

TRIED & TRUE

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SUMMER 2024

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Dear Fratco family,

This summer we're not just basking in the sunshine but also in the continuous growth and resilience that define Fratco. Each issue of *Tried & True* is a new chapter in our shared journey, celebrating our collective efforts, challenges and triumphs as we lay the groundwork for a future as enduring as the foundations we help build.

In this issue, we shine a light on Jeff Webb, an exemplary member of our team whose dedication and hard work illuminate the path for all of us at Fratco. Turning our focus outward, we also spotlight PNA Drainage, a contractor whose commitment to excellence and quality reflects our core values. Their innovative approach and dedication to the craft serve as a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of pushing boundaries.

We are also proud to feature KTS Custom Fabrication in our Partner Spotlight. The collaboration between KTS Custom Fabrication and Fratco exemplifies the synergy that drives industry advancement, highlighting how partnerships can lead to impactful solutions and enhance our offerings to our valued customers.

This edition also delves into the essence of our planet with "Digging Into Soil: The Silent Supporter of Life on Earth," a feature that explores the foundational role soil plays in sustaining life. Additionally, "Pioneers in Modern Drainage: A Brief History of Trenching Technology" takes us on a journey through the evolution of trenching, showcasing the innovations that have helped shape the drainage industry.

Understanding materials is a great way to learn about the plastics we use in our daily lives, which is why "Decoding Plastics: Understanding the Plastic Number System" offers interesting insights into the materials we use every day—on the production floor and at home! This piece breaks down the complexities of plastic categorization so we can all recycle more efficiently.

At Fratco, we're always committed to innovation and the continuous pursuit of excellence. This issue of *Tried & True* is a testament to that relentless drive, packed with stories of growth, partnership and advancement. We hope it not only informs but also inspires you.

Here's to a summer of progress, learning and success. At Fratco, we're more than just a team; we're a family, building a brighter, more sustainable future with every line of pipe we produce.

Sincerely,

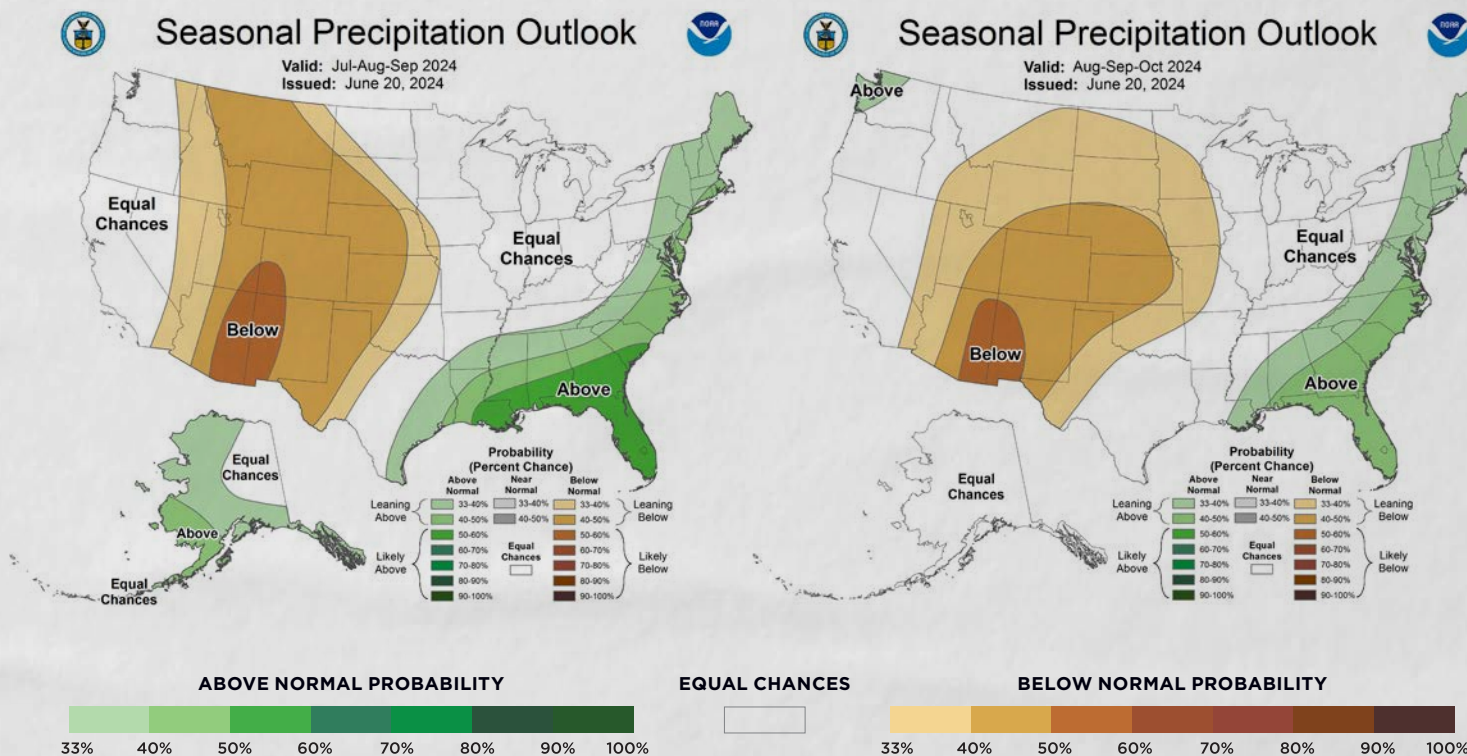
Chris Overmyer
President and CEO

Precipitation Outlook

FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

JUL-SEP

AUG-OCT



The future brings a constantly shifting landscape, and weather predictions are no exception. In an industry where preparation is the cornerstone of success, having a glimpse into what lies ahead can make the difference between a normal day or an unforeseen setback. Staying vigilant with daily and weekly weather updates is essential. Take proactive steps towards a successful future by considering seasonal forecasts for a broader perspective on the coming season.

For the latest weather information, visit the National Weather Service's website.

www.weather.gov



Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit.

- CONRAD HILTON, AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN

In Motion: The Essence of Success

Success is often portrayed as a distant, almost unattainable goal, achieved only by a few. However, Hilton's words remind us that the essence of success is not in a flawless journey, but in perpetual motion in the relentless pursuit of goals, despite the hurdles and setbacks.

Mistakes, often seen as roadblocks to success, are in fact stepping stones. Each error, each misstep, is an opportunity to learn, to grow and to improve. Successful people

understand this. They embrace their mistakes, not as signs of failure, but as essential parts of the learning process.

This perspective is crucial for everyone, regardless of profession or stage in life. Whether you're a professional facing career hurdles, or struggling with your work-life balance at home, the key is to keep moving.

Remember, the pause after a fall is temporary; the decision to rise and move forward is what defines your

journey. In your moments of doubt, think of the countless successful individuals who have walked this path before you, who have stumbled, but chose not to stop.

Your journey will be marked by mistakes, but your resilience and continuous action will pave the way to your achievements. Here's to being in motion, learning from our mistakes and never quitting on the path to success. ■

INDUSTRY NEWS

TRANSFORMING FLORIDA'S OBSOLETE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Florida's aging drainage networks, originally designed for development, now worsen flooding issues. At a recent resiliency summit, experts emphasized the need for sustainable solutions. Environmental engineer John Kiefer pointed out the maintenance challenges and environmental impacts. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program is restoring natural waterways using federal funds, improving flood resilience, especially in disadvantaged communities. Innovative, multi-purpose projects are key to addressing these issues amid climate change.



Scan here to see the full story at www.wusf.org

A ROBUST DATASET FOR DRAINAGE

Dive into the latest findings on how best practices in subsurface drainage not only enhance crop yields but also safeguard our land and water. This research, detailed in the journal, Scientific Data, sheds light on the critical need for data-driven approaches to drainage. Discover how growers can optimize water management to benefit both their crops and the ecosystem, especially in areas prone to nutrient loss. A must-read for anyone in the agriculture and environmental sectors looking to stay informed on the evolving world of water management and drainage.



Scan here to see the full story at www.drainagecontractor.com

URBAN DEVELOPMENT MEETS INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES: A CASE STUDY FROM INDIANOLA, IA

The debate over city support for development projects has taken center stage in Indianola, where a sewer pipe dilemma has sparked discussions on taxpayer contributions to infrastructure repairs. How much should cities invest in supporting development projects? Dive into the full story to explore the intersections of city planning, taxpayer investment and sustainable development.



Scan here to see the full story at www.indianola-ia.com

PLANTS ARE TALKING: ARE YOU LISTENING?

Beyond the routine of mowing, watering and fertilizing, there lies a subtle communication happening right under our noses. It's called plant phenology, the study of how plant life cycle events are influenced by seasonal and environmental changes. This silent language offers great insights into ecosystem health and can guide our land and water management practices more effectively.



Scan here to see the full story at www.turfandrec.com

MEET JEFF WEBB

CONTROLLER & CFO

Jeff Webb's journey at Fratco is a testament to the company's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a supportive work environment. Joining the company eight years ago, Jeff serves as the Controller and CFO, overseeing financial operations across all Fratco locations.

When asked about his role, Jeff highlights the dynamic nature of his work, emphasizing the positive culture and devoted team that makes Fratco a great place to work. Jeff's methodical nature thrives in the routine of monthly financial closings, but he appreciates the unexpected challenges that keep his job exciting and engaging.

A standout benefit Jeff discovered at Fratco is the genuine work-life balance promoted by the leadership. "Chris, Bill and Craig want you to do your job well but also value your life outside of work," Jeff notes. This flexibility was particularly important when his children were younger, allowing him to attend their sporting events and school functions without issue. Jeff found his way to Fratco through a handful of personal connections that led him to meet with Bill Champion, Fratco's COO. Bill actually knew of Jeff before they met, which helped prove a true sense of community within the greater industry. This sense of community and personal connection is a recurring theme in Jeff's experience at Fratco.

Describing Fratco's unique position in the industry, Jeff points out that while Fratco competes with major companies, it retains the accessibility and personal touch of a small-town business. He remarks on this saying,



It's a neat environment to do what we do and still know that there are personal relationships not only between the employees here but also with the customers that we're working for.



This blend of quality and customer service is a hallmark of Fratco's operations. Jeff believes Fratco's dedication to customer service and problem-solving sets them apart. The reputation for reliability and integrity makes him proud to be part of the Fratco team.

Through his day-to-day work, Jeff helps demonstrate what it means to thrive in a family-oriented work environment. We are grateful for Jeff's journey here at Fratco and the example he sets for us all. ■

DIGGING INTO SOIL

The Silent Supporter of Life on Earth

In the earth beneath our feet lies an intricate blend of minerals, organic matter, air and water—what we like to call, soil. This dynamic mixture serves as an often overlooked building block of civilization, from agriculture to construction. But what really is soil? It's not merely the ground we walk on; it is a living, breathing entity that sustains life and shapes how the world around us functions.

WHY TALK ABOUT IT? WHAT DOES SOIL “DO”?

Soil does more than just sit under our feet; it's a powerhouse that supports life on Earth, akin to the essentials like light, water and air. When you think about the basics of survival, soil's role

becomes clear. It's not just about providing a place for plants to root, but also about the critical functions it performs, like purifying water and air. Acting as a natural filter; when rain hits the soil, it doesn't just puddle and run off. Instead, it percolates through the soil, which naturally cleans it before it joins underground aquifers. This process helps ensure the water we eventually drink is clear and clean, the first step in a natural filtration process.

Moreover, soil acts as a vital regulator for the greater environmental system, managing everything from climate control to flood prevention. Its ability to absorb and hold water can mitigate the impact of heavy rains, reducing

the risk of floods. And it's not just about what soil can hold; it's also about what it gives. The clothes we wear, the homes we live in and even some medicines come from soil. For instance, the discovery of Streptomycin, a game-changer in antibiotic medicine often used to treat Tuberculosis and other infections, was made possible because of the microbial life that calls soil home.

So, looking at soil through this lens, it's much more than dirt. It's a dynamic, living system that supports, cleans and provides. From the food on our plates to the roofs over our heads, soil plays a part in many aspects of our lives, making it a resource worth respecting and protecting.

THE ESSENCE AND FORMATION OF SOIL

Soil's complexity begins with its formation, a process shaped by the interaction of minerals, organic materials and the forces of nature over time. Its creation is a slow dance of the elements, with topsoil formation taking hundreds to thousands of years, depending on the climate. This slow crafting process is influenced by the climate, organisms, relief (landscape), parent material and time—all summarized by the acronym CLORPT—and results in the diverse soil profiles that blanket the earth's surface. Each profile, or horizon as it's referred to in the soil world, tells the unique story of a soil's journey and composition.

At the heart of soil's functionality is its texture, structure and color—each aspect gives us unique information about the soil horizon, which explains different soil's drainage capabilities and suitability for different uses.

TEXTURE

The balance of sand, silt and clay determines a soil's texture, influencing its water retention and drainage. Loamy soils, with their near-equal mix of these components, are prized for agriculture due to their optimal water and nutrient-holding capacities. Conversely, sandy soils, with their quick drainage, are less suited for crops without irrigation support.

STRUCTURE

The arrangement of soil particles into “peds”—soil particles arranged in small clumps—impacts air and water movement within the soil. Soils with granular structures promote healthy plant growth by facilitating good drainage and air circulation. In contrast, platy soils can hinder drainage, leading to waterlogged conditions that are detrimental to most crops.

COLOR

A soil's hue can reveal its mineral content and organic matter levels, with dark soils rich in organic material and bright-colored soils indicating good drainage. Soils that are mottled and marked with spots suggest poor drainage, which can pose challenges for construction and agriculture by requiring specialized management strategies to prevent water accumulation.

NAVIGATING SOIL TYPES

To manage and utilize soils effectively, especially in projects requiring precise drainage solutions, understanding the soil types and their classifications is paramount. The United States soil taxonomy system categorizes soils into 12 orders, each defined by specific properties that impact land use and management practices. These orders provide a foundational understanding of soil's physical, chemical and biological characteristics, guiding decisions in agriculture, construction and environmental conservation.

GELISOLS

These soils are always cold, containing permafrost near the surface. You'll find Gelisols in polar regions and high mountains. They challenge construction and agriculture due to limited water movement and shallow root zones.

HISTOSOLS

Rich in organic material, Histosols are often called bogs or peats. Located mostly in wet areas, they're great for farming if drained but can subside and decompose if disturbed. They cover about 1% of the Earth's land.

SPODOSOLS

Recognized by their distinct layers, Spodosols form under acidic conditions, usually beneath coniferous forests. They're found in humid regions and are often sandy and acidic, covering about 4% of the Earth's land.

ANDISOLS

Born from volcanic ash, Andisols are fertile and hold water well, making them excellent for crops. They're common in areas with moderate rainfall and cool temperatures but can erode on slopes.

CONTINUE READING ▶▶▶

WORK ANNIVERSARIES

OXISOLS

These tropical soils are rich in iron and clay, forming over stable landscapes. Despite being highly weathered and naturally infertile, they can be productive with proper management. Oxisols span about 8% of the globe.

VERTISOLS

Packed with expansive clay, Vertisols swell with moisture and shrink when dry, causing surface issues. However, their fertility is high, making them good for crops if waterlogging is managed.

ARIDISOLS

Dry soils of deserts, Aridisols are home to unique ecosystems. They often contain salts and require irrigation for agriculture, covering 12% of the Earth's surface.

ULTISOLS

Found in humid regions, Ultisols are heavily weathered and acidic but can be made fertile with lime and fertilizers. They're common in forests and makeup about 8% of the land.

ALFISOLS

Less weathered and acidic than Ultisols, Alfisols are fertile and found under forests in humid areas. They're more common than Ultisols, making up 10% of the land.

MOLLISOLS

The dark, rich soils of grasslands, Mollisols are highly fertile and support robust agriculture. They benefit from the organic matter provided by prairie plants and cover 7% of the land.

INCEPTISOLS

These soils show moderate development and are widely diverse, forming under various conditions. They're widespread, occupying 17% of the Earth's surface.

ENTISOLS

With little to no development, Entisols are found in new or constantly changing environments like floodplains or dunes. They're among the most common soils, covering 16% of the land.

Each soil type presents unique challenges and opportunities, especially when it comes to drainage and agriculture. Understanding these can help in making better land use and management decisions.

TAILORING DRAINAGE SOLUTIONS TO SOIL TYPES

Understanding the intricacies of soil types is a great tool whenever you're working with dirt. Each soil's unique characteristics dictate the type of drainage needed to prevent erosion, protect infrastructure and support plant growth. By assessing the texture, structure and color of the soil on a project site, contractors and farmers can use proven, tailored drainage strategies that optimize water management and promote sustainable land use.

As we delve deeper into the world beneath our feet, the knowledge of soil types and their drainage needs becomes a powerful tool in our quest for sustainability and efficiency. Whether it's constructing resilient foundations, nurturing bountiful crops or managing water resources, the secrets held in the soil are key to our success. Let us continue to explore, understand and respect this precious resource, for in it lies the future of our endeavors on this planet. ■

Daniel Koebcke	37 years	Stacie Baccam	13 years	Felix Jonatham	3 years
Willie Parish Jr.	37 years	Andrew Leman	13 years	Darrell Luepnitz	2 years
Dean Speece	31 years	Jeffrey Webb	8 years	Ana Alvarenga	2 years
Kent Towler	29 years	Oscar Velasquez	7 years	Jason Dorothy	2 years
Edward Leszek	27 years	Brendan Noggle	6 years	Tommy Mangan	2 years
John Danford	20 years	Hans Peter	5 years	Troy Calvert	2 years
Raymond Carter	19 years	Mark Garay	4 years	Blake Calvert	2 years
Roger Cavness	19 years	Magdalena Alfaro	4 years	Ashtin Howard	2 years
Anthony Hannon	18 years	Lucas Duensing	4 years	Donald Allen	2 years
Rebecca Blackburn	14 years	Jerome Weiland	4 years		

WELCOMING NEW HIRES

Kiara Grandos	Roberto Saldana Jr.	Ryan Shepherd
Lenier Rosell	Herson Giron Barrera	Andri Gonzales
Myran Garcia	Carlos Lopez Lemus	Mikael Moreno
Juan Luis	Fernando Barrera	Braxton Winn
Yilbert Arellano	Aubrey Vaughan	Jose Garcia
Michael Franco	Lucio Medina	Gene Slaney
Kenneth Galvin	William Sandoval Pena	Jesus Salas
Bereket Gebru	Amarilys Lopez Perez	Miguel Rivera Salazar
Pedro Cedillo	Miguel Espinoza	Alexander Hernandez
Raymond Simmons	Eva Perez Oliveras	Anthony Flores
Isaac Rodriguez	Ralph Brown	Byron Torrez
Jamie McBride	Juan Miranda	Pedro Portillo Diaz
Samuel Moreno	Jose Jasso	Oscar Gutierrez
Noel Delgado	Matthew Bashore	Diego Serrano
Eduin Sanchez Amorocho	Benjamin Rodriguez	Jose L Salazar
Joel Lopez Jiron	Carlos M Garcia	Brian Stidham

KTS CUSTOM FABRICATION

INNOVATING RELATIONSHIPS & CUSTOM SOLUTIONS

TRUCK CHASING OVER STATE LINES

We initially caught up with Dave as he was on his way from Iowa to Monticello, Indiana. He was coming to pick up a new truck he had purchased. Now, you might be asking yourself, “Why was he coming all the way to Indiana to buy a truck? Surely Iowa has plenty!” For Dave, it all boils down to relationships. Several years ago Dave found himself somewhat stranded (and in the market for a new truck) in Indiana after a business conference. Dave set his sights on a truck at Hubbard Auto Dealership, but, he didn’t want to hassle with a loan that day—nor did he need it. What Dave needed was his checkbook, but it was back in Iowa. With great generosity, the dealership let him take the truck in good faith. Through mutual relationships with Chris Overmyer and Fratco, the dealership extended their trust in Fratco, to Dave. Agreeing to let Dave drive the unpaid for truck back to Iowa, where he mailed a check back, just as he had promised. This relationship was a huge step forward for Dave, saying he would always buy his vehicles there from now on... and of course, he’s kept his word.

BEGINNINGS ROOTED IN HARD WORK AND COMMUNITY

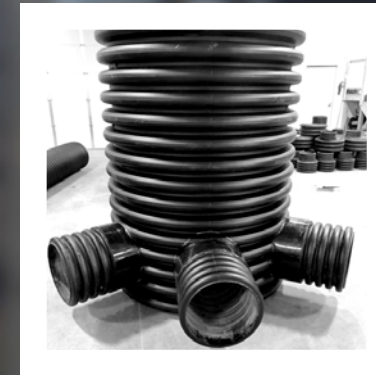
The roots of KTS Custom Fabrication can be traced back to the earnest efforts of Dave and Jean Leichtman, whose upbringing in family farming instilled in them the values of hard work and community trust. Dave and Jean grew up knowing each other as their families lived 5 miles apart in the beautiful, fertile countryside of New Hampton, Iowa. They started dating in high school and shortly

after graduating high school, they got married, had their first daughter and moved into a farmhouse next to Neil and Evelyn Kahn, the founders of Kahn Tile Supply.

Their journey with Kahn Tile Supply began in 2003, marking the start of what would become a significant chapter in their lives. The Leichtmans rented farmland from the Kahns, and soon the Kahns brought Dave onto the Kahn Tile Supply Team. Dave’s initial role involved making deliveries

and stocking inventory for the Kahn’s, a humble beginning that laid the foundation for future endeavors. When Neil Kahn passed away in 2004, Dave stepped up more to help Evelyn Kahn run the day-to-day business.

In our insightful conversation with Dave, he reflected on the essence of the drainage industry, saying, “Relationships are the number one thing!” This principle has guided the Leichtmans’ path, especially when, in 2010, Dave and Jean took a decisive



Reflecting on his connection with Neil and Evelyn, Dave shared, “The Kahns saw our hard work and dedication and were confident in partnering with us.” This sentiment underscores the essence of Kahn Tile Supply and its founders: a relentless pursuit of excellence, nurtured within a community that values trust, hard work and the bonds of family. Though the owners have changed, the core value of Kahn Tile Supply never has:

CUSTOMERS ARE FAMILY, AND FAMILY COMES FIRST.

FORGING A PARTNERSHIP WITH FRATCO

Already familiar with each other, as Kahn Tile Supply had sold Fratco pipe for years, in 2020 Dave and Chris sat down to explore their shared vision that would further bridge the two companies, fostering an alliance built on trust and the collective aim of delivering exceptional solutions in the drainage sector. This led Dave and Jean to officially launch the sister company of Kahn Tile Supply, KTS Custom Fabrication, which wholly focuses on the custom fabrication of drainage parts for special projects. There was nothing comparable out there that could deliver custom solutions quickly and efficiently.

Dave recalls a pivotal moment that solidified his partnership with Fratco: “Chris flew me out to Indiana and taught me the process [of custom fab]. He wanted me to go back to Iowa and make custom fittings.” This gesture of support and collaboration from Chris and Fratco was a turning point, emphasizing the importance of hands-on learning and mutual trust. Not only had Dave gained valuable insights for his company, but Fratco gained a trusted partner that would benefit its customers as well.

INNOVATING CUSTOM SOLUTIONS

KTS Custom Fabrication is built on its commitment to innovation ensuring that no matter the part for a custom drainage project, KTS Custom Fabrication could create it. The drainage industry, with its complex needs and challenges, demands flexibility and precision—qualities that KTS Custom Fabrication embodies. Dave explained that we live in a society where everything we want—as consumers—can be at our doorstep within minutes to a day or two. This instant-delivery mentality has crept into all types of industries and really explains the transformative impact of Dave’s approach, “Custom fab is the same. People want things quickly, and we can do that with custom orders.”

Their dedication to crafting tailored solutions has set them apart, with state-of-the-art equipment like the 5-axis CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine, enabling them to undertake projects that were previously unfeasible. The term “5-axis” refers to the number of directions that the cutting tool can move. On a 5-axis machine, the cutting tool moves across the X, Y and Z linear axes as well as rotates on the A and B axes to cut pieces from any direction. This technological versatility, combined with a deep understanding of their clients’ needs, has allowed KTS Custom Fabrication to offer unmatched services in the drainage industry.

A VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

Looking to the future, KTS Custom Fabrication is not just focused on serving their customers to the best of their ability, but also on sustainability. Their commitment to recycling waste and unused product

CONTINUE READING >>>



The Leichtman family

back into production is a testament to their dedication to environmental stewardship. Dave proudly shared, “We recycle any unused parts back to Fratco. We sell them back to be made into pipe, and they go straight to regrind.”

As KTS Custom Fabrication continues to evolve, its partnership with Fratco remains a cornerstone of pivotal growth for both companies. The shared values and unwavering trust between the two companies have cultivated a fertile ground for innovation, setting a precedent for the industry at large.

BEYOND BUSINESS: A FAMILY LEGACY

Beyond all of the technical achievements and business milestones lies the heart of KTS Custom Fabrication—a story of a family’s journey through the realms of hard work, dedication and the joys of seeing a vision come to life. Dave and Jean, along with their children, embody the spirit of family and the belief in making a difference through their work.

The whole family helps to make both companies thrive. Jean’s brother, Linn, is a manager for Kahn Tile Supply. Isabel, the Leichtman’s oldest daughter, helps with marketing while attending nursing school. Their second daughter, Ava, a freshman in high school, has done everything from drilling holes in pipe to driving tractors and even doing paperwork in the office. Their son, Bryer, works on the farm, helps in the custom fabrication shop and even has his own tractor. The Leichtmans also have many nephews that help with farming, hauling pipe and work in the custom fabrication shop.

Outside of working to help move the drainage industry forward, Dave coaches his daughters’ high school basketball team. When comparing coaching the team to running his business he remarked, “When you’re coaching, you’re also leading young individuals and guiding them. And so I see a huge correlation between the two. Everyone wants to have a great culture

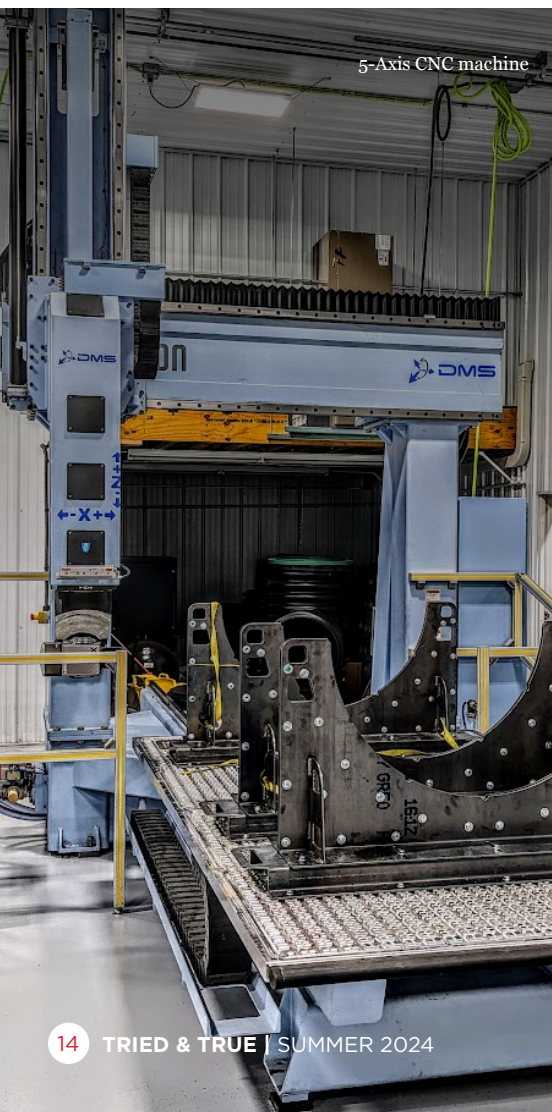
and work atmosphere, and if you have great teammates or coworkers, your practice (or your work day) flies by.”

Jean couldn’t say enough about how supportive and loving the team is at Kahn Tile Supply. Jean’s sister passed away last November leaving her husband and two small children behind. The Kahn Tile Supply team put on a fundraiser to raise money for the family. Jean affectionately told us, “We are here for each other in our worst moments—we all have each other’s back. We care about our employees personally, and we know that they care about us.”

PIONEERING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

KTS Custom Fabrication and their partnership with Fratco is a beacon of innovation, resilience and collaboration in the drainage industry. As more and more unique problems arise, more diverse custom solutions are needed, and KTS Custom Fabrication is ready. But, the story goes beyond just business. It’s about community, family and coming together with a common vision for a brighter future.

As KTS Custom Fabrication looks ahead, its roots remain firmly planted in the values that have guided its journey so far. They stand ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow, driven by a commitment to innovation, excellence, relationships and a deep understanding of the industry they serve. ■



5-Axis CNC machine



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QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

PNA DRAINAGE'S HUMBLE STRIDE

In 2013, Jon Pfeifer laid the foundation for PNA Drainage in Richland, Iowa out of a passion for drainage and a wealth of experience in the field. Over the past decade, with a dedicated crew of three, they've laid an estimated 2.5 million feet of pipe.

The road to success was bumpy at first, marred by challenges with suppliers that couldn't deliver the right materials or in some cases deliver on time. Jon switched to Fratco after a recommendation from a friend, he noted to us, "It was easy to transition to Fratco, they go out of their way to help me succeed in my business."

Reflecting on the growth of both companies, Jon notes, "It's been pretty nice watching them [Fratco] grow as I've grown." Jon noted how busy Fratco's Mt. Pleasant location has become explaining that today there are almost always a few other customers there to pick up materials. This mutual growth isn't just about business expansion; it's a testament to the relationship PNA Drainage and Fratco have cultivated, growing side by side for years, with more to come.

Central to PNA Drainage's ethos is a principle that Jon has always stood by: "Quality not quantity." This philosophy isn't about cutting corners to increase output. Instead, it's about meticulous attention to detail and ensuring that each job is done correctly the first time. This approach not only saves time but also builds a reliable reputation, allowing PNA to help more customers effectively. Jon's commitment to this principle has been a critical factor in PNA Drainage's success, emphasizing the importance of quality in building a sustainable business.

"IT'S A FAMILY-ORIENTED BUSINESS—THEY KNOW MY NAME—YOU DON'T GET THAT ANYWHERE ELSE,"

Jon pointed out, emphasizing his personal relationship with Fratco. This level of personal recognition and familiarity is rare in the industry and highlights the strong community ties within the Fratco network. For Jon, this isn't just about business transactions; it's about being part of a community that values and supports its members on a personal level. He



Jon Pfeifer and his family



Jon's 5-year-old son already hard at work

remarks that the Mt. Pleasant Fratco team knows him well enough that they know exactly what materials and products he needs on a regular basis, and they're always ready to deliver.

The relationship between Fratco and PNA has also helped improve PNA's customer relations with farmers through Fratco's quality pipe. Jon explained that when Flexcorr first came out, Kiley Miller, one of our proud Fratco salesmen, recommended it for a specific job that Jon was struggling to solve in a cost-efficient way. While he was hesitant to use a new product at first, Flexcorr proved to be a highly efficient solution not just for PNA but for the farmer as well. "It just has great flow rate compared to traditional single-wall," Jon told us. He went on to explain that he has used Flexcorr consistently since that job, and it's proven its worth time and time again. For Jon and PNA, Flexcorr "changed the industry."

While PNA Drainage may seem small to some, Jon is quite proud of the work they do. Jon told us about the possibility of some small expansions on the horizon but PNA Drainage isn't

looking to spread themselves too thin. Jon wants their work to be done right, so PNA won't expand until he's confident they can do it right. PNA Drainage at its heart is a family business, and the future looks bright for them as Jon laughs saying, "Well, my son's five and can run an excavator."

Jon Pfeifer's leadership at PNA Drainage serves as a compelling testament to the benefits of forging strong partnerships and maintaining a commitment to quality. Jon consistently recommends others in his area to Fratco, connecting them with salesmen and continuing to grow the Fratco family. Within a community that prioritizes hard work and integrity, PNA Drainage emerges as a distinguished example of excellence, driven by Jon's clear vision and dedicated approach. ■

DECODING PLASTICS

Understanding the Plastic Number System

In our industry, we work with plastic every day, and recycling Fratco pipe is a simplified process since the pipe is only made from two types of plastics. Can we just recycle all the plastic we use at home the same way? Sadly, it's not so simple when you introduce different types of plastic, making recycling at home a headache with all these numbers and types to keep track of. Understanding the types of plastics and their respective codes, from one to seven, can make a big difference in how we approach recycling on-site or at home.



1 - PET: THE POPULAR CHOICE

Code 1 plastics, made with PET or PETE, polyethylene terephthalate, are the unsung heroes of the recycling world. These containers, often housing your favorite beverages, lead the charge with a 96% market share in the U.S. Beyond bottles and jars, PET's versatility stretches to combs, tote bags, carpeting and more. A champion of the recycle bin, PET's journey from your site to the recycling center is sustainability in action.



2 - HDPE: THE PROTECTOR

HDPE's (high-density polyethylene) strength lies in its resilience and protective nature, especially when it comes to safeguarding your food and drinks. Although it's a steadfast guardian, reusing HDPE for food containers is a no-go for safety reasons, the recycling process can introduce chemicals we don't want to consume. From shampoo bottles to milk jugs, HDPE's second life includes fencing, crates and even lumber. It's a sturdy ally in our eco-friendly endeavors.



3 - PVC: THE VERSATILE ONE

PVC, polyvinyl chloride, flexes its muscles in both rigid and flexible forms, proving indispensable in plumbing and construction. Yet, its utility comes with a caution—PVC recycling is less common, due to its potential harm if ingested. Still, when recycled, it finds new purpose in products like binders, cables and traffic cones, showcasing the power of transformation.



4 - LDPE: THE FLEXIBLE FRIEND

LDPE, low-density polyethylene, might not headline recycling programs, but it's starting to make its mark. Known for its flexibility and safety with food storage, LDPE crafts everyday essentials like grocery and sandwich bags. Its path to recycling is growing, promising a future where less LDPE is destined for the landfill and instead integrated into useful items like garbage cans and outdoor furniture.



5 - PP: THE HEAT-RESISTANT

With only about 3% of PP, polypropylene, products recycled in the U.S., there's room to grow. PP's claim to fame is its high-temperature resistance, making it perfect for food containers that face the microwave's heat. Recycled PP turns into durable goods like battery cables and bins, proving that tough materials can have a soft spot for the planet.



6- PS: THE LIGHTWEIGHT

Polystyrene, or Styrofoam, is the lightweight contender in our lineup. PS may be the most notoriously bad-for-the-environment plastic, its recycling process is energy-intensive, but efforts are improving. From coffee cups to packing material, PS has a wide range of uses. Its recycled form contributes to products such as insulation and license plate frames, highlighting the potential for sustainability even in the most challenging materials.



7 - MISCELLANEOUS: THE WILD CARDS

The number 7 category is the catch-all for plastics that defy the first six codes, including those made with polycarbonate. Though tough to recycle, innovations are underway to give these plastics new life in forms like plastic lumber. Among them, BPA-containing products remind us of the importance of cautious use and disposal.

We all do our part for the environment at work, from reducing waste in the field to recycling plastic on the production floor. Let's keep the same sustainability mindset when we're at home! Check in with your local waste management company to learn what types of plastics they can accept for recycling. If they can't take certain types, grocery stores and other local places will often have recycling bins for tougher plastics to be taken to recycling plants that can handle them. Every piece of plastic has a role to play in paving the way toward sustainability. Let's make every effort to sort, recycle and champion the use of eco-friendly materials wherever we can. Together, we're not just building for today—we're helping pave the way for a greener tomorrow. ■

FIELD JOURNAL

TRIED & TRUE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

BUILDING FROM FEEDBACK

A ROADMAP FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Whether it's from customers, coworkers or the boss, feedback is like a roadmap to doing things better. Here's how to take that feedback and use it to up your game:

1. LISTEN UP

First off, actually listen. It's easy to get defensive, but resist that urge. There's often gold in what people are telling you—even if it's not what you want to hear.

2. SORT IT OUT

Not all feedback is created equal. Some of it's spot on, some of it's off base. Take a step back and figure out which is which. Look for the patterns—if you're hearing the same thing from multiple sources, there's probably something to it.

3. PLAN YOUR NEXT MOVE

Alright, you've got this feedback—now what? Make a plan. If customers are saying they want faster service, figure out how to speed things up. Are coworkers saying communication is an issue? Find ways to be more clear and direct.

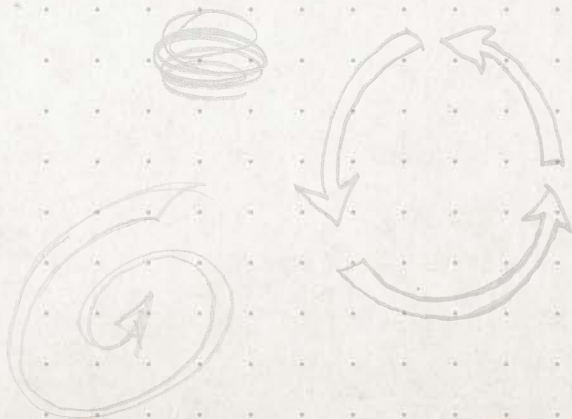
4. PUT IT INTO ACTION

This is where the rubber meets the road. Put that plan into action. Make the changes you need to make. Work to solve the problems presented. It might be a bit rough at first, but stick with it.

5. KEEP THE LOOP GOING

After you've made changes, check back in. Ask if things are better, worse or the same. Feedback is a loop, not a one-off. Keep it going.

Remember, feedback isn't about someone ragging on your work. It's an opportunity to grow and do better. Embrace it, use it and watch how it changes your game for the better.



PIONEERS IN MODERN DRAINAGE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF

TRENCHING TECHNOLOGY

In the ever-evolving story of construction technology, trenchers—including what has become industrial drainage plows—stand out for revolutionizing the way we manage land and water. These formidable machines, which cut through the earth to create trenches, have played an important role in agriculture, infrastructure development and urban planning.

This journey into the depths of the earth began in 1893 with the development of the first mechanical trencher, the Buckeye No. 88, by James Hill at the Bowling Green Foundry and Machine Co. This invention marked the dawn of a new era in land management, leading Hill to establish the Van Buren Heck & Marvin Co. in 1902, later known as the Buckeye Traction Ditcher Co. This company would become synonymous with the advancement of trenching technology.

As the 20th century progressed, the demand for trenching equipment surged, propelling companies like The Parsons Co., Barber-Greene Co. and Cleveland Trencher Co. into the spotlight. Each contributed unique innovations to the field, such as The Parsons Co.'s ladder ditcher capable of digging substantial trenches and Barber-Greene's introduction of a hydrostatic trencher that utilized hydraulic technology to move and dig quicker and more efficiently.

The evolution of trenchers from mechanical beasts to hydraulic powerhouses post-World War II represented a leap forward in technology. This period saw trenchers becoming faster and more efficient, catering to the expanding scale of projects. The advent of the Ditch Witch's first trenching machine in 1949, featuring a hydrostatic propel and a John Deere diesel engine, revolutionized trenching work by outdating manual excavation methods.

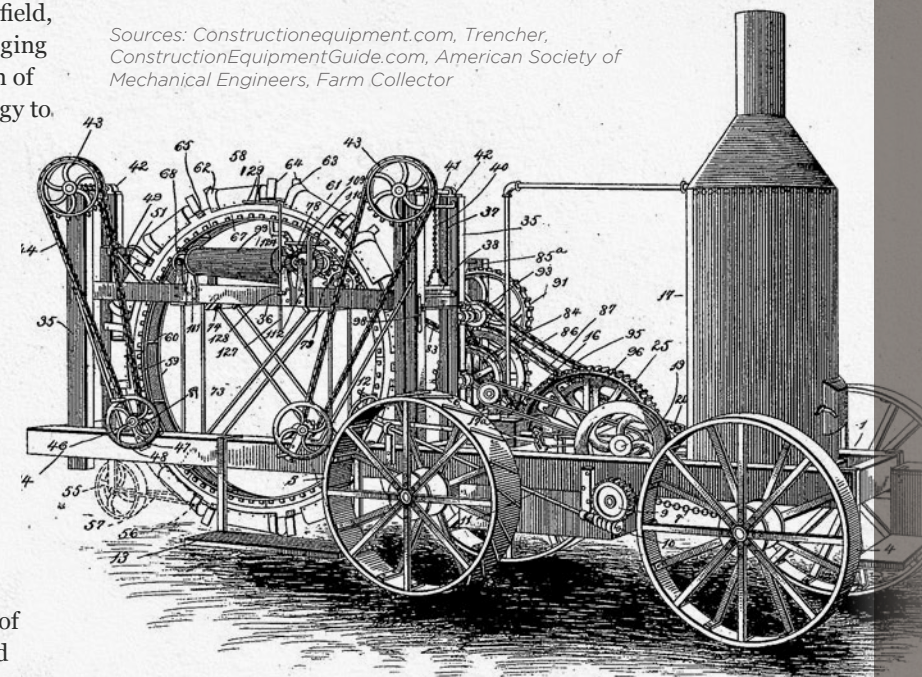
However, the demand for trenching equipment was not just for larger models but also for more compact, powerful machines. This need led to the development of trenchers capable of slicing through frozen ground and even rock, exemplified by the Tesmec TRS 100 in 1951 and the Parson's 355 model, which became the largest capacity ladder trencher available of its time.

Innovations continued with the creation of the Polar Bear trencher in 1982, boasting a 2000 hp diesel engine and heralded as the largest trencher built to date. Such advancements underscore the relentless drive to push the boundaries of what trenching technology could achieve.

Trenchers have since diversified in use, from laying pipelines and cables to facilitating drainage systems and even aiding in domestic projects like installing sprinklers or running electrical lines. The integration of trenchers with drainage pipe or geotextile feeder units—like in modern drainage plows—showcases the versatility of these machines, capable of executing multiple tasks in a single pass.

It's quite incredible to see how far the industry has come, from the simple rudimentary designs of the 1800s trenchers to the more sophisticated, efficient machinery we find in drainage plows today. As we look back at these pioneers of modern drainage, we also look forward to the innovations that will continue to redefine what is possible in the world of trenching technology.

Sources: Constructionequipment.com, TrencherConstructionEquipmentGuide.com, [American Society of Mechanical Engineers](http://AmericanSocietyofMechanicalEngineers.com), [Farm Collector](http://FarmCollector.com)



James Hill's patent drawing for the Buckeye No. 88, the "Traction Digging Machine"

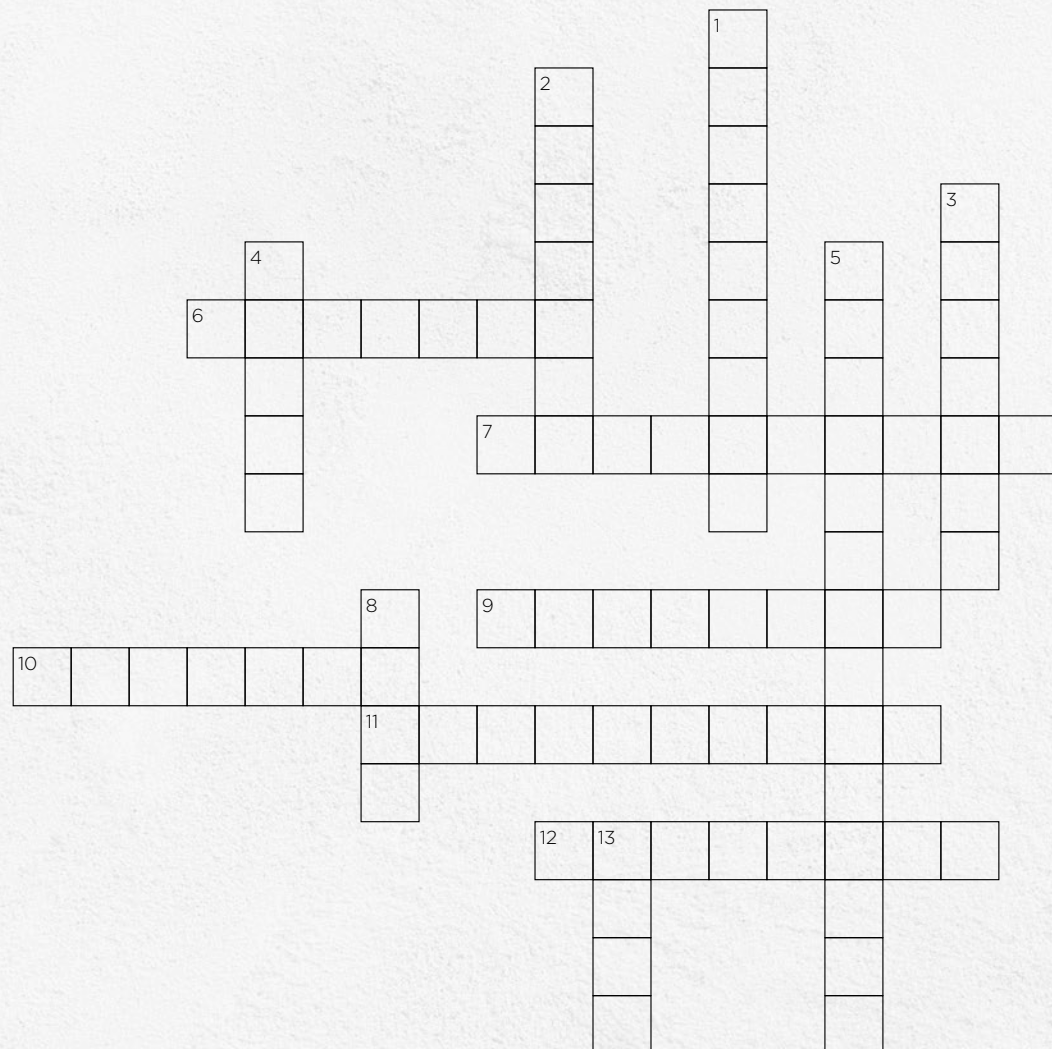
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Name: _____
 Street Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____



CROSSWORD CLUES

DOWN

- Nickname for the largest trencher built to date.
- Name of the first mechanical trencher from 1893.
- Type of soil that covers 8% of the Earth and is rich in iron and clay.
- The number for the “wild cards” of plastic recycling.
- What mistakes are seen as by successful people.
- Abbreviation for number four on the plastic recycling system.
- Feedback is a _____, not a one-off.

ACROSS

- The aspect of soil determined by the amount of sand, silt and clay.
- City where KTS Custom Fabrication is currently located.
- The city where PNA drainage was founded.
- The dealership where Dave Leichtman purchases his vehicles.
- Soil is a _____ that supports life on Earth.
- Fratco product recommended by Kiley Miller, that proved to be a cost-effective solution for PNA Drainage.



INSTRUCTIONS: Cut along the dotted line for 5x7 frames. Cut out the image for 4x6 frames.

The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination.

- TOMMY LASORDA, PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL PLAYER

LOCATIONS

CORPORATE OFFICE
105 W. BROADWAY ST.
MONTICELLO, IN

**WESTFIELD, IA
(STATELINE TILE)**
23942 IA HWY 12

FRANCESVILLE, IN
4385 S. 1450 W.

ST. ANNE, IL
499 S. OAK ST.

ALGONA, IA
2502 E. POPLAR ST.

MT. PLEASANT, IA
1600 W. WASHINGTON ST.



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