

## Let's Rethink Water to Benefit Future Generations

By Martin Knieps, PMI Board of Directors President, Viega



*Martin Knieps*

Every PMI president, and most certainly those who have held the helm in the past five years or so, have faced some unenviable challenges and circumstances. Whether they were navigating the retirements of key people, dodging the impact of COVID-19, or leading the association in a new strategic direction, each of them performed with great finesse and even sharper instincts.

Every year, the value of PMI grows membership because PMI recognizes the importance of both “front-of-the-wall” fittings and fixtures and “behind-the-wall components” for today’s commercial and residential marketplaces. Throughout its 68-year history, PMI has recognized the important and unique complexities of manufacturing. There is no better organization to represent manufacturers and allied companies in the plumbing products industry, and we look forward to welcoming new friends and new companies to the membership.

These past 12 months have flown by fast. While leading the development of strategic plans for the association’s future and making the hundreds of decisions – small and large – essential to PMI’s success, I have benefited from the support, guidance and sound advice of a wonderful team of volunteer leaders at the committee, task group and board levels. In addition, I thank my Viega colleagues for their unwavering support while I was otherwise engaged with PMI business. I am grateful to them and to so many of you who, even with hectic hybrid work schedules, found time to share your thinking, ideas and advice with me.

One of the most important things fostered by all the member and committee input was a careful re-examination of PMI’s strategies and focus. It is no secret the COVID-19 pandemic drove enormous change in our world. COVID-19 fueled the world’s greatest innovations in vaccine development. It changed the way we work, and the way we travel, educate our children, and spend our free time.

It changed our companies, too! COVID-19 accelerated the digitization of our sales, customer service, and supply-chain interactions by a decade. It forced all of us to rethink work. How do we collaborate and innovate while sitting at home conducting the business of the day? And in those moments of solitude and contemplation, what other changes are awaiting us over the horizon?

There is an ancient Iroquois philosophy – the Seventh Generation Principle – that says decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future.

Think about that for a minute. Consider how your actions today would impact the world seven generations hence. How would that change what you do?

When it comes to water, every kettle we boil, bottle of water we drink, or bath or shower we take is a choice we make to use the planet’s scarce resources. With regard to the Seventh Generation Principle, none of us wants to contribute to a water apocalypse for our children or grandchildren. The Great Law of the Iroquois makes clear, “In every deliberation, we must consider the impact on the seventh generation.”

PMI aims to be part of the water solution, so now is the time for action. At the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference, we introduced our Rethink Water initiative, which has a simple mission: ensuring reliable access to clean and safe water for future generations. We will need your help and expertise as we take proactive approaches to addressing water challenges in many ways.

Go to [safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water](https://safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water) to place your name at the top of the list for updates, information, and unique opportunities to help move the Rethink Water initiative forward in a meaningful and impactful way for our planet. And thank you all, once again, for all that you do for PMI, our industry, and future generations.

# The Days of Big Data Are Alive and Well

By Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

The worldly philosopher Dr. Seuss once said, “the more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

We certainly have no shortage of things to read and learn. In today’s whitewater-filled information channel, the stream of information flowing your way can certainly feel overwhelming. According to IDC/Statista, 3,026,626 e-mails are sent every second, 67% of which are spam. The 94 zettabytes of data streaming at us in 2022 will jump to 149 zettabytes in 2024. In case you’re wondering, that’s a 63% increase measured in zettabytes — a 1 followed by 21 zeros, or if you prefer, a trillion gigabytes.

It is no surprise data scientists are among the most in-demand information technology professionals these days. A data scientist oversees the collection, storage and analysis of data. More importantly, they sort data points into useful insights to support your company’s business process, customer relations, strategy and growth.

On the factory floor, it’s the computer numerical control (CNC) machine tool programmers who find themselves in demand. It’s easy to understand why. During the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference in Louisville, participants toured the Hillerich & Bradsby manufacturing plant to witness advances in CNC machining up close. At the turn of the century, it took eight hours to turn out one Louisville Slugger baseball bat. Today, Hillerich & Bradsby turn out 680 bats in the same eight hours using a customized CNC milling machine. There’s still a great deal of handwork that goes into delivering the quality Louisville Slugger bats amateur

and professional players expect, but the attention to efficiency is more than noteworthy.

If your day-to-day work takes you anywhere near a manufacturing plant, customer service center, testing lab or engineering center, you’ve most likely witnessed the amazingly rapid growth of data management tools fueling automation. Articulated, logistic and material-handling robots automate all varieties of warehouse pick-and-ship work, repetitive activities, and heavy lifting. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) and production management systems (PMS) drive all means of productivity and efficiency reviews and work process improvements.

The quarterly PMI Market Outlook report tracks the growth of manufacturing robotics through its Materials Handling Equipment Index. While the global recession of 2009 drove down the ERP software market, several new product launches drove the index up 45% in 2010. According to the IDG Market Pulse survey, 91% of organizations are looking for new capabilities to better integrate their ERP systems.

The desire to leverage cloud integration, lower migration costs, and accelerate transformation with channel and trading partners may explain the

22.7% jump in new orders from this same quarter a year ago. While some economic uncertainty will drive slower growth in the sector for 2023, there are more encouraging projections for new order increases into 2024. Supply chain threats and other potential disruptions remain, but opportunities to drive new, innovative ways of thinking and executing the work ahead abound.

The growth and velocity of big data inflows are driving nearly every company to use findings from deep dives into the data. Every leader from human resources to marketing and sales can use big data to increase the speed at which decisions are made, reduce the amount of time and resources required, or assure high levels of satisfaction among associates and customers. Living under the “you can’t manage what you don’t measure” mantra has driven extraordinary discoveries by managers about the inner workings of their businesses. Big data are driving accuracy in predictions, smarter decisions, and competitive advantages. Having these data on hand is challenging managers to realign their reliance on experience and intuition to leverage the benefits of a data-driven strategy. Having your most important decisions resting on the highest-paid person’s opinion is becoming an increasingly poor choice. The question isn’t what do we think? The question of the day is, what does the data tell us?

As 2022 winds down, we often find ourselves reflecting upon the great work we accomplished, our families, and the many blessings for which we are thankful. I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and confidence in PMI, our programs, and member services. I hope your year has been happy and healthy thus far, and along with the entire PMI professional staff team, we all wish you the very best heading into 2023.



# Sal Gattone Elected 2023 PMI President, Board Members Approved

Plumbing Manufacturers International announced the election of **Sal Gattone** as president of the 2023 PMI Board of Directors during PMI's 68th



*Sal Gattone*

Annual Meeting of the Membership. The leader of research and development projects at LIXIL, Gattone succeeds **Martin Knieps**, senior director, operational excellence, Viega LLC. Knieps will remain on the board as immediate past president. The meeting was held during the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference in Louisville.

In addition to Gattone and Knieps, the other members of the 2023 board will be board vice president **Chip Way**, Lavelle Industries; board secretary/treasurer **Cambria McLeod**, Kohler Co.; and at-large directors **Kevin Campbell**, Moen, Inc.; **Daniel Gleiberman**, Sloan Valve Co.; **Bob Neff**, Delta Faucet Co.; and **Belinda Wise**, Kerox, Ltd.

"I am delighted and honored to lead as the next president of the PMI Board of Directors," Gattone stated. "We are at a pivotal juncture. Record-breaking temperatures this summer, combined with historic drought conditions, remind us of the urgency with which we need to act to tackle water conservation challenges at every level of government. In collaboration with my colleagues at PMI, we will continue to focus on water efficiency, advising key stakeholders on proactive measures we can implement to advance responsible use of our water resources."

Gattone thanked Knieps for his contributions as the 2022 PMI board president. He also announced that the 69th Annual Meeting of the Membership will be held as part of the PMI23 Manufac-

turing Success Conference from Oct. 23-26, 2023, at the Lotte Hotel in Seattle.

In remarks summing up 2022, Knieps recognized PMI member companies that joined during the year – BOCCHI, Speakman and Uponor. He presented the PMI President's Award to **Troy Benavidez**, leader, international governmental relations and policy, LIXIL International.



*Troy Benavidez and Martin Knieps*

## PMI introduces Rethink Water initiative

PMI's Rethink Water initiative is an effort to assure clean and safe water for future generations by building a coalition of individuals, organizations and policymakers with a shared vision of sustainably managed water. Legacy product replacement will be the first project of the Rethink Water initiative (see story on pgs. 4 and 5).

Knieps introduced a video ([safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water](https://safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water)) about the initiative and emphasized the importance of addressing



*PMI 2023 Board: Bob Neff, Belinda Wise, Daniel Gleiberman, Chip Way, Sal Gattone, Cambria McLeod, Kevin Campbell and Martin Knieps*

the water shortages caused by climate change and aging infrastructure. Rethink Water is one of an "amazing array of forward-looking initiatives" PMI has planned for 2023 and beyond, he said. Knieps also announced the new **Paul Patton** PMI Conference Scholarship, named after the late former PMI president, to be awarded each year to provide complimentary attendance to the PMI Manufacturing Success Conference.

During his state of the association report, PMI CEO/Executive Director Kerry Stackpole recognized the contributions of the PMI board, committee leaders, staff, and business support team. He named **Kate Olinger**, director, industry and regulatory affairs, Uponor, as the recipient of the PMI Ambassador Award, given each year to an employee of a PMI member company.



*Kate Olinger and Martin Knieps*



# Legacy Product Replacement - PMI's 1st Rethink Water Project

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Legacy product replacement will be the first project of Plumbing Manufacturers International's Rethink Water initiative, an effort to ensure that future generations have reliable access to clean and safe water. Rethink Water addresses the effects of climate change and aging water infrastructure by bringing together organizations, policymakers and individuals sharing a vision of sustainably managed water.

In this initial project, PMI will be working to gain support from policymakers and stakeholders for replacing older, inefficient plumbing fixtures, known as legacy products, as a way of saving water in the face of historic drought conditions.

The project stems from a new PMI-commissioned study of the market penetration of mandated water-efficient fixtures in California. The study found a continuing and strong need to replace legacy products with new ones. Installing water-efficient plumbing products quickly takes on increased urgency as the nation seeks solutions to water shortages caused by the continuing drought.

Conducted by GMP Research, the California Market Penetration of Water-Efficient Plumbing Products Study finds the residential market penetration of water-efficient 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf)-or-less toilets to range from 22.0% to 25.9% in the five state regions surveyed (Exhibit 1). The market penetration in disadvantaged communities was even lower, ranging from 19.6% to 22.2% in the five regions (Exhibit 2).

## **PMI encourages public-private partnerships to replace inefficient toilets and save water in California**

The study supports the idea that the direct replacement of older, inefficient toilets and other fixtures can save a high volume of water quickly. Should California do a toilet replace-

ment program focused on disadvantaged communities, 3.2 billion gallons of water can be saved in three to five years by replacing 469,000 3.5+ gpf toilets currently in use with water-efficient 1.28 gpf toilets (Exhibit 2). Statewide, up to 326 billion gallons of water can be saved over 30 years by replacing 26.1 million 1.6+ gpf toilets with 1.28 gpf toilets (Exhibit 1). By accelerating the replacement of these toilets, 65.3 billion gallons can be saved within five years (Exhibit 3), and 95.7 billion gallons within 10 years (Exhibit 4).

Toilets offer the greatest opportunity for water savings within a home. For this reason, PMI encourages public-private partnerships and incentives to replace inefficient toilets as a response to water shortages caused by climate change, population growth, and continued residential and commercial development.

## **Toilet replacement programs have been successful throughout the nation, but more needs to be done**

Water-efficiency grant programs continue to be developed by federal, state and local governmental entities, especially as drought persists and water resources recede. These programs cover both product and installation costs.

In California, toilet replacement or rebate programs have been implemented in Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Francisco, and other municipalities.

San Antonio, Texas, had a decade-long program that delivered and replaced toilets free of charge until virtually no inefficient toilets were left to replace. Programs replacing toilets free of charge or via rebates have been implemented



throughout the nation, primarily at the county or municipal level, in places including Dallas/Fort Worth, Maui, New York City, Seattle, and Tucson.

## **Replacing inefficient faucets and showerheads can save even more water**

The GMP study also examined the market penetration of water-efficient kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets and showerheads in residential buildings, as well as the market penetration of water-efficient tank-based toilets, toilets with flushometer valves, urinals, faucets and showerheads in commercial settings. Significant water savings can be achieved in residential and commercial settings by replacing older fixtures in these categories with water-efficient fixtures, as well.

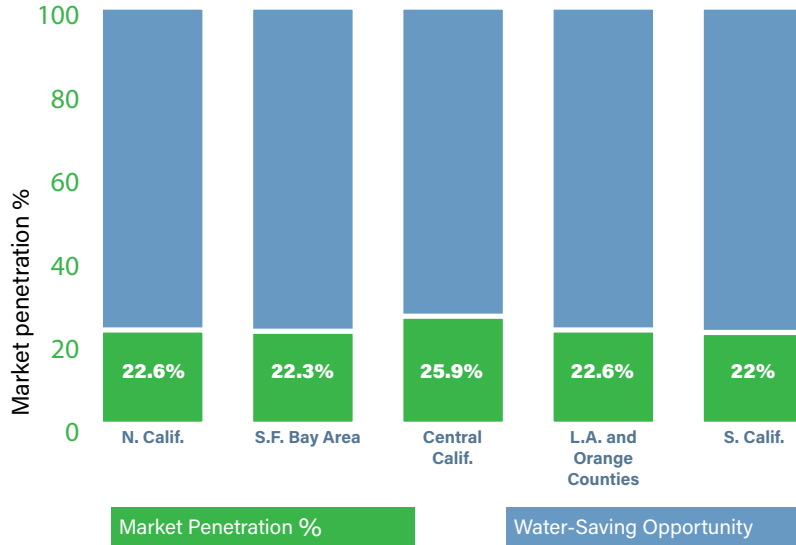
While market penetration for water-efficient faucets, showerheads, urinals and other fixtures is higher than it is for toilets, even more water can be saved by replacing those that do not meet standards mandated in California. Water utilities, home improvement retailers, and government entities have often offered rebates or giveaways to replace these less-expensive products.

To watch PMI's video about the Rethink Water initiative and sign up to receive updates, go to [safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water](https://safeplumbing.org/advocacy/rethink-water).

### 3 Benefits of Legacy Product Replacement in California

#### 1. High volumes of water can be saved statewide

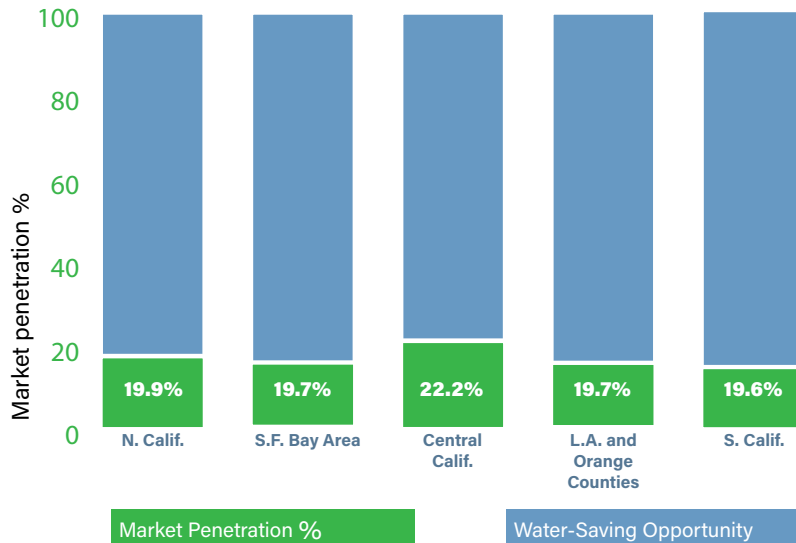
Exhibit 1



**Opportunity to Save 326 Billion Gallons**

#### 2. Toilet replacement saves water quickly in disadvantaged communities

Exhibit 2



**Opportunity to Save 3.2 Billion Gallons**

#### 3. Accelerated toilet replacement saves water faster throughout California

Exhibit 3

**65.3B Gallons Saved If Replaced in 5 Years**

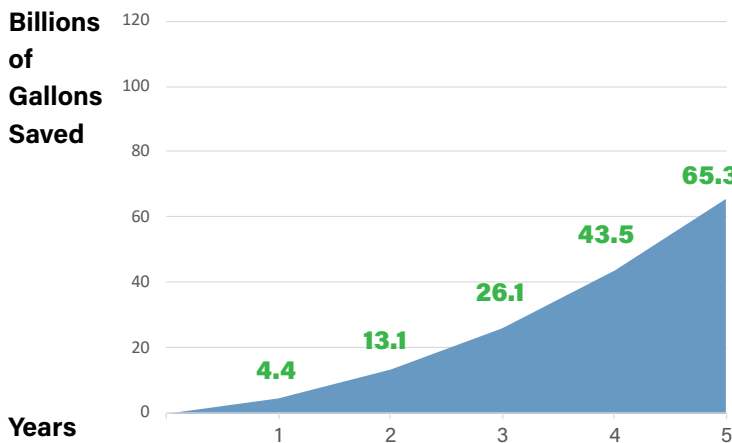
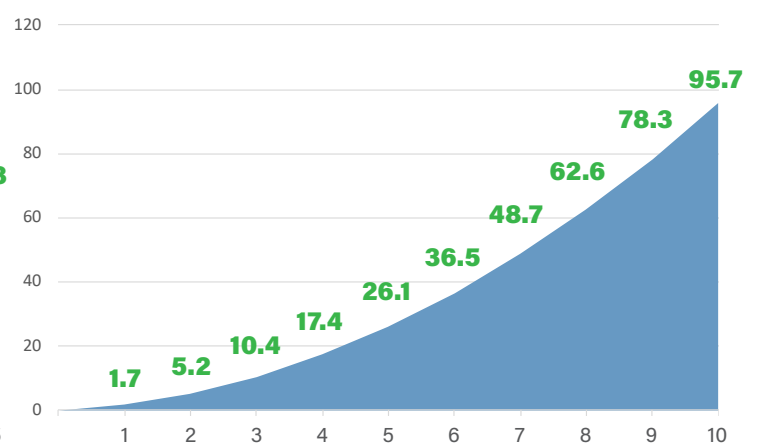


Exhibit 4

**95.7B Gallons Saved if Replaced in 10 Years**



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# Focus on People and Planet to Build 'Net Positive' Future

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.



Andrew Winston

A big shift is taking place in what it means to be a successful business. A decades-long focus on short-term shareholder profits is giving way to becoming “net positive” – devoting more resources to the environment and society than a company takes.

Megatrends and sustainability expert **Andrew Winston**, co-author of “Net Positive: How Courageous Companies Thrive by Giving More than They Take,” said a company’s success comes down to answering one question: Is the world better off because your business is in it?

“We’ve kind of cracked the world, taken everything from it, and now we need to heal it. That means taking a larger responsibility and longer-term view,” keynote presenter Winston told attendees of the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference.

This shift in business commitment is being driven by pressures from stakeholders for companies to improve their environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies and actions, he added. ESG encompasses an organization’s commitment to sustainability and a lower carbon footprint; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); and leadership transparency and accountability.

Plumbing Manufacturers International members have been stepping up efforts

to address ESG, looking for more ways to help leave the planet a better place. Examples of how PMI members are striving toward “net positive” can be found in the PMI 2022 Annual Report ([tinyurl.com/2p8j52cb](https://tinyurl.com/2p8j52cb)). In addition, PMI’s newly introduced Rethink Water initiative will focus on making contributions to ensure safe and clean water for future generations through projects such as legacy product replacement.

## **Demands for change, transparency remain loud and clear**

Winston noted two key reasons for more businesses amping up their ESG policies: public and government demand for transparency and changing generational norms.

The world’s largest investors are focused on sustainability, climate change and ESG. “It’s not optional anymore. The investor demand for this is real,” he said. In 2022, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proposed mandates that public companies disclose their carbon emissions, including those produced by suppliers and customers.

Consumers are demanding transparency, too. They want to invest in companies with strong environmental policies and buy products from businesses that disclose all ingredients and materials used to make their products. Employees want to work for companies solving environmental and social challenges, affecting how businesses attract and retain talent, Winston added.

Generational norms have changed and are becoming permanent. Winston cited Deloitte and Cone Communications surveys which reported that 90% of Generation Z believes a company has an obligation to solve environmental and social problems and 64% of Millennials won’t take a job if a company doesn’t have strong corporate social responsibility values.

## **Paths to success require purpose, partnerships and courageous leadership**

To succeed in this new environment, companies must have a clear purpose, build strong partnerships and choose courageous, humble leaders, Winston said.

As an example, he discussed Anglo American, a global mining company that has set a net positive goal and purpose to reimagine mining to improve people’s lives. The company wants to create small-footprint mines that are radically more efficient – instead of those that need to be repaired and cause strife in communities.

Winston suggested businesses partner with suppliers, peers, communities, government and non-government organizations – and look to their critics – to innovate and deliver solutions. “Working together has a multiplier effect,” he said. “Working across sectors will help companies find solutions to shared challenges.” Winston noted many PMI members’ efforts as good examples of peers collaborating across the plumbing manufacturing industry.

“We also need a new kind of leadership where those running companies have the courage to lead from a sense of purpose, duty, humility and decency,” he said.

A 2021 Edelman Trust Report stated that 86% of people surveyed agree with the statement: “I expect CEOs to publicly speak out about societal challenges.”

“You can grow and profit by solving the world’s problems, not creating them,” Winston said and noted that companies with successful sustainability efforts outperform those without climate goals.

PMI members can view Winston’s and other PMI22 presentation slides here: [tinyurl.com/c29exanw](https://tinyurl.com/c29exanw)

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# River Cleanup Wunderkind Sustains Decades-Long Movement

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Working as a commercial shell diver in 1992, 17-year-old **Chad Pregracke** was appalled by the heaps of garbage he discovered in the Mississippi River. He decided to do whatever it took to clean up the river.

Pregracke, who grew up along the river's banks, triumphed over many hurdles as he set out on his expedition – from scraping up funding to securing a place to store and recycle tons of trash. Today he runs Living Lands & Waters – what he describes as the only “industrial strength” river cleanup organization in the world.

“I got to know the river from the bottom up. I saw a different side of the river and it bothered me. The more I saw, the more I wanted to do something about it,” Pregracke said, telling his story at the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference in a keynote address. He shared how he and his crew have led over 1,000 community cleanups on 23 rivers in 20 states, removing over 10 million pounds of garbage – and they're still going strong.

Pregracke noted the Mississippi River's importance: 18 million people get their drinking water from it, 40% of all native birds use it as a flyway in North America, and it acts as a superhighway to transport goods in the United States. In 2021, 92% of all agricultural exports flowed through the Mississippi Delta port of New Orleans, he added.

He thanked Plumbing Manufacturers International members for their water innovations and collaboration, including Elkay for its long-time support of his work and a recent fundraiser that raised more than \$100,000 for Pregracke's team. He highlighted PMI members' bottle-filling stations, which have helped deliver clean drinking water while saving billions of plastic bottles from ending up in landfills.

## Finding a corporate sponsor and surprising his parents

At the start of his journey – with few resources, including an old boat with a wonky motor, and no solid plan – Pregracke set his sights on a goal: to clean a 435-mile stretch of the Mississippi River, he explained.

Pregracke first approached aluminum and mining company Alcoa for help. The idea to find a corporate sponsor came to him from watching a NASCAR race. He asked for \$8,400 to get started and Alcoa obliged. The grant covered his expenses, including fixing his boat motor and buying gas.

He admitted to not thinking through where he would store everything. His parents returned from vacation dismayed to discover Pregracke was using their boat launch and backyard in Hampton, Illinois, as a collection site for thousands of pounds of appliances, barrels, tires, plastic and other garbage he pulled from the river.

Soon after, the Associated Press picked up a local story about Pregracke, winning him national coverage and launching a decades-long river cleanup movement.

He faced many challenges to raise the money needed to meet his big goals. Later, looking to double his capacity, he came up with the idea to use a barge as a “floating recycling plant,” he recalled. He took another leap of faith and asked a local sand company for a barge and then two more followed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – along with a tugboat bought from a local marina.

In the years that followed, Pregracke expanded his operations, hiring several crew members, recruiting thousands of volunteers and coordinating with various communities and organizations. They have cleaned several other large rivers – such as the Ohio, Anacostia, Potomac, Missouri and Illinois – and conduct educational seminars for high school students and others in between cleanups.

He recently purchased a 71,000-square-foot factory and started manufacturing pallets out of plastic his teams have pulled from rivers across the country.

Looking back, Pregracke said that he's proven big things can be accomplished little by little. “I once read a book that said the earth is not destroyed as a whole, but piece by piece. I think that's the same way it needs to be fixed. Like pulling one tire at a time out of a river,” he added.

PMI members can view Pregracke's PMI22 presentation slides here: [tinyurl.com/c29exanw](https://tinyurl.com/c29exanw)



Chad Pregracke

## Let's Make Things Better in 2023!

As we enter the new year, we're all looking for ways to make our lives better. Serving in a volunteer leadership position with Plumbing Manufacturers International is one way to enhance your career experience and contribute to finding solutions to water-related challenges.

PMI is always looking for individuals who are interested in board or committee roles in 2023 and beyond. These roles provide unique opportunities to make our industry – and the world – better. This year, all committees will have a role to play in PMI's new Rethink Water initiative – developed to ensure reliable access to clean, safe water for future generations. The first project of this initiative is legacy product replacement (see pages 4 and 5).

Open to all employees of PMI member companies, a leadership position requires a reasonable commitment of your time and energy. The return on your investment? Insights into the challenges facing the industry today and tomorrow, along with the opportunity to do something about them.

Dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive leadership team, PMI seeks leaders with various backgrounds and experiences from all member companies – big and small. Openings that meet your interest are available for the PMI

Board of Directors and for co-chairs of our six committees.

“Serving on the PMI board has given me a higher sense of pride and purpose,” said **Belinda Wise**, a PMI board member and director of business development in North America for Kerox, Ltd. “I have enjoyed getting this broad perspective and big-picture view of our industry that I couldn't have gotten anywhere else.”

Those serving in PMI committee and board leadership roles actively enjoy collaborating with a variety of industry colleagues, participating in appropriate debate and discussion, and ensuring PMI remains focused on its deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

To nominate yourself or another person, submit the Board of Directors Application ([tinyurl.com/jsyern4u](https://tinyurl.com/jsyern4u)) or the Leadership Committee Application ([tinyurl.com/mu2bzx4e](https://tinyurl.com/mu2bzx4e)) to PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**.

“This is an excellent opportunity to apply your positive leadership attributes to our industry's greatest challenges and opportunities, while working to make the world a better place,” said Stackpole.

Get started on this extraordinary leadership journey by completing your application today!

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### PMI STAFF

**Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE**  
CEO/Executive Director  
[kstackpole@safep plumbing.org](mailto:kstackpole@safep plumbing.org)

**Jodi Stuhrberg**  
Director of Programs and Administration  
[jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org](mailto:jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org)

**Kyle Thompson**  
Technical Director  
[kthompson@safep plumbing.org](mailto:kthompson@safep plumbing.org)

**Stephanie Lass**  
Education Coordinator  
[sslass@safep plumbing.org](mailto:sslass@safep plumbing.org)

**Ann Geier**  
Administrative Assistant  
[ageier@safep plumbing.org](mailto:ageier@safep plumbing.org)

### PMI CONSULTANTS

**Ray Valek**  
Public Relations  
[ray@valekco.com](mailto:ray@valekco.com)

**Pam Taylor**  
Legal Consultant, Jones Day  
[ptaylor@jonesday.com](mailto:ptaylor@jonesday.com)

**Maureen Baird**  
Graphic Design  
[info@mbairdgraphics.com](mailto:info@mbairdgraphics.com)



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