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& TRUE**

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SPRING 2025

# *Advancing Drainage Science*

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PROJECT | **PG. 18**

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Metalworks*

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### Dear Fratco family,

As winter's chill begins to fade, I know many of you, like me, are ready to welcome the warmth and opportunity that spring brings. This season of renewal is the perfect backdrop for the exciting news we're sharing in this issue of *Tried & True*.

First and foremost, I'm thrilled to announce that Fratco is growing again. We're working to open a new plant in northern Alabama, marking another step forward in our journey. This milestone is only possible because of the support, loyalty and dedication of people like you. Together, we've built something truly special, and this new location represents the next chapter in serving our customers and communities even better.

Our move south is also driven by the increasing demand for HDPP pipe in water management. This innovative material is reshaping what's possible in efficiency and durability, and we're eager to see how it continues to evolve. In this issue, you'll find an article showcasing HDPP and why it's becoming a top choice for so many customers.

But growth isn't just about heading south. Our expansion into Western Irrigation continues to take shape, and I couldn't be more proud of the strides we've made. In this issue, we're shining a spotlight on Buffalo Ridge Metalworks, led by Jason Waldner and his remarkable team. Their creativity and craftsmanship have been instrumental in developing our All-in-One Water Transportation Systems, making adaptable and affordable solutions a reality for our customers.

This issue is packed with stories of ingenuity and innovation—the same qualities that drive all of us at Fratco. It's a privilege to be part of a community so full of passion and forward-thinking ideas. You inspire me to strive for better every day, and for that, I'm endlessly grateful.

Thank you for being part of the Fratco family. Together, we'll keep pushing boundaries and building a stronger future.

Sincerely,



**Chris Overmyer**  
President and CEO



# Precipitation Outlook

FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

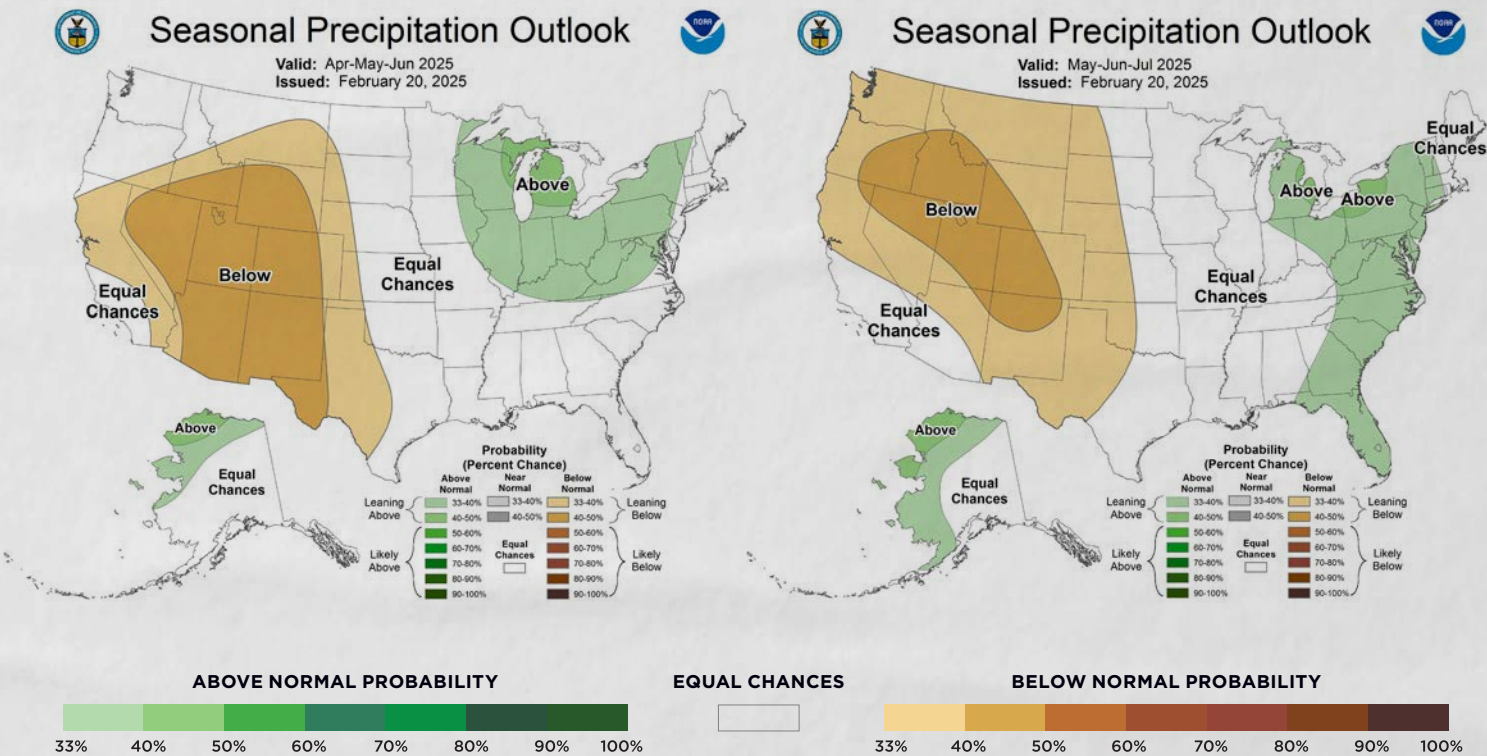
Blueprint for Success

A man can make what he wants of himself if he truly believes that he must be ready for hard work and many heartbreaks.

- THURGOOD MARSHALL, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

APR-JUN

MAY-JUL



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](http://www.weather.gov)



## Shaping Your Own Path

The road to becoming who you want to be isn't an easy one. It's marked by hard work, setbacks and challenges that will test you at every turn. Marshall's words remind us that success doesn't come to those who wait for it—it's built by those who roll up their sleeves and press on, no matter how tough it gets.

It starts with a vision of who you want to be and what you want to achieve, but it requires more than wishful thinking. You have to believe deep

down that it's possible and then put in the sweat to make it happen. You have to be ready to push through the grind, face the tough days and learn from the times when things don't go your way. This is more than working hard; it's being ready to take a punch, stand back up and keep moving forward.

But the heartbreaks along the way are not without purpose. They shape you, teaching lessons that success alone never could. Each setback gives you the grit and determination to keep

going, turning what feels like failure into fuel. The process isn't just about achieving a goal—it's about who you become while chasing it. If you believe it's worth it and you're willing to do the work, you can make yourself into exactly who you set out to be. ■



# ADMC CORNER



WITH  
**KEEGAN KULT**

Another check-in with Keegan Kult, Executive Director for ADMC, yielded some exciting updates for the drainage water management industry.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

There are plans in place to revamp ADMC’s strategic plan to focus heavily on bringing more education to the industry through the Conservation Drainage Network, advanced installation techniques and new opportunities for education like NACADE 2025.

## BATCH AND BUILD EXPANSION

The Indiana Nature Conservancy has received funding from the NCRS through a regional conservation partnership program (RCCP) in order to bring Batch and Build projects to the Wabash River Watershed, which is the second largest tributary to the Ohio River and is the longest segment of free-flowing river east of the Mississippi River.

Iowa continues to install around one hundred of these projects each year, with Minnesota pumping out around 60 to 70 projects in the last few years. Knox County, Illinois, has 100+ projects in the works being implemented by Charlie Schafer’s Ecosystems Services Exchange (ESE). These multi-grant-funded projects will be directed at the Illinois Water Basin.

## A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

After Board President Kent Rodelius’ recent retirement, ADMC has welcomed several new board members, including Fratco’s own Craig Douglass. This new influx of leadership has brought new energy and focus on unifying the industry.

## GROWING IN MEMBERSHIP

ADMC is always looking to bring new members on board its mission to improve agricultural production efficiency, water quality and environmental outcomes. If you are interested in joining ADMC as a member, please contact Keegan Kult at [kkult@admcoalition.com](mailto:kkult@admcoalition.com).



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON ADMC MEMBERSHIP,  
SCAN HERE.

## MEET **BROOKS SCHOON**

### FACILITIES MANAGER

For Brooks Schoon, success is built one small decision at a time. As Facilities Manager at Fratco’s St. Anne location, Brooks brings the same level of dedication to his work that he’s honed on the court playing college basketball for Aurora University. A St. Anne native, Brooks’ journey with Fratco began in 2020, and his rise through the ranks reflects the payoff of putting in work where it’s needed.

Brooks first joined Fratco during the spring of his senior year in high school, when COVID-19 closed campuses and left many students searching for direction. Starting by loading trucks, he quickly became a versatile team member, working summers in the yard. He began shadowing leaders at Fratco’s Francesville and Mt. Pleasant facilities. This breadth of experience laid the groundwork for his current role, which he assumed in June.

As Facilities Manager of the St. Anne plant, Brooks oversees inventory, production schedules and employee engagement. For him, keeping employees happy and supported is a top priority.

*I just try to pass along  
the trust and support that  
Fratco has shown me ...*



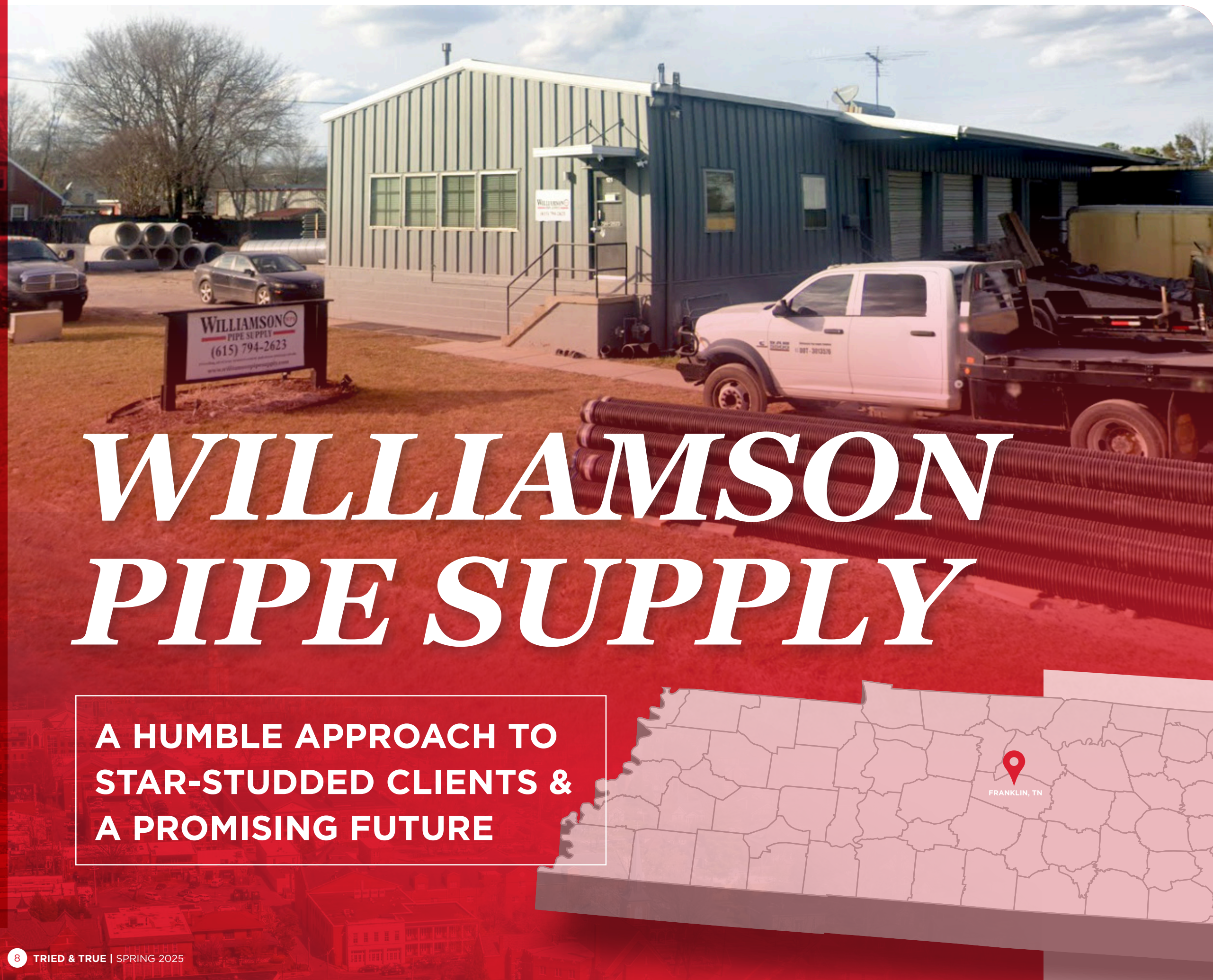
Brooks also credits Fratco’s tuition assistance program with shaping his path. “I was very lucky to receive tuition assistance for my four years at Aurora [University],” he says. “It was life-changing for me because I probably wouldn’t have gone to school without it.” Graduating with a degree in business administration, Brooks now uses those skills to help ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the St. Anne facility.

Beyond Fratco, Brooks stays rooted in his community, coaching JV basketball at St. Anne Community High School. He loves the town’s family-centered atmosphere, where long-standing connections create a sense of belonging.

When asked what advice he’d give to someone considering a role at Fratco, Brooks emphasizes the company’s supportive culture. “They really trust everybody in their positions and give them the resources to succeed. You’ll feel like you’re part of something bigger than just your own growth.”

Whether on the court or in the warehouse, Brooks embodies Fratco’s commitment to teamwork and excellence. His story is one of gratitude, growth and paying forward the trust and opportunities he’s received. ■





# WILLIAMSON PIPE SUPPLY

**A HUMBLE APPROACH TO  
STAR-STUDDED CLIENTS &  
A PROMISING FUTURE**



Barry Saucier

Williamson Pipe Supply sits just south of Nashville's concerts and nightlife in Franklin, Tennessee—a place as famous for its country music stars as its rolling hills. Led by Barry Saucier and his tight-knit team of five, this humble pipe supply company focuses on one thing: doing right by their employees and customers.

"We're looking to make enough to put food on the table, and that's what keeps us happy. I'm not looking to get wealthy," Barry says—a grounded philosophy that many of us can respect.

## **A ROUNDABOUT RETIREMENT**

Barry's journey to owning Williamson Pipe Supply wasn't exactly a straight line. But is it ever? After retiring from a career in road construction, he lasted about two weeks before realizing he wasn't quite ready to sit still.

"I gotta find something else to do," Barry recalls thinking. That "something else" turned into buying Williamson Pipe Supply in 2017, a move that drew on his years of experience working in subdivisions, utility projects and a wide variety of other construction work.

Though he's quick to point out, "I'm not a salesman—I've installed this stuff before." Barry's hands-on knowledge has made him a trusted partner for contractors and customers alike. He's even been known to roll up his sleeves and help with installations.

**CONTINUE READING** >>>



“If somebody needs a hand, I’ll run out there—whatever it takes,” Barry says, “I’ve been guilty of making a delivery, where the person does not know how to put the pipe in, so I’ll get out of the truck and help them put the pipe in the ditch. And they’re [the office staff] sitting there calling me from the office, asking, ‘Where are you at? We need you to do this.’” But Barry’s priority is ensuring each customer can get their job done. “I’m helping them put pipe in the ditch. I’ll be back when I get back.”

**And so that’s what I love to do. If somebody needs a hand, I’ll go up there, whether it’s putting pipe in the ditch, running a piece of equipment, whatever it takes. Because we’re all here on Earth to help each other.”**

**PARTNERING WITH FRATCO**

When Barry first took over Williamson Pipe Supply, he wasn’t impressed with the relationship he had with their previous pipe supplier. Determined to find a better partner, he started asking around. Word of mouth led him to Fratco, and a simple phone call kicked off what has become a strong partnership.

After connecting with Craig and meeting Brendan, Barry knew he’d found the right fit. “It just started from there,” he says. Today, Fratco trucks keep them stocked with near-daily shipments of pipe and accessories. “Austin [Simanson] does a great job of lining trucks up and keeping pipe coming to us,” Barry notes, expressing his gratitude for consistent and reliable supply.

**PIPE FOR EVERY PROJECT—EVEN CELEBRITY ONES**

Most of Williamson Pipe Supply’s sales consist of 20-foot sticks of HDPE (SingleCorr and SmoothCorr) and accessories, often for smaller residential projects like custom homebuilding with contractors. However, he also notes that HDPP (ProCorr) is becoming increasingly more common, especially in their southern footprint.

While the company’s bread and butter might be modest-scale jobs, its reach has extended to some star-studded clients. Located in one of Tennessee’s wealthiest areas, Williamson Pipe Supply has delivered pipe for the likes of Trace Adkins, Kid Rock, Shania Twain and other high-profile names.

“We are the pipe place for the stars,” Barry jokes. But he’s quick to add, “We laugh about it and have fun.” Despite the glitz of their clientele, Barry and his team stay humble, “We’re just a simple little pipe company,” he adds with a light chuckle.

**LOOKING SOUTH**

As Williamson Pipe Supply continues to grow, Barry is already planning the company’s next step: opening a new location in the Florida panhandle, specifically in Navarre. Encouraged by Fratco’s own expansion into Alabama, Barry is eager to take the business further south and bring the corrugated plastic pipe water management industry with him.

With its strong partnerships, practical approach and willingness to lend a helping hand, Williamson Pipe Supply isn’t just selling pipe—it’s building relationships, one stick at a time. ■



SCAN HERE TO  
LEARN MORE ABOUT  
WILLIAMSON PIPE  
SUPPLY.



# WORK ANNIVERSARIES

Todd Denton	34 years	Matthew Rightman	5 years	Ryan Shepherd	1 year
Charles Houchell	28 years	Brice Watts	4 years	Ray Simmons	1 year
Gavin Conley	20 years	Deyanira Gonzalez	3 years	Jose Garcia	1 year
Craig Douglass	14 years	Derek Overmyer	3 years	Pedro Diaz	1 year
Bill Champion	14 years	Sierra Wood	3 years	Miguel Angel Rivera Salazar	1 year
Mason Doyle	14 years	Matthew Barker	3 years	Jesus Salas	1 year
Joel Kruger	13 years	Robert Boyd	2 years	Gene Slaney	1 year
Brandon Herron	12 years	Tyler Ricardez	2 years	Jandy Battle	1 year
Katrina Pelsy	11 years	Shain Yenna	2 years	Jordan Campbell	1 year
Martin Thompson	10 years	Michelle Mills	2 years	Jose Luis Salazar Zarate	1 year
Jackie Sanchez	9 years	Devon Pocius	2 years	Eduin Sanchez Amorocho	1 year
Skylur Moseley	7 years	Fernando Barrera	1 year	Brian Stidham	1 year
Jose Requena	7 years	Miguel Espinoza	1 year	Yariel Turro	1 year
Jesus Hernandez	7 years	Lucio Medina	1 year	Bryan Velasquez	1 year
Katie-Anne David	6 years	Isaac Rodriguez	1 year		
Erick Garza Lozano	5 years	Willian Sandoval	1 year		

# WELCOMING NEW HIRES

Jaime Hall	Josue Ramirez Mota	Carlos Ramon Paguaga Gutierrez
Elisbeth Matos	Rogelio Mata	Marcos A Salazar
Orlando Valdez Moncada	Tyler Rapier	Joel Vega Soler
Jeisy Romero Castillo	Abegail Steele	Lucas Conley
Jose Guijosa Alcantar	John J Sarmiento	Trace McIlvain
Feliciano Arias	Draevin Gard	Zachary Griffin
Brandon Hinkle	Jose A Martinez Mercado	
Todd Riley	Ethan Lincourt	



# BUFFALO RIDGE METALWORKS

## CUSTOM-CRAFTED QUALITY

Just north of Brookings, South Dakota, Buffalo Ridge Metalworks operates as a unique blend of community, craftsmanship and innovation. With a small but mighty team of seven full-time employees, this metal manufacturing business has spent the past decade creating custom solutions for a wide range of industries. Among their standout accomplishments is their invaluable contribution to Fratco's All-in-One Water Transportation Systems.

Managed by Jason Waldner, Buffalo Ridge Metalworks is part of a close-knit family community that lives and works together. The community's primary operations are Buffalo Ridge and a substantial pig farm, but neither business is totally isolated. Workers from both enterprises often help with projects.

"It's really a community where we all serve each other," Jason explains. This family-oriented dynamic mirrors Fratco's own values, making the partnership between the two businesses a natural fit.

Jason's journey into metalwork began at just 11 years old, helping out with odd jobs here and there. That early start sparked a lifelong passion. Today, he oversees Buffalo Ridge's operations, utilizing advanced design tools like CAD software to develop custom solutions tailored to each customer's unique needs.

### PRECISION IN EVERY PART

Turning those custom designs into reality requires close attention to detail at every stage. This care for precision guides their process. Their shop is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery that allows them to produce high-quality, custom-fabricated metal components with efficiency and accuracy.

#### • LASER CUTTING

Their two fully automated laser cutters—a 3,000-watt and a 10,000-watt system—streamline production by handling raw materials with minimal manual input. Once loaded, the machines cut and sort each piece automatically, ensuring clean, precise results every time.



A state-of-the-art Bystronic Fiber Laser used for CNC Laser Cutting.

#### • PRESS BRAKES

To shape and form metal components, Buffalo Ridge utilizes a 150-ton manual press brake and an 80-ton robotic bending cell. The automated system uses a robotic arm to manipulate and bend parts according to exact specifications, reducing turnaround time while maintaining consistency.

#### • WELDING

For assembly, their 40-foot robotic welding table allows multiple parts to be welded simultaneously, maximizing efficiency. A 10-by-10-foot robotic welding cell further streamlines the process, flipping parts for seamless welding. Their team also performs manual welding for more intricate or custom projects, ensuring every piece meets their high standards.

From standard manufacturing to highly custom projects, Buffalo Ridge has built parts for major names like Jack Links, Twin City Fan and Daktronics while also supporting small businesses in their local area.

Their team's output speaks volumes. Over the past two years, Buffalo Ridge has completed an estimated 55,000 parts for various projects. Among those are 300 units for Fratco's All-in-One Water Transportation Systems, 200 of which are already in the field.

### A PARTNERSHIP FORGED IN INNOVATION

Buffalo Ridge's connection with Fratco began four years ago when Jerry Weiland approached them with a vision for what would eventually become the All-in-One Water Transportation Systems. Originally, the plan was to use plastic for the system's components, but Jason proposed an alternative.

"Stainless steel would be easier, stronger and more efficient in the long run," he advised Jerry. That decision set the foundation for a partnership defined by innovation and collaboration. As the project evolved, Jason and his team worked closely with Fratco to optimize the design, always prioritizing simplicity and functionality.

CONTINUE READING ►►►

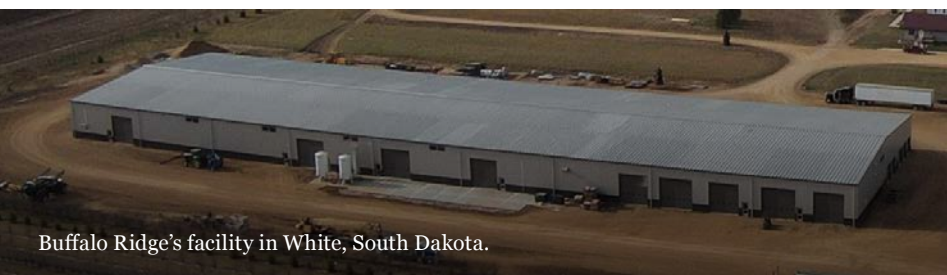
**We're a small family that works together, and we try our best for the products we put out the door to meet high expectations."**



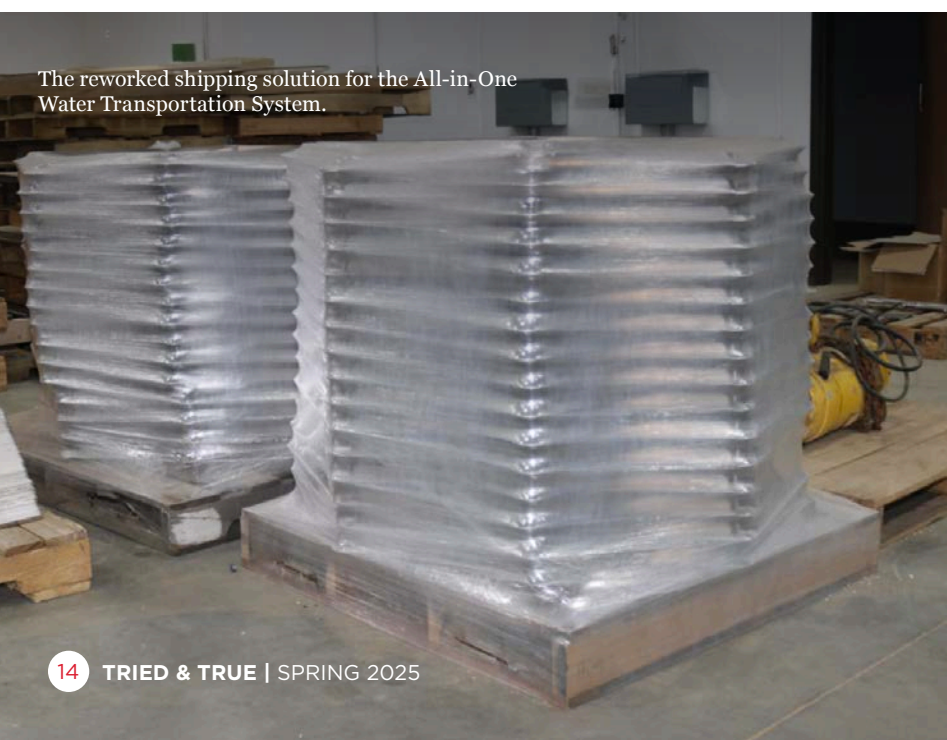


Not familiar with Fratco's All-in-One Water Transportation Systems? Read about our Western Irrigation solution here!

Fratco's All-in-One Water Transportation System.



Buffalo Ridge's facility in White, South Dakota.



The reworked shipping solution for the All-in-One Water Transportation System.

**We're always making changes to make it simpler for the guy that does the install work in the field."**

One such improvement was redesigning the components to maximize shipping efficiency. Early iterations of the system allowed for just 10 to 15 units per truckload, but now, optimized designs fit up to 75 units, ready to be assembled on-site. The custom nature of the stainless steel control structure ensures perfect compatibility with Fratco's dual-wall pipe, making Fratco's All-in-One Water Transportation Systems both efficient and reliable.

### **A SHARED COMMITMENT TO QUALITY**

Jason appreciates Fratco's dedication to delivering exceptional products, a value Buffalo Ridge shares. "We're both dedicated to the products that we put out the door," he says.

Buffalo Ridge Metalworks exemplifies the power of collaboration, combining technical expertise with a strong sense of community to deliver high-quality results. Whether they're crafting components for Fratco or supporting local businesses, Buffalo Ridge's work is a testament to the impact of innovation and teamwork. ■



SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUFFALO RIDGE METALWORKS AND THEIR PRODUCTS.



**MAXIMUM FLOW.  
MAXIMUM STRENGTH.**

MADE FROM HDPP, PROCORR OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL CONCRETE AND METAL PIPE FOR HEAVY-DUTY DRAINAGE PROJECTS. OFFERING UNPARALLELED COST-EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH IMPROVED LEAD TIMES AND FASTER INSTALLATION—ALL WHILE GETTING THE JOB DONE RIGHT.

\*THIS IMAGE WAS CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVERTISING. IT IS NOT A RECOMMENDED INSTALLATION OF THE PRODUCT. BUT WE'RE GUESSING YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT!

**PRO CORR**





# THE RISE OF HDPP PIPE

## EXPANDING THE ROLE OF PLASTIC PIPE

The world of water management is continuously evolving, with materials like high-density polypropylene (HDPP) expanding the role of plastic pipe in demanding applications. Rather than replacing high-density polyethylene (HDPE), HDPP offers a solution for situations where HDPE may not be the best fit, taking on projects traditionally handled by concrete or metal. Fratco's ProCorr pipe exemplifies this evolution, embracing HDPP's advanced properties to offer a next-generation solution for heavy-duty projects like stormwater management, construction and beyond.

### WAIT, WHAT IS HDPP?

If you've been around the plastic industry, you've probably heard of HDPP. At this point, it's hard to avoid hearing it!

So what is it? HDPP, or high-density polypropylene, is a crystalline thermoplastic polymer known for its exceptional strength, flexibility and chemical resistance. While similar to HDPE (high-density polyethylene), HDPP's higher rigidity and heat resistance make it better suited for demanding applications like industrial drainage and stormwater management. It's important to note that HDPP isn't replacing HDPE—instead, it's filling roles where HDPE isn't the ideal choice, replacing materials like concrete or metal for added strength and durability.

HDPP can confidently replace options like metal or concrete in many instances where performance under stress is of extra importance.

According to a recent review in Discover Nano, polypropylene has evolved significantly over the decades, finding applications in fields ranging from biomedical scaffolds to high-performance filtration membranes. Its use in water management reflects a growing awareness of its potential to handle more robust applications than HDPE while maintaining a lightweight and cost-effective profile. With its robust abilities, HDPP is also a great alternative to conventional concrete and steel pipe.



Scan here to read our full article on HDPP and HDPE technology.

### WHY HDPP MATTERS IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater and industrial water management demand materials that can resist corrosion, sustain high flow rates and endure heavy structural loads. In cases where HDPE may not provide the necessary strength, HDPP steps in as a reliable alternative to materials like concrete and metal. HDPP meets these unique needs by providing:

#### 1 | SUPERIOR RIGIDITY

Greater resistance to deformation under load

#### 2 | CHEMICAL STABILITY

Non-reactive to a wide range of substances

#### 3 | ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Recyclable for greener construction practices

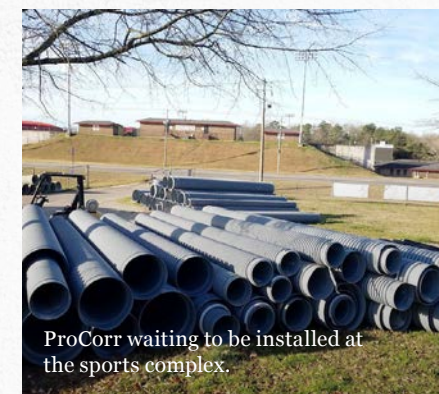
As stormwater infrastructure continues to evolve, driven by environmental challenges and urban development, HDPP products, like Fratco's ProCorr, are becoming indispensable tools for ensuring resilient and long-lasting solutions.

### FRATCO'S PROCORR: STAYING IN FRONT OF THE CURVE

ProCorr is an excellent example of how HDPP expands the possibilities of plastic pipe in water management. This Fratco product offers enhanced load-bearing capacity and resistance to environmental stressors, making it especially suited for applications where traditional materials like concrete or metal were previously required, such as large-scale stormwater systems and industrial drainage.

In fact, ProCorr and similar HDPP products are being used more commonly in southern markets. Twin Oaks Environmental, a proud Fratco distributor in Opelika, Alabama, recently demonstrated the power of innovation by incorporating Fratco's ProCorr pipe into a groundbreaking project. Tasked with designing an underground drainage system for a new sports complex, Twin Oaks faced a challenge: the initial plan called for a concrete vault, a costly and labor-intensive solution. Recognizing an opportunity for improvement, they proposed an alternative approach using ProCorr, Fratco's dual-wall HDPP pipe.

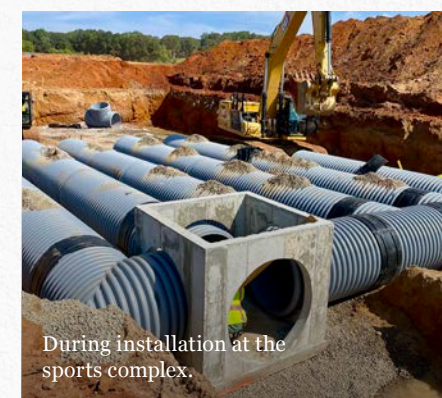
This wasn't just a cost-saving measure—it demonstrated the shift in how municipal drainage systems can be approached. ProCorr's lightweight yet



ProCorr waiting to be installed at the sports complex.

durable design eliminated the need for heavy machinery and extensive manual labor, significantly reducing the project's timeline and expenses. Collaborating closely with Fratco and Xerxes, a supplier of underground liquid storage tanks, Twin Oaks developed and refined the system's design. After rigorous review and detailed submittals, project engineers approved, clearing the way for implementation.

The result? A drainage system that set a new standard for efficiency, sustainability and performance. In this venture, robust and durable drainage systems were paramount, and ProCorr's strength and reliability proved indispensable.



During installation at the sports complex.



Scan here to read the full story about Twin Oaks Environmental and Jobie Watson.

### A STEP CLOSER TO TOMORROW'S INNOVATIONS

It's no secret that the adoption of HDPP in water management reflects a broader industry trend toward finding better solutions for challenging applications. By complementing HDPE and stepping into roles traditionally filled by concrete and metal, HDPP is redefining what plastic pipe can achieve in the most demanding conditions. At Fratco, we're ready to continue providing tomorrow's innovations today so that you always have the best materials for your next project. ■

SOURCE: DISCOVER NANO



# ADVANCING DRAINAGE SCIENCE

## THE IMPACT OF THE TRANSFORMING DRAINAGE PROJECT



Dr. Jane Frankenberger

The Transforming Drainage Project, an initiative from 2015 to 2021, has left a lasting and significant mark on agricultural drainage practices across the Midwest. This groundbreaking endeavor, driven by a multidisciplinary team of experts and supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, introduced innovative drainage strategies addressing critical environmental and agricultural challenges.

However, the story doesn't end there. Dr. Jane Frankenberger, the director of the original project and a professor at Purdue University, continues to champion these advancements through her ongoing work with the Conservation Drainage Network. We had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Frankenberger about her insights into the project's evolution, its impact and the path forward for sustainable drainage.



The Transforming Drainage team consisting of leading drainage researchers and extension specialists across the Midwest.

### PERSONAL PASSION, PROFESSIONAL DRIVE

Dr. Frankenberger's dedication to water management stems from personal experiences. Though she grew up in Minnesota, her connection to water and the environment was shaped by eight years in Africa, where she taught math and physics and only later started work in conservation. "My time in Africa inspired me to pursue water management engineering," she told us. It was the vast difference between how we treat water in the Midwest of the U.S. and how they do in Africa that stirred her passion for water conservation science.

After degrees from the University of Minnesota and Cornell University, she settled in at Purdue University, where she continues inspiring progress as an Agricultural and Biological Engineering Professor. Today, she leads a team on an active research and extension program for agricultural drainage, watershed management and water quality.

**I want to preserve and protect the environment while empowering farmers with sustainable solutions,"**

she emphasized—and that's exactly what the Transforming Drainage Project set out to do.

### FROM VISION TO REALITY

Reflecting on the project's beginnings, Dr. Frankenberger emphasized its primary goals: addressing water quality concerns—particularly nitrate loss—and enhancing water quantity management. She noted, "Well, sometimes the water isn't there when you [farmers] need it, and there's too much [water] when you don't need it."

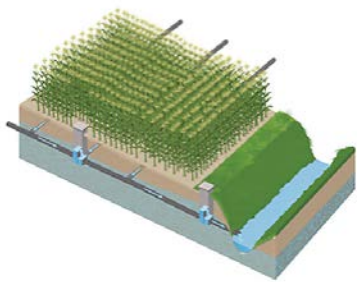
Dr. Frankenberger explained, "Our goal was to advance conservation drainage by collecting data on newer drainage strategies and technologies that could store and reuse water effectively, making it available when most needed."

With a visionary approach, the project introduced advanced drainage techniques that do more than manage water effectively—they incorporate water storage into the landscape for more sustainable practices. At the heart of the project were three pivotal strategies: Controlled Drainage, Saturated Buffers and Drainage Water Recycling.

CONTINUE READING >>>

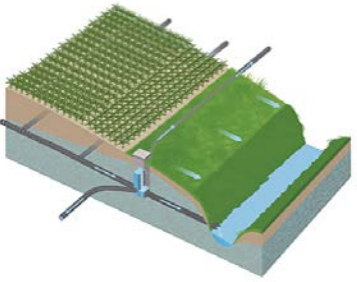


CONTROLLED DRAINAGE



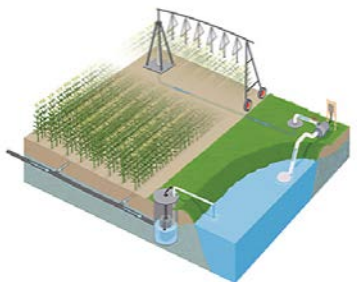
This practice involves water control structures that manage the outlet elevation of subsurface drainage, allowing for water to be stored within the soil profile.

SATURATED BUFFERS



A water control structure at the edge of a field diverts water through a distribution pipe into the buffer, enabling water interaction with the root zone of perennial buffer vegetation.

DRAINAGE WATER RECYCLING



This method recycles drained water, storing it in nearby ponds or reservoirs for later use in irrigation.

These innovative strategies have changed how contractors and farmers think about and implement drainage solutions. Thanks to this project, you may recognize these strategies and systems, which are more commonly implemented today.

EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

While the project officially concluded in 2021, its momentum continues through the Conservation Drainage Network, which Dr. Frankenberger described as “an ongoing collaboration of researchers, agencies and industry leaders.”

Dr. Frankenberger credits the project’s success to these robust partnerships that make up the network, particularly with groups like the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (ADMC), where she worked closely with industry leaders like Keegan Kult and Charlie Schafer. “It’s all about sharing information and working together to connect research with industry,” she said.

The network meets annually, bringing together experts and practitioners to share research and practical applications. Each year’s meeting has grown in attendance, with 2024 having around 250 attendees. The challenge of the meeting now is creating a space for both seasoned professionals and those new to the field and eager to learn.

The data amassed during the project forms the backbone of a publicly accessible research database. Monitoring, modeling and synthesis activities helped determine the tangible benefits of these modern drainage strategies, contributing to 38 peer-reviewed papers and numerous conference presentations.

The project’s outcomes demonstrated that proper drainage water storage practices could reduce nutrient losses from drained lands while maintaining or even increasing yield across the Midwest. Data collected over the years is now accessible through the Conservation Drainage Media Library, providing an invaluable resource for ongoing research and development. “We continue to

share data and information to ensure farmers and agencies can implement these conservation practices effectively,” Dr. Frankenberger noted. Her passion lies in translating complex research into actionable solutions, bridging the gap between academia and real-world applications.

For Fratco, the advancements born from this project align with our mission to deliver cutting-edge drainage solutions, enabling contractors and farmers to adopt systems that improve water quality and resource management.



SCAN HERE TO CHECK OUT THE CONSERVATION DRAINAGE MEDIA LIBRARY.

WHAT’S NEXT?

As climate change introduces new challenges, Dr. Frankenberger and her colleagues remain focused on integrating these considerations into future drainage strategies. She is currently working with a team to evaluate how conservation drainage practices might affect greenhouse gas emissions, to more fully understand the breadth of conservation benefits—she noted that climate change is not her field of expertise, but she’s proud of those on the team who know it so well. They plan to bring their findings and discussion points to the next network meeting. It’s ever-evolving research like this that drives the Conservation Drainage Network to adapt, continuing its mission of fostering collaboration and innovation in agricultural water management.

Fratco is proud to support and implement these transformative practices, ensuring our products and services can be used more optimally, in the best interest of the industry and the environment. With visionaries like Dr. Frankenberger, as well as the rest of the Transforming Drainage Project team, their collaborators and the Drainage Conservation Network, we are building a legacy of sustainable drainage solutions that will benefit generations. ■

CONTROLLED DRAINAGE

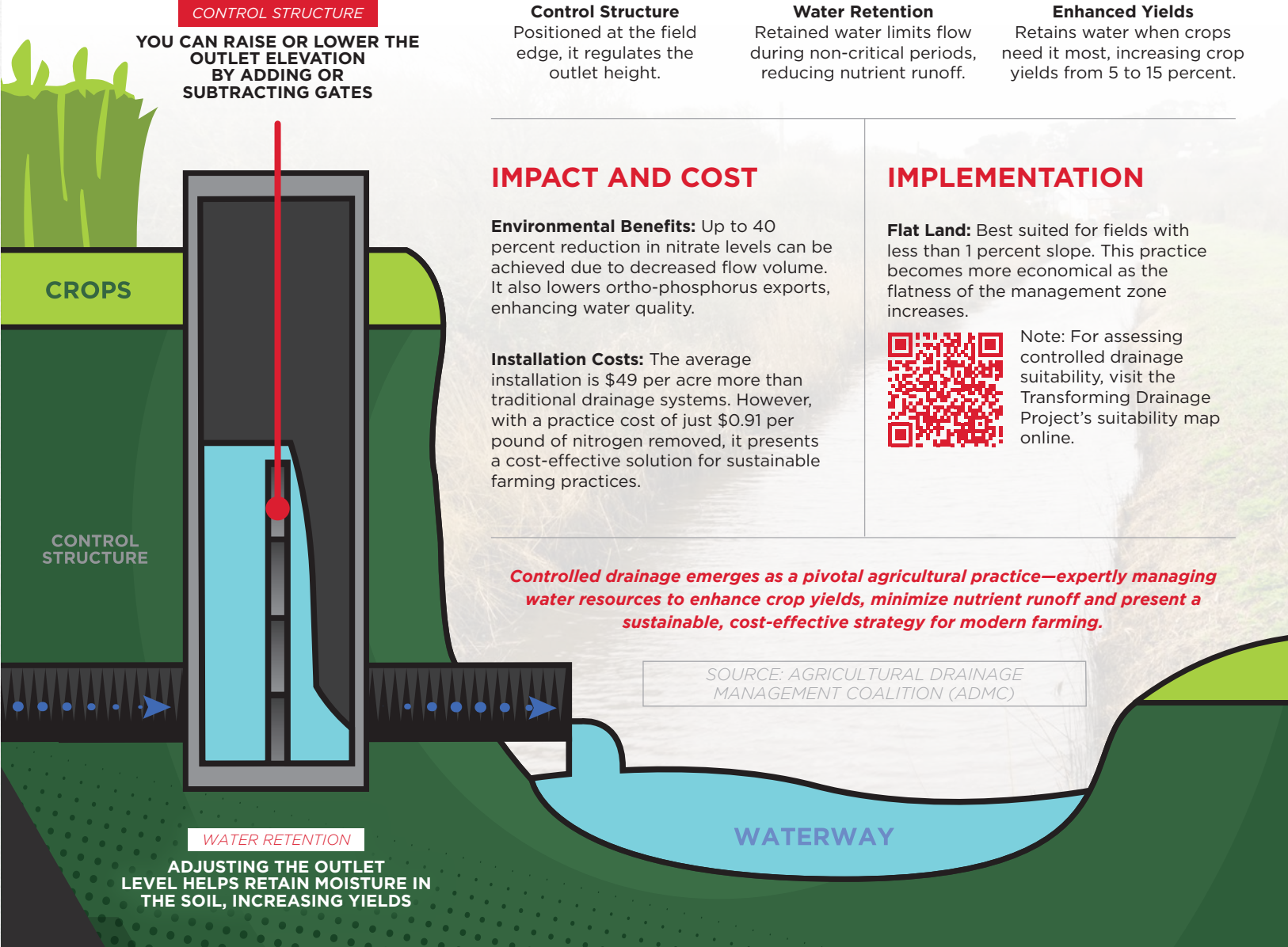
OPTIMIZED WATER USE FOR AGRICULTURE

WHAT IS CONTROLLED DRAINAGE?



Controlled drainage, or drainage water management, involves a technique using a control structure to adjust the outlet height of a drainage system. This approach allows for precise control over the timing and volume of water drained from fields, directly impacting water conservation and nutrient runoff.

HOW DOES IT WORK?



Scan to download the full series of Strategies for Eco-Friendly Water Management infographics!





# NACADE 2025 RECAP

## INNOVATION & COLLABORATION IN AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE

In January, the 2025 North American Conservation & Drainage Expo (NACADE) in Indianapolis, Indiana, brought together industry leaders, researchers and professionals to discuss the latest advancements in water management. This was the second biennial event, founded by Jason and Justin Brown, brothers and owners of Mid America Trenchers from Dexter, Iowa, along with Brad Baker with Springfield Plastics. Mid America produces the Buckeye line of wheel trenchers and Link drainage plows.

As third-generation drainage manufacturers with contractor backgrounds, Jason and Justin Brown have dedicated their lives to this industry since they could walk. Jason and Justin believed that their dedication came with a natural duty to steward the land to the best of their ability.

Jason and Justin's dedication was the driving force behind founding this event. "It's our turn to step up and devote the time so our industry can thrive," Jason explains. They saw a need for a unique type of tradeshow that hadn't been done before. There are several aspects of this event that make it one-of-a-kind.

### SPACIOUS LAYOUT

Large, open booths allow sponsors and exhibitors to showcase anything and everything, enabling attendees to easily compare similar products from different vendors.

### QUALITY LEADS

The attendees at NACADE are serious, quality customers—you won't find busloads of high schoolers, which can easily distract from promising sales.

### COLLABORATION

Roundtable events initiate spontaneous speakers who take questions from the crowd. Everyone benefits from these open conversations.

### TANGIBLE

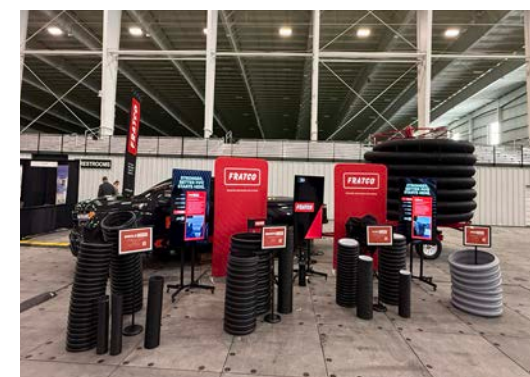
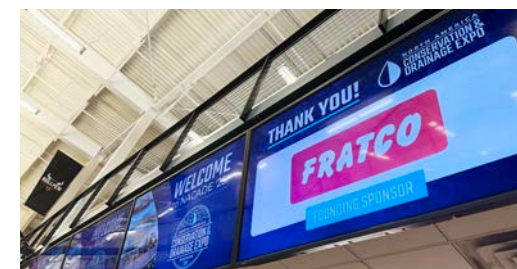
Large vendor booths let you see, touch and compare pipe, fittings and accessories—and even climb aboard four different trenchers in one afternoon.

### UNSTRUCTURED

A loose schedule allows attendees to leisurely chat, grab coffee, peruse or listen to a speaker on their own time. There are no rigid schedules or breakout sessions with forced participation.

### TOP-LEVEL EDUCATION

Every industry expert comes together at NACADE to teach best practices, the most recent research and the newest equipment.



Vinayak Shedakar was one of our earliest supporters and runs the Overholt Drainage School. He helped get a lot of our academics on board, especially the first year. He spoke this year, too, along with experts like Dr. John McMaine (University of Kentucky) and Dr. Lindsay Pease (University of Minnesota) who shared research on nutrient loss in tile drainage and drainage system performance for various crops, offering valuable insights to improve water management strategies. Matt Helmers (Iowa State University) covered the engineering behind drainage coefficient and drain spacing, while Dr. Jane Frankenberger (Purdue University) introduced online tools to enhance drainage projects.

Conservation solutions took center stage, with Dr. Jill Kostel (Wetlands Initiative) and Keegan Kult (ADMC/ISAP) guiding attendees in selecting the best edge-of-field practices. Scott Wagner (USDA-NRCS) outlined how to navigate NRCS programs, and Purdue University Extension's Angela Sorg, Abby Heidenreich and Jesi Davenport discussed the unique mental health challenges faced by farmers and ag professionals.

**Drainage is more than just moving water off the field—it's about managing it in a way that benefits both the farmer and the environment,"**

said Keegan Kult, executive director of ADMC. "NACADE gives us the opportunity to collaborate on solutions that make conservation drainage both practical and profitable." Doubling in size from the first event, NACADE is expected to grow exponentially as the drainage industry realizes the value of this unique experience. NACADE 2027 is projected to take place in Des Moines, Iowa. Justin speaks of the future of NACADE with excitement and pride, "We are standing on the shoulders of giants. Reflecting on the past, present and future of this industry, I'm honored to embrace the role and responsibility my brother and I share." ■

### A NOTE FROM FRATCO

*As Fratco continues to advance durable and efficient drainage solutions, events like NACADE reaffirm the importance of collaboration, education and innovation in shaping the future of our industry. Craig Douglass, Sales Manager, emphasized, "NACADE continues to prove how vital collaboration is in the drainage industry. Bringing together top industry experts helps push innovation forward, and Fratco is proud to be part of that progress."*



SCAN HERE TO SEE MORE  
PHOTOS FROM NACADE 2025



# FIELD JOURNAL

TRIED & TRUE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE: BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR IMPACT

Being a leader goes beyond wearing a suit and tie and walking around with a clipboard. True leadership comes down to traits, habits and practices that motivate others to follow your lead—often without a single command.

Real leaders know when to step forward and when to step back. Sometimes, it's about rolling up your sleeves and doing the dirty work with everyone else. The most respected leaders can follow directions as easily as they give them, demonstrating respect for the job itself and for the team that makes it happen.

So, leadership isn't just for those with titles. Anyone, from a new hire to a seasoned hand, can be a leader by taking responsibility, making thoughtful decisions and keeping a positive attitude on tough days. Leading is often about setting an example through work ethic, collaboration and communication. Setting the status quo by meeting it yourself fosters a culture of respect, accountability and growth—essential qualities on any job site.

Whether you're in charge or just starting out, remember the mindset of a leader isn't about power. It's about being a present part of the team.

Leaders aren't born,  
they're made.  
And they are made  
just like everything  
else - through  
HARD WORK.

## NATURE'S TOUGH LESSONS: THE NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO SIMPLICITY & STRENGTH

Out in the wild, nature's not just a nice view—it's the ultimate teacher of hard, honest lessons. For those of us who spend our days working under the open sky, nature's got some straightforward advice on living simpler and stronger. Here's what the great outdoors can teach us about cutting the clutter and finding real grit.

### 1. THE PATIENCE OF A MOUNTAIN

Ever seen a mountain in a rush? Didn't think so. Nature's all about the long game—steady, relentless and unwavering. It's a lesson in patience for the rest of us. Concrete sets, deals get done—but it all takes time. Rushing gets you nowhere fast.

### 2. STRIP IT DOWN

Out in the wild, there's no room for extras. Everything has its purpose, and that's it. That's a lesson for our lives, too. Cut the crap, keep what matters and let the rest go. It's about doing more with less and focusing on the essentials.

### 3. QUIET DOESN'T MEAN WEAK

There's power in the stillness of a forest or the calm before a storm. Strength isn't about noise and bluster. It's about that solid, unshakable presence. Be the person who doesn't need to shout to be heard.

### 4. ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

Nature's the champ of rolling with the punches—adapting, surviving and thriving. It's a kick in the pants for us to do the same. New challenges? Change of plans? Don't wallow in pity. Get up and adapt. It's about being tough enough to handle what life throws at you.

### 5. FIND YOUR MOMENT

Yeah, taking a minute to just breathe might sound like a load of crap, but even the toughest of us need a break. Stand back, take a look around and find that moment of peace. It's not about zoning out; it's about recharging and keeping your head clear.

### 6. PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Working with nature is a daily reminder that you're part of the bigger picture. It keeps things in perspective, reminding you that the world doesn't revolve around your latest headache.

Nature's not about touchy-feely lessons. It's about straightforward, no-nonsense truths. And for those of us out here day after day, those lessons are worth their weight in gold.



# Howdy, Fratco Family!

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Complete the word search, snap a picture of it and email it to [tried-true@fratco.com](mailto:tried-true@fratco.com) by June 30<sup>th</sup>. We will pick FIVE lucky winners to receive a *Tried & True* hat! Fill out the information below and include it in your photo!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# WORD SEARCH CLUES

“A man can make what he wants of himself if he truly believes that he must be ready for hard work and many \_\_\_\_\_.”

Brooks Schoon attended \_\_\_\_\_ University.

Williamson Pipe delivered to this country artist, famous for singing “Man! I Feel Like a Woman!”  
(11 LETTERS)

The town that Williamson Pipe is opening its new location in Florida. (7 LETTERS)

The name of Fratco’s dual-wall HDPP pipe. (7 LETTERS)

HDPP offers superior \_\_\_\_\_, chemical stability and environmental sustainability. (8 LETTERS)

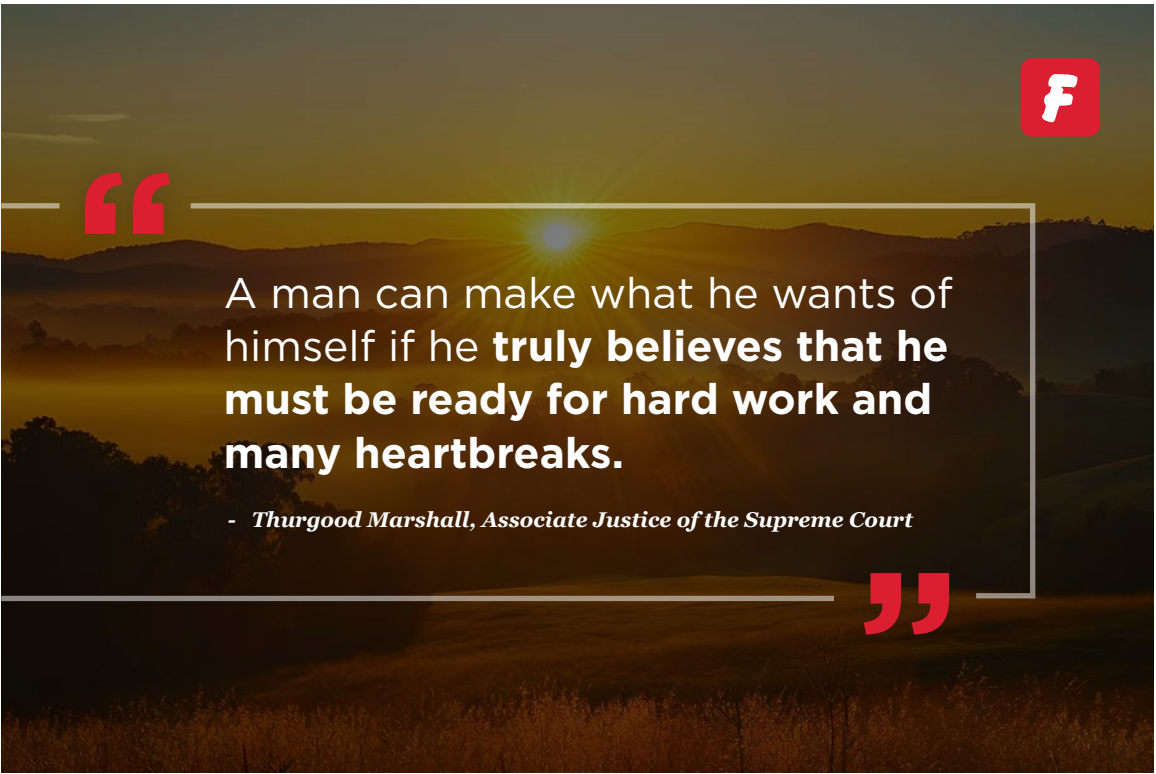
Jane Frankenberger started her career by spending eight years in \_\_\_\_\_ teaching math and physics. (6 LETTERS)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Drainage Project has redefined the landscape of agricultural drainage across eight states. (12 LETTERS)

Meeting in Indianapolis in 2025, \_\_\_\_\_ is where like-minded drainage industry participants can meet and discuss the issues and technology that matter. (6 LETTERS)


\_\_\_\_\_ is the ultimate teacher of hard, honest lessons. (6 LETTERS)

The mindset of a leader is about being a \_\_\_\_\_ part of the team. (7 LETTERS)



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





*“Leadership and  
learning are indispensable  
to each other.”*

- PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

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