technology Committee feature cutting-edge damage prevention technology applications that are driving real successes in the field. Important insights about challenges to integration and adoption of new technologies within the damage prevention industry that are hampering ongoing efforts to drive down the annual rate of damages. To meaningfully reduce damages, it is important for all stakeholders to consider how their investments in technology and integration can make a more positive impact on damage prevention.

This year, CGA also rolled out a new technology hub to provide enhanced access to information about damage prevention technologies. The new microsite provides details of CGA technology reports, case studies, and other information, identifies the stakeholder group(s) the technology is intended for, and gives users the ability to search and filter by stakeholder.

The technology hub classifies information into seven categories:

- **Encroachment** – Detection of when and where excavation activity is getting close to buried lines.
- **Facility installation** – Reducing the chance of damage to other buried facilities during installation.
- **Locating** – Equipment, techniques, and training.
- **Mapping** – Increased accuracy, accessibility, and/or reducing cost or time to complete mapping.
- **Pipeline integrity** – Maintaining pipeline integrity, including detection and mitigation of cross bores.
- **Positioning** – Incorporating GPS/GNSS satellites to identify the position of buried lines and/ or other items such as excavation equipment, locating devices, persons, and vehicles.
- **Software** – Incorporating software to enable digital collection, storage, and sharing of data, use on mobile devices, desktops, etc.

CGA's Damage Prevention Institute (DPI)

Any DCA member who has been active in the association over the past seven years remembers how the excavation contracting community reacted to the initial rollout of the Gold Shovel Standard (GSS) in 2016. The mandatory, one-sided, and punitive nature of the program was of immediate concern, and the fact that a very few contractors were consulted before its rollout only made matters worse. After several years of sometimes intense discussion of the merits of GSS between facility operators and the excavation industry, it was clear that GSS, as introduced, would not gain 'buy in' from contract excavators.

In recent years, CGA and leaders of the Gold Shovel Association implemented a plan to merge both groups. This will allow for the productive concepts of GSS to be included in CGA's purview, namely the establishment of performance metrics and evaluation of damage prevention programs through a peer review process. In 2022, CGA established the DPI to address systemic inefficiencies in the damage prevention process through a metrics-focused, peer-reviewed model of shared accountability that serves all stakeholders. DPI will be formally launched in January 2023.

Participation in the DPI is open to all CGA members, and former members of GSA will automatically become DPI participants in 2023. The big difference is that participation in the DPI is and will continue to be voluntary, and all CGA members are eligible to voluntarily participate in DPI at no additional cost. Participating organizations must be members of CGA and must agree to submit data into the CGA DIRT system.

DPI will announce additional information about data submission and other participation requirements, but the acquisition of GSS by CGA, and the remarkable changes to the approach to measuring performance in the damage prevention process, should be considered very good news for our industry. DCA has always expressed that metrics are critical to measuring performance, but performance of all stakeholders should be measured, and the process should be voluntary and overseen by CGA. Needless to say, in the end, DCA was very pleased with the establishment of DPI and the general direction the way CGA is heading. ▲



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2023 HDD Academy
February 16-17, 2023 – Scottsdale, Arizona

Member News



Robert C. "Bob" Osborn

Robert C. "Bob" Osborn, President of Michels Energy Group, Wins 2022 Pipeline Leadership Award

The 2022 Pipeline Leadership Award will be presented to Robert C. "Bob" Osborn at the Pipeline Leadership Conference, Nov. 15-16, in Houston, Texas, organized by Benjamin Media Inc., publisher of North American Energy Pipelines, in cooperation with Continuum Capital.

As President of Michels Energy Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of Michels Corporation, Bob Osborn is responsible for all aspects of pipeline, natural gas distribution, and electrical power construction operations across the United States.

"The reputation Bob has built for Michels pipeline construction services and the quality of the team he has assembled speaks for itself," says Pat Michels, President and CEO of Michels Corporation. "Beyond that, Bob is respectful of the pipeline industry's past at the same time he is leading it into the future to support energy transition needs."

Osborn joined Michels in 2001 as vice president of pipeline construction operations. In ensuing years, Osborn helped to grow Michels into one of the largest full-service pipeline contractors in North America. He was promoted to Senior Group President of Energy in 2019 before taking the helm at Michels Energy Group.

Outside of his duties at Michels, Osborn is an active participant in the industry, having been elected president of the Pipe Line Contractors Association (PLCA) in 2017

and serving on the PLCA board of directors, PLCA Labor Negotiating Committee, International Laborers Training Steering Committee, and Teamsters Pension Fund.

Osborn's leadership has led to the successful completion of numerous energy pipeline projects throughout his 40 years in the industry. It's this reputation for safety and hard work that has earned Osborn the 2022 Pipeline Leadership Award.

"Bob Osborn embodies the work ethic, safety commitment and dedication prevalent in the hard-working folks who build a critical part of America's energy infrastructure," said Mike Prior, P. Eng., Senior Strategic Advisor, Michels Canada. "Bob's experience and personal integrity make him an effective, energizing leader regardless of whether he is visiting with crews in the field, asking hundreds of workers on a spread to focus on safety, or interacting with executives and political leaders."

"Bob literally grew up in the pipeline industry, starting as a laborer and advancing into the highest levels of leadership," Pat Michels says. "He brings a unique perspective as a pipeliner and a businessperson, which allows him to focus on the sustainability of the industry, as well as the importance of the invaluable people who perform the work. In the industry and at Michels, Bob is unflinchingly committed to safety, quality and environmental performance, making him an important steward of the pipeline industry."

"Bob has set a very high standard of expectations and then assembled a nationwide team to enact his vision," Michels continues. "He is always accessible and available when needed, yet trusts his team to perform work and to act in accordance with Michels standards. In addition, Bob is also a visible leader, frequently visiting jobsites and meeting with crews. He is as comfortable meeting with crews in the field as he is with executives in a boardroom. He exemplifies Michels core values at every step along the way."



Ditch Witch

The Toro Company to Expand Ditch Witch Operations in Perry, Oklahoma

Officials from The Toro Company recently announced the company will be expanding its Perry, Oklahoma, manufacturing facility, home to Ditch Witch and other leading construction brands. The move is expected to bring up to 100 new jobs to the rural community and expand its current building by an additional 200,000 square feet.

The Toro Company, based in Bloomington, Minnesota, is the parent company of Ditch Witch, which first started operations in Perry more than 80 years ago. The expansion further reinforces the company's long-standing commitment to the Perry community and the State of Oklahoma and positions the company to support future growth.

"This investment in the Perry facility expands our manufacturing capacity, reinforces our commitment to the community and the many customers we serve around the world, and ultimately helps us continue to produce the world-class products Ditch Witch is known for well into the future," said Rick Rodier, Group Vice President of Construction, Contractor, and Residential Businesses at The Toro Company.

As part of The Toro Company's expansion agreement, the company was awarded \$6 million through the Business Expansion Incentive Program by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. The funds will be used for road improvements in front of the existing and expanded facilities.

"The expansion of The Toro Company facility in Perry is a great win for Oklahoma," said Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt. "I am proud of partners like the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for their conjoined effort in continuing Oklahoma's economic development while adding new jobs to Perry."

Ditch Witch specializes in the manufacturing of underground construction equipment and is a leading source

for trenchers, horizontal directional drilling systems, mini skid steers, and more. Ditch Witch traces its roots in Perry back to 1902 and has been its largest employer since 1949. Today, the company employs more than 1,600 people in the community. The growth of operations in Perry will allow the company to increase efficiencies and improve its production to better serve its worldwide customer base.

"Growth is so important to show our commitment to operational excellence," said Kevin Carpenter, Vice President, Global Operations and Integrated Supply Chain at The Toro Company. "It is such an exciting time for the company and we are proud to invest in the Perry facility to further our operational efficiencies that ultimately will better enable us to deliver our great product made by great people to our customers."

Larry Pannell, City Manager of Perry, highlighted the partnerships and teamwork that helped push this critical project to the finish line. "Economic development in smaller communities is often challenging, especially in the economic climate we are all currently experiencing. However, with the right entities working together with one singular focus, beneficial progress can be achieved for all parties. That is the case with the Ditch Witch expansion project now underway in Perry," said Pannell.



Caterpillar

WMCC Breaks Ground with Support from Milton CAT, Caterpillar

White Mountains Community College (WMCC) in Berlin, New Hampshire, recently broke ground on its new Advanced Technology Building at its Littleton Academic Center with support from Milton CAT and Caterpillar.

Students, faculty, community members, and dignitaries including Gov. Chris Sununu, gathered to celebrate

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a shared goal of improving access to quality education, increasing regional recruitment, and helping WMCC meet current and future workforce needs in the North Country by growing high-demand programs.

The 10,000-square-foot building will be home to WMCC's Diesel Heavy Equipment Technology program as well as an innovation lab, a welding lab, and flexible learning spaces.

In March, Milton CAT made a \$200,000 donation to support the construction, equipment, infrastructure, and program development for the Advanced Technology Building as part of WMCC's larger Build Community Expansion. Following Milton CAT's donation, Caterpillar donated \$25,000 as part of the Caterpillar Dealer Excellence Fund (DEF). The DEF program aims to strengthen schools' technical curriculum and faculty development in hopes of increasing the number of qualified technicians in the heavy equipment industry.

"We're excited about continuing to build partnerships with the greater Littleton community and with their support, we are proud to be breaking ground for our new Advanced Technology Building, which is being built with

the everchanging needs of our local workforce in mind," WMCC President Chuck Lloyd explained." The generous support from Milton CAT and Caterpillar Inc. has been instrumental in helping us get this project under way to train the next generation of technicians and mechanics."

Throughout the years, Milton CAT has donated machines, diagnostic equipment, engines, and PPE to the college; led workshops; assisted with instructor development; and provided students with internship, co-op, scholarship, and employment opportunities.

"Access to high-quality technical and safety training can truly change the lives of students and those within our community. We are so proud to be able to give back by supporting such an important pillar of our community as WMCC," Chris Robichaud, Milton CAT representative, said.

WMCC is one of seven community colleges in New Hampshire. It offers 48 unique programs ranging from culinary arts to industrial mechanics. Its Diesel Heavy Equipment Technology program is the only program in New England accredited by the Associated Equipment Distributors (AED).

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McElroy

McElroy Announces Latest In Line Of Industry-Leading Fusion Equipment

As pipe fusion standards and methods continue to evolve, McElroy®, the world's leading manufacturer of thermoplastic fusion machines, presents the latest in its line of rugged, industry-leading equipment.

The Tritan™ 560 is the newest member of the McElroy lineup. It combines features of three of McElroy's most innovative machines: the rugged portability and technology of the TracStar® iSeries, pipe loading capabilities of the Talon™ 2000, and the ability to meet the pipe where it lays, found in the Acrobat™ QuikFit® carriages. With a full 360-degree rotation and a boom that can raise, extend, and curl the carriage to approach and load pipe, the Tritan boosts jobsite efficiency and improves workplace safety by eliminating the need to top-load pipe into the fusion machine.

The Tritan™ 560 aids in pipe positioning, allowing for more flexibility and increased performance and productivity. With the same rugged, dual rubber tracks found on McElroy TracStar® machines, the Tritan offers all-terrain mobility to easily travel across a variety of terrains and can be driven directly to and from the pipe itself. By building off the legacy and design of multiple McElroy® units, the Tritan minimizes the amount of time spent between fusions while also letting the machine work in tight areas. ▲



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Century Products

www.centuryproducts.net

Century Products is a privately held custom design and manufacturing firm serving the global HDD industry. Headquartered in Sussex, Wisconsin with representation in Brazil, Canada, Europe and Mexico, they provide worldwide sales across America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific Rim.

Century Products offers a wide selection of HDD tooling & HDD supplies designed for rigs large to small.



Darby Equipment Company

www.darbyequip.com

Darby Equipment is a leading manufacturer and distributor of pipeline equipment located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The company manufactures 6 to 48-inch pipe bending equipment, pipe facing machines, line-up clamps, roller cradles, bending mandrels and other pipeline supplies. In addition to its Tulsa facility, the company maintains equipment at customer locations and leased locations in many states and can ship equipment and service personnel nearly anywhere in the world.



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