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February 2004

## HOW TO STOP THE PROJECT CLOSE-OUT PROFIT LEAKS

*By: John Zink*

The PHCC Educational Foundation conducted its third "Essentials of PHC Project Management" course in Fort Worth, Texas a few weeks ago. The attendees learned about jobsite management, how to identify lost labor time, and a variety of other management topics. One of those additional topics was how to avoid having a great job go bad because of a poor project close-out. Below is a sampling of the information that was covered on this topic during the last "Essentials" class.

### Effective Project Close-Outs

Most contractors have seen jobs that were problem free for 90% of the project go sour as problem plagued the close-out process. Many profitable jobs have turned into losers as crews lingered to finish up work or G.C.'s issued their second and then their third "final" punchlist. With proper planning, documentation and managers who know how to handle crews and the G.C., you can ensure that you will not see your profits bleed away at the end of your projects.

### Work Expands to Fill the Time Available

As a great project is nearing completion, sometimes an attitude of relaxation can settle upon the field crews and the project manager. The foreman knows that the crews are way under their projected hours, so why push hard? "There are only a few things left to finish up and they'll take care of themselves."

Unfortunately, without the goal of being off the jobsite as quickly as possible, work from your crews may pace itself to fill the available time left on a project. Labor savings evaporate in the last weeks of the project and if an unexpected difficulty arises, suddenly that fat job can turn into a loser.

Work expanding to fill the time available is a known human condition. It even has a name: Parkinson's Law. It is not something to get mad about, UNLESS you have taken responsibility for training your project managers and foremen to manage and avoid it.

During work on the project, your PM and foremen/superintendents should know how long each phase should be taking and should be checking DAILY how actual installations are going versus projections. As the project nears completion, the foreman needs to have a very clear concept of exactly what is left to do and how long it will take to complete the work. If this sounds like a punchlist, you are right on target.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 9 marks the 13th legislative day of the 40-day session. With the General Assembly recessing every Wednesday for committee work, the session cannot end before March 26.



### PMA Board Meets at Capitol

The PMA Board of Directors met last week at the Capitol. At the meeting, the board received a reports from PMA lobbyist John Poole and consultant George Whalen. Mr. Whalen has helped several cities solve water and sewer problems. PMA is studying how the plumbing industry may be able to provide the solution to Georgia's increasing water problems, including the Atlanta situation. The Whalen program includes a rebate program for retrofitting 1.6 gal. toilets.

### Bill would preempt local wage mandates.

A bipartisan group of House members has introduced legislation to head off efforts by the City of Atlanta to require that contractors with the city pay their employees a "living wage." HB 1258 by Rep. Earl Ehrhart of Powder Springs, Stan Watson of Decatur, and others provides that "no local government entity may adopt, maintain, or enforce by charter, ordinance, purchase agreement, contract, regulation, rule, or resolution, either directly or indirectly, a wage or employment benefit mandate" on private employers. The bill was referred to the House Industrial Relations Committee.

Last year, Senator Vincent Fort of Atlanta introduced SB 303, which would require all employers in the State who contract with

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



### 2003 - 2004 President George Raburn

I hope the new year has gotten off to a fast start for you. It certainly has for us in several areas. I truly believe that 2004 is going to be one of the best years ever.

The General Assembly is in session. You association is hard at work with our lobbyist, John Poole, Rob Sumner and Danny Richardson watching the things going on under the gold dome. I would like to thank everyone who works hard during this legislative session.

Our Tap In Tour meetings continue to grow each month. I attended the Northeast meeting on Tuesday, January 27th and it was standing room only. We had three new members join that night. Ron Kikta and the rest of the crew are doing a great job.

I also attended the Northwest meeting on January 20th in Marietta. They had 27 folks at that meeting. That, I believe, was the biggest crowd to date.

The programs continue to exceed all of our expectations. The "What to Do When OSHA Comes Knocking", presented in Marietta by Bryan Black was just super. Sammy Rawlins of DeVore and Johnson's program, "Preparing Your Company's Financials", was at the Northeast meeting. What a great job Sammy does. Thank you to all of our speakers. I believe we have raised the bar on our continuing education classes. They continue to get better and better.

Keep your eyes on the calendar of events. Lots of things will be happening. The second annual Bass Fishing Tournament, the State Convention at Hilton Head, and of course, the balance of our Tap In Tour meetings.

As most of you know, my father passed away on January 19th. My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the cards, phone calls and especially your prayers during this time. It has been unbelievable the amount of concern and care that the members of the association have shown to my family and me. Thank you again.

I count it an honor to serve as your president. If I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to call.

George

## BASS TOURNAMENT

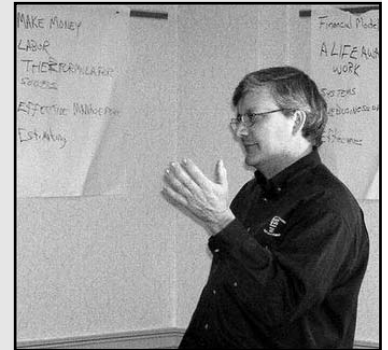
The 2nd Annual Bass Fishing Tournament will be held on Saturday April 24th, at Southern Harbor Marina on West Point Lake. Registration for the event is \$75.00 per boat. Co-Chairs for this event are Wade Frame, Wade Plumbing and Julie Schaeffer, Kohler. The team is planning for this event to be bigger and better than last year. Our goal is to have over 100 boats this year and give away cash prizes to the top ten teams. Kohler has committed once again to the top prize of \$2,000 for First Place. For Registration see Insert. For Sponsorship opportunities contact Wade Frame or the PMA office.

## 2nd BOSS CLASS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 19 & 20TH

Based on the successful sellout of the first Business Operations & Systems Success class held in Athens this month, a second class has been scheduled for May 19 & 20th in McDonough, Georgia. According to the evaluation forms, this class was rated a nine out of ten. Contact the PMA office for the registration form.

### Shots & Quotes From Athens Boss Class

**"Extremely  
informative"**



Jon Alexander, Carson Plumbing  
Bryan Stevens, Northwest Plumbing

**"He was  
good and I  
enjoyed all  
of it"**



Northwest Plumbing l to r, Jim Markham, Tony Mahaffey and Matt Gibbs

**"The info on the balance sheet and profit & loss statement was eye opening"**



Mike Maynard, QSC



Jessica Davis, Armour Plumbing, and  
Matt Brock with Ash Plumbing.

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

state or local governments to pay a "living wage" to be calculated by formula. Fort's bill is still in the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

### Conferees approve water planning measure.

All six members of a House/Senate conference committee signed off on a compromise version of HB 237 on Friday, and the Senate approved the conference report the same day. The House is expected to act on the measure this week.

As approved by the conference committee, HB 237 is a straight-forward water resource planning bill, bearing little resemblance to the controversial bill from last year. Gone are provisions to prohibit inter-basin transfers and to provide for limited trading of withdrawal permits in areas where a permit moratorium is in effect.

The bill establishes a Water Council which is charged with bringing a management plan to the Board of Natural Resources no later than December 1, 2007.

### New bill introductions.

**HB 1300** by Powell of Hartwell, would amend Chapter 14 of Title 43 to prohibit persons from contracting with any other person to perform utility contracting work unless such other person is properly licensed. Would require persons holding utility manager and utility foreman certificates to provide proof of safety training every two years. Referred to Governmental Affairs Committee.

**HB 1313** by Buckner of Jonesboro, would amend Code Section 8-2-26 relating to the enforcement of building codes, so as to add a requirement for recipients of building permits to show proof of completion of a continuing education class in a field related to the construction they are

undertaking. Referred to Governmental Affairs Committee.

**HB 1352** by Wix of Mableton, would amend Chapter 9 of Title 25, the "Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act," revising procedures for the protection of utility facilities from damage due to excavating and blasting. Referred to Public Utilities and Telecommunications Committee.

### Other bills of interest

**HB 35** by Noel of Atlanta, relating to enforcement of minimum standards for gray water recycling systems under the standard plumbing code. Prefiled prior to 2003 session and carried over to 2004. Still in House Governmental Affairs Committee.

**HB 109** by Powell of Hartwell, would amend Title 43 to create a State Licensing Board for Residential Contractors. Carryover bill from 2003, still in House Governmental Affairs Committee.

**HB 628** by Hugley of Columbus, would amend Title 43 to change provisions relating to occupational regulation legislation review; to provide for evaluation of businesses and professions; to change the composition of the Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council. Passed House in 2003 and now in Senate Committee on Regulated Industries and Utilities.

**HB 1003** by Powell of Hartwell, would amend Title 43 to create the State Licensing Board for Residential and General Contractors. Carryover bill from 2003, still in House Governmental Affairs Committee. Subcommittee hearing conducted last week, and another hearing likely this week. PMA is working with legislators and other construction industry associations on language of the bill that affects subcontractors.

**HB 1045** by Noel of Atlanta would amend Chapter 14 of Title 43 to provide for comprehensive revision of laws relating to licensing of plumbers, electrical contractors, utility contractors, conditioned air contractors, and low voltage contractors. Would also require licensing of general contractors. Still in House Governmental Operations Committee.

**HB 1205** by Purcell of Rincon, would amend Title 36 to prohibit local governments from requiring connection with or use of water supplied by a public water system, except when other water is unfit. Would prohibit local governments from requiring connection with or use of a public system to dispose of sewage or other waste products in certain cases. Still in State Planning and Community Affairs.

**HB 1218** by Borders of Valdosta would require that employees at an inbound call center disclose the employee's name, name of the employer, and the physical location of such employee. Still in Public Utilities Committee.

**HB 1231** by Beasley-Teague of Red Oak, would amend Code Section 36-71-3 relating to imposition of development impact fees, to provide for the imposition of a sewer connection, reconstruction, and improvement fee. Still in Committee on State Planning and Community Affairs.

**HR 668** by Noel of Atlanta, a RESOLUTION urging the use of certain design elements and material standards in state development activity and local school construction projects. Carryover from 2003, still in House Governmental Affairs Committee.

*If you have any questions about legislation, please contact Danny Richardson, Legislative Chairman, [danny@richardsonplumbing.com](mailto:danny@richardsonplumbing.com); or Rob Sumner, Executive Director, [rsumner@plumbingpros.com](mailto:rsumner@plumbingpros.com).*

## CARE & CONCERNS

Julius Dean, **Deen Plumbing**, Brunswick, GA and PMA member since 1991, died Sunday, February 1, 2004. Mr. Dean was a native of Kirkland, GA and had been a resident of Brunswick for 34 years.

George Raburn, Sr., PMA President George Raburn Jr.'s (**Raburn & Raburn Plumbing**) father passed away on January, 19th. Mr. Raburn had been in an Alzheimer's care unit for several years

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

On behalf of the members, directors, and officers of the Plumbing & Mechanical Association, we would like to publicly welcome as a new member:

H & M Mechanical, **Jeff Jones**, Marietta  
G & G Plumbing and Mech, **Scott Galt**, Gwinnett

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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON WADE PLUMBING



This is part of a series of articles spotlighting the background of PMA members. Last month our spotlight was on PMA's First Vice President, Chip Greene, President of Greene & Associates. This month, we feature one of PMA's Board of Directors, **Wade Frame with Wade Plumbing.**

**PMA:** Could you give me a brief history of your company?

**FRAME:** I started Wade Plumbing in 2000. We opened the doors with 22 employees.

Previously I had been in business with another partner for 16 years. Over all I've been in the business for 20 years.

**PMA:** How many people does Wade Plumbing employ?

**FRAME:** Right now we have 21 employees. Some of the same guys have been with me for 10 years and one of the men has been with me for 17 years.

**PMA:** What is your area of service?

**FRAME:** We operate on the south side of Atlanta and parts of Downtown as well. Primarily we handle new residential construction, specializing in tankless water heaters. And, while we have always done service work, we have not actively marketed ourselves as service contractors. We are beginning to get more aggressive in going after service work.

**PMA:** How Did You Get Started in the Business?

**FRAME:** Mr. Tommy Carroll hired me in 1979. I started as an apprentice and began learning the trade.

**PMA:** What do you think is the greatest challenge to the plumbing profession today?

**FRAME:** The caliber of potential employees. It's all about hiring and finding the right type of people. You have to have things in place - like doing drug free programs.

**PMA:** What is the secret to your success?

**FRAME:** Actually it's all about taking care of the customer. Scheduling is key. If I tell a customer I'm coming out we show, and if we can't we call them and let them know. High quality is key but lots of guys can do that, it comes down to being honest with the customer on when you can deliver not just what you can deliver. Our service department has a program called "Awesome Service", lots of

guys can stop a toilet from running, what this is about is doing the job so well your customer is glad you came out to do it. We want them to be tickled about the job and the price they pay won't matter to them.

**PMA:** Is there anyone who has been a mentor for you in the plumbing business?

**FRAME:** Gene Knowles, he worked for Tommy Carroll when I started. He was one of those guys at age 50 that could work circles around everyone, even the younger guys. And he was a good plumber. Tolerance is something he taught me.

**PMA:** If someone were interested in getting into the plumbing trade what would you advise them?

**FRAME:** It would be to make sure they are not afraid to work hard. It's hard work. Find someone to hire and train you. You can support a family, you won't get rich but you make a good living. It's a trade you can be proud of. But make sure you can take on the physical work.

### secret to success...

#### Scheduling

High quality is key but lots of guys can do that, it comes down to being honest with the customer on when you can deliver not just what you can deliver.

**PMA:** How did you come to be involved in PMA?

**FRAME:** Ultimately it was through Tommy Carroll back when he started the South Metro Area. He kept faxing out reminders to come out to the meetings and I finally started going to meetings. I became the South Metro Area Chairman last year to do my part.

**PMA:** Why did you stay involved in PMA?

**FRAME:** Mainly to keep up with current events and interact with other professionals. Also it's about the knowledge you gain from these interactions. It's invaluable. You can't put a price on what you learn from the other members.

**PMA:** If someone were interested in joining PMA, what would you advise them?

**FRAME:** I'd tell them to join and get information from other professionals in the business that is priceless.

**PMA:** Will you tell me about yourself and your family?

**FRAME:** My wife Telisa helps out with the business in the office and we have three boys. I also have a daughter and a three year old grandson. My cousin Michael and I, have been organizing our family reunion for the last 7 years with about 60-80 family members attending. We all can't wait for September to come around. Family is important to me.

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### 2004

March 6 CE	Principles of Cross Connection Gwinnett Tech
March 25-27	PHCC Legislative Day and Leadership Conference
April 24	2nd Annual Bass Tournament
May 19-20	B.O.S.S Training McDonough
June 17-20	PMA Annual Convention Hilton Oceanfront Resort Hilton Head Island, SC

### Happy Birthday!

East State Plumbing	Mr. Jimmy Whiten	18-Mar
Keever Plumbing	Mr. Michael Dalton	2-Apr
McLeroy Plumbing	Mr. Henry McLeroy	9-Apr
Plumb-It-Co.	Ms. Cecelia Hamrick	14-Apr
McLeroy Plumbing	Ms. Debbie Adams	23-Apr
K & R Mechanical	Ms. Carol Carroll	25-Apr
Atlanta Mechanical	Mr. George R. Bross	29-Apr

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