

gear," Schultz says. "Also their mini reinstatement cutter, and we have an 18-foot Perma-Liner lateral lining trailer."

When they have a call for lining larger diameter pipe, they use Masterliner Inc. These liners are typically installed with a platform truck or scaffolding using water inversion.

"We utilize a boiler for this, either the one on the platform truck or we rent one," Schultz says. "Our group has a 10-year-old International 10 million Btu platform rig."

Their CCTV truck is a CUES 2009 Ford with two CUES crawler cameras and a CUES cart-mounted camera system.



The BlueWorks crew cleans and prepares a sewer main for lining.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS

BlueWorks covers the entire state, and when they get a call with a request for a proposal, there are a lot of questions to be answered. They want a good overview of what the customer is experiencing, whether it's a percolating problem, burping, blackwater events, back pressure or backflow issues. The office staff, under the guidance of General Manager Erin Dunham, will handle this initially.

"We try to understand the problems, get an assessment before sending out a technician," Schultz says. "We also like to identify the customer needs. Is it a budget issue as well? We usually work with a board of directors. We like to make recommendations before we start any work."

"Often when they first call they will tell us it is in the stacks, but usually it is something in the ground causing the stack to back up."

"Blackwater losses are extremely expensive. Who wants to be on the second floor of a high-rise with sewers sludged dripping down the wall or mold growing behind the cabinets?"

When they complete a large project, they will have an engineering firm verify their work to catch anything they missed and have a third party involved so nobody gets bullied or taken advantage of.

After more than 15 years in the business and over \$30 million dollars of exposure in the past five years, Schultz knows that problems in these facilities have to be dealt with promptly and thoroughly.

THE PR FACTOR

Working in buildings where people reside has specific requirements. In assisted living homes, the residents are often interested in what is going on, and the staff is careful to understand and respond courteously. Plus there is the need for protection, and putting up barricades and notices. They usually have a staging area outside the building on these types of projects, and often work from the roof downstream to an access point in the building.

In the larger condominium complexes they have to work in sections. One



Eric Pinto carries inspection equipment out of the truck at the start of a sewer main project.

section will be isolated while the system is down. Preparation will begin early in the morning, but the water will not be turned off until 9 a.m. so the residents will have a chance to shower and go about their normal morning routines. Services are restored by 5 p.m. Here again, notices must be posted.

Approximately 85 percent of business is generated through full rehabilitation projects involving televising, cleaning and relining of the pipes, with the majority of time spent in the preparation process. The 15 percent balance is generated from smaller video, cleaning and replacement jobs, as well as other ancillary work.

BlueWorks currently employs 15 technicians, and Schultz is specific about requirements during the hiring process. Total staff is 22.

"We are a unique boutique operation," he says. "Recent use of drugs or alcohol abuse is not acceptable. We can't have that going on. We want to work with someone who is interested in a long career with the company. We do our own training because we are not like a NASSCO seminar where you can pull out a spec book."

"We will interview up to 15 people, and select one applicant and work with him for two weeks. Our staff has a lot of experience; I have a lot of experience. In two weeks we can pick up the traits that will or will not work for us. If this is not our candidate, we will pay generously, thank him for his time and move on."

"Attitude is important. An inexperienced guy with a phenomenal attitude and a desire to better himself has it over the guy with a bad attitude who knows how to run equipment."

"An old joke is that every new employee's baggage is only two weeks behind him, so usually by the end of four weeks we can tell if this is our candidate."

"Blackwater losses are extremely expensive. Who wants to be on the second floor of a high-rise with sewer sludge dripping down the wall or mold growing behind the cabinets?"

Jeremy Schultz

He adds that they like to hire those who have served in the military whenever possible.

Chris Barsel, project manager and a former Marine, heads a very qualified staff, from the office through technicians and others. Schultz and Barsel are actively involved in the contracts and proposals, and meet with the customers before a contract is signed and throughout the project.

BlueWorks typically has three to four large contracts in progress throughout the state and into the Florida Keys, with crews of three to five technicians on site. The company will often rent a home for the workers when



Eric Pinto uncoils a vacuum hose while the crew cleans and inspects a sewer main.

they are working out of town, and they'll spend five days each week at the project until completion. Technicians can be dispatched to handle issues and arrive within four hours in any given area of the state.

In Clearwater, they operate out of an office and warehouse facility, and there is also an office in Naples. Additionally, they have a laydown yard in Jacksonville where they can park equipment. Because of the weather concerns during hurricane season, their equipment is extremely mobile, mostly housed in box trucks or trailers for easy removal, even when on a work site.

"Equipment and tools are supposed to be on the trucks, not on the shop shell but out on a job," Schultz says. "BlueWorks knows its employees care about their gear, because our employees know we care about them." c



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RISING Above the REST

BY MARIAN BOND

FOCUSING ON SMALLER PIPELINES IN LARGE FACILITIES GIVES STARTUP COMPANY A STRONG FOOTHOLD IN A SOMETIMES OVERLOOKED SECTOR OF THE INDUSTRY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARMANDO SOLARES/SOLARES/PHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Many contractors focus on residential work or larger municipal jobs. BlueWorks Inc, based in Clearwater, Fla., has combined aspects of both in carving out a specific niche in the pipeline rehabilitation market.

The company's bread and butter is the labyrinth of small-diameter pipe hiding in the floors and walls of high-rise residential

complexes. The majority of BlueWorks' contracts last about 30 days and involve large structures that are more than 25 years old. In a space of 5,000 square feet there can be 150 different pipes of various sizes that need to be televised, cleaned, and sometimes replaced or relined.

Jeremy Schultz, managing director of BlueWorks Inc., says that the company specializes in these 6-inch and smaller lines. In 2013, they grossed \$3 million in small-diameter work and completed a cleaning and relining project involving the 18-story Monaco Beach Club in Naples, Fla., that lasted seven months. They cleaned and relined 10,000 linear feet of pipe in the high-rise complex.

"We consider ourselves a plumbing restoration company, and our goal is to restore the systems we service to 100 percent operating efficiency," Schultz says. "To accomplish this we use a myriad of techniques to get a system up and running properly. We do a lot of investigative work before executing a contract. We want to take care of our customers. We use diagnostics to identify the proper scope of work, and this takes a lot more legwork than other aspects of the business."

"In an 18-story, 130-unit, high-rise condominium there is more piping than there is in the road in front of the building," he says. "Smaller pipes have more bends and more utilities attached. It requires exhaustive diagnostics to identify the proper scope of work."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Schultz, who is a master plumber with a long history in the industry, believes this market is overlooked by many, but is an opportunity for the company he represents. While they focus on the large complexes and smaller pipes, they also respond to residential requests and handle lateral lines and large diameter storm and sewer lines.

"In our work with high-rise buildings, we use mechanical cleaning and our Vermeer vacuum equipment," he says. "Our staff, on a job, typically needs more than one camera on the truck to televise multiple pipe sizes and configurations."

Mechanical cleaning is accomplished using a Picote Oy Ltd. machine, which gently scrubs the inside of the pipe, rather than more traditional jetting, which runs the risk of damaging failing cast-iron piping. The method of cleaning must match the pipe. BlueWorks handles a range of piping, from cast iron to



BlueWorks project manager Chris Barsel keeps an eye on the RIDGID SeeSnake monitor as he feeds the camera down the line during an inspection of a vertical stack.



The BlueWorks team includes (back, from left) Managing Director Jeremy Schultz, General Manager Erin Dunham, project managers Anna Peterson and Chris Barsel, and pipe restoration specialists Lovell Thomas and Eric Pinto. Pipe restoration specialists Brendyn Marsee and Joel Galindo are in front.

profile

BLUEWORKS, INC., CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, SERVING ALL THE STATE

MANAGING DIRECTOR: Jeremy Schultz
ESTABLISHED: 2011

SERVICES: CCTV, jetting, cleaning, repair, relining

CUSTOMER BASE: High rise apartments, condominium complexes, aged care facilities, mobile home parks, residential

EMPLOYEES: 22
WEBSITE: www.blueworkscapany.com



"The most important part of lining is the cleaning. If the line is not cleaned properly, you cannot line it. We will often televise a line four times to make sure it is ready for relining."

Jeremy Schultz

"The most important part of lining is the cleaning," he says. "If the line is not cleaned properly, you cannot line it. We will often televise a line four times to make sure it is ready for relining. We can reline even those 2-inch lines; however we do not always reline. In many cases, traditional replacement is the best and only way to take care of the customer's problem."

clay to corrugated metal to concrete and new HDPE to slow deflection issues. Any of these lines can be relined. They are often deteriorated, are sometimes cracked or have buildups causing leaks.

When jetting is called for, they turn to a pair of US Jetting trailer jettors that supply 18 gpm with both 3/8- and 1/2-inch hoses. There is also a Honda jetter with 3/8-inch hose, and they lease a drop axle Vac-Tron with a 3/4-inch hose.

For smaller diameter pipes they have Vermeer vacuums. They have a Vac-Tron Hydro Excavator and the Vermeer Mighty Mole Hydrovac.

He says that in a high-rise building they could be lining as much as 10,000 feet, which can be very challenging. "You have to get it right."

Schultz has no qualms about noting the most important piece of equipment: "The cameras. The job requires good working cameras. If you don't have a camera you are lost," he says. "We have to have a variety in order to perform, and they must be available when needed."

Liners are prepared outside the building and brought in for installation. Cameras are easily moved about within a building. They have a variety of cameras, reels and cable capable of reaching 200 to 300 feet down a line.

There are no typical lengths of pipe to be relined. It can be 300 feet or less than 10. A lateral branch line can be from 2 to 200 feet.

They have the capability to reline through pipe size transitions by doing one length and then overlapping the next size going in the direction of the flow of the pipe, then going back with the Picote machine to smooth out the transition.

"BlueWorks is certified for the Perma-Liner Industries inversion, pull-in-place, continuous inversion spot repair and lateral lining technologies. We recently completed lining 2 miles of 3- to 6-inch piping at the Monaco Beach Club utilizing Perma-Liner technologies.

"Most of our smaller diameter equipment is from Perma-Liner, and includes a continuous inverter, mini inverter steam unit and PIP spot repair