

From the President



Rick Throop
MSTA President

As fall arrives and the end of 2020 is around the corner, I wonder what the future holds for us all. Hopefully a new year will bring changes that lead to something more “normal”. I hope that, all things considered, 2020 was a prosperous year for everyone and that all of your friends and family are continuing to stay safe and healthy. I do want to thank everyone who was able to attend our fall virtual meeting via Zoom. I felt it went very smoothly considering it was a new approach and a possible view of our future meetings. I did miss seeing and speaking to all of you and do pray that is not what the future looks like. I will say it worked well for me as I am not usually able to attend the fall meeting due to coaching football games every Saturday in the fall.

Now we can all look forward to 2021!!! Unfortunately, as I’m sure most of you are already aware, it won’t be starting that great for MSTA. We had to cancel the annual wastewater conference at the Kellogg Center. That is a very enjoyable way to get motivated for the start of a new year and talk about the previous years ups and downs. I will continue to miss seeing everyone and discussing the issues we all face, however please feel free to email or call me any time. I do remain positive that this new way of life we all are dealing with will soon pass and move to better things in 2021.

With all that being said, I encourage you all to ask yourself what needs to be done in your own businesses. Is it new equipment, big or small? Hiring or firing an employee? What is it for you? We are all moving toward our slower time of year and I always find the gears turning in my mind. We all do this for the same reason and it is to make money, profit is not a bad word. Like any business that is why we do what we do. It’s not the most glamorous job but it is definitely essential. For me this has been the first time we have been having trouble getting people to pay their bills. I feel fortunate that I am able to say that but it is frustrating none the less. I always try to move past the frustration and look for the solution whatever it may be and that is what hope for everyone. It is very easy to become down in today’s world so I would again encourage positive steps in your business and life.

Lastly, I want to thank all our members for their continual support of our association. Some members still have raffle tickets for sale and if you can help to sell some, I would ask that you contact Karlyn so she can send you some. Myself and a few other board members will be traveling to Lansing on January 13th to do the raffle drawing via Zoom so results will be known that day. Invitations will be sent out for that Zoom meeting for those who wish to attend. Again, thank you again for all the member support and look forward to see everyone soon.

Thank You,
Rick Throop
MSTA President



The Fall Virtual Meeting was a success!

Well, we did it!! We hosted our first “Virtual Meeting” in place of the in-person meeting which takes place every October. Even though we couldn’t do a “Virtual” Chili-Cook-off, we thought it was a success. There were over 60 people that signed up to view the meeting and about 45 of those actually logged on and viewed it.

Thank you to Tracy Metcalfe from Bay County Health Department who spoke about the many infectious diseases that you all run into while working on the job and how to stay healthy. In addition, thank you Lynden Johncock and Denise Bobier-Schoelles from Williams and Bay Pumping Service who illustrated the many features of Portable Restroom Routing Software and how to use and implement the system. Both of these presentations are available on the MSTA Website by going to www.msta.biz and clicking on EVENTS at the top and then PRESENTATIONS.

If you attended the webinar in its entirety, you were emailed a report of the credits that you earned. If you did not receive this report and attended the entire duration, please email me.

We hope to have the Spring Meeting in person, but if that is not possible we will most likely do another “Virtual” meeting. You will get an email in late winter to let you know how this meeting will be done.

Thank you and have a happy holiday season!



Karlyn Wickham
MSTA Executive Officer

Important Information about Education and Continuing Septage Credits

As you know by now, the Michigan Onsite Wastewater Conference which normally takes place at the Kellogg Center every January, has been cancelled due to COVID19. There may be some of you who are still in need of Continuing Septage Credits and are wondering how you can get them before your license is up for renewal.

The next few pages in this newsletter lists additional training that is put on by other organizations (MSU and Wastewater Education) and have been given EGLE approval for CSE's. Keep in mind that MSTA is not putting this education on and so therefore WILL NOT track the credits you earned by attending these. The organizations that put on this education will give you certificates of completion and you must retain these in your records for proof that you took these classes. I don't believe these organizations will “track” these like MSTA tracks credits for our members for the classes that we put on. This information can also be found on our website (www.msta.biz) by clicking on “EGLE approved Classes and Contact Info” on the left column.

We truly value your membership and the excellent service you provide to the citizens of Michigan and wish you and your family good health.

Karlyn Wickham
MSTA Executive Officer





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TRAINING BULLETIN 2020

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY DRINKING WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION SEPTAGE WASTE PROGRAM AND CONTINUING SEPTAGE EDUCATION

MSU Decentralized Wastewater Treatment

LOCATION: Webinar (CANR.MSU.EDU/Septic_System_Education/Events)

DATE: March 11 - April 22, 2020; July 8 - August 19, 2020; November 4 - December 16, 2020

CREDIT HOURS: 16 Credit Hours

DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER TREATMENT

CREDITS	TIME	TITLE	INSTRUCTOR
2.0		Onsite Wastewater – Past, Present, and Future	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
1.0		Types of Pollutants	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
2.0		Septic Tank Design and Function	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
3.0		The Soil Component	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
2.0		Wastewater Transport	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
3.0		Advanced & Alternative Treatments	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
1.0		Water Reuse	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
1.0		High Strength Wastewater Treatment	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.
1.0		Case Studies	Steven I. Safferman, PH.D.,P.E.

CREDIT: The courses will count toward the septage education (CSE) requirements outlined in Section 11703 of part 117. Only the CSE credits earned by the “responsible agent” for a given Michigan licensed septage firm will be credited to that firm.

Due to concurrent course session scheduling, no more than 16 CSE credits may be earned during the conference.

A certificate will be issued for each class attended.

REGISTRATION/FEEs: For further information, contact Ms. Betsy Braid or Mr. Steve Safferman (CANR.MSU.EDU/Septic_System_Education/Events). You may also call 517-884-7081.

Course Cancellation/Rescheduling: Some courses may be cancelled or rescheduled due to low enrollment/registration or other reasons. EGLE is not responsible for any course cancelled or rescheduled by a course sponsor. Course sponsors are strongly encouraged to notify EGLE and those who have registered for the course in a timely manner when a course is cancelled or rescheduled prior to the date the course is scheduled to be offered. Course attendees from Michigan are encouraged to make adequate consultation with the course sponsor before registering for the course.

For additional information, you may call Mr. Matt Rockhold, EGLE, at 517-888-4897 or send email to RockholdM@Michigan.gov.

TRAINING BULLETIN 2020

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division Environmental Health Section

2020 ONLINE WASTEWATER EDUCATION 501(C)(3)

LOCATION: Webinar Based Education Opportunities

DATE: Must Call To Arrange

TIME: Not Applicable – Arrangements Made with Wastewater Education

COURSE: There is a Total of 33 Webinar Based Courses

INSTRUCTOR: This varies and is under the direction of Ms. Dendra J. Best, Director of Wastewater Education 501(c)(3) Traverse City, Michigan.

CREDIT HOURS: COURSES MUST HAVE A PASSING TEST SCORE OF 75%, TAKEN AT THE END OF EACH COURSE, TO BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE CERTIFICATE toward the continuing septage education (CSE) requirements outlined in Section 11703 of part 117. Only the CSE credits earned by the designated “responsible agent” for a given Michigan licensed septage firm will be credited to that firm.

REGISTRATION: For more information contact Ms. Dendra J. Best at 231-233-1806 or Info@WasteWaterEducation.org.

Thank you to our 2020 PAC Fund Donors

(AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2020)

Tom Stump	Mark Scott	Arthur Goodwin	Mark and Jaimi Kent
Donald Bollinger	Darrell D. Butler, Jr.	Eric and Patricia Schwartz	Alan and Wendy Anglebrandt
Larry and Toni Spies	Dave Snyder	Derek and Cynthia Evenhouse	Dean and Julie Kreh

We want to remind everyone that we can only make our political efforts possible through the help of our membership donations to the MSTA PAC fund. With the help of Joe Hall's leadership in the past years we were able to successfully make several legislative changes that have strengthened our industry and organization. We hope to continue having a prominent voice in the capital by representing our member's ability to effectively conduct business in the State of Michigan.

With that being said, we would like to encourage engagement from our general members and provide transparency to the use of our PAC dollars. If any members have specific pain points they feel should be communicated, we are happy to review them at the PAC committee so we can properly plan how to address them with legislators. Additionally, any contributions are appreciated and begin to add up when considering the potential scale of our association. For example, if we have 150 of our members donate \$100, we have \$15,000 of fire power to move forward our initiatives and make sure our voice is heard in Lansing.

Please note that all PAC donations must come from personal checks and we can't accept checks written from business accounts.

Best regards,
MSTA PAC Committee

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Fax: (517) 371-5302

MSTA Annual Raffle

Tickets On Sale Now

Because the Michigan Onsite Wastewater Conference is cancelled in January, we will not be able to draw the winners of the MSTA Annual Raffle in person. We will, however, still be having the raffle on January 13th with a few of the board members present. This drawing will be available to view via ZOOM and all members will receive an emailed invitation to join the ZOOM meeting to watch the drawing on your computer. More information about how to view the drawing will be emailed to you soon.

If you would like to purchase more tickets, contact one of the MSTA Board Members as they may have extra's they can sell to you. Tickets are 3 for \$25.

1st: Henry Big Boy 44 mag Brass Receiver or \$750 Cash
2nd: Ruger Am Go Wild 243 Win Camo Stock or \$450 Cash
3rd: Ruger Mark IV Lite 22LR Pistol or \$400 Cash
4th: Remington 783 450 Bush Tan Synthetic or \$400 Cash
5th: Winchester SXP pump 12 or 20 gauge (wood) or \$300 Cash
6th: Savage BMag 17 WSM Synthetic or \$200 Cash
7th: Omega S12 12 gauge 3" Synthetic or \$175 Cash
8th: Ruger 10/22 22LR Wood Stock or \$150 Cash

2021 Raffle Ticket Sponsor:

PolyJohn

Thank you to PolyJohn for sponsoring the raffle tickets!

Sincerely,
MSTA Raffle Committee

Letter to the Editor

(DISCLAIMER: THE OPINIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS OF MSTA AS AN ORGANIZATION)

I wonder how our country has become so divided.

It certainly has been a crazy time since we were introduced to COVID-19. It isn't the cause but it certainly has added to the division of our country. Our state had its problems trying to decide what to close and what to keep open. Our governor wasn't able to work with the legislators or chose not to.... I don't know, I'm not taking sides.

How is it that our legislators are no longer able to compromise on what is best for the American public? When our president, like him or not, nominated Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, not one Democratic Senator voted to approve her because they followed party lines. I understand people not liking the process, but this was a vote for a Supreme Court Justice, not a vote to decide who has the authority to nominate a justice.

If you don't like the process, work to change it. It's hard to imagine that not one Democratic Senator wasn't able to say that this person is qualified, I support the person but I will work to change the process. When legislators follow party lines it seems to me you are taking away an individual's ability to think on their own. I believe it's time to think for ourselves and compromise in doing what is best for the American public.

Raymond Daniels
Daniels Septic Service, Inc.
MSTA Board Member



Karlyn Wickham

MSTA Executive Officer

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE MSTA WEBSITE

www.msta.org

HOW TO LOG IN TO YOUR PERSONAL PORTAL OF THE MSTA WEBSITE

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz

If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password. Follow the instructions on this email to log in.

GETTING YOUR CSE CREDITS OFF FROM THE MSTA WEBSITE

As you already know, we have a new website and database system to track your membership and CSE credits. The old website contained all your CSE Credits prior to August of 2017. If you don’t have records of your credits prior to August 2017, you will not be able to get them by logging onto the website. Instead you will have to send an email to the address below to request a report of those.

The new website contains your CSE Credits from August 2017 through now. To get a record of the credits you received from the Fall 2017 meeting or the 2018 Michigan Onsite WW Conference, follow the steps below:

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “other information” tab
4. Click on “Prior Event Registrations”
5. Find the class you just attended and click on the symbol with the checkmark inside the square
6. A copy of your transcript will appear showing the credits you earned by going to the meeting
7. Print this page and keep it for your records to be turned into the DEQ when you renew your license.

Please save these instructions for future use. Please also save your username and password somewhere safe as well so that you can log onto the MSTA website again. By the way, your username and password can be changed to something you remember more easily by clicking on “Member Information / change username and password” (right next to the “other information” tab).

CHANGING CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
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3. Click on the “Membership Information” tab
4. Click on “change contact / profile”
5. Change your profile information
6. BE SURE TO PRESS SUBMIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE

ADDING EMPLOYEES OR ADDITIONAL PEOPLE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

1. Log into your account on www.msta.biz If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “Membership Information” tab
4. Click on “additional individuals attached to this membership”
5. Click on “add an additional member”
6. Fill out the information about this member
7. Do this for every person you would like to add to your membership

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PUMPER PROFILE

COVER
STORY

The All American Septic Service crew includes (front row, from left) Melissa Schoo, Paul Lawrence, Maureen Walton, Brandon Blatt; (back row, from left) James Crawford, Dave Mead, Todd Cole, Ben Horton, Dave Betker and Bob Ludwig. (Photo by Eric Seals)

All American Septic Service

Imlay City, Michigan

OWNER: Paul Lawrence

FOUNDED: 1991

EMPLOYEES: 11

SERVICE AREA: 50-mile radius including five counties

SERVICES: Septic system pumping, installing, maintenance and repairs; drain cleaning and camera work

AFFILIATIONS: Michigan Septic Tank Association

WEBSITE: www.allamericanseptic.com



AN EARLY START

Paul Lawrence was running a vacuum truck at age 18 and then relentlessly pursued his dream to build a full-service wastewater business

By Dee Goerge

After one semester of college and a summer job working for a septic company, Paul Lawrence knew he wouldn't be going back to college.

"He paid so well, and I was making as much as my dad at GM (General Motors). The smell didn't bother me, and I picked up on it real quick. I was running the service van and pumper truck and doing repair work at 18. I'm glad I never looked back," Lawrence says.

Five years later, he purchased his first truck and started his own pumping business. Now at 51, Lawrence looks at 23-year-olds and wonders how he managed it. Today, All American Septic Service is thriving as it tries to keep up with Michigan's growing economy. He and his team are doing all the jobs he first did as a teenager, plus installing septic systems.

MENTORING FROM DAD

Before venturing on his own, Lawrence worked for two businesses that did everything from pumping septic tanks to servicing mainlines

and drains. So he had a few years' experience when he saw a 1977 International truck for sale for \$13,000. With financial backing from his dad, Leslie, he purchased the truck and went into business.

"It [buying the old truck] was probably the worst thing I could have done. I worked on the truck about three days every week," he recalls. But he managed to get enough work to buy a newer truck within nine months.

"Before I was doing the work for everyone else," he says, reflecting on the bold entrepreneurial move. "Rather than doing that, I broke off on my own to go in a more diversified direction, and it ended up paying off."

From the beginning, Lawrence valued advice from his father. The first thing father and son dealt with was naming the business. With military folks on both sides of his family, it was important to put "American" in the name. That worked well for marketing too, as it puts the company at the top alphabetically. It also led to eye-catching red equipment with a mustard yellow oval logo with the business name.

(continued)

Right: Paul Lawrence discusses the day's work with Melissa Schoo, office manager at All American Septic Service. (Photo by Amy E. Voigt)

Below: Technicians Dave Betker, left, and Dave Mead cut and fit PVC pipe to run a new sewer line for a home. (Photo by Amy E. Voigt)



“ Before I was doing the work for everyone else. Rather than doing that, I broke off on my own to go in a more diversified direction, and it ended up paying off. ”

PAUL LAWRENCE

equipment for his employees, he has built an impressive fleet.

For pumping he has four trucks: two Internationals (2010 and 2011) with 5,000-gallon steel tanks and 4310 National Vacuum Equipment blowers; a 2000 WG64F Volvo with a Transway Systems 4,500-gallon steel tank and Fruitland 500 pump; and a 2005 378 Peterbilt with a 4,000-gallon waste/200-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and a NVE 866 pump.

For other services, the company has two Chevrolet Express vans (2007 and 2008) and three pickups: a 2019 Chevrolet Silverado, 2017 GMC 2500 and 2007 Dodge 1500. They are outfitted with Spartan Tool drain cleaning machines, General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye cameras, and jettors made by Landa, Shark and Sewer Equipment.

For excavating, Lawrence says he appreciates his newest machine, a John Deere 160G excavator that he says cuts some work time in half. His other excavators include a 2002 New Holland LS180 skid-steer, Kubota XP excavator, New Holland C238 track loader and Komatsu D31PX dozer. Equipment is hauled with two Benson semitrailers (1987 and 1988) and a 1995 Fruehauf semitrailer. The business also has a fleet of utility trailers — from Integrity Trailers, Legend Premium Trailers, Talbert and PJ Trailers.

To land-apply seepage, Lawrence has a four-wheel-drive John Deere 8760 tractor and a Balzer 4800 spreader to inject. For cultivating, seeding and harvesting crops grown on the fields, the company runs a 16-row Kinze planter, MT845B Caterpillar tractor and John Deere 9600 combine.

One major equipment expense he hasn't regretted was switching to 4310 NVE 930 cfm blowers for two of the vacuum trucks. "They [the old

(continued)

The next thing Leslie helped with was advising Lawrence on how to deal with employees. Leslie worked in quality control at GM and had taken a Dale Carnegie course.

"Dealing with my first employees was kind of a struggle," Lawrence admits. "I'm a doer and not a good boss-person."

His dad gave him advice that helped: Remember no one is perfect. Take it one day at a time. Realize you don't know what people are dealing with and the backgrounds they've had.

"I try to be more patient and talk them through it. I let them speak their mind, and I interject how they can do better in a more positive direction," Lawrence says.

ADDING EQUIPMENT

As he learned to work with his employees, Lawrence expanded his services. He started with pumping, and when he could afford it, he purchased his first service van and drain cleaning equipment for repair work.

"That opened the door to a new level for us — excavating," he says. "Our ratio was 75% to 80% pumping. But now pumping is almost equal to excavation of septic fields and repairs. We are so busy we could double our work. In the last couple of years, we've seen the economy explode with building."

About 10% of the work is new septic installations. The rest are repair and replacement jobs. To keep up with demand and to provide enough

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Above: Paul Lawrence walks near the rigs parked in front of All American Septic Service in Imlay City, Michigan. Shown are two Internationals and a Peterbilt; they use either blowers or pumps from National Vacuum Equipment. (Photo by Eric Seals)

“People call in and say, ‘Can you get me in today?’ and we try to be accommodating. ... I tell the guys to go the extra mile. Give quality work and make sure the customers are happy when they leave.”

PAUL LAWRENCE

HUGE TANK HELPS SPREADING OPERATION

With a \$400,000 investment in a 549,000-gallon Harvestore Slurrystore (CST Industries), Paul Lawrence will save money and can more easily land-apply septage.

“This gives us a lot more window when it gets too wet and you can wait until it’s drier,” says the owner of All American Septic Service in Michigan. He’d been relying on two smaller holding tanks with a total capacity of 75,000 gallons. To keep up, he had to pump the tanks to land-inject about once or twice a week and go to the treatment plant when land application wasn’t viable due to weather.

Lawrence started land-applying in 1998 when he purchased 70 acres. Later he purchased another 80 acres to rotate with soybean and corn crops. The process included sending letters to neighbors and attending township meetings to get the permit to land-apply along with regular soil tests. With trees bordering the fields and the nearest neighbors at least a half-mile away, it worked well. Then Michigan regulations required injection in 2001, and Lawrence complied. As the business grew, he needed more storage space, so Lawrence saved his money to invest in the larger tank.

“I applied for it, and it took 1 1/2 years to get approved,” he says.

The new tank is 81 feet in diameter and 14 feet tall. Though it was a big investment, it will pay for itself in disposal fee savings within three or four years.

“I am still licensed to dump at two plants, but they have gone so high (with fees) that I try not to go there,” Lawrence says.

pumps] were 400 to 500 cfm, so the blowers double their vacuum ability. They cut 15 to 25 minutes off a job, so they are phenomenal for saving time,” Lawrence says.

KEEPING CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES

Lawrence relies on his team of employees and an efficient routine to get the work done. His office manager and fiancée, Melissa Schoo, and secretary Maureen Walton set pumping and service schedules the night before so drivers can grab a folder and be ready to go in the morning. Drivers call in whenever they arrive and leave a job and are given additional jobs as they come in.

“Sometimes there are only 10 jobs on the books, but we end up with 25 pumpings,” Lawrence says. “People call in and say, ‘Can you get me in today?’ and we try to be accommodating.” Although All American Septic Service isn’t the cheapest in the area (prices are in the middle), customers tell them they like the quality of service and that they are prompt.

“I tell the guys to go the extra mile. Give quality work and make sure the customers are happy when they leave.”

Lawrence notes that he hired three of his employees through the employment website Indeed. Younger people do everything on their smartphones, he says, so it’s an effective way to find employees. He also knows that Indeed automatically notifies people about other jobs, so he needs to pay good wages and keep employees satisfied so they aren’t tempted to move on.

USING TECHNOLOGY

Lawrence remembers when his ads ran in 5-inch-thick phone books. Though they are only about 1/4-inch thick now, he continues to run phone book ads to reach older customers. He also uses some radio advertising, but the majority of customers reach him through the company’s website, social media and YP internet advertising. Lawrence and Schoo take care of posting

photos — and recently a drone video taken by a customer — on Facebook. They pay a YP salesperson to keep up their visibility on the internet, as more people shop online.

He also appreciates the technology on General Pipe Cleaner Gen-Eye camera equipment that can send more accurate information to a phone or flash drive.

In the office, staff use Intuit QuickBooks, as well as Tank Track software that has customer and tank information and reports when to send reminder postcards to more than 12,000 residential customers.

“That has netted a lot of repeat work for the business,” Lawrence says.

Finally, the trucks are outfitted with GPS to provide directions to drivers.

FUTURE WORK

With restaurants, schools and monthly residential pumping, All American Septic Service doesn’t slow down as much as it used to in January and February. Contracts with a large corporation canning plant for drain work and repair during that time also keep crews busy. Lawrence, who does 90% of the contract bidding, also works on the excavating side of the business.

“I do the bigger (excavator) operating for water and sewer stuff and repairs for the canning plant,” he explains. It’s safer and faster for him to do some of the more intense jobs like digging near a gas plant, for example.

Recently moving the business from a rural property with a couple of sheds that he outgrew to a 10,000-square-foot building in Imlay City, Michigan, has been helpful. The former vegetable packing plant has room for offices and to store most of the equipment, plus shop space for working on equipment.

Lawrence anticipates continued growth in the area driving more work. He is considering purchasing another vacuum truck. With rural customers in three directions and a metro area with expensive homes in the fourth direction, his diversified customer base continues to grow.

He recently got back into the portable restroom business after being out of it for a few years. He rents about 40 PolyJohn and Satellite | PolyPortables units for commercial construction sites and is considering purchasing another 200 for weekend events. He realizes that would require hiring another employee or two, as it is difficult to keep on top of all the work he already has.

“I put more hours in than anyone else, so there are no loose ends. I want to make sure we grow and try not to turn any work down,” Lawrence says. “As my dad says, ‘Make hay while the sun shines.’” **P**

Below: Brandon Blatt uses a bucket to prevent spillage at the hose connection during a pumping job. (Photo by Amy E. Voigt)



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PolyJohn
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Sewer Equipment
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www.sewerequipment.com

Spartan Tool LLC
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Talbert Manufacturing Inc.
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Tank Track LLC
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Transway Systems
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Volvo Trucks North America
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Above: Lawrence spends time speaking to customers over the phone at the company office. (Photo by Eric Seals)

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SHOULDA, WOULD, COULDA

ARTICLE SUBMISSION BY RANDY REDMER.

As owner of Michigan Waste and Environmental Services and an MSTA Board Member, I would like to share a story that happened to me a few years back and to offer some advice to the members of MSTA. Slippery roads are coming and our members should check to make sure their drivers exercise proper caution and that they have adequate insurance coverage and umbrella coverage. I'm buying a septic company right now where a driver pulled out in front of a motorcycle ending in a horrific tragedy. More insurance rather than less was needed (unfortunately, they were not one of General Agency's clients) as was the need to incorporate. Our members should be encouraged to incorporate and should never operate as a DbA.

In 2002 my wife and I opened Minuteman Plumbing in Jackson, Michigan. I was out doing service calls one night in December when the snow suddenly turned to freezing rain. This happened so quickly that city snow plows had not even had time to plow and salt.

As I drove slowly down a city street on my way to my next job, my windshield wipers became useless as they loaded up with a combination of snow and freezing rain coating them with 1/2' of ice. I stopped on the side of the street at the top of a hill and got out to snap the ice off my wipers so they could begin to function again. I became very aware that the street under my feet had become slicker than the proverbial snot on a doorknob. Taking small deliberate steps, I climbed back into the van and proceeded down the hill at the bottom of which lay an intersection with a traffic light.

The road I was on was a side street but the one I was heading toward was a main North-South Street in Jackson. As I crept down the steep hill going 10-15 miles per hour, I was thankful that the North-South bound traffic at the bottom of the hill had the red light and were stopped. I didn't feel I could make it through the light because I was going so slow, so I prepared to stop as I was sure the light would be red by the time I got there. I gently applied the brakes only to discover that, given the intense grade and height of the hill, combined with the greasy condition of the road, my van had become no more than a 4500lb. hockey puck continuing relentlessly toward the intersection despite every effort to turn into the curb, go off the road or pump the brakes. The rudder wasn't responding to the helm!

It was then that I began attempting to signal the drivers at the bottom of the hill with my lights in order to get their attention. Their light turned green and mine red as I continued slowly toward my appointment somewhere beyond the intersection (as gravity now assisted in increasing my velocity). The cars either didn't see me frantically signaling them or just ignored me and they slowly lurched forward into the intersection just as my vehicle arrived with an accuracy that I have not been able to replicate in any other area of my life.

The first car that I connected with was a blue Mercedes 450 SL being driven by a doctor from the hospital down the road. My vehicle gently pushed his vehicle into a brown Oldsmobile being driven by a woman who was transporting her husband home from a physical therapy appointment that he was attending due to an accident that he had been involved in several months before. Their car spun slowly on the ice and connected with a red pickup truck that slid gently through the intersection and stopped peacefully at the curb. I was still sliding but the vehicles I hit had reduced my speed significantly and my steering responded and I was able to bring my vehicle to a gentle stop in front of a police car who was sitting at the opposing side of the intersection of the East-West road that I was traveling down. He had a great seat.

After coming to a halt, I rolled down my window and as he got out of his car laughing, he jeered at me saying "where did you learn how to drive"? No sooner had the last word left his lips and his feet slipped out from under him and he did a face plant in the middle of the road. He was less than amused when I responded to him with "where did you learn how to walk"? I then exited the van and declared how outraged I was with the fact that city plow trucks had not been out to salt such an obviously treacherous intersection.

As we discussed this point, it dawned on both of us that we had chosen the wrong venue for our discussion as a car came slowly sliding through the intersection imitating the same exact maneuver I had employed (with strikingly similar results) and gently

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smashed into the rear end of my van, pushing it off the road into the front yard of a residence.

Within minutes everyone was out of their cars walking around and with each changing light, one and then another car slid through the intersection and began to accumulate on the same front lawn where my van had come to rest.

The Brown Oldsmobile...that was the one I was concerned about...the guy turned out to be walking glasshouse and I broke one of the panes! It turns out that the guy in that vehicle was a professional victim and made his living by suing anybody for anything he could. He had sued two former employers for workers comp. injuries. He had sued another person for injuries sustained in an accident. He was collecting from injuries he supposedly derived from another accident that resulted in his physical therapy sessions.

Finally, 2 months later he and his wife filed a suit against me, my company, the doctor with the 450SL and the city. They filed suit against me for injuries and loss of intimacy claiming they had sustained \$80,000.00 in damages. Apparently, they didn't have as much intimacy prior to the accident as they originally would have led us to believe as they ultimately settled with my insurance company for \$15,000.00.

The moral of the story is that as a business owner, it is better to have the insurance coverage and not need it than to need it and not have it.

Legislative Report for MSTA



Judy Augenstein,
Legislative Consultant

SEPTEMBER 2020 REPORT

Most states give their governors extraordinary powers to amend or suspend laws and regulations during emergencies, as Governor Gretchen Whitmer has done, but most states also give their legislatures power to end an emergency declaration, unlike the law on which Ms. Whitmer is relying to keep a state of emergency in place.

A review of research conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, Council of State Governments and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that for as much as Ms. Whitmer's use of her authority to unilaterally amend statutes to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic has rankled Republicans, most states give their governors the same authority in an emergency.

A huge legal fight is set to go before the Michigan Supreme Court on whether Ms. Whitmer has the authority to keep Michigan under a state of emergency beyond 28 days without legislative approval. The 1976 Emergency Management Act sets the 28-day time limit and provides for extensions with legislative approval, but the law also says it does nothing to hinder the powers of the 1945 Emergency Powers of the Governor Act, which gives the governor total control over the duration of an emergency with no role for the Legislature. As far as the use of emergency powers, Ms. Whitmer appears to have issued more executive orders than any other governor.

The state has confirmed that Michigan has 100,000 confirmed cases, the state announced. The rate of new cases in Michigan has slowed greatly. Where once Michigan was in the top five in cases, it is now 17th. Still, at 100,000 cases, that means at least 1 percent of the state has been infected.

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“Since the first cases of COVID-19 were recorded in March, the vast majority of Michiganders have done their part to protect themselves and their loved ones,” Ms. Whitmer said in a statement. “And because we took some of the most aggressive actions against this virus in the nation, Michigan is faring far better than other states in terms of new cases and deaths, and our economy is moving closer to where it was in March. The COVID-19 pandemic is still a very real threat to our families, our brave frontline workers, and our economy.”

Fred Wszolek, spokesperson for Unlock Michigan, said that Unlock Michigan petition drive now has more than 300,000 signatures in hand, and is actively employing more than 60,000 volunteer activists in signature collection, on top of roughly 100 paid circulators working for National Petition Management. If the group’s count is correct, it is moving with remarkable speed to gain the signatures necessary for certification. Unlock Michigan needs 347,047 valid signatures from registered voters to bring their proposal before the Legislature.

Touting the accomplishments of President Donald Trump over the last three years, Vice President Mike Pence at a Friday campaign rally in Traverse City also warned voters that their Democratic opponents would lead America down a “downward path” if elected in November.

“The stakes have never been higher,” said Mr. Pence, in his first Michigan rally following the weeklong Republican National Convention. “Last week, (Democratic presidential nominee) Joe Biden said democracy was on the ballot. The truth is: Our economic recovery is on the ballot. Law and order is on the ballot.”

The fear of going backward, undoing Mr. Trump’s deeply conservative yet controversial agenda, and electing a president who Mr. Pence said was the architect of “Obamacare” and “the slowest” economic recovery in American history permeated the vice president’s nearly 40-minute speech –which also included a run through of promises Mr. Pence said Mr. Trump kept since the previous election.

Speaking to supporters outdoors beneath cloudy skies at Avflight Traverse City, located near Cherry Capital Airport, Mr. Pence also said that what’s more important in this election is not whether America will become more conservative or liberal, but whether “America will remain America,” leaning heavily into rebukes of current social justice movements and the civil uprisings that have punctuated them in 2020.

“As President Trump said last night, this election will decide whether we will defend the American way of life, or whether we will allow a radical movement to dismantle and destroy it,” Mr. Pence said. “Here in the heartland, I know what we’re (going to) do. Here in the heartland we stand for faith, family, freedom and the American flag.”

And while some have blamed Mr. Trump for igniting racial tensions, or at the very least showing indifference in solving them, Mr. Pence said American voters and those American government shouldn’t have to choose between supporting Black families who face injustice and supporting the police, again vowing that he and Mr. Trump would not entertain and would fight against mass de-funding of police departments across the nation.

Other key themes in Mr. Pence’s address were Atta-boys for his and the president’s response to the new coronavirus pandemic and the economic advances made before the novel virus dented and stymied that purported economic surge.

Mr. Pence propped up the White House’s efforts to fast-track COVID-19 therapeutics and claimed that America scientists and doctors would have a working vaccine by the end of this year, although several health officials – including Michigan Department of Health and Human Services’ Dr. Joneigh Khaldun – have repeatedly said that a proper vaccine won’t be available until at least next year.

Still, Mr. Pence said his team had built a “seamless” partnership to respond to the needs of states enduring the worst of the pandemic, including Michigan – of which Democrats, like Governor Gretchen Whitmer, have criticized as not being robust enough.

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Turning again to law enforcement, VP Pence accused Mr. Biden of bowing to what he called “the radical left” by not condemning the uprisings and unrest that have erupted across the nation at last week’s Democratic National Convention.

The current vice president also said that the “violence and chaos” must be stopped in places like Minneapolis, Minnesota, Portland, Oregon, and now, Kenosha, Wisconsin. Vice President Pence asked those in attendance to do what they did in 2016 – ignore the pundits, talk to their neighbors about what’s at stake in this election and have faith in Mr. Trump for another term.

DECEMBER 2020 REPORT

Dozens of conservative poll challengers and workers testified today about allegations of voter fraud and improper vote counting procedures at the TCF Center in Detroit during the November 3 elections and the day after, repeating numerous claims that have been rejected in court cases and largely disproven.

Members of the Senate Oversight Committee Track took testimony for seven hours during which dozens of President Donald Trump supporters were also on the sidewalk outside the Binsfeld Office Building rallying.

Among the allegations made by those who testified included that of rude behavior directed at Republican poll challengers, lack of adequate access to various parts of the voting process and not being allowed to be within six feet of those counting ballots, among others.

Republican poll challengers also made allegations regarding dozens of boxes of ballots arriving several hours after the polls had closed, arriving in the early hours of November 4.

There were numerous further claims made by those testifying Tuesday, some by individuals who have given sworn affidavits in court cases. Among the allegations stated in committee were that of running ballots through voting machines multiple times, of military ballots being counted at one point of almost entirely consisting of votes for Democratic president-elect Joe Biden and few or no military ballots cast for Mr. Trump, names of voters being observed as not being listed in electronic poll books and accusations of dead people voting.

During Tuesday’s hearing the Associated Press reported that U.S. Attorney General William Barr had stated the U.S. Department of Justice has not found any evidence of widespread voter fraud stemming from the November 3 elections. Mr. Trump’s attorneys Rudy Giuliani and Jenna Ellis said in a statement there hasn’t been “any semblance” of an investigation.

“We have gathered ample evidence of illegal voting in at least six states, which they have not examined,” they said in a statement. It’s unclear what evidence they are pointing to as their court challenges so far have been mostly unsuccessful.

Among those testifying Tuesday was Patrick Colbeck, a former member of the Senate. He delivered a presentation lasting about an hour alleging, among other things, that the chain of custody was broken for the processing and tabulation of ballots and that the voting equipment was plugged in to the internet, making it ripe for being hacked.

He pointed to what he called discrepancies and issues with voting equipment from Dominion Voting Systems. The company has drawn criticism from conservatives following claims by the Trump campaign of alleged inaccuracies in its vote counts in jurisdictions where the company’s products were used. No problems with the company’s equipment performance in the November elections have yet been proven.

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Several people who testified said they witnessed seeing numerous names in the electronic poll books of people with a date of birth listed as January 1, 1900.

The Department of State has repeatedly stated that dead voters' ballots are not counted. Such dates of birth, the department has also said, are merely a placeholder birthdate for when a date of birth is not known so that it is easily flagged and can be corrected.

Phil O'Halloran said he was a poll challenger who filed an affidavit outlining his experience at TCF Center. He outlined allegations of procedures not being followed including not having the correct number of people transporting ballots, election officials not supervising the loading and unloading of ballots from vehicles nor properly logging the arrival and departure of ballots.

Republican poll challengers including Patty McMurray said people were not allowed to get close enough to the ballots to check them, while also saying she believed that Democrats working at the TCF Center were behaving as agitators.

Jeff Stearns, who said he was a registered independent, urged the committee to review the allegations being made by those testifying in good faith, calling them significant.

Chris Schornack in testimony also said he believed the chain of custody of ballots was broken at TCF Center, alleging that others had found instances of dead voters casting ballots and a couple thousand other voters had invalid addresses in Detroit.

Democrats were not impressed with the hearing. Michigan Democratic Party Chair Lavora Barnes in a statement said Mr. Biden won Michigan by more than 154,000 votes and the results have been certified.

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Back Safety & Lifting Techniques

Back problems associated with manual lifting are among the most common and most expensive types of on-the-job injuries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. Furthermore, one-fourth of all workers' compensation indemnity claims involve back injuries, costing businesses billions of dollars, in addition to the pain and suffering experienced by injured employees.

The following strategies can be used by organizations to reduce the risk of manual lifting injuries.

Analyzing Past Losses

The first step organizations should take to reduce the risk of back injuries is to review the causes of the back injuries that have occurred in the past 3-5 years. If accident investigation reports are available, they should be reviewed to see if recommendations for corrective action were made and, if so, were they effective in preventing future injuries. If repeat injuries have occurred, this signals the need for more extensive evaluation, implementation of existing recommendations, or new recommendations for corrective action.

Eliminating Manual Lifting and Carrying

The most effective way to reduce the risk of manual lifting injuries is to reduce the amount of manual lifting. If employees don't have to handle, lift, or carry materials, they are less likely to suffer a back injury or other musculoskeletal disorder. In many cases, it is not possible to completely eliminate all lifting. In these cases, organizations should attempt to reduce the frequency of lifting, improve the posture of employees, or reduce the weight of the objects being lifted. Some suggestions for doing this are as follows:

- Use mechanical lifting devices (e.g., hoists, lift tables) to reduce the amount of lifting from

below the knees or above the shoulders.

- Use material handling devices (e.g., hand cart, conveyor, forklift) to transport materials rather than carrying.



- Have materials delivered to the location where they will be used to reduce the amount of material handling.
- Reduce the size of totes or bins to decrease the amount of weight being lifted.
- Store heavy objects at waist level, or at least between the shoulders and the knees.

Workstation design and storage practices should also be reviewed to determine if improvements can be made. The goal should be to eliminate or reduce risk factors such as:

- Repeated bending at the waist.
- Twisting while lifting.
- High frequency of manual lifting.
- Lifting with quick, jerky motions.
- Excessively heavy lifting.
- Lifting with the arms extended or above shoulder level.

Eliminating each of these risk factors reduces the risk of lifting injuries, improves productivity and quality, and creates healthy and pain free employees.

Continued

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Instruction on Proper Lifting Techniques

Employee training on proper lifting techniques is an important part of any back and lifting safety program; however, two common problems plague many organizations' training programs:

1. Training is completed before attempting to eliminate or reduce manual lifting using the techniques described above. Simply put, engineering controls come first. Training an employee to "safely" lift an object that should not be lifted at all is not likely to reduce injuries.
2. Training does not include instruction on when not to lift. It is important that employees are instructed on getting help on heavy objects (two-person lifts), ways to eliminate or reduce lifting, how and when to use mechanical lifting or material handling devices, etc.

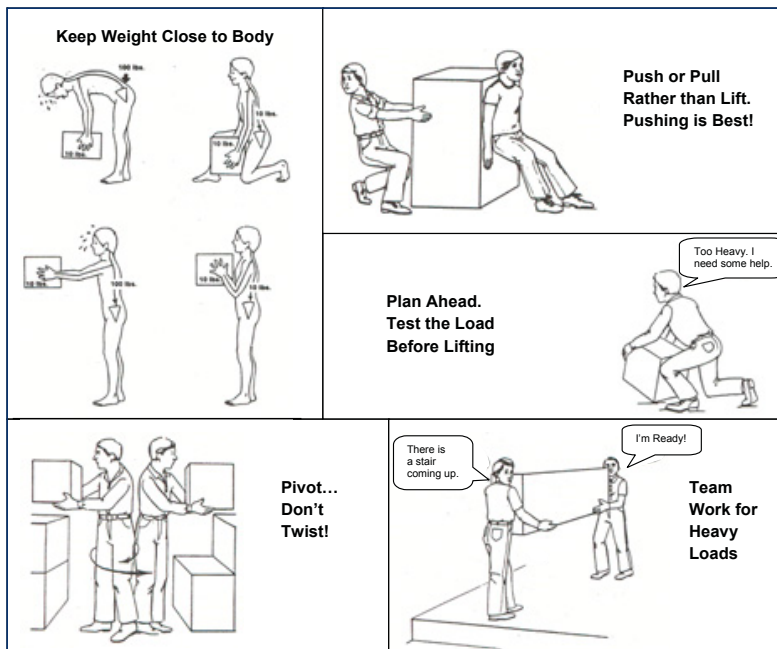
When training occurs, the items shown below should be addressed.

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MSTA PAC Update

We are continuing to fight for legislative issues that benefit MSTA members. Your donation to the PAC Fund will help tremendously in these efforts! If you would like to donate, a “personal check” (not a company check) should be made out to: MSTA PAC Fund.

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